Dated: March 3, 2004.

Stephen P. Martin,

Director, Intermountain Region, National Park Service.

[FR Doc. 04–11163 Filed 5–17–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4312–DY–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Intent

AGENCY: National Park Service (NPS).

ACTION: Notice of intent to terminate an Environmental Impact Statement for a Proposed Land Exchange Between the National Park Service and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians at Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Yancy, Associate Regional Director, Natural Resources, 100 Alabama Street, SW., Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the President's Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508), as implemented by Director's Order 12, and Public Law 108–108, Section 138, the National Park Service (NPS) announces the termination of a EIS. The EIS examined a proposed land exchange between the NPS and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) in North Carolina.

On November 10, 2003, the President signed into law Public Law 108–108, Section 138 of which constituted the ''Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Land Exchange Act of 2003''. The Act ratified a proposed land exchange between the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (218-acre Waterrock Knob) and the National Park Service (143-acre Ravensford) that has been studied extensively by the parties pursuant to the terms of General Agreement number GA–GRSM–01–FY00 since June 14, 2000. Congress declared that the Ravensford tract would be held in trust for the EBCI upon review of title and acceptance of a conveyance to the United States of the Waterrock Knob tract.

The enactment of the ''Act'' eliminates the need to publish a Final Environmental Impact Statement along with an associated Record of Decision.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Draft EIS was issued for public review under a Notice of Availability on June 20, 2003 for a period of 60 days. Subsequent to its release. Pub. L. 108–108 was signed to direct the exchange on November 10, 2003.

Dated: February 23, 2004.

Patricia A. Hooks,

Regional Director, Southeast Region.

[FR Doc. 04–11168 Filed 5–17–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–70–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Record of Decision, Final Rural Landscape Management Program Environmental Impact Statement, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, OH

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) has prepared this Record of Decision (ROD) for the final rural landscape management program environmental impact statement (EIS) for Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio (CUVA). The final EIS addresses the long-term management of the rural landscape (*i.e.*, agricultural lands and associated structures) in the park. This ROD is a concise statement of the decisions made, other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, the environmentally preferable alternative, the mitigating measures developed to avoid or minimize environmental harm, and the public involvement in the decision-making process.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Superintendent, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, 15610 Vaughn Road, Brecksville, Ohio 44141, or by phone 440–546–5903.

Background of the Project

Preservation of the rural landscape (*i.e.*, lands and structures modified by humans for agricultural use) is central to CUVA's legislative mandate. The CUVA encompasses approximately 33,000 acres of relatively undeveloped land along 22 miles of the Cuyahoga River between the metropolitan areas of Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. Within the legislative boundary, the NPS owns approximately 18,500 acres. The remainder of land is owned and under management by other public or quasi-public entities, or remains in private ownership. Management of the rural landscape on the federally-owned acres within park boundaries is the focus of the Final EIS (*i.e.*, 1,345 acres of land and 58 properties with 175 structures as described in final EIS, section 2.3). The law that established CUVA mandates the ''preservation of the historic, scenic, natural, and recreational values of the Cuyahoga Valley'' (Public Law 93–555, 1974). One component of the historic and scenic values of CUVA is the rural landscape. Throughout the park's history, efforts to preserve the rural landscape have been sporadic; there has never been a comprehensive program to manage the rural landscape. As a result, many of the park's rural landscape resources have been lost. Therefore, CUVA is proposing to better protect and revitalize this cultural resource by implementing an integrated rural landscape management program, with the goal of more effectively and systematically preserving and protecting the rural landscape resources in the park. The final EIS analyzes four alternatives and their associated impacts.

Farming history in the park and in the Cuyahoga Valley Region is significant. For the past one thousand years, there has been some form of agriculture in the Valley. In the more recent past, specifically the 1800s, agriculture was the dominant and very prosperous way of life, particularly due to efficient transportation of goods via the Ohio & Erie Canal and the railroad system. But by the 20th century, new developments in agriculture in other parts of the State and country surpassed the Valley's farming methods. As a result, farming in northeast Ohio began to decline, while industrial, commercial, and residential development increased. However, the Cuyahoga Valley Region was largely spared from extensive development due to its challenging geography and geology. The 33,000-acre CUVA was created in December 1974, effectively halting the conversions of historic farmsteads into residential and commercial uses. Today, the total amount of active farming in CUVA is about 3.6 percent of park land. Private farmers or other groups on non-Federal lands conduct half of this farming (590 acres).

As the NPS began to acquire land for the new park, beginning in 1975, the focus was on protecting land from development pressures. However, once acquired, farm structures and farm fields were not given priority attention. Most of the farm buildings were allowed to stand vacant and deteriorating, and farm fields were untended and prone to ecological succession. While undeveloped lands in natural condition were seen to benefit from this ''hands off'' management strategy, farm properties suffered severe negative impacts. Attempts to address this shortcoming in rural landscape management were slow and haphazard and usually occurred in a very opportunistic fashion. Efforts including occasional mowing of farm fields, involvement of local farmers through short-term special use permits, and adaptive re-use of scattered historic