

withdrawal of industry from the area and the relocation of some individuals from their residences by the TVA project beginning in the late 1920s, as well as the outstanding obligations of the 1943 Agreement.

4.2.2.3 Mitigation Options to Address Potential Community Impacts

Options to address potential community impacts include:

- identification and development of heritage and interpretation opportunities to accompany any alternative,
- Park management strategies regarding cultural and natural resources,
- improvements to connections to cemetery access roads or trails by a given alternative (Cultural Resources, Section 4.2.8),
- use of the Monetary Settlement for public works projects to enhance quality of life in the area and/or to focus on specific social infrastructure impact concerns, particularly those pertaining to local heritage and culture, and/or
- continued public consultation and coordination on the North Shore Road Project and on subsequent actions and strategies related to the project.

4.2.3 Economics

Construction of one of the partial-build or build alternatives or selection of the Monetary Settlement would provide a new stimulus to the regional economy, generating economic benefits for residents, businesses, and local governments in the area. Such effects include additional jobs, personal income, and retail sales.

4.2.3.1 Methodology for Assessing the Economic Impacts

The methodology used in this analysis of economic impacts is driven by four parameters: (1) estimated construction cost of the road alternatives and proposed amount of the Monetary Settlement; (2) estimated additional Park staff and operating expenditures; (3) estimated traffic/visitor volumes for each alternative; and (4) economic characteristics of visitors in terms of origin and typical spending characteristics. Inputs related to these parameters are entered into a version of the IMPLAN model (Impact Analysis for PLANning) originally developed by the USFS to assist in land resource management planning, but subsequently privatized and widely adopted for use in a host of planning and economic impact assessment applications.

Resulting economic impacts are described by five parameters: (1) new jobs supported; (2) personal income generated; (3) retail sales generated; (4) intraregional shifts in economic activity; and (5) economic development and sustainability. Examples of direct impacts include jobs for construction of the partial-

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build and build alternatives and the hiring of additional NPS staff. An example of indirect economic impacts is new service jobs in local restaurants, stores, and motels resulting from increased visitation to the Park and surrounding communities. The direct, indirect, and cumulative consequences of the project-related changes are assessed.

Economic impacts are assessed in terms of type, duration, and intensity. More detail on the economic analysis approach and assumptions can be found in the Regional Economic Impacts Technical Report (Appendix F).

Type

Economic effects can be beneficial, adverse or indeterminate. Beneficial effects are those that are broadly accepted or recognized as improving economic conditions, either in general or for a specific group of individuals, economic entities, or organizations and institutions. Examples of beneficial effects include reduced unemployment, higher personal income, and economic diversification and sustainability.

Adverse effects are those generally recognized as representing a diminishment of economic welfare, either in general or for a specific group of individuals, economic entities, or organizations and institutions. Examples of adverse effects include a decrease in employment opportunities, an increase in the cost of living unmatched by higher incomes, or the erosion of public sector fiscal resources to fund public facilities and services.

Indeterminate effects are those for which the incidence, magnitude, timing, or distribution of the impacts cannot be determined or which include both beneficial and adverse effects, in some instances accruing to different communities, populations, or public entities or jurisdictions, such that the net effect is indeterminate.

Duration

Economic changes attributable to the alternatives can be temporary or can extend over a lengthier period. The principal characteristic of duration related to the alternatives relates to the temporal relationship between direct construction activity and any induced impacts that may extend beyond the construction period.

Short-term effects are those that occur during the planning, design and construction activities associated with the initial federal government funding provided for each alternative. Long-term effects are those that extend beyond completion of direct activities associated with the initial federal government funding provided for each alternative or that are initiated after completion. Such activities include ongoing operations and maintenance of federally funded improvements and those effects associated with increased visitation to GSMNP.

Clarification of the term "baseline" for this project:

The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell and the Northern Shore Corridor include a baseline route, as well as options to that route. Baseline routes and options are detailed in Section 2.5 and shown on Figure 2-8. Baseline routes have been compared to existing conditions. Impact analyses for the options are shown as a difference from the associated baseline route.

Timing

This factor, characterized as either immediate or having a delayed/deferred onset, is a modifier indicating that the effects do not begin concurrently with construction of the project, but rather are a delayed or deferred pending completion of all or major portions of the project. For example, increased visitor use associated with a build alternative would not begin until construction was complete and the entire road was opened to travel by the public.

Intensity

The scale or intensity of the economic impacts refers to the relative change(s) associated with the alternatives when compared with current conditions or future conditions under the No-Action Alternative. Where possible, both the change and the baseline conditions are quantified, but the relative changes may be assessed on a qualitative basis. In addition to the relative magnitude, factors considered when assessing the scale or intensity parameter include the degree of awareness or ease of measurement of the changes and the geographic scope or size of population affected. The impact thresholds for economic conditions are defined below.

No/Negligible

Effects on employment, personal income, public sector revenues, or the structure and functioning of the local/regional economy would be below detectable levels or detectable only through indirect means and would have no discernible effect on economic conditions.

Minor

Effects on employment, personal income, public sector revenues, or the structure and functioning of the local/regional economy would be detectable or observable, but would be localized in geographic extent and/or population or size of group affected, comparable in scale/magnitude to typical year-to-year or seasonal variations, and not expected to substantively alter the established economic structure and environment.

Moderate

Effects on employment, personal income, public sector revenues, or the structure and functioning of the local/regional economy would be readily detectable or observable across a broad geographic area or segment of the community and could have noticeable effects on the established economic structure and conditions.

Clarification of the term "baseline" for this project:

The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell and the Northern Shore Corridor include a baseline route, as well as options to that route. Baseline routes and options are detailed in Section 2.5 and shown on Figure 2-8. Baseline routes have been compared to existing conditions. Impact analyses for the options are shown as a difference from the associated baseline route.

Major

Effects on employment, personal income, public sector revenues, or the structure and functioning of the local/regional economy would be readily detectable or observable, affect a substantial segment of the population, would extend across much of a community or region, and would be likely to have a substantive influence on the economic environment.

4.2.3.2 Summary of Economic Impacts

Annual visitation, jobs, personal income, and taxable retail sales were evaluated for the alternatives.

Under the No-Action Alternative, projected long-term population growth described in Community Impacts, Section 4.2.2, for Swain and Graham counties would be accompanied by economic growth of an estimated 3,200 jobs between 2003 and 2025 beyond the combined total of 10,864 jobs for the two counties in 2003. Increases in the number of jobs and resident population will also be reflected in increased total personal income and retail sales in the two counties, which recorded a combined \$432 million in personal income (US Bureau of Economic Analysis 2005) and a combined \$135 million in retail sales in 2003 (North Carolina Department of Revenue 2004).

Driving forces underlying changes in the region include the relocation of the GSMR headquarters to Bryson City, gaming operations and associated development in Cherokee, the trend for increased second home construction in western North Carolina, and general increases in tourism and outdoor recreation in response to regional and national growth. Many of the jobs supported by these driving forces will be seasonal in nature. That pattern will heighten the region's current dependency on such seasonal jobs, along with the associated effects on unemployment and personal income. Because of that, local economic development initiatives have focused on creation of year-round jobs in the area.

The GSMNP recorded 2004 recreation visitation of 9.2 million (NPS 2005a). The highest recorded GSMNP visitation occurred in 1999 when there were 10.3 million visitors, with lower levels of recreation visitation recorded in recent years. However, recreation visits to GSMNP have trended upwards over the long-term, despite similar periodic declines. More information on GSMNP visitation trends is presented in the Regional Economic Impacts Technical Report (Appendix F).

The projected annual visitation for the partial-build and build alternatives is shown in Table 4-8. Table 4-8 also shows the portion of the annual visitors to the partial-build and build alternatives who represent new visitors rather than visitors attracted from other locations in the Park or region. Variations in projected visitation reflect the different road designs, the type and capacity of travel and supported recreational use, the length of season, and full or partial-build design. More information on the visitor projections and how they were derived is presented in the Regional Economic Impacts Technical Report (Appendix F). No direct impacts on recreation use and visitation to the Park or broader region would result from the Monetary

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Settlement Alternative, although induced impacts on visitation could result, depending on what investments Swain County makes using proceeds of the settlement.

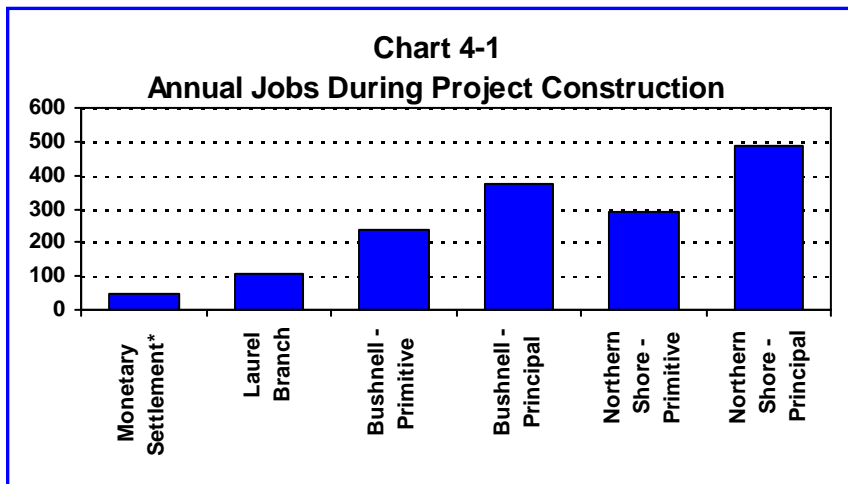
Table 4-8. Projected Annual Recreation Visitor Use, Total and Net New for the Partial-Build and Build Alternatives*

	Primitive Park Road	Principal Park Road
Laurel Branch Picnic Area		
Total Annual Visitors	Not Applicable	38,900
Net New Annual Visitors	Not Applicable	10,500
Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell		
Total Annual Visitors	77,600	123,500
Net New Annual Visitors	21,300	38,200
Northern Shore Corridor		
Total Annual Visitors	118,800	463,600
Net New Annual Visitors	70,900	279,300

* Projected use is in addition to current recreation use on Lake View Road.
 Source: ARCADIS DEIS Project Team, 2005.

The short-term and long-term job impacts of the alternatives are shown in Charts 4-1 and 4-2 and Table 4-9. Jobs would primarily be located in Swain and Graham counties.

Short-term job impacts are primarily a function of the estimated project construction costs (Cost, Section 2.10), with the more costly projects generating higher levels of short-term employment. Chart 4-1 compares average annual job impacts of each alternative, which range from 45 jobs per year for 18 years for Monetary Settlement to 488 jobs per year for 15 years for the Northern Shore Corridor (Principal Park Road).



* Investments by Swain County could induce increases in economic activities that result in employment gains higher than shown. However, the timing and magnitude of such impacts would depend on how Swain County uses the funds.

Clarification of the term “baseline” for this project:
 The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell and the Northern Shore Corridor include a baseline route, as well as options to that route. Baseline routes and options are detailed in Section 2.5 and shown on Figure 2-8. Baseline routes have been compared to existing conditions. Impact analyses for the options are shown as a difference from the associated baseline route.

Total job impacts due to construction will compare differently than the average annual jobs shown above because the length of construction varies by alternative:

- 18 years for the Monetary Settlement for a total of 806 job-years of employment,
- 2 years for Laurel Branch Picnic Area for a total of 207 job-years,
- 5 years for the Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell for a total of 1,191 job-years for the Primitive Park Road and 1,882 job-years for the Principal Park Road, and
- 15 years for the Northern Shore Corridor for a total of 4,391 job-years for the Primitive Park Road and 7,315 job-years for the Principal Park Road.

The two southern options at the three embayments and the Southern Option Crossing Fontana Dam affect short-term job impacts due to the associated changes in construction costs. These changes to annual short-term job impacts are shown in Table 4-9. As with the annual short-term job impacts, the total effect of these increases and decreases in annual jobs during construction would be multiplied by the length of the associated construction periods of 5 years for the Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell and 15 years for the Northern Shore Corridor.

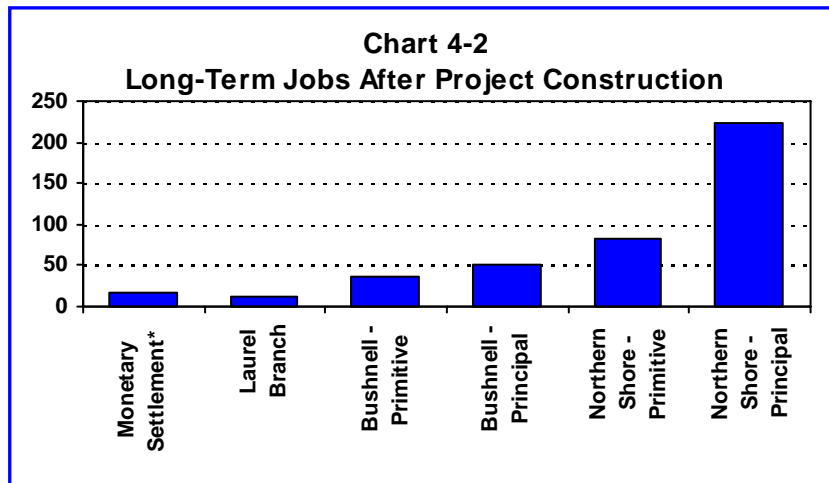
Table 4-9. Impact of the Southern Options on Annual Jobs During Construction

	Primitive Park Road	Principal Park Road
Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell		
Option at Forney Creek Embayment	+20 jobs / yr	-46 jobs / yr
Northern Shore Corridor		
Option at Forney Creek Embayment	+6 jobs / yr	-15 jobs / yr
Option at Hazel and Eagle Creek Embayments	+29 jobs / yr	-20 jobs / yr
Option Crossing Fontana Dam	-8 jobs / yr	-11 jobs / yr

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The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell and the Northern Shore Corridor include a baseline route, as well as options to that route. Baseline routes and options are detailed in Section 2.5 and shown on Figure 2-8. Baseline routes have been compared to existing conditions. Impact analyses for the options are shown as a difference from the associated baseline route.

Long-term job impacts are a function of the demand for services in and around GSMNP caused by increased visitation to the Park and the surrounding area. Long-term job impacts for the action alternatives range from 13 for Laurel Branch Picnic Area to 223 for the Northern Shore Corridor (Principal Park Road) and are shown in Chart 4-2.



* Investments by Swain County could induce increases in economic activities that result in employment gains higher than shown. However, the timing and magnitude of such impacts would depend on how Swain County uses the funds.

Economic effects of the alternatives on personal income and net retail sales are shown in Table 4-10 and generally mirror the levels of visitors and job impacts described above for the alternatives. However, the relationship between personal income and net retail sales varies due to the substantially lower number of new visitors with the primitive road design and partial-build alternatives.

Table 4-10. Annual Long-Term Increases in Personal Income and Net Retail Sales

Alternative Road Type	Total Personal Incomes - Per Year	Net Retail Sales - Per Year
Monetary Settlement*	\$ 470,000	\$ 140,000
Laurel Branch Picnic Area	\$ 490,000	\$ 590,000
Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell		
Primitive Park Road	\$ 1,230,000	\$ 1,370,000
Principal Park Road	\$ 1,521,000	\$ 2,240,000
Northern Shore Corridor		
Primitive Park Road	\$ 2,390,000	\$ 4,040,000
Principal Park Road	\$ 5,670,000	\$14,270,000

* Investments by Swain County could induce additional increases in economic activities. The timing and magnitudes of such increases would depend on how Swain County uses the funds and are beyond the scope of this analysis.

Clarification of the term “baseline” for this project:
 The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell and the Northern Shore Corridor include a baseline route, as well as options to that route. Baseline routes and options are detailed in Section 2.5 and shown on Figure 2-8. Baseline routes have been compared to existing conditions. Impact analyses for the options are shown as a difference from the associated baseline route.

The full economic analysis is presented in the Regional Economic Impacts Technical Report (Appendix F). Overall economic impacts taking into consideration not only the quantifiable visitation, job, income, and sales impacts, but also effects on intraregional economic competitiveness and economic development and sustainability, for each alternative are summarized in the following sections.

4.2.3.2.1 No-Action

The No-Action Alternative would not impact local or regional economies. The region will continue to experience changes due primarily to the relocation of the GSMR headquarters to downtown Bryson City, the trend for increased seasonal home construction in western North Carolina, and gaming operations and hotels in Cherokee. These existing trends and planned actions are further described in Cumulative Impacts, Section 4.1.2.

4.2.3.2.2 Monetary Settlement

The Monetary Settlement is projected to result in moderate, beneficial impacts in the short-term and long-term, characterized by some deferral, but increasing over time as subsequent investments and expenditures are made.

The impact of the Monetary Settlement on visitation, jobs, income, and retail sales are presented in Charts 4-1 and 4-2, and Tables 4-8 through 4-10. Projected impacts of 45 annual jobs during the initial investment period would represent 0.4 percent of total jobs in Swain and Graham counties in 2003. The projected 16 long-term jobs would represent 0.1 percent of total jobs in the two counties in 2003 and 0.5 percent of estimated job growth by 2025. The projected long-term impacts on total annual personal income and net retail sales are \$470,000 and \$140,000, respectively, which each would represent 0.1 percent of the respective total personal income and retail sales figures for Swain and Graham counties in 2003. More detailed information on economic impacts of the Monetary Settlement is presented in the Regional Economic Impacts Technical Report (Appendix F).

The job estimates for the Monetary Settlement and resulting income and sales impacts are conservative because they do not include induced or indirect jobs generated by capital projects or economic development opportunities in which Swain County might choose to invest. The proceeds of the Monetary Settlement would provide a unique opportunity for Swain County to spur local economic and community development efforts. Over the long term, this alternative could stimulate economic diversification and sustainability and result in shifts in intraregional competitiveness to an extent not achieved with other alternatives. In addition, the way in which these economic changes could combine with other planned

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actions and existing trends discussed under the No-Action Alternative would depend on how Swain County uses the funds.

4.2.3.2.3 Laurel Branch Picnic Area

This alternative would result in negligible, beneficial economic impacts in the short-term and long-term due to relatively low construction cost and limited draw of the facility for new visitor use. These slight economic impacts would not be likely to result in greater cumulative impacts even when combined with other planned actions and existing trends.

The impact of the Laurel Branch Picnic Area on visitation, jobs, income, and retail sales are presented in Tables 4-8 through 4-10. Projected impacts of 104 annual jobs during the 2-year construction period would represent 1.0 percent of total jobs in Swain and Graham counties in 2003. The projected 13 long-term jobs would represent 0.1 percent of total jobs in the two counties in 2003 and 0.4 percent of the projected job growth by 2025. The projected long-term impacts on total annual personal income and net retail sales are \$490,000 and \$590,000, respectively, which would represent 0.1 percent and 0.4 percent of total personal income and retail sales figures for Swain and Graham counties in 2003. More detailed information on economic impacts of the Laurel Branch Picnic Area is presented in the Regional Economic Impacts Technical Report (Appendix F).

4.2.3.2.4 Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell (Primitive and Principal Park Roads)

Construction of the Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell (Primitive Park Road) would provide moderate, short-term economic benefits and minor, long-term economic benefits associated with limited long-term gains in new recreation visitors. Short- and long-term economic benefits would be larger for the Principal Park Road than for the Primitive Park Road due to higher construction costs and larger increases in visitor use associated with the improved access, particularly boating and heritage tourism use. The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell (Principal Park Road) would provide major short-term benefits. However, the difference in specific benefits associated with long-term increases in visitor use would not be substantial enough to change the overall level of long-term economic impact for the Principal Park Road from minor.

The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell (Primitive and Principal Park Roads) would expand the scale and type of recreation and heritage tourism opportunities in the Park. However, although benefits would be concentrated in Swain County and specifically Bryson City, there would be little effect on intraregional competitiveness or economic development. The long-term benefits would be slightly delayed in onset, beginning when the road and amenities were open to the public following the 5-year construction period.

The impact of the Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell on visitation, jobs, income, and retail sales are presented in Tables 4-8 through 4-10, and Charts 4-1 and 4-2. The moderate, short-term impacts for the Primitive Park Road include 238 annual jobs during the 5-year construction period, which would represent

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2.2 percent of total jobs in Swain and Graham counties in 2003. The major, short-term impacts for the Principal Park Road include 376 annual jobs during the 5-year construction period, which would represent 3.5 percent of total jobs in Swain and Graham counties in 2003. As noted, long-term economic impacts for the Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell are minor for both road types. The projected 37 long-term jobs for the Primitive Park Road and 51 long-term jobs for the Principal Park Road would represent 0.3 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively, of total jobs in the two counties in 2003 and would represent 1.2 and 1.6 percent, respectively, of the projected job growth by 2025. The projected long-term impacts on total annual personal income are \$1,230,000 for the Primitive Park Road and \$1,521,000 for the Principal Park Road, which would represent 0.3 percent and 0.4 percent of total personal income for Swain and Graham counties in 2003. Projected long-term changes in net retail sales are \$1,370,000 for the Primitive Park Road and \$2,240,000 for the Principal Park Road, which represent 1.0 percent and 1.7 percent, respectively, of total retail sales for Swain and Graham counties in 2003. More detailed information on economic impacts of the Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell (Primitive and Principal Park Roads) is presented in the Regional Economic Impacts Technical Report (Appendix F).

These impacts, when added to the other planned actions and trends would likely result in some cumulative impacts to the area, but these indirect and cumulative economic impacts would be limited by the heavy use of the alternative by local users and would remain localized in nature, most particularly in Swain County and Bryson City.

Southern Option at Forney Creek Embayment (Primitive and Principal Park Roads)

The Southern Option at Forney Creek Embayment would not affect overall economic impacts resulting from the Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell. Although, there would be increases in short-term, construction-related jobs, income, and retail sales for the Primitive Park Road and decreases in short-term, construction-related jobs, income, and retail sales for the Principal Park Road due to the difference in construction costs, these changes would not alter the overall short-term economic impacts of the Northern Shore Corridor.

4.2.3.2.5 Northern Shore Corridor (Primitive and Principal Park Roads)

The Northern Shore Corridor (Primitive Park Road) would yield moderate, short-term economic benefits associated with construction of the road, transitioning to minor benefits in the long-term associated with limited increases in visitation, which have a delayed onset until the road is completed and opened following a 15-year construction period. The road would result in some redirection of traffic flows, affecting intraregional competitiveness. However, it would reinforce existing seasonal economic cycles and dependency on tourism.

The impact of the Northern Shore Corridor (Primitive Park Road) on visitation, jobs, income, and retail sales are presented in Tables 4-8 through 4-10, and Charts 4-1 and 4-2. Projected impacts of 293 annual jobs during the 15-year construction period would represent 1.0 percent of total jobs in Swain and Graham

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counties in 2003. The projected 82 long-term jobs would represent 0.8 percent of total jobs in the two counties in 2003 and 2.6 percent of the projected job growth by 2025. The projected long-term impacts on total annual personal income and net retail sales are \$2,390,000 and \$4,040,000, respectively, which would represent 0.6 percent and 3.0 percent of total personal income and retail sales figures for Swain and Graham counties in 2003. More detailed information on economic impacts of the Northern Shore Corridor (Primitive Park Road) is presented in the Regional Economic Impacts Technical Report (Appendix F).

The Northern Shore Corridor (Principal Park Road) would yield major, short-term economic benefits due to higher construction costs for the road and moderate benefits in the long-term associated with greater expected increases in visitation due to better driving conditions. Again, visitation increases and associated impacts would have a delayed onset until the road is completed and opened. The road would result in greater redirection of traffic flows and have more effect on intraregional competitiveness. However, like the Primitive Park Road, the Principal Park Road would continue to reinforce existing seasonal economic cycles and dependency on tourism.

The impact of the Northern Shore Corridor (Principal Park Road) on visitation, jobs, income, and retail sales are presented in Tables 4-8 through 4-10, and Charts 4-1 and 4-2. Projected impacts of 488 annual jobs during the 15-year construction period would represent 4.5 percent of total jobs in Swain and Graham counties in 2003. The projected 223 long-term jobs would represent 2.1 percent of total jobs in the two counties in 2003 and 7.0 percent of the projected job growth by 2025. The projected long-term impacts on total annual personal income and net retail sales are \$5,670,000 and \$14,270,000, respectively, which would represent 1.3 percent and 10.5 percent of total personal income and retail sales figures for Swain and Graham counties in 2003. More detailed information on economic impacts of the Northern Shore Corridor (Principal Park Road) is presented in the Regional Economic Impacts Technical Report (Appendix F).

These impacts, when added to the other planned economic actions and trends would result in greater cumulative impacts to Bryson City, Cherokee, Swain, Graham, and surrounding counties than would result from the Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell, as the Northern Shore Corridor would be projected to attract more visitation from outside the area (non-local use). These cumulative impacts would be substantially greater for the Principal Park Road due to higher levels of projected visitation.

Southern Option at Forney Creek Embayment (Primitive and Principal Park Roads)

The Southern Option at Forney Creek Embayment would not affect overall, long-term economic impacts resulting from the Northern Shore Corridor. Although, there would be increases in short-term, construction-related jobs, income, and retail sales for the Primitive Park Road and decreases in short-term, construction-related jobs, income, and retail sales for the Principal Park Road due to the difference in construction costs, these changes would not alter the overall short-term economic impacts of the Northern Shore Corridor.

Clarification of the term "baseline" for this project:

The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell and the Northern Shore Corridor include a baseline route, as well as options to that route. Baseline routes and options are detailed in Section 2.5 and shown on Figure 2-8. Baseline routes have been compared to existing conditions. Impact analyses for the options are shown as a difference from the associated baseline route.

Southern Option at Hazel and Eagle Creek Embayments (Primitive and Principal Park Roads)

The Southern Option at Hazel and Eagle Creek Embayments would not affect overall economic impacts resulting from the Northern Shore Corridor. Although, there would be increases in short-term, construction-related jobs, income, and retail sales for the Primitive Park Road and decreases in short-term, construction-related jobs, income, and retail sales for the Principal Park Road due to the difference in construction costs, these changes would not alter the overall short-term economic impacts of the Northern Shore Corridor.

Southern Option Crossing Fontana Dam (Primitive and Principal Park Roads)

The Southern Option Crossing Fontana Dam would not affect overall, long-term economic impacts resulting from the Northern Shore Corridor. Although, there would be reductions in short-term, construction-related jobs, income, and retail sales due to the difference in construction costs, these changes would not alter the overall short-term economic impacts of the Northern Shore Corridor.

4.2.3.2.6 Cumulative Impacts

The region's economy has been shaped over the past 200 years by historic Cherokee presence, early agricultural settlements, the timber industry, mining operations, and major public works that have included the Fontana Dam, creation and expansion of GSMNP, and USFS Nantahala National Forest creation and acquisitions.

The area's economy has been transitioning to a predominantly service-based economy centered on tourism associated with public and private outdoor recreation activities and other unique attractions such as the GSMR and the Cherokee casino. The relocation of the GSMR headquarters to Bryson City over the next 10 years will shift some economic activity within the region, adding to current tourism trends in Bryson City. The ongoing construction of retirement and second homes will also continue to play a role in the region's economy.

The economic effects of the North Shore Road alternatives when combined with these past actions, existing conditions, current trends and planned actions in the region were taken into account in assessing the economic impacts of the alternatives. Those impacts are summarized here.

The Monetary Settlement has the potential for substantial cumulative economic impacts in the study area, because the proceeds of the Monetary Settlement would provide a unique opportunity for Swain County to spur local economic and community development efforts. This alternative could stimulate economic diversification and sustainability and result in shifts in intraregional competitiveness to an extent not achieved with other alternatives. However, the nature and extent of these economic changes would depend on how Swain County uses the funds.

Clarification of the term "baseline" for this project:

The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell and the Northern Shore Corridor include a baseline route, as well as options to that route. Baseline routes and options are detailed in Section 2.5 and shown on Figure 2-8. Baseline routes have been compared to existing conditions. Impact analyses for the options are shown as a difference from the associated baseline route.

The limited economic impacts resulting from the Laurel Branch Picnic Area would not be likely to result in cumulative impacts even when combined with other planned actions and existing trends in the area.

The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell (Primitive and Principal Park Roads) would result in some cumulative economic impacts to the study area, but these economic impacts would be limited by relatively low levels of projected visitation and the large portion of this visitation that would be local users.

The Northern Shore Corridor would result in the greatest cumulative impacts among the partial-build and build alternatives, attracting more new visitors to the study area from outside the region. The cumulative impacts would be substantially greater for the Principal Park Road due to higher levels of projected visitation.

4.2.4 Land Use

4.2.4.1 Methodology for Assessing Land Use Impacts

Figure 3-2 illustrates the GSMNP GMP Proposed Management Zoning. Also included on Figure 3-2 are the wilderness recommendation boundary and the potential wilderness addition.

In order to assess the impacts of the study alternatives on GSMNP GMP land use and land use outside GSMNP, the following were considered: (1) existing land use in the study area, especially along the proposed roadway alternatives; (2) land management plans and policies in the study area; (3) traffic volumes projected for roadway alternatives; (4) land ownership (public or private) in the study area, particularly along the proposed roadway alternatives; and (5) future land use in the area under a No-Action Alternative. Projected change in travel patterns within and through the study area, as well as economic drivers and projected economic impacts of the alternatives, were also considered in determining potential indirect and cumulative impacts on land use. The direct and indirect consequences of the project-related changes were assessed for each alternative. For example, direct land use impacts would include revisions to the GSMNP GMP and indirect land use impacts could include induced development outside GSMNP. Land use impacts are assessed in terms of type, duration, and intensity.

Type

In regards to land use effects, few standards exist as to what constitutes beneficial or positive changes and which are considered adverse or negative. For example, the conversion of an undeveloped property to a commercial use may be viewed to some as beneficial if the new use provides a needed community service. Others may view this change in land use as adverse if it alters the natural landscape and impacts community character. Those desiring improved economic conditions may welcome any new development as beneficial. Therefore, the land use impacts of the project alternatives are described without any attempt to determine whether the impact would be beneficial or adverse.

Clarification of the term "baseline" for this project:

The Partial-Build Alternative to Bushnell and the Northern Shore Corridor include a baseline route, as well as options to that route. Baseline routes and options are detailed in Section 2.5 and shown on Figure 2-8. Baseline routes have been compared to existing conditions. Impact analyses for the options are shown as a difference from the associated baseline route.