

Preliminary  
Alternatives Report

North Shore Road  
Environmental Impact  
Statement

Appendix A

Initial Options  
Considered

## **Initial Options Considered**

Most of the initial study options represent the main concepts expressed in public comments. The tone and content of these ideas reflect the views of the individuals providing input.

### No-Action

- 1) The no-action alternative would forgo any improvements to Lake View Road with the exception of routine maintenance. It includes no monetary compensation or construction of any kind.
- 2) No change; existing US 19 and NC 28 fulfill the 1943 Agreement.
- 3) If a road is not built, then no money should be provided.
- 4) Continue annual cemetery visitations.

### No-Build (monetary settlement)

- 1) Suggestions were made for a monetary settlement amount for Swain County, including: \$9.5 million with direct congressional appropriation to Swain County; \$16 million (use portion of current budget toward settlement); \$40 million to be set aside in escrow for approximately \$2 million/year in interest; range of \$40 million to \$50 million; \$52 million; \$54 million; \$56 million; \$150 million; the amount of estimated construction of North Shore Road; and the amount of NC 288 bonds adjusted for inflation plus interest.
- 2) Monetary settlement for Graham County for \$52 million or share a \$52 million settlement with Swain County.
- 3) Develop a package of public works projects totaling \$40 million, plus \$50 million cash for Swain County.
- 4) Suggestions were made for the directed use of the cash settlement for Swain County, including: schools; civic and social facilities; county government functions; sustainable economic development; boat access for visiting cemeteries; infrastructure; mountain communities; work with planning groups to ensure that it is spent wisely; invest for annual income from interest; prohibit misuse; health systems; recreational facilities; new jail; pay off school bonds and other bonds in Swain County.
- 5) Monetary settlement for the families relocated by the Fontana Dam project.

### Partial-Build (roadway segment, may include destination)

- 1) Suggestions were made to continue Lake View Road to the following areas: the vicinity of Welch Branch and Pole Bridge Branch and create a new destination; an area southwest of Bluff Branch; the vicinity of Cable Cemetery; the vicinity of Hazel Creek and Rowan Branch; an area north of Sandy Gap Branch; the vicinity of Hazel Creek and Sugar Fork Creek; five miles beyond the tunnel; Forney Creek;

Gray Wolf Creek and construct a day site and Goldmine Branch and construct a day development site and/or marina (day site no more than 10 acres, picnic area, parking, water/sewer systems, a floating dock, trail connection to the road termini); to Bushnell or other location for proposed development and construct a bridge across the Lake to form a loop roadway; to Bushnell or other area and construct a dead-end road starting from the Dam; to create trailhead area at existing hiking trails; and to Monteith Branch and construct a marina and associated recreational facilities.

- 2) Construct additional road to a destination and continue with a multi-use trail or a gravel road.
- 3) Provide facilities at new destinations to include a pedestrian bridge to Tsali; boat ramp; water access (pedestrian dock, paddle boats, canoes); interpretive trail; picnic area; greenway trail; Laurel Branch Picnic Area; or an overnight, rustic facility.
- 4) Construct a campground, picnic area, and small marina in the vicinity of Canebrake Creek (with access road to Fontana Lake).
- 5) Construct a day-use facility at the existing tunnel area to include picnic area/shelter, interpretive trail, and comfort station.
- 6) Develop a series of campgrounds and trailheads connected by a free passenger ferry service.
- 7) Provide a Visitor Center/Interpretative Center with local goods for sale; tribute to local heritage; visitor information; campground/permits for camping; restrooms; boat ramp; picnic area; museum like Oconaluftee; history of area and native Americans; and/or pictorial interpretation with features and path.
- 8) Construct a Visitor Center/Interpretative Center at the end of the Lake View Road tunnel or at Deep Creek (improve existing facilities).
- 9) Develop an access road approximately 15 miles from the existing Lake View Road tunnel to Procter.
- 10) Construct a new bridge across Fontana Lake from the existing tunnel termini vicinity to connect to an additional 7.5 miles of roadway and tie into NC 28.
- 11) Construct dock facilities and a campground at Noland Creek.
- 12) Construct a new bridge from the extended or existing termini to form a loop road without a new destination or bridge access across Fontana Lake from NC 143 and NC 28 to an extended or completed road.
- 13) Construct two buildings with 300 rooms for a resort at Noland Creek.
- 14) Construct an Intercept Center in Bryson City to identify Bryson City as a "take-off point" for GSMNP and include a visitor center with exhibits and information, a large parking area, and NPS guided tours into the Monteith Branch area and Deep Creek developed area.

### Build (full roadway corridor)

- 1) Suggestions were made for the proposed road, including: 30.3-mile-long road between Noland Creek and Fontana Dam; 39-mile-long, "high line" route; 26-mile-long, 2-lane road along the Fontana Lake shoreline; 30-mile-long, 2-lane road along the highline; Bryson City to Fontana Road, a 36-mile road to generally parallel the northern side of Fontana Lake; utilization of old NC 288 remnants; and a road that would allow access to the Fontana Addition and all cemeteries in GSMNP.
- 2) Suggestions were made for the road criteria, including: a one-way, low-standard, paved or unpaved road; public use road; gated administrative road; two-lane paved road as planned in the 1943 Agreement; gravel road with turnouts; one-way pair; 10-foot-wide primitive road; or require permits for use of road.
- 3) Facilities provided with the roadway should include parking areas, turn-outs, and comfort stations.
- 4) Suggestions were made for the location of a proposed road, including: follow along the south shore, in addition to NC 28; or cross Fontana Lake near the existing Lake View Road tunnel and continue to Fontana Dam as a "South Shore Road."
- 5) Use Lake Shore Trail for the new road.
- 6) Complete horse-and-buggy road on proposed route with camping areas and inns.

### Other Ideas

- 1) Use a light-rail system or railroad.
- 2) Create transit options to include: a Visitor Transit Concept with a combination of rail conveyances and buses to offer a car-free loop of GSMNP with stops or layover and transfer points; free transportation system within GSMNP; or Transportation System Management (evaluate and improve existing transportation network).
- 3) Protect GSMNP through aggressive reduction of traditional camping and transportation services (follow the lead of Yosemite).
- 4) Improve cemetery access by improving hiking trails to the cemeteries or by providing better ferry access and covered land transportation to the cemeteries.
- 5) Place ornamental fences and memorial plaques in and around cemeteries or build a memorial to honor the deceased who once lived in the area.

- 6) Give back land to original property owners if road is not built or have NPS relinquish the title to the 44,000 acres, returning the land to TVA or to the original owners if such action would provide legal release from the 1943 Memorandum of Agreement.
- 7) Develop an area around Cherokee to enhance access to GSMNP and provide for a more dignified way for Native Americans to make a living.
- 8) Obliterate the current seven miles of Lake View Road.
- 9) Drain Fontana Reservoir, dismantle the dam and return the area to a natural state, and reestablish NC 288.
- 10) Drain Fontana Lake and build road on lake bottom.
- 11) Extend boundary of GSMNP south to include NC 28.
- 12) Construct a Blue Ridge Parkway Extension inside GSMNP (approximately 15 miles) from Cherokee to Deep Creek (and on to Bryson City).
- 13) Construct a Blue Ridge Parkway Extension partly outside GSMNP located approximately 11 miles within GSMNP and approximately 5 miles in the Cherokee Reservation (with land exchange) from Cherokee to Deep Creek (and on to Bryson City).
- 14) Extend Foothills Parkway inside GSMNP for 61 miles from its western terminus to connect with the Blue Ridge Parkway Extension near Bryson City.
- 15) Extend Foothills Parkway outside GSMNP to cross the Tennessee River in the vicinity of Chilhowee and remain south until crossing Fontana Lake in the vicinity of Monteith Branch to connect with existing Lake View Road.
- 16) Improve US 441 by adding two more lanes.
- 17) Improve, widen, and add bike lanes to NC 28.
- 18) Circle the Smokies Scenic Drive or Beltway by utilizing only the existing roads and right-of-way to be designated as scenic highways; intensively develop the peripheral areas (visitor activity centers), and phase out vehicular traffic on US 441.
- 19) Develop a circumferential system of parkways or "Around the Park Road" by using US 441 to Deep Creek Campground westward to the junction of Noland Creek and the Tuckasegee River, extending a bridge over the Tuckasegee River and continuing with a south shore scenic drive to tie into the Foothills Parkway in TN, and phasing out vehicular traffic on US 441.
- 20) Extend the skyway west along the Smoky Mountain divide (North Carolina/Tennessee border) to Deal's Gap to connect with the "Around the Park Road."

- 21) Construct a transpark highway from Bryson City, NC, to Townsend, TN.
- 22) Provide technical assistance for the development of high-quality destination facilities in the Bryson City area.
- 23) Provide a total water route from Bryson City to Noland Creek or Monteith Branch.
- 24) Provide ferries with several stops, more frequent service, and/or charge a fee for non-residents of Swain County.
- 25) Develop a narrow, unpaved foot trail.
- 26) Apologize and recognize Swain County for their patience and sacrifice.
- 27) Create a preserve so that no one can take anything (living or stone). People can use existing access paths, roads, or streams (use McCloud River Preserve as an example).
- 28) Offer transportation across Fontana Lake for public access.
- 29) Offer families the option to relocate graves to cemeteries outside GSMNP.
- 30) Create a financial and social plan for Swain County.

#### Combination

- 1) Build a portion of new road and provide a cash settlement. After building the road, place excess money into a bank account for road maintenance and administrative costs.
- 2) Combine the monetary settlement with continued and/or more frequent ferry service.