

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECORD OF DECISION

REHABILITATION OF THE GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD  
GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

A UNIT OF WATERTON-GLACIER INTERNATIONAL PEACE PARK  
FLATHEAD AND GLACIER COUNTIES, MONTANA

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS) has prepared this Record of Decision on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Rehabilitation of the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park, Montana. The Federal Highway Administration has been a cooperating agency with Glacier National Park throughout the environmental process. This Record of Decision is a statement of the decisions made as a result of environmental and socioeconomic analysis, and consideration of public and other agencies' input. It describes the following: project background, the selected action, other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, the environmentally preferable alternative, mitigation measures, and the involvement of public, agencies, and other nations.

**Project Background**

The Going-to-the-Sun Road (GTSR or Road) is a 50-mile scenic road that spans the Continental Divide and links the east and west sides of Glacier National Park (Park). The Park attracts about 1.7 million visitors annually, with over 475,000 vehicles traveling the Road between June and October each year when the Road is open. In 1999, the NPS concluded that the GTSR should be rehabilitated to preserve a National Historic Landmark and premier visitor experience in the Park.

Completed in 1932, the GTSR is defined by outstanding historic structural features and access to some of the most spectacular scenic landscapes in the United States. Today, the Road is in immediate need of repair to protect those characteristics for which the Road was designated as a National Historic Landmark and to maintain a world-class visitor experience. The Road is an integral component of the regional economy and numerous tourist-related businesses are supported by visitors drawn from throughout the United States, Canada, and the world to visit Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park and experience the natural, cultural, and scenic resources present along the Road.

Numerous studies and investigations have been conducted by the Federal Highway Administration and private contractors to assess the condition of the

GTSR and the appropriate actions necessary to correct structural deficiencies. If corrective actions are not taken, historic structures will be lost and adjacent environmental resources may be adversely affected. Recently, engineering, socio-economic, visitor use, cultural resource, and other studies completed in 2001 and 2002 have further established the need to rehabilitate the Road. From February 2000 to December 2001, a Citizens Advisory Committee was established to help guide these studies and advise the NPS on how best to accomplish rehabilitation. Public input and recommendations from the Citizens Advisory Committee have contributed greatly to the development of rehabilitation alternatives and mitigation measures to reduce impacts on park resources and the local and regional economy.

The GTSR will be rehabilitated in a manner that accomplishes the following objectives:

- Preserve its historic character, fabric, width, and significance
- Rehabilitate the Road to a quality condition in a cost-effective manner
- Minimize effects on natural, cultural, and scenic resources
- Maintain a world-class visitor experience
- Provide for visitor and employee safety
- Minimize impacts to the local and regional economies

### **Key Issues**

The most critical repair needs are located on the 11-mile alpine section of the Road where the terrain is steep, the pavement is narrow, and there is little to no shoulder. Part of the difficulty in implementing needed repairs is that the majority of rehabilitation can only be conducted 4 to 6 months out of the year in the late spring, summer, and early fall. This construction season also coincides with the time that most visitors come to the Park. One of the challenges is to maintain visitor access, while implementing rehabilitation work. Also of concern is the potential impact during rehabilitation to local and regional businesses and communities that rely on summer tourism. Thus, the rehabilitation alternatives considered the need to balance implementing necessary repairs while preserving the Road's National Historic Landmark status, protecting natural resources, and maintaining visitor use and access during construction.

Serious safety concerns have surfaced due to the condition of the Road. Deterioration has resulted in drainage problems, cracked and uneven road surfaces, missing or low guardwalls, and damaged retaining walls. Pedestrian crossings and traffic circulation at pullouts, overlooks, and parking areas are often deficient, which puts motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians at risk. Many of the pullouts and parking areas adjacent to the Road have likewise deteriorated or were not designed for today's larger vehicles. Overuse at some pullouts has resulted in erosion, vegetation trampling, soil compaction, and development of

informal social trails. A lack of interpretive exhibits, orientation information, and signs, often leads to visitor confusion and congestion at popular sites.

### **Decision (Selected Action)**

The NPS will implement Alternative 3, the Shared Use Alternative, as described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the GTSR Rehabilitation Plan and as amended below.

Rehabilitation of the Road will be completed over 7 to 8 years, if required funding is made available and unforeseen delays do not occur. The cost to implement proposed Road rehabilitation and visitor use improvements and mitigation is estimated to range from \$140 million to \$170 million. This alternative accomplishes road repairs while maintaining visitor use and access to the GTSR similar to current conditions.

Rehabilitation will include improvements and upgrades to visitor use facilities located adjacent to the Road. Visitor use improvements include: improved vehicle parking and pedestrian circulation at existing pullouts; rehabilitation of existing toilets and the addition of new toilets; construction of five new short turnouts for slow-moving vehicles; construction of a few new short roadside trails and rehabilitation of social trails; designation of transit stops at popular locations along the Road; and improved information, orientation and interpretive information for visitors. Selective vegetation trimming and clearing to restore scenic vistas at specific locations along the road will occur in accordance with an approved Vista Management Plan that is currently being developed.

To ensure that the Road remains in excellent condition following this rehabilitation effort, the Park is seeking increased funding for operations and maintenance of the Road. In the past, the annual operating budget for Road maintenance has not been adequate to keep up with necessary Road repairs. Sufficient annual funding is required to protect the investment in Road rehabilitation and visitor use improvements.

Mitigation as described in the Final EIS and summarized under *Measures to Minimize Environmental Harm* below is also incorporated into the preferred alternative and NPS decision. NPS biologists and other park staff will work with FHWA during project development to incorporate the mitigation into the construction contract documents.

One concern raised by several members of the public on the Final EIS was the planned restrictions in traffic during the shoulder seasons prior to July 4 and after mid-September. Several individuals and businesses were concerned that a delayed road opening across Logan Pass until July 4<sup>th</sup> would be perceived as a Road closure and could result in more adverse affects on tourist visits and local businesses.

In response to these comments, the NPS has decided that shoulder season work will occur prior to mid-June and after mid-September. This is a change from the Final EIS. The specific date in June for opening the road across Logan Pass will be determined by the Superintendent. It will be dependent on the construction underway, road conditions, safety, and the weather. Prior to mid-June and after mid-September, when visitation is typically lower, traffic will be suspended within discrete work zones, while Logan Pass and the remainder of the Road remain open, dependent on weather conditions, (at least 40 miles; 65 kilometers). Between mid-June and mid-September, a maximum cumulative traffic delay of 30 minutes over the length of the Road will occur during peak visitor hours. Longer delays will be used during the early morning, evening, and at night. Glacier National Park will remain open throughout the year regardless of the various travel restrictions required during rehabilitation.

Increasing the visitor access season to the entire Road from mid-June to mid-September will reduce the economic impacts from those stated in the Final EIS. The additional two weeks in the spring for visitor access to the entire Road is estimated to increase the number of visitors to GNP by about 10,000. Thus, the reduction in visitors from implementation of Alternative 3 will change from a decrease of 119,000 visitors annually during rehabilitation as stated in the Final EIS to a decrease of 109,000 visitors. Changing spring suspensions from July 4 to mid-June also will increase tourism-related expenditures by about \$1 million annually. Total tourism related expenditures will change from a decrease of \$13.5 million annually during rehabilitation as described in the Final EIS to a decrease of \$12.5 million annually.

### **Other Alternatives Considered and Why They Were Not Selected**

Several alternatives for rehabilitation of the GTSR were evaluated in the Draft and Final EIS to determine potential impacts and how well they meet project objectives. Four alternatives, including no action, were evaluated in detail.

Alternative 2, the Priority Rehabilitation alternative allowed for advance planning and design, rather than in response to roadway failure or emergencies, to selectively rehabilitate priority sites. Road rehabilitation would have been implemented over 20 years. This alternative would have addressed current structural deficiencies in the Road with only a few improvements to visitor use facilities and no visitor development mitigation funding. The estimated cost was \$157 million to \$186 million.

Alternative 2 was rejected because it would take 20 years to rehabilitate the GTSR, which would have allowed continued deterioration and loss of historic features and possible damage to natural resources. The net annual economic impact for Alternative 2 was slightly greater than Alternative 3 (\$6.2 million), and would have extended over a longer period. Alternative 2 included fewer visitor improvements to roadside pullouts, parking, and trails, and lacked an extensive

shuttle system to improve traffic flow and visitor travel options. Alternative 2 was not selected because it would not have implemented repairs soon enough to preserve and protect the features and character of the National Historic Landmark.

The objective of Alternative 4, the Accelerated Completion alternative, was to complete rehabilitation of the Road as quickly as possible by using isolated traffic suspensions Monday through Thursday (May through October) and maintained visitor access on the weekends from Friday to Sunday. This alternative would have implemented Road repairs over 6 to 8 years at a cost of \$126 million to \$144 million. The rapid completion of rehabilitation would have minimized further Road deterioration and damage to historic, cultural, and environmental resources. Although the Accelerated Completion alternative would have reduced the period of construction, it would have required greater restrictions in visitor access during the week. This alternative included the same visitor use improvements and visitor development mitigation funding as the selected action.

Alternative 4 was rejected because although it would have protected historic and natural resources by completing GTSR repairs in the shortest amount of time, it would have the greatest impact on visitor use and experience and annual economic impacts to the local economy (\$16.6 million). Restrictions in visitor travel on the GTSR were projected to reduce visitation to the Park by about 208,000 annually. Alternative 4 was not selected because of the impact on Park visitation and the economic effect to the local economy.

The Repair as Needed alternative/No Action alternative, represented baseline existing conditions. Under this alternative, rehabilitation work on the Road would have continued as funding allowed, but work would have been limited to critical and emergency repairs. This alternative focused only on rehabilitating the Road. No funds would have been available for visitor use or mitigation of construction activities. Road rehabilitation was estimated to take about 50 years at current levels of funding and would cost between \$328 million and \$394 million. During that time, it was expected that further deterioration of the Road would have occurred and significant historic resources would have been lost.

The No Action alternative was rejected because extending needed road rehabilitation over 50 years would result in significant deterioration of historic features that contribute to the National Historic Landmark status of the GTSR. Delay of critical repairs would increase the potential for catastrophic roadway failure that could cause significant damage to historic and natural resources. A 50-year rehabilitation schedule also would have prevented timely implementation of necessary safety repairs including poor drainage, inadequate guardwalls, pavement deterioration, unstable slopes and rockfall hazards, and improper pedestrian crossings and traffic circulation. This alternative would not

meet National Park Service goals and objectives to correct safety issues, protect resources, and maintain a world-class visitor experience.

### **Environmentally Preferred Alternative**

The environmentally preferable alternative is defined as the “alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in the National Environmental Policy Act’s Section 101. Typically, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment. It also means the alternative that best protects, preserves and enhances historic, cultural and natural resources” (*Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning Council of Environmental Quality’s National Environmental Policy Act Regulations, 1981*). As expressed in NEPA’s Section 101, it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to:

1. Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
2. Assure for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
3. Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of 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 that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
5. Achieve a balance between population and resource use that 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.

Each of the action alternatives provides an environmentally preferable alternative in comparison to the No Action alternative, which would extend needed rehabilitation work over 50 years. However, the selected action (Alternative 3) is the environmentally preferred alternative because it surpasses other alternatives in realizing the full range of environmental policy goals stated in Section 101 of NEPA. Alternative 3 provides long-term protection of valuable resources and the environment for future generations. Planned improvements maintain the scenic character of the Road while improving safety for visitors, workers, and Park staff. This alternative meets national environmental policy goals 2 and 4 by preserving the Road’s status as a National Historic Landmark. Alternative 3 addresses the need to balance needed rehabilitation repairs, while maintaining visitor access and minimizing impacts to regional businesses that depend on tourism. Alternative 3 will realize each of the six provisions of the national environmental policy goals.

## **Basis for the Decision**

Although each of the action alternatives evaluated in the Final EIS would meet the purpose and need of the project, Alternative 3 (the selected action) provides the best balance in meeting overall project objectives, including critical Road rehabilitation, protecting and preserving historic, scenic, and natural resources, while allowing continued visitor use and access and minimizing impacts to the local and regional economy.

Roadwork will be conducted throughout the visitor season, subject to traffic management guidelines described in the Final EIS, but work that requires substantial traffic delays will be conducted during the spring and fall shoulder seasons, which are times of low visitor use. Alternative 3 is projected to complete the needed GTSR repairs within 7 to 8 years, if full funding is obtained. However, unforeseen delays may increase the total rehabilitation time beyond 8 years. The selected action will also prevent further deterioration of cultural and natural resources. An expanded transit service will be implemented during rehabilitation.

The selected action will have a significant long-term beneficial effect on cultural resources. National Historic Landmark designation will be maintained by implementation of rehabilitation measures to repair and protect retaining walls, guardwalls, arches, bridges, culverts, and other historic features before further significant deterioration occurs.

Under the selected action, with the previously described changes in the spring construction schedule from prior to July 4<sup>th</sup> to prior to mid-June, annual visitation is projected to decline by about 109,000, with a decrease in visitation-related employment of about 306 jobs. Economic output for the three counties in and bordering the Park and three Canadian municipal subdistricts will decrease about \$12.5 million annually, but will be partially offset by construction spending, for a net decrease of \$5.6 million. The quality of the visitor experience will remain high by maintaining traffic flow during the peak visitor season with selective traffic suspensions during the shoulder season. Planned mitigation measures as described in the Final EIS will help minimize projected visitor use and economic impacts. Additional measures, also described in the Final EIS will be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to sensitive wildlife and plant species and their habitat and other natural resources.

Road repairs under the selected action will result in limited temporary ground disturbance because rehabilitation will occur within the existing roadway prism with no change in alignment. Planned visitor improvements including shuttle vehicle parking, roadside pullouts, and trails will result in a long-term disturbance of about 7.4 acres (3.0 hectares). Impacts to wetlands will be avoided, although minor temporary disturbances are possible for actions such as culvert replacement. A long-term beneficial improvement to water quality will

occur with drainage improvement, although short-term increases in erosion and sedimentation are possible. Minor to moderate short-term impacts to threatened and endangered species will occur from construction-related activities.

### **Measures to Minimize Environmental Harm**

All practicable measures to minimize environmental effects that could result from implementation of the selected action have been incorporated into the decision. The NPS selected action integrates mitigation measures into the project design and construction contracts as well as specific construction practices and conservation measures to protect resources as described in the Final EIS and Programmatic Agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Rehabilitation design for historic features will follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in addition to specific recommendations from a recent cultural landscape study completed on the GTSR.

Rehabilitation of the GTSR will occur within the existing alignment, which confines disturbance primarily to the current road prism and areas of previous road shoulder disturbance. A variety of best management erosion and sediment control practices will be used to minimize soil loss, capture sediments, and stabilize temporarily disturbed areas. Long-term site reclamation will be provided by revegetating with native seed and plants. Periodic vegetation monitoring will be conducted to ensure adequate vegetation cover. Construction specifications include measures to prevent the introduction of hazardous materials and noxious and exotic plants to the environment.

The NPS will consult annually with the FWS to ensure appropriate measures are taken during each phase of final design and rehabilitation. Brief Biological Assessments will be prepared for site specific project impacts. Annual consultations will also occur. Restrictions in the timing and location of construction activities will be used to minimize impacts to wildlife species. Specific conservation measures have been incorporated into the project to protect and minimize impacts to threatened and endangered species, including monitoring of grizzly bear activity during rehabilitation by park biological staff and enforcement of regulations for food and attractant storage. Park biological staff also will be actively involved in developing and implementing contract mitigation measures to meet site-specific requirements during the design process. Park biological staff will also initiate monitoring during construction to insure that resource protection measures are effective.

The NPS, in consultation with the SHPO, has agreed that Section 106 compliance will be conducted separately for each phase of construction. The Park will work with SHPO to develop a Programmatic Agreement for reoccurring rehabilitation actions. Upon signing of the Programmatic Agreement, individual Section 106



consultation will occur for rehabilitation plans that result in unique circumstances for a particular section of Road.

Due to the potential impacts to visitors, businesses, and tourism from the GTSR rehabilitation, the NPS will implement several visitor development strategies to offset impacts. The Park will work with public, commercial, private, non-profit, and tribal organizations to create proactive public information, special events and gatherings, and marketing programs before and during Road repairs. The existing transit fleet will be expanded to 14 vehicles with shuttle service throughout the length of the Road operating at 30-minute intervals. This service will provide visitors with an alternative method of traveling the Road and an opportunity to stop at about 17 popular destinations. A West Side Discovery Center near Apgar is included in the General Management Plan. This facility will provide a quality visitor center and museum, and will replace an existing small visitor contact station in Apgar Village. A portion of the Discovery Center will focus on transit staging, as well as information and orientation for visitors. This part of the center will be constructed as part of the GTSR Rehabilitation Plan. Rehabilitation of the St. Mary Visitor Center will provide east side transit staging and improve the quality of exhibits and interpretive information. Both of these improvements are included as mitigation to improve transit and provide a high quality visitor experience.

To improve the quality of communications and timeliness of information to Park visitors, the NPS plans to implement an Intelligent Transportation System, which includes a computerized network linking information sources and providing real-time information to visitors on road conditions, traffic delays, weather, transit schedules, and interpretive information. Visitor and economic mitigation measures will be implemented according to available funding.

### **Finding on Impairment of Park Resources and Values**

In addition to determining the environmental consequences of alternatives, National Park Service policy (Management Policies 2001) requires analysis of potential effects to determine whether actions would impair Park resources. Because implementation of the selected action will not result in any major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is: (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation of Glacier National Park; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the Park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the Park; or (3) identified as a goal in the Park's general management plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents, there will be no impairment of Glacier National Park's resources or values. The selected action will prevent impairment from occurring.

## Public and Interagency Involvement

Public involvement during this entire planning effort has been extensive and involved national and local public and U.S. and Canadian government agencies. A Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) was established and appointed by the Secretary of Interior in February 2000. The CAC met four times during 2000 and 2001 to discuss ongoing engineering and socioeconomic studies prepared to assist in determining alternatives for GTSR rehabilitation. The CAC released its recommendations to the NPS in December 2001. A Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register on June 5, 2000 to initiate the public involvement process. Five open houses were held in December 2000 in the United States and Canada to conduct scoping and solicit input on the proposed project. The Draft EIS was released in September 2002 and five additional open houses/hearings were conducted in the same locations as scoping. Public comments on the Draft EIS were taken for 60 days. Approximately 84 people attended the public hearings and testimony was received from eight participants. Over 250 written comments were received. Concerns were raised about the construction schedule, interest in expanding transit service, potential impacts to local businesses, suggestions for visitor use improvements, and funding.

Consultation and coordination was held with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Environmental Protection Agency, and the State Historic Preservation Office. A Biological Assessment and Programmatic Agreement were submitted to the FWS on February 17, 2003. On July 30, 2003, the FWS issued a Biological Opinion concurring with the NPS determination of "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" bald eagle, lynx, gray wolf, and bull trout and "likely to adversely affect" grizzly bear. The NPS will work with the FHWA, contractor and FWS to insure that conservation measures as described under the *Mitigation Measures/Monitoring* section in the Final EIS will be included in the contract documents. These measures will minimize impacts to threatened and endangered species and avoid jeopardizing the grizzly bear population. The conservation measures included in the Biological Assessment and Programmatic Agreement are critical and the FWS considered them part of the proposed action in reaching their other conclusions. **The Programmatic Agreement with the FWS requires annual consultations and the preparation of brief biological assessment amendments to address site-specific project impacts that could arise based on final design and implementation.**

**Canada lynx.** A court order enjoins the FWS from issuing any written concurrences for proposed federal actions that "*may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect*" Canada lynx. Therefore, the FWS wrote a Biological Opinion for Canada lynx, and in it stated that the GTSR Rehabilitation Plan is *not likely to jeopardize* the continued existence of Canada lynx. No critical habitat has been designated for this species, therefore, none will be affected. No incidental take is

expected as a result of the proposed action, and no reasonable and prudent measures or terms and conditions are necessary.

**Grizzly bear.** The park determined the proposed action *may affect, likely to adversely affect* grizzly bears and requested formal consultation. The FWS wrote a Biological Opinion, and determined the proposed action is *not likely to jeopardize* the continued existence of the grizzly bear. Although no critical habitat has been designated for grizzly bears, habitat modifications proposed by this project constitute almost an undetectable change (less than 8 acres along existing development) in the environmental baseline.

During the planning stages for this project, Glacier National Park staff met several times with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to discuss rehabilitation plans and protection of cultural resources. Glacier National Park does not anticipate an adverse effect on the National Historic Landmark qualities of the Road. The NPS, in consultation with the SHPO, has agreed that Section 106 compliance will be conducted separately for each phase of construction. The Park will work with SHPO to develop a Programmatic Agreement for reoccurring rehabilitation actions. Individual Section 106 consultation will occur for rehabilitation plans that result in unique circumstances for a particular section of Road. If, during consultation with the SHPO, an adverse effect determination is reached on some aspect of road rehabilitation, that part of the project will stop and a determination will be made about the need for further National Environmental Protection Act compliance.

A Notice of Availability for the Final EIS appeared in the Federal Register on May 7, 2003. Nineteen comment letters were received on the Final EIS from private individuals, former Citizen Advisory Committee members, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Canadian Government, and local businesses. In addition, two citizens representing the Waterton-Glacier Visitors Association met with Superintendent Mick Holm to discuss concerns with the July 4<sup>th</sup> road opening date. Several individuals and businesses were concerned that waiting until July 4<sup>th</sup> to open the road all the way across the divide would be perceived as Road closure and could adversely affect tourist visits and local businesses. Six letters were received stating concerns about the date.

After consideration and consulting with the Federal Highway Administration (a Cooperating Agency on the EIS) on the affect on the rehabilitation schedule and the contractor on the socio-economic effects, the NPS decided that traffic suspensions in the spring will be changed from prior to Independence Day (July 4), as described in the Final EIS, to prior to mid-June. With this change, every effort will still be made to complete the rehabilitation in the projected 7 to 8 years. This change is discussed under the description of the **Selected Action**.

The Environmental Protection Agency commented that they did not object to the preferred alternative and accepted the responses to their letter on the Draft EIS. The Minister of Transportation for Alberta Canada wrote supporting the project. Another comment suggested the NPS consider creation of a new road through the interior of the Park to reduce congestion on the Going-to-the-Sun Road. The purpose of the GTSR rehabilitation is to preserve the character and function of the existing Historic Landmark rather than to develop alternative methods for traveling through the Park. A new road would result in significant environmental impacts and economic costs. This was considered and rejected as an option in the 1999 General Management Plan EIS. It was not reconsidered in this EIS process.

An additional comment from a business indicated concern over how bicyclists will be accommodated during rehabilitation. Current bicycle travel restrictions limit travel between Apgar and the Sprague Creek Campground and eastbound travel from Logan Creek to Logan Pass between 11:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. The additional traffic delays and shoulder season suspensions during rehabilitation will further restrict bicycle traffic on portions of the Going-to-the-Sun Road. The NPS will continually review and update those sections of the Road and times of the day where bicycle travel will be permitted during rehabilitation, but some limitations in bicycle travel are unavoidable. Safety will be the primary consideration in determining bicycle travel restrictions. The use of bicycle racks on shuttle buses will be considered to facilitate bicycle travel through construction zones.

### **Conclusion**

Alternative 3 (the selected action) provides the best balance of correcting the structural deficiencies in the Going-to-the-Sun Road, while protecting and preserving historic, scenic, and natural resources compared to other alternatives considered. This alternative maintains visitor access and the quality of the visitor experience, and minimizes impacts to the local and regional economy. The selection of Alternative 3, according to the analysis in the Final EIS, will not result in the impairment of Park resources or violate the NPS Organic Act and will allow the National Park Service to conserve Park resources and provide for their enjoyment by visitors.

The NPS, in consultation with the SHPO, has agreed that Section 106 compliance will be conducted separately for each phase of construction. The Park will work with SHPO to develop a Programmatic Agreement for reoccurring rehabilitation actions. Upon approval of the Programmatic Agreement, individual Section 106 consultation will occur for rehabilitation plans that result in unique circumstances for a particular section of Road. If during consultation with the SHPO, an adverse effect finding is reached on some aspect of road rehabilitation, the NPS will consult with the SHPO to develop an evaluate alternatives that could avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse effect. If the adverse effect finding cannot be avoided or minimized, NEPA compliance would be re-initiated.

The NPS will consult annually with the FWS in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement on the GTSR. Brief biological assessment amendments will be prepared to address site-specific project impacts that could arise based on final design and implementation.

**Recommended:**

/s/ Michael O. Holm  
Michael O. Holm, Superintendent  
Glacier National Park  
National Park Service

10/31/03  
Date

**Approved:**

/s/ Steven P. Martin  
Steven P. Martin, Regional Director  
Intermountain Regional Office  
National Park Service

11/5/03  
Date

cc: Office of Environmental Quality, WASO  
EIS Mailing List