Appendix C. NPS Management Policies, 2001 (Sections 1.2 and 1.3)

1.2 The National Park System

The number and diversity of parks within the national park system grew as a result of a government reorganization in 1933, another following World War II, and yet another during the 1960s. Today there are more than 375 units in the national park system. These units are variously designated as national parks, monuments, preserves, lakeshores, seashores, wild and scenic rivers, trails, historic sites, military parks, battlefields, historical parks, recreation areas, memorials, and parkways. Regardless of the many names and official designations of the park lands that make up the national park system, all represent some nationally significant aspect of our natural or cultural heritage. As the physical remnants of our past, and great scenic and natural places that continue to evolve— repositories of outstanding recreation opportunities— class rooms of our heritage— and the legacy we leave to future generations— they warrant the highest standard of protection.

1.3 Criteria for Inclusion

Congress has declared in the NPS General Authorities Act of 1970 that areas comprising the national park system are cumulative expressions of a single national heritage. Potential additions to the national park system should therefore contribute in their own special way to a system that fully represents the broad spectrum of natural and cultural resources that characterize our nation. The National Park Service is responsible for conducting professional studies of potential additions to the national park system when specifically authorized by an Act of Congress, and for making recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress. Several laws outline criteria for units of the national park system, and for additions to the national wild and scenic rivers system and the national trails system. To receive a favorable recommendation from the Service, a proposed addition to the national park system must (1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources; (2) be a suitable addition to the system; (3) be a feasible addition to the system; and (4) require direct NPS management, instead of alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector. These criteria are designed to ensure that the national park system includes only the most outstanding examples of the nation's natural and cultural resources. They also recognize that there are other management alternatives for preserving the nation's outstanding resources.

1.3.1 National Significance

NPS professionals, in consultation with subject matter experts, scholars, and scientists, will determine whether a resource is nationally significant. An area will be considered nationally significant if it

* is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource;
* possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage;
* offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment, or for scientific study;
* and retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmarks process contained in 36 CFR Part 65.

1.3.2 Suitability

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by- case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses rarity of the resources; interpretive and educational potential; and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource- protection or visitor- use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

1.3.3 Feasibility

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must (1) be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection

and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries); and (2) be capable of efficient administration by the NPS at a reasonable cost.

In evaluating feasibility, the Service considers a variety of factors, such as: size; boundary configurations; current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands; land ownership patterns; public enjoyment potential; costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation; access; current and potential threats to the resources; existing degradation of resources; staffing requirements; local planning and zoning for the study area; the level of local and general public support; and the economic/ socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system.

The feasibility evaluation also considers the ability of the National Park Service to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected constraints on funding and personnel.

An overall evaluation of feasibility will be made after taking into account all of the above factors. However, evaluations may sometimes identify concerns or conditions, rather than simply reach a "yes" or "no" conclusion. For example, some new areas may be feasible additions to the national park system only if landowners are willing to sell; or the boundary encompasses specific areas necessary for visitor access; or state or local governments will provide appropriate assurances that adjacent land uses will remain compatible with the study area's resources and values.

1.3.4 Direct NPS Management

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. The National Park Service applauds these accomplishments, and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities, and by other federal agencies. Unless direct National Park Service management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the Service will recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not receive national park system status.

Studies will evaluate an appropriate range of management alternatives and will identify which alternative or combination of alternatives would, in the professional judgment of the Director, be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment. Alternatives for NPS management will not be developed for study areas that fail to meet any one of the four criteria for inclusion listed in section 1. 3.1.

In cases where a study area's resources meet criteria for national significance but do not meet other criteria for inclusion in the national park system, the Service may instead recommend an alternative status, such as "affiliated" area. To be eligible for "affiliated area" status, the area's resources must: (1) meet the same section 1.3.1 standards for national significance that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the national park system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the NPS and the non- federal management entity. Designation as a "heritage area" is another option that may be recommended. Heritage areas are distinctive landscapes that do not necessarily meet the same standards of national significance as national park areas. Either of these two alternatives would recognize an area's importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the National Park Service.