

National Park Service
Briefing Paper

Prepared for: Director
Submitted: July 10, 1997 States: Southeastern U.S.

Title: Southern Appalachian Mountains Initiative (SAMI)

Issue: Regional, multi-stakeholder initiative to address adverse air quality impacts in "Class I" areas of the southeast.

Background:

- o Research and monitoring at Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks (NPs) have documented adverse air pollution impacts to vegetation, soils, streams, and visibility.
- o In September 1990, the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, as the Federal Land Manager (FLM), announced a finding of adverse impact for Shenandoah NP. Similarly, in February 1992, the FLM announced an adverse impact determination for Great Smoky Mountains NP.
- o States in the region acknowledge that Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains NPs (as well as several Forest Service (FS) wilderness areas) are currently experiencing adverse resource impacts from air pollution; nevertheless, the states continue to issue permits to major new sources of air pollution over the FLMs' objections.
- o In response to the controversy over new source permits, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NPS, FS, and eight southeastern states (AL, GA, KY, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV) met in June 1992, to launch SAMI.
- o SAMI is comprised of a Governing Body (consisting of high-level State, EPA, NPS, and FS environmental officials), and numerous committees. NPS has representation on each committee. The Governing Body adopted the following mission statement for SAMI: "Through a cooperative effort, identify, and recommend reasonable measures to remedy existing and to prevent future adverse effects from human-induced air pollution on the air quality related values (AQRVs) of the Southern Appalachians, primarily those of Class I parks and wilderness areas, weighing the environmental and socio-economic implications of any recommendations."

Status:

- o Although SAMI is a voluntary initiative, it has the opportunity to (1) consider all air pollution sources in the region, (2) examine what various Clean Air Act programs can do for Class I air quality protection, and (3) develop cost-effective, innovative ways to reduce air pollution levels in the Southern Appalachians.
- o SAMI is currently developing the necessary data to include in an integrated assessment model that will be used to evaluate the costs/benefits of various identified emission reduction strategies.

Position of Interested Parties:

- o Generally, all SAMI participants support SAMI's mission, but differ on specific tasks, and how SAMI's recommendations should be implemented.

Department/Bureau Perspective:

- o The NPS will continue to actively participate in SAMI and its committees to develop regional solutions to the air quality problems at Great Smoky Mountains NP, Shenandoah NP, and other NPS units in the southeast.

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