

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and
Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument
Texas

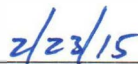
General Management Plan

Record of Decision

Approved:

Date:


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Regional Director, Intermountain Region
National Park Service


2/23/15

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

RECORD OF DECISION

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and
Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument**

Texas

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS) has prepared this Record of Decision for the *Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. This Record of Decision includes a description of the project background, a statement of the decision made, a listing of mitigating measures to minimize environmental harm, commitments for user capacity and adaptive management, synopses of other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, a description of the environmentally preferable alternative, and an overview of public and agency involvement / consultation in the decision-making process.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the general management plan is to provide comprehensive direction for resource preservation and visitor use and a foundation for decision making for the parks for the next 15 to 20 years. The plan describes the resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved and maintained in the park over time. Clarification of what must be achieved according to law and policy is based on review of the parks' purpose, significance, and special mandates.

DECISION (SELECTED ACTION)

Description of the Selected Action for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area

The selected action for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area (alternative 3) will promote both traditional and nontraditional uses. The national recreation area will become a destination for semi-primitive outdoor recreation opportunities for a broad range of skill levels. Implementation of the selected action will enable the national recreation area to operate more efficiently and respond to changing lake levels and visitor uses. The national recreation area will strengthen partnership opportunities that employ science-based resource management and compatible land management uses to improve visitor experience and wildlife habitat. A map of this alternative can be found on page 91 of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.

- This selected action for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area will encourage nonmotorized recreation such as hiking, biking, backpacking, and paddling. This will be

achieved by maximizing the area in the semi-primitive zone and by providing a water-based, no wake zone in several areas on Lake Meredith.

- In addition to existing types of outdoor recreation, visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy new activities, including defined trails for hiking and biking on the west side of the national recreation area and global positioning system (GPS)-based recreation.
- Park operations will be improved through facilities consolidation, including locating the headquarters within the national recreation area boundary.
- The parks will provide increased interpretation and an expanded range of recreational opportunities as appropriate, supported by improved or additional facilities.
- Rural zoning will provide transitions between more developed areas of the national recreation area and the semi-primitive zone. A large portion of the national recreation area will be designated as semi-primitive zone, which will only be accessible to visitors through nonmotorized means. The selected action will also include a water-based, no wake zone to provide a more natural setting for nonmotorized water-based recreation.
- The definition of the semi-primitive zone is modified to allow vehicle access across the Mullinaw Crossing during the last week of the mule deer season for hunting. There may be times when conditions prohibit the safe crossing of the Canadian River and the gate will remain closed. This exemption will allow members of the public, including those with disabilities and decreased physical ability, the opportunity to hunt the area as they have done in the past.

KEY ACTIONS AT LAKE MEREDITH NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Natural Resources

- Prepare a comprehensive travel/road management plan to reduce the size of the dirt road network and implement the decision. This plan will evaluate each road to determine if it should be maintained, converted to a trail, or closed and restored to native vegetation. Motorized vehicles will only be allowed in the semi-primitive zone to support park administration and for oil and gas production.
- Rehabilitate Mullinaw Trail to control erosion.
- Increase monitoring and mitigation in areas requiring additional resource protection.

Cultural Resources

- Continue to manage cultural resources in a manner consistent with all laws and NPS policies. Document and assess historical resources such as remnants of ranching activities and former oil and gas production sites. Preserve sites that are adequately stabilized and not at risk of disturbance by visitor use and manage them as discovery sites.
- Continue to acquire and catalog, preserve, protect, and make museum collections available for access and use according to NPS standards and guidelines.
- Complete limited modifications to the McBride Ranch House to allow for adaptive use of the property for interpretation. Provide guided tours during special events.
- Install waysides to increase interpretation of archeological sites.

Visitor Experience

- Continue traditional visitor recreational activities. These include but are not limited to boating, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, camping, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, use of off-road vehicles (ORVs) in two locations, and driving for pleasure.
- Promote recreation that does not rely on the presence of the lake such as hiking, biking, group and primitive camping, and GPS-based exploration.
- Become a destination for semi-primitive recreation opportunities for a broad range of skill levels.
- Encourage a broader range of camping experiences by providing primitive camping in the semi-primitive zone and installing water and electricity at some developed campsites.
- Provide better trail markers for the Mullinaw Trail.
- Provide a new visitor contact station in the consolidated operations center off Sanford-Yake Road.
- In rural and semi-primitive zones, provide an opportunity to experience a more natural setting with an opportunity for solitude away from roads.
- Apply a water-based, no wake zone to lake coves and the Canadian River inlet to encourage activities such as canoeing and kayaking. This zone will vary in size and extent depending on fluctuating lake levels.
- Promote more use on the west side of the national recreation area.
- Develop a headquarters, visitor contact station, and consolidated operations center that includes maintenance, fire, and law enforcement at the site of the existing maintenance yard off Sanford-Yake Road.

Recreational Activities

- Rehabilitate the Mullinaw Trail.
- Develop additional opportunities for hiking, biking, and horseback riding in the national recreation area:
 - Define semi-primitive trails for hiking, horseback riding, and biking on the west side of the national recreation area.
 - Designate and mark some existing roads for hiking, biking, and horseback riding multiuse only. Designate other existing roads for administrative use only.
- Continue with plans that consider construction of a new boat ramp on the northwest side of the lake near the dam.
- Manage the Rosita and Blue Creek areas in accordance with the Off-Road Vehicle Plan.
- Provide primitive camping on the west side of the national recreation area (for example, in Martins and Evans Canyons). Identify camping areas and do not designate individual sites unless required for resource protection.
- Provide electricity and water to approximately 10 campsites at Fritch Fortress and 10 campsites at Sanford-Yake.

- At Bates Canyon, construct a new campground with electrical hookups.
- At Harbor Bay, provide additional group campsites with minimal facilities that can be moved as water levels change.
- At Spring Canyon, install underwater features for diving.

Operations

- Provide more flexibility in managing visitor facilities in developed areas by removing underused facilities and replacing them if warranted by rising lake levels. Remove the water tower, Bates Canyon boat ramp, and some Blue West campsites.
- Install energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
- Continue fee programs for boating and special use permits.
- Include storm shelters in all new buildings.
- Employ sustainable design for new buildings.
- Consider establishing fees for ORV users.
- Consider establishing campground fees.
- Develop a headquarters, visitor contact station, and consolidated operations center that includes maintenance, fire, and law enforcement at the site of the existing maintenance yard off Sanford-Yake Road.
- Expand community outreach, interpretation, and education.
- Improve the McBride Canyon camping area by delineating individual sites to protect resources and installing additional primitive toilets.

Interpretation

- Continue to use bulletin boards to provide general information and safety-oriented messages.
- Expand community outreach, interpretation, and education.
- Use the amphitheater at Fritch Fortress for partner, as well as, NPS programs.
- Construct a self-guiding interpretive trail with outdoor interpretive materials focusing on an Antelope Creek-style dwelling outside the Alibates contact station.
- Install interpretive waysides along the multiuse trail and at overlooks such as on Ridge Road near Mullinaw Canyon.
- Develop information technologies such as podcasts to provide orientation to the national recreation area, interpret features such as geology and history, and provide virtual tours or visitation.
- Enhance interpretation through development of additional waysides and on-site interpretation of cultural resources.
- Interpret additional cultural sites in a manner that discourages damage from visitors.
- Conduct guided tours of the McBride Ranch House during special events.

Commercial Visitor Services

- Consider using commercial visitor services for marina or marina-type services.
- Evaluate the possibility of using commercial visitor services for food services and/or campground operations.

Partnerships

- Maintain the current level of partnerships with federal, state, local, and nonprofit entities.
- Expand partnerships to include community user groups, with an increased focus on community outreach, interpretation, and education.
- Encourage visitation by nontraditional user groups, with the goal of increasing visitation and a sense of stewardship.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SELECTED ACTION FOR ALIBATES FLINT QUARRIES NATIONAL MONUMENT

The selected action for Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument (alternative B) will expand interpretive and educational programs at the national monument to provide visitors, researchers, and the public with a better understanding and appreciation of the role of this significant resource in the greater human story. Visitor opportunities will be expanded through self-guiding outdoor interpretation and information technologies. A map of this alternative can be found on page 109 of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.

KEY ACTIONS AT ALIBATES FLINT QUARRIES NATIONAL MONUMENT

Visitor Experience

- Continue to provide visitor orientation at the Alibates visitor contact station.
- Provide guided tours to the quarries with NPS staff or volunteers.
- Provide guided tours to the ruins and petroglyphs by special request.
- Continue to restrict access to other areas of the national monument.
- Provide and expand special events in collaboration with partners, such as flint knapping demonstrations. If sufficient interest is available, consider developing these into annual events.
- Provide increased education and interpretive opportunities outside the visitor contact station, including a short, self-guiding interpretive trail near the visitor contact station; and outdoor interpretive materials focusing on an Antelope Creek-style dwelling on the terrace above the visitor contact station.
- Include interpretation of an excavated quarry in the guided tours of the quarries.
- Expand visitor opportunities using information technologies to allow virtual exploration of the national monument and its resources.

Natural Resources

- Protect geologic resources (the Alibates flint) by reducing unauthorized pedestrian access and soil erosion, and preventing entry into the national monument by hunters.

Cultural Resources

- Using controlled archeological methods, excavate a quarry pit for interpretation.
- Expand education, interpretation, and outreach to increase understanding of the value of the resources at the national monument; promote protection of cultural resources; and provide a greater sense of stewardship regarding the national monument.

Operations

- Incorporate maintenance of new facilities into the larger operations program for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area.
- Increase coordination with volunteers and partners to present special events.
- Expand education, interpretation, and outreach using paid and volunteer staff.

Interpretation, Education, and Outreach

- Continue interpretation at the Alibates visitor contact station.
- Provide access to the quarries and other resources through guided tours.
- Continue outreach to schools and special event groups.

Partnerships

- Maintain the current level of partnerships with Friends of Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument and Windows on a Wider World.
- Increase partnerships with schools and community organizations.

MANAGEMENT ZONING, FACILITIES, AND ASSOCIATED VISITOR ACTIVITIES

All management zones are created within the scope of the parks' purpose, significance, mandates, and legislation. Management zones describe the range of desired resource conditions and visitor experience for the national recreation area and national monument. Zone descriptions include statements about the appropriate kinds and levels of management, use, and development in each zone. Management zones provide primary guidance for subsequent decision making at the parks. The following 10 management zones were developed for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument: water-based motorized zone, water-based no wake zone, swim/scuba zone, developed zone, administrative zone, rural zone, semi-primitive zone, cultural zone, off-road vehicle zone, and motorized scenic corridor. Descriptions of each

management zone are included in table 3 of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.

MITIGATING MEASURES / MONITORING

The following mitigation measures and best management practices will be applied to avoid or minimize potential impacts from implementation of the selected actions. Additional mitigation measures may be implemented based on need. These measures will apply to the selected actions in both parks. Construction activities and/or other actions will adhere to these mitigation measures.

Exotic Species

- Implement an invasive weed abatement program. Standard measures could include ensuring that construction-related equipment arrives on the site free of mud or seed-bearing material, certifying all seeds and straw material as weed-free, identifying areas of invasive weeds before construction begins, requiring visitors to certify that all horse feed, including hay, carried into the national recreation area is weed free, treating invasive weeds or invasive weed topsoil before construction, and revegetating with appropriate native species.

Natural Soundscape

- Implement standard noise abatement measures during construction and daily operations. Standard noise abatement measures could include a schedule that minimizes impacts on adjacent noise-sensitive uses, the use of the best available noise control techniques wherever feasible, the use of hydraulically or electrically powered impact tools when feasible, and the location of stationary noise sources as far from sensitive uses as possible.
- Apply mitigation measures to protect the parks' natural sounds. Specific actions could include, but will not be limited to, siting and designing facilities to minimize objectionable sound and exploring opportunities to reduce human-caused sound.

Plant Communities and Vegetation

- Monitor areas used by visitors, such as roads and trails, for signs of native vegetation disturbance such as trampling of vegetation, driving off existing roads, creating social trails, and widening trails beyond constructed width through use. When concerns are identified via monitoring, apply management strategies as described in the "User Capacity" section of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.
- Use public education, revegetation of disturbed areas with native plants, erosion-control measures, and barriers to control potential impacts on plants from trail erosion or creation of social trails.
- Use barriers and closures to prevent trampling and loss of riparian vegetation.
- Develop revegetation plans for disturbed areas and require the use of native species. Specify measures such as seed or plant source, seed and plant mixes, and soil preparation. Use salvaged vegetation to the maximum extent possible.

Special Status Species and their Habitats

Mitigation actions will occur during normal park operations as well as before, during, and after construction to minimize immediate and long-term impacts to rare, threatened, and endangered species. These actions will vary by specific project and area of the parks affected. Many of the measures listed for vegetation and wildlife will also benefit rare, threatened, and endangered species by helping to preserve habitat. Mitigation actions specific to rare, threatened, and endangered species will include the following:

- Conduct surveys for rare, threatened, and endangered species, as warranted, to inform management and development decisions.
- Site and design facilities or actions to avoid adverse effects on rare, threatened, and endangered species. If avoidance is not feasible, minimize and compensate for adverse effects as appropriate and in consultation with the appropriate resource agencies.
- Develop and implement restoration and/or monitoring plans, as warranted. Plans should include methods for implementation, performance standards, monitoring criteria, and applying adaptive management techniques when concerns are indicated.
- Implement measures to reduce adverse effects of nonnative plants and wildlife on rare, threatened, and endangered species.

Scenic Resources

- Design, site, and construct facilities to avoid or minimize visual intrusions on natural and cultural resources and the landscape.
- Provide vegetation screening, where appropriate.
- Continue cooperative measures to protect regional air quality, which affects scenic views.

Soils

- Build new facilities on soils and slopes suitable for development.
- Design trails and roads to minimize compaction and soil erosion.
- Minimize soil erosion by limiting the time that soil is left exposed.
- Apply erosion-control measures such as erosion matting, silt fencing, and sedimentation basins in construction areas to reduce erosion, surface scouring, and discharge to water bodies.
- To conserve available organic matter, retain and replace any topsoil that is present.
- Once work is completed, quickly revegetate construction areas with native plants.
- Monitor for visitor impacts, particularly in sensitive or highly visited areas and, when concerns are indicated, apply management strategies as described in the "User Capacity" section of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.
- Implement a spill prevention and pollution control program for hazardous materials, including fuels. Standard measures could include hazardous materials storage and handling procedures; spill containment, cleanup, and reporting procedures; and limitation of refueling and other activities to upland or nonsensitive sites.

Water Resources

- To prevent water pollution during construction, use erosion-control measures, minimize discharge to water bodies, and regularly inspect construction equipment for leaks of petroleum and other chemicals.
- Build runoff detention or filtration systems to minimize water pollution from larger parking areas.
- Minimize erosion from trails and dirt roads.

Water Quality

- Provide information on water quality protection at visitor contact stations and in brochures. Stress the lake's function as a municipal water supply source. Coordinate messaging with the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority.
- Post signs at boat ramp areas emphasizing the need to use restrooms and not deposit human waste in the water or on the lakeshore.
- At horse corrals, provide educational materials on the need for horse owners to remove horse manure. Remove horse manure from public corrals if visitors fail to do so. Encourage horse riders to stay on the trail in areas close to the Canadian River.
- During times of high water, install a floating restroom with a pump-out to encourage boaters to reduce the amount of human waste in Lake Meredith.
- Educate users of ORVs of the need to refuel vehicles at least 100 yards from the Canadian River or its tributaries and to take steps to eliminate fuel spills.
- Have spill kits readily available at the marina fueling station.

Wetlands

- Delineate wetlands before construction work so they can be avoided or protected, and apply protection measures during construction. Delineation should be done by qualified NPS staff or certified wetland specialists and clearly marked.
- Perform construction activities using best practices to prevent damage caused by equipment, erosion, or siltation.
- Improve existing trails through wetland areas and design new trails to minimize impacts on vegetation.

Wildlife

- Employ techniques to reduce impacts on wildlife, including visitor educational programs, restrictions on visitor activities, and ranger patrols.
- Implement a natural resource protection program. Standard measures could include scheduling construction outside sensitive periods such as nesting, biological monitoring, erosion and sediment control, the use of fencing or other means to protect sensitive resources adjacent to construction, the removal of all food-related items or rubbish, topsoil

salvage, and revegetation. This could include specific construction monitoring by resource specialists as well as treatment and reporting procedures.

- Schedule activities in or near water sources to minimize disturbance to wildlife.

Cultural Resources

The National Park Service will preserve and protect, to the greatest extent possible, resources that reflect the human occupation of what is now Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and/or Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. Specific mitigation measures, if needed, will include the following:

- Carry out projects in accordance with site-specific planning and section 106 compliance. Make all efforts to avoid adverse impacts through use of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation* (1995) and by using designs that are compatible with historical resources. If adverse impacts are unavoidable, mitigate impacts through a consultation process with all interested parties.
- Before disturbing or modifying any cultural resources that are eligible or listed in the National Register of Historic Places, consult with the Texas state historic preservation officer, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, any associated American Indian tribes, and other concerned parties.
- Inventory all unsurveyed areas in the parks for archeological, ethnographic, and historical resources. Conduct archeological surveys in unsurveyed areas where development will occur to determine the extent and significance of archeological resources, and carry out projects to avoid adverse resource impacts or effectively mitigate impacts through a consultation process with all interested parties.
- Document cultural and ethnographic landscapes in the parks and identify treatments.
- Conduct archeological site monitoring and routine protection. Where protection or site avoidance during design and construction is not feasible, conduct data recovery excavations at archeological sites threatened with destruction.
- Continue ongoing consultations with associated American Indian tribes. Protect sensitive traditional-use areas to the maximum extent feasible.
- Whenever possible, modify project design features to avoid adverse effects on cultural resources. Locate new developments on sites that blend with cultural resources and that are not adjacent to ethnographic resources. If necessary, use vegetation screening to minimize visual impacts on cultural and ethnographic resources.
- Encourage visitors through the interpretive programs to respect and leave undisturbed any inadvertently encountered archeological resources.
- Strictly adhere to NPS standards and guidelines on the display and care of artifacts including those used in exhibits in the visitor facilities.

Visitor Safety and Experiences

- Implement a traffic control plan during construction, as warranted. Include strategies to maintain safe and efficient traffic flow.

- Implement measures to reduce adverse effects of construction on visitor safety and experience.
- Incorporate safety into interpretation and educational programs.
- Use interpretation and educational programs to promote a sense of stewardship among the parks' visitors.
- Implement a strategy to maximize accessibility for people with impaired mobility.

Socioeconomic Environment

- Work with communities and county governments during future planning and implementation of the approved General Management Plan to identify potential impacts and mitigation measures that will best serve the interests and concerns of both the National Park Service and the communities.
- Pursue partnerships to improve the quality and diversity of community amenities and services.

Sustainable Design and Aesthetics

- Design projects to work in harmony with the surroundings. This will include reducing, minimizing, or eliminating air and water pollution and the generation of solid or hazardous waste.
- Make projects sustainable to the maximum feasible extent.
 - Recycle and reuse materials.
 - Minimize the use of materials, including project supplies and construction materials.
 - Minimize energy and water consumption, and the generation of carbon emissions during project construction and throughout the life span of the project.

USER CAPACITY AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

General management plans for national park system units are required by law to identify and address implementation commitments for user capacity, also known as carrying capacity. The National Park Service defines user capacity as the types and levels of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining the quality of park resources and visitor experiences consistent with the purposes of the park. Managing user capacity in national parks is inherently complex and depends not only on the number of visitors but also on where the visitors go, what they do, and the “footprints” they leave behind. In managing user capacity, NPS staff and partners employ a variety of management tools and strategies rather than relying solely on regulating the number of people in a park area. In addition, the ever-changing nature of visitor use in parks requires an adaptive approach to user capacity management.

As part of the NPS commitment to implement user capacity, park staff will abide by these directives for guiding the types and levels of visitor use that will be accommodated while sustaining the quality of park resources and visitor experiences consistent with the parks' purposes.

The *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* includes indicators and standards for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. Indicators and standards are measurable features that will be monitored to track changes in resource conditions and visitor experiences. Indicators and standards help the National Park Service ensure that desired conditions are being attained, supporting the fulfillment of the park's legislative and policy requirements. The plan also identifies the types of management actions that will be taken to achieve desired conditions and related legislative and policy requirements.

Indicators and Standards

Priority indicators for user capacity of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument are associated with the following issues:

- visitor removal of flint from sites in Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument
- trail conditions on designated, nonmotorized trails
- breaches of the designated boundaries of the ORV use areas
- changes in campsite conditions within designated camping areas
- visitors camping outside designated areas
- incidences of damages to park resources resulting in a ticketed violation
- incidences of vehicles traveling outside the designated road or route

Indicators for each of these issues and standards that represent the minimum acceptable condition are shown in table 4 of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.

Long-Term Monitoring

NPS staff will continue monitoring use levels and patterns throughout Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. In addition, NPS staff will monitor the user capacity indicators. The rigor of monitoring the indicators, such as the frequency of monitoring cycles and the geographic area monitored, might vary considerably, depending on how close existing conditions are to the standards. If the existing conditions are well below the standard, the rigor of monitoring might be less than if the existing conditions are close to or trending toward the standard.

Initial monitoring of the indicators will determine if the indicators are accurately measuring the conditions of concern and if the standards truly represent the minimally acceptable condition of the indicator. NPS staff might decide to modify the indicators or standards and revise the monitoring program if better ways are found to measure changes caused by visitor use. Most of these types of changes should be made within the first several years of initiating monitoring. After this initial testing period, adjustments will be less likely.

If use levels and patterns change appreciably, NPS staff might need to identify new indicators to ensure that desired conditions are achieved and maintained. This iterative learning and refining process, a form of adaptive management, is a strength of the NPS user capacity management program.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area

Alternative 1, No Action / Continue Current Management

This alternative would continue current management approaches at Lake Meredith National Recreation Area. Few additional facilities or amenities would be provided. Some infrastructure not being used would be removed. Staff at the national recreation area would continue to pursue partnerships to enhance outreach both within and outside the national recreation area boundary.

Alternative 2

This alternative would provide quality recreation to visitors by offering improved opportunities for outdoor activities that are not affected by changing lake levels at Lake Meredith National Recreation Area. This would include enhancing traditional activities and expanding visitor experiences by using information technology. More ecologically sensitive approaches to traditional activities would promote resource protection.

Large areas of the national recreation area would be zoned as rural and semi-primitive. In these areas, visitors would experience a more natural setting with an opportunity for solitude away from roads. Rural zoning would provide transitions between more developed areas and the semi-primitive zone, which would only be accessible to visitors by nonmotorized means.

Visitors would continue to have opportunities to enjoy traditional outdoor recreational activities, such as boating, fishing, wading, and swimming in the lake and camping, picnicking, hunting, and driving for pleasure on the land. The focus would be on providing a better visitor experience through additional or improved facilities and increased interpretation in accessible settings and through expanded opportunities in more natural rural and semi-primitive areas. Park operations would be improved through facilities consolidation within the national recreation area boundary.

Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument

Alternative A, No Action / Continue Current Management

This alternative would continue current management approaches at Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. Management would continue to focus on the preservation, protection, interpretation, and scientific study of Alibates flint deposits. Visitor experiences at the national monument would primarily involve the existing visitor contact station and guided visits to the quarry sites.

Alternative C

This alternative would provide understanding and appreciation for archeological protection through enhanced educational opportunities and research at Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. Partnerships with appropriate entities would encourage more research at the national monument. A wider range of visitor uses and experiences would be accommodated.

BASIS FOR DECISION

After careful consideration of each alternative and its foreseeable environmental impacts, the expressed purpose and need for federal action, and all public and agency comments, including comments on the *Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, alternative 3 has been selected for implementation in Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and alternative B has been selected for Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. These alternatives best comply with NPS management policies and the legislated purposes of both parks to provide long-term protection of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument resources and values while allowing for visitor use and visitor enjoyment.

The National Park Service has determined that the selected action for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area will

- Prevent loss, maintain, and improve conditions of natural resources.
- Provide an appropriate range of visitor experiences and recreational opportunities.
- Improve operational efficiency, safety, and sustainability.

For Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, the National Park Service has determined that the selected action will

- Preserve cultural resources.
- Provide an appropriate range of visitor experiences.
- Improve operational efficiency, safety, and sustainability.

As documented in the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, the following key factors support implementation of the selected actions in Lake Meredith National Recreation Area. The selected action

- Results in an increase in opportunities for recreation regardless of the lake level.
- Improves park operational efficiencies from locating all administration, operations, and management functions at a single location.
- Maximizes a semi-primitive experience, which has the added benefit of enhancing natural resources.

As documented in the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, the following key factors support implementation of the selected actions in Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. The selected alternative:

- Provides the greatest advantage as a result of increased opportunities for visitors to learn about the flint deposits and the people who used them.
- Provides the maximum protection of cultural resources as a result of assigning most of the national monument to the cultural zone.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The National Park Service is required to identify the environmentally preferable alternative in its National Environmental Policy Act documents. Guidance from the Council on Environmental Quality (1981) states that the environmentally preferable alternative will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act. Further, it is “the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.”

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area

The selected action, alternative 3, has been identified as the environmentally preferable alternative for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area. Features of this alternative that will result in the least damage to the biological and physical environment and will best protect, preserve, and enhance the national recreation area’s valuable historic, cultural, and natural resources include the following:

- Compared to the other alternatives, the selected action provides additional protection to national recreation area resources by designating a larger part of the land area as a semi-primitive zone and establishing a water-based, no wake zone in part of Lake Meredith. Establishing these zones will provide the greatest opportunity to protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources in their boundaries. Additionally, this alternative’s emphasis on nonmotorized activities will help reduce the carbon footprint associated with recreation.
- The selected action will consolidate the headquarters, visitor contact station, and operations center into one facility. This consolidation will have multiple environmental advantages. For example, it will reduce the number of staff trips in vehicles between locations, with a related reduction in fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions; eliminate the need for duplicative office equipment in multiple locations; and allow staff time to be used for managing natural and cultural resources rather than traveling.

Alternative 1 (no action/ continue current management) was not considered environmentally preferable because of inefficiencies resulting from the separate administrative, visitor contact, and maintenance facilities and use of motorized vehicles throughout the national recreation area.

The types of beneficial impacts expected under alternative 2 would be similar to those expected under the selected action. However, they would occur at a reduced intensity in alternative 2 because the facilities would not be consolidated under a single roof as they are under the selected action and a smaller part of the national recreation area would be zoned for nonmotorized use by visitors.

Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument

Alternative A (no action/ continue current management) has been identified as the environmentally preferable alternative for Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. This alternative would result in the least damage to the biological and physical environment and would best protect the national monument’s valuable cultural resources.

Compared to the selected action and alternative C, alternative A provides the greatest protection to national monument resources by maintaining restricted access and not developing any additional infrastructure or facilities. Under alternative A, no construction or excavations would occur and, therefore, no impacts on natural or cultural resources would result from development. Continuing the current restrictions on access to the national monument would provide the greatest protection from vandalism and looting of the national monument's cultural resources.

The selected action, alternative B, would also restrict access to the national monument, but it would impact natural and cultural resources through the development of self-guiding trails, the development of outdoor interpretive materials focusing on an Antelope Creek-style dwelling, and the controlled archeological excavation of a quarry pit.

Alternative C was not environmentally preferable because it would have some of the same development proposed for the selected action and because part of the national monument would be designated within the semi-primitive zone, which would allow unrestricted access to the national monument, increasing the potential for vandalism and looting of cultural resources.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT / CONSULTATION

The *Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument Abbreviated Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* was based on input from the National Park Service, other agencies, organizations, partners, and the public. Consultation and coordination among these groups was important throughout the planning process. A notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement was published in the *Federal Register* on June 9, 2009. Input gathered during scoping was used to develop the alternatives and assess and compare the effects of management alternatives.

Public Meetings and Outreach

The first of two newsletters was published in April 2009 to inform the public of the general management plan process and to solicit input on issues that should be addressed. The second newsletter was distributed in April 2010 and described the proposed management zones for the park and the draft alternatives. The mailing list for all newsletters consisted of members of governmental agencies, nongovernmental groups, businesses, legislators, local governments, and interested citizens.

In addition to the two newsletters, public meetings informed and involved the public in the planning process for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument.

Four public scoping meetings were held at Fritch, Borger, Dumas, and Amarillo in April 2009. A total of 48 people attended these meetings. Three additional public meetings were held at Amarillo, Dumas, and Fritch in April 2010. A total of 21 people attended these meetings.

Park neighbors, community leaders, local citizens, commercial interests, and other interested groups shared numerous perspectives for the future of the parks and their management during the public meetings and comment periods.

Release of the Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement

The *Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* was released in March 2013 for a 60-day public comment period ending May 28, 2013. Two public meetings were conducted to review and discuss the draft plan and receive public input. The first was on April 30, 2013, at the Ashmore Inn and Suites in Amarillo, Texas. Attendees included 17 members of the public. The second meeting was held on May 1, 2013, at the Sanford-Fritch Schools Business Office in Fritch, Texas. Ten individuals attended the meeting including several local businesses and a representative from the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority.

Public comments were solicited during the public meetings and hard copy comment forms were provided for attendees. The meetings were preceded by notice on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website and through announcements to local media. Copies of the document were distributed by mail as well as provided at park headquarters and posted on the Internet.

Agencies and the public were invited to comment using a variety of methods, including letters, e-mails, and postings on the NPS PEPC website. A total of 23 written and electronic comments were received. Several agencies stated that they had no comment. Comments received covered a broad range of topics and are presented in the *Abbreviated Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Section 7 Consultation

Section 7 (a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, requires each federal agency, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, to ensure that any action the agency authorizes, funds, or carries out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. This section sets out the consultation process as implemented by regulation 50 CFR 402.

The National Park Service contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by letter early in the planning process. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department was also contacted by letter in April 2009. These agencies were also sent copies of each of the newsletters regarding the planning process and meetings. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided an updated species list in May 2009. The National Park Service additionally consulted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website over the course of the planning process to remain up to date about listed and proposed threatened and endangered species. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department did not provide any formal consultation.

The National Park Service provided copies of the *Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for review in March 2013. In accordance with the Endangered Species Act and relevant regulations in 50 CFR 402, the National Park Service determined that the selected actions will have negligible to minor adverse and beneficial effects on the various federally and state listed species that occur in the parks (described in chapters 3 and 4 of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* and responded (by e-mail dated September 26, 2013) to indicate they had no comments, thereby concurring that the selected actions are not likely to adversely affect any federally listed endangered

or threatened species or their formally designated critical habitat. The National Park Service also committed to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on future actions conducted under the framework described in the management plan to ensure that such actions are not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species and that all appropriate permits will be obtained prior to land-disturbing activities to protect resources.

Section 106 Consultation

In accordance with 36 CFR 800 and the programmatic agreement among the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the National Park Service, a letter was sent to the Texas state historic preservation officer (April 2009) and to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (April 2009) to inform them a general management plan environmental impact statement planning process was underway for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument and to initiate consultation. The letters invited them to participate in the planning process by reviewing and commenting on the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. The Texas Department of Cultural Resources, the state historic preservation officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation acknowledged receipt of the NPS consultation letter and their intent to review the document upon availability. A copy of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* was sent to the state historic preservation officer and the advisory council for review and comment. The Texas state historic preservation officer responded by e-mail on December 18, 2013, that they did not have any comments on the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.

While section 106 summaries were included for each alternative in the impact analysis chapter of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* for archeological resources and historic structures, the level of detail regarding the actions in the alternatives is not sufficient to meet section 106 requirements as outlined under 36 CFR 800. The section 106 summaries are a preliminary determination of the effects the actions will have on cultural resources. The parks will complete formal section 106 consultation with the Texas state historic preservation officer and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, as needed, on the actions in the plan before implementing them.

Other Agency Consultation

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers / Tulsa District was sent scoping letters, copies of each newsletter, and request for consultation during the course of the project. The National Park Service sent a letter on April 15, 2009, concerning the general management planning process and requested information regarding any U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects that were expected or planned to take place within the vicinity of the parks. No response was received from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also received a copy of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. The agency responded with comments on May 21, 2013. Its concerns related to a correction regarding one-time capital costs in the draft document, inclusion of all correspondence and concurrence with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Texas state historic preservation officer, and general comments related to oil and gas development within the parks. The National Park Service responded and made corrections regarding one-time capital costs. The *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* complied with NPS guidance and the final plan included all agency consultation.

Comments regarding oil and gas development were directed to the 2002 *Oil and Gas Management Plan* for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument.

The Bureau of Reclamation was also sent a copy of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* and request for consultation. On October 25, 2013, the Bureau of Reclamation responded by e-mail and stated it had no comments.

Consultations with Traditionally Associated American Indian Tribes

Federal regulations for implementation of section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, require consultation with federally recognized American Indian tribes (36 CFR 800.2) on a government-to-government basis, as specified in Executive Order 13175. Consultation letters, signed by then-superintendent Cindy Ott-Jones, were sent to the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Caddo Nation of Oklahoma, Cheyenne and Arapahoe Tribes, Comanche Nation, Delaware Nation, Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma, Mescalero Apache Tribe, and Wichita and Affiliated Tribes in April 2009. To date, none raised concerns about specific cultural resources or traditional cultural properties. One tribe responded by phone on May 18, 2009, and no written responses were received from any of the associated tribes.

CONCLUSION

The selected actions for both Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument provide the most comprehensive, long-term, effective strategy among all the alternatives considered in the General Management Plan for meeting NPS purposes, goals, and criteria for managing the parks and for meeting national environmental policy goals.

As described in the “Mitigation Measures” section of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected actions have been adopted. Implementing the selected action for Lake Meredith National Recreation Area will protect the long-term ecological health of the national recreation area by establishing a large portion of the land as a semi-primitive zone and a water-based, no wake zone in part of Lake Meredith. Additionally, consolidation of park operations facilities will reduce fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions; eliminate the need for the duplication of office equipment in multiple locations; and allow staff more time to manage natural and cultural resources rather than travel between facilities. These actions will allow the National Park Service to balance protection of the national recreation area’s natural and cultural resources with the enjoyment of the recreational resources by all park visitors. Within Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, the National Park Service will be able to achieve this same balance by establishing most of the national monument as a cultural zone with restricted access and increasing interpretative opportunities for visitors to learn about the flint deposits and the people who used them where access is allowed. All aspects of the selected action will be undertaken and monitored under the direction of the superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, beginning as soon as practicable.

ATTACHMENT: DETERMINATION OF NONIMPAIRMENT FOR LAKE MEREDITH NATIONAL RECREATION AREA AND ALIBATES FLINT QUARRIES NATIONAL MONUMENT RESOURCES AND VALUES

National Park Service *Management Policies 2006* require analysis of potential effects to determine whether actions will impair park resources. The fundamental purpose of the national park system, established by the Organic Act and reaffirmed by the General Authorities Act, as amended, begins with a mandate to conserve park resources and values. NPS managers must always seek ways to avoid, or to minimize to the greatest degree practicable, adversely impacting park resources and values.

However, the laws do give the National Park Service the management discretion to allow impacts to park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a park, as long as the impact does not constitute impairment of the affected resources and values. Although Congress has given the National Park Service the management discretion to allow certain impacts within parks, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement that the National Park Service must leave park resources and values unimpaired, unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise. The prohibited impairment is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS manager, would harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values. An impact to any park resource or value may, but does not necessarily, constitute an impairment. An impact would be more likely to constitute an impairment to the extent that it affects a resource or value whose conservation is

- necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park;
- key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or
- identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents.

An impact would be less likely to constitute impairment if it is an unavoidable result of an action necessary to preserve or restore integrity of park resources or values and it cannot be further mitigated. Impairment may result from NPS activities in managing the park, visitor activities, or activities undertaken by concessioners, contractors, and others operating in the park. Impairment may also result from sources or activities outside the park unit.

Park resources and values subject to the no-impairment standard include:

- the park's scenery, natural and historic objects, and wildlife, and the processes and conditions that sustain them, including, to the extent present in the park: the ecological, biological, and physical processes that created the park and continue to act upon it; scenic features; natural visibility, both in daytime and at night; natural landscapes; natural soundscapes and smells; water and air resources; soils; geological resources; paleontological resources; archeological resources; cultural landscapes; ethnographic resources; historic and prehistoric sites, structures, and objects; museum collections; and native plants and animals

- appropriate opportunities to experience enjoyment of the above resources, to the extent that can be done without impairing them
- the park's role in contributing to the national dignity, the high public value and integrity, and the superlative environmental quality of the national park system, and the benefit and inspiration provided to the American people by the national park system
- any additional attributes encompassed by the specific values and purposes for which the park was established

Impairment findings are not necessary for visitor use and experience, socioeconomics, public health and safety, environmental justice, land use, and park operations, because impairment findings pertain only to park resources and values. These topics are not generally considered park resources or values according to the Organic Act, and cannot be impaired in the same way that an action can impair park resources and values. Among the topics addressed in the General Management Plan, those evaluated for impairment include special status species and their habitats, soils, archeological resources, and historic structures and buildings. Of these, Alibates flint, an archeological resource at Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument was been identified as a fundamental resource or value for the national monument. The wide range of sites and archeological artifacts and the diverse habitats and ecological transition zones (available for special status species) were identified as fundamental resources for both park units.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS

There are seven federally listed species of concern and four Texas state listed species that might occur near the parks.

The implementation of the selected action in Lake Meredith National Recreation Area will result in temporary adverse impacts on special status species because of new disturbance to habitat associated with the construction of new facilities, restoration of sites from which facilities were removed, and rehabilitation of Mullinaw Trail. Long-term adverse impacts on special status species from an increased visitor presence in areas of the national recreation area will result from the following actions: the construction associated with the consolidated visitor contact, headquarters, and operations center; the potential for increased foot traffic on the shorelines associated with the establishment of a no wake zone; and the construction of new and/or additional camping in various locations. Mitigation measures and best practices will be used as described in the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.

Over the long term, there will be beneficial impacts to special status species from restoring the sites of the existing fire cache and law enforcement facilities, decreasing the size of the dirt road network, and rehabilitating Mullinaw Trail. Long-term benefits to special status species in Lake Meredith National Recreation Area will also result from increasing monitoring and management of resource conditions, implementing a fee for ORV use, which could reduce the amount of users, increasing visitor education regarding special status species, and reducing road kill of individual animals. Additionally, the majority of the national recreation area will be within the semi-primitive zone, thereby further protecting special status species habitat.

Overall, because there will be beneficial effects on special status species due to restoration and increased habitat protection, and most adverse impacts will be temporary, the selected action will not result in impairment to special status species within Lake Meredith National Recreation Area.

Within Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, the only elements of the selected action with the potential to affect special status species are the excavation of one quarry pit near the existing trail, potential construction of a shade canopy over the quarry pit, and interpretation and construction of a self-guiding interpretive trail near the contact station. The small areas of disturbance will be surveyed for the Texas horned lizard, which is the only special status species with the potential to occur at these sites. If lizards are found, mitigation measures will be used during construction to protect individuals. The excavated quarry and shade canopy will not pose hazards to the Texas horned lizard. If the selected quarry was steeper than anticipated and the potential for entrapment existed, a lizard escape route, such as a natural-appearing log extending from the pit base to the lip, would be installed. Because of the low likelihood of affecting special status species while implementing these elements and the mitigation measures in place, the selected action will not result in impairment to special status species within Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument.

SOILS

Implementation of the selected action in Lake Meredith National Recreation Area will result in temporary adverse impacts on soils because of new disturbances created from construction and/or installation of facilities throughout the national monument. These projects include the consolidated visitor contact, headquarters, and operations center; construction at the Bates Canyon, Fritch Fortress, and Sanford-Yake Campgrounds; and installation of interpretive waysides.

The new consolidated visitor contact, headquarters, and operations center; new camping areas (Bates Canyon, Harbor Bay, and on the west side of the national recreation area); the addition of interpretive waysides; and the marking and use of trails throughout the national recreation area will result in long-term adverse impacts on soils from additional trampling and compaction of soils around these newly developed locations. Mitigation measures and best practices will be used as described in the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*.

Over the long term, there will be beneficial impacts to soils from restoring sites where facilities will be removed, rehabilitating trails, closing some dirt roads and restoring native vegetation, designating some dirt roads for administrative use only, making improvements at McBride Canyon campground, and increasing monitoring and management.

Overall, because there will be beneficial effects on soils due to restoration, and most adverse impacts will be temporary and/or can be effectively mitigated, the selected action will not result in impairment to soils within Lake Meredith National Recreation Area.

Within Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, the only elements of the selected action with the potential to affect soils is the excavation of one quarry pit near the existing trail, potential construction of a shade canopy over the quarry pit, and interpretation and construction of a self-guiding interpretive trail near the contact station. Because of the small areas of disturbance and the mitigation measures in place, the selected action will not result in impairment to soils within Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

At Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, components of the selected action that have the potential to affect archeological resources are associated with facilities construction and trail rehabilitation. Many of the areas identified for construction throughout the national recreation area

are on previously disturbed sites. Archeological surveys will precede any ground disturbance associated with any of these activities to find any previously undiscovered archeological resources. If any sites are found, they will be evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Because national register-listed or -eligible archeological resources will be avoided, adverse effects on these archeological resources are not anticipated. If, however, important archeological resources could not be avoided, the effects on such resources will be adverse, and an appropriate mitigation strategy will be developed in consultation with the Texas state historic preservation officer and, if necessary, associated American Indians.

Over the long term, there will be beneficial impacts to archeological resources from improved education, interpretation, and outreach, in addition to reduced vehicular access in the semi-primitive zone. Overall, because of the limited areas of disturbance and the NPS commitment to conduct surveying and avoidance, the selected action will not result in impairment to archeological resources within Lake Meredith National Recreation Area.

At Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, actions of the selected action that have the potential to affect archeological resources are associated with the excavation of one quarry pit and increased visitor access to guided tours of the ruins and petroglyphs. Excavation of one quarry pit will result in long-term, adverse impacts on the archeological resources of that one quarry pit. Prior to excavation, the National Park Service will consult with the Texas state historic preservation officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and all associated Indian tribes to identify appropriate mitigation.

While access to the ruins and petroglyphs will remain restricted to guided tours with NPS staff and volunteers, increased visitor access to these tours will result in long-term adverse impacts to the archeological resources in Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument due to the increased exposure of these elements to more people.

Over the long term, improved education, interpretation, and outreach will result in long-term, beneficial impacts to archeological resources at Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument.

Overall, because there will be beneficial effects on archeological resources due to improved education and interpretation, and adverse impacts will be mitigated in association with the Texas state historic preservation officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and all associated Indian tribes, the selected action will not result in impairment to archeological resources within Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES AND BUILDINGS

At Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, the selected action will include providing guided tours of the McBride Ranch House during special events. Rehabilitation of this building is the most likely treatment because it will employ some restoration elements to enhance the character-defining elements of the building but will also allow limited modifications to provide adaptive use of the property for interpretation. Restoration of the McBride Ranch House will have long-term beneficial impacts on this property, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Over the long term, beneficial impacts to historic structures and buildings will result from the documentation and assessment for national register eligibility of other historical structures such as remnants of historical ranching activities and former oil and gas production sites. Suitable sites will

be stabilized, preserved, and managed as discovery sites. These sites will be at low risk of adverse effects on character-defining features so their integrity will not be affected.

Overall, because there will be beneficial effects on historic buildings and structures due to rehabilitation of the McBride Ranch House and because the park will follow specific requirements to mitigate impacts and document other historical structures in the national recreation area, the selected action will not result in impairment to historic structures and buildings within Lake Meredith National Recreation Area.

There are no historic structures or buildings within Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument. Therefore, implementation of the selected action will not result in impairment to historic structures and buildings within the national monument.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, as guided by this analysis, good science and scholarship, and advice from subject matter experts and others who have relevant knowledge and experience, and the results of public involvement activities, it is the National Park Service's professional judgment that there will be no impairment of park resources and values from implementation of the selected actions.