

Guide to Making Public Comments

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Shenandoah National Park



Each person has an important perspective on the management of Shenandoah National Park and can make a unique contribution to the planning process that will help the National Park Service produce better planning documents. The type of comment that is most useful in evaluating a plan or project depends on how far along the agency is in the planning process. Shenandoah project teams solicit comments during what is referred to as *Scoping*, as well as upon release of a draft document. The public is also encouraged to send in general comments for consideration by park staff at any time.

Scoping Comments

The primary goal of scoping for a project is to determine the range of issues and alternatives to be addressed. At the time of scoping, the park provides a description of the project proposal, including a statement of the purpose of and need for the project and a list of project goals. The public is asked to submit comments, concerns, and suggestions relating to these goals.

The most useful types of scoping comments consider the following:

- Alternative approaches and ideas for accomplishing the project goals
- The range of environmental and socioeconomic issues that need to be considered
- Other potential projects that might affect or be affected by this project
- Information that needs to be considered (such as related research) and why
- Information on how you use the park and how a project might affect that use

Comments on Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements

Ideally, comments on an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement assess the adequacy of the document in disclosing and evaluating a project's effect on the environment. These comments are most useful if they are as specific as possible and do the following:

- Discuss a particular plan element or alternative
- Identify incomplete or incorrect information
- Offer reasons why a particular alternative or plan element would or would not work
- Offer a reasonable, new plan element or completely new alternative that could help accomplish the stated goals
- Point out discrepancies between legal mandates and proposals
- Highlight deficiencies in the analysis of environmental consequences
- Provide information on how you use the park and how particular proposals in the planning document would affect that use

General Comments

Even outside of a formal planning effort, park staff would like to hear your thoughts and ideas relating to planning and management issues affecting Shenandoah National Park. All comments received will be read and directed to the appropriate staff within the park.

The most useful comments include:

- Your concerns about conditions or activities in the park and possible solutions
- How the National Park Service is accomplishing its mission at Shenandoah
- The clarity of proposed project descriptions, their purpose and need
- The overall quality of your visit to Shenandoah National Park

How to Stay Involved

Here are some ways to stay involved:

- Visit the park's website regularly
- Submit comments on the [Planning, Environment, and Public Comment](#) website
- Submit comments to: Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park
3655 U.S. Highway 211 E.
Luray, VA 22835
- Complete public comment forms available at Visitor Centers