

The basic steps of a Choosing by Advantages evaluation are as follows:

1. Determine the **Factors**. Factor is an element or component of a decision. It serves as a container for attributes and advantages. It is helpful to base the factors on the issues identified during scoping as well as the fundamental resources and values. For example *Preserves resources and promotes the long-term stewardship of the ecosystem.*
2. Identify the **Attributes** for each alternative in each factor. An attribute is a characteristic of one alternative. It does not make a comparison between alternatives. For example is *Protects 30 acres of wetlands.*
3. List the **Advantages** of the Attributes for each alternative in each factor. An advantage is a favorable dissimilarity in quality or a favorable difference in quantity. Choosing by advantages only looks at advantages because without exception, a disadvantage of one attribute is an advantage of another attribute. For example: *20 acres more wetland protected.*
4. Determine the alternative for each factor that has the **Lowest Amount of Advantage**—underline the advantage statement (not individual attributes). The alternative with the lowest amount of advantage for that factor is assigned an importance of **0 (zero)**.
5. Determine the alternative in each factor that has the **Highest Advantage**—circle the entire advantage statement (not the individual attributes). Do not assign an importance value at this time.
6. Compare the highest advantage identified for each factor to each other using the "defender/challenger" method to determine the **Paramount Advantage**. In making this determination, consider the reason for developing the GMP; the park's purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, and interpretive themes; public comments; the magnitude of the advantage and the magnitudes of associated attributes. Assign an importance value of **100** to the paramount advantage.
7. Compare the **remaining most important advantage** for each factor against the paramount advantage. Based upon group discussion, assign an importance value. The amount of importance must be less than 100.
8. Compare the **remaining advantages in each factor** against the importance value for the most important advantage for that factor. The importance value cannot be higher than the value given to the alternative with the highest advantage for that factor e.g. if the highest importance value is 60, then the other alternative advantages must be no higher than 60.

9. Add the **total importance values** of each factor by alternative.
10. **Consider Cost.** If costs are equal for each of the alternatives, then select the alternative with the greatest amount of advantage. If all costs are not equal, create an excel bar chart where the x axis=importance and the y axis=cost.
11. **Identify The Preferred Alternative:** Choose the alternative that provides the greatest amount of importance for the least amount of cost. *The preferred could be one of the existing alternatives, elements from several alternatives, or a completely new alternative.*
12. **Reconsider your decision. Change the preferred alternative if necessary**
 - a. Were the needs and preferences of the public and stakeholders considered?
 - b. How well does the preferred alternative answer the issues identified during scoping?
 - c. Is the preferred alternative cost conscious? How would the park save budgeted funds?
 - d. Would adding or removing attributes or high cost items strengthen the preferred alternative?
 - e. Is the preferred alternative consistent with the park's purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values?
 - f. Should the importance values be adjusted?