

**OBED  
WILD &  
SCENIC  
RIVER**

**T E N N E S S E E**

**General Management Plan  
Development Concept Plan  
Environmental Impact  
Statement**

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**U.S. Department of the Interior  
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**Draft Environmental Impact Statement/General Management Plan/  
Development Concept Plan**

**Obed Wild and Scenic River  
Morgan and Cumberland Counties, Tennessee**

A general management plan has been prepared for the Obed Wild and Scenic River (Obed WSR) pursuant to the National Parks and Recreation Act, P.L. 95-625, and NPS policy to provide for the protection of Obed WSR values and address resource management and visitor use. The plan has been prepared in cooperation with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and with public and agency involvement, and will guide management of the Obed WSR for approximately the next 10 to 15 years. Two alternatives for the general management and use of the Obed WSR and the environmental consequences of each are presented and analyzed. "**Alternative A, The Preferred Course**" constitutes the Park Service's proposed course of action and represents the minimum actions and developments needed to make the Obed WSR operational. This alternative proposes a management zone system representing area specific applications of management objectives; a resource management strategy that addresses the complexity of issues both inside and outside the Obed WSR boundaries; enhanced and expanded visitor oriented programs and facilities to provide visitors the opportunity to experience the special values of the Obed WSR; expanded boundaries to include approximately 200 acres of land and more than 6 river miles and, in the future to study and potentially include other river sections. "**Alternative B, The Existing Course**" is based primarily on continuing the present course of action which includes implementation of the *1978 Development Plan* and its modifications as updated by new data and specific program planning. Most of the proposals in this alternative are very similar to Alternative A, however, there are some key differences. The management zone system is based on ownership patterns; landscape character is not addressed as a resource; some different visitor facilities are proposed including different locations for an overlook and trails and more roads to be developed and maintained; and only two tracts containing less than 65 acres would be added to the boundaries. Because the Alternatives are so similar, the environmental consequences of implementing either alternative are also similar. Overall, neither alternative would have a significantly adverse effect on the resources and values of the Obed WSR. Most impacts from development and use would be mitigated. The additional roads and different overlook development proposed in Alternative B would negatively affect a greater amount of land and vegetation. Since county tax income may be reduced if lands are acquired in fee, the socioeconomy may be impacted more from implementing Alternative A as more boundary adjustments are proposed. However, it is difficult to accurately predict this impact since a land acquisition strategy—fee or less-than-fee—has not been determined for these lands. Alternative A was selected as the Proposed Action because it: brings the *1978 Development Plan* in line with NPS Management Policies based on additional information and the management objectives, provides an overall direction for resource management and interpretation, and contains a management zone system based more specifically on the Wild and Scenic River legislation, resource opportunities and constraints, and the desired visitor experience.

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## SUMMARY

The *1978 Development Plan* was prepared pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, P.L. 90-542. This General Management Plan/Design Concept Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP) was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Parks and Recreation Act, P.L. 95-625, and NPS policy which requires the preparation of a GMP for all units of the National Park System. A GMP addresses not only development but also resource management and all aspects of visitor use. The general management plan serves to guide development of the Obed WSR, as the *1978 Development Plan* did, but also guides the overall management and use of the park in ways that will best serve visitors while preserving the values for which the Obed WSR was established.

The GMP has been prepared in cooperation with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and with public and agency involvement, and will guide management of the Obed WSR for approximately the next 10 to 15 years. It presents two alternatives for the management of the Obed WSR, one of which the Park Service prefers and is identified as the Proposed Action.

In many respects, the two alternatives are very similar in dealing with visitor use, park operations, and facility development. However, there are important differences between the alternatives regarding such topics as land use and management and boundary adjustments.

**“Alternative A: The Preferred Course”** constitutes the Park Service’s proposed course of action. This alternative also represents the minimum actions and developments needed to make the Obed WSR operational. A new management zone system has been devised representing area specific applications of the Management Objectives. An overall strategy for

resource management addresses the complexity of the Obed WSR and the need to address resource issues both inside and outside Obed WSR boundaries. Visitor oriented programs and facilities would provide visitors the opportunity to experience the special values of the Obed WSR. Revised interpretive themes and an expanded interpretive services program is proposed. Overlooks would provide visitors visual access to the Obed WSR. One developed overlook would be located near Lilly Bridge at Lilly Bluff. A long distance trail system, located primarily on lands managed by the National Park Service, and expanded camping facilities are also proposed. Facilities for river access and associated uses would be accommodated within appropriate management zones. The visitor contact center, administrative headquarters, and maintenance facility would remain in Wartburg. Some changes would be made in the current use and management of easements to provide for protection of values and accommodate visitor access. Boundaries would be expanded to include approximately 200 acres of land and more than 6 river miles and other river sections may be studied in the future for potential inclusion.

Alternative A was selected as the Proposed Action because it:

- is more consistent with NPS Management Policies based on additional information and the management objectives,
- provides an overall direction for resource management and interpretation, and
- contains a management zone system based more specifically on resource protection and visitor experience.

**“Alternative B: The Existing Course”** represents the on-going implementation of the 1978 *Development Plan* as modified and supplemented over the years by later information and specific program planning.

Most of the proposals in this alternative are very similar to A. However, there are some key differences. The management zone system is based primarily on land ownership patterns. Landscape character is not addressed as a resource in this alternative since it is not reflected in any existing resource management proposals or planning documents. An overlook would be developed in the Obed River and Clear Creek Junction area. The locations of long distance trails are also different. In this alternative the trail system is proposed primarily on Catoosa Wildlife Management Area lands. Roads would be constructed and maintained to the river at Obed Junction and Norris Ford. Boundaries would be adjusted to include two tracts containing less than 65 total acres.

The environmental consequences of implementing either alternative are similar. Overall, neither alternative would have a significantly adverse effect on the resources of the Obed WSR. Most impacts from development and use would be mitigated. There are only two main different consequences between the alternatives. Implementing the additional roads and overlook development proposed in Alternative B would affect a greater amount of land and vegetation. Since county tax income may be reduced if lands are acquired in fee, the socioeconomy may be affected more from implementing Alternative A as more boundary adjustments are proposed. However, it is difficult to predict this impact since a land acquisition strategy--fee or less-than-fee--has not been determined for these lands.

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