

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Flight 93 National Memorial
General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement
Somerset County, Pennsylvania

**Flight 93 National Memorial
General Management Plan/Environmental Impact
Statement
Record of Decision**

Approved:



John Latschar, Acting Regional Director
Northeast Region, National Park Service

2/26/07

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

RECORD OF DECISION

**FLIGHT 93 NATIONAL MEMORIAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
Somerset County, Pennsylvania**

The U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS) has prepared a Record of Decision (ROD) for the *Flight 93 National Memorial General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*. This ROD describes the project background, states the decision and the basis for the decision, provides a synopsis of the alternatives considered, assesses the findings on impairment, summarizes the agency's preferred alternative and the environmentally preferable alternative, and summarizes the public involvement that was integrated into the decision-making process for this project.

BACKGROUND

On September 24, 2002, Congress enacted the *Flight 93 National Memorial Act*, (P.L. 107-226), which authorized "a national memorial to commemorate the passengers and crew of Flight 93 who, on September 11, 2001, gave their lives thereby thwarting a planned attack on our Nation's Capital...". The Act specifically designated the crash site of Flight 93, located in Stonycreek Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania, as the site for this national memorial to honor the passengers and crew of Flight 93. The Act also formally designated this site a unit of the national park system, which automatically listed the site in the National Register of Historic Places (November 8, 2002).

Four partner organizations participated in the planning of a permanent memorial for Flight 93: 1) the Flight 93 Advisory Commission, 2) the Families of Flight 93, a nonprofit organization, 3) the Flight 93 Memorial Task Force, and 4) the National Park Service, the Federal agency responsible for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Pub. L. 91-190, as amended).

The formal public scoping process began on December 10, 2003, with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register, followed by a series of public and agency meetings that were conducted from 2003 to 2005. In the spring 2004, the Partners launched an open international design competition to produce a design for the national memorial. The selected design, publicly announced on September 7, 2005, was approved by the Partners, formally adopted by the Flight 93 Advisory Commission and submitted to the Secretary of the Interior and Congress. The selected design is represented and evaluated as Alternative 2-Preferred Design Alternative in the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS). The planning process culminated in a 60-day public comment period on the Draft GMP/EIS that extended from June 16 through August 15, 2006. A public open house was held on July 20, 2006, in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, to solicit comments on the Draft GMP/EIS. Approximately 1,452 comments were received during the public review period and from the public open house.

Pursuant to section 1506.9 of the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), the National Park Service filed the Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Flight 93 National Memorial, with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on June 20, 2007. An announcement of the availability of the Final GMP/EIS was published in the *Federal Register* at 72 FR 34273-34274 on June 21, 2007. Consistent with the laws, regulations and National Park Service policies, the Final GMP/EIS described the proposed Federal action to establish a programmatic framework in the

form of a General Management Plan to accomplish the objectives set forth in the *Flight 93 National Memorial Act* (Pub. L. 107-226; 116 Stat. 1345) and responded to the public comments received on the Draft GMP/EIS. This Record of Decision is based upon the Final GMP/EIS for the Flight 93 National Memorial.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed Federal action establishes a programmatic framework for the planning and development of the Flight 93 National Memorial. This programmatic framework is in the form of a General Management Plan and is designed to accomplish the objectives set forth by Congress in the *Flight 93 National Memorial Act*. The GMP meets all Federal statutory requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act, and 16 U.S.C. 1a-7(b). The GMP addresses the following issues:

1. The types of management actions required for the development, protection and preservation of park resources;
2. The types and general intensities of development (including the memorial features, visitor facilities, transportation and access requirements) associated with the public enjoyment and use of the area, including general locations, timing of implementation and anticipated costs;
3. Visitor carrying capacities and implementation commitments for major aspects of the memorial; and
4. Potential modifications to the external boundaries of the park, if any, and the reasons for the proposed changes.

PURPOSE

On September 24, 2002, the *Flight 93 National Memorial Act* (P.L. 107-226) was enacted by Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush, thus creating the Flight 93 National Memorial. The principal purposes for developing the Flight 93 General Management Plan are—

1. to ensure that the Partners—the Flight 93 Advisory Commission, the Families of Flight 93, the Flight 93 Memorial Task Force and the National Park Service, as well as the public have a clear understanding of the types of resource conditions, visitor experiences and management actions that will best fulfill the mission of the Flight 93 National Memorial; and
2. to ensure that the basic foundation for decisionmaking has been developed with the Partners and other interested stakeholders and adopted by the National Park Service after an adequate analysis of the alternatives, benefits, environmental impacts and economic costs and benefits of alternative courses of action has been conducted.

NEED

The need for this action is to develop a programmatic framework, in the form of a General Management Plan (GMP), to guide the National Park Service and the Partners during the creation and long-term administration of the Flight 93 National Memorial. This GMP provides direction and guidance to the National Park Service for protecting the Memorial's natural and cultural resource values and for maintaining the tranquil setting of the crash site. The need for this action is further supported by the existing and projected visitation to the Memorial, which is expected to peak to 400,000 annual visitors by 2011 and then level to approximately 230,000 visitors per year throughout the remainder of the 20-year planning horizon.

MISSION STATEMENT

In accordance with National Park Service planning guidance, the Partners agreed that the design for the national memorial and all development and management decisions should be predicated on the Memorial's mission statement. Through a collaborative process involving months of workshops, online forums, and distribution of a project newsletter and comment form, the Partners drafted the following

mission statement.

The *Mission* of the Flight 93 National Memorial is to—

1. honor the heroism, courage and enduring sacrifice of the passengers and crew of United Airlines Flight 93;
2. revere this hallowed ground as the final resting place of 40 heroes who sacrificed their lives so that other would be spared;
3. remember and commemorate the events of September 11, 2001;
4. celebrate the lives of the passengers and crew of Flight 93;
5. express the appreciation of a grateful nation forever changed by the events of September 11, 2001;
6. educate visitors about the context of the events of September 11, 2001; and
7. offer a place of comfort, hope and inspiration.

. The following statements represent shared understandings of the *purpose* of the Flight 93 National Memorial:

- Honor the passengers and crew members of Flight 93 who courageously gave their lives, thereby thwarting a planned attack on Washington, D.C.
- Allow the public to visit the site and express their feelings about the event and the passengers and crew of Flight 93
- Respect the rural landscape and preserve the solemn and tranquil setting of the crash site of Flight 93

The events of September 11, 2001, and the dramatic story of Flight 93 are forever linked to the Pennsylvania field on which the crash occurred. The *significance* of this site and the reason it was selected as the site of a national memorial are because—

- the crash site is the final resting place of the passengers and crew of Flight 93, and
- the heroic actions of the passengers and crew of Flight 93 are part of the transformational events of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.

MEMORIAL DESIGN COMPETITION

The Flight 93 National Memorial design competition, which began on September 11, 2004, was conducted in two stages, both of which were independently juried by art and design professionals, family members and local and national leaders. The intent of Stage I was to solicit a broad range of concepts for the new memorial. In response, the Partners received more than 1,000 design concepts in January 2005, which were placed on exhibit in Pennsylvania and posted on the project website for public review and comment. On February 4, 2005, the Stage I jury, composed of nine design professionals, national leaders and family members, evaluated all the entries and recommended five final design concepts that best represented the spirit of the memorial's Mission Statement, showed an understanding of the physical landscape, and addressed the public comments made during the exhibition. These five concepts advanced to Stage II of the competition where they were further developed and refined. These design concepts were exhibited in Somerset, Pennsylvania, and were posted on the project website from July 1 until September 25, 2005, for public review and comment.

An independent Stage II design jury evaluated the five final designs and the public comments submitted on the designs. Based on this input, the Stage II jury recommended the design presented by the team of Paul Murdoch Architects as the design that they judged best embodied the spirit of the Mission Statement. The selected design was publicly announced on September 7, 2005. The selected design is described and evaluated as Alternative 2 in the Final GMP/EIS.

Design Controversy

After public announcement of the final design, the National Park Service received comments criticizing the design's principal landscape feature, a curved allée or pathway lined with red maple trees. To these individuals, the curved walkway resembled an Islamic crescent symbol. Others, however, understood that the designers' intent was to reflect the natural contours of the land that encircle the crash site and "embrace" the final resting place of the passengers and crew.

In the fall of 2005, the Partners met with the architect to discuss a variety of issues, including perceptions that the design contained Islamic symbolism. This meeting was the first opportunity the Partners had to speak directly with the architect about the design because communication with all of the design finalists had been prohibited during the competition. Over the next few months, the architect refined the design in response to public comments received during and after the competition, as well as to conversations with the Partners, the Stage II jury comments, and specific issues that surfaced during the General Management Plan/EIS analysis. The refinements to the design were disclosed and again presented to the public through the project website and a newsletter published in November 2005.

The design refinements were well-received by the public, particularly by visitors to the Temporary Memorial. However, a sector of the public continued to assert that the design contained Islamic symbolism, and launched an email and targeted Internet "blog" campaign against the design. In response, the Partners met with religious scholars, design professionals, and other family members and toured the site with the principal critic of the design. At the conclusion of these activities and consultations, it was determined that the perceptions of religious symbolism in the design had been adequately addressed by the architect and that the details of the design do not affect the GMP/EIS. The NPS, along with the other Partners, were satisfied that the design properly honors the passengers and crew and that the refinements showed the architects' sensitivity and responsiveness to public comments. Certain design details, including the specific locations of memorial features and the selection of finish materials, will evolve as more detailed site data, such as survey and geotechnical data, become available and as funding priorities are established.

DECISION SUPPORTING THE SELECTED ACTION

Description of the Selected Action – Alternative 2-Preferred Design Alternative

The National Park Service is selecting Alternative 2-Preferred Design Alternative, which was described on pages II-14 to II-23 of the Final GMP/EIS. The selected alternative fulfills the legislative intent of the *Flight 93 National Memorial Act* of 2002 and the spirit of the mission statement for the national memorial. The design for the national memorial honors and commemorates the heroic actions of the passengers and crew members of Flight 93 by transforming the reclaimed mining site into a memorial landscape. It fully develops the site including construction of an 8,000-square foot visitor facility, a new entrance road directly from U.S. Route 30, utilities, and commemorative features. The memorial features include a tree-lined allée and 40 memorial tree groves as part of a circular landform that follows the topography of the site and leads visitors to a memorial plaza near the crash site. An entry portal near the visitor center marks the flight path and a commemorative tower and plantings greet visitors at the entrance to the memorial.

The new memorial is expected to accommodate an estimated 400,000 annual visitors in the peak year (2011) after construction, and thereafter serve an estimated 230,000 annual visitors. Because Flight 93 National Memorial has not been developed nor has land been acquired to date, reliance on existing visitation figures, comments from visitors to the Temporary Memorial and resource surveys were considered when exploring visitor carrying capacity. As the memorial develops, monitoring of visitor use, experiences and trends, as well as assessing the park's fundamental resource values, will be conducted.

Decision to Select Alternative 2

Alternative 2 was selected because it more fully meets the goals of the Flight 93 National Memorial’s Mission Statement, as well as the purpose and intent of the Flight 93 National Memorial Act. The selected alternative commemorates the actions of the passengers and crew by creating a designed memorial landscape, which blends with the contour of the land and enhances the physical features of the site. It protects the final resting places of the passengers and crew and places special attention on providing an appropriate setting for the memorial. A new visitor facility will provide for interpretive exhibits, public education and outreach, and visitor services. The public will have a broader range of opportunities to learn about the deeds of the passengers and crew members and the events that occurred on September 11, 2001. The selected alternative also provides a venue for visitors to get closer to the crash site while removing parking and other visitor support facilities from the views around the crash site. Under the selected alternative, visitor traffic will be contained within the site and removed from the neighboring villages to create safer roadway conditions and significantly improve conditions for residents living along these routes. The construction costs to build the memorial features and the related infrastructure would be shared through a partnership involving the public, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the federal government.

Costs

The estimated total development cost for the Preferred Design Alternative is more than \$44 million, based on 2005 dollars. The Partners initiated a fundraising feasibility study that showed \$30 million in private funds could be raised for the memorial feature. The cost estimates for the visitor center and infrastructure were developed through the use of the National Park Service Facility Planning Model, which estimates facility and infrastructure needs based on visitor projections, comparable National Park Service facilities, industry standards and regional conditions. Based on the National Park Service’s facility planning model, the visitor center assumes a modest 8,000-square-foot facility for basic visitor services, shelter from the weather and staff offices. Actual costs for the selected design will be refined through the design development process. Development of the proposed facilities and infrastructure is dependent on the availability of funds and the success of the private fundraising campaign. The following table shows the estimated development costs.

Estimated Development Costs, Preferred Design Alternative

Item	Estimated Budget*	Funding Sources
Memorial Feature	\$27.0 million	Private
Visitor Center	\$ 6.0 million	Private, State, Federal
Utilities and Parking	\$ 5.0 million	State, Federal
Roads	\$ 6.7 million	State, Federal
Total (Gross)	\$44.7 million	Private, State, Federal

Source: National Park Service, 2005.

These estimates represent gross costs and are for planning and comparison purposes only, based on 2005 cost estimates. Actual costs will be determined through the design development process. Development of the proposed facilities and infrastructure will be dependent upon availability of funding.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

No Action Alternative

Alternative 1-No Action would involve existing National Park Service management and direction, focusing on protection of the crash site and the adjacent areas. Public safety and visitor improvements, such as roadway improvements and permanent toilet facilities, would be made but a permanent memorial

feature, a visitor center and ancillary facilities are not included under this alternative. The existing Temporary Memorial would be retained and the parking areas would be redesigned. A more permanent shelter for visitors during inclement weather would be constructed. Access to the site would continue from Skyline Road. About 657 acres would be acquired in fee for resource protection and visitor use and about 1,605 acres would be acquired through easements or partnerships. The estimated cost for land acquisition for Alternative 1 would be about \$8 million, and the estimated cost of development would be about \$450,000 based on 2005 dollars. Estimated staff and operating costs would be about \$750,000 and would involve eight full-time staffpersons. With Alternative 1, visitation to the memorial is projected to decline to about 87,000 visitors a year.

The No Action alternative was not selected because it would only minimally meet the goals identified in the Mission Statement. Although development costs would be much lower than those for the selected alternative, there would be no visitor facilities, no formal interpretive program and no public education or outreach programs. Visitors would continue to experience the site in the open. Visitors would be limited to the area where the Temporary Memorial is currently located and would not be able to gain closer access to the crash site. Some local residents would be directly impacted by necessary improvements to Lambertsville and Buckstown roads. The danger of buses and high volumes of visitor traffic using narrow, local roads would continue as would the annoyances of visitors traveling along local roads, turning around in private driveways, and disturbing private property. In addition, the site may not also be adequately protected from adjacent land development along US Route 30, especially those lands north of the existing draglines. There are no zoning or land use controls in Stonycreek Township and before September 11, 2001, this land was considered for development as an industrial park or a wind farm.

International Design Competition Concepts.

Through an open International Design Competition, the Partners offered design professionals and the public an opportunity to actively participate in the creation of the memorial by submitting their idea for the Flight 93 National Memorial. A total of 1,011 entries met the mandatory criteria set forth in the competition regulations. These entries were on public display in Somerset, Pennsylvania, and on the project website for public viewing and comment. A Stage I jury of design professionals and family members evaluated all designs against the Mission Statement, the public comments, and the abilities of the concept to be developed on this site and within the competition budget. Five entries were selected to move on to Stage II of the competition where they were fully developed into “preliminary alternatives” that could be evaluated in the GMP/EIS. A model of the entire site and a master plan, including a management zoning scheme, were developed for each design and shared with the public during a three month public exhibition.

The Stage II jury—comprised of art and design professionals, family members, and local residents—evaluated the five final designs according to the competition guidelines, the Mission Statement, and public comments received. Based on these considerations, the Stage II jury recommended a design presented by Paul Murdoch Architects to the Partners. The Partners concurred with the jury’s recommendation and the selected design was announced to the public on September 7, 2005.

Memorial on Mall in Washington, DC.

When planning began for the Flight 93 National Memorial in 2003, the idea of establishing a memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC, instead of in Pennsylvania was raised. This idea was not considered further because the Flight 93 National Memorial Act states that a memorial should be developed at the crash site in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and because this site is the final resting place of the 40 passengers and crew members of Flight 93.

Memorial to Commemorate All Victims of September 11, 2001

The concept of developing a memorial to collectively commemorate the events and all victims of September 11, 2001, was also considered. The Flight 93 National Memorial act is specific in its authorization to create a national memorial to commemorate the passengers and crew of Flight 93. However, the Partners believe visitors to the Flight 93 National Memorial need to understand the other events that occurred on September 11. They anticipate that interpretive materials and displays would make such connections and complement the presentation at the memorials in New York City and at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, both of which had been initiated before planning began for the Flight 93 National Memorial. Therefore, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.

BASIS FOR DECISION

The National Park Service concurred with the recommendation of the design competition juries and the Partners that the selected alternative best met the intent of the *Flight 93 National Memorial Act* (Public Law 107-226), the spirit of the Mission Statement, and responded to comments from the public. It commemorates the actions of the passengers and crew of Flight 93 through the creation of a designed memorial landscape. The selected alternative places special attention on respecting the natural qualities of the site and the surrounding rural areas. This alternative also allows for the increasing number of visitors, buses, and school groups to be safely accommodated in a manner that is respectful of the site. The selected alternative allows visitors to get closer to the crash site and provides basic visitor services and opportunities for greater interpretation of the site. By creating a new entrance into the site, this alternative also creates safer conditions for residents living in the small villages that line the routes near the memorial.

FINDINGS ON IMPAIRMENT OF RESOURCES AND RESOURCE VALUES

The NPS has determined that implementing the selected action will not constitute an impairment of park resources and values. This conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the environmental consequences described in the GMP/EIS and summarized below, agency and public comments received, and the professional judgment of the decision-makers in accordance with *NPS Management Policies 2006*.

The introduction and establishment of a new national park unit within a rural area where a national park had not previously existed will induce many changes, both positive and negative, to the rural landscape, the resources in the area, the adjacent land uses and local infrastructure, and the lives of the community members. In many cases, development proposals related to the construction of the memorial and its ancillary infrastructure must be evaluated in the future to determine the impacts associated with design, facility development, updated visitor projections and economic impacts. The following describes the more significant changes that are projected to occur as a result of implementing the selected alternative.

- **Possible Conflicts with Local Plans, Policies and Controls.** Several local and regional plans guide the growth and the direction of Stonycreek Township, Somerset County and the six-county Southern Alleghenies Region. The development of the Flight 93 National Memorial has been addressed by most of these plans and does not constitute a conflict with the goals and objectives of these plans.
- **Environmental Justice.** No minority or disproportionately low-income communities are located immediately adjacent to the memorial, and, therefore, no impacts will occur to any such populations, as defined in Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*.
- **Floodplains.** There are no floodplains located within the boundary of the national memorial, as defined in Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management*.
- **Prime and Unique Agricultural Lands.** Previous farming or grazing practices would not occur within the core area of the site where the memorial expression and visitor center would be located and where the visitor experience could be detracted. However, current agricultural practices could

continue within the perimeter zone or the buffer area (about 907 acres) around the core area.

- **Ecologically Critical Areas.** There are no ecologically critical areas within Somerset County.
- **Sacred Sites and Indian Trust Resources.** There are no Indian sacred sites or Trust resources within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- **Management of the Memorial.** The National Park Service will be the management agency for the memorial under the selected alternative.
- **Access to the Crash Site.** Access to the crash site under the selected alternative will be limited to family members and authorized personnel only.
- **Contaminants.** Under the selected alternative, the site will be cleaned up to meet Federal environmental health and safety standards prior to land acquisition. Remediation will focus on areas where visitors are expected to walk and congregate, particularly where contamination has occurred. The buffer areas will require less need and attention.
- **Draglines and Industrial Structures.** It is currently planned to remove some of the former mining and industrial structures and equipment prior to land acquisition. A scrap and recycling operation will be relocated once that land is acquired. The National Park Service does not intend to acquire the two draglines or preserve other mining buildings under either alternative because of cost and because they are not central to the mission of the Flight 93 National Memorial.
- **Hemlock Grove.** The National Park Service desires to acquire the properties and four cabins in the hemlock grove, located immediately southeast of the crash site. Human remains and debris from the crash were discovered in this area and it is considered part of the final resting place of the passengers and crew members of Flight 93.
- **Acid Mine Drainage (AMD).** The National Park Service will not purchase the subsurface mineral rights where AMD is known to occur. The National Park Service will cooperate with property and mineral rights owners, the State and other agencies and nonprofit groups to pursue solutions to the challenges of AMD within the memorial boundary. The National Park Service will continue to permit authorized personnel to monitor and appropriately treat AMD within the memorial boundary.
- **Accessibility.** The National Park Service will comply with *The Americans with Disabilities Act* and with NPS policies to ensure that all persons have access to the park and its programs and services.
- **Aircraft Overflights.** The National Park Service will request cooperation from the Federal Aviation Administration; PennDOT, Bureau of Aviation; and the Air National Guard to discourage sightseeing overflights to the memorial and to help maintain a peaceful and tranquil environment that allows for a contemplative visitor experience.
- **Park Visitation.** With implementation of the selected alternative, visitation is projected to peak to 400,000 annual visitors by 2011 and then stabilize to about 230,000 visitors annually.
- **Land Acquisition.** Under the selected alternative, approximately 1,355 acres would be acquired for resource protection and visitor use areas, and 907 acres would be acquired for protection through easements and partnerships.

Historic and Cultural Resources

When the *Flight 93 National Memorial Act* was enacted in 2002, the crash site was designated a unit within the national park system and subsequently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Sorber Cemetery, a small family cemetery (circa 1856-1892), is located within the boundary, just south of U.S. Route 30. The National Park Service advised the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation and the local historian about the location of the cemetery. No development is planned that would affect this site under either alternative and acquisition of this area has not yet been determined.

An archeological assessment of undisturbed areas within the boundary has been proposed. Prior to any ground disturbance, an archeological survey will be conducted and coordination with the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation will be continued.

Natural Resources

Soils: Consultation with a geotechnical engineer will be conducted during the design phase to determine appropriate options for constructing the components of the memorial expression, visitor facilities and associated infrastructure. A geotechnical survey will be conducted prior to construction activities.

Rare and Protected Species: The FWS identified the potential occurrence of the federally-listed Indiana bat on the site. A field survey did not reveal the presence of the bat or critical habitat for the bat on the site. A number of state-listed bird species of special concern occur were observed at the site in 2005, including: northern Harrier, state candidate species-at-risk; Wilson's snipe, state threatened; and short-eared owl, state endangered. Based on available information, no known habitat exists on the site even though sightings of the state-listed birds were recorded. No rare plant species or species of conservation concern were found during two field surveys conducted of the site. Potential exists for the Appalachian blue violet, a Pennsylvania Tentatively Undetermined species to occur near the Sorber Cemetery. Although the hemlock grove has the greatest potential to support viable populations of rare plants, such as weak rush, kidney-leaved twayblade and heart-leaved twayblade, none of these species were found during two field inspections. In addition, this area was heavily traversed during and after the NTSB investigations and the potential for finding any rare or protected plant species is extremely low. Follow up surveys for rare plants will be undertaken as necessary.

Other Flora and Fauna: The hemlock grove is an important resource within the boundary. Of concern to the integrity of this resource is the hemlock woolly adelgid, an insect that is dispersed passively by birds, mammals, people, and wind, and which threatens to eradicate eastern hemlocks. The adelgid is an insect known to occur in Pennsylvania and in Somerset County; however, it was not detected in the hemlock grove during a field inspection.

In addition to the hemlock woolly adelgid, Pennsylvania has been experiencing "maple die-back" or "sugar maple decline" to sugar maples. This threat is due in part to problems with soil fertility and to other insects. Although maple die-back is not known to affect red maples, red maples are susceptible to a disease called fusarium canker, which results in long, narrow lesions on the bark. This problem can occur when maples are planted in high densities and when the trees reach 20-40 years of age. A mixture of trees that complement the maples are proposed to mitigate die-off from any pests or diseases. The specific tree species will most likely be determined during design. However, regardless of the species used, monitoring of the memorial landscape and the site's natural resources will be conducted and an Integrated Pest Management Plan will be prepared to address issues related to these resources.

Water Resources: The selected alternative will impact wetlands as a result of the construction of an allée of maples through the wetlands in the Bowl. Permits would be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and from the State before any filling in these areas could occur. The selected alternative includes implementing a process called "phytostabilization," which helps stabilize the toxicity of the site through the use of specific plantings.

Under the selected alternative, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection would continue to monitor the water quality of the streams on the site, and PBS Coals would continue treating AMD occurring from the former mines. The selected alternative proposes development and construction of facilities and impervious surfaces, as well as re-grading of certain contours of the site. Runoff will be contained to prevent discharges and sedimentation from occurring in surface streams.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Under the selected alternative, visitation to the memorial is expected to increase to about 400,000 annual visitors by 2011 and then stabilize to about 230,000 annual visitors after that year. Once the visitation stabilizes, an estimated \$9.6 million in direct sales, plus an additional \$4.3 million generated from multiplier effects, are expected to result in a total of \$13.6 million in additional sales by regional businesses and industries annually. Most of the visitor impacts are expected to occur in the food, beverage and lodging industries.

Since September 11, 2001, 2,300 additional jobs are projected to be generated within the nine-county region under the selected alternative, averaging 293 jobs per year during the first eight years after construction of a new memorial. The projected sales revenue for the region is expected to amount to \$331 million. Over the long-term, the economic impacts induced by the memorial will principally accrue to lower paying industries in the region, which is typical of tourism-based development.

Development of a permanent memorial, as described for the selected alternative, is expected to boost regional economic activity though such development will place increased demand on the townships for services such as road maintenance, fire and police protection. Increased economic activity would result in additional revenue accruing to Somerset County, Stonycreek and adjacent townships, as well as the Shanksville-Stonycreek School District. Overall, the County should see a modest net increase in revenue, whereas municipal government and school districts will incur a slight loss due to the memorial's operations and visitations. These impacts do not include improvements in infrastructure, such as construction and improvement of roads to the memorial.

Transportation, Land Use and Public Infrastructure

Under the selected alternative, access would be developed directly from U.S. Route 30 and the local roads leading to the site would be terminated. This will remove visitor traffic from local roadways and circulate it within the site.

Land use of the core area of the memorial would be converted from reclaimed mining to parkland. Adjacent land uses, such as residential and farmland, would be retained. Incompatible development, such as salvage yards, cell towers, wind farms, night clubs, hunting and racing clubs, would be discouraged.

Property values would also be expected to rise as access to public sewer and water could generate additional development along Lambertsville Road. In addition, if public sewer is extended along Lambertsville Road, an estimated 30 homes would be required to connect to the new public system, causing a short-term economic impact to these residents. However, connection to public sewer would create long-term environmental and community benefits.

Under the selected alternative, four water supply options were assessed: 1) drill a deep well onsite, 2) connect to Indian Lake Borough's public water supply, 3) connect to the Shanksville School water supply, and 4) connect to Camp Allegheny's private water supply. Indian Lake Borough and Camp Allegheny were considered infeasible due to the lack of interest from the Borough to sell water and due to insufficient supply from Camp Allegheny. Construction of Shanksville's sewage system could be extended to the memorial along Lambertsville Road. No decision has been made on the preferred water supply. To date, no land has been acquired and the National Park Service does not have access to the properties to perform additional surveys necessary before a decision can be made.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying the following six criteria suggested in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), which is guided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ provides direction that "the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's §101: (1) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; (2) assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings; (3) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradations, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; (4) preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety, of individual choice; (5) achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and (6) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources."

Alternative 2 represents the agency's preferred alternative and is also the environmentally preferred alternative. Alternative 2 would meet the Mission of the Flight 93 National Memorial, as well as meet the legislative intent of Congress through the passage of the *Flight 93 National Memorial Act of 2002*. Alternative 2 will ensure that this nationally significant area is protected in a manner that is appropriate to the purpose of the memorial, as well as the rural character of the area. This alternative will also improve visitor safety and the safety of residents living in the small villages along the routes that are currently used to reach the site.

AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Scoping

A Notice of Intent to Prepare a General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement was published in the *Federal Register* (68 FR 68947-68948) on December 10, 2003. This Notice of Intent initiated the scoping process for the Flight 93 National Memorial GMP/EIS and was followed by agency scoping meetings conducted in Somerset, Pennsylvania, on December 15, 2003, and on December 9, 2004. A total of 65 letters were mailed to Federal, State and local agencies and offices advising them of the project and scoping meeting, as well as requesting resource information and agency input. During the scoping process, the following issues identified were:

- **Local community and lifestyle impacts**, including traffic on local roadways and access to the site, changes to local tax base and school district tax revenue, and restrictions on uses, such as hunting and ATV use on the site;
- **Adjacent development** and its impact on the visitor experience and the rural setting for the national memorial
- **Development challenges**, such as the presence of hazardous materials, geotechnical constraints and the ability to provide adequate potable drinking water and sewerage systems;
- **Ability to accommodate peak visitation levels**, particularly during commemorations, without affecting the solemn environment and visitor experience
- **Noise impacts** on the visitor experience from sources such as aircraft and other noise generators
- **Protection of a private family (Sorber) cemetery** located within the boundary and its future protection
- **Security and public safety**

Other issues raised during scoping that did not directly relate to the GMP and which were subsequently dismissed from further evaluation involved—

- Treatment of Acid Mine Drainage
- Regional Watershed Planning
- Environmental Remediation of Contaminated Sites

Agency Coordination

Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was conducted pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (87 Stat. 884), and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended (48 Stat. 401). Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a search through the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory concluded that no known federally or State listed species or species of concern would be affected by the selected alternative.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reviewed the Draft EIS and assigned a rating of “LO” (Lack of Objections), in accordance with the agency’s review responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Consultation with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau of Historic Preservation, was conducted pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800. The response from the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation stated that although there may be historic buildings and/or structures eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places located within the project area, it is their opinion that there will be no effect on these properties. Prior to any ground disturbing activities, an archeological survey will be conducted.

Coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of District Mining Operations, occurred throughout the project regarding wetland retention ponds, acid mine drainage and the status of mining activities. Other agencies that were consulted to determine if issues of concern existed included, but were not limited to, the Federal Aviation Administration and the PennDOT, Bureau of Aviation; the Pennsylvania State Police and local sheriff’s department; PennDOT District 9-0; Pennsylvania State Game Commission; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service; U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining and U.S. Geological Survey; regional and local planning commissions; tourism and economic development councils; local tax assessor’s office; local emergency management offices; the local conservation district; and the County Coroner’s office. Local environmental nonprofit organizations were also consulted throughout the process. Appendix B of the Final GMP/EIS contains copies of agency correspondence compiled throughout the project. Appendix J contains responses to agency comments received on the Draft GMP/EIS.

Public Outreach and Involvement

In 2003, an extensive public outreach and involvement program was launched to gather public input to the Flight 93 National Memorial GMP/EIS. The National Park Service, as the Federal agency responsible for NEPA compliance in association with the GMP/EIS for the Flight 93 National Memorial, conducted a total of 13 public meetings throughout the GMP process. These included agency and public scoping meetings, four public meetings, seven open Advisory Commission meetings and a public open house workshop conducted on the Draft GMP/EIS. The Draft GMP/EIS was available for public review and comment for 60 days from June 16 through August 15, 2006.

Public Comment

On June 16, 2006, a “Notice of Availability” announcing the public comment period for the draft Flight 93 National Memorial GMP/EIS was published in the *Federal Register* (71 FR 34964). The public review period extended from June 16 to August 15, 2006. In addition to the *Federal Register* announcement, media announcements were released and a newsletter was widely distributed announcing availability of the document. Broad electronic messaging through email and through the Flight 93 National Memorial project website was disseminated to announce the availability of the Draft GMP/EIS and the 60-day public comment period. The document was posted on the project website at

<http://www.flight93memorialproject.org/> and was accessible to persons wishing to view the document online. Copies of the document were also available upon request.

A public open house workshop was conducted on July 20, 2006, in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, to solicit public comments on the GMP/EIS. Approximately 70 to 80 people attended the open house. A wide range of forums through which the public could comment was provided. These forums included a comment box, oral testimonies through a video recorded session, a “graffiti wall” on which comments could be posted, email, mail, and the online comments through the project website. A total of 1,452 comments were received during the public comment period, most of which were submitted through the online project website. The majority of comments received were opposed to the selected design (see p. 4, Design Controversy). Other comments favored the design and moving forward with developing the memorial. Another group of opposition comments related to a request for attribution to another design competitor who was not selected as a finalist. Agency comments received were supportive of the compliance procedures required for this project to proceed. Appendices B and J of the Final GMP/EIS contain all substantive agency and public comments and the NPS responses. A separate Compendium, which was not published as part of the Final GAP/EIS but is available on request, contains all comments received, both substantive and non-substantive.

CONCLUSION

The GMP establishes a programmatic framework for the memorial that would accomplish the legislative objectives outlined in P.L. 107-226, the Flight 93 National Memorial Act of 2002. It serves as a guide for development and future management of the memorial and a tool for understanding the effects of implementing the design. The GMP is the culmination of numerous studies, the collaborative efforts of countless people, and an extensive public process to explore ideas for a fitting memorial tribute. Creating this framework has involved inventorying and assessing the park’s resource conditions, establishing preliminary interpretive themes, defining a vision for the visitor experience and planning for the long-term management and maintenance of a permanent memorial honoring the passengers and crew members of Flight 93.