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Island Campground Reconstruction Project

Environmental Assessment

Greenbrier Ranger District,
Monongahela National Forest
Pocahontas County, West Virginia

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Introduction

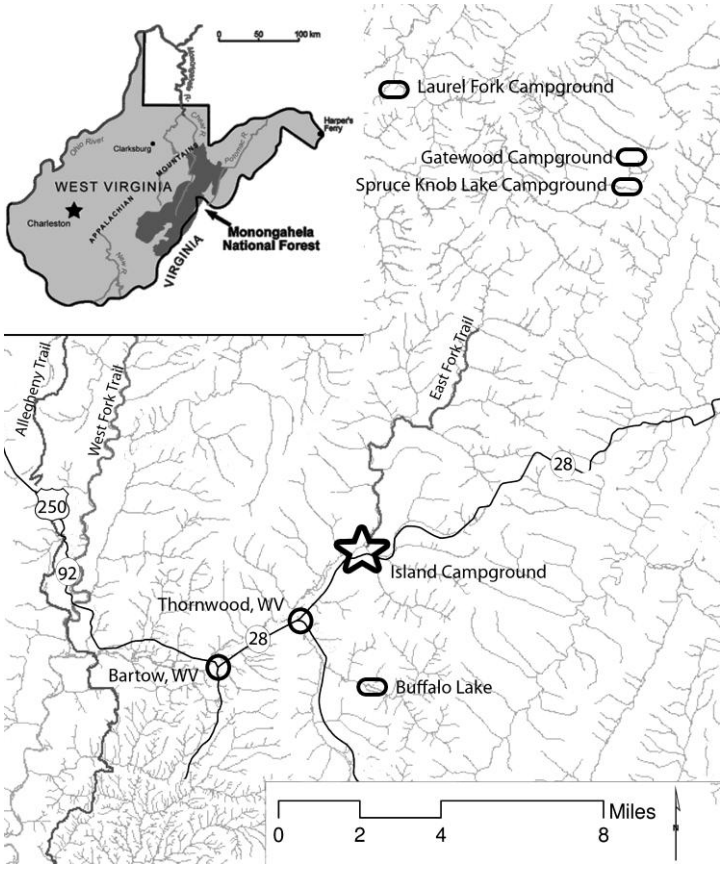
Regulatory Framework

The Forest Service prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations at 40 CFR 1500-1508 and 36 CFR 220, other relevant Federal laws, regulations, policies, and the 2006 Monongahela National Forest Land & Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). This EA is intended to provide sufficient evidence and analysis about the estimated environmental effects of the Island Campground Reconstruction Project and to determine whether or not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement or Finding of No Significant Impact. The effects analysis reports and other supporting documents are available upon request.

Location

This project is located off of West Virginia State Route 28 approximately 5 miles north and east of Bartow, West Virginia at an elevation of approximately 3,000 feet. The project is located in Pocahontas County on the Greenbrier Ranger District, in the Thornwood Northwest 7.5 Min. quadrangle (Figure 1). The project area is located in Forest Plan Management Prescription 3.0.

Figure 1. Project Location Map



Background

In 2002, the two bridges that access campsite units two through six at Island Campground failed inspection for vehicular traffic (Barger 2009). Due to the popularity of the campground, the bridges remained open until April 2010, when they were closed to all but foot traffic, making campsites two through six walk-in only units. To accommodate these new traffic patterns, campsite one was converted into a parking lot, leaving only five usable walk-in campsite units.

In addition to no longer being accessible for drive-in camping, the five remaining campsite units are also located in the 100-year floodplain of the two converging waterways on the site, posing a major safety hazard to visitors in the event of flooding.

Following the bridge closure, an extensive petition and a large volume of comments were received by the Greenbrier Ranger District office expressing a strong desire for the reopening of the campground to vehicular traffic. Each individual who commented and provided contact information was sent an initial scoping letter dated February 10, 2011 inviting them to comment on a proposal to relocate Island Campground (Dunk 2011).

In the spring of 2011, the Forest utilized the skills of a landscape architect to design a new campground in the same proximity, but outside of the 100-year floodplain. This EA analyzes and discloses the potential effects of that design on a variety of Forest resources.

CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

This chapter briefly describes the need for the project, in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.9 and 36 CFR 220.7. The project record contains further details about the existing and desired conditions in the project area that indicated a need for the proposed activities.

Purpose & Need

The purpose of this project is to reconstruct Island Campground and relocate the campsites and toilet outside of the 100-year floodplain, widen Forest Road 36, and remove the existing campsites and vault toilet buildings, including any rehabilitation needed to return the existing campground to a natural state. The need for this project is to provide a safe, fully accessible, campground for the recreating public. Day use opportunities associated with trails and fishing will also be enhanced.

Proposed Action

The Forest Service is proposing to reconstruct Island Campground between its current location and Highway 28 on Forest Road 36 (Figure 2).

The proposed project will include the complete construction of 11 new campsites located off of Forest Road 36.

Included in this proposal is also the removal of the existing campsites and vault toilet buildings, including any rehabilitation needed to return the ground to a natural state.

See Chapter 2 for Proposed Action details.

Decision Framework

The Greenbrier District Ranger, as the responsible official for this project, will review the potential effects of the proposed action and alternative actions as described in Chapter 2 in order to make the following decisions:

1. Whether to select the Proposed Action, a modification of the Proposed Action, or No Action Alternative for implementation.
2. Determine if the selected alternative complies with the Forest Plan, as amended.
3. Determine if the selected alternative protects federally listed species and their habitats.
4. Determine if the selected alternative protects archeological and cultural resource sites.
5. Determine if the selected alternative avoids substantial adverse effects to other resources.
6. Determine whether the selected alternative would have significant impacts on the quality of the human environment and an Environmental Impact Statement needs

to be prepared, or whether no significant impacts are expected, and therefore, a "Finding of No Significant Impact" needs to be prepared.

The decision will be documented and made available to the public in early 2012.

Public Involvement

Public involvement related to the proposed action began in the summer of 2010 after the campground was closed to vehicular traffic in April. A few weeks prior to the closure, a news release was sent to many local newspapers and signs were placed in the campground notifying the public why the campground was closed to vehicular traffic. The signs also requested the public to contact either the Zone Recreation Manager or the Greenbrier District Office to provide input regarding the closure and a potential fee at the site (Fosbender 2010). Numerous calls, letters, and emails were received expressing support for reopening the campground.

In December 2010, the Greenbrier Ranger District, District Ranger, received a petition with 450 signatures requesting the Forest reopen Island Campground. The Forest sent a letter in February 2011 to all 450 petitioners and others who had called or written about Island Campground, requesting input about the construction of a new Island Campground, in essentially the same location, but outside of the 100-year floodplain (Dunk 2011). Again, numerous calls, letters, and emails were received expressing support of the new campground.

The Island Campground Reconstruction Project was listed on the Forest's Schedule of Proposed Actions starting on October 1, 2011. The Schedule of Proposed Actions is available on the Forest website and distributed to 140 interested parties.

On December 14, 2011, a detailed description of the proposed activities was distributed to approximately 100 individuals on the interested parties mailing list as well as the 450 petitioners, for a public scoping period (Tribble 2011). All materials distributed in the mailings were also made available on the Forest website at http://www.fs.usda.gov/mnf.

This EA is being released and distributed for a 30-day notice and comment period in accordance with 36 CFR 215.6, with the legal notice that begins the comment period to be published in the Pocahontas Times on January 12, 2012. The EA and accompanying legal notice will be posted on the Forest website. The decision for this project will be posted on the Forest website and distributed to those people, organizations, or agencies who received this EA.

Issues

During internal scoping, the interdisciplinary team identified possible concerns related to the amount of soil disturbance with the proposed activities. Excessive excavation could affect the ephemeral and intermittent water flows from the base of the slope, which could destabilize the slope over time. Also, the water table in the project area is close to the surface and excavation without proper drainage design, could cause ponding in

campsites, as well as possibly destabilizing the slope. To resolve concerns regarding water flow through the soils, some sites were dropped from consideration and the design limits the depth of excavation for developing the spurs and camping pads. Excavation will also be limited when installing the vault for the toilet building. Mitigation measures were developed to protect soils and water resources (see Table 1).

The team then solicited public comments on the proposed action and evaluated those comments.

Eight responses were received from the public from the December 14, 2011 scoping letter. Generally, responses were supportive of the project and potential fees at the site. Issues raised in the responses from the public are already addressed by specialists in this EA. No new issues were identified.

After considering all public comments received throughout the planning process, together with input from agency resource specialists, the interdisciplinary team found no additional unresolved or significant issues [36 CFR 220.7 (b)(2)(i)]. Public comment letters and documents that consider and respond to public comments are available in the project record.

CHAPTER 2 - ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

This chapter describes two alternatives analyzed in this EA: the no action alternative and the proposed action. This chapter also describes the design features and mitigation measures required for implementation of the proposed action (36 CFR 220.7). The interdisciplinary team considered the potential impacts of the proposed action and all public input and found there is no need to develop or evaluate additional alternatives (36 CFR 220.7).

Alternative 1 – No Action

Under the no action alternative, Island Campground would remain a 5-unit, walk-in only campground. No new sites would be constructed, no road improvements would be completed, and the existing single vault toilet buildings would remain.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative)

The reconstruction and relocation of Island Campground would include the following (see Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5):

- Widening and improving Forest Road 36 (FR-36) within the existing foot print of the road.
- Construction of a new turn around at the end of FR-36 with a radius no less than 50’ to accommodate trailers up to 45’.
- Construction of 11 campsites including needed culverts and drainage work and adding crusher run gravel to create campsite pads. Nine sites would have a parking spur adjacent to the site, while 2 sites are “walk-in” sites with parking available within a short walk of the campsite.
- Construction of 9 parking spurs with crusher run gravel. This includes installing culverts off of FR-36 to allow parking for newly constructed campsites, The typical size of the spurs would measure approximately 20’ x 35’.
- Construction of two road-side parking areas with crusher run gravel, to accommodate parking for two walk-in campsites.
- Each newly-constructed campsite would be furnished with a table, fire ring, lantern post, and tent pad.
- Installation of a fee station and kiosk near the entrance of the campground,
- The installation of 1 single-unit vault toilet building.
- Installation of bear-resistant trash cans, campsite number posts, and new traffic control, directional, and site identification signing.
- Removal of existing restroom facilities and rehabilitation of existing campsites.

All construction, signs, new site furnishings, and installation of these furnishings would follow all applicable Forest Service manual direction, Forest Service Outdoor Recreation

Accessibility Guidelines, and Department of Transportation and Forest Service sign installation standards.

Alternatives Dropped From Consideration

Following the closure of the bridges in April 2010, many people requested that Island Campground be rebuilt in the current location, including replacement of the bridges.

Forest Recreation staff and the District Rangers for the Greenbrier Ranger District considered this alternative. In June 2010, as the Forest was considering options to replace the bridges at Island Campground, a devastating flash flood destroyed the Albert Pike Campground on the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas, killing 20 campers as they slept and stranding many more until rescued. As a result of this tragedy, the Forest Service made it clear that all new campground construction must be located out of the 100-year floodplain. In accordance with Forest Service Manual 2330, Public Managed Recreation Opportunities (USDA 2011b) and Forest Service Manual 2527.02 (USDA 2004), Floodplain Management and Wetland Protection, this alternative was dropped from consideration.

Figure 2. Island Campground Site Design

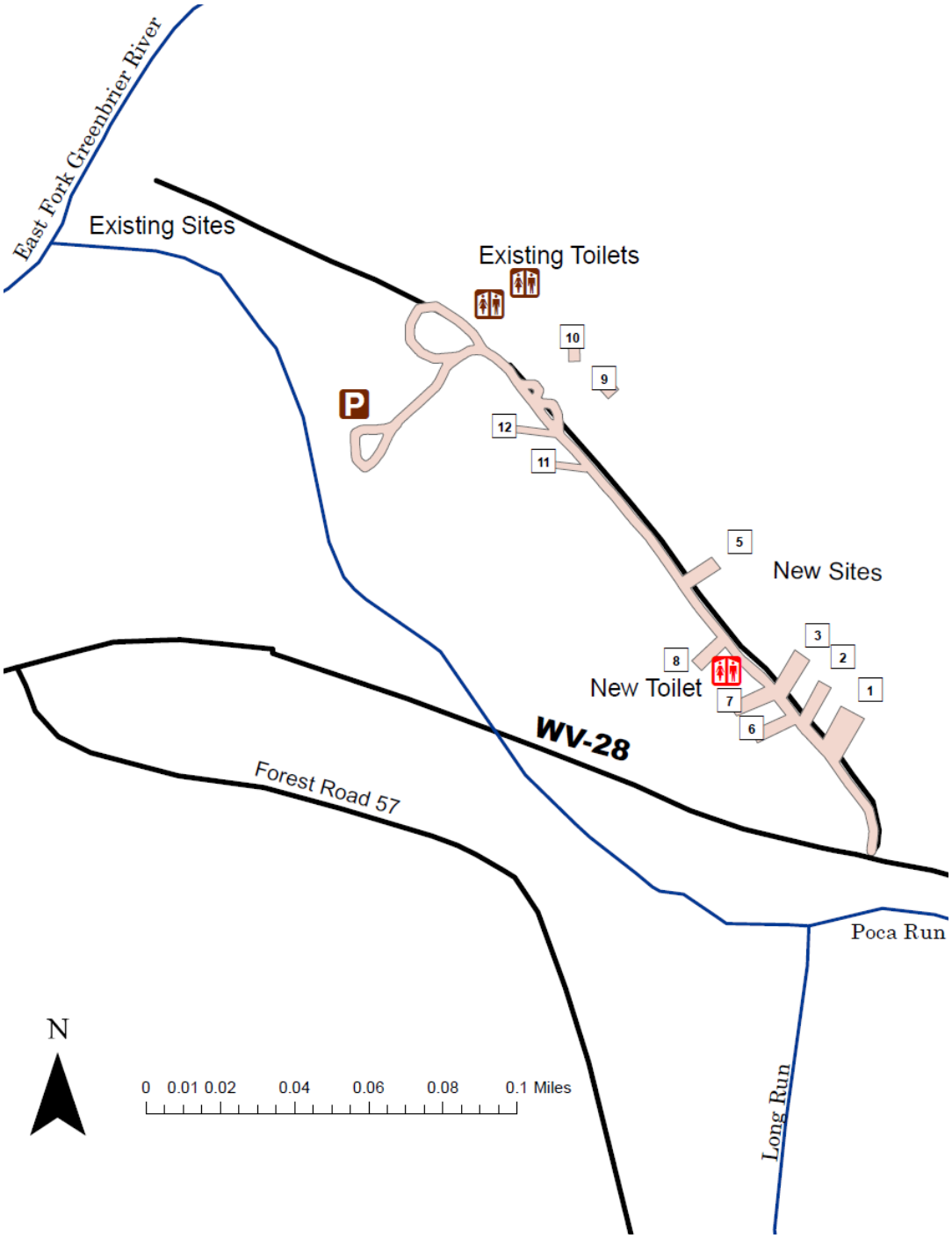


Figure 3. Typical Campsite Detail

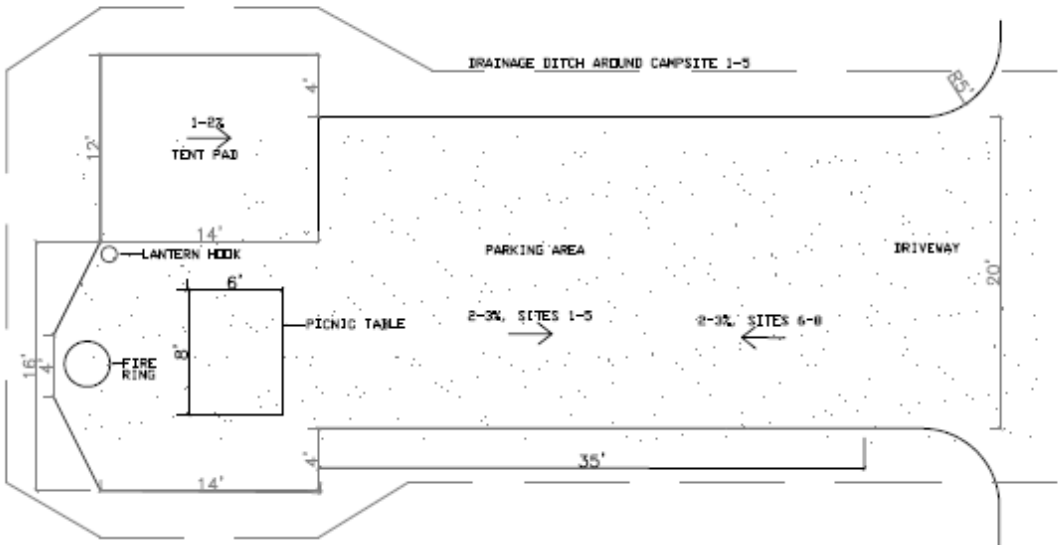
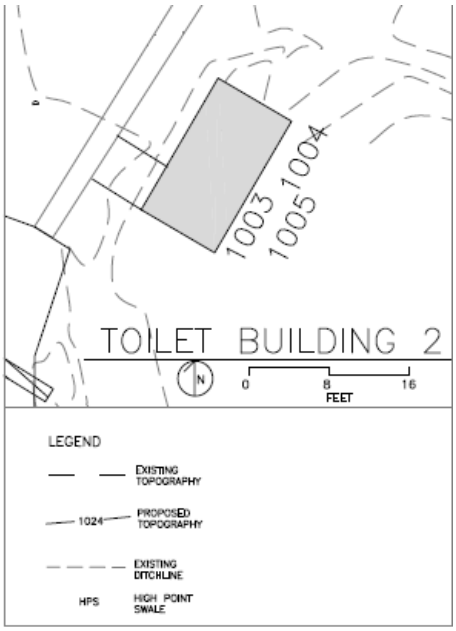


Figure 4. Grading Plan for sites 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and the toilet building
(please note, this design includes site 4, but site 4 has been removed from consideration due to soil and water concerns)



NOTES

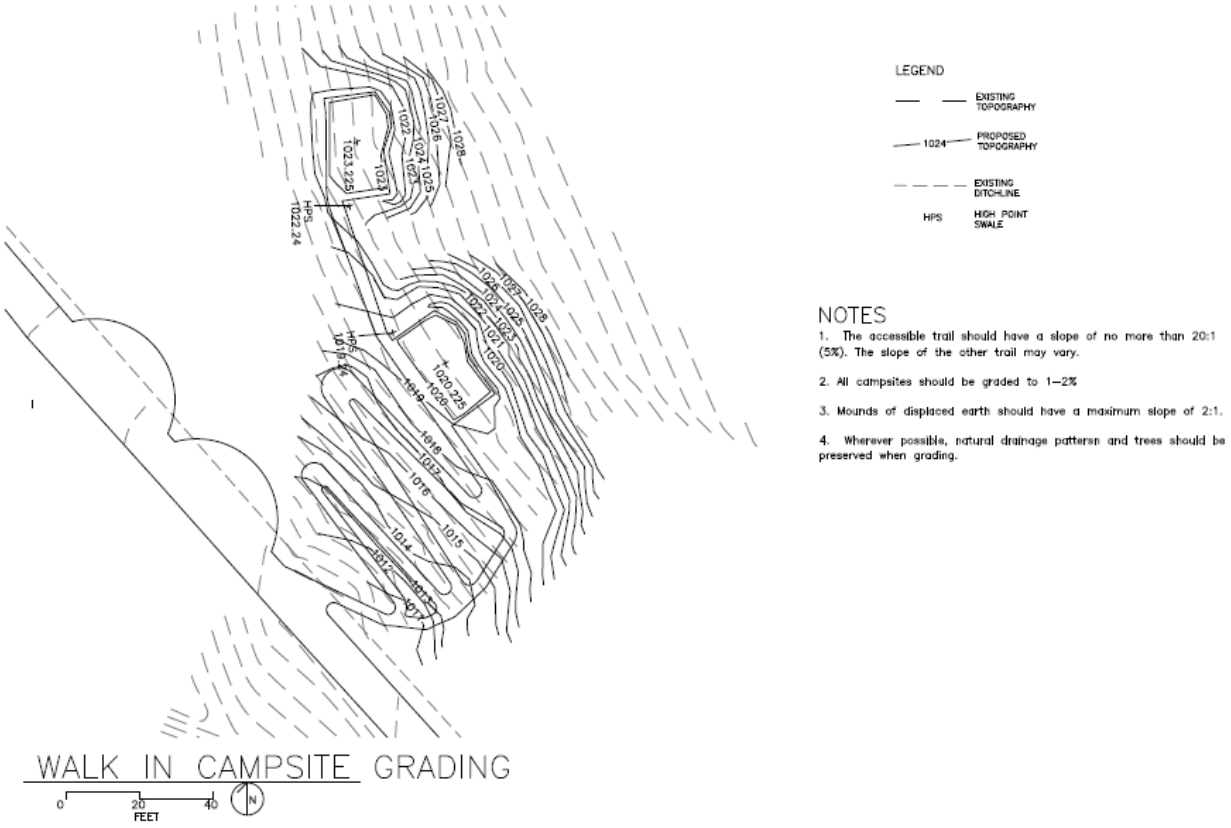
1. Grading at Toilet Building 2 should roughly follow the proposed topography, but may need to be adjusted on site.

2. All driveways should be graded to a maximum slope of 8.33%. All campsites should be graded to 2%–3% as indicated by spot elevations.

3. On campsites 1–5, mounds of displaced earth should have a maximum slope of 2:1.

4. Wherever possible, natural drainage patterns and trees should be preserved when grading.

Figure 5. Grading Plan for sites 9 and 10



Mitigation Measures Required for Implementation of Alternative 2

In addition to applying standard resource protection measures listed in environmental regulations, Forest Service directives, and the Forest Plan, the following specific mitigation measures would be applied to minimize the chance for proposed activities to result in adverse impacts. This table also provides additional details on how to implement Forest Plan direction, especially when Forest Plan direction is general, or a specific method of implementation is recommended to ensure the desired results.

Table 1. Mitigation Measures for Alternative 2, Construction of New Sites

Primary Resource	Mitigation Measure
Soil	To level the new sites, add soil material and gravel from the existing sites that are proposed for decommissioning.
Soil/Aquatics	Limit as much as possible any excavation into the soil profile in new site locations while building stable pads. Specifically sites 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 10 should have limited excavation and pads located adjacent to the spur when possible.. For sites 3 and 5, limit the long access .
Soil/Aquatics	Provide adequate drainage around each new hardened site so that water flows away from each site and into the receiving drainage ditch. Specifically sites 1, 2, 3, and 5 will need additional drainage.
Soil	Site 11 construction will need fill elevating the site to the height of the railroad grade. The material used to fill the site should be coarse, with finer material used to fill at the top to allow for drainage and prevent the water table from wicking upward toward the pad surface.
Soil	There are several ephemeral stream channels and springs located along the road on the upslope position. Avoid disturbing soils within these features and do not install any sites on these soils or adjacent to the channels. Also avoid locating the toilets on soils where the springs pop out of the ground. If the pits for the toilets need to be deeper than the elevation of the seasonal high water table (identified in the soil profile by red and gray redoxamorphic features), material should be added and mounded (such as topsoil or gravel) so that the toilet pits do not sit in water, and the site is well drained around the toilet houses, but beneath the elevation of the newly constructed site 7 and 8 recreation pads.
Soil/Aquatics	During reconstruction of Forest Road 36, to accommodate potential increased flow and sediment load, the ditch line would be larger, may need to be rip rapped, and have larger culverts installed. The newly redesigned road will be rocked and hardened. The cut bank and fill added on the left side of the road will be vegetated according to the botany report specifications.
Soil	During construction of the turn-around at the end of Forest Road 36, the area will need to be rocked and hardened, with the cut banks and fill slopes vegetated according to the botany report specifications; and culverts will be placed to move water into the drainage ditches. Outflows of culverts will be shaped and rocked (armored) with boulders.

Primary Resource	Mitigation Measure
Soil	In order to mitigate against adverse heating effects, slash piles should be dispersed prior to burning as much as possible or should be protected with fire lines.
Soil	Burning on soils that are designated as hydric or have thick O horizons should be prohibited to protect carbon stores that may exist in these areas.
Wildlife – Indiana bat	Tree or snag felling must be conducted during the hibernation period for the Indiana bat (November 15 to March 31) to minimize potential impacts to this species.
NNIS	All construction and maintenance equipment and materials must be free of soil, seeds, plant parts, and other material that could contain or hold seeds when such equipment and materials arrive on National Forest land. Contractor and cooperator equipment and materials may not be cleaned on National Forest land. Forest Service equipment must be cleaned in a manner and location that does not spread invasive species to unimpacted sites and does not contaminate soil or water.
NNIS	Do not bring hay onto National Forest land. If mulch is necessary, use clean straw, coconut fiber, wood fiber, synthetic material, or other Forest Service-approved material that is not likely to contain invasive species. Do not use hay bales for erosion barriers. Substitute silt fencing, clean straw bales, or other Forest Service-approved material that is not likely to contain invasive species.
NNIS	If seeding is necessary, use a native-based seed mix. A non-native, non-invasive cover crop may be used for quick stabilization, but all persistent components of the mix must be native. Seed mixes proposed by contractors and cooperators must be submitted to the Forest Service for approval prior to use.
Heritage	Should potential heritage sites be located during the course of project implementation, the Forest Archaeologist should be notified and activity in that area should cease until the size and nature of the resource can be determined and mitigation measures, if needed are identified.

Table 2. Mitigation Measures for Alternative 2, Restoration of Existing Sites

Primary Resource	Mitigation Measure
Soil	Decommissioning would be done during low flows.

Primary Resource	Mitigation Measure
Soil	At existing hardened sites – remove gravel from site and decompact soil to deepest depth of compaction using a ripping device whether it be a back hoe or some other toothed equipment – Due to the nature of the road and the need to elevate the roads and pads above the subsurface water tables; decompaction may be as deep as 2 feet; however, site is naturally rocky as observed in the undeveloped areas located adjacent to the sites and road. The intent of the decompaction is to restore hydrologic connectivity of the floodplain from the toeslope of the colluvium to the alluvial floodplain to the river and tributary creeks, allow for the reestablishment of vegetation, and remove the road and site pad prisms.
Soil	Remove material used to elevate sites and roads to the elevation of the natural floodplain as seen around the existing campground. Stock pile material to be used at the construction of the new turn around and new pads.
Soil	Backfill areas to match the approximate original contour .
Soil	Use on-site large boulders and rip rap to stabilize site near stream banks.
Soil	Pull back banks as designed by watershed staff.
Soil	Remove bridges and pull back banks to mimic streambank morphology.
Soil	Plant stream banks with riparian vegetation to help stabilize banks – use any existing large rock from the sites to stabilize as needed.
Soil	Plant existing sites with riparian vegetation and seed a stabilizing riparian seed mix suitable for the ecology of the site and to control any potential erosion.

CHAPTER 3 - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

This chapter briefly provides sufficient evidence and analysis of the context and intensity of the environmental impacts of the alternatives for the District Ranger to determine whether to prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact or an Environmental Impact Statement[1]. The no action alternative describes the current conditions and expected future conditions if the proposed action is not implemented.

Chapter 3 is organized by resource, focusing on those resources that may be affected by the proposed action. This chapter is intentionally concise in describing the scope of analysis and affected environment for each resource, and the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects expected for each alternative. Each resource section is a summary of a more detailed resource specialist report. Additional information regarding the analysis of effects for each resource topic is documented in resource specialist reports and/or other files available in the project record.

The cumulative effects disclosed in this chapter rely in part on information summarized in Appendix A: Cumulative Effects Framework. Appendix A includes a list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities determined to be relevant to the cumulative effects analysis for the proposed action. The cumulative effects analysis provides sufficient information to determine whether the effects from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities would combine with effects anticipated from the proposed action to result in a significant cumulative effect. The cumulative effects predictions not only consider the proposed action and information on other actions listed in Appendix A, but also the existing conditions and effects described under the no action alternative. The project record contains further information used to support the analysis of direct, indirect, and cumulative effects.

Analysis was completed to determine if the proposed alternatives would result any unavoidable adverse impacts, or irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources. Unless otherwise noted in a specific resource section, the proposed alternatives would not result in unavoidable adverse impacts, or irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources. Each resource specialist also reviewed the proposed alternatives for consistency with the Forest Plan, as well as with applicable laws, regulations, handbooks, and executive orders. Unless otherwise noted in a specific resource section, the proposed alternatives are consistent with Forest Plan direction, applicable laws, regulations, handbooks, and executive orders. Many of the mitigation measures found in Table 1 and Table 2 contain details on how to implement Forest Plan and other direction, specific to activities proposed under Alternative 2.

[1] 40 CFR 1508.9; 36 CFR Part 220.7 (b)(3)(i). and 36 CFR Part 220.7 (b)(3)(iii)

Heritage Resource (Calabrese 2012)

Scope of the Analysis

The spatial boundary used to evaluate all effects on heritage resources is the area of potential ground and vegetation disturbance from proposed activities. The temporal boundary used to evaluate all effects is the time during which this disturbance would occur, roughly a couple months to a couple years.

Affected Environment

USDA Forest Service archaeological staff conducted a cultural resource survey of the Island Campground project area in September of 2011. The survey was conducted on all areas potentially impacted by actions proposed in Alternative 2. It was determined that implementation of the project would have no effect on historic properties, pursuant to the terms of our Programmatic Agreement with the WV SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

Alternative 1
Alternative 1 would provide protection to potentially unknown intact cultural resources, as no ground disturbance would take place from campground construction. However, because no cultural resources were located during the survey, the potential for existing intact resources is negligible.

Alternative 2
Potential negative direct effects could derive from ground disturbance due to, tree felling, and activities associated with campsite construction (cut/fill, grading, cutting, culvert placement, etc), installation of vault toilet building, as well as road improvement. However, because no cultural resources were located during the survey, the potential for direct, indirect, or cumulative negative effects from this alternative is negligible.

Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Project activities would not result in irreversible or irretrievable commitment of heritage resources.

Consistency with the Forest Plan, Laws, Regulations, and Handbook

The alternatives would be consistent with direction in the Forest Plan, and would meet the requirements of laws, regulations, and Forest Service policy for heritage resources.

Soil Resource (Connolly 2012)

Scope of the Analysis

The spatial boundary used to evaluate direct effects is the delineated boundary of the recreation site and indirectly the Poca Run creek on the south side of the area and the East Fork of the Greenbrier River on the western boundary. The spatial boundary used to address cumulative impacts was the recreation area boundary and subwatershed because beyond the subwatershed boundary effects would be non-detectable.

The temporal boundary used to assess direct and indirect effects was the time since the construction of the existing campground, during construction and up to within one year of the construction of the campground, and including the long-term future of a proposed redesigned campground because this multi time frame takes into account when soil was originally altered to the proposed disturbance and the long-term stability of the site. The temporal boundary used to assess cumulative impacts is the time since the soil was disturbed for the original Island Campground construction.

Affected Environment

The soils in the project area are mapped as Uf—Udifluvents-Fluvaquents complex. These soils are mapped in floodplains along perennial streams in the Greenbrier River watershed. This soil material has been deposited on site by the creek and river systems via flooding as well as receiving material from upslope just out of the floodplain. The soil survey indicates that the water tables in this complex are greater than 80 inches. However, a site investigation (April 6, 2011) showed that for much of the site that was not elevated either by the fill of the road template, the fill in the existing railway grade, or the fill of the developed campsite areas, this was not true. The soils had indicators of ponded water on the soil surface and ponded water was also visible in areas. Soils on the upslope side of the site or northern and north eastern boundary are mapped as an inclusion and have no soil series name listed. (Slope of this area is 2-15% and is a slope break between the floodplain and the steep mountain side.) These colluvial soils had water tables near the soil surface as was evident from the water running out of the soil profile in the cut bank of the ditch line. The soils in the project area are extremely stony, bouldery and cobbly. These rock fragments of varying size create lots of voids to move water readily over the soil surface. However, because part of the site is in a floodplain the groundwater is very close to the surface in many areas. Soil texture is variable given the nature of the alluvial soils and the construction and materials used to build the site and maintain the site over time.

The site shows varying degrees of erosion and does contribute to sediment levels in the streams that surround it. Sediment moves along the ditch line of the road, with the road acting as a source. The biggest sources of sediment from erosion are the stream banks and road at the approaches of the existing bridges and culverts. The floodplain is not allowed to function as naturally, slowly over time eroding and depositing material during and after flood events. However, the presence of State Route 28 also acts as a permanent impediment on the floodplains of both Poca Run and the East Fork of the

Greenbrier River. The existing campground has recreation pads along the stream banks and a road and parking area traversing the project area. These permanent structures have suffered periodic large-scale flooding events and erosion. Maintenance for these sites occurs on a regular basis. Despite regular maintenance, the force of water during high water events has required rip rapping of the site and bank stabilization measures to be installed to protect the site from erosion.

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

Alternative 1
The No Action Alternative would mean that the existing footprint would remain in place. The campsites are all located on the island at the northwest end of the project area. No motor vehicle access would be permitted to the site, and it would be open on a limited basis for walk in use. The soil resource would be adversely affected from the no action in that no restoration of the sites would occur, and these areas would continue to be a permanently committed resource. However, the ability to maintain the sites would also be restricted. Therefore, erosion caused by flooding and natural forces within the floodplain over time would result in Island Campground sites becoming long-term sediment sources, which could permanently threaten or limit the site for any developed recreation use. A large-scale flood event such as the historic 1985 flood within the Greenbrier River watershed could then render the site unusable.

However, No Action would also imply that there would be no new soil disturbance on the east end of the project area. These soils are wet, located partially in the floodplain or at the toe of a slope comprised of colluvial material and large boulders. Their stability is marginal and ephemeral and intermittent flows come from the base of the slope throughout the year. Flows are minimal, but the soils stay wet year-round, with a seasonal water table at 18 inches or less. Not disturbing these soils would be beneficial and avoid the risk of destabilizing the slope. Soil quality would remain intact and no permanent conversion would occur on the estimated 2.5 acres.

The cumulative effect of implementing the No Action would be that the recreation site would erode over time as the floodplain was reclaimed by the stream course. The site would need to be permanently closed. Vegetation would slowly encroach the recreation pads and road, but where fill material is heavily compacted vegetation would most likely not re-grow. The area would remain as a permanently converted site until some point in the long-term future. The sediment would cumulatively add to the other sources over the long term until all of the fill was washed away downstream in the greater Greenbrier watershed.

Direct and Indirect Effects

Alternative 2
This section describes specifically the effects of the proposed action to the soil resource and any design features that would need to be applied to prevent adverse effects and maintain site stability over time. These effects are described based on each specific action related to this project. Mitigation Measures are listed in Table 1and Table 2.

Widening and improving FR-36 within the existing footprint of the road would require both cut and fill in order to widen the road. The ditch line on the right when entering the site would be moved upslope, resulting in a higher cut bank and possibly increased stream flow into the ditch line.

Construction of the new turn around at the end of FR-36 with a minimum of 50' radius would require both removing existing fill and depositing new fill to accommodate the new shape and drainage design.

Construction of 11 new campsites and 9 new parking spurs would require approximately 2.5 acres of soil disturbance and a permanent conversion of land use of the soil resource no longer dedicated to growing trees. Both cut and fill excavation techniques would be used to move the soil according to the design provided by Engineering. The majority of the soil disturbance would be from cuts, resulting in excess soil that would have to be removed from site and deposited out of the floodplain so that it does not become a future sediment source. All soil disturbances would be revegetated as soon as possible post construction activities. Site suitability will be discussed on a site-by-site basis below.

- Sites 1 and 2 would require minimal cut of the bank to build the sites. Site 1 is less than Site 2.

- Sites 6, 7, and 8 would require fill to elevate them out of the floodplain and away from seasonal high water tables making them well drained and desirable for camping. The water table at this end of the project area is lower in the profile than the western portion of the project area. The soils in this location are mixed and made up primarily of both soil and fill brought in and moved around during the construction or State Route 28 and FR-36.

- Sites 3 and 5 are farther back toward the slope of the mountain in location and would require an additional amount of soil excavation to reach grade for the recreation pad. As much as 3 to 12 feet of material would need to be removed at these sites. Large volumes of soil would be moved off site or used at sites 6, 7, 8, or 11 as fill. Design features such as large boulders may be needed to stabilize the cut banks and toe slope of the each site. In addition, soil wetness would be a continual problem at these sites, and maintenance would need to occur routinely to ensure that the banks are stable and the ditch lines around the sites are cleaned out. There is a moderate to high risk that slope creep and sloughing may also happen, which could require periodic partial to full reconstruction of the site depending on the amount of sloughing that may occur.

- Site 12 is located on the existing rail road grade. This site would need to be hardened but is elevated out of the floodplain and should remain well drained.

- Site 11 is located in a wet area with an inclusion of hydric soils (identified on site – samples and pictures taken by the North Zone Watershed Technician and

identified by Soil Scientist 12/21/11), indicating that soil moisture is at or near the surface year-round.

- Sites 10 and 9 are walk-in sites to tent camping pads. There is minimal excavation required to establish these sites on a microtopographic bench on the natural landscape. There is an existing game trail leading up the slope and a small switch-back trail would be hand created on a hiking grade. There would be minimal soil resource impacts and disturbance needed to create these sites, with no adverse effects.

Site 9 and 10 require a road side parking area for each one. These areas would require some excavation off the road template. Mitigations for revegetating cutbanks, establishing ditching around the parking areas and installation for culverts would be needed. The parking areas would be hardened with gravel and shaped for positive drainage.

The installation of a kiosk and fee station would require minimal soil disturbance for a small hardened area and the excavation of post holes.

The installation of a new toilet located adjacent to sites 7 and 8 would require specially constructed vaults to be used in floodplains where water tables are at or near the soil surface. These special vault toilets are designed for use in the floodplain. Excavation of a foundation would be required to set the vault in place. The hole would be filled with appropriate engineering material as specified in the Engineering design plan.

Removal of existing restroom facility and campsites; rehabilitation of the ground to return it to a natural state would require soil disturbance. These sites are considered as a permanent commitment of the soil resource, and this proposal acts to return soil quality and site productivity to them by removal of the physical structures and treatment of the soil and fill to grow new vegetation (including trees) in the future. Over time this area would equilibrate as much as allowed to by the existing road to the south and the existing structures of the recreation area that will remain in place. The newly constructed sites would have little influence on the immediate floodplain.

Decommissioning of these sites may include soil disturbance associated with the following:

- Removal of riprap on the stream side position of the campsites. All boulders and fill should be removed out of the floodplain and either used as part of the new construction or hauled offsite to be disposed of outside of the floodplain.

- Ripping of the pads and the road and removal of material to the elevation of the stream channel or natural bank elevation.

- Removal of all culverts and bridges, and removal of constructed abutments used to support the infrastructure of the bridges. All of this material would be disposed of properly and outside of the floodplain.

Cumulative Effects

Implementation of the Proposed Action to its full extent would result in less of an effect to detrimental soil quality effects because fewer acres of soil would be permanently converted and committed for other land use. Rehabilitating the existing sites and the road to them would reduce the potential for adverse effects in the Poca Run watershed and the East Fork of the Greenbrier at the confluence. Otherwise, more of the floodplain would be remain hardened, which would continue to interfere with the hydrologic function of the area, and sources of potential sediment and erosion would be approximately doubled within the project area.

Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Alternative 1
There will be no net change to the 4 acres of soil resource in an irreversible state.

Alternative 2
Alternative 2 would result in the restoration of the site and the beginning of soil quality and site productivity restoration on 4 acres; however, the newly constructed sites of the proposed action would result in 2.5 acres of irreversible loss to the soil resource.

Consistency with the Forest Plan, Laws, Regulations, and Handbook

Alternative 1
This alternative is not consistent with the current Forest Plan in that the recreation site and conversion of the soil resource into a permanent loss is located in the floodplain.

Alternative 2
The Proposed Action, if implemented fully, would comply with the Forest Plan.

Aquatic Resource (Hayes and Owen 2012)

Scope of Analysis

The spatial boundary used for analysis of effects includes the project area along with the section of Poca Run adjacent to the project area; north of State Route 28 to the confluence with the East Fork of the Greenbrier River. Effects on aquatic populations or habitats would not likely be observable or detectable beyond this boundary.

The temporal boundary used for analysis of effects (direct, indirect and cumulative) is 5 years. Construction is expected to take less than 2 months. Any short-term increases

in sedimentation from initial construction should return to pre-construction levels after vegetation is established, although long-term increases in sedimentation may persist for several years before soil conditions stabilize.

Affected Environment

The affected environment for the project is within the watershed of the Headwaters of the East Fork of the Greenbrier River and the lowest reach of Poca Run, as it joins the East Fork of the Greenbrier River. The Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) is 050500030102. The East Fork of the Greenbrier River is considered to have moderately good to good water quality, neutral pH, and it supports a relatively healthy coldwater fishery. The riparian vegetation within the project area is mostly intact apart from areas directly adjacent to an Island Campground parking area, river access point, and walk-in camping sites. Large woody debris is largely absent from this portion of the watershed.

The current location of the campground and walk-in sites are within the mapped floodplain of the East Fork of the Greenbrier River and Poca Run. Both watersheds are important resources for the eastern brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis)*, a Management Indicator Species (MIS) for the Forest, and the associated aquatic community. Streams within the Headwaters of the East Fork of the Greenbrier River are currently inhabited by 26 fish species. Four fish species and one aquatic amphibian species listed as Regional Foresters Sensitive Species (RFSS) are known to occur in the Headwaters East Fork Greenbrier watershed. These aquatic RFSS include candy darter (*Etheostoma osburni),* Appalachian darter (*Percina gymnocephala),* New River shiner (*Notropis scabriceps),* Kanawha minnow (*Phenacobius teretulus*), and eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis)* (Welsh *et al. 2007).* Preferred habitat for these RFSS include clear water with cool to cold water temperatures and substrate consisting of gravel to cobble size material with low incidence of fine sediments. The East Fork of the Greenbrier River in this area is also currently stocked by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) with hatchery raised trout. More detail on the current condition of this watershed is available in the Upper Greenbrier Watershed Assessment.

The existing campground has hardened sites that prohibit water infiltration and hinder floodwater storage potential of a normally functioning floodplain. Several of these sites are immediately adjacent to Poca Run or East Fork of the Greenbrier River and are currently preventing the growth of streamside vegetation due to continued use and compaction. The far end of Forest Road 36 is elevated above normal grade and therefore acting as a dike in high-water events, cutting off part of the natural floodplain and channeling water around it. The current ditch line for Forest Road 36 through the area of proposed campsites continues approximately 900 feet before going into a culvert under a parking area. The ditch line then continues and empties into a side channel of East Fork of the Greenbrier River.

Direct and Indirect Effects

Alternative 1
In the no action alternative, the existing campground would remain on the landscape and continue to be used as a day use or walk-in camping facility. This section of the floodplain would not be restored to a more natural state where it could function properly as a floodplain. Streamside areas at the hardened sites and river access points would not be revegetated. Hardened areas would not be decompacted to allow water infiltration, vegetative recovery, and floodplain restoration. These impediments to natural floodplain conditions and function would be long term. However, new sites would not be constructed and would not generate new sources of sediment into the East Fork of the Greenbrier River watershed.

Alternative 2
The proposed action involves widening and improving Forest Road 36, constructing a new turnaround at the end of Forest Road 36, constructing 11 new campsites and parking spurs, installing a new toilet building, and removing and rehabilitating existing campsites, access roads, and toilet buildings from the floodplain area. More details are available in Chapter 2.

All soil-disturbing activities in the Proposed Action have the potential for producing sediment to nearby streams. Activities related to rehabilitation may have an initial short-term increase in sediment production that will subside after construction ceases and vegetation is established. There are long-term benefits from this type of action, including restoring the riparian and wetland ecosystem to a more natural state. Soil disturbing activities relating to road widening and campsite development will also have an initial increase of sediment production during construction. However, these activities may also have long-term consequences regarding increased sediment production due to persistent areas with bare soil and additional ground water interception that may cause increased runoff and erosion of destabilized soils.

Excavating the new campsites as described in Figure 4 has the potential to increase sedimentation during the construction phase and over time as these sites are expected to need long-term maintenance associated with slope instability issues. The grading plan shows excavation into the slope to build the tent pads of sites 1, 2, 3 and 5 (campsite 4 is no longer being considered for development because it elicited the most concern). This excavation is shown to have a change in natural grade from 3-5 feet along the toe of hillslope where stream channels and seeps are relatively common. Extensive soil moisture may be encountered at 18 inches of depth along this toeslope. The Forest Hydrologist has predicted that proposed excavation would bring more groundwater to the surface more frequently and likely create persistent problems with soil erosion and slope instablility.

Increased sediment production from newly developed campsites would likely be delievered to Poca Run through the ditch line conveyance and contribute to aquatic habitat degredation downstream. Most aquatic species that are native to the Headwaters East Fork of the Greenbrier River watershed depend on colder streams with clean gravel and cobble-dominated substrate. As larger particle sizes in the stream substrates become embedded with smaller grains such as sand and silt, these finer sediments tend to clog interstitial spaces between the larger substrate particles and impair the utility and productivity associated with these habitats. This increased stream sedimentation can have a negative influence on the reproductive success of aquatic organisms and can adversely alter the composition and productivity of aquatic benthic communities.

The magnitude and duration of anticipated effects to aquatic resources from increased sediment production and slope instability can be reduced by incorporating design features and mitigation measures that have previously been developed through an interdisciplinary process for these campsites. The recommended design features and mitigation measures are listed in Table 1 and Table 2.

A small portion of ephemeral wetland would be filled to create campsite 11. The area of disturbance is estimated to be less than a thousand square feet. This amount would not likely have any substantive effect on the size or function of the ephemeral wetland.

Cumulative Effects

Alternative 1
The No Action alternative does not propose new activity and therefore, it would not produce any direct or indirect effects. Since there will be no direct or indirect effects from this alternative, it would not alter the existing cumulative effects associated with the aquatic and riparian resources.

Alternative 2
The Proposed Action, along with proposed mitigation measures, would be expected to lessen the degree of sediment increases such that long-term cumulative benefits could be realized.

Cumulative effects associated with Alternative 2 would be expected to result in the following determinations for Regional Forester's sensitive fish species.

- candy darter (*Etheostoma osburni*) - may impact individuals but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability
- New River shiner (*Notropis scabriceps*) - may impact individuals but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability
- Appalachian darter (*Percina gymnocephala)* – may impact individuals but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability
- Kanawha minnow (*Phenacobius teretulus*) – may impact individuals but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability
- eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*) – may impact individuals but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability

Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

It is expected that there would be no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources associated with aquatic or riparian habitat associated with either alternative.

Consistency with the Forest Plan, Laws, Regulations, and Handbook

The No Action alternative is consistent with the Forest Plan; however it is not contributing to Goals SW 29 and SW 33 because it would not restore floodplain function or mitigate resource damage caused by existing facilities. The Proposed Action is consistent with the Forest Plan direction but it is not consistent with Guideline SW 51, avoiding ground disturbance in wetlands. In this instance, the ground disturbance in the ephemeral wetland would be much less than a thousand square feet and would not have substantive effects. The Proposed Action is consistent with all applicable laws, regulations, handbooks and executive orders.

Vegetation Resource (Karriker 2012)

This EA discloses the expected effects of the Island Campground Reconstruction Project on botanical resources, including non-native invasive plant species and threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant species. Other terrestrial ecological resources, including old growth, ecological reserves, Botanical Areas, and Research Natural Areas, are not discussed in detail. The proposed action would have a very small footprint and would have no effect on these other terrestrial ecological resources.

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species

Scope of Analysis

The spatial boundary used to evaluate direct and indirect effects was the project area boundary as depicted in the map accompanying Chapter 2 of this EA. This boundary was used because it contains all of the activities associated with the project. The direct and indirect effects on botanical resources are not expected to extend substantially beyond the footprint of the construction and rehabilitation activities. The project area boundary was also used to evaluate cumulative effects. Direct and indirect effects are expected to be minimal or non-existent, so cumulative effects would not occur outside the project boundary.

The temporal boundary used to assess direct, indirect, and cumulative effects was a ten-year time frame. All project activities, including any necessary invasive species control work, should be implemented well within that time frame.

Affected Environment

No threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species were found in or near Island Campground during recent area surveys.

Direct and Indirect Effects

The botanical survey covered the project area in its entirety and did not locate any threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species. Nearby surveys did not locate any threatened, endangered, or sensitive species immediately adjacent to the project area. Therefore, we can be reasonably certain that both alternatives would have no direct or indirect effects on threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants.

Cumulative Effects

Because neither alternative would have any direct or indirect effects on threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants, neither alternative would contribute to any cumulative effects on these species.

Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Neither alternative would have any direct, indirect, or cumulative effects on threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants. Therefore, neither alternative would make any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources with respect to threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants.

Consistency with the Forest Plan, Laws, Regulations, and Handbook

Because neither alternative would have any effects on threatened, endangered, and sensitive plants, both alternatives would be consistent with Forest Plan direction, with all laws, regulations, and directives that relate to these species.

Non-native Invasive Plant Species

Scope of Analysis

The spatial boundary used to evaluate direct and indirect effects was the project area boundary as depicted in the map accompanying Chapter 2 of this EA. This boundary was used because it contains all of the activities associated with the project. The direct and indirect effects on botanical resources are not expected to extend substantially beyond the footprint of the construction and rehabilitation activities. The project area boundary was also used to evaluate cumulative effects. Direct and indirect effects are expected to be minimal or non-existent, so cumulative effects would not occur outside the project boundary.

The temporal boundary used to assess direct, indirect, and cumulative effects was a ten-year time frame. All project activities, including any necessary invasive species control work, should be implemented well within that time frame.

Affected Environment

An infestation of invasive bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera morrowii* and/or *L. maackii*) was located by the botany survey in 2004. In 2010 this infestation was approved for herbicide treatment as part of the Forest-wide Non-native Invasive Plant Project, but the treatment has not been implemented yet.

Ongoing use and maintenance of the site as a walk-in campground presents a small risk of new or expanded invasive plant infestations. Invasive plant seeds or parts could be brought in on visitor's vehicles and camping equipment. Continued maintenance mowing of the Forest Road 36 shoulder may result in new or expanded infestations due to plant parts being moved by the mowing equipment.

Direct and Indirect Effects

Alternative 1
Alternative 1 would not involve any new activities. Therefore, for non-native invasive plants, Alternative 1 would have no effects beyond the existing condition described in the Affected Environment.

Alternative 2
Construction activities associated with Alternative 2 could facilitate the spread of invasive plants by introducing plant seeds or parts via dirty equipment or contaminated materials. This risk would be reduced by implementing the design features in Table 1. If any new or expanded infestations occur, they could be controlled under the authorization provided by the Forest-wide Non-native Invasive Plant Project. They could also be controlled under the Categorical Exclusion that provides for the repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities [36 CFR 220.6(d)(5)]. Assuming the preventative design features are implemented, the potential for new or expanded infestations is low. Because of the existing authorizations that would allow elimination of infestations before they become large and difficult to control, any infestations that may occur are expected to be temporary, and they are not likely to have any appreciable effect on surrounding resources.

Long-term use and maintenance of the reconstructed campground would present a small risk of new or expanded infestations, which is similar to the existing condition.

Cumulative Effects

Alternative 1
Alternative 1 would have no direct or indirect effects related to non-native invasive plants; therefore, Alternative 1 would not contribute to the cumulative effects of other activities.

Alternative 2
Because Alternative 2 would have only a minimal risk of spreading non-native invasive plants, Alternative 2 would be unlikely to make a measurable contribution to the cumulative effects of other actions.

Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Neither alternative would have any appreciable direct, indirect, or cumulative effects relative to non-native invasive plants. Therefore, neither alternative would make any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources with respect to non-native invasive plants.

Consistency with the Forest Plan, Laws, Regulations, and Policy

Alternative 1
Alternative 1would have no effects relative to non-native invasive plants, so this alternative would be consistent with Forest Plan direction, laws, regulations, and directives that relate to invasive species.

Alternative 2
Because Alternative 2 risks spreading invasive plants through dirty equipment and contaminated materials, design features must be implemented to maintain consistency with Forest Plan direction (see Forest Plan standards and guidelines VE21, VE22, and VE23 on p. II-20 of the *Monongahela National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan*). Provided the design features in Table 1 are followed, Alternative 2 would be consistent with the applicable Forest Plan direction for invasive species.

Alternative 2 would require the implementation of invasive species prevention measures to maintain consistency with Executive Order 13112 and Forest Service directives contained in Forest Service Manual 2900 (USDA 2011c). Provided the design features in Table 1 are followed, Alternative 2 would be consistent with the Executive Order and directives related to invasive species.

Threatened and Endangered Terrestrial Wildlife Species (Jones 2011a)

Scope of Analysis

Due to the small project area and projected limited habitat impact, the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects spatial boundary is the project area.

Affected Environment

All terrestrial threatened and endangered (T&E) animal species on the Forest were considered in this analysis. A review of all T&E records showed that there were no terrestrial T&E animal species or designated Critical Habitat known to occur in or near the proposed project area. The project area does not provide potential habitat for Cheat Mountain salamander, and there is no evidence that the area is used by the West Virginia flying squirrel or Virginia big-eared bat. However, it is assumed that the project area may be occupied by Indiana bats during the non-hibernation period. The Indiana bat may roost in trees and snags in the area from April 1 to November 14 each year. However, there would likely be no negative impacts to Indiana bat or other T&E animal species or habitat due to the size, scope and nature of the proposed action. The entire project area is less than 5 acres in size and it is expected that less than 12 trees (greater than 3" in diameter at base height) would need to be cut to install new campsites and facilities. Furthermore, the project was designed to protect as many overstory trees (especially healthy hemlock) in the area as possible.

Indiana Bat
To avoid potential impacts to the Indiana bat, any tree (> 5 inches DBH) or snag felling on National Forest property associated with this project must be conducted during the hibernation period for the Indiana bat (November 15 to March 31) (see Table 1).

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

Alternative 1
Alternative 1 would not involve any changes from the existing condition. Therefore, Alternative 1 is considered to have no effects to the Indiana bat beyond the existing condition described in the Affected Environment subsections.

Alternative 2
Due to the limited size and scope of the project, it is anticipated that activities associated with this project would have no direct negative effect on Indiana bat, if tree or snag felling is conducted prior to April 1.

Effects Determination

The effects determination for both alternatives on all T&E species, including the Indiana bat, is no effect.

Consistency with the Forest Plan, Laws, Regulations, and Policy

The no action and action alternatives would be consistent with direction in the Forest Plan, and would meet the requirements of laws, regulations, and Forest Service policy.

Other Wildlife Species of Concern

This section summarizes the analysis of terrestrial fauna listed on the Regional Forester's Sensitive Species (RFSS) list.

Scope of Analysis

Population viability for RFSS is addressed at the Forest-wide scale because the regulatory requirement for maintaining viable populations specifically addresses Forest-wide viability, rather than site-specific viability.

Affected Environment

The analysis for the sixty-nine terrestrial wildlife species can be found in the Likelihood of Occurrence table (Jones 2011b).

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

Alternative 1
Alternative 1 would not involve any changes from the existing condition. As such, the majority of the project area would continue to provide minimal habitat for RFSS. Therefore, Alternative 1 is considered to have no effect on RFSS.

Alternative 2
No terrestrial animal species on the RFSS list would be adversely impacted by the relocation and reconstruction of the Island Campground.

Consistency with the Forest Plan, Laws, Regulations, and Policy

The no action and action alternatives would be consistent with direction in the Forest Plan, and would meet the requirements of laws, regulations, and Forest Service policy.

Recreation Resource (Sherman 2011)

Scope of the Analysis

The scope of analysis includes all recreation resources on the Greenbrier Ranger District, including the Wilderness and Roadless Area resources within the vicinity of the Island Campground Reconstruction Project Area.

The spatial boundary used to evaluate direct, indirect, and cumulative effects will be the project area and the East Fork Greenbrier Roadless Area. Analysis beyond these boundaries is not necessary because of the localized nature of this project.

Affected Environment

The project area is bordered by Management Prescriptions 3.0 (Vegetation Diversity) and 6.2 (Backcountry Recreation) and is within the existing Island Campground corridor.

Recreation

Visitors to Island Campground are either participating in overnight camping or using this area for day-use opportunities. The two most common day-use activities are hiking and fishing.

Island Campground was historically a six site campground with sites accessible by motor vehicle. In April 2010, two bridges leading to campsites two through six were closed to vehicular traffic because they failed safety inspections. However, they remained open for pedestrian use. Campsites two through six were converted to walk-in only units. To accommodate the parking for these walk-in campsites, campsite number one was converted into a parking lot, leaving only five usable walk-in campsite units. Each unit has a picnic table, fire ring, lantern post, and the site has two vault toilet buildings. These current site features are not accessible to people with disabilities. All of the existing campsites are within the 100-year floodplain of the East Fork of the Greenbrier River.

Fishing is the most common day-use activity of Island Campground. Anglers park in the parking lot (previously campsite 1) or at a small parking lot next to the vault toilets. Visitors walk across the bridges to the East Fork of the Greenbrier River on the western edge of the campground or south to Long Run, a tributary of the East Fork, on the southern edge of the campground. The state used to stock fish at the campground, but since the bridges closed, they stock downstream of the campground from State Route 28.

Hiking is the second most popular day-use activity in this area. The East Fork Trail's (TR 365) southern trailhead is in Island Campground near the existing vault toilets. This is a multi-use (pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists), non-motorized trail. Four parking spaces are provided at the trailhead. Additional parking is located in the campground parking area. The trail receives very low use.

Wilderness

There are no wilderness areas adjacent to the project area. The closest Wilderness Areas are the Laurel Fork North and Laurel Fork South Wildernesses, which are approximately five (5) air miles to the northwest.

Roadless Areas

Island Campground is adjacent to the East Fork Greenbrier Roadless Area and serves as part of the southern boundary to this area. With a total acreage of 10,156 acres,

natural appearance and integrity are high in most areas, with exceptions near private lands and developed recreation areas, such as Island Campground.

Direct and Indirect Effects

Recreation

Alternative 1

The No Action Alternative would continue to allow walk-in camping at the existing five sites. This alternative would not address the safety issue of camping within the 100-year flood plain. Other upgrades, such as accessible toilet facilities and bear-resistant trash containers, would not be installed. As the picnic tables, vault toilets, fire rings, bridges, toilet, and any other campground amenities become unsafe for visitor use, they will be removed and not replaced.

Recreationists would continue to be allowed to fish. Existing parking would remain. Overnight and day-use activities would start to overlap in the same location, causing user conflicts.

Implementing the Alternative 1 would not change the existing hiker, equestrian, or bicycle experience on the East Fork Trail.

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would relocate all of the campsites out of the 100-year floodplain, provide for drive-in access to most sites, and furnish each campsite with accessible features.

Alternative 2 proposes 11 campsites, which would increase the total number of campsites currently available. Occupancy limits would be enforced (8 people/2 vehicles at single sites and 16 people/4 vehicles at double sites) when the campground is reconstructed.

With Alternative 2, campsites will be smaller, closer together, and closer to State Route 28 than in the existing campground. These three factors could affect the amount of privacy and potential for noise carrying from one campsite to another. However, separating the day users (hikers and anglers) from the campers would increase one aspect of privacy because day users would not be walking through campsites to get to the river.

Alternative 2 would allow for a $10 per night fee for camping. Holders of the Senior or Access Federal Passports would pay $5 per night. Revenue collected would help pay for the operation and maintenance of Island Campground.

The new vault toilet would be accessible and adjacent to the campground road. This would make it easier for people with disabilities to use the facility, and will also allow for easier maintenance and pumping.

The new trash containers would be bear-resistant. The inability of bears and other wildlife to get to food scraps and trash easily would lessen the likelihood of them frequenting the campground, increasing visitor safety and safety of the wildlife.

Anglers would continue to use the existing parking lot and walk to either Long Run or the East Fork of the Greenbrier River. The bridges would remain in place and open to pedestrians. People would not be able to use the existing campsites for overnight stays. Separating the day and overnight users would provide more space and solitude for each.

People would not be allowed to park in the existing parking area near the old vault toilets because that area would become a part of the motor vehicle turn-around. This would mean a slightly longer walk from the parking area to the old bridges for day users.

The current vault toilets would be removed and a new toilet installed in the middle of the camping area. This would mean a slightly longer walk for day users needing to use the toilet.

Wilderness

Alternative 1
There are no foreseeable effects to Wilderness with Alternative 1. The closest congressionally designated wilderness to Island Campground is approximately 5 miles away.

Alternative 2
The proposed action will have no affect on Wilderness.

Roadless Areas

Alternative 1
People can enter the East Fork Greenbrier Roadless Area by hiking the East Fork Trail from Island Campground. Alternative 1 would not change the type or amount of use of this trail.

With Alternative 1, people would continue to be allowed to camp at the Island Campground walk-in campsites, there would continue to be noise and visual effects to anyone hiking the beginning of the East Fork Trail or hiking cross county on the hillside within the East Fork Greenbrier Roadless Area that overlooks Island Campground.

Alternative 2
Effects to the East Fork Greenbrier Roadless Area would be minimal and short in duration. Construction of the campground may create additional noise in the area, possibly affecting solitude. However, natural topography, the existing highway already creating traffic sounds, and the short duration of the construction time, should negate possible negative impacts.

The reconstruction of campsites 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 10 would place them close to the Roadless Area. The potential for additional use in the Roadless Area is slim because of this relocation, however. The backside of the newly constructed campsites is a very steep, rocky hillside with no trails or destination attractions.

Cumulative Effects

Even though the scope of analysis for the recreation resource area is the project area, cumulative effects to the recreation opportunities in Pocahontas County need to be considered. The closing of Bird Run Campground in 2008 (20-miles to the south) and the degradation of Island Campground, has caused a decrease in the recreation opportunities in Pocahontas County. Reopening Island Campground with its improved facilities and additional campsites would help reduce the effects of recent campground closings on this type of developed recreation opportunity.

For the Wilderness and Roadless Area Resources, there are no cumulative effects with either alternative.

Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

For the Recreation, Wilderness, and Roadless Area Resources, there is no irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

Consistency with the Forest Plan, Laws, Regulations, and Handbook

Alternative 2 would be consistent with direction in the Forest Plan, and would meet the requirements of laws, regulations, and Forest Service policy. Alternative 1 would not be consistent with recent Forest Service policy changes regarding the location of campgrounds in floodplains.

CHAPTER 4 - PREPARERS, CONTACTS, AND LITERATURE CITED

Persons Who Prepared or Contributed to This EA

The following Monongahela National Forest interdisciplinary personnel helped prepare or contributed to the 2012 Island Campground Construction Project and this environmental assessment.

Table 2. Persons Who Prepared or Contributed to the EA

Personnel	Position
John Calabrese	Forest Archeologist
Stephanie Connolly	Forest Soil Scientist
David Ede	Forest Planner & Environmental Coordinator
Julie Fosbender	Recreation Manager
Lindsey Hayes	Watershed Technician
Shane Jones	Wildlife Biologist
Lauren Marshall	Landscape Architect
Brandon Olinger	Recreation Technician
Michael Owen	Aquatic Ecologist
Eric Sandeno	Recreation Program Manager, Team Leader
Ed Sherman	Developed Recreation Manager
Jack Tribble	District Ranger and Responsible Official

Agencies & Persons Consulted

A scoping letter was sent to an estimated 550 non-Forest Service individuals, organizations, and local, state, and federal agencies. Eight responses were received. Please see the project record for the complete scoping mailing list and the responses.

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Appendix A

Past, Present, or Reasonably Foreseeable Actions in or near the Project Area

Activity	Past, Present, or Future Action	Estimated Acres Affected
Coal mining and road building & maintenance prior to federal ownership	Past	600
Timber harvest, skid trails, road building & maintenance prior to federal ownership	Past	2617
Road building and maintenance subsequent to federal ownership	Past	Unknown
Wildfires	Past	Unknown
Recreation on NFS lands	Ongoing	Dispersed
Road and trail maintenance	Ongoing	Variable
Native Plantings	Past	16
Spruce/Cherry TSI (45 acres)	Future	45
Barton Knob Repeater	Past	3
Barton Bench Restoration Project	Ongoing	100
Island Campground, hemlock wooly adelgid treatments	Ongoing	10