



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mammoth Cave National Park
P.O. Box 7
Mammoth Cave, Kentucky 42259-0007

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7617 X H4217

June 18, 2004

Memorandum

To: Files

From: Deputy Superintendent, Mammoth Cave National Park

Subject: Amendment to Environmental Assessment, Mammoth Cave Railroad Bike and Hike Trail

The purpose of this memorandum is to document the decision to amend the Environmental Assessment for construction of the Mammoth Cave Railroad Bike and Hike Trail.

The Environmental Assessment for this project was completed in 1990 and a Finding of No Significant Impact was signed by the Regional Director on July 12, 1990. Since that time the project has been modified to include a new segment between Chaumont and Park City and minor adjustments in the route.

Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) regarding the changes was completed in June 2004. FWS concurred that there would be no adverse impacts on wetlands or federally listed endangered or threatened species. A Phase I archeological survey of the changes was completed in April 2004 with a finding that "no further archeological work is recommended."

Review of the changes found no additional issues or impacts of significance that would warrant additional public review of the project. Consequently, the environmental assessment is amended by addition of this memo and the attached supporting documentation.

Bruce M. Powell

Bruce M. Powell

Attachments

1. FWS concurrence signed June 2, 2004
2. Report of archeological survey dated April 16, 2004
3. Maps of the trail route including changes
4. Final Report: Mammoth Cave National Park Bikeway Trail, March 2004, by Parsons-Brinkerhoff

Summary of Changes to Mammoth Cave Railroad Bike and Hike Trail

An environmental assessment was prepared previously for this project, informal consultation was completed, and a Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on July 12, 1990. Subsequently, one mile of the trail was completed, but the project has not been finished because funds have not been available. We now have funding to continue the project. However, changes have been made in the plans including addition of a 2.4 mile segment from Chaumont to Park City. The attached prospectus, which was prepared as a conceptual document, explains the purpose and general layout of the trail. Recently, field work was completed to define the specific route for the trail. The attached maps show the full layout of the trail. The changes that have been made since the previous consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are shown by red dashes and the unchanged areas are shown as black dashes. Also sections of the proposed trail that will be on the existing berm or within the existing roadway prism are indicated by a solid green line.

The changes are summarized below.

1. A terminus will be established at the Mammoth Cave Hotel parking area, and a new trail segment will be constructed along the road between the terminus and the Green River Ferry Road. From the Green River Ferry Road southward a new trail will be built through a wooded area to connect with the existing bicycle trail south of the Green Pond wetland area. The trail will be routed to avoid the wetland.
2. North of Sloan's Crossing the trail segment between Doyel Valley and the top of Joppa Ridge has been realigned to reduce the trail grade to less than 5%. This segment will pass by the Furlong Cemetery. The ridge top area is an old field situation that is dominated by Easter Red Cedar and dogwoods. The section of trail that traverses the ridge side is open woodland composed primarily of white and red oaks mixed with maples and a few hickories.
3. The reconstruction of the Sloan's Crossing Intersection resulted in a change in alignment. The new alignment will be entirely within the area disturbed by the reconstruction of the intersection.
4. The parking area that in conceptual plans was to be at the Chaumont Intersection will be constructed northwest of the entrance to Locust Grove Cemetery. The parking area will be constructed within the existing road prism in an area that is maintained fescue turf grass.
5. The trail between the Chaumont parking area and the Chaumont Intersection will be shifted from the north to the south side of the highway. The new segment will be mostly on the railroad berm and the remainder will be along the grass roadside. At the Chaumont Intersection the trail will cross the Park City Road behind the stop sign.
6. This new trail segment will be approximately 2.4 miles in length and will be located between the Chaumont Intersection and park boundary at Park City. At that point the trail will join with the Park City trail system which will include the crossing underneath I-65. This trail segment is primarily on the east side of the Park City Road. Much of area is old field situations that were heavily disturbed during construction of the Park City Road in 1967. The Park City Road was built as a "parkway" to connect I-65 to the park. The Commonwealth of Kentucky owned the "parkway" until 1991 when it was transferred to the National Park Service. The property width is 550 feet from the road centerline at most

places, and only exceeds that width in a few places. At Diamond Caverns, a section of the trail 1,000 feet long will cross the Diamond Caverns property which is privately owned.

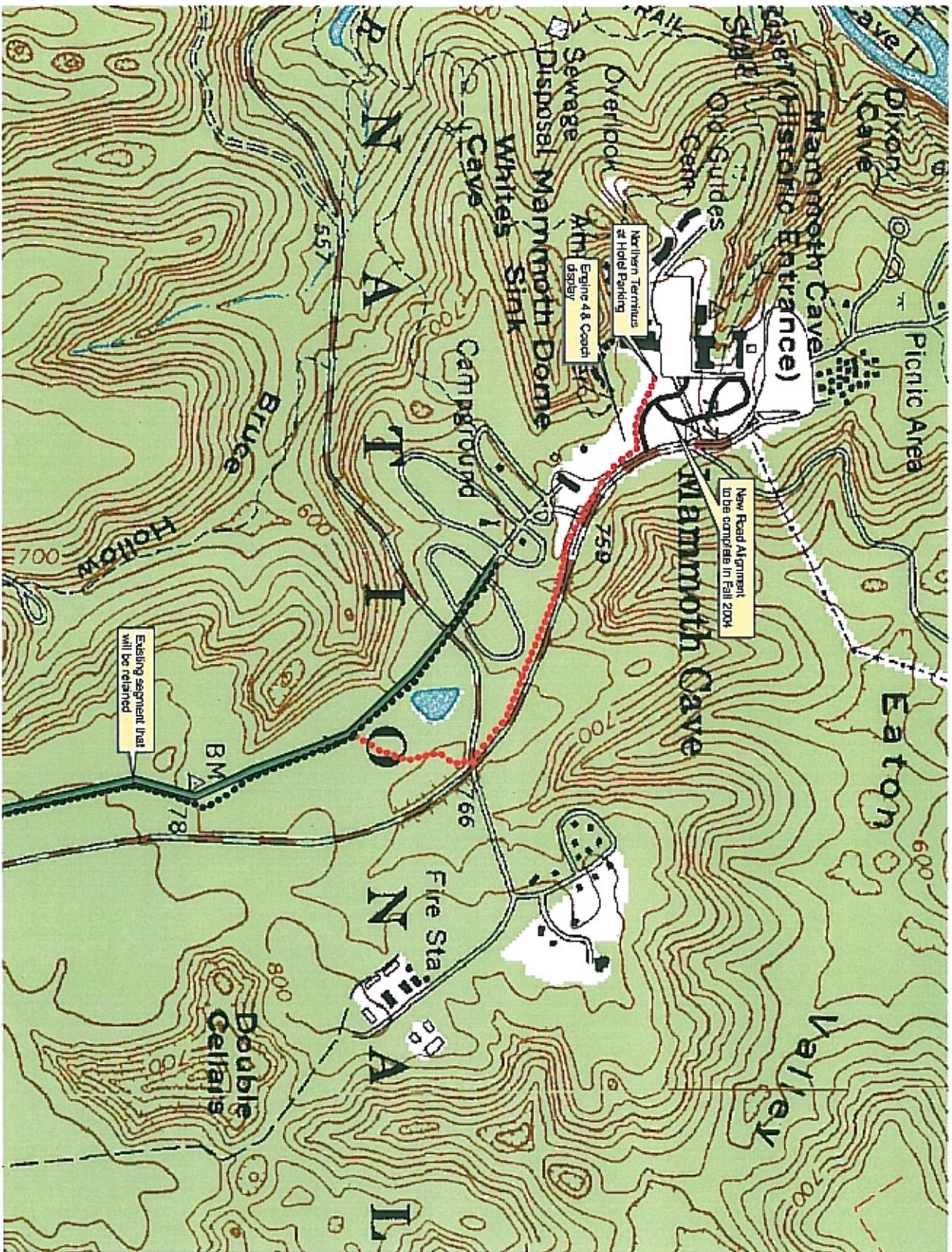
Indiana bats and Gray bats are expected to forage in the project area. The Indiana bat may roost in trees in the project area. The potential effects include noise and dust from construction activities and removal of trees that may serve as roosts for the Indiana bats. Most trees to be removed are less than 4 inches in diameter. Larger trees can not be avoided where the railroad berm will be used and for part of the trestle location. Tree removal activities would conform to the park "Hazard Tree Management Plan" (approved June 20, 2000). The park completed formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before approval of the plan. Larger trees that are likely to provide summer roosts for Indiana bats would be removed when the bats are hibernating in caves.

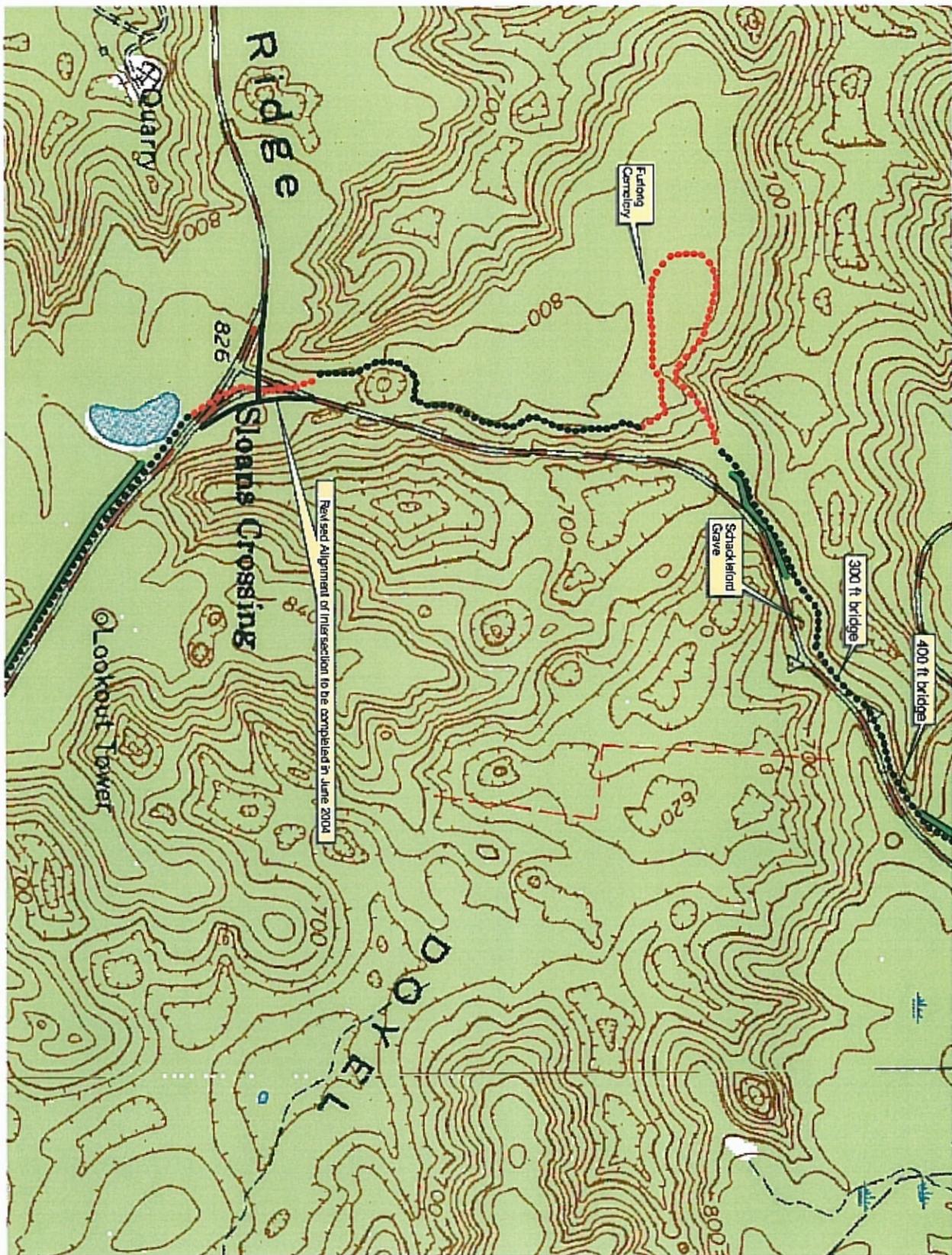
All of the project area lies within groundwater basins that contain the Kentucky Cave Shrimp. Uncontrolled erosion could result in sediments reaching the base level cave streams and impacting the Kentucky Cave Shrimp. Adequate erosion control measures will be installed where needed.

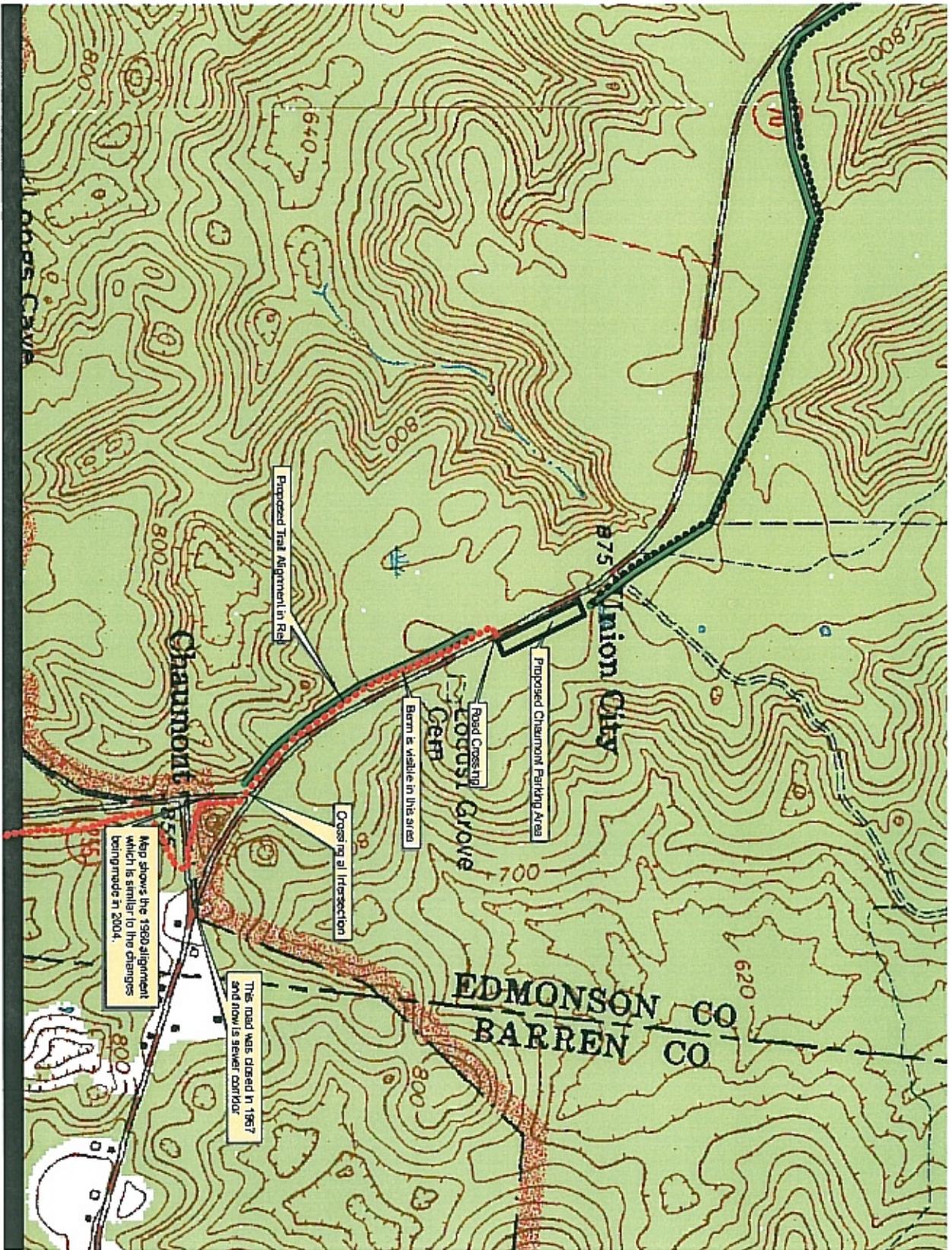
Two populations of Eggert's sunflower have been reported near the project. Neither population will be affected by construction of the trail.

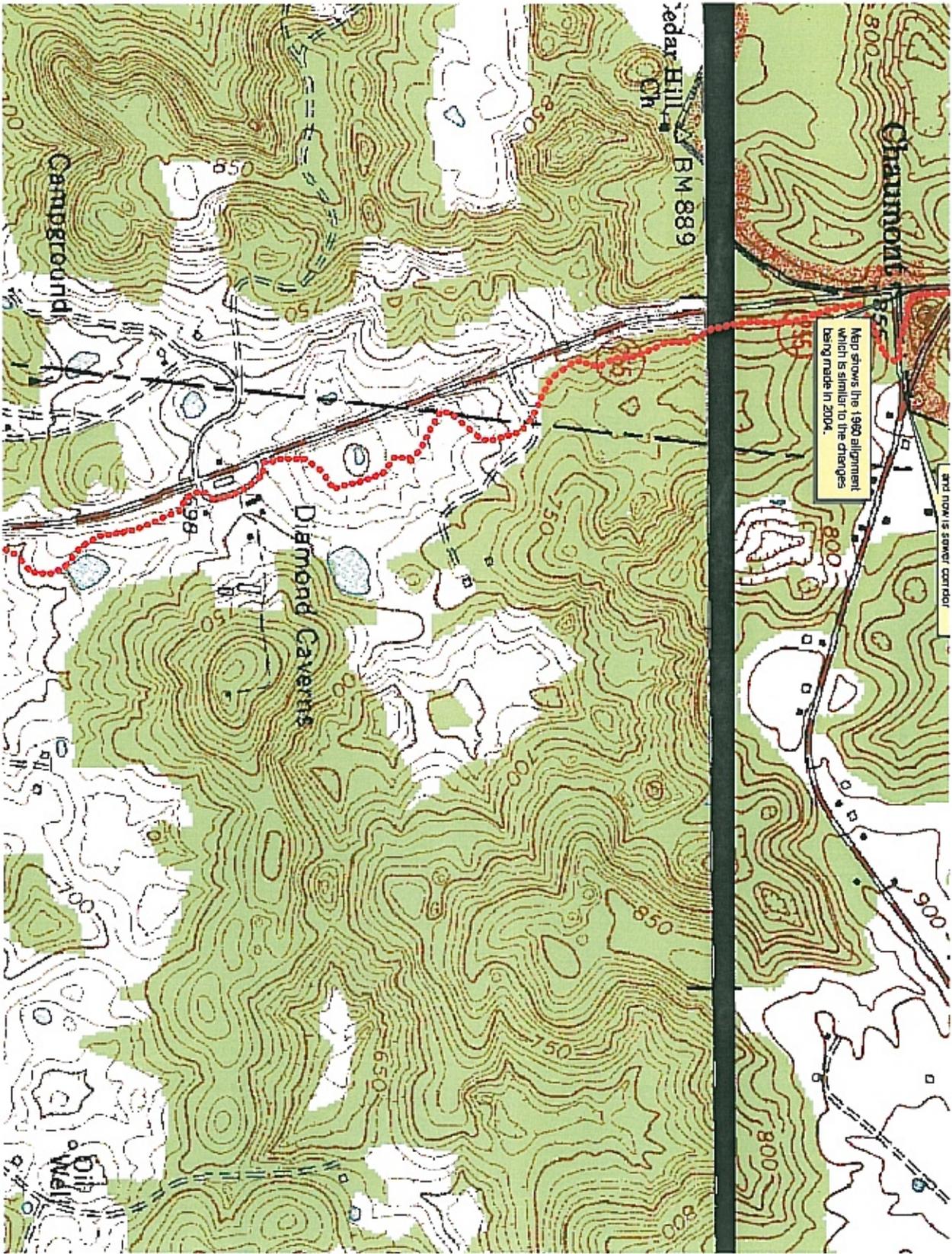
At the closest point the project is more than ½ mile from the Green River which contains at least six species of endangered mussels. No effects are expected related to the mussel populations.

With the mitigation measures described above, the project is expected to have no adverse effects on threatened or endangered species.











United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mammoth Cave National Park
P.O. Box 7
Mammoth Cave, Kentucky 42259-2007

RECEIVED
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7617 X H421 STAFF
LOG # 84-1076 QUAD
April 23, 2004 Co. LAT
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APP 5

No significant adverse impacts to wetlands or federally listed endangered or threatened species are anticipated from this proposal.

for Lee Andrews June 2, 2004
Field Supervisor Date
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Frankfort, KY 40601

Lee Andrews, Field Supervisor
Attention: Mike Armstrong
Kentucky Field Office
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
3761 Georgetown Road
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

RE: Park Impact Assessment Number: IA-B923
Project Title: Construct the Mammoth Cave Railroad Bike
and Hike Trail

Dear Mr. Andrews:

Enclosed is a copy of documentation related to a proposed project, identified above, at Mammoth Cave National Park. We request informal consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act in relation to this proposal.

An Environmental Assessment was prepared previously for this project, informal consultation was completed, and a Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on July 12, 1990. Subsequently, one mile of the trail was completed, but the project has not been finished because funds have not been available. We now have funding to continue the project. However, changes have been made in the plans including addition of a 2.4 mile segment from Chaumont to Park City. A summary of the changes is attached for your review along with other related documents. At this time, we anticipate amending the existing Environmental Assessment rather than preparing a new one, and we expect to begin construction in October 2004. The park staff has completed an initial review of the proposal. Based on that review, we believe the project will have no adverse effects on any threatened or endangered species.

Henry Helms



United States Department of the Interior



National Park Service
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE
75 Spring Street, S. W.
Atlanta, Georgia, 30303

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7617(SER-PC)

JUL 12 1990

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Mammoth Cave
From: Acting Regional Director, Southeast Region
Subject: Environmental Assessment, Bicycle Trail Construction

We are pleased to enclose the approved Finding of No Significant Impact for the subject proposal. This completes environmental compliance and you may proceed with construction if all other requirements have been met.

C. W. Ogle

Enclosure

MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK		REC'D.	DATE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ACTION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	INFO.	7/16/90	
ROUTE TO	INITIAL		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUPERINTENDENT	DM	
<input type="checkbox"/>	ASST. SUPL.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	JOB CORPS		
<input type="checkbox"/>	CHIEF INTERP.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CHIEF WARDEN		
<input type="checkbox"/>	CHIEF RANGER		
<input type="checkbox"/>	ADM. OFFICER		
<input type="checkbox"/>	PERSONNEL		
<input type="checkbox"/>	PROCUREMENT		
<input type="checkbox"/>	BUDGET		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RES. MGMT./SCIENCE	7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CONCESSIONS/SAFETY		
FILE (DOB)			TOSS

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
BICYCLE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION
MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Conversion of the remaining segments of the abandoned railroad berm for use as a bicycle and hiking trail would accomplish two objectives. It would provide an additional recreational opportunity for park visitors, and it would provide for separation of bicycle traffic from motor vehicle traffic on narrow and busy park roads. The environmental effects of trail construction will be minimized by use of previously disturbed areas.

The bicycle trail, as proposed, will be about 6-1/2 miles in length. Approximately 4-1/2 miles will be on the railroad berm and another 1/2 mile on existing abandoned roadbeds. The 1/2 mile Beaver Pond Trail will be upgraded for bicycle traffic. About 1 mile will be new trail development. The route will be cleared of brush and the tread will be gravel. The minimum tread width is 6 feet with wider sections on the old roadbeds and at selected places on hills to provide for safety and resting spots.

An Environmental Assessment was prepared in June 1990. Please attach this Finding of No Significant Impact to the Environmental Assessment.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The proposal should have no adverse impacts on floodplains, wetlands, lands covered under the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1984, or any endangered or threatened species.

Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act regarding this proposal was completed in May 1990. An archeological reconnaissance found subsurface prehistoric materials at two areas. Fill material will be used where possible to establish the trail surface, thereby, avoiding disturbance of these materials. Where soil disturbance is necessary to establish the grade in these areas, an approved Archeologist will be present to monitor the work.

Consideration has been given to the no action alternative. It is rejected because it does not provide for preservation of the railroad berm or for improvement in recreational opportunities for visitors.

CONCLUSION

The National Park Service has made a finding of No Significant Impact since implementation of the proposal does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment and an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Recommended: Vaughn J Baker
for David A. Mihalic
Superintendent
Mammoth Cave National Park

Date: 6-27-90

Approved: C. W. Ogle
FOR Robert M. Baker
Regional Director
Southeast Region

Date: 7-13-90

MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for

BICYCLE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

June 20, 1990

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
for
BICYCLE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION
Mammoth Cave National Park
Kentucky

I. PURPOSE AND NEED

Before the advent of automobiles and after the demise of stage coach travel, the Mammoth Cave Railroad was the primary means visitors used to reach Mammoth Cave. In 1931, the railroad was abandoned. The rails and ties were removed leaving only the berm as evidence of its presence. In the intervening years, road construction has destroyed several portions of the berm. Conversion of the remaining segments of the abandoned railroad berm to use as a bicycle and hiking trail would accomplish two objectives. It would provide an additional recreational opportunity for park visitors, and it would provide for separation of bicycle traffic from motor vehicle traffic on narrow and busy park roads. The environmental effects of trail construction will be minimized by use of previously disturbed areas.

This Environmental Assessment is intended to facilitate compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and various other related administrative and legislative requirements.

II. PROPOSAL

The bicycle trail, as proposed, will be about 6-1/2 miles in length. Approximately 4-1/2 miles will be on the railroad berm and another 1/2 mile on existing abandoned roadbeds. The 1/2 mile Beaver Pond Trail will be upgraded for bicycle traffic. About 1 mile will be new trail development. The route will be cleared of brush and the tread will be gravel. The minimum tread width is 6 feet with wider sections on the old roadbeds and at selected places on hills to provide for safety and resting spots.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Construction of the bicycle trail will require removal and/or pruning of small trees and shrubs. Dead or hazardous trees near the trail route will also be removed. In the approximately 1-mile segments of the trail not on the abandoned railroad berm, removal of primarily oak, poplar and hickory trees will occur on approximately 1/4 mile. The remaining 3/4-mile segments have been previously disturbed by farming and contain cedar trees and small approximately 1 inch in diameter oak and hickory trees.

Some cut and fill will be required to establish grade for the trail. An archeological reconnaissance found subsurface prehistoric materials at two areas. Fill material will be used where possible to establish the trail grade, thereby, avoiding disturbance of these materials. Where soil disturbance is necessary to establish the grade in these areas, an approved archeologist will be present to monitor the work.

The cypress knee sedge, Carex decomposita, is present at Beaver Pond near the existing trail. This plant is a candidate for listing as a federally endangered species. The work near this species is limited to upgrading the existing trail. This species is not expected to be affected by the proposed work or the subsequent increase in visitor use.

No negative effects are expected on floodplains, wetlands, lands covered under the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1984, or any endangered or threatened species.

IV. ALTERNATIVES

No Action -- If the trail is not built, the remaining portions of the railroad berm would not be preserved. An opportunity to provide for an additional recreational use and at the same time reduce the problems associated with bicycle use on heavily traveled highways would be missed.

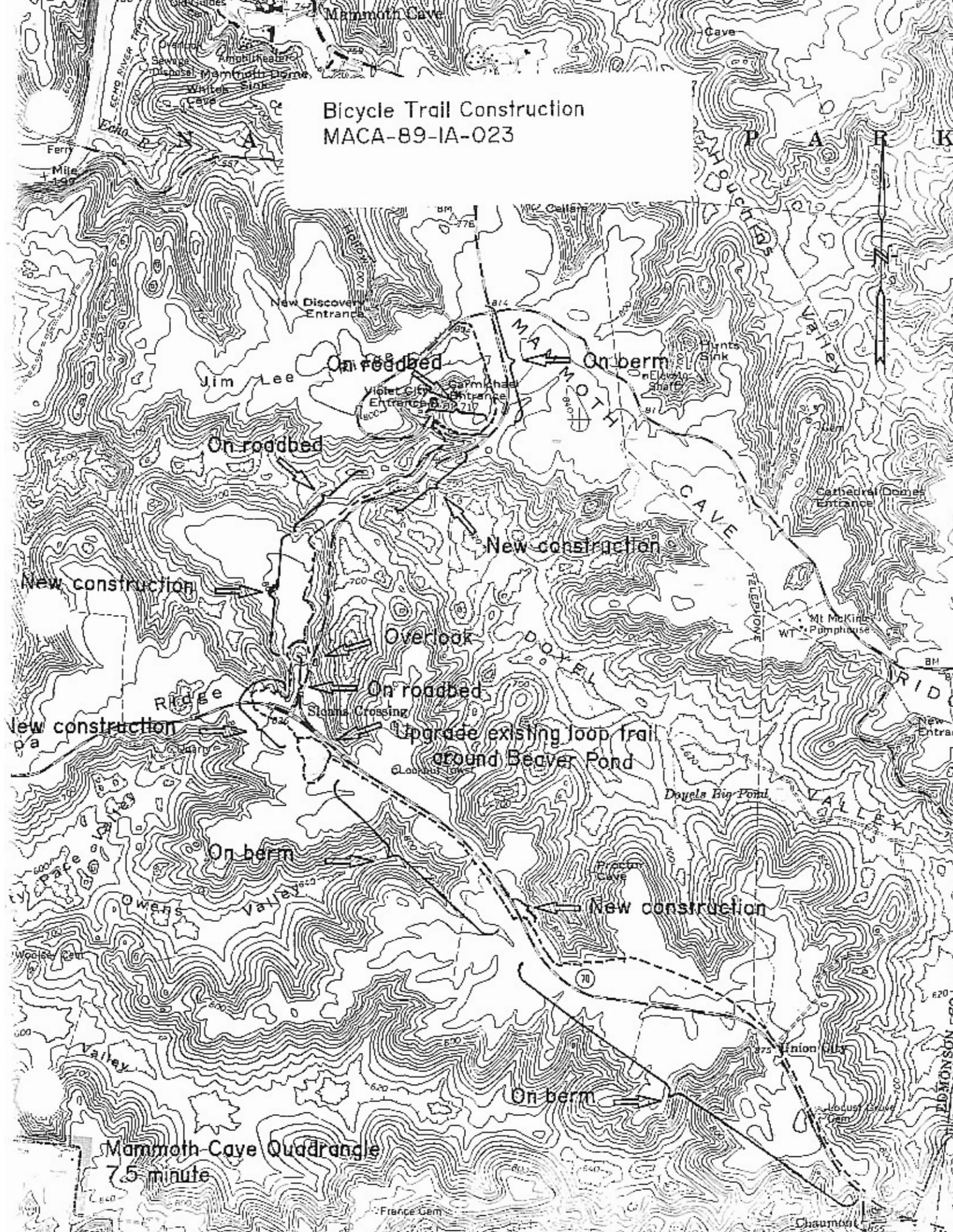
V. CONTACTS

1. Jim Wuidlak, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
2. Beth Horvath, Southeast Archeological Center

VI. ATTACHMENTS

1. Map of proposed trail route

Bicycle Trail Construction MACA-89-IA-023



Mammoth Cave Quadrangle
7.5 minute

EDMONSON CO
SABOR