

Approved For Release 2010/05/17 : CIA-RDP89-00244R001002410010-8

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GWMP

**GEORGE WASHINGTON
MEMORIAL PARKWAY
SPOUT RUN TO THEODORE ROOSEVELT BRIDGE
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT SUMMARY**

AUGUST 1985

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United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

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Dear Friends,

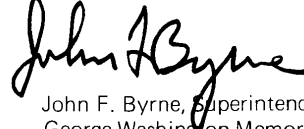
The National Park Service has just released a *Draft Environmental Impact Statement* for a 1.6-mile section of George Washington Memorial Parkway (between Spout Run and Theodore Roosevelt Bridge) and Spout Run Parkway. The DEIS analyzes four alternative ways of addressing peak-hour traffic congestion and safety concerns on that section of the parkway, and it identifies the alternative preferred by the National Park Service.

Our challenge has been to reduce commuter traffic congestion and improve safety while protecting and enhancing the scenic and recreational values of the parkway. We feel the preferred alternative meets these two goals. We hope you will review this summary of the issues and alternatives and share your opinions and suggestions with us about meeting these goals. We have enclosed a response sheet for your convenience.

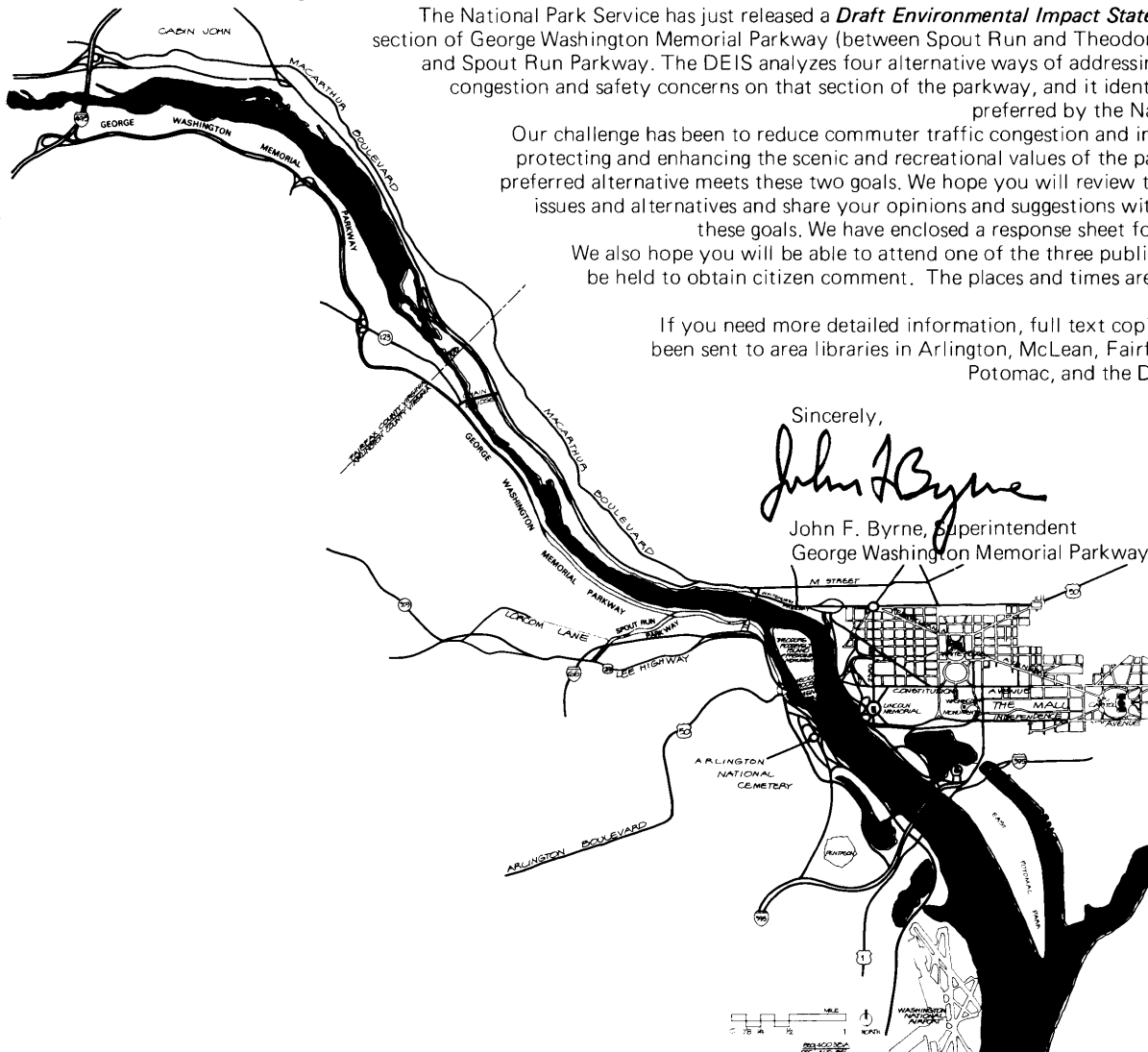
We also hope you will be able to attend one of the three public meetings that will be held to obtain citizen comment. The places and times are listed at the end of this booklet.

If you need more detailed information, full text copies of the DEIS have been sent to area libraries in Arlington, McLean, Fairfax, Reston, Vienna, Potomac, and the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,



John F. Byrne, Superintendent
George Washington Memorial Parkway



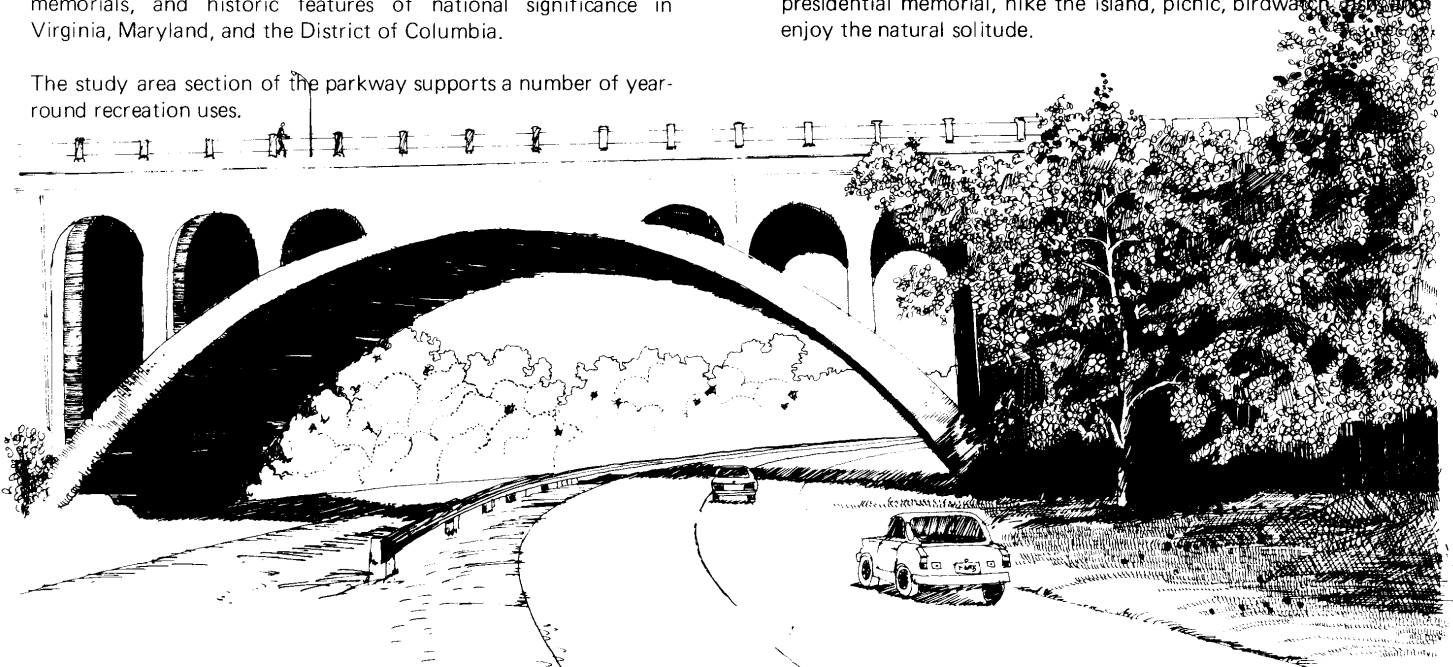
GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL PARKWAY – MORE THAN A ROAD

A parkway is not only a road — it is parkland encompassing a roadway. Unlike most roads, it is designed to be in harmony with the features of the landscape. All the parkway features work together to create an experience of comfortable driving in pleasant surroundings.

The George Washington Memorial Parkway, established by Congress in 1930, is an outstanding example of the parkway concept and has been recognized worldwide as one of the finest scenic gateways to a major city. For more than 50 years the parkway has been an integral part of the park system of our nation's capital, which many believe is the most beautiful in the world. In addition to a road designed for scenic driving, the parkway contains and connects a number of recreational sites, memorials, and historic features of national significance in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

The study area section of the parkway supports a number of year-round recreation uses.

Hiking, bicycling, fishing along the river, and picnicking beneath the trees are enjoyed by both Washington area residents and visitors. The completion of a pedestrian and bicycle bridge from Rosslyn will directly link the parkway to the northern Virginia bicycle trail system and make a bicycle trip from Mount Vernon to Leesburg and the Shenandoah Valley possible. In addition, the George Washington Memorial Parkway is within the corridor of the congressionally authorized Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Studies are currently underway to identify specific routes for the trail. One of the principal activity sites within the study area is Roosevelt Island, a national historic site dedicated to President and conservationist Theodore Roosevelt. The island remains largely undisturbed and forested. Each year thousands of visitors are drawn to this natural open space to visit the presidential memorial, hike the island, picnic, birdwatch, fish, and enjoy the natural solitude.



PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

Despite the fact that the completion of I-66 and the extension of the Metrorail to the Virginia suburbs were expected to significantly reduce commuter problems in the western portion of the Washington metropolitan area, peak-hour traffic problems persist throughout the region. Because of its location and proximity to other regional transportation systems, GWMP not only serves as a scenic memorial approach to the nation's capital, it also becomes a congested commuter route during the morning and evening rush hours. Like most of the highways in the metropolitan area, the study area roadway now carries traffic volumes that exceed the design capacity. The heavy rush hour traffic, the high traffic speeds during nonpeak periods, and the condition of the road surface, all contribute to a frequent occurrence of rear-end, sideswipe, and run-off-the-road accidents.

Within the study area morning congestion begins at the intersection of Spout Run and Lorcom Lane. Currently, the traffic turning left from Lorcom Lane onto inbound Spout Run is accommodated by closing the outbound portion of the parkway and allowing uninterrupted inbound turns. Where inbound Spout Run merges into inbound GWMP, long backups occur on both parkways. No exit to Key Bridge and Rosslyn is allowed during the morning rush hour because neither Rosslyn Circle, Key Bridge, nor the connecting streets in Georgetown can accommodate this traffic; backups on GWMP and increased traffic congestion in Arlington would occur. Traffic headed into the District must therefore use the Roosevelt Bridge, which is also heavily congested. This results in substantial traffic backups from the bridge onto the parkway.

In the evening, high outbound traffic volumes on Roosevelt Bridge create congestion on the bridge, the on-ramp to GWMP, and the outbound parkway. The congestion is aggravated at the on-ramp from Key Bridge because of the high volume of outbound vehicles entering the parkway at this location. Traffic remains highly congested to the Spout Run exit because of traffic merging and weaving problems.

The traffic congestion on the parkway is part of a more general problem that occurs throughout the greater metropolitan area. Consequently, any proposal to improve traffic flow on GWMP must be developed in the context of how traffic patterns would shift throughout the overall network of connecting roadways and streets. For example, Key and Roosevelt bridges, which link the study area section of GWMP with city streets in Washington and Rosslyn, also carry rush hour traffic volumes that exceed their design capacities, and this creates traffic backups on the parkway. The roadway intersections at the east ends of these bridges (M Street at Key Bridge and 23rd Street and Constitution Avenue at Roosevelt Bridge) are a long-term fixed constraint on capacity, and the greatest morning traffic congestion occurs at these intersections.

The heavy traffic volumes carried on GWMP, along with high speeds and bad weather conditions, are a contributing factor to accidents. Rear-end collision accidents are the most frequently recorded type within the study area, and they occur primarily during peak traffic hours. However, the three fatal accidents recorded during the past three years in the study area all occurred at night.

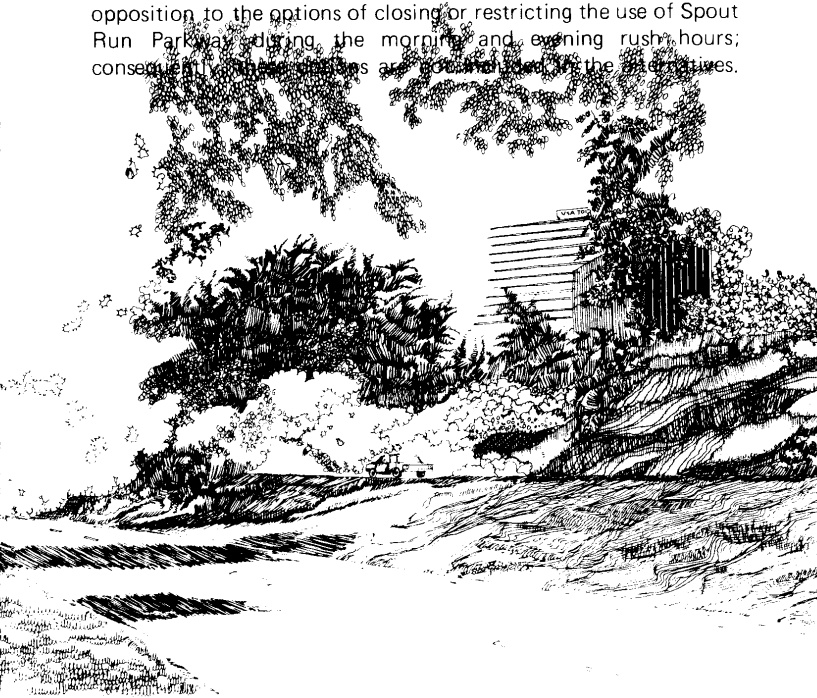
In addition to traffic congestion and highway safety, GWMP presents additional concerns that are not generally shared by other regional roadways. These are the needs to perpetuate the visual qualities that distinguish it as a parkway, to protect the scenic values of the Potomac River valley, and to provide recreational and other park experiences for the local, regional, and national public. The study area section of the parkway is a narrow band of parkland tucked between Arlington and the Potomac River, and it is extremely susceptible to the loss of its parklike character if its thin vegetative buffer is disturbed. Over the years, there has also been a general erosion of the pleasurable aspects of parkway use. Increasing traffic congestion has contributed to this decline. However, reducing this traffic problem will not reverse the decline unless it is accomplished in a manner that also protects the parkway's scenic and recreational values.

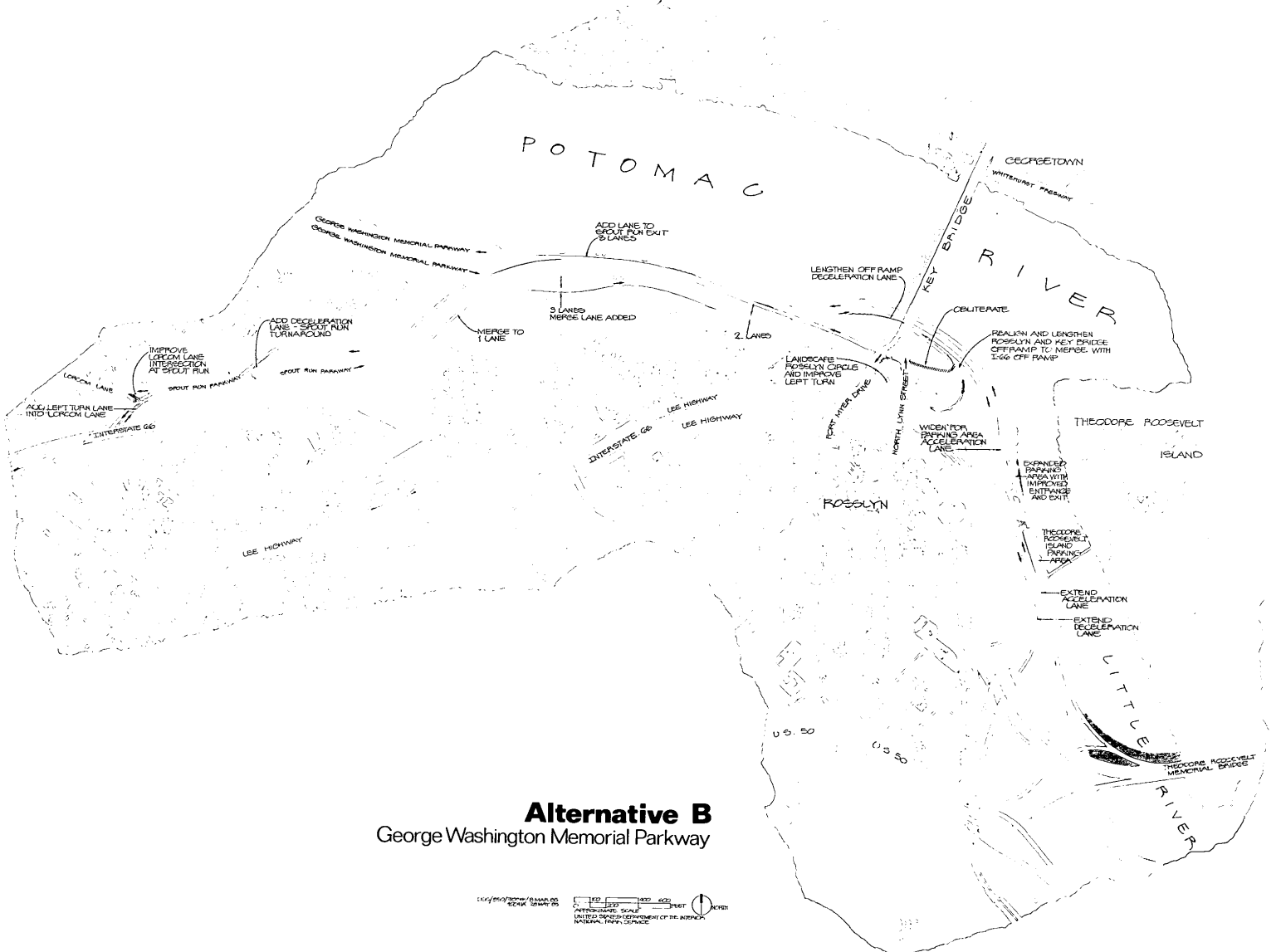
EIS ALTERNATIVES

Four alternatives for roadway changes have been developed and evaluated (see the alternative maps). Alternative A contains actions that are ongoing or programmed for implementation regardless of what other course of action might be taken. These include the rehabilitation of the existing road base and surface and safety improvements such as reflective markings, guardrails, signing, and skid-resistant surfacing. These improvements are contained in alternatives B, C, and D, also. Alternative B, the NPS preferred alternative, additionally includes the lengthening of on-ramps and off-ramps, improving the merge area where inbound Spout Run and GWMP meet, and adding a new third continuous lane on the outbound roadway between Key Bridge and Spout Run. Alternative C adds a new third continuous inbound lane between Spout Run and Key Bridge and a fourth outbound lane through this section, and a new stacking lane on inbound GWMP for traffic exiting at Roosevelt Bridge. Alternative D adds third

continuous inbound and outbound lanes between Key and Roosevelt bridges. The alternatives also address possible improvements to the Lorcom Lane/Spout Run intersection and Rosslyn Circle and various ways to access Rosslyn and Key Bridge from the inbound parkway.

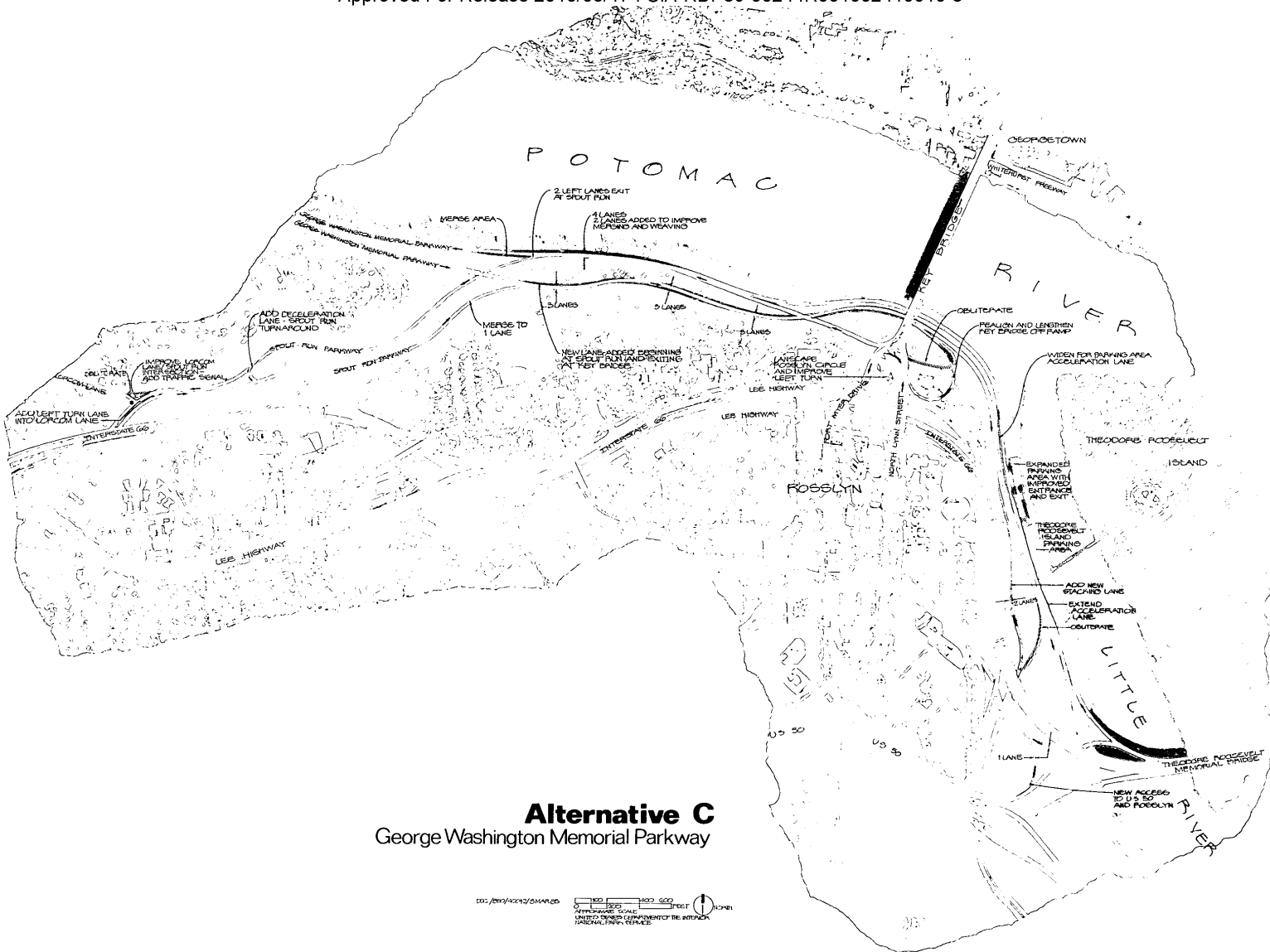
In the initial public meetings held last year, and in the written comments received to date, the public has expressed general opposition to the options of closing or restricting the use of Spout Run Parkway during the morning and evening rush hours; consequently, these issues are not addressed by the alternatives.





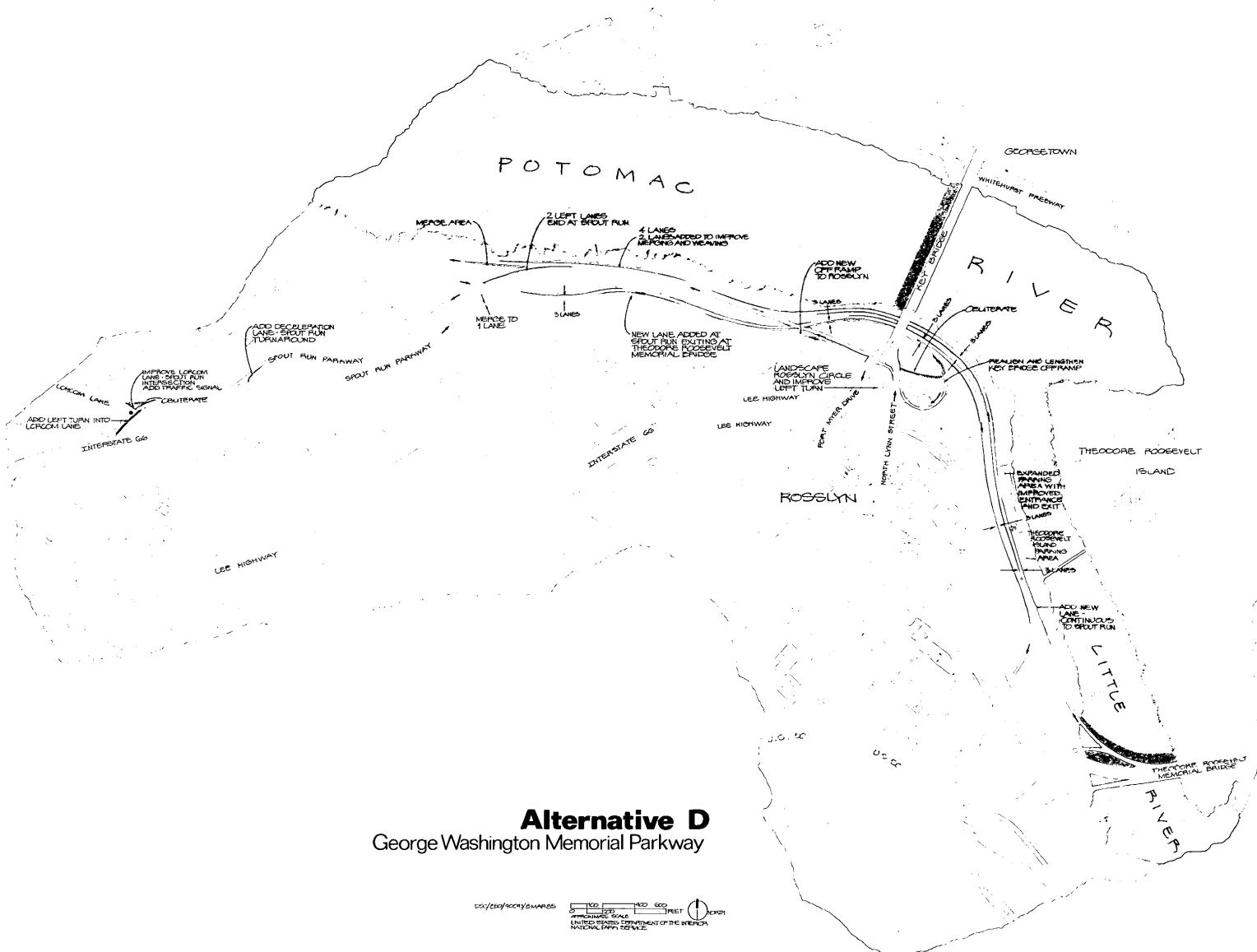
Alternative B
George Washington Memorial Parkway

DATE: 05/20/70 DRAWN: R. H. W. G. CHECK: S. H. W. G.
SCALE: 1" = 400' HORIZ. SCALE 1" = 40' VERT.
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NATIONAL TRAILS SERVICE



Alternative C
George Washington Memorial Parkway

DOT/OMV/40242/04MAR/00
1 100 200 300 400 500 FEET
VERTICAL SCALE
USDC, FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL MAPS SERVICE



IMPACTS

Each of the alternatives was analyzed for its effect on traffic and safety conditions. No alternative would improve more than two of the eight locations within the study area that are currently "capacity deficient" (locations where traffic is severely congested and drivers must endure significant delays). Most of these locations would remain capacity deficient through the year 2000 regardless of the amount of parkway improvements or lane additions proposed by the individual alternatives (see the Capacity-Deficient Locations table).

For most segments alternative A would result in the longest travel times. Alternatives B, C, and D generally would reduce congestion and shorten travel times compared to alternative A.

The potential for accidents would be reduced over the existing situation in all alternatives, including alternative A, by improvement of the roadway surface, signing, and markings. Alternatives B, C, and D would additionally provide for safer traffic merging throughout the study area and for safer traffic weaving on outbound GWMP between Key Bridge and Spout Run. The primary safety benefits of alternatives B, C, and D would be the likely reduction of rear-end, run-off-the-road, and side-swipe accidents.

Concerning environmental impacts, alternative A would cause no long-term negative impacts; however, alternatives B through D would cause increasingly severe impacts on the parkway's scenic, recreational, and natural values. Alternative B would result in low to moderate impacts. Alternatives C and D would involve a considerable increase in the road surface, extensive cut and fill slopes, and the removal of critical vegetation along narrow parkway edges. Some impacts could be mitigated through revegetation, but others would result in irreparable damage to the scenic character of this segment of the parkway.

Capacity-Deficient Locations, Year 2000

Route Segment	Existing Conditions	Alternatives			
		A	B	C	D
Inbound/Morning Peak Hour					
Junction of Spout Run Parkway and GWMP	X	X	X		X
GWMP off-ramp to Key Bridge/Rosslyn	..*	..*	..*	X	X
Junction of GWMP off-ramp to Key Bridge/Rosslyn and Lynn Street	..*	..*	..*	X	X
Junction of GWMP off-ramp to Roosevelt Bridge and inbound I-66	X	X	X	X	X
Outbound/Evening Peak Hour					
GWMP on-ramp from Roosevelt Bridge	X	X	X	X	X
Junction of on-ramp from Roosevelt Bridge and GWMP	X	X	X	X	X
GWMP between Key Bridge and Spout Run	X	X	X		
GWMP on-ramp from Key Bridge/Rosslyn		X	X	X	X

Note: X = location where the level of service would be E or F or where the assignment would exceed the theoretical capacity.

*Ramp closed to traffic from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m.

Construction costs for the four alternatives range from \$10.2 million for alternative A up to \$31.8 million for alternative D.

The effects of the four alternatives are summarized for comparison in the following chart.

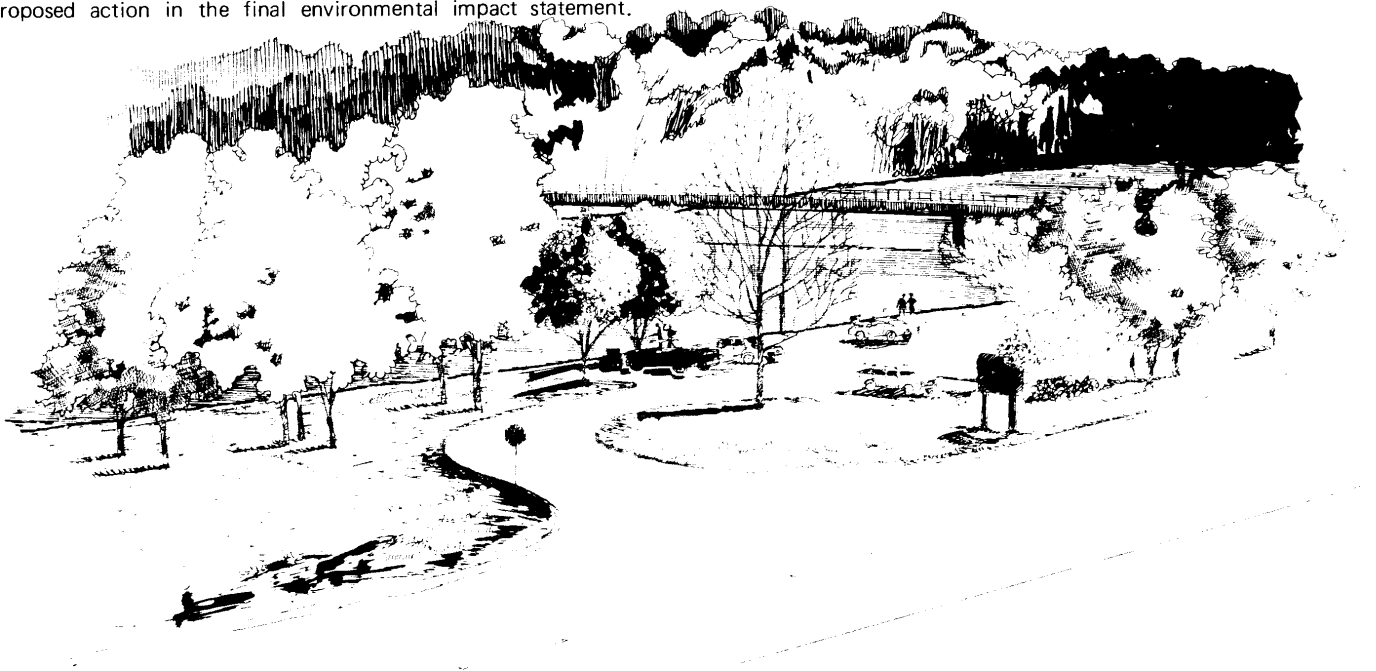
Summary Comparison of the Effects of the Alternatives

	Alternative A	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative C	Alternative D
Key features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - resurfacing and basic safety improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - longer deceleration and acceleration lanes - new continuous lane outbound between Key Bridge and Spout Run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - additional lanes both inbound and outbound between Spout Run and Key Bridge - new stacking lane on inbound GWMP prior to Roosevelt Bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - additional lanes both inbound and outbound between Spout Run and Roosevelt Bridge - new ramp from inbound parkway to Rosslyn Circle
Traffic conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better travel surface - continued traffic merging and weaving problems - continued congestion during peak hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better travel surface - improvement to traffic merging problems - some improvement to traffic weaving outbound - continued congestion during peak hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better travel surface - good access to Rosslyn (and US 50) - improvement to traffic merging and weaving problems - added congestion at Key Bridge during morning peak hours - continued congestion during peak hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better travel surface - improvement to traffic merging and weaving problems - added congestion at Key Bridge during morning peak hours - continued congestion during peak hours
Total number of capacity-deficient locations in year 2000	6 of 6 locations	6 of 6 locations	6 of 8 locations	7 of 8 locations
Travel times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - longest travel times on most segments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shorter travel time than A inbound on GWMP but longer than A inbound on Spout Run - second shortest travel time outbound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shorter travel time than B inbound - slightly longer travel time than B outbound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shorter travel time than C inbound - shorter travel time than B outbound
Parkway safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improved due to better surface, signing, and guardrails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - same as A plus - safer traffic merging conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - same as A and B plus - more space for traffic weaving - safer intersection provided by Lorcom Lane traffic signal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - same as C
Cost of improvements (1985 dollars)	\$10,269,000	\$16,513,000	\$21,669,000	\$31,813,000

	Alternative A	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative C	Alternative D
Cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no negative impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> moderate potential for disturbance of archeological resources minor to moderate impact to historic parkway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> higher potential for disturbance of archeological resources major impact to historic parkway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> same as C
Natural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no negative impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minor impact due to some loss of vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> moderate impact due to disturbance of river edge and floodplain along outbound GWMP vegetation loss due to stacking lane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> moderate to major impact due to disturbance of river edge and floodplain along outbound GWMP sizable cut and fill slopes and loss of vegetation
Recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive impact due to improved road surface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive impact due to improved road surface improved Rosslyn Circle bike trail improvements improved visitor contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> same as B except negative impact on Potomac River Trail caused by four lanes around piedmont rock on outbound GWMP pleasure driving diminished by loss of scenic values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> same as B except negative impact on Potomac River Trail caused by four lanes around piedmont rock on outbound GWMP pleasure driving greatly diminished by loss of scenic values Little River shoreline recreation activity confined to narrower area
Scenic values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no negative impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minor negative impact due to reduction in vegetative edge positive impact due to enhancement of Rosslyn Circle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> major negative impact due to stacking lane, loss of vegetative edge, and more paved surfaces positive impact due to enhancement of Rosslyn Circle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> major negative impact due to loss of vegetative edge, extensive paved surfaces, and cut and fill slopes and retaining walls positive impact due to enhancement of Rosslyn Circle
Overall retention of parkway character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retention of parkway character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minor alteration of parkway character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> major alteration of parkway character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> severe alteration of parkway character
Impact summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved safety at the lowest cost and impact but continued poor traffic merging and continued peak-hour congestion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved safety and traffic merging at moderate cost and minor impact with continued peak hour congestion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved safety and traffic merging/weaving at moderate cost and major impact with continued peak hour congestion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved safety and traffic merging/weaving at the highest cost and impact with continued peak hour congestion

SELECTION OF A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Four factors — traffic movement, traffic safety, environmental impact, and project cost — were the primary measures of which alternative should be selected as the preferred alternative in this draft document. Alternative B was selected because it improves traffic safety and merging conditions at a lower cost and with less environmental impact than either alternative C or D. A final proposal, which might or might not be the same as the preferred alternative, will be developed after the public review of the alternatives. The comments and concerns of individuals, organizations, agencies, and officials will be considered in determining if the preferred alternative, another alternative, or a combination of actions from several alternatives is selected as the proposed action in the final environmental impact statement.



SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS – 1985

You are invited to attend one of the following meetings to obtain further information on this draft environmental impact statement and to comment:

Tuesday October 8 7:00 p.m.	Cooper Intermediate School – cafeteria 977 Balls Hill Road McLean, Virginia
Wednesday October 9 7:00 p.m.	George Mason University Metro Campus Professional Center – 3rd floor 3401 North Fairfax Drive Arlington, Virginia
Thursday October 10 7:00 p.m.	National Capital Planning Commission Commission Meeting Room, 10th Floor 1325 G Street Northwest Washington, D.C. (By Metrorail—Metro Center stop)

RESULTS OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

A summary of public comments will be prepared in November. This information will be made available to area media representatives, including local newspapers. Write your name and address on the attached comment sheet if you, your agency, or your organization would like to receive a copy of the summary.

PUBLIC COMMENT SHEET

I generally prefer:

Alternative A

Alternative B

Alternative C

Alternative D

None of the above

How do you use the parkway?

for commuting

for recreation

both of the above

not a parkway user

If you would modify one of the above alternatives, or if you support a completely different alternative from those included in this document, please describe your changes below:

If you would like to receive a copy of the summary of public comments, please write your name and address below.

Tear here

Thank you for taking the time to respond. Your comments will be very helpful in the final selection of a proposal.

Tear out this page, fold, and mail to the address on the back. No postage is required.

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George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Headquarters
McLean, Virginia 22101

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, and parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

Publication services were provided by the editorial and graphic staffs of the Denver Service Center. NPS D-64, August 1985

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