

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**



**Grand Teton National Park
Wyoming**

December 2004

Fire Management Plan Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)



FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Grand Teton National Park and John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway
Fire Management Plan

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Park Service (NPS) prepared an environmental assessment to examine various alternatives and environmental impacts associated with the revision of the Fire Management Plan (FMP) for Grand Teton National Park and John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway, collectively referred to as GTNP. The environmental assessment (EA), released on October 1, 2004, was prepared to examine three alternatives: Alternative A – *No Action*, Alternative B – *Multiple Strategies (preferred alternative)*, and Alternative C – *Limited Strategies (No Prescribed Fire)*. The proposed action or plan responds to five primary fire management goals: 1) Implement a fire program that allows the natural process of fire to persist in GTNP, 2) Protect life, property, and other resources from unwanted fire effects, 3) Enhance the interagency fire management program through collaboration and coordination to include public involvement and civic engagement, 4) Use adaptive management to continually improve the fire management program, and 5) Manage personnel and financial resources effectively. Topics of concern identified during scoping and evaluated in the EA included vegetation, wildlife (including threatened, endangered, and special concern species), water resources, wetlands, soils, wilderness, air quality, archaeological resources, historic structures, cultural landscapes, firefighter and public safety, park neighbors, and program cost.

The current 1991 FMP (and 2003 amendment) is primarily a risk-based program that allows for wildland fire use, prescribed burns, and suppression response strategies organized by Fire Management Units (FMUs). The prescribed fire program is permitted throughout the park for fuel treatment and limited resource management objectives. Although the GTNP Fire Management Plan (FMP) calls for fuel reduction around developed areas by machine, hand, or through prescribed burning, specific implementation information is found in a separate 1991 *Hazard Fuels Management Plan*. The *Hazard Fuels Management Plan* addresses five key areas where mechanical treatments will take place, but does not address all developed areas, inholdings, and adjacent properties nor does it address collaborative project planning with interagency partners.

In addition to there being a Congressional mandate to update and revise fire management plans, a revised FMP is needed to provide GTNP with the flexibility to manage fire in accordance with 1995 and 2001 Federal Fire Policy Reviews and the related guidelines in NPS Director's Order #18: *Wildland Fire Management*, and NPS *Management Policies 2001*. These policies and directives require an approved FMP in order to use resource benefits as a primary consideration influencing the selection of wildland fire management strategies. A revised FMP will continue to allow GTNP to counter the effects of past fire exclusion and perpetuate fire in fire-dependent ecosystems while protecting life, property, and resources from unwanted fire. The new FMP will increase opportunities for wildland fire use, expand opportunities under a multi-year treatment schedule for using prescribed fire to meet resource objectives, and improve fuel reduction (mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed burning) treatments to enhance defensibility around developments, private lands, and other resources at risk.

Furthermore, a need exists to enhance the management of fire on an ecosystem level, further integrating GTNP with adjacent lands and the plans, resources and risks associated with other jurisdictions (private, county, state, regional, and federal). In the future, a revised FMP may serve as the park's portion of a joint fire management plan with the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Where the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service lands share common boundaries, similar fire management objectives are met through joint operations and shared resources where possible.

SELECTION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (Alternative B in the EA)

After a thorough review of fire management goals and the impacts of the alternatives on cultural, natural, and social resources, consideration of public comment, and further consultation with the USFWS, the preferred alternative (Alternative B) has been selected for implementation. Proposed FMP revisions under Alternative B include: (1) integrating the previously separate Hazard Fuels Management Plan; (2) modifying existing FMU boundaries and corresponding management strategies; (3) expanding wildland fire use; (4) adopting an adaptive management decision-making process to select, develop, implement, and monitor planned events and to determine appropriate management strategies for unplanned events; and (5) formulating new resource objectives by defining current and desired future conditions (DFCs) for Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas and all park vegetation types, within an adaptive framework that provides for modifying these DFCs as new information becomes available.

Alternative B is fundamentally similar to Alternative A (no action) in that fire management staff will have multiple tools available (i.e., prescribed fire, mechanical treatments, wildland fire use and suppression) to manage fire, and planned actions will, on average, treat a similar number of acres. Mechanical treatment acres are expected to remain between 60-100 acres/year for the next four to six years. The prescribed fire trend is predicted to be close to the current annual ten-year average (1,486 acres). In contrast, hazard fuels treatments will be incorporated into the revised FMP and an adaptive management process will be adopted to formally guide interdisciplinary fire management decisions. FMU boundaries will be modified and strategies will change to allow wildland fire use within all zones. The Suppression Zone will be renamed the Protection Zone. Wildland fire use will be expanded as a result of the ability to use fire throughout the park, adaptive management, and enhanced flexibility to use prescribed and mechanical treatments as tools to reduce risks associated with wildland fire use. An adaptive fire management process will allow fire within the ecosystem based upon broader, more clearly defined resource objectives.

New resource objectives will be formulated to address the primary goal of maintaining fire's active role in ecosystem function. These objectives will be established by vegetation type rather than by FMU. DFCs will be developed for sagebrush steppe, persistent lodgepole pine, mixed conifer, Douglas-fir, aspen, high elevation mixed conifer, wetland/riparian, current or former agriculture, and WUI areas. DFCs will be subject to modification as new information becomes available and will be considered when developing annual prescribed fire and hazardous fuels reduction projects, as well as when making long-range decisions on the management of unplanned events.

Decision-making Process

Planned events such as prescribed fire and hazard fuels reduction projects will use adaptive management procedures for a multi-year decision-making process. Since planned projects are identified annually but may require as many as four years to implement, the process will be reinitiated each year. Although the decision-making is presently designed to occur over a four-year period, it may be streamlined for efficiency, and is therefore referred to as a multi-year planning process.

For unplanned events, the current "Go/No-Go" decision-making process described in Alternative A will be revised using the *Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy, Implementation Procedures Reference Guide* and will incorporate criteria for determining when wildland fire use will be permitted park-wide. The Fire Committee will evaluate an appropriate management response using four criteria: objectives, relative risk, external influences, and the ability to defend the selected fire boundary. External influences and objectives considered will include other fire activity in the area, smoke impacts, visitor use, desired future conditions, fire history, and location. The Fire Committee will use the Wildland Fire Relative Risk Rating to assess the current fire situation and determine the relative risk of the decision. Fire size, time of season, and fire danger indicators are monitored daily for staffing thresholds. The potential complexity is more speculative, therefore fire location and behavior will be examined closely.

Wildland Fire Use

Wildland fire use will be managed with firefighter and public safety as the primary objective. Approved wildland fire use actions will consider resource objectives and DFCs for vegetation types and WUI areas. Fire management staff will review recent fire history, scientific information, and fire effects monitoring information to make decisions where possible on wildland fire use actions for the upcoming fire season. Wildland fire use actions are expected to increase to 30-60% as a result of modified FMUs, adaptive management, vegetation/WUI DFCs, and the ability to use prescribed fire as a tool to reduce risks associated with allowing fire on the landscape.

Mechanical Treatments

Mechanical treatments to reduce fuel loads will be guided by WUI DFCs and planned on an annual basis to achieve structural protection and safety objectives. Fires will be used to burn debris piles and clearing standards will follow recommended treatments described in the *Hazard Fuel Management Plan* (1991). In addition to reducing hazard fuels loading, mechanical treatments could also be used to achieve specific vegetation DFCs if science indicates relevancy and the fire management committee approves the action. Mechanical treatments will continue to average 60-100 acres/year. In four to six years, hazard fuel treatment projects will then decrease to a level of maintaining previously treated areas, with some new treatment areas likely.

Prescribed Fire

Prescribed fire will be used throughout all fire management units as a component of the hazard fuels reduction program and as a resource management tool. Annual prescribed fires will be planned based on the condition of WUI areas and DFCs for vegetation types. Prescribed fire objectives will include mimicking natural processes where possible, achieving a reduction in fuel loading, and functioning as a fuel break or buffer tool to reduce risks associated with wildland fire use. Depending upon specific project goals, one objective or a combination of objectives may be identified. The Fire Management Office expects that prescribed fire treatment acres averaged for the next ten years will remain similar to the current ten-year annual average (1,486 acres).

Mitigation Measures

Under the preferred alternative, potential mitigation measures will be consistently considered when preparing prescribed burn and wildland fire implementation plans and when implementing suppression activities. Fire operation sites (e.g., fire camps and dip sites) and sensitive resource locations will be pre-identified in the revised FMP and updated annually when necessary. Potential mitigation measures include those detailed by resource topic in Section 2.6 of the EA, those listed for threatened, endangered, and special concern species in the Biological Assessment (BA), and Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (Appendix H of the EA). For planned events, all mitigation measures will be considered and selected according to identified values at risk. GTNP will adhere to national Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST), particularly during unplanned events. MIST is the concept of selecting the minimum tool needed to safely and effectively suppress wildland fire while minimizing the long-term effects of suppression actions. MIST tactics address mitigation measures specific to construction of fire-lines (including ground and aerial fuels) mop-up, aviation management (including retardant, foam, and water bucket use), logistics, camp sites, personal conduct, and restoration and rehabilitation.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative A - No Action: Implementing the no action alternative (Alternative A) would result in the continuation of existing fire management program conditions. Under the 1991 FMP EA, tools available to fire management staff would include prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and suppression; however, hazard fuels treatment projects require separate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses. Under

current management conditions, the acreage of prescribed fires would remain similar to the average range, as would the number of expected wildland fire use actions. Hazard fuel treatments would continue, under separate planning documents, at current levels using a four-year treatment schedule, then transition primarily to a maintenance cycle. Existing FMUs and respective response strategies would not be revised.

Resource objectives would continue to be defined in general vegetative terms and focus on sagebrush/grassland and aspen fuel types (FMP 1991, page 54). Current resource objectives include reducing sagebrush cover and encouraging grasses and aspen regeneration. Vegetation monitoring protocols would continue to follow the Grand Teton National Park Plan for Fire Effects Monitoring (1996).

Alternative C - Limited Strategies (No Prescribed Fire): Tools available to fire management personnel under Alternative C would include mechanical treatments, wildland fire use, and suppression. Prescribed fire would not be used as a management tool, except as a means for woody debris disposal following mechanical fuel reduction treatments. Mechanical treatments to reduce hazard fuels would increase to compensate for the absence of prescribed fire, wildland fire use would be expanded, and new resource objectives would be established based on vegetation type.

Similar to the preferred alternative (Alternative B), hazard fuels treatments would be incorporated into the revised FMP and an adaptive management process would be adopted to formally guide fire management or more clearly define vegetation objectives. FMU boundaries would be modified and strategies would change by allowing wildland fire use within all zones. The number of wildland fire use fires is expected to increase above current levels, ideally allowing between 30-60% natural fire starts to burn. However, wildland fire use is expected to be lower than Alternative B without the ability to use prescribed fire to reduce the risks associated with wildland fire use.

Resource objectives under this alternative would remain the same as the preferred alternative (Alternative B) and would also be formulated by defining current and DFCs for WUI areas and vegetation type. These resource objectives would be considered when developing annual mechanical treatment projects as well as when making long-range decisions on the management of unplanned events. With no prescribed fire, the selection of a wildland fire use strategy as a response to a natural fire start would be the only tool available for managing fire on the landscape for resource objectives.

Alternatives Considered, But Rejected for Consideration in the EA: In addition to the three alternatives analyzed in the EA, six other alternatives were considered by the park's Interdisciplinary Team based on the extent to which the purpose, need, and desired future conditions were met. The rationale for dismissal of the other six alternatives follows.

The *Suppression Only* alternative was dismissed because it failed to meet several key conditions. The alternative could lead to a large buildup of fuels because no preventative measures would be allowed. Risks to firefighter and public safety could increase over time. Further, this alternative would not adequately protect life and property, achieve the goal of fire as a natural process, and address ecosystem management. The *Suppression, Prescribed Fire, Mechanical Treatment (No Wildland Fire Use)* alternative would eliminate wildland fire use as a management tool, which is not consistent with the general management plan to allow fire to function as a natural process. Lack of wildland fire use would create a large strain on firefighting resources, would not restore natural fire regimes, and would not meet resource and safety objectives. The *Suppression and Prescribed Fire* alternative is a subset of the dismissed *Suppression, Prescribed Fire, Mechanical Treatment (No Wildland Fire Use)* alternative and was dismissed for the same reasons.

The *Suppression and Mechanical Treatment* alternative would not allow fire use in fire dependent areas, and would not address ecosystem management or achieve the goal of allowing fire to function as a natural

process. Managing fire entirely by suppression and mechanical treatments may be perceived as safer, but it could also lead to a buildup of fuels. The *No Suppression – Do Nothing (Free Roaming Fires)* alternative was eliminated because it does not meet policy or the purpose and need for an updated FMP. Park policy (Director's Order-18) and the purpose and need for a revised FMP state that the program should perpetuate fire on the landscape while simultaneously protecting life, property, and resources from unwanted fire. A “no suppression” alternative could not effectively protect these values. Similarly, a free roaming fire scenario would not meet the purpose and need to further integrate the park with adjacent lands and the plans, resources, and risks associated with other jurisdictions. The *Suppression and Wildland Fire Use* alternative is similar to the two action alternatives (Alternatives B and C) but lacks both prescribed fire and mechanical treatments. Policy requires NPS to protect structures and this would be impossible to achieve without the use of mechanical and/or prescribed fire treatment as a fire management tool.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying criteria described in §101 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations. In light of these criteria, the environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that will best:

1. *Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.*
2. *Assure, for all generations, safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.*
3. *Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.*
4. *Preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice.*
5. *Achieve a balance between population and resource use that would permit high standards of living and wide sharing of life's amenities.*
6. *Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of resources.*

The ability to manage fire with all available tools (mechanical, prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and adaptive management) provides the flexibility necessary to select appropriate management responses that efficiently maintain fire's active role on the landscape. Although Alternative A also provides the ability to manage fire with multiple tools, Alternative B will best perpetuate natural process because wildland fire use will be expanded and adaptive management will facilitate use of best available science through formal interdisciplinary decision-making. Alternative C provides for adaptive management and will expand wildland fire use, but life and property values may be at increased risk if wildland fire use were to expand without the use of prescribed fire. Alternative B's combination of adaptive management and multiple tools enables fire management personnel to most effectively maintain hazard fuel reduction, thereby minimizing risk to property, life, and cultural resources more than Alternatives A or C.

While each of the alternatives considered meet some of the criteria listed above, Alternative B meets all of the six §101 goals and it best meets criteria 1, 2, and 6; hence, it is the environmentally preferred alternative. Alternative B attains the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences. In doing so, it meets the six §101 goals to the greatest extent of any of the alternatives. Consequently, Alternative B is the environmentally preferred alternative as well as the NPS preferred alternative. A detailed evaluation of the environmentally preferred alternative is provided in Section 2.8 of the EA.

WHY THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

As defined in 40 CFR §1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse

The preferred alternative, Alternative B, will not measurably impact ethnographic resources, museum collections, floodplains, natural lightscapes, natural soundscape, prime and unique farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, visitor experience, aesthetic resources, environmental justice, Indian trust resources, or the socioeconomic environment.

Implementation of the preferred alternative, Alternative B, will not result in significant adverse or beneficial effects. Management of fire under Alternative B will have beneficial and moderate impacts to the successional patterns of vegetation. Impacts to wetlands and water resources, such as function and human disturbance, will be adverse and beneficial, and minor to moderate. Impacts to soil nutrient cycling, erosion, and compaction will be adverse and beneficial, and negligible to minor. Impacts of planned events on archaeological resources under Alternative B will be adverse, negligible to minor, and short-term, since managers will have the ability to anticipate, inventory, and mitigate impacts to archaeological resources. Impacts to wildlife and fish (such as habitat loss, mortality, habitat fragmentation, and human-caused disturbance) will be adverse and beneficial, and negligible to moderate.

Fire activities and strategies under the preferred alternative will have adverse negligible to minor impacts on wilderness character. The impact of smoke on air quality and human health will vary according to the scale of the fire event. These short-term adverse impacts range in intensity from minor to moderate. Impacts to park neighbors were measured in terms of risk to values such as life and property, as well as public participation, informed decision-making, and interagency cooperation. These impacts are considered adverse and minor in the short-term, and beneficial and minor in the long-term. A revised FMP under the preferred alternative will have beneficial and minor impacts to program costs. Impacts to the remaining resources analyzed in the EA are discussed in the subsections that follow.

Degree of effect on public health or safety

The preferred alternative will have an overall beneficial effect on public health and safety for residents, employees, visitors, and park neighbors associated with Grand Teton National Park. The FMP EA addressed safety issues under the resource topic *firefighter and public safety*. Firefighter and public safety impacts were evaluated in terms of timely, effective, and safe fire response, and in terms of hazard fuel reduction and firebreaks. Resulting effects under the preferred alternative will be beneficial and minor to moderate. Public health was evaluated in the EA under the resource topic *air quality/visibility*. Fire events will result in temporary Air Quality Index (AQI) values that range from the good to moderate categories, depending on the scale of the event. A moderate AQI (50-100) is defined as air quality that is acceptable, but for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people. The impact of planned events on public health is minimized by coordinating actions with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and regional fire agencies.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas

The revised FMP under Alternative B will have no impacts on prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. There will be no significant effects to historic or cultural resources, park lands, or wetlands, as described in Table 2.7d in the EA.

Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial

Throughout the environmental process, the proposal to update the FMP was not highly controversial and its effects are not expected to generate future controversy. Public and agency participation during the EA process did not indicate the likelihood of highly controversial issues related to impacts of the proposed revised FMP on the human environment. Agency involvement during the scoping process did not identify any major issues related to a revised FMP. Agencies that formally responded to the scoping notice included the Office of the Governor, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the Shoshone-Bannock Heritage Tribal Office. The Shoshone-Bannock Heritage Tribal Office did identify five cultural resource concerns that are addressed in the EA (see Section 1.6.3). Two public scoping responses raised concerns about firewood sales, restoration of the “natural role of fire,” and general natural resource impacts. These concerns were also addressed in the EA (see Section 1.6.3). A public workshop was held October 14, 2004, during the 30-day public comment period. The attendance was low (less than a dozen people) and the feedback was positive.

Written responses were only received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. These respondents expressed support of the preferred alternative, and reinforced the need to have the park’s Wilderness Committee review treatment projects, and asked that management actions occurring in sagebrush communities be fully analyzed because of sage grouse concerns. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the park’s determinations of effects on threatened and endangered species. The SHPO concurred with the NPS determinations of effect on cultural resources discussed for each alternative. Based on the mitigation measures included in the EA and the comments received from agencies and the public, there are no highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment associated with the preferred alternative.

Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks

The revised Fire Management Plan involves prescribed fire and wildland fire use, both of which pose risks to park and park neighbor values because of the potential for escaped fire. Several measures will be used to prevent escaped fire, including consideration of climatic conditions and the use of firebreaks. Other mitigating factors to be used during planned events will be discussed in detail in site-specific burn plans. Otherwise, the effects of the preferred alternative are relatively straight forward and do not pose unacceptable uncertainties. The environmental process has not identified any effects that may involve highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks to the environment.

Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration

Actions and strategies under the preferred alternative (Alternative B) is not expected to set a precedent for future actions with significant effects, nor do they represent a decision in principle about a future consideration elsewhere in the National Park System.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts

The adverse impacts of the preferred alternative, in conjunction with beneficial and adverse impacts of other recently completed or reasonably foreseeable future actions, will result in both beneficial and adverse cumulative impacts on the resources analyzed in the EA. The intensity of these cumulative impacts ranges from negligible to moderate. No individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts will occur to any resources as a result of the preferred alternative in combination with all other related actions (related actions are summarized in the beginning of Chapter 4 of the EA).

Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources

In NEPA terms, the preferred alternative will have an adverse and negligible to minor short-term impact on archaeological resources, a negligible impact on historic structures, and a beneficial, minor, and long-term impact on cultural landscapes. An Assessment of Effect was not prepared in combination with the FMP EA because not all ethnographic resources, archaeological resources, and cultural landscapes within both park units have been identified, surveyed, and evaluated according to Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) within the scope of the FMP EA. Consequently, all specific planned projects will be required to comply with the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA before implementation.

The preferred alternative will not intentionally allow an “adverse effect” to a cultural resource from planned actions or activities. The NPS contends that all impacts resulting from planned fire actions and activities can be mitigated so that there will not be an adverse effect to any cultural resource. In the unlikely event that the NPS proposed an activity that will potentially adversely affect a cultural resource, that action would require separate NEPA analysis and would not be covered under the Fire Management Plan’s compliance. In the event of a wildland fire, measures will be taken to avert damages to archaeological resources, historic structures, and other known cultural resources. Nevertheless, there always remains the potential for adverse effects from wildland fire and/or suppression actions.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred with the determination of *May Effect But Not Likely to Adversely Affect* bald eagles, Canada lynx, grizzly bears, and gray wolves. This concurrence was issued on November 24, 2004 and based on GTNP’s commitment to implement design criteria and conservation and mitigation measures outlined in the Fire Management Plan’s biological and environmental assessments.

Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local environmental protection law

Actions and strategies proposed under the preferred alternative do not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local environmental protection law. Under the preferred alternative, planned events will adhere to EO 11990 and Director’s Order 77-1: *Wetland Protection* (DO 77-1) by avoiding adverse impacts to wetland characteristics and function. Should such adverse impacts be unavoidable, a Statement of Findings (SOF) will be prepared as part of the site-specific burn plan and additional NEPA compliance will be required. Emergency events are exempted from preparing a SOF. In addition, temporary disturbances specifically designed to restore degraded natural wetland, stream, riparian, or other aquatic habitats or ecological processes are exempted from the preparation of a SOF, provided best management practices are adhered to (Reference Manual 77-1, Appendix 2).

The preferred alternative will adhere to the Wilderness Act of 1964 and DO-41: *Wilderness Preservation and Management* by preparing a minimum requirement analysis as part of the revised FMP. Any proposed action in wilderness areas will be subject to the minimum tool analysis, including annual analyses for aircraft use and expected suppression activities.

IMPAIRMENT

In addition to reviewing the list of significance criteria, the National Park Service has determined that implementation of the Alternative B will not constitute an impairment to any of Grand Teton National Park's resources and values. This conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the environmental impacts described in the Fire Management Plan EA, the public and agency comments received, relevant scientific studies, and the professional judgment of the decision-maker guided by the direction in NPS *Management Policies* (December 27, 2000). Although the plan has some negative impacts, in all cases these adverse impacts are the result of actions taken to preserve and restore other park resources and values. Overall, the plan results in benefits to park resources and values, and it does not result in their impairment.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In preparation for public scoping, a mailing list of approximately 200 agencies, interested organizations, and individuals was compiled (Chapter 5 of the EA contains an abbreviated mailing list). A scoping notice was prepared in April 2003, and mailed to those on the list, with remaining copies distributed to GTNP visitors and other interested parties. On April 14, 2003, GTNP issued a press release, scoping flyers, and a newspaper announcement. The scoping notice included a brief description of the purpose and need, the actions proposed, the alternatives considered to date, the EA completion process, and a solicitation for public participation in a scheduled open house. The notice also contained a one-page response form for readers to complete and return to the National Park Service at GTNP. The response forms were designed so that respondents could provide comments on the plan and to insure that future mailings were sent to anyone indicating an interest in the plan.

The public scoping open house was held on April 24, 2003, in Jackson, Wyoming. The open house consisted of an open forum and exhibits pertaining to the FMP. Representatives from the NPS, Bridger-Teton National Forest, and the Jackson/Teton County Fire Department were present to answer questions and solicit comments on the plan. A total of thirteen individuals attended the workshop. Interested parties were asked to submit written comments by May 4, 2003. Six written responses were received and concerns were addressed in the EA.

The Fire Management Plan EA was made available for public review and comment during a 30-day period ending November 4, 2004. Approximately 125 copies of the EA were mailed to government agencies, private organizations, and individuals identified during the scoping and planning processes. The document was also posted on the Internet at www.nps.gov/grte/plans/planning.htm, and copies were available in the Moose Visitor Center and the Teton County Library. A press release was issued to local media and the *Jackson Hole News & Guide* published an ad informing the public about an open house held on October 14, 2004, in Jackson, Wyoming. Written responses were received from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Substantive comments to the EA centered on treatments in wilderness areas, treatments in sagebrush, willow, and aspen communities, and potential effects to wildlife. Although these comments did not result in changes to the text of the EA, they are addressed in the errata sheet attached to this FONSI. The FONSI and errata sheets will be sent to all commentors.

CONCLUSION

The preferred alternative does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). The preferred alternative will not have a significant effect on the

human environment. Negative environmental impacts that could occur are minor or moderate in intensity. There are no significant impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an EIS is not required for this plan and thus will not be prepared.

Recommended by: Mary Gibson Scott
Mary Gibson Scott, Superintendent
Grand Teton National Park

12/2/04
Date

Approved by: Stephen P. Martin
Stephen P. Martin
Director, Intermountain Region
National Park Service

12/2/04
Date

Errata Sheet
Grand Teton National Park and John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway
Fire Management Plan

Substantive comments to the Fire Management Plan Environmental Assessment were received from Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Comments centered on treatments in wilderness areas, treatments in sagebrush, willow, and aspen communities, and potential effects to wildlife. Although there were relatively few substantive comments, the Response to Comments section addresses comments received that warranted clarification or explanation. Although these comments did not result in changes to the text of the EA, they are addressed on this errata sheet listed in the **Changes in the Environmental Assessment Text** section below. The combination of the EA and the errata sheets form the complete and final record on which the FONSI is based.

CHANGES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT TEXT

1. Page 46: Replace “same as Alternatives B and C” with “same as Alternatives A and C” in Table 2.7d, third column (Alternative B: Multiple Strategies (Preferred Alternative)), for resource topics *Air Quality*, *Archaeological Resources*, and *Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes*.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

All comments received were positive and in favor of the Fire Management Plan preferred alternative. The nature of the few comments received expressed concern or made general statements of acknowledgement regarding potential future treatments in wilderness areas; treatments in sagebrush, willow, and aspen communities; and potential effects to wildlife; however, these comments were addressed adequately in the EA and did not warrant further clarification or explanation.