

## Chapter 8

### Impact Assessment

This chapter describes the anticipated impacts related to the proposed management alternatives, including the “no action” and the National Heritage Area designation alternative. For the purposes of this Environmental Assessment, the proposed action is the designation of a defined area in eastern and southern Kansas as the Bleeding Kansas and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom National Heritage Area. The results of the feasibility study indicate that the historic and cultural resources are best protected and interpreted by designation as a National Heritage Area.

The Bleeding Kansas National Heritage Area feasibility study is subject to the compliance requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Generally, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is sufficient to meet NEPA compliance requirements since no significant, quantifiable positive or negative impacts of NHA designation have been identified.

Formal and informal consultation with the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies has been conducted in the preparation of this feasibility study. The study consultants have contacted the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), resource protection and Native American organizations. Consultation was conducted through letters to the Kansas Biological Survey, Kansas State Historical Society, Kansas Humanities Council, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Department of Transportation, Kansas Department of

Commerce, National Park Service, Midwest Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kaw Valley Heritage Alliance, Kansas Land Trust, Nature Conservancy of Kansas, Kansas Rural Center, Prairie Band of Potawatomi Indians, Kickapoo of Kansas Tribal Council (See Appendix F). These letters requested the agencies and organizations to identify any issues regarding the study.

Any development projects that involve federal funds, assistance, or permits/licenses would be subject to review for compliance with Section 110 (f) of the Historic Preservation Act. If and when a comprehensive management plan for the Bleeding Kansas Heritage Area is developed, future consultations with the Kansas State Historic Preservation Officer may be required.

Neither of the management alternatives considered would result in positive or negative impacts to public health or safety.

Implementation of either of the management alternatives would necessarily comply with state and federal regulations, including laws pertaining to health and safety.

Because neither of the management alternatives prescribe specific actions for the development of land or natural or cultural resources with the study area, air quality and water resources would not be affected. Development projects that involve federal funding or staff would be subject to review for compliance with the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts. It is impossible to identify potential impacts on wetlands because no management alternative specifies a development location. If and when development sites are selected, a wetland determination

would be conducted and an analysis of potential impacts, if any, on wetlands would be completed to fulfill compliance requirements. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was contacted on December 1, 2003 and indicated on December 12 that no formal consultation was necessary.

Based on the information in Chapter 4, Affected Environment, and the analysis in Chapter 6, Application of NHA Criteria, the consultants have determined that heritage area designation will be consistent with continued economic activity (see criterion 8, Chapter 6).

**SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

One of the management alternatives is “no action.” This assumes that there will not be any additional federal action in the study area. Therefore, for that management alternative, the consultants find that there will be no adverse effects on the characteristics of the affected environment. This conclusion is based on an analysis of population, socioeconomic conditions, land use, transportation, air and water quality, tourism, topography, natural resources, recreational resources, and cultural resources.

For the National Heritage Area designation, two boundary alternatives were considered. This environmental assessment will not evaluate the expanded heritage area alternative. Because the expanded area alternative would include additional Kansas counties and cross the Kansas border to include at least three counties in Missouri, public participation has not been demonstrated in those additional counties. If the expanded area alternative is considered in the future, additional consultation and an amended Environmental Assessment will be required.

The proposed Bleeding Kansas National Heritage Area is an area in eastern and southern Kansas that includes twenty-three counties:

Allen	Anderson	Bourbon
Cherokee	Clay	Coffey
Crawford	Douglas	Franklin
Geary	Johnson	Leavenworth
Labette	Linn	Miami
Neosho	Pottawatomie	Riley
Shawnee	Wabaunsee	Wilson
Woodson	Wyandotte	

The Proposed Action would not have a significant impact on the natural environment, cultural, or socioeconomic resources of the Bleeding Kansas National Heritage Area. As defined in 40 CFR Section 1508.27, significance is determined by examining each of the following ten criteria:

**Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.**

Because of the conceptual nature of the proposal, there would be no noticeable effects to the geologic, vegetative, and scenic resources of the area. Generally, there would be no effects to other natural resources (wetlands, floodplains, rivers, wildlife, air quality, etc.). Thus impacts to natural resources as a whole were not considered to be significant. Impacts to the socioeconomic environment would be localized, positive impacts. No effects to cultural resources were identified for the basic heritage area alternative.

**Degree of effect on public health or safety.**

There are no known health and safety issues that would result from the designation.

**Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

No effects to natural or cultural resources were identified for the preferred boundary alternative. There are no prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically areas that would be affected.

**Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

Controversy can relate to local opposition to the proposed boundary definition and NHA designation. There was no significant local opposition to the proposed action.

**Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

There were no highly uncertain or unique or unknown risks identified.

**Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

This proposal for National Heritage Area designation is modeled after several designated and proposed National Heritage Areas, for example, "Silos and Smokestacks" Iowa, and "Crossroads of the Revolution," New Jersey.

**Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

There are many past and present actions that affect the historic and cultural resources included in the Bleeding Kansas and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom National Heritage Area. With implementation of this proposed designation, the planning committee believes that protection and interpretation of the historic and cultural resources included would be enhanced.

**Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

The Kansas Historic Preservation Office (KHPO) has advised on the preparation of the NHA feasibility study. Draft copies were sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer on January 12, 2004. Because the study provides recommendations without any actions or undertakings, no further consultation is required. Therefore, the feasibility study has met the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

**Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat.**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been consulted and provided information that indicated the action would have no effect on threatened or endangered species.

**Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, state, or local environmental protection law.**

This action violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

## CONCLUSION

The proposed action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Negative environmental impacts that could occur are minor. There are no significant impacts on public health, public safety, threatened and endangered species, sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. The proposed action does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental law.