

the study team and the proposed project, review the current project information, initiate discussions, answer questions, and collect input. Participants included representatives from FHWA, GSMNP, NPS-Southeast Regional Office (SRO), NPS-Blue Ridge Parkway, NCWRC, USFWS, TVA, USACE, NCDOT, and ARCADIS. The group discussed the draft Purpose and Need Statement, NEPA “cooperating agencies,” the proposed study area boundary, proposed impact topics, and the concept alternatives that had been suggested over the past years.

Following the meeting, the TVA and USACE submitted written requests to be included in the NEPA process as cooperating agencies. Appendix P includes scoping letter responses provided to the NPS.

## **5.2 Notice of Intent (April 24, 2003)**

The NOI to prepare the EIS for the North Shore Road Project in GSMNP was published in the Federal Register on April 24, 2003 (68FR79). The NOI explained the purpose of the EIS and established the public scoping process. The scoping process was proposed to elicit public comments regarding the full spectrum of public issues and concerns, including a suitable range of alternatives, the nature and extent of potential environmental impacts, and appropriate mitigation strategies.

## **5.3 Interagency Meeting No. 2: Existing Conditions (September 10, 2003)**

The second interagency meeting was held on September 10, 2003, at the Holiday Inn Sunspree in Asheville, North Carolina. Representatives from FHWA, NPS (GSMNP and SRO), NCSHPO, USACE, NCWRC, USFWS, TVA, NCDOT, NCDENR, ARCADIS, and TRC Garrow were present at the meeting. A representative from the NPS Appalachian National Scenic Trail attended via telephone. The purpose of this interagency meeting was to provide a status update on the project; review public involvement efforts; and discuss the initial data gathering efforts, study area conditions, and roles of participating and cooperating agencies. Appendix P includes agency comments related to the ECR.

## **5.4 Interagency Meeting No. 3: Alternatives Development (March 24 and April 22, 2004)**

The third interagency meeting was held on March 24, 2004, at the ARCADIS Building in Raleigh, North Carolina. Representatives from FHWA, NPS (GSMNP and SRO), NCDWQ, USEPA, NCDOA-State Clearinghouse, TRC Garrow, ARCADIS, NCSHPO, TVA, North Carolina Division of Forest Resources (NCDFR), and NCDOT participated in the meeting. Representatives from NPS (AT), USEPA, EBCI-THPO, NCWRC, NCSHPO, USACE, USFWS, and USFS were present via telephone. The purpose of the meeting was to review information on the development of study alternatives and initiate discussions.

Two subsequent meetings were held on April 22, 2004, to follow up on discussions concerning alternatives. One meeting, requested by the USACE, was held at the USACE offices in Asheville, North Carolina. Attendees included representatives from FHWA, NPS (GSMNP and SRO), USACE, USEPA, NCWRC, USFWS, and ARCADIS. At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that NPS would send each agency a letter asking for concurrence on the alternatives proposed to be studied in the DEIS.

Also on April 22, 2004, a meeting among NPS, FHWA, and USFS was held at the USFS offices in Asheville, North Carolina. The USFS advised that its regulations may not permit a study alternative to