

## s e c t i o n n

## MOST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE

### *General*

**P**ublic Law 105-391 directs that the Secretary of the Interior “shall consider whether direct National Park Service management or alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector is appropriate for the area . . .” and “. . . shall identify what alternative or combination of alternatives would in the professional judgment of the Director of the National Park Service be the most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing for public enjoyment. . . .”

After careful consideration of the four management alternatives presented in the *Ice Age Floods Study of Alternatives and Environmental Assessment*, the National Park Service has determined that Management Alternative 3, which establishes the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail (Floods Pathways), is the most effective and efficient alternative. Under Alternative 3, the NPS would assume a lead role in Trail management. The NPS has ongoing responsibilities for numerous sites and programs having major interpretive and collaborative

elements such as the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail and the Underground Railroad. The NPS has the demonstrated expertise and experience in promoting resource stewardship and interpretation of resources, and can be an effective leader and partner in working with numerous public- and private-sector entities in the region.

During the review of the draft report, the public and agency partners widely supported national designation of an Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail that



follows the pathways of the Floods. They also supported the use of a collaborative approach to interpret the Floods.

Congressional authorization would be required to establish the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail in parts of Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, and to establish NPS administration of the Trail. It would be recommended that any requirement for the development of a comprehensive trail management plan incorporates the study goals of a well-coordinated interpretive and educational approach among the various public and private sector entities within the four-state region.

As suggested in the study report, it would be further recommended that the National Park Service not be given any specific land acquisition or new

regulatory authority concerning the management of the National Geologic Trail. NPS responsibilities for Trail management should not have any effect on the legal jurisdiction of any local, state, or tribal government entity along the designated trail area. Federal agencies managing Floods resources within their lands would be expected to coordinate closely with Trail staff and partners regarding the interpretation and protection of Ice Age Floods resources.

In addition to coordinating Trail management among public and private entities within the region, the National Park Service also supports other specific components of Management Alternative 3, including the establishment of an Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail Advisory Board composed of representatives from various public and

private sector entities. Also supported is the continued important role of non-profit organizations, including the Ice Age Floods Institute, in furthering educational, tourism, and economic opportunities in conjunction with the Trail and the story of the Floods.

As the study report suggests, an authorization for annual operational funds for Trail staff and management support, along with an authorization for capital development funds, is needed to provide the necessary support for services and interpretive facilities associated with the development of the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail. In year-2000 dollars, annual operating costs are estimated to be \$500,000, plus a total appropriation of \$12,000,000 for capital development needs that can be allocated over several fiscal years.