

## 1.2 Project Purpose and Need and 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) between the United States Department of the Interior (DOI), the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Swain County, North Carolina, and the state of North Carolina. The 1943 Agreement dealt with the creation of Fontana Dam and Reservoir, which 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 the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP). 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. This was completed in 1959.

Approximately 7.2 miles (11.5 kilometers [km]) of the originally proposed North Shore Road have been constructed within GSMNP, with the last segment being completed in the 1970s. 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. Both build (i.e., road or other facilities) and no-build alternatives will be developed to determine how the 1943 obligation will be met.