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State Historic Preservation Office

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April 26, 2005

Mr. Dale A. Ditmanson, Superintendent
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Great Smokey Mountains National Park
107 Park Headquarters Road
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

SUBJECT: Draft Historic Architectural Resources Phase II Survey Report, Great Smokey Mountains National Park, Newfound Gap Road, Project No. PRA-GRSM 1B19, Swain County, ER03-3494

Dear Mr. Ditmanson:

Thank you for your letter of March 16, 2005, transmitting the draft environmental assessment and the draft survey report for the above project by Clay Griffith of Edwards-Pitman, Inc.

SW0116

We have reviewed the documents and concur that the Park Development Historic District appears eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. However, we also think the report should include a discussion of Newfound Gap Road as a linear historic district and specify the reasons why only a portion appears to be eligible.

We concur that the proposed undertaking appears to be an adverse effect upon the Park Development Historic District. We also believe the intersection work at the National Register-eligible Blue Ridge Parkway may have an effect upon the Parkway and would like to see more detailed design plans for this intersection.

We look forward to receiving the final documents for the proposed undertaking.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

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Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

Sincerely,



 Peter Sandbeck

cc: Martha Catlin, ACHP
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106
County

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT
Intensive Identification and Evaluation**

For

**NEWFOUND GAP ROAD
GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**

Project No. PRA-GRSM 1B19

**Prepared for:
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior**

**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Eastern Federal Land Highway Division
Sterling, Virginia**

**Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
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**Prepared by:
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November 2004

**Clay Griffith, Principal Investigator
Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc.**

JAN 11 2006

**NEWFOUND GAP ROAD
GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. conducted an intensive survey of historic architectural resources for the proposed Phase II rehabilitation of Newfound Gap Road through Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Swain County, North Carolina. The project study area extends from approximately 500 feet beyond the Collins Creek Picnic Area south to the southern Park boundary at the Cherokee Indian Reservation, and includes improvements to Newfound Gap Road where it intersects Big Cove Connector Road, Blue Ridge Parkway, Oconaluftee Visitor Center, Park Circle Drive, Tow String Road, Smokemont Campground, and Collins Creek Picnic Area. This report presents the findings of the intensive study, which identified the Oconaluftee Visitor Center and Park Development Historic District as significant architectural resources within the Area of Potential Effects for the planned improvements.

The Park Development Historic District encompasses the original automobile circulation system and major developed areas accessed by that system in Great Smoky Mountains National Park during the period from 1933 to 1942. Resources present within the district include Newfound Gap Road, Clingman's Dome Road, Little River/Laurel Creek Road, the Rockefeller Memorial, Sugarlands Visitor Center, Oconaluftee Visitors Center, and Mt. Cammerer Fire Tower, along with numerous other bridges, culverts, tunnels, and various landscape features. The district is considered to be nationally significant for its associations with the expansion of the National Park System in the eastern United States during the 1930s, its association with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal administration of work relief programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration, and its design component, which represents an outstanding embodiment of the National Park Service's design principles.

The resources potentially impacted by the planned improvements include pipe culverts with stone headwalls, automobile pull-outs with stone curbing, and other landscaped areas that contribute to the Park Development Historic District. Some of these resources are scheduled to be removed and replaced, which will result in an effect on the district. However, these resources represent common, standardized elements found throughout the Park that may be mitigated with sufficient documentation and sensitive replacement structures.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment for the Phase II portion of the Rehabilitation of Newfound Gap Road Project in Swain County, North Carolina. The project study area, which lies entirely within the boundaries of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, extends from approximately 500 feet beyond the Collins Creek Picnic Area south to the southern Park boundary at the Cherokee Indian Reservation.

The proposed improvements include resurfacing, grading, drainage, pavement markings, and traffic control for approximately 6.5 miles of the roadway. The improvements also include constructing left turn lanes where Newfound Gap Road intersects Big Cove Connector Road (Saunooke Bridge Road), Blue Ridge Parkway, Oconaluftee Visitor Center, Park Circle Drive, Tow String Road, Smokemont Campground, and Collins Creek Picnic Area. Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. has prepared plans for candidate build alternatives at each intersection. Work to be performed at each intersection location is summarized below:

- **Collins Creek Picnic Area** – approximately 1300 feet; northbound lane widened to the east; left turn lane at entrance to picnic area; center pavement striping; extension of existing box culvert.
- **Smokemont Campground** – approximately 1300 feet; southbound lane widened to the west; left turn lane at road and bridge to campground; center pavement striping; removal and minor relocation of paved pullout; removal and replacement of two existing pipe culverts and stone headwalls.
- **Tow String Road** – approximately 1200 feet; northbound lane widened to the east; realigned intersection with Tow String Road; left turn lane at new intersection; center pavement striping; removal and replacement of existing pipe culvert and stone headwalls; realign approximately 350 feet of Tow String Road to meet location of realigned intersection; pavement removal for abandoned section of Tow String Road.
- **Park Circle Drive** – approximately 1100 feet; southbound lane widened to the west; left turn lane at Park Circle Drive; center pavement removal; install four culverts and stone headwalls; removal and replacement of existing pipe culvert and stone headwall.
- **Oconaluftee Visitor Center** – approximately 1600 feet; remove approximately 14,000 square feet of pavement; southbound lane widened to the west; left turn lane at visitor center parking area; center pavement removal and installation of grass median.
- **Blue Ridge Parkway** – approximately 450 feet; southbound left turn lane at Blue Ridge Parkway widened to east into existing grass median.

- **Big Cove Connector Road** – approximately 1300 feet; southbound lane onto the Big Cove Connector Road and a left turn lane from Big Cove Connector Road onto southbound Newfound Gap Road; install one culvert and stone headwall.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park received approximately 9,190,000 visitors in 2003, making it the most visited national park in the national park system. Vehicular traffic on Newfound Gap Road, the only improved road to cross the Park, is significant during peak season, often resulting in appreciable traffic congestion. The proposed improvements address specific transportation and maintenance needs along the roadway.

Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. conducted an intensive survey of the project area for historic architectural resources. This report presents the findings of the intensive study. The project area is limited to improvements at existing intersections along Newfound Gap Road, with single-lane widening and a realignment of the Tow String Road intersection. Newfound Gap Road largely follows the valley of the Oconaluftee River through the Park, and much of the original roadbed was built on the bed of an abandoned logging railroad. Civilian Conservation Corps laborers from local camps performed extensive landscaping work on the road banks between 1933 and 1940.

Eight significant historic resources located within the general project area were identified during a preliminary survey for the Existing Conditions Report (April 2004). Most of the resources, however, lie outside the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the individual candidate build alternatives. Elements of the Park Development Historic District are found within the APE at several intersections and are discussed relative to the proposed improvements at those locations. The Park Development Historic District, a property considered to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), encompasses the Park's original automobile circulation system and major developed areas accessed by that system during the period from 1933 to 1942. The Oconaluftee Visitor Center, which is considered a contributing resource within the Park Development Historic District, is also on the North Carolina State Study List as an individually eligible property.

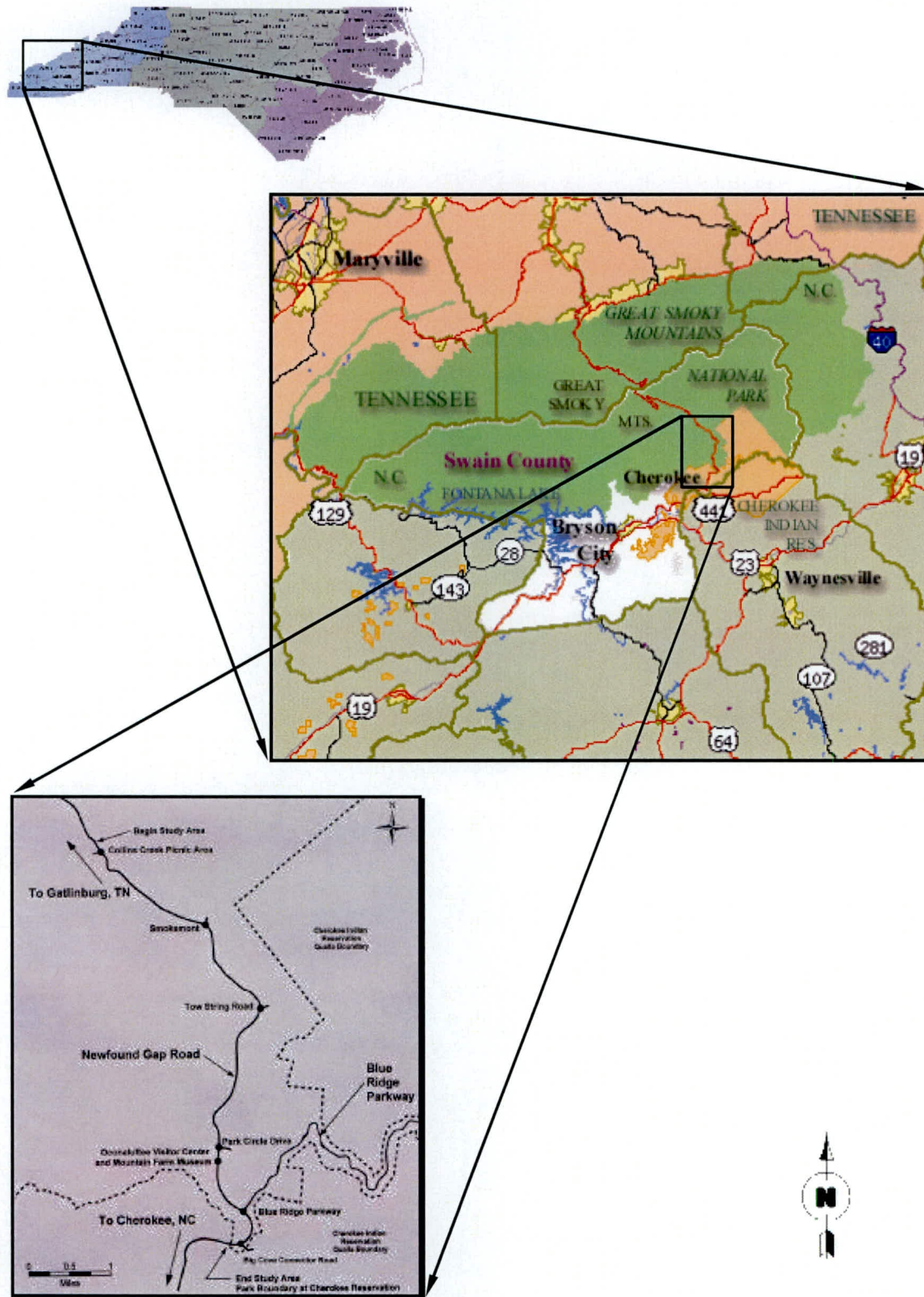
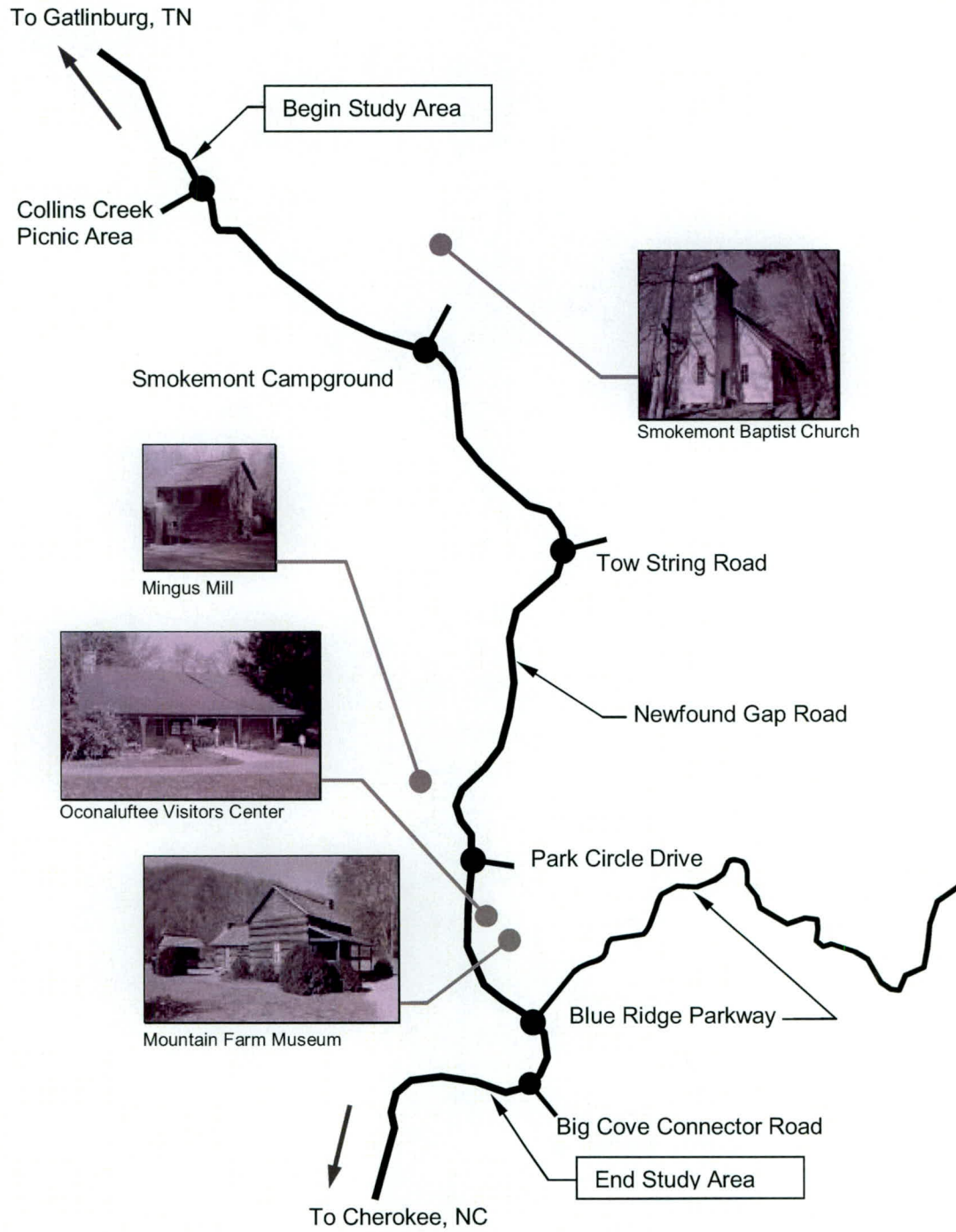


Figure 1. Project Vicinity Map





| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  <p>Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. Asheville, North Carolina</p> | <p>Historic Architectural Resources Newfound Gap Road, Phase II Great Smoky Mountains National Park</p> |  |
|---|---|---|

Figure 2. Project Location Map

II. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Great Smoky Mountains National Park contains 521,347 acres of land encompassing the Smoky Mountain range that serves as the boundary between North Carolina and Tennessee. The Park extends between the two states from roughly the Little Tennessee River to the Pigeon River. The Smokies rise approximately 5,000 feet from the surrounding lowlands to their crest, with Clingman's Dome being the highest peak within the park at 6,643 feet above sea level and the third highest peak east of the Mississippi River. The dramatic rise from the surrounding valleys is one of the distinct characteristics that led to the designation of the Smokies as a National Park in 1934.

The rich biodiversity and natural history of the Smokies also contributed to their protection by the National Park Service. Great Smoky Mountains National Park contains some of the last stands of virgin hardwoods in the eastern United States, as well as an astounding array of plant and animal species. One important characteristic of the Park topography is the climatic change that occurs over the significant elevation change, allowing for a broad range of flora and fauna to exist within the area. At the lower elevations, the young oak and pine forests have reclaimed land that was previously cut for timber and cleared for livestock. In the middle elevations, the mountainsides are covered with oak, hickory, maple, and poplar forests, including steep areas inaccessible to the timber companies of the early twentieth century. The crest of the Smokies is topped by spruce and fir forests akin to those of Maine and Canada and punctuated by balds, treeless mountaintop areas that provide relief to the dense forest cover (*Great Smoky Mountains* 1981, 25-37).

The project area lies in the lower elevations of the Park on the North Carolina side. Newfound Gap Road crosses Newfound Gap at the crest of the Smokies and closely follows the Oconaluftee River as it descends to the town of Cherokee. Within the designated areas for improvement, the roadway has been constructed on a gentle gradient with unpaved shoulders. In several places automobile pull-outs and parking areas are bordered with a single course of square-cut stone curbing. The Civilian Conservation Corps provided manpower for many landscaping and road-building projects in the Park during the 1930s and 1940s, and the project area strongly bears the imprint of their work.

III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

The movement to form a national park in the southern Appalachian Mountains began in the late nineteenth century with the formation of the Appalachian National Park Association, which lobbied for the creation of a national park either in the Great Smoky Mountains or another southern mountain range in North Carolina. The efforts of the Appalachian National Park Association, later known as the Appalachian National Forest Reserve Association, eventually led to the establishment of national forests in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. As a result of the association's shifting focus, the efforts of the Appalachian National Forest Reserve Association are generally discounted as part of the movement to create a national park. The desire for a national park in the Smokies gathered new momentum following World War I. The creation of the National Park Service in 1916 consolidated the administration of existing national parks and provided a platform for the development of new parks. Following the war, increased automobile ownership and tourism provided another incentive for the creation of parks in the eastern United States (Campbell, 12-18; Gatewood, 166; Pierce, 46-52).

The movement to form a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains specifically is said to have begun in the summer of 1923 with Ann Davis, wife of Knoxville businessman Willis P. Davis, who posed the question about a park in the Smokies after returning from a tour of national parks in the West, commenting that the Smokies were every bit as beautiful as the western mountains. With the backing of the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce and the Knoxville Automobile Club, a committee was formed to research the idea and support began to grow for the creation of a park in the Smokies. Dr. Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, appointed an exploratory committee to investigate approximately thirty new park sites. The Southern Appalachian National Committee, as this group was known, traveled throughout the region and on December 13, 1924, announced the recommendation of two new parks: one in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and the second in the Great Smokies. Col. David C. Chapman, a Knoxville businessman, proved to be a key figure in the promotion of the park, tirelessly supporting the idea on behalf of the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association. Horace Kephart, a writer living in Bryson City, actively promoted the park idea in North Carolina, complementing Chapman's efforts in Tennessee. In 1926, legislation was passed authorizing the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, but it did not guarantee its creation. Property for the park would have to be purchased either privately or by the two states—North Carolina and Tennessee—and transferred to the Department. The National Park Service would begin limited administration of the park after 150,000 acres were acquired and once 400,000 acres were secured the National Park Service would begin full development and management of the park (Campbell, 16-28; Pierce, 61-65, 78-80).

Through state appropriations, private donations, and a \$5 million dollar gift from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (through the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial) park supporters began acquiring property. In July 1930, the federal government accepted title to 158,876 acres, allowing the National Park Service to begin limited administration of the park. J. Ross Eakin, superintendent of Glacier National Park, was appointed the first superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Property acquisition was not

completed until 1938, a period marked by drawn out battles between the state park commissions and various corporate interests that owned large tracts within the park boundary to purchase land. On September 2, 1940, Great Smoky Mountains National Park was formally dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in a ceremony at the Rockefeller Memorial atop Newfound Gap before 10,000 attendees (*At Home in the Smokies*, 114-119; Campbell, 50-54, 58-75; Pierce, 137-153).

While the land acquisition phase was dragging out, the country fell into a long economic depression, during which time the park actually benefited from relief programs implemented by President Roosevelt. Roosevelt's New Deal programs sought to put the nation's idle labor force back to work on a variety of public building and conservation projects. The National Park Service's master planning process and design principles were well established by 1933, which allowed the agency to make maximum use of the labor and funding available through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). With as many as seventeen CCC camps located in the Smokies, park administrators oversaw the clearing and improvement of hundreds of miles of trails, removal of several hundred structures, and the design and construction of numerous small structures and landscape features including culverts, retaining walls, guardrails, tree wells, comfort stations, and campgrounds. All of the work completed by the CCC adhered to the naturalistic landscape design principles of the National Park Service, which are to preserve and enhance the existing natural landscape and to provide easily accessible visitor facilities that incorporate rustic and vernacular architectural styles and local building materials (*At Home in the Smokies*, 121-123; Jolley, 12-14).

Concurrent to the effort to create a national park in the Smokies, both North Carolina and Tennessee were under pressure to improve roads for increasing automobile traffic as part of the Good Roads movement of the 1910s. Business leaders on either side of the Smokies were calling for a commercial road across the mountains during the 1920s and public officials finally relented to the construction of a highway between Cherokee, North Carolina and Gatlinburg, Tennessee, knowing that it likely would not meet National Park Service design standards. Tennessee completed its section of the road to Newfound Gap in 1929, but North Carolina, which cooperated more closely with National Park Service engineers did not complete work until a year later in the summer of 1930. As anticipated, the National Park Service found the road incompatible with their design guidelines and rebuilt the upper three-fourths of the Tennessee road. On the North Carolina side the National Park Service relocated several short segments between 1933 and 1935, and CCC laborers did extensive landscape work on the road banks from 1933 to 1940. In the early 1960s, a ten-mile section of the road from Newfound Gap south to Kephart Prong was relocated to a new route along Thomas Ridge that offered a gentler grade and more scenic opportunities (Campbell, 71-72; Blythe, 11-14).

Today Great Smoky Mountains National Park, known for its rich biodiversity and old growth forests, remains one of the largest protected areas in the eastern United States. With over nine million visitors each year, Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most visited national park in the National Park System.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The project methodology involved field surveys of the selected intersections as well as background research on Swain County and the formation and development of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The purpose of the field survey was to identify and record any resources over fifty years of age and evaluate those properties according to the National Register of Historic Places criteria (36 CFR 60.4). Research was conducted to form a general understanding of the historic background and architectural development of the project area and the Park and to establish contexts in which to evaluate any recorded properties. The project areas were delineated on USGS topographic quadrangle maps.

Fieldwork was conducted by an Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. (EPE) architectural historian on September 22, 2004. Each intersection was inspected by car and on foot and all architectural resources determined to be over fifty years old were photographed and recorded. Since few buildings exist within the various APEs most of the recorded resources are associated with the landscaping and design features of Newfound Gap Road, including stone curbing, retaining walls, parking areas, pull-outs, drains, culverts, and bridges. The Oconaluftee Visitor Center is the only significant building located within an APE for the planned improvements.

Historical research on the general history of Swain County and Great Smoky Mountains National Park was conducted at Pack Memorial Library in Asheville. The survey files of the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office (HPO) in Asheville were searched for any previous survey information. Swain County was included as part of a ten-county reconnaissance survey conducted by the North Carolina HPO in the early 1980s. Michael Ann Williams of Western Kentucky University completed an additional survey of Swain and Graham counties in 1998. Two properties located within the general project area—Mingus Mill and Smokemont Baptist Church—were listed on the NRHP by federal nomination in the early 1970s. Other survey files for the Oconaluftee Visitor Center, Mountain Farm Museum, Luten Bridge over Oconaluftee River, and the Park Development Historic District were also reviewed.

EPE conducted the survey and prepared this report in accordance with the provision of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents; the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 60; 36 CFR Part 800; and the North Carolina Department of Transportation's *Section 106 Procedures & Report Guidelines* (October 2003).

V. RESULTS OF ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

The study area lies along the principal north-south corridor through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Newfound Gap Road not only links the towns of Cherokee, North Carolina and Gatlinburg, Tennessee, but also connects the Oconaluftee and Sugarlands visitor centers for the Park. A number of the Park's most popular attractions are accessed from Newfound Gap Road.

Nine significant historic architectural resources are located within the general study area. Identified in the Existing Conditions Report (April 2004) for the subject project, the nine resources include two properties listed in the NRHP, one property on the North Carolina State Study List, one property determined to be eligible for the NRHP, one historic district that is considered to be eligible for the NRHP, and four additional resources. With the exception of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center and various landscape design elements of Newfound Gap Road, the eligible and potentially eligible historic resources are located outside the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the specific areas of improvement to Newfound Gap Road.

All of the significant historic resources identified during the survey and located within the APEs of various improvements are elements that contribute to the Park Development Historic District. The district encompasses the original automobile circulation system and major developed areas accessed by that system in Great Smoky Mountains National Park that were developed between 1933 and 1942. The district represents a thorough realization of the National Park Service's mature landscape design philosophy. National Park Service principles emphasized landscape harmonization, carefully composed exposure to the Park's natural features and vistas, and consistent use of rustic stone materials to visually link Park buildings, roads, and associated structures. These design principles were first developed in the western parks and then adapted for eastern parks during the 1930s. The onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s, coupled with the relief programs of President Roosevelt's New Deal administration, provided a supply of available funding and laborers to carry out conservation and construction projects in the Park following the design guidelines of the National Park Service.

Contributing resources present within the district include Newfound Gap Road, Clingman's Dome Road, Little River/Laurel Creek Road, the Rockefeller Memorial, Sugarlands Visitor Center, Oconaluftee Visitors Center, and Mt. Cammerer Fire Tower, along with numerous other bridges, culverts, tunnels, and various landscape features. The district is considered nationally significant under National Register Criterion A for its associations with the expansion of the National Park System in the eastern United States during the 1930s and for its association with the President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal administration of work relief programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration. The district is also significant under National Register Criterion C for its design component, which represents an outstanding embodiment of the National Park Service's design principles.

A draft nomination for the district was prepared in 1999 by Robert W. Blythe, a National Park Service historian, and submitted for review and comments. The National Park Service has received comments from the Historic Preservation Offices of North Carolina and Tennessee, but the nomination has not been completed. The state agencies generally concur with the National Park Service that the district is eligible for the NRHP. The Oconaluftee Visitor Center, which is included as a contributing resource in the Park Development Historic District, is also on the North Carolina State Study List as a potentially eligible individual property.

Collins Creek Picnic Area

At the intersection of Newfound Gap Road and the entrance to the Collins Creek Picnic Area, the planned improvements include adding a left turn lane to the existing northbound travel lane. The existing roadway would be widened to the east (away from the picnic area) along the inside radius of the curve to accommodate the turn lane.

A triple-barrel reinforced-concrete box culvert (Structure No. 5460-093P) is the only resource over fifty years of age within the APE for this improvement. Built in 1930, the culvert dates to the original construction of Newfound Gap Road during the earliest stages of Park development. As such, the structure is considered a contributing resource within the Park Development Historic District. Located just south of the entrance to the picnic area, the Collins Creek culvert (Sta 18+75)—approximately 62 feet in length—would be widened fifteen feet to the east to accommodate the additional pavement. No other changes to the culvert, which will remain functional, are planned. If during the design phase of this project the culvert is determined to be structurally deficient, it will be replaced with an open bottom type culvert. This action will have an effect on the resource, which contributes to the Park Development Historic District.

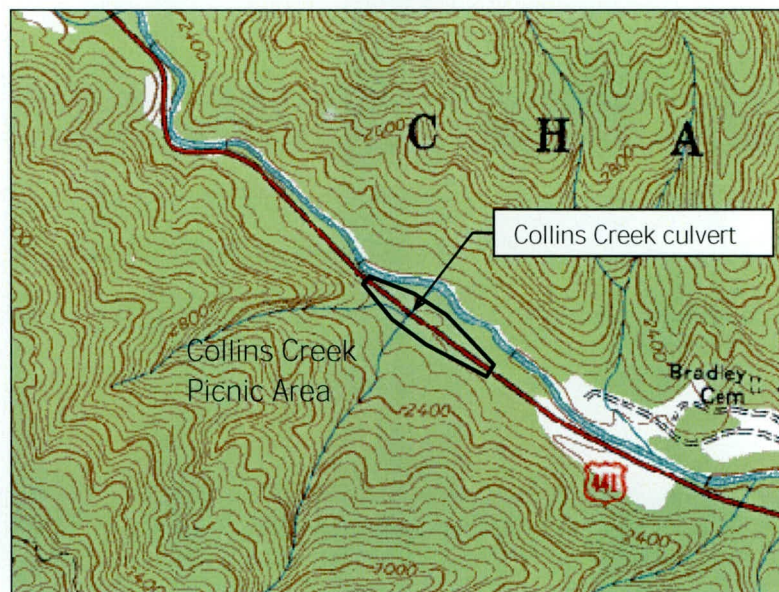


Figure 3. Area of Potential Effects – Collins Creek Picnic Area



Figure 4. Newfound Gap Road, looking south from intersection at entrance to Collins Creek Picnic Area



Figure 5. Entrance to Collins Creek Picnic Area, looking west from Newfound Gap Road



Figure 6. Collins Creek culvert, east side



Figure 7. Collins Creek culvert, west side

Smokemont Campground

At the intersection of Newfound Gap Road and the entrance to Smokemont Campground, the planned improvements include adding a left turn lane within the existing southbound travel lane. The existing roadway will be widened to the west along the inside radius to accommodate the turn lane. The bridge over Oconaluftee River is a modern structure, with the campground located 0.3 mile to the north. One of three reinforced-concrete Luten arch bridges constructed in 1921 for Swain County and later included within the Park boundary is located over Bradley Creek in Smokemont Campground. Given its distance from the proposed work, the Luten bridge is outside the APE for this improvement.

Also located outside the APE is the Smokemont Baptist Church, which sits to the east of Newfound Gap Road on a steeply sloped site overlooking the Oconaluftee River. The congregation was organized in 1836, although the present frame building was constructed in 1912. Regular services were held in the building until 1935. The church is the only remnant of the small community associated with the lumber camp at Smokemont. The church occupies a densely wooded site removed from Newfound Gap Road. The church was listed in the NRHP by federal nomination in 1973, and although no boundaries are stated in the nomination, eligible boundaries for the church are limited to an area closely surrounding the building.

The paved automobile pull-out with stone curbing and two pipe culverts with stone headwalls are the only resources over fifty years of age within the APE for this improvement. These resources are consistent with the landscaping and road-improvement work conducted by the CCC from 1933 to 1942. The automobile pull-out—approximately 200 feet in length and located on the west side of Newfound Gap Road—extends south from the bridge at the campground entrance. Preliminary plans call for the pull-out to be shifted west relative to the lane widening and for the stone curbing to be removed and reset in the new location. This action will have an effect on the resource, which contributes to the Park Development Historic District.

Two pipe culverts are located north (Sta 21+05) and south (Sta 17+19) of the campground entrance. The culverts, which also contribute to the Park Development Historic District, were built according to standardized plans prepared by the National Park Service in 1932. The candidate build alternatives call for both resources to be removed and replaced, constituting an effect on these contributing resources.

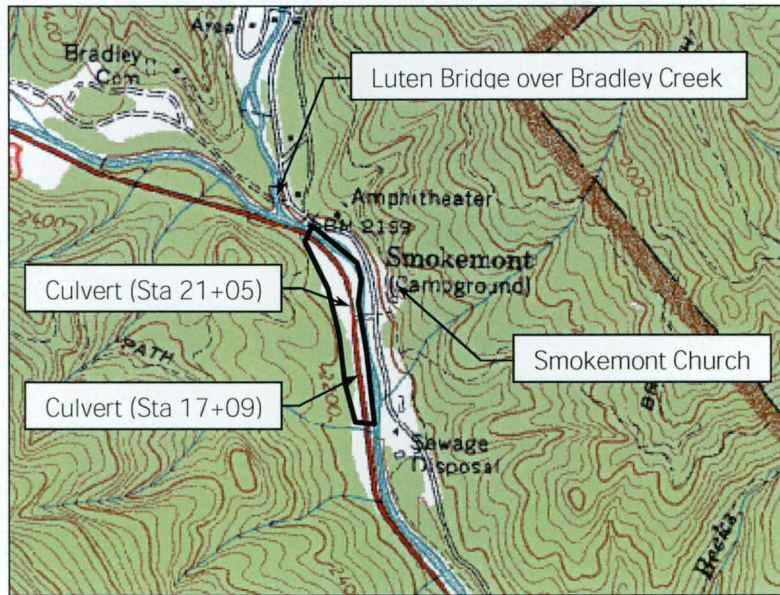


Figure 8. Area of Potential Effects – Smokemont Campground



Figure 9. Smokemont Baptist Church (NRHP)



Figure 10. Bridge at entrance to Smokemont Campground, looking west to Newfound Gap Road



Figure 11. Automobile pull-out, west side Newfound Gap Road, looking north to entrance to Smokemont Campground



Figure 12. Detail, stone curbing in automobile pull-out, west side of Newfound Gap Road at entrance to Smokemont Campground



Figure 13. Pipe culvert (Sta 21+05) – west headwall, north of entrance to Smokemont Campground



Figure 14. Pipe culvert (Sta 21+05) – east headwall, north of entrance to Smokemont Campground



Figure 15. Pipe culvert (Sta 17+09) – east headwall, south of entrance to Smokemont Campground (west side not accessible for photography)

Tow String Road

At the intersection of Newfound Gap Road and Tow String Road, the planned improvements include adding a left turn lane within the existing southbound travel lane and realigning approximately 350 feet of Tow String Road to a new location approximately 175 feet north of the existing intersection to gain increased sightlines at the intersection. Existing Newfound Gap Road will be widened to the east along the outside radius of the curve to accommodate the turn lane.

One pipe culvert with stone headwalls (Sta 18+00) is the only resource over fifty years of age within the APE for this improvement. It is located to the north of both the existing and proposed Tow String Road locations. The culvert, which contributes to the Park Development Historic District, was built according to standardized plans prepared by the National Park Service in 1932, and is consistent with the landscaping and road-improvement work conducted by the CCC from 1933 to 1942. The candidate build alternative calls for the culvert and headwall to be removed and replaced, constituting an effect on this resource.



Figure 16. Area of Potential Effects – Tow String Road



Figure 17. Tow String Road, looking west to Newfound Gap Road along the existing section and area of realignment



Figure 18. Newfound Gap Road, looking north from existing intersection with Tow String Road



Figure 19. Pipe culvert (Sta 18+00) – east headwall, north of existing and proposed intersection with Tow String Road



Figure 20. Pipe culvert (Sta 18+00) – west headwall, north of existing and proposed intersection with Tow String Road

Park Circle Drive

Park Circle Drive intersects Newfound Gap Road a short distance north of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center area. A bridge across the Oconaluftee River provides access to Park maintenance and housing facilities as well as the Job Corps Center. At the intersection of Newfound Gap Road and Park Circle Drive, the planned improvements include adding a left turn lane to the existing southbound travel lane. The existing roadway will be widened to the west to accommodate southbound traffic. The bridge over the river was built in the 1980s to replace one of three reinforced-concrete Luten arch bridges constructed in 1921 under contract for Swain County. In addition to the surviving bridge at Smokemont Campground, the other surviving Luten bridge over Raven Fork is located beyond the east end of Park Circle Drive, approximately one-half mile from the proposed improvements.

A paved automobile pull-out with stone curbing, a paved parking area with stone curbing, and a pipe culvert with stone headwalls are the only resources over fifty years of age within the APE for this improvement. These resources are consistent with the landscaping and road-improvement work conducted by the CCC from 1933 to 1942. The automobile pull-out—approximately 300 feet in length and located south of Park Circle Drive—extends from the northernmost intersection of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center and features cut stone blocks used as curbing material. A paved parking area with eight marked spaces and cut stone curbs is located on the north side of Park Circle Drive. Both the pull-out and the parking area lie on the east side of Newfound Gap Road, between the roadway and the river. Neither area will be disturbed by the planned widening on the west side.

The pipe culvert and stone headwalls are visible on the west side of Newfound Gap Road within the widening section (Sta 18+57). It is unclear whether the east headwall remains intact. Due to the steepness and apparent instability of the river bank, the principal investigator was unable to view this resource. The headwall on the west side of the road, however, remains intact and is scheduled to be replaced with a new structure. Widening to the west side of the existing roadway will necessitate replacing the drainage structure, which will be an effect on the resource.

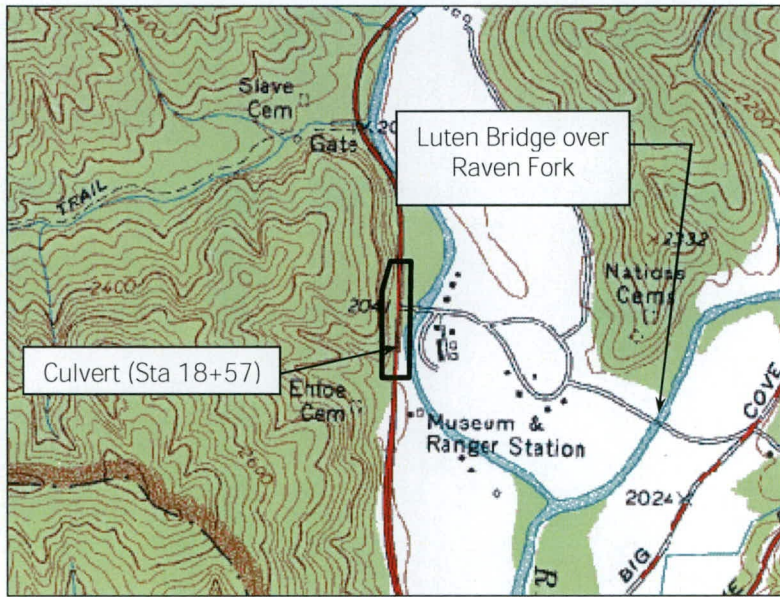


Figure 21. Area of Potential Effects – Park Circle Drive



Figure 22. Park Circle Drive, looking east from Newfound Gap Road



Figure 23. Newfound Gap Road, looking south from intersection with Park Circle Drive



Figure 24. Automobile pull-out, east side Newfound Gap Road near north intersection with Oconaluftee Visitor Center



Figure 25. Pipe culvert (Sta 18+57) – west headwall, south of Park Circle Drive



Figure 26. Parking area, east side Newfound Gap Road near intersection with Park Circle Drive

Oconaluftee Visitor Center

At the intersection of Newfound Gap Road and the Oconaluftee Visitor Center, the planned improvements include utilizing existing lanes for left and right turn lanes into the visitor center parking areas, creating a southbound left turn lane into the Visitor Center, widening for an additional southbound travel lane on the west side of the existing roadway, and center pavement removal and installation of a grass median.

The Oconaluftee Visitor Center, a rustic stone building designed by Knoxville architect Charles I. Barber, was placed on the North Carolina State Study List in 1989. The two and one-half story, T-plan main building sits on the east side of Newfound Gap Road. A broad, slate-covered side gable roof covers the building, which also features an engaged full-width porch supported by chamfered chestnut posts. The visitor center is surrounded by flagstone sidewalks; a stone retaining wall extends to the east of the building; and stone terraces, steps, and drinking fountain are located on the north side. The original parking area lies between Newfound Gap Road and the visitor center building. A rock retaining wall at the west edge of the visitor parking area borders a lozenge-shaped landscape island, which separates the visitor center from the roadway. An employee parking area to the northeast of the building was part of the original plan of the visitor center, but the garage building to the east was built around 1970. The large parking area lying to south was added in the 1950s.

The majority of work at the Oconaluftee Visitor Center will occur within and to the west of the existing roadway. While the proposed widening does not encroach upon planned areas of the visitor center complex constructed by CCC laborers, any changes that may affect the complex can likely be mitigated with sensitive landscaping and new plantings. The planned improvements at this location, however, will not have any effect on the visitor center building or associated site features including sidewalks, steps, terraces, retaining walls, and drinking fountains.

The Mountain Farm Museum, an open-air museum adjacent to the visitor center, occupies the open valley between the Oconaluftee River and Newfound Gap Road that was part of the Floyd family farm before the formation of the Park. The complex consists of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century domestic and agricultural buildings relocated to the site to present elements of mountain culture that existed before the Park. Since the museum is situated to the southeast of the visitor center and removed from the roadway, the Mountain Farm Museum is outside the APE for this resource.

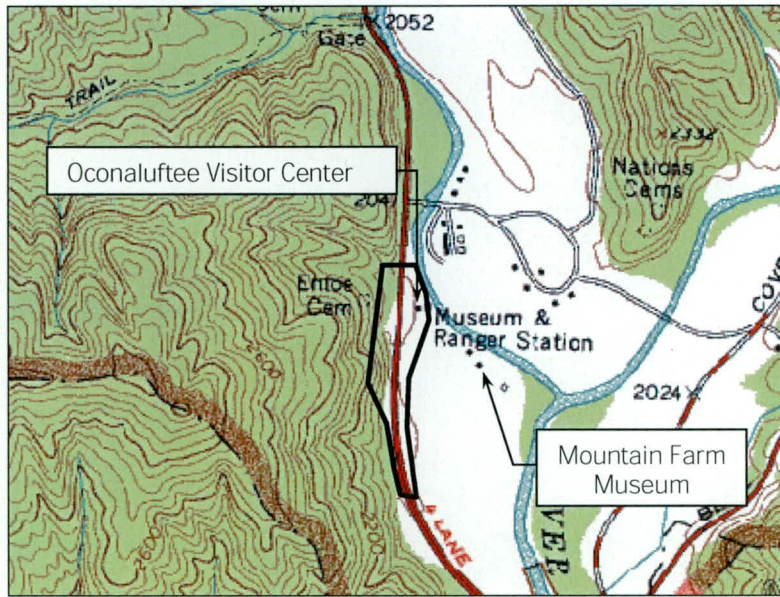


Figure 27. Area of Potential Effects – Oconaluftee Visitor Center



Figure 28. Oconaluftee Visitor Center, front elevation (south side)



Figure 29. Oconaluftee Visitor Center, looking northeast from central intersection



Figure 30. Oconaluftee Visitor Center – original visitor parking area, looking north from central intersection



Figure 31. Detail, retaining wall, Oconaluftee Visitor Center parking area



Figure 32. Newfound Gap Road, looking south to center and southern driveways for Oconaluftee Visitor Center



Figure 33. Newfound Gap Road, looking north from center intersection towards Park Circle Drive



Figure 34. Detail, retaining wall in original visitor parking area at Oconaluftee Visitor Center, looking west to Newfound Gap Road

Blue Ridge Parkway

At the intersection of Newfound Gap Road and the Blue Ridge Parkway the planned improvements include adding a left turn lane to the existing southbound travel lanes, with construction of the turn lane to occur within the existing grass median. The new lane will be approximately 175 feet long with an additional 175-foot taper. The proposed lane width is eleven feet with a four-foot grass shoulder. Newfound Gap Road is a four-lane divided roadway as it passes through its intersection with the Parkway. Currently, one vehicle making a left turn onto the Blue Ridge Parkway may enter a paved lane in the median before crossing the two northbound travel lanes. Similarly one vehicle exiting the Parkway before turning left onto southbound Newfound Gap Road may enter a paved lane in the median after crossing the two northbound lanes.

The Blue Ridge Parkway, a property owned and managed by the National Park Service, has been determined eligible for the National Register, and is the only built resource over fifty years of age within the APE at this intersection. The intersection of the Parkway and Newfound Gap Road marks the southern terminus of the 469-mile scenic highway. The final mile marker stands at the east end of the Parkway bridge over the Oconaluftee River and Big Cove Road. Since the planned improvement to Newfound Gap Road occurs totally within the existing roadway and only provides additional left turn storage, the proposed project will have no effect on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

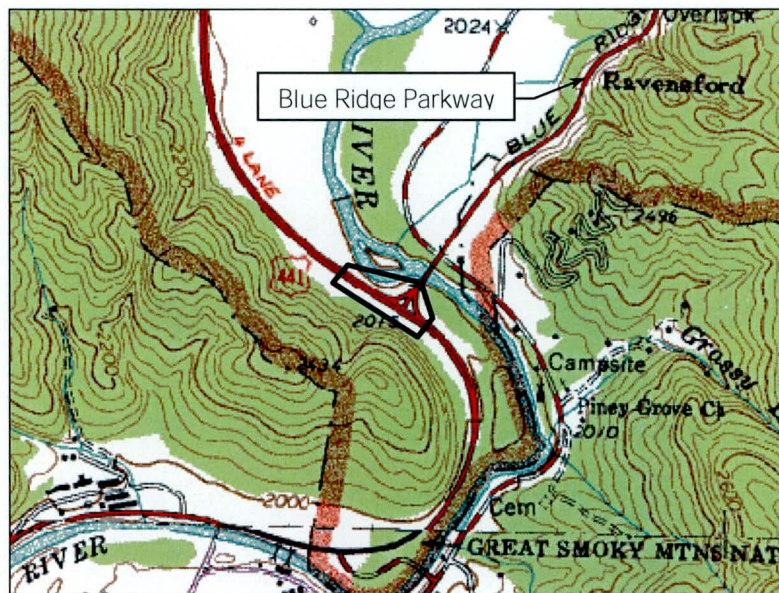


Figure 35. Area of Potential Effects – Blue Ridge Parkway



Figure 36. Newfound Gap Road at Blue Ridge Parkway, looking north at existing paved turn lanes and grass median.



Figure 37. Blue Ridge Parkway at Newfound Gap Road, looking east across median turn lanes to the Parkway.

Big Cove Connector Road (Saunooke Bridge Road)

Big Cove Connector Road, known as Saunooke Bridge Road outside Park property, links Newfound Gap Road with Big Cove Road to the east and crosses the Oconaluftee River. At the intersection of Newfound Gap Road and Big Cove Connector Road, the planned improvements include adding a left turn lane to the existing southbound travel lane and a left turn acceleration lane for southbound traffic entering onto Newfound Gap Road from the Big Cove Connector Road. The existing roadway will be widened to the north along the inside radius of the curve to accommodate the turn lane.

A paved automobile pull-out with stone curbing and a pipe culvert with a stone headwall situated at the east end of the widening section are the only resources over fifty years of age within the APE for this improvement. These resources are consistent with the landscaping and road-improvement work conducted by the CCC from 1933 to 1942. The automobile pull-out—approximately 225 feet in length—features cut stone blocks used as curbing material abutting an asphalt sidewalk. The pull-out is located on the south side of Newfound Gap Road and will not be disturbed by the planned widening on the north side. The pipe culvert (Sta 25+48) has a stone headwall located on the north side of the widening section, approximately 100 feet from the end of the taper for the additional lane. The culvert is scheduled to remain in place and be functional. With no changes in the design or function of these resources planned, the proposed action will have no effect on these resources, which contribute to the NRHP-eligible Park Development Historic District.

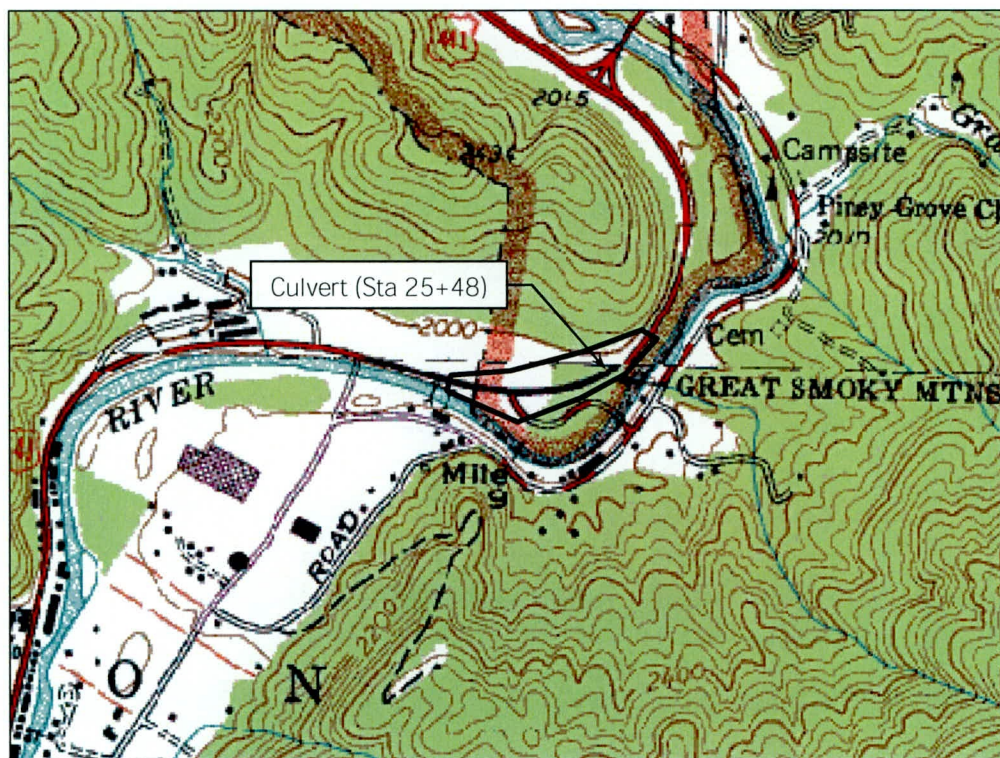


Figure 38. Area of Potential Effects – Big Cove Connector Road



Figure 39. Newfound Gap Road, looking west to Big Cove Connector Road intersection from automobile pull-out



Figure 40. Saunooke Bridge Road, looking south from Newfound Gap Road



Figure 41. Automobile pull-out, south side Newfound Gap Road near intersection with Big Cove Connector Road



Figure 42. Pipe culvert (Sta 25+48) – north headwall, east of intersection with Big Cove Connector Road

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. conducted an intensive survey of historic architectural resources for the proposed Phase II rehabilitation of Newfound Gap Road through Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Swain County, North Carolina. The project area includes improvements to Newfound Gap Road where it intersects Big Cove Connector Road, Blue Ridge Parkway, Oconaluftee Visitor Center, Park Circle Drive, Tow String Road, Smokemont Campground, and Collins Creek Picnic Area. The intensive study identified the Oconaluftee Visitor Center and Park Development Historic District as resources within the Area of Potential Effects for the planned improvements.

The Park Development Historic District encompasses the original automobile circulation system and major developed areas accessed by that system in Great Smoky Mountains National Park during the period from 1933 to 1942. Resources present within the district include Newfound Gap Road, Clingman's Dome Road, Little River/Laurel Creek Road, the Rockefeller Memorial, Sugarlands Visitor Center, Oconaluftee Visitors Center, and Mt. Cammerer Fire Tower, along with numerous other bridges, culverts, tunnels, and various landscape features. The district is considered to be nationally significant for its associations with the expansion of the National Park System in the eastern United States during the 1930s, its association with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal administration of work relief programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration, and its design component, which represents an outstanding embodiment of the National Park Service's design principles. The Oconaluftee Visitor Center is also on the North Carolina State Study List as a potentially eligible individual property.

The resources potentially impacted by the planned improvements include the Collins Creek culvert (Structure No. 5460-093P), two pipe culverts with stone headwalls and an automobile pull-out with stone curbing at the entrance to Smokemont Campground and pipe culverts with stone headwalls at Tow String Road and Park Circle Drive. All of these resources contribute to the Park Development Historic District, and represent common elements found throughout the district. Most of the resources were built according to standardized plans that guided the overall aesthetic character of the Park. The effects of the planned improvements on these resources, however, may be mitigated with sufficient documentation and sensitive replacement structures.

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