

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Project Purpose and Need: the 1943 Agreement

The purpose of the proposed action is to discharge and satisfy any obligations on the part of the United States that presently exist as the result of the July 30, 1943, Memorandum of Agreement (1943 Agreement) among the United States Department of Interior (DOI), Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Swain County, North Carolina, and the state of North Carolina. The 1943 Agreement, which is included in Appendix A, dealt with the creation of Fontana Dam and Reservoir (referred to as Fontana Lake) that caused the flooding of lands and roads within Swain County. As part of the 1943 Agreement, 44,170 acres (17,875 hectares [ha]) of land were ultimately transferred to the DOI and made part of Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP, also referred to as the Park). The 1943 Agreement contained a provision by which the DOI was to construct a road through GSMNP, along the north shore of the newly formed Fontana Lake (generally located between Fontana Dam and Bryson City, North Carolina), to replace the flooded NC 288. The 1943 Agreement also called for the state of North Carolina to construct a road from Bryson City to the GSMNP boundary. That road (Fontana Road [SR 1364]) was completed in 1959.



Fontana Dam

Approximately 7.2 miles (11.5 kilometers [km]) of the originally proposed North Shore Road (known as Lake View Road) have been constructed within GSMNP, with the last segment being completed in the 1970s. Due to environmental concerns with acid rock, high construction cost, and construction feasibility, construction of Lake View Road was stopped in 1972. The need of the project is to determine whether or not it is feasible to complete the road and to evaluate other alternatives that would satisfy the obligation. Recognizing that the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, (NEPA) requires consideration of a reasonable range of alternatives that would address the purpose and need for a proposed action, this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) includes several different alternatives for detailed study. The detailed study alternatives include: No-Action, Monetary Settlement, Laurel Branch Picnic Area, Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell, and the Northern Shore Corridor. The development of these alternatives was based on their ability to address the purpose and need, while attempting to avoid known and sensitive resources. This Record of Decision for this EIS will serve as a General Management Plan (GMP) Amendment if an alternative that is not consistent with the Park's GMP is selected for implementation. Since the Laurel Branch Picnic Area is included in the current GMP and because the Monetary Settlement would not involve changes to GSMNP, neither would require the GMP to be amended.

### 1.2 Project Goals and Objectives

Project goals and objectives are what the National Park Service (NPS) intends to accomplish by taking the proposed action. They are meant to protect the Park's resources and to ensure the action is meaningful. The project study team developed the goals and objectives for the project by reviewing the GSMNP's GMP, other management documents, and public and agency input.

Draft goals and objectives were presented to the public and agencies at March 2003 scoping meetings. After reviewing all public and agency comments, the study team finalized the goals and objectives below.