



# Elkmont Historic District

## Public Involvement Update

### Invitation to Public Meeting

The planning process for the Elkmont Historic District is on schedule and quickly moving forward. The Public Scoping phase was an enormous success with 554 individual comments received either by written letter or in the form of completed surveys.

Since the first public meetings in May, the Elkmont Planning Team has completed initial baseline studies on cultural and natural resources, visitor and recreational use and current infrastructure status. Public comments have been compiled and analyzed and an initial set of potential uses identified based on these comments and Park identified needs. Baseline studies, public comments, and the preliminary list of uses will be presented at the next set of public meetings.

The first meeting will be held on **Monday, August 19, 2002, at the American Legion Hall, 1222 Parkway East, Gatlinburg, TN** and the second meeting on **Thursday, August 22, 2002, at Hollingsworth Auditorium in the Ellington Plant Sciences Building, at the corner of Center Drive and Chapman Drive on the Agriculture Campus of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville**. Both meetings will be from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Park and technical experts will be available to answer questions.

I look forward to seeing you at these meetings as we take the next step forward in planning the future of the Elkmont Historic District.

Sincerely,

Michael Tollefson, Superintendent  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park

### Summary of Baseline Studies

**Cultural resources:** This investigation included an assessment of the historic architecture in the National Register District to determine which buildings and structures still contribute to the District, and an archaeological study that identified potential significant prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. Of the 74 buildings in the vicinity of the Wonderland Hotel and Appalachian Clubhouse, 49 are still recommended as contributing to the District.

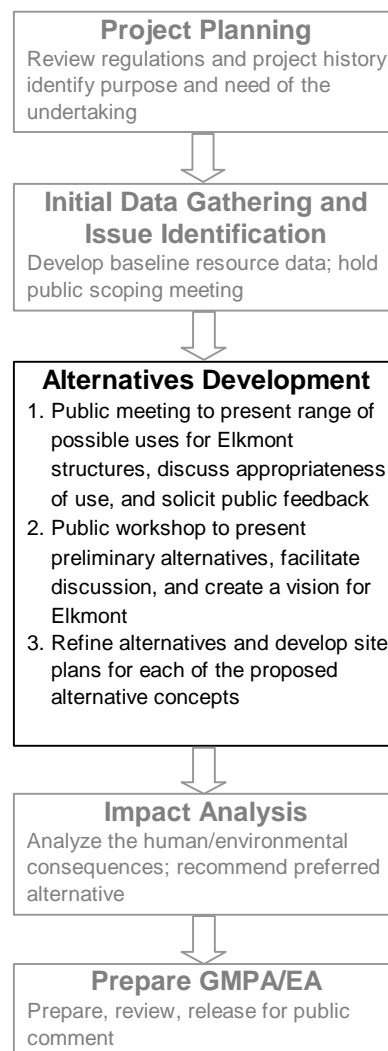
**Natural resources:** This investigation encompassed a review of existing information and a limited field survey of streams, floodplains, and mid-elevation forests in the watershed. Water quality is exceptional, no state or federally listed species were located, the high montane alluvial forest is exhibiting high rates of recovery, wildlife is abundant, and fish population trends are stable.

**Infrastructure:** Overall, the roads and bridges within the district are in fair to good condition. The sewage treatment plant that serves the campground operates at 90% capacity during peak flows in summer months. The existing water distribution system needs improvement but can handle additional use. Many of the existing power lines and poles are old and in need of replacement or removal.

**Recreational use:** The Little River, Jakes Creek, and Elkmont Nature trails are used by an estimated 2,103 people per month. Of the total number of visitors to Great Smoky Mountains National Park campgrounds in 2000 and 2001, 40.5% and 36.1% stayed at Elkmont Campground.

### Planning Process

The first two steps of the public planning process are now complete. The process follows guidelines laid out by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The planning process is now entering the third phase: Alternatives Development.





National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

If you would like to participate in a facilitated workshop, provide input on the management of the Elkmont Historic District, or receive email updates, contact us at:

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## Summary of Public Survey Results

There was an excellent response by written comments and to the survey available at the first public meeting, on our website, and at the Park.

We received 448 survey responses and 106 letters during the comment period. Of the survey respondents:

- 94% have been to Elkmont and describe specific recollections of time spent there.
- 99% feel that protection of the cultural environment is important, with 90% feeling the same about protection of the natural environment.
- 91% feel it is possible to balance recreation, nature, and historic preservation.
- 89% are in favor of some form of restoration.
- 44% are from Tennessee, 12% from Georgia, 5% from Maryland, and 4% from North Carolina.
- 32% are from Knoxville, Memphis, Nashville, and Marietta/Atlanta.
- 26% are within a geographical radius of 50 miles from the Elkmont Historic District.

The 106 letters received support the survey results

and conveyed the following:

- restore select buildings and preserve the area for historical significance (66%)
- remove all buildings and return to 'natural' state (19%)
- save all buildings (9%)
- other issues (6%)

## Background

The Elkmont enclave began in the early 1900s when several individuals bought land from the Little River Lumber Company and built vacation cottages. Most Elkmont cabins were occupied until 1992 under lifetime leases. In 1993, many of the structures were placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The goal of this planning effort is to develop an appropriate management plan that balances cultural, natural, and recreational experiences for the Elkmont Historic District.



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*Announcing  
Elkmont  
Planning Meeting #2*