FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
Nicodemus National Historic Site
Kansas

INTRODUCTION

The unincorporated town of Nicodemus is in Graham County in the high plains of northwestern Kansas. Nicodemus, which is 304 miles west of Kansas City, Kansas, and 306 miles east of Denver, Colorado, sits on the south side of U.S. Highway 24. Nicodemus is the only remaining western town established by African Americans during the Reconstruction period and represents the western expansion and settlement of the Great Plains. The entire platted town site, a national historic district, is recognized as a national historic landmark. The town contains modest residences and limited commercial services and is surrounded by farms and an open landscape. The exposed location of the town is probably the most compelling and consistent characteristic.

The Nicodemus National Historic Site, established in 1996 and administered by the National Park Service (NPS), includes five historic structures — the Old First Baptist Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Nicodemus District No. 1 School, the St. Francis Hotel / Fletcher-Switzer Residence, and the Township Hall — and their legally defined lots.

A general management plan has been prepared for Nicodemus National Historic Site to articulate a vision for the future that will guide decision-making by current and future management teams during the next 10 to 15 years. The plan addresses NPS responsibilities at the national historic site and provides guidance for preserving and protecting the area's resources. In addition, it guides the development of the new park unit and suggests mechanisms to form partnerships for the long-term operation of the national historic site. Four alternatives were developed and analyzed, and a preferred direction has been selected.

SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

Alternative 4: Joint Stewardship

Alternative 4 was selected as the alternative preferred by the National Park Service. In response to public comments, two minor changes have been made to the alternative. These changes were assessed under alternative 2 and are described below and on the attached management area map.

General Concept

Nicodemus would retain its character as a living, evolving community, and the public would be invited into the community at several areas where onsite interpretation would be provided and in-depth stories would be told. The National Park Service would present interpretive programs, workshops, and skill development opportunities in consultation with community residents and organizations.

Orientation and Interpretation

In the original alternative 4, a portion of the Roadside Park would be acquired by the National Park Service for the purpose of constructing a visitor contact facility. Because of public desires to retain traditional uses at the Roadside Park, this proposal has been changed. The National Park Service would lease or build a facility for administration and visitor contact as close to the historic site as possible. Orientation to the national historic landmark district and national historic site would be provided at this facility. If needed, the National Park Service could lease additional facilities to accommodate NPS operations. The Roadside Park would remain in township ownership but would be included in the national historic site boundary to facilitate cooperative agreements with the Township Board for maintenance of the Roadside Park and appropriate access and use by visitors to the national historic site.

In-depth interpretation of the Nicodemus story would occur around and in the historic structures managed by the National Park Service. The National Park Service would strive to minimize disruption of the town and cultural landscape in design and implementation of facilities and services.

The National Park Service would consult with the community in preparing a long-range interpretation plan. Additionally, the National Park Service would coordinate with the community in exploring the wide variety of media and programs that could be offered by the National Park Service and/or jointly with residents and local organizations. If community members chose to provide interpretive services, the National Park Service would offer interpretation training and assistance to help develop their interpretive programs and skills.

Resource Preservation and Management

The National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. Church. A higher level of treatment than stabilization would be anticipated under this alternative for the church. The National Park Service would seek to acquire the St. Francis Hotel and Nicodemus School from willing sellers/donors. In the original alternative 4, the National Park Service would also seek to acquire the Old First Baptist Church. This proposal has been changed in response to desires by the congregation that their traditional use of the church be reestablished. This church would remain in private

ownership, and the National Park Service would work with the Nicodemus First Baptist Church congregation to obtain grants to rehabilitate the building. Until grant monies become available, the National Park Service could still need to stabilize or rehabilitate the church building as called for in the original alternative 4. If emergency actions are not required, the estimated NPS costs of implementing the alternative could be reduced on the order of $100,000.

The National Park Service would request a cooperative agreement from the Township Board to allow some public access to the Township Hall and would stabilize the Township Hall if it was in danger of being physically lost.

The National Park Service would provide appropriate curatorial storage for objects associated with Nicodemus and its residents, consistent with objectives of the national historic site's collection management program. Collections would be available to residents, researchers, and the general public for investigation and viewing, consistent with NPS policies.

The National Park Service would conduct archeological investigations in the national historic site and national historic landmark district. This information would assist in resources management and in the national historic site's interpretation program. Archeological materials would be catalogued, curated, and stored at the historic site.

Facilities and Development

Circulation and parking for residents of Nicodemus would remain as they are now. Dedicated visitor parking would be provided at orientation sites and some interpretive facilities. Visitor circulation around the sites would be directed to provide a cohesive interpretive story. Visitor circulation also would be directed in such a way that traditional circulation pathways would not be interrupted.

Boundary Adjustment

A minor boundary adjustment (addition) would be required (through congressional action) to include the Roadside Park in the national historic site boundary.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative 1: No Action

Under alternative 1 the National Park Service would continue its current management course to preserve and interpret the resources of Nicodemus National Historic Site. Visitors would continue to receive orientation to the site and basic interpretation of the Nicodemus story at Township Hall, which is leased for this purpose from

the Township Board. The National Park Service would continue to own and manage the A.M.E. Church. The remaining four structures in the national historic site would remain in non-NPS ownership.

Alternative 2: Community Stewards

Under alternative 2 Nicodemus would remain a living, evolving community, and the National Park Service would retain ownership of the A.M.E. Church only. A site near but not in the national historic landmark district would be acquired by the National Park Service for the purpose of constructing a visitor contact facility.

Unless the community chooses otherwise, visitors would see the town function as it has traditionally. At the community's request, the National Park Service would provide technical assistance or training in community planning/development, interpretation, and cultural resources preservation. Regardless of the eventual level of NPS presence onsite, NPS management would strongly focus on community decision-making and on noninterference in the living community.

Alternative 3: The Learning Place

In alternative 3 Nicodemus would function as a learning center where the public would experience onsite interpretation and in-depth stories told at a variety of sites. Students would have "classroom" opportunities to learn about Nicodemus and its lessons and stories. The National Park Service would retain ownership of the A.M.E. Church and would seek to acquire the other four historic structures over time. A visitor contact facility would be developed at the Roadside Park, which would be acquired by the National Park Service.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. According to section 101, the environmentally preferred alternative would cause the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protect, preserve, and enhance the cultural and natural resources.

Alternatives 1–4 were evaluated by applying the criteria suggested in the National Environmental Policy Act and guided by the Council on Environmental Quality. Although all alternatives in the plan rated well, alternatives 3 and 4, which had the same overall scores, were found to best meet the criteria. However, because alternative 4 outscored alternative 3 on the criterion that directly pertains to the

National Park Service's mission (attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences), alternative 4 was selected as the environmentally preferred alternative.

WHY THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

As described in the environmental assessment accompanying the general management plan, actions included in the selected alternative, as modified, would result in negligible to moderate beneficial or adverse effects. The alternative would result in moderate beneficial impacts on historic structures and museum collections to be managed by the National Park Service, and there would be minor beneficial impacts on the Township Hall, which would remain in town ownership. Minor adverse impacts could result from changes in use of some community structures and from the likelihood of visitors intruding at times on community activities. There would be moderate beneficial effects on the visitor experience, and minor to moderate benefits to the local economy.

None of these impacts constitute a "significant effect on the human environment." As defined in 40 CFR § 1508.27, significance is determined by examining the specific criteria discussed below.

- *Impacts that have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts which require analysis in an environmental impact statement.*

  Implementation of the selected alternative, as modified, would not result in any major adverse impacts. The selected alternative would involve NPS expenditures in the community that would boost the local economy, along with potential demand for housing, acquisition of historic properties, and leasing of properties within the town for NPS administrative or support facilities. This alternative would also encourage an increase in tourism to Nicodemus. There would be a potential for economic opportunities for residents to provide a variety of services to visitors, and there might also be some temporary job opportunities for local labor during the construction of new facilities and the preservation of historic structures. Overall, increased economic opportunities and NPS and visitor-related expenditures in the community would result in minor to moderate, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy.

  On the other hand, this alternative would alter the community's use of two of the currently privately owned historic properties (St. Francis Hotel and Nicodemus School) should the National Park Service acquire them, because the National Park Service would then manage the use of these buildings. In addition, visitation would likely increase under this alternative, and there

would be an increased likelihood that visitors could at times interfere with or impose on community activities associated with the properties. These changes in use would result in minor, long-term, adverse impacts on the community's use of these ethnographic resources.

The alternative includes measures to mitigate the adverse impacts. The proposal commits the National Park Service to manage public circulation through town in a manner that would minimize disruption to residents and calls for developing plans and programs in consultation with the community.

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

  Analysis of proposed actions did not reveal the potential for effects on public health or safety.

- *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.*

  Preservation and treatment of historic and cultural resources at Nicodemus are addressed in the selected alternative, and the minor to moderate beneficial impacts on those resources are described in the environmental assessment.

  Two soil types considered "prime farmland" by the U.S. Department of Agriculture occur on the properties in the national historic site. Under the selected alternative, soil productivity would be eliminated in areas where new development would cover the soil. However, new development is limited and would occur in previously disturbed and developed locations in or near the town of Nicodemus. Any loss of prime and unique farmlands would be minimal and would affect a negligible amount of farmlands in the county.

  No park lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas would be affected.

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

  A variety of issues and concerns were identified during public scoping for the general management plan. The most prevalent concern expressed was the potential for local residents to lose control over important aspects of their lives through federal intervention. Aspects of concern include telling their history in ways that respect their traditions, values, and beliefs. Additionally, although legislation establishing Nicodemus National Historic Site explicitly protects private property rights, some property owners remain concerned that the federal government will restrict business opportunities through outright condemnation or by controlling development. Many residents expressed their

desire to work with the National Park Service to preserve Nicodemus in ways that reflect their aspirations and beliefs.

The selected alternative addresses public concerns by committing the National Park Service to working closely with the community in planning and decision making, and by attempting to provide for continuing traditional activities with as little disruption from NPS operations and visitors as possible. Public comment on the draft GMP largely indicated support of the selected alternative with the minor modifications reflected in this FONSI. For these reasons, actions proposed in the selected alternative and their associated impacts are not considered to be highly controversial.

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

  Analysis of proposed actions did not reveal the potential for any highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks. Similarly, there were no public comments that reflected any such concerns.

- *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.*

  The selected alternative neither establishes a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

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

  If the population of Nicodemus continues to decline, the community's character as a living, evolving community would be affected. Also affected would be the opportunity for visitors to experience and interact with the community as an integral part of their visit. Although implementation of the selected alternative could contribute to overall economic and social changes (and could be both beneficial and adverse — see discussion above), the contributions are expected to be only minor to moderate, depending on the net loss of population and its effect on the continued viability of the community.

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

  As discussed in the environmental assessment, the selected alternative would have minor to moderate beneficial effects and only minor adverse effects on cultural resources. This alternative would have a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. Church and the St. Francis Hotel

and Nicodemus School that would be acquired by the National Park Service, and the Old First Baptist Church which would remain in private ownership. There would be a minor, long-term, beneficial impact on the Township Hall, which would remain in township ownership. Impacts on the cultural landscape would be minor, long term, and beneficial due to NPS technical assistance to guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district and minor, long term, and adverse if new NPS structures were added within the national historic landmark district. Impacts on archeological resources would be negligible.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the National Park Service has consulted with the Kansas state historic preservation officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In July 1997 letters were sent to both inviting their participation and involvement in the process. Copies of the internal draft document were shared with both agencies. The Kansas state historic preservation officer indicated support of the preferred alternative in a letter dated May 6, 2003.

- *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 determined that it is highly unlikely that any threatened or endangered species or their habitats occur in the vicinity of the national historic site (letter dated August 21, 1997). Consequently, the selected alternative will have no effect on any threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat.

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

  The selected alternative violates no federal, state, or local environmental laws.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In summer 1997 the public was notified that a general management plan for Nicodemus National Historic Site was getting underway by means of announcements in the media. The opening of the scoping process coincided with the Emancipation/Homecoming celebration held in July. Hundreds of people attend this special event every year, and many questions, comments, and suggestions were gathered from the attendees. Progress reports on the general management plan were shared with the public at each of the subsequent Emancipation/Homecoming celebrations.

After preliminary alternatives were crafted, members of the planning team met with each of the affected property owners to discuss the planning process. Throughout

the process, informal discussions were held with township, county, state government officials and representatives from Nicodemus Historical Society.

During the public review period for the GMP/EA, a public meeting was held in Nicodemus the evening of June 30, 2003, in the Township Hall. About 13 citizens attended the meeting. Discussion centered on the desire of those present to see the visitor contact facility as close as possible to the national historic site and the need to continue a relationship with the Township for purposes of visitor use and access to the Town Hall and Roadside Park. To gain full advantage of the large group of people attending the Nicodemus Emancipation/Homecoming, the public comment period was extended until August 15, 2003. During the homecoming celebration weekend two presentations were made on the GMP/EA. Total attendance at these gatherings was about 60 people. Most of the discussion revolved around specific proposals for each of the buildings in the national historic site and general questions about national historic site operations and assistance for buildings in the town site that fall outside the national historic site boundary. Copies of the GMP/EA and comment cards were distributed to the participants. On August 22, at their request, NPS staff met with the minister and trustees of the First Baptist Church to discuss the GMP alternatives as they related to the Old First Baptist Church.

Thirty comment cards, three accompanied or followed by letters, were received during the public review period. Public comment on the draft GMP largely indicated support for the preferred alternative with the modifications as addressed in this FONSI.

CONCLUSION

The selected alternative does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). The proposal will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Negative environmental impacts that could occur are minor. There are no unmitigated adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, sites or districts listed on 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, cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an EIS is not required for this project and thus will not be prepared.

Recommended: _____ _____
Superintendent, Nicodemus NHS Date

Approved: _____ _____
Regional Director, Midwest Region Date

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Kansas

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Kansas

Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment

SUMMARY

The purpose of this general management plan is to articulate a vision for Nicodemus National Historic Site that will guide decision-making by current and future management teams during the next 10 to 15 years. The plan addresses NPS responsibilities at the national historic site and provides guidance for preserving and protecting the area's resources. In addition, it guides the development of the new park unit and suggests mechanisms to form partnerships for the long-term operation of the national historic site.

As a new unit, Nicodemus National Historic Site does not have an overall management plan to guide decision making. By law (a 1978 amendment to the NPS General Authorities Act of 1970), the National Park Service is required to conduct comprehensive general management planning to guide specific projects, to base decisions on adequate information and analysis, and to track progress made toward goals. The management plan will establish the overall direction for providing basic services, which include interpretation, resource preservation and protection, and visitor health and safety.

Developing a vision for the site's future is the primary role of the general management plan. Several possible visions for the site's future, called alternatives, have been developed and analyzed and a preferred direction has been selected.

Under **alternative 1** the National Park Service would continue its current management course to preserve and interpret the resources of Nicodemus National Historic Site. This alternative would have a minor long-term beneficial impact on the A.M.E. Church and a long-term moderate adverse impact on the other four non-NPS owned historic structures. There would be no change in visitor use or experience. Visitor intrusions on the community would continue to be long term and negligible. There would be no change in land use or economic opportunities for the community.

Under **alternative 2** Nicodemus would remain a living, evolving community. Unless the community chooses otherwise, visitors would see the town function as it has traditionally. At the community's request, the National Park Service would provide technical assistance or training in community planning/development, interpretation, and cultural resources preservation. Regardless of the eventual level of NPS presence onsite, NPS management would strongly focus on community decision-making and on noninterference in the living community.

There would be moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. church and a minor, long-term, beneficial impact on the four remaining non-NPS owned historic structures. The increased likelihood of visitors intruding at times on community activities associated with the historic properties could result in a minor, long-term, adverse effect to the community's use of these ethnographic resources. There would be a minor beneficial effect on the visitor experience under alternative 2 and minor, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy. Adverse impacts on the

community from NPS activities and visitors would be long term and minor. There would be no change in land use.

In **alternative 3** Nicodemus would function as a learning center where the public would experience onsite interpretation and in-depth stories told at a variety of sites. Students would have "classroom" opportunities to learn about Nicodemus and its lessons and stories. The National Park Service would present interpretive programs in consultation with community residents and organizations.

Alternative 3 would have a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. church and the other four historic structures (St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, Township Hall, and Old First Baptist Church) that would be acquired by the National Park Service. Changes in use of the four historic properties acquired by the National Park Service as well as the increased likelihood of visitors intruding at times on community activities associated with the historic properties would result in a minor, long-term, adverse effect on the community's use of these ethnographic resources. Impacts on museum collections would be moderate, long-term, and beneficial. There would be a moderate long-term beneficial effect on the visitor experience, and minor to moderate, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy. Impacts on the community's social environment from NPS activities, visitors, students, and land use changes would be long term, adverse, and moderate.

Under **alternative 4,** the National Park Service's preferred alternative, Nicodemus would retain its character as a living, evolving community, and the public would be invited into the community at several areas where onsite interpretation would be provided and in-depth stories would be told. National Park Service would present interpretive programs in consultation with community residents and organizations.

Alternative 4 would have a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. church and the St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and Old First Baptist Church that would be acquired by the National Park Service. There would be a minor, long-term, beneficial impact on the Township Hall, which would remain in town ownership. Changes in use of the St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and Old First Baptist Church as well as the increased likelihood of visitors intruding at times on community activities associated with the historic properties would result in a minor long-term adverse effect on the community's use of these ethnographic resources. Impacts on museum collections would be moderate, long-term, and beneficial. There would be a moderate long-term beneficial effect on the visitor experience and beneficial. There would be a moderate long-term beneficial effect on the visitor experience and minor to moderate, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy. Impacts on the community's social environment from NPS activities, visitors, students, and land use changes would be long term, adverse, and minor.

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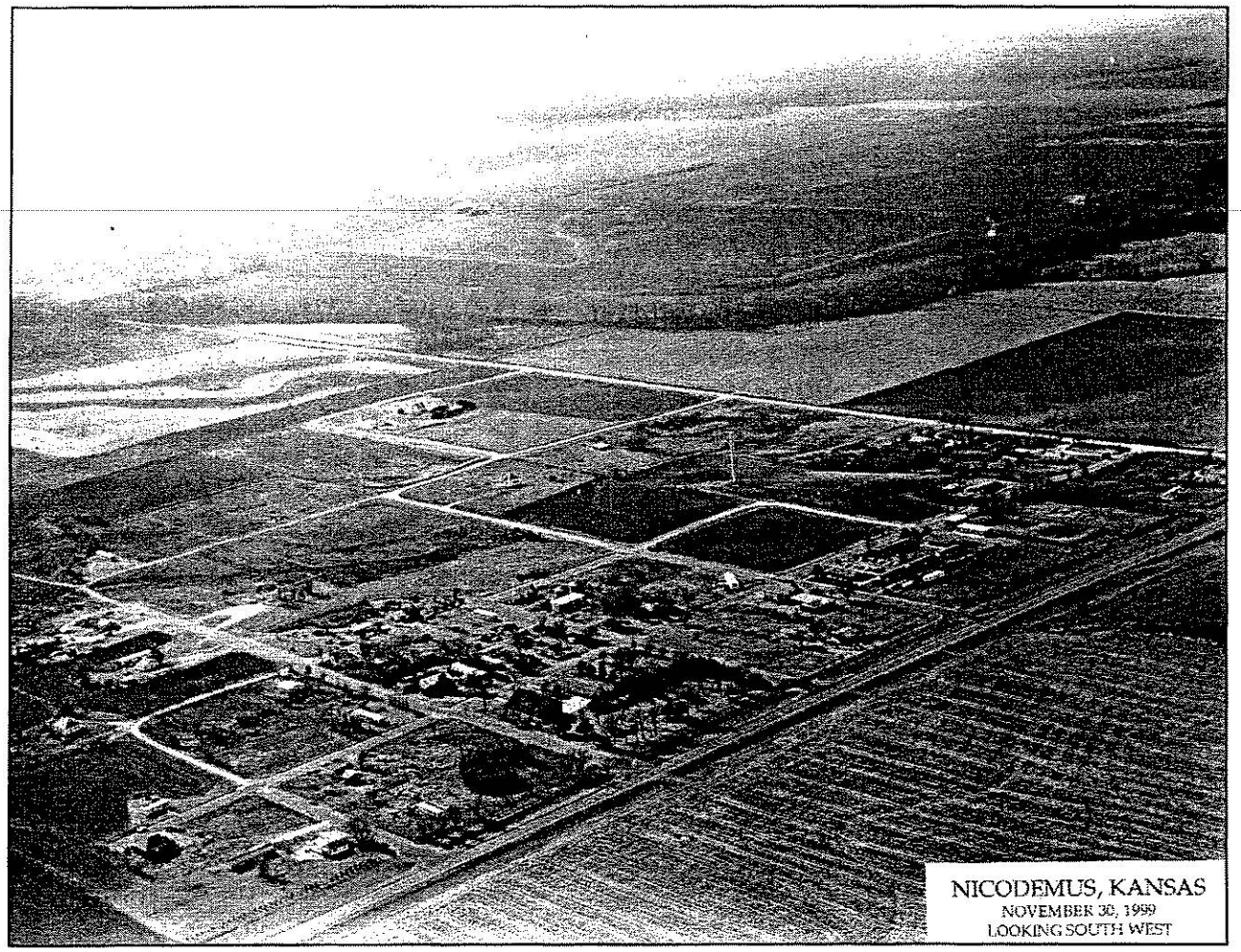


BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The unincorporated town of Nicodemus is in Graham County in the high plains of northwestern Kansas. Nicodemus, which is 304 miles west of Kansas City, Kansas, and 306 miles east of Denver, Colorado, sits on the south side of U.S. Highway 24. It is 39 miles north of Interstate 70. The nearest commercial air service is at Hays, Kansas, which is 60 miles southeast of Nicodemus (see Vicinity map).

Nicodemus lies open to the surrounding countryside, with little vegetation to obstruct vistas of the plains. As was typical of towns platted in the post Civil War period, Nicodemus assumed the grid pattern imposed by the General Land Office survey. Streets, roads, property lines, and fences were oriented along the compass directions, with only minor concessions to topography and watercourses.

Nicodemus is the only remaining western town established by African Americans during the Reconstruction period and represents the western expansion and settlement of the Great Plains.

Typical of western settlements of its time, most of those who came to Nicodemus in those first migrations (1877-1880) came to farm. The town of Nicodemus provided services to the outlying community as a center for worship, school, government, and commerce. The "core" of the historic community soon included the (Old) First Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) Churches; Nicodemus District No 1 School; Township Hall; and the St. Francis Hotel/Fletcher-Switzer residence (which also served as the site of the town's first Post Office and livery stable). Today, there are about 40 additional buildings within the town, including public facilities such as the fire station, the municipal garage, the Nicodemus Historical Society building, and a residential complex developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for low-income residents of Nicodemus. Most of the remaining structures are one- or 1½-story frame residences, simple in style, and with very little architectural detailing. Several of the residential structures are vacant. Farmsteads, cemeteries, and ruins are scattered throughout the township.

Historically, the Nicodemus community included members of the outlying agricultural area and those in town where they shared churches, a school, government, and commercial services. Today many people living within the outlying township and in other parts of Graham County, such as Hill City and Bogue, have family in Nicodemus. Kinship ties extend beyond the region to all areas of the nation, pulling family members back to Nicodemus for the Emancipation/ Homecoming celebrations, funerals, and other occasions. This association with the place continues as one of the strongest characteristics of the Nicodemus community.

The people of Nicodemus have observed the Emancipation/ Homecoming annually from 1878 to the present. Originally called the Emancipation Celebration, the observance celebrated the emancipation of slaves by the British in the West Indies in 1834. Over the intervening years the event

has evolved into a mass family reunion and is now more commonly referred to as Homecoming. Several hundred descendants return to Nicodemus on the last weekend of July each year to participate in this gathering. For the far-flung descendants, it has become an essential part of life, a way of renewing family ties and maintaining a physical connection with a proud heritage. Programmed activities include a parade, dances, carnival rides, spiritual songs, a fashion show, and much more.

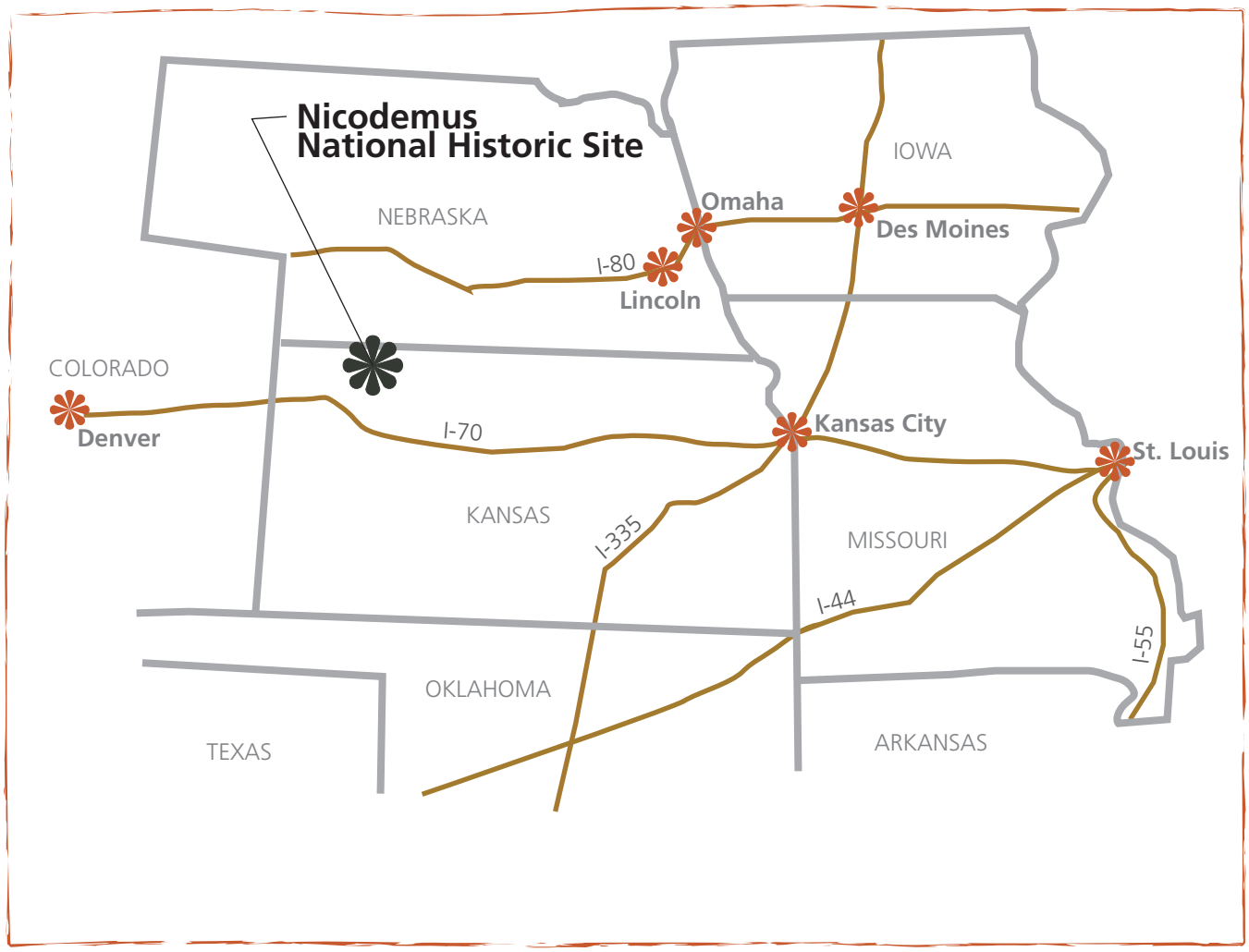
HISTORY OF NICODEMUS

In the years following the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans throughout the South struggled to establish social, political, and economic equality. As years passed, however, they repeatedly rediscovered the sad truth that for most of them, the promised equality was elusive, if not impossible, in the South. When newly inaugurated President Rutherford B. Hayes fulfilled an election promise (1877) by withdrawing federal troops from the South, the Reconstruction era officially ended, and with it the hopes of many African Americans for equality in the South within their lifetimes. Believing they could only find economic, social, and political equality within a community of their peers, many traveled to the West in search of the American dream.

Among the first of the communities that these equality seekers established in the west was Nicodemus, Kansas. The first groups arrived in 1877; initially a small party arrived in July, followed two months later by a group of some 350 weary African American emigrants recruited from Lexington, Kentucky. In stark contrast to the wooded hills of their native Kentucky, the emigrants found that the "promised land" was desolate and forbidding, with only a scattering of trees along the Solomon River. Disheartened, about 60 families immediately returned eastward in search of more familiar surroundings and better economic prospects. Yet most remained, and despite hardships, helped to establish Nicodemus, Kansas, one of the oldest and most famous African American communities in the Midwest. Ultimately, African American groups, primarily from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi, formed the Nicodemus community. According to the U.S. Census, there were 260 African American settlers living in Nicodemus Township by 1880.

The freedmen had a clear set of priorities as they sought their future in the years following emancipation. The first was the reestablishment of home and family. Many newly freed African Americans searched the country to locate loved ones separated by sale/ slavery or war. During the decades that followed, the establishment of strong family ties brought with it an attachment or association to the place where the family was centered.

The next priority for most 19th century African Americans during the post-emancipation period was participation in organized religious activities. Before emancipation, many slaveholders encouraged enslaved people to participate in religious services either in the rear of white churches or in separate services held in the slave quarters. These services, however, were generally designed to teach the slave that slavery was a proper and natural institution and that he or she was



NORTH

VICINITY MAP

NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / KANSAS
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
DSC / MAY, 03 / 030 / 20,001

back of map

to accept slavery and the dictums of the master. Finding such teachings unacceptable, African American ministers began to form congregations even before emancipation. In addition to ministering to the African Americans' spiritual needs, these nascent congregations became centers of African American social and political life; in fact, it was by way of the religious communities that many freedmen learned of the new African American communities being established in the West. Two religious congregations formed early in the Nicodemus community: the (Old) First Baptist Church formed shortly after the initial settlement, and the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church was organized in 1879.

After religion, education was another high priority for most African Americans. Some African Americans sought education as the means to create a better life for themselves and their children. Others saw education as a way to achieve the political equality promised by federal civil rights laws beginning with the Emancipation Proclamation, but enforced in the South only when backed by the presence of military forces. Still others simply wanted to read the Bible once before they died. As early as 1879, Mr. and Mrs. Zachary Fletcher provided schooling at their sod hotel in Nicodemus. The first dedicated schoolhouse was erected on Fourth Street in 1887. When that school burned, the current structure — Nicodemus District No. 1 School — was built in its place in 1918.

The need to earn a living and become self-sufficient was inextricably tied to the other African American values. Although studies of Reconstruction clearly detail the willingness of freedmen to work hard, Southern freedmen were barely able to make ends meet, let alone save money. The plantation owners continued to dominate the Southern economic system, and ensured a new order in which freedmen were still dependent upon the landowning whites. In addition to codified economic inequities, African Americans were subject to terrorizing (or "bulldozing") inflicted by the Ku Klux Klan. When the developers of western towns encouraged freedmen to go to Kansas to establish their farms and businesses, many heard the call. Among the first were Reverend John Samuels, who made and repaired shoes for the residents of Nicodemus. Z.T. Fletcher opened a general store in the fall of 1877. By 1879, the town had a store, two livery stables, a real estate office, a drug store, and a hotel.

An undeniable attraction of Nicodemus was the opportunity to participate in local government. Discriminatory voting requirements and outright violence kept many free men and freedmen from the polls in the South. In contrast, Nicodemus residents were heavily involved in politics from the very beginning, and held township and county posts. In 1879, the township elected African Americans to be Justice of the Peace, Township Clerk, and Roads Overseer. County elections in 1880 installed African American men as court clerk, county attorney, and county commissioners.

PRIMARY RESOURCES

Nicodemus is an unincorporated town of about 20 residents. The entire platted town site is recognized as a national historic landmark (a national historic

district). The town contains modest residences and limited commercial services and is surrounded by an open farming landscape. The exposed location of the town is probably the most compelling and consistent characteristic.

The Nicodemus National Historic Site, established in 1996 (see appendix A) and administered by the National Park Service (NPS), includes five historic structures (the Old First Baptist Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Nicodemus District No. 1 School, the St. Francis Hotel / Fletcher-Switzer Residence, and Township Hall) and their legally defined lots.

The Old First Baptist Church *(figure 2)*. Several structures in succession, all at the same location, housed the congregation of the First Baptist Church from its founding in 1877 to the present. The group initially worshipped in a dugout, which was replaced by a soddie, another dugout, and eventually a small limestone structure. The current structure, an L-shaped building with intersecting gable roofs, was completed in 1907. The exterior walls are limestone, and the structure was coated with stucco circa 1940; a 1960 addition features concrete unit masonry covered with stucco. The building has several irregularly spaced and shaped buttresses of limestone rubble coated with stucco. An articulated vestibule at the intersection of the ell segments marks the entrance to the church.

St. Francis Hotel / Fletcher-Switzer Residence *(figure 3)*. Zachary Taylor Fletcher built the initial 1-½ story stone structure in 1880 and used it as a residence and a hotel/stagecoach station. The main portion features stucco-covered limestone bearing walls. The main entrance is on the northeast corner. There are wood frame additions on the north and south elevations. Windows are generally one-over-one double-hung with wood frames in various sizes. The first floor of the original structure included a living and dining area, and the second story provided two guest rooms. The 1924 addition (i.e., the east end of the structure) provided more living spaces, kitchen, and bathroom on the first floor, and a new staircase and bedroom on the second floor. Later additions provided additional bedroom and storage space and front and back porches.

Figure 2: The Old First Baptist Church as it appears today.

Figure 3: The St. Francis Hotel / Fletcher-Switzer residence has served many functions over the years.

Nicodemus District No. 1 School *(figure 4)*. Nicodemus was the first community in Graham County, Kansas, to establish a school district and school. The existing school building was constructed in 1918 after a fire destroyed its predecessor. The single-story wood-frame school is square in plan with a wood-shingle hipped roof. A porch on the east elevation marks the main entry to the building. The school property also contains a one-story gable-roofed shed. The structures are surrounded by a large playground and open space. This property will be referred to as the Nicodemus School in this document.

The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church *(figure 5)*. Area residents founded this church in 1879. Members initially met in a sod structure; in 1885 the sod church was replaced with a limestone structure. In 1910 the congregation moved into an existing church structure in Block 11 that was previously owned by the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. In the 1920s the congregation changed a window to a doorway and added a vestibule to provide protection against the wind. They continued to use the structure as a church until circa 1940. Mr. Alvin Bates acquired the structure for storage purposes in the 1950s.

The A.M.E. Church has exterior limestone walls that, like other stone buildings in Nicodemus, were covered with stucco in the 1940s. Rectangular in plan, the single-story structure has a gabled roof, as does the vestibule with double doors on the east elevation. The south elevation has four regularly spaced windows; the north elevation was similar but collapsed and was replaced with plywood on stud walls.

Township Hall *(figure 6)*. The Works Progress Administration constructed the single-story Township Hall of locally quarried limestone in 1939. The rectangular building is three bays wide and six bays long. The gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has exposed false rafter ends but no gutters. A gabled vestibule projects from the south (front) elevation. Nonhistoric doors are centered on the main entry, with a window on either side. Large metal-frame windows are along the east and west side elevations. The load-bearing walls are randomly sized rock-faced limestone with buttresses on the east and west. The roof has a steel scissors truss structure with wood beams, wood decking, and asphalt shingles. The Township Hall, owned by the Township Board, serves as the current NPS visitor contact facility.

Figure 4: Main entrance, Nicodemus District No. 1 School.

Figure 5: The African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Figure 6: The historic Township Hall is the temporary home of the NPS visitor contact facility.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the general management plan is to articulate a vision for Nicodemus National Historic Site that will guide decision-making by current and future management teams during the next 10 to 15 years. (NPS policy describes general management plans as establishing the management direction for a national park system unit for the next 15 to 20 years, but in the case of a new unit, the timeline may be shortened.)The plan addresses NPS responsibilities at the national historic site and provides guidance for the preservation and protection of the area's resources. In addition, it guides the development of the new park unit and suggests mechanisms to form partnerships for the long-term operation of the national historic site. The plan establishes the management direction for providing basic services, which include interpretation, resource preservation and protection, and visitor health and safety.

Developing a vision for the site's future is the primary role of the general management plan. Several possible visions for the site's future, called alternatives, are generally developed and analyzed before a preferred direction is selected.

Although an environmental impact statement is normally prepared to accompany a general management plan, an exception has been made in the case of this plan. Early in this process environmental impacts were screened and a determination was made that no significant environmental impacts would be anticipated as a result of implementing any of the alternatives, and so this plan is accompanied by an environmental assessment.

NEED FOR THE PLAN

The Secretary of the Interior designated Nicodemus, Kansas, a national historic landmark district on January 7, 1976. The designation recognized Nicodemus' exceptional significance as the only remaining Reconstruction-era western town established by African Americans, and for its ability to represent western expansion and the settlement of the Great Plains. Since the designation, two buildings were lost due to extreme deterioration. The integrity of the remaining contributing resources is sufficient to support the national historic landmark district designation, but the continued deterioration and potential loss of these resources could limit the ability of the physical features to convey the significance of Nicodemus in American history. A special resource study (NPS 1993) recommended federal involvement to preserve the historic and cultural resources and to interpret the significance of Nicodemus.

Congress authorized Nicodemus National Historic Site on November 12, 1996, with the passage of Public Law 104-333. The law directed the National Park Service to "preserve, protect, and interpret . . . [the site's primary resources]" and "to interpret the historical role of the town of Nicodemus in the Reconstruction period in the context of the experience of westward expansion in the United States."

No previous general management plan for Nicodemus has been prepared. The National Park Service is subject to a number of legal requirements for planning, all intended to support the best possible decision making. By law, the National Park Service is required to conduct comprehensive general management planning to guide specific projects, to base decisions on adequate information and analysis, and to track progress made toward goals.

A variety of issues and concerns were identified by the general public, the NPS staff, and other agencies during scoping for this *Draft General Management Plan*. Nicodemus descendants expressed a broad range of concerns, perceptions, and aspirations similar to those expressed by similar communities at the beginning of close relationships with the federal government. The most prevalent concern expressed is the potential for losing control over important aspects of their lives through federal intervention. This includes telling their history in ways that respect their traditions, values, and beliefs. Parallel with the desire to control telling their story is their frequently stated frustration that authors and researchers having no family ties with Nicodemus "make money" by obtaining "free" information from descendants; some feel that the NPS oral history projects continue that trend.

Continued deterioration of historic structures seriously concerns the descendants, because this deterioration diminishes the community's sense of connection with a proud heritage. Although the National Park Service has discussed federal planning and funding processes at various public meetings, some Nicodemus descendants feel that progress toward preserving historic structures and national historic site development has been too slow.

Although legislation establishing Nicodemus National Historic Site explicitly protects their property rights, some property owners and nascent entrepreneurs remain concerned that the federal government will restrict their business opportunities through outright condemnation or by controlling development. The potential for unsought, undesirable influences on the annual Emancipation/Homecoming celebrations and other traditional activities by the National Park Service was also occasionally voiced. On a positive note, many residents expressed their desire to work with the National Park Service to preserve Nicodemus in ways that reflect their aspirations and beliefs. Others hope that NPS development can be leveraged to enhance business opportunities in Nicodemus in ways leading to its renaissance.

On the basis of the public comments and agency concerns, the following decisions need to be addressed by this general management plan.

> How can the National Park Service respect the needs of the community for privacy, and balance it with the desires of visitors to explore the town site?
>
> Treatment of historic structures is urgent due to their accelerated rate of deterioration, which in some cases poses serious health and safety concerns. The plan needs to identify appropriate preservation strategies and uses for all structures.

The National Park Service must establish the infrastructure necessary to support national historic site management. In what ways might this damage or alter the cultural landscape?

Appropriate and sustainable partnerships are needed for resource protection and interpretation of the historic site. What are the respective roles of the National Park Service and others?

The national historic site boundary does not include the entire national historic landmark district. The national historic site currently lacks sufficient property within its legal boundary to fulfill significant management functions, such as public parking and facilities for administrative offices.

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE PURPOSE, SIGNIFICANCE, AND INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The reasons for which the national historic site was set aside as part of the national park system provide the most fundamental criteria against which the appropriateness of all plan recommendations, operational decisions, and actions are tested. The enabling legislation defined **two purposes for Nicodemus National Historic Site**:

Preserve, protect, and interpret, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations, the remaining structures and locations that represent the history (including the settlement and growth) of the town of Nicodemus, Kansas.

Interpret the historical role of the town of Nicodemus in the Reconstruction period in the context of the experience of westward expansion in the United States.

Statements of significance clearly define the most important things about national historic site resources and values based on the site's purpose. They create a tool that managers can use in setting resource protection priorities and in identifying primary site interpretive themes and desirable visitor experiences. This helps managers and staffs focus their efforts and limited funding on the preservation and enjoyment of those attributes that directly contribute to the purpose of the site and that must be protected. **Nicodemus is significant for the following reasons:**

At the end of Reconstruction, Nicodemus was platted as an African American community in rejection of the rampant racism of the post–Civil War South and a key aspect of African Americans' struggle to overcome obstacles to social, economic, and political equality.

Nicodemus is a symbol of the African American pioneer spirit. It is the only western town established by African Americans at the end of Reconstruction that still remains, it represents a largely untold aspect of the story of western expansion and the settlement of the Great Plains.

Nicodemus is one of the oldest continuously occupied African American towns in the West.

The resources of Nicodemus represent the five pillars of many African

American communities, during the late 19th and 20th centuries: family/home, church, school, business, and traditions of mutual assistance that evolved into local government.

The national historic landmark district designation was an important precursor to a 1993 special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of adding the Nicodemus Historic Landmark District to the national park system. The study concluded that the historic district represented six nationally significant historic themes: "Ethnic Communities, Poverty Relief and Social Reform, Civil Rights Movements, Reconstruction Era, Farmer's Frontier, and Farming Communities." The following primary interpretive themes were developed to expand on the national themes and to guide public understanding of the site's significance:

Nicodemus arose from the efforts of an organized group of African Americans who wanted to create a supportive, viable, African American community, relying on the values of home life, education, religion, hard work, and the social, religious, and political organizations that grew out of a tradition of mutual assistance.

The settlement of Nicodemus represents a determination to escape rampant racism; the loss of federal support and protection for African American citizens in the South at the end of Reconstruction allowed and encouraged an increase in institutional racism, social injustice, and violence.

The continuous occupancy of Nicodemus, Kansas, portrays African American perseverance and the struggle of African American emigrants as they journeyed west into an unknown and often difficult physical environment to participate in the American Dream.

The annual Emancipation Celebration began in 1878 and continues today as the Homecoming Celebration. It is an African American traditional celebration that fosters the renewal of family and communities with the physical place of Nicodemus and with its residents, offsite descendants, and the African American community at large.

Nicodemus represents far more than a physical place with historical significance. It serves as a focal point for all people to renew spiritual and emotional connections to family, community, and ancestors through this African American experience.

Figure 7. Part of an Emancipation/ Homecoming parade.

LAWS, POLICIES, AND MANDATES

Special Mandates and Administrative Commitments

The law that established Nicodemus National Historic Site (Public Law 104-333) contained special mandates and authorities for administration of the historic site:

> The National Park Service may enter into cooperative agreements with individuals, public or private agencies, organizations, or institutions in order to further the purposes of the historic site. Further, the National Park Service may provide technical assistance for the preservation of historic structures and maintenance of cultural landscapes in the historic site.
>
> The National Park Service may acquire by donation, exchange, or purchase lands necessary for interpretation, preservation, or restoration of structures within the historic site with the following limitations: property owned by the State of Kansas or a political subdivision of the state may only be acquired by donation; no property may be acquired without the consent of the owner of that property.

Servicewide Laws and Policies

As with all units of the national park system, management of Nicodemus National Historic Site is guided by the 1916 act creating the National Park Service and other applicable laws and regulations, such as the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, as well as NPS management policies. Many resource conditions and some aspects of visitor experience are prescribed by these mandates and policies. Although full attainment of these conditions may be deferred because of funding or staffing limitations, the National Park Service will continue to strive to implement these mandates and policies. The conditions prescribed by laws, regulations, and policies most pertinent to the planning and management of the historic site are summarized in this section.

Cultural Resource Management Requirements

Historic Resources. Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved for historic properties (e.g., buildings, cultural landscapes):

Desired Condition	Source
Historic resources will be inventoried and their significance and integrity evaluated. The qualities that contribute to the listing or eligibility for listing of historic properties on the national register as well as those qualities	National Historic Preservation Act; Executive Order 11593; Archeological and Historic Preservation Act; the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation; Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with Guidelines for the Treatment of*

Desired Condition (cont.)	Source (cont.)
that contribute to the national historic landmark will be protected in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* (unless it is determined through a formal process that disturbance or natural deterioration is unavoidable).	*Cultural Landscapes;* programmatic memorandum of agreement among the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers (1995); NPS *Management Policies 2001,* DO-28: "Cultural Resource Management Guidelines" (1994).

Ethnographic Resources. Certain contemporary American Indian and other communities are permitted by law, regulation, or policy to pursue customary religious, subsistence, and other cultural uses of NPS resources with which they are traditionally associated. Recognizing that its resource protection mandate might affect this human use and cultural context of historic/ethnographic resources, the National Park Service plans and executes programs in ways to safeguard cultural and natural resources while reflecting informed concern for contemporary peoples and cultures traditionally associated with them.

Desired Condition	Source
Appropriate cultural anthropological research will be conducted in cooperation with groups associated with the national historic site.	National Historic Preservation Act; Advisory Council for Historic Preservation implementing regulations; NPS *Management Policies 2001;* Director's Order 28 "Cultural Resources Management Guidelines"
Other federal agencies, state and local governments, potentially affected American Indian and other communities, interested groups, the state historic preservation officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation will be given opportunities to become informed about and comment on anticipated NPS actions at the earliest practicable time.	National Historic Preservation Act; programmatic memorandum of agreement among the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers (1995); Executive Order 11593; American Indian Religious Freedom Act; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act; Executive Order 13007 on American Indian Sacred Sites, Presidential memorandum of April 29, 1994, on government-to-government relations with tribal governments; NPS *Management Policies 2001*
The identities of community consultants and information about sacred and other culturally sensitive places and practices will be kept confidential when research agreements or other circumstances warrant.	National Historic Preservation Act; NPS *Management Policies 2001*

Desired Condition (cont.)	Source (cont.)
American Indians and other individuals and groups linked by ties of kinship or culture to ethnically identifiable human remains, sacred objects, objects of cultural patrimony and associated funerary objects will be consulted when such items may be disturbed or are encountered on national historic site lands.	NPS *Management Policies 2001;* Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

Archeological Resources. Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved in the national park system units:

Desired Condition	Source
Archeological sites will be identified and inventoried, and their significance will be determined and documented. Archeological sites will be protected in an undisturbed condition unless it is determined through formal processes that disturbance or natural deterioration is unavoidable. When disturbance or deterioration is unavoidable, the site will be professionally documented and salvaged in consultation with the state historic preservation officer and affected contemporary groups.	National Historic Preservation Act; Executive Order 11593; Archeological Resources Protection Act; the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation;* programmatic memorandum of agreement among the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers (1995); NPS *Management Policies 2001;* Director's Order 28 "Cultural Resources Management Guidelines"

Collections. Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved for museum collections:

Desired Condition	Source
All museum objects and manuscripts will be identified and inventoried, and their significance will be determined and documented. The qualities that contribute to the significance of collections will be protected in accordance with established standards.	National Historic Preservation Act; American Religious Freedom Act; Archeological and Historic Preservation Act; Archeological Resources Protection Act; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act; NPS *Management Policies 2001;* Director's Order 28 "Cultural Resources Management Guidelines"

Desired Condition (cont.)	Source (cont.)
NPS museum collections will inform and enhance every aspect of work at the national historic site — from resource management and interpretation to research and public accountability. Museum objects will be featured in exhibits, interpretive programs, films, and print and electronic publications. Museum collections will be key resources for educators, students, researchers, NPS managers and neighbors, and the general public. Accessibility of museum collections will be a prime component of museum management.	Director's Order 24, "NPS Museum Collections Management"

RECOMMENDED STUDIES NEEDED

Baseline research reports provide information that can serve a variety of purposes, from planning to interpretation. A cultural landscape report and a historic structures report have been completed for Nicodemus National Historic Site (Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects, Ltd. 2002 and 2003). The cultural landscape report focuses on identifying features that contribute to the historic significance of the national historic site properties and the national historic landmark, as well as providing guidelines on managing landscape change. The historic structures report provides stabilization recommendations for the five historic structures. The following studies are recommended for completion at Nicodemus National Historic Site:

Archeological Overview and Assessment: This report describes and assesses the known and potential archeological resources in a park unit area, assesses past work, and helps determine the need for and design of future studies.

Archeological Identification/ Evaluation Studies: These studies are more detailed and identify the locations and some of the characteristics of all or a sample of archeological resources in a particular area. These studies are frequently linked with archeological overviews and assessments to resolve management and interpretive concerns. At Nicodemus, these studies could greatly enhance professional scholarship nationwide by focusing on the analysis of material culture related to early Black pioneer settlement in the West and community development.

Historic Resource Study (HRS): A historic resource study provides a historical overview of a park or region and identifies and evaluates a park unit's cultural resources within historic contexts.

Scope of Collection Statement: This is a museum management document required for all national park system units. Evolving from legislation and planning documents specific to each unit, it guides acquisition and preservation of those museum objects that

contribute directly to interpretation and understanding of the unit's themes, as well as any additional objects that the National Park Service is legally mandated to preserve.

Traditional Use and Ethnographic Landscape Study: This study looks at how the Nicodemus community historically used the landscape and the values they placed on different parts of the landscape. Personal interviews and oral histories will be useful in gathering this information.

IMPACT TOPICS SELECTED FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

To analyze a mix of future visions (alternatives) for the national historic site, specific resources and values that could be affected by the different alternatives were identified. These resources and values, called impact topics, were used to focus the planning process and assessment of potential consequences of the alternatives.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources associated with the national historic site that may be affected by the alternatives include historic structures, cultural landscapes, ethnographic resources, archeological resources, and museum collections.

Visitor Experience

All action alternatives propose changes in the way visitors would use and experience the resources of the national historic site.

Socioeconomic Environment

The alternatives provide various levels of development and use of the national historic site that would affect visitation and the type and location of facilities. There could be differences in the economic benefit to and social environment of the local community. The alternatives could also affect local land use in the community.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 requires federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. The African American community of Nicodemus would be the primary population affected by the alternatives. Impacts to the economic and social environment of Nicodemus are addressed under the socioeconomic environment impact topic.

IMPACT TOPICS ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER EVALUATION

The topics discussed below will not be addressed further in this document for the reasons outlined under each topic heading.

Air Quality

There would be some short-term, localized impacts on air quality resulting from particulates or machinery fumes generated during construction or rehabilitation of facilities under the

alternatives. With implementation of mitigation measures (e.g., watering and revegetation of disturbed areas, requiring machinery to meet emission standards) site-specific impacts would be negligible.

Prime and Unique Farmlands

Soil, providing a growing medium for cash crops and for the grasses grazed by livestock, is the most important natural resource in Graham County. Two soil types are represented on the properties within the national historic site. Holdrege silt loam is a deep, well-drained, moderately permeable soil found on uplands with 1 to 3 percent slopes. These soils formed in loess and are moderately well suited to the construction of dwellings and small buildings. Water capacity and natural fertility are high. The St. Francis Hotel, A.M.E. and Old First Baptist Churches, and Township Hall are on sites with Holdrege silt loam soils. Penden loam is a deep, well-drained, moderately permeable soil found on upland side slopes of 3 to 8 percent. These soils formed in calcareous, loamy sediments. They are mildly alkaline but moderately well suited for dwellings and small buildings. The Nicodemus School site has Penden loam soils.

Both soil types are considered "prime farmland" by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Prime or unique farmland is defined as soil that particularly produces general crops such as common foods, forage, fiber, and oil seed; unique farmland produces specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts. The national historic site is part of the town of Nicodemus and no lands within the national historic site are used for agriculture.

Under all of the alternatives, soil productivity would be eliminated in areas where development covers the soil. However, new development is limited under all of the alternatives and would occur primarily in previously disturbed and developed locations within the town of Nicodemus; no agricultural lands would be affected. Soils in these areas have already been lost or highly altered, adversely affecting their productivity. Construction of a new visitor contact or administrative facility could occur along U.S. Highway 24 outside of, but adjacent to the town under some of the alternatives. A new building would be designed to minimize the development footprint and thus the disturbance or loss of agricultural lands that surround the town. Any loss of prime and unique farmlands would be minimal and would affect a negligible amount of farmlands within the county.

Vegetation and Wildlife

Despite being in a rural area, Nicodemus as a developed town site has little or no wildlife habitat or native plant communities remaining in a natural state. Most disturbance would occur in previously developed or impacted areas, and mitigation measures such as erosion control and revegetation would be used to control and reduce impacts. Other measures such as designated walkways and signs would assist in controlling and minimizing localized visitor impacts. Because any potential impact would affect limited areas, would occur primarily in previously developed and disturbed sites, and would be mitigated to the extent possible, short- and long-term adverse effects would be negligible.

Under all alternatives planted vegetation such as lawns, trees, and shrubs are considered cultural resources. Impacts to these features of the cultural landscape are evaluated under the impact topic "Cultural Resources."

Threatened and Endangered Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that it is highly unlikely that any threatened or endangered species or their habitats occur in the vicinity of the national historic site (see appendix B). Consequently, the alternatives would have no effect on any threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat.

Floodplains/Wetlands

Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplain Management) and 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) require an examination of impacts on floodplains and wetlands and of potential risk involved in placing facilities within floodplains. Although the town of Nicodemus is within 0.5 mile of water sources, it is above the floodplain at an elevation of approximately 2,000 feet. There are no wetlands within or near the national historic site or that would be affected by the alternatives.

Water Resources

On the west side of Nicodemus, small natural drainages flow generally north-to-south feeding into Spring Creek. Spring Creek flows southeast, entering the South Fork of the Solomon River directly south of town. None of these drainages would be directly affected by the alternatives. Erosion control measures to prevent sedimentation from construction site runoff would be employed as necessary to avoid potential indirect adverse effects to any drainages. Adequate quantities of underground water are available for domestic and livestock use. The alternatives would have negligible effects on water available for domestic use.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The national historic site is not adjacent to a wild and scenic river corridor, although it is in the valley of the South Fork of the Solomon River. The Solomon River is not included in the *National Rivers Inventory* due to its high levels of nitrates and siltation.

Indian Trust Resources

Secretarial Order 3175 requires that any anticipated impacts to Indian trust resources from a proposed project or action by Department of the Interior agencies be explicitly addressed in environmental documents. The federal Indian trust responsibility is a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation on the part of the United States to protect tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, and it represents a duty to carry out the mandates of federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

There are no Indian trust resources at Nicodemus. The lands comprising Nicodemus are not held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of Indians due to their status as Indians. Therefore, Indian trust resources are

dismissed as an impact topic in this environmental assessment.

Energy Requirements and Conservation Potential

The alternatives describe the need for the construction of new facilities. Energy consumption within buildings would be considered within design, and the maximum use of energy saving concepts would be implemented.

Land Use Plans

Possible conflicts between the alternatives and county, state, tribal, or federal land use plans and policies must be considered. The jurisdictions near Nicodemus do not have approved plans; therefore, this topic has been dismissed from further consideration.

ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Alternatives allow us to compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of one course of action over another. The alternatives are also evaluated against current management and trends at the national historic site — described as the no-action alternative. The consideration of alternatives provides a sound approach to decision making, which is required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Eventually, a single alternative will be selected as the final plan. The alternative currently preferred by the National Park Service is described in this draft document, but this alternative could be modified in response to public comments.

It is important to keep in mind that regardless of the alternative finally selected, the national historic site's establishing legislation prohibits federal acquisition of property without the consent of the property owner(s).

MANAGEMENT AREAS

The National Park Service considered a variety of management areas (or prescriptions) for portions of the national historic site. These management areas define the specific resource conditions that are to be achieved and maintained over time for each given parcel and identify the kinds and levels of visitor use, management activities, and development that are appropriate within each management area. Management areas are described in terms of the desired visitor experience, resource condition, and appropriate development to be accomplished within that portion of the site. Because the national historic site and the town of Nicodemus are deeply interrelated, the National Park Service also considered community experience as an aspect of each potential management prescription.

Four potential management areas for Nicodemus National Historic Site are described below. Alternative future visions for the historic site were formulated by placing these management areas in different locations or configurations on the ground. This application of the management areas is described further on in this section.

Story Area

Resource Conditions. Resource management activities in this management area would be visible and accessible to the public. A moderate level of impact on the resources would be tolerated to accommodate a high level of visitor use. The structural resources and cultural landscape would be rehabilitated to support the interpretive program and in accordance with NPS management policies. Their rehabilitation would ensure that they are able to withstand both the elements and a more intense level of visitation. Resources would be managed to retain their historic character, representing the five pillars of African American communities (see previous significance statements).

Visitor Experience Conditions. The story area would be devoted to the primary function of telling the story of

Nicodemus and its significance to present-day Americans. Visitor interaction with resources would be highly managed, but visitors would enjoy direct contact with resources to encourage a sense of stewardship and to enhance overall resource preservation. In this area the National Park Service would attempt to inspire visitors with the Nicodemus story and provide them with opportunities to understand it in depth. Visitors would experience a high level of interpretation and a moderate to high level of interaction with staff. The relatively high use of this area would generate contact and interaction among visitors. Residents would be invited to participate in the interpretation program to the extent they desire, so visitors would also have a moderate opportunity to interact with them. The National Park Service would work closely with the Nicodemus community to research, prepare, and present the site's interpretive story.

Community Involvement. The community would be invited and encouraged to participate in interpreting the national historic site by assisting in developing and presenting exhibits, programs, and demonstrations. Residents and their descendants could participate in all aspects of the education/ research program by sharing oral histories and family traditions. There would be opportunities to teach and learn skills, perpetuate the tangible evidence of their heritage, and share artifacts, cultural materials, and expertise.

Appropriate Development. Compatible development would include workshop and training areas, exhibit space, research space, archive and collections space, curatorial facilities, and climate control and security features. New construction would be permitted in the story area to meet the necessary basic operational functions and could include visitor amenities such as indoor and outdoor exhibits, theater, bookstore, restrooms, and parking. All facilities would be fully accessible.

Orientation/Support Area

Resource Conditions. Resources in this management area would likely receive much visitor and/or staff use. The orientation and support area would be located in areas with low resource integrity, and facilities would be designed and maintained so that they would not negatively impact the historical character of the national historic site.

Visitor Experience Conditions. The orientation area would provide visitors their first impression of Nicodemus National Historic Site. It would be the gateway; the welcome mat; the inspirational "hook" that would pique visitors' interests and set the tone for their visit. In the orientation/support area visitors would have a high level of interaction with national historic site staff as they seek information about services, the site, and other opportunities, but they are unlikely to encounter residents in this management area. In the portions of the area set aside for primarily administrative functions, visitor and staff interactions would be minimal.

Community Involvement. The community would use the orientation facilities as a place of welcome and hospitality for visitors. The orientation information

presented in this management area would serve the goals of the national historic site as well as build an economic relationship between Nicodemus and the national historic site by pointing out other community features, businesses, and services. The support area would have a low impact on the community and its lifestyle. In the portions of the area set aside for primarily administrative functions, a moderate level of interaction between residents and staff would be expected.

Appropriate Development. To successfully provide the desired visitor experience, development in this area must be inviting. The architectural design of the orientation facilities would be compatible with the architecture of the site at large. The orientation facilities could include a visitor contact station, informational exhibits, kiosks, wayside exhibits, administrative offices, parking, rest rooms, water, and shelter in addition to an area in which visitors and/or large family groups could assemble. Existing buildings within the town site might be used to house these facilities if they are appropriate for the intended use, are inviting, and do not detract from the cultural landscape. All facilities must comply with ADA standards of accessibility.

Spiritual Area

Resource Conditions. Within the spiritual management area the cultural landscape and the historic structure(s) would be managed to provide a contemplative opportunity and allow for personal and fairly solitary reflection on the significance of Nicodemus. The resources would be preserved in close to their current conditions, but stabilized so they were safe for unmonitored visitation. Management activities would protect the existing integrity of the resources.

Visitor Experience Conditions. Designation of a spiritual area would provide visitors with a place for quiet solitude and personal introspection, thus providing an opportunity to reflect upon the Nicodemus story and its personal meaning for them. This area would be dedicated to self-discovery and would have a minimum of interaction among visitors or with national historic site staff. Any interpretation would be nonintrusive and designed to support the spiritual experience of visitors.

Community Involvement. This area would offer a place of spiritual reconnection for residents and their descendants.

Appropriate Development. To complement the preservation goals, new NPS development would be kept to a minimum and would not be allowed to interfere with the mood-setting aspects of the spiritual management area.

Traditional Use Area

Resource Conditions. Resources could evolve over time to suit new community goals, conditions, and situations in this management area. Modifications of the cultural landscape and historic structures could be undertaken to provide a safe visitor experience. Alterations could include essential climate and humidity control improvements for the resources as well as necessary security measures. New uses could occur, allowing the cultural landscape to continue to evolve. Development impacting the resources (directly or

indirectly) would be compatible with the general historic character, but a high degree of intervention and change would occur.

Visitor Experience Conditions. A traditional use area would present visitors with an essentially self-guided contextual and aesthetic experience of everyday life in Nicodemus. They would see the town continue to function as it always has, with no direct interpretation and only limited NPS influence. The potential for a variety of land uses, including agriculture, commercial, and residential, would continue to evolve. Residents would determine the level of interaction with visitors. Visitors would have low levels of contact with national historic site staff.

Community Involvement. The resident lifestyle would continue uninterrupted. The concept of local self-determination would continue unhindered.

Appropriate Development. Residents would determine the level of new development that is compatible with the character of the town.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The alternatives represent a range of possible future conditions for Nicodemus National Historic Site. Each alternative uses some combination of the management prescriptions discussed above, and is grounded in the national historic site's enabling legislation as expressed in the site's purpose and significance statements. Each of the options proposed are consistent with this legislation, other applicable laws, and NPS management policies. Although there are some similar situations in the national park system, Nicodemus National Historic Site is rather atypical of national park system sites. At Nicodemus National Historic Site the National Park Service does not own, and may never own, much of the designated properties in the national historic site. The national historic site sits within a larger national historic landmark district, and NPS management activities and management activities by other property owners must be closely integrated. And, finally, the historical significance of the national historic site is embedded less in the physical resources and more in the perseverance and continuity of a community. Because of these factors, the following guiding principles have been developed to guide NPS managers at the national historic site:

> The National Park Service minimizes its influence on the character and continuity of the community and encourages community-initiated sustainable development, which preserves the qualities of the national historic landmark district.
>
> Residents, property owners, and the National Park Service protect and preserve the five designated historic properties, the cultural landscape, material culture, and archeological resources. Residents, property owners, and descendants are encouraged to be involved with decision-making at the national historic site.
>
> The National Park Service, under existing policy, law, and regulation, may provide technical assistance (see glossary) to property owners and other interested parties to encourage preservation of significant resources within the national landmark district. Use of

federal dollars would trigger requirements that projects meet NPS standards.

Visitors experience a sense of discovery as they learn about African American westerners that founded towns such as Nicodemus. They understand the hardships faced by early pioneers on the Great Plains.

Visitors understand and are inspired by the history of African Americans seeking a promised land in the West and the drive of African American emigrants to participate in the American Dream.

Visitors have opportunities to form their own intellectual and emotional connections with the traditional values of family, church, education, work, and mutual assistance that ensured the survival of Nicodemus in the face of economic and environmental hardships.

Residents and descendants have the opportunity to perpetuate their heritage by teaching and learning skills, demonstrating expertise, and sharing artifacts and other cultural materials. The community would be encouraged to participate in restoration and plan implementation decisions, to help determine the types of activities to be provided, and to help develop exhibits, programs, and presentations.

The community retains its characteristic quiet and helps descendants reconnect spiritually with Nicodemus. Residents and descendants are aware of the importance of their evolved community and continue to cherish their physical connection to the past.

Management and interpretation of Nicodemus is based on exhaustive historical, sociological, anthropologic, ethnographic, and archeological research and investigation. Oral history interviews use the most current academic methodology.

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO ACTION

Alternative Concept

The no-action alternative represents a continuation of current management at the national historic site. This alternative is presented as a way of comparing the conditions that would result from continuing current management direction with the possible future conditions described in the other alternatives.

Orientation and Interpretation

In this alternative, visitors would continue to receive orientation to the site and basic interpretation of the Nicodemus story at Township Hall, which the National Park Service leases from the Township Board. The National Park Service would continue to provide basic interpretive services, including historic site videos, documentaries, site brochures, exhibits, and ranger-led walking tours during the summer. Some private individuals and organizations provide interpretive services for which fees are charged. It is assumed that these kinds of services would continue.

Resource Preservation and Management

The National Park Service would continue to own and manage the A.M.E. Church and would preserve the structure to maintain the building's integrity and character. The remaining four structures in the national historic site would remain in non-NPS ownership. The only building normally open to the public would be the Township Hall. Visitors would be able to walk around the A.M.E. Church but would not be able to enter the building. The other three historic buildings would remain closed unless the property owners elected to open them and made such improvements as would be necessary to admit visitors.

In this alternative the National Park Service would stabilize non-NPS owned national historic site properties only if they were in imminent danger of loss. Similarly these structures would only be considered for acquisition from willing sellers by the National Park Service if they were in imminent danger of being physically lost.

The National Park Service would pursue a cooperative agreement with the Township Board to maintain the Roadside Park.

Historic objects in the national historic site's collection include materials from the A.M.E. Church. These objects, and any additions to the collection, would continue to be documented and stored consistent with NPS curatorial policy and museum guidelines.

If national historic site operations or stabilization activities (see glossary) could affect archeological resources, investigations and management actions would be taken according to NPS policy.

Facilities and Development

Use of and access to Nicodemus National Historic Site and its resources would remain as it is now, using existing highways and streets. Local convention would guide access, parking, and circulation within the national historic landmark district.

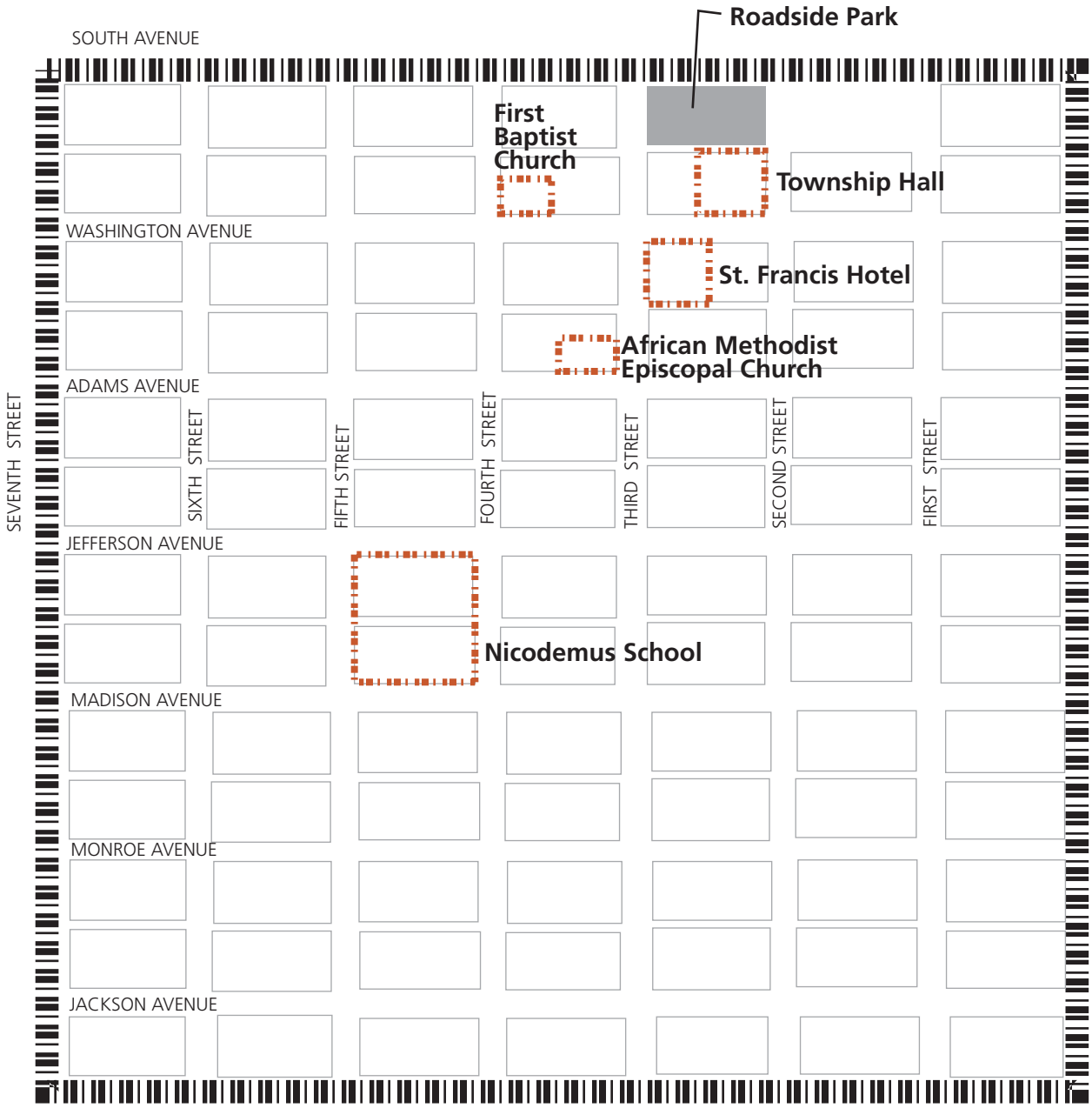
NPS staff would continue to operate out of leased or temporary facilities within or near the national historic landmark district.

Staffing and Operations

Onsite staff would continue to include a superintendent, NPS rangers, and maintenance staff. Offsite staff would consist of an administrative technician at Fort Larned National Historic Site; this position would continue to provide a wide range of administrative services. Additional administrative support would continue to be provided by staff at Fort Larned.

Costs

These costs are based on FY 2003 dollars and should be used for comparison of the alternatives, not for budget projections.



National Historic Landmark District

National Historic Site

200 Scale in Feet 800
400 600

NORTH

ALTERNATIVE 1
No Action
(Existing Conditions)

NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / KANSAS
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
DSC / MAY, 03 / 030 / 20,002

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TABLE 1. COST ESTIMATES, ALTERNATIVE 1

AREA	DESCRIPTION	COST
A.M.E. Church	Stabilization. Limestone coated with stucco. Overall condition poor.	$105,000
Staffing and operations	Including superintendent, rangers, maintenance staff	$320,000
LIFE CYCLE TOTAL (25 years)		**$3,834,147**

NOTE: If necessary, emergency stabilization of St. Francis Hotel, Old First Baptist Church, Township Hall, and Nicodemus School could cost up to an additional $1.4 million. Life cycle cost is an estimate of one-time and annual costs over a period of 25 years, expressed in today's dollars.

ALTERNATIVE 2: COMMUNITY STEWARDS

Alternative Concept

Nicodemus would remain a living, evolving community. Unless the community chooses otherwise, visitors would see the town function as it has traditionally. At the community's request, the National Park Service would provide technical assistance or training in community planning/ development, interpretation, and cultural resources preservation. Regardless of the eventual level of NPS presence onsite, NPS management would strongly adhere to those "Guiding Principles" (see pages 19-20) that focus on community decision-making and on noninterference in the living community.

Management Areas

In this alternative, a site near but not within the national historic landmark district would be acquired from a willing seller(s) by the National Park Service for the purpose of constructing a visitor contact facility. This new site would constitute the orientation/support area. The contact facility would be on a site that would facilitate visitor recognition and access but minimize impacts on traditional activities of town residents and visual intrusions on the cultural landscape.

The A.M.E. Church would be in the spiritual area. In this area of quiet solitude, visitors would be invited to reflect on the Nicodemus story and its personal meaning to them.

All four other national historic site properties and the Roadside Park (which would be included in the national historic site boundary) would be included in the traditional use area and would remain in non-NPS ownership.

Orientation and Interpretation

Visitors would learn the significance of Nicodemus and receive orientation to the national historic landmark district and national historic site at the visitor contact facility. NPS staff would encourage visitors to tour Nicodemus on their own without a formal tour route and in ways that minimize impacts on the community. Interpretation in the town would be

provided at the discretion of community members.

The National Park Service and the community would jointly prepare a long-range interpretation plan that would describe the stories to be shared with visitors and would identify how best to create opportunities and meaningful experiences for visitors. The long-range plan would also determine what the National Park Service would provide at the contact center and what community members might be interested in providing within the town. If community members chose to provide interpretive services, the National Park Service would offer training and assistance to help develop interpretive programs and skills to meet NPS standards and visitor expectations for NPS sites.

Resource Preservation and Management

In this alternative, the National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. Church. A higher level of treatment than stabilization would be anticipated under this alternative for the church. All other national historic site structures would remain in non-NPS ownership. The Roadside Park would be included in the national historic site boundary, but the park would remain in the ownership of Nicodemus Township.

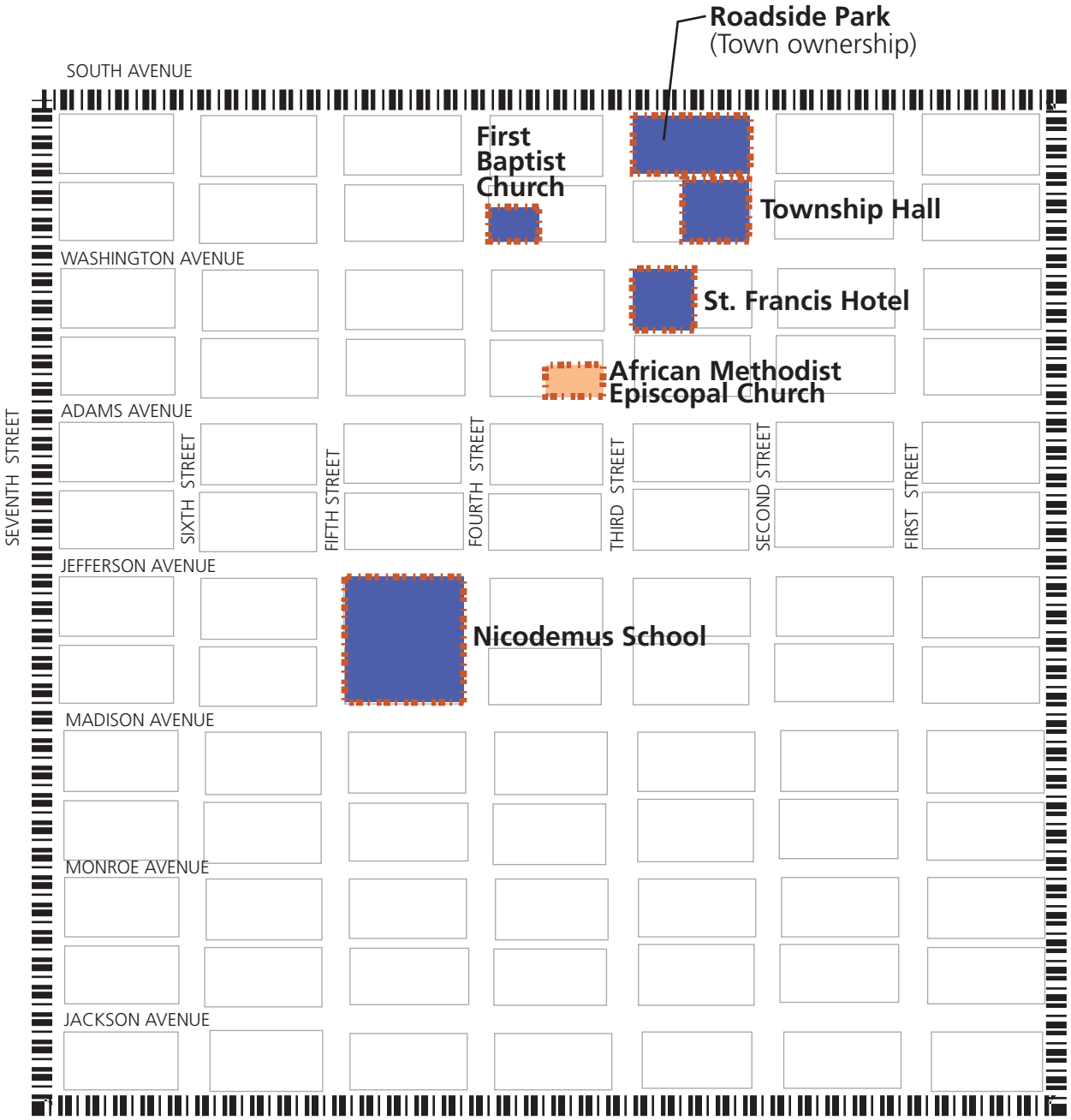
Under the Historic Sites Act and the legislation establishing the national historic site, the National Park Service has authority to enter into agreements with property owners to protect, preserve, and maintain the historic buildings that remain in private ownership. The National Park Service would provide technical assistance (see glossary) to the community in stabilizing and rehabilitating historic buildings to ensure the long-term preservation of structures and the cultural landscape within the national historic site. If necessary to prevent their physical loss, the National Park Service would stabilize the four non-NPS owned structures.

As in the no-action alternative, historic objects in the national historic site's collection (from the A.M.E. Church) would be documented and stored consistent with NPS curatorial policy and museum guidelines. Other objects associated with historic site properties would remain in non-NPS ownership. The National Park Service could provide curatorial advice if requested. If these objects were stored in a local facility, the National Park Service would extend technical curatorial support, including recommending upgrades to the facility and providing a cataloging system.

If requested, the National Park Service would provide technical assistance for the investigation, management, and disposition of archeological resources in the national historic landmark district. Included would be a comprehensive archeological overview, assessment, and investigation program to identify the potential to uncover archeological resources and to ensure the protection, preservation, and scholarly research of resources at Nicodemus.

Facilities and Development

Use of and access to Nicodemus National Historic Site and its resources would remain as it is now, using existing



Orientation / Support Area

Story Area

Spiritual Area

Traditional Use Area

National Historic Landmark District

National Historic Site

Note: Orientation / support area for visitor orientation and administration functions to be located outside the National Historic Landmark District

200 Scale in Feet 800
400 600

NORTH

ALTERNATIVE 2
Community Stewards

NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / KANSAS
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DSC / MAY, 03 / 030 / 20,003

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highways and streets. Local convention would guide access, parking, and circulation within the national historic landmark district.

A new visitor contact facility would be constructed near, but not within, the national historic landmark district. Visitor parking would be provided at the offsite visitor contact facility.

NPS support and administrative functions would be accommodated at the new visitor contact facility.

Boundary Adjustment

Minor boundary adjustments (additions) would be required (through congressional action) to include the Roadside Park in the national historic site boundary and to provide a location outside the national historic landmark for a visitor contact facility. Boundary adjustments of units within the national park system must meet certain criteria to comply with federal law. Those criteria are outlined in Section 3.5 of the National Park Service's *Management Policies 2001*.

In the case of the Roadside Park, inclusion in the boundary would facilitate NPS involvement in joint operation of the site that would remain in the ownership of the Township Board. The site provides values that enhance opportunities for public enjoyment related to national historic site purposes (Section 3.5) in that interpretive and visitor support facilities are provided there, and the site plays a significant role in the annual Emancipation/Homecoming celebrations. Because the Roadside Park is relatively small and is adjacent to the national historic site, the area is feasible to administer in partnership with the Township Board. (Section 3.5).

Alternative 2 does not specify a location for the visitor contact facility. An evaluation of sites would be required to ensure consistency with the boundary adjustment criteria in NPS policies. To be effective, a visitor contact facility must be (1) where visitors would be attracted to it and receive orientation/interpretation upon or soon after their arrival, (2) located on or near a primary roadway, and (3) avoid or minimize intrusion on the national historic landmark and national historic site.

Staffing and Operations

Onsite staff would include a superintendent, maintenance staff to care for NPS-managed properties, and NPS rangers-interpreters to operate the visitor contact facility. Administrative staff could be duty-stationed on or offsite, with additional administrative support provided offsite. Technical expertise related to preserving cultural properties, community planning, collections management, and archeology could be provided on or offsite, in cooperation with other nearby NPS areas, by NPS regional and central offices, or by contractors.

Costs

These costs are based on FY 2003 dollars and should be used for comparison of the alternatives, not for budget projections.

TABLE 2. COST ESTIMATES, ALTERNATIVE 2

AREA	DESCRIPTION	COST
Visitor contact/administrative offices	Construct new facility with orientation, interpretation	$2,173,000
A.M.E. Church	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$470,000
TOTAL (one time costs)		$2,643,000
Staffing and operations	Including superintendent, maintenance staff, ranger/interpreters	$420,000
LIFE CYCLE TOTAL (25 years)		**$7,537,505**

NOTE: If necessary, emergency stabilization of St. Francis Hotel, Old First Baptist Church, Township Hall, and Nicodemus School could cost up to an additional $1.4 million. Land acquisitions costs are not included in this estimate and would be additional to the totals estimated here. Life cycle cost is an estimate of one-time and annual costs over a period of 25 years, expressed in today's dollars.

ALTERNATIVE 3: THE LEARNING PLACE

Alternative Concept

Nicodemus would function as a learning center where the public would experience onsite interpretation and in-depth stories told at a variety of sites. Students would have "classroom" opportunities to learn about Nicodemus and its lessons and stories. The National Park Service would present interpretive programs, workshops, and skill development opportunities in consultation with community residents and organizations.

Management Areas

In this alternative, the National Park Service would seek to acquire the Roadside Park (with permission from the Township Board) for the purpose of constructing a visitor contact facility. Additionally, space would be acquired from willing sellers elsewhere within the national historic landmark district to accommodate administrative functions. Both facilities would be in the orientation/support areas.

As in the other alternatives, the A.M.E. Church would be in the spiritual area.

To provide the in-depth interpretive and educational opportunities consistent with this alternative, the other four historic structures — St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, Old First Baptist Church, and Township Hall — would be included in the story area. This would represent the eventual goal of the National Park Service. These properties would not become part of the story area unless conveyed to the National Park Service by willing owners.

Orientation and Interpretation

Visitors would receive orientation to the historic site and national historic landmark district at a new contact facility located at the Roadside Park. From there,

visitors would follow a suggested tour route to the various historic structures for portions of the Nicodemus story. The National Park Service would develop programs and media around and within the historic structures.

The National Park Service would prepare a long-range interpretation plan in consultation with the community to explore a wide variety of media and programs that could be offered by the National Park Service and/or jointly with residents and local organizations. Further, the National Park Service would work with the community to develop programs for regional schools that would include site visits, distance learning programs, and adult education.

Resource Preservation and Management

As in the other alternatives, the A.M.E. Church would remain in NPS ownership. A higher level of treatment than stabilization would be anticipated under this alternative for the A.M.E. Church. The National Park Service would also seek to acquire over time (either in fee or easements) the St Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, Old First Baptist Church, and Township Hall from willing sellers/donors. Assuming the willingness of the Township Board, the National Park Service would acquire the Roadside Park for visitor orientation. Emancipation/Homecoming celebrations and other community activities would still occur there by arrangement with the National Park Service.

Until the National Park Service acquires national historic site properties, it would seek façade preservation easements to preserve the integrity of the properties. Ultimate treatments for the structures (following NPS acquisition) could encompass a range of options including stabilization, preservation, and rehabilitation (see glossary). The most appropriate treatment option for each property would be that which maximizes its educational and interpretive value and would be consistent with the *Secretary's of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Under the Historic Sites Act and the legislation establishing the national historic site, the National Park Service has authority to enter into agreements with property owners to protect, preserve, and maintain the historic buildings that remain in private ownership.

The National Park Service would also provide technical assistance (see glossary) to the community that would help guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district.

The National Park Service would provide appropriate curatorial storage for objects associated with Nicodemus and its residents, consistent with objectives of the national historic site's collection management program. Collections would be available to residents, researchers, and the general public consistent with NPS policies.

The National Park Service would conduct archeological investigations in the national historic site and national historic landmark district. This information would assist in resources management and in the national historic site's interpretation program. Archeological materials would

be catalogued, curated, and stored at the site.

Facilities and Development

Circulation and parking for residents of Nicodemus would remain as they are now. Dedicated visitor parking would be provided at orientation sites and some interpretive facilities. Visitor circulation around the sites would be directed to provide a cohesive interpretive story. Visitor circulation also would be directed in such a way that traditional circulation pathways would not be interrupted.

A new visitor contact facility would be constructed at the Roadside Park.

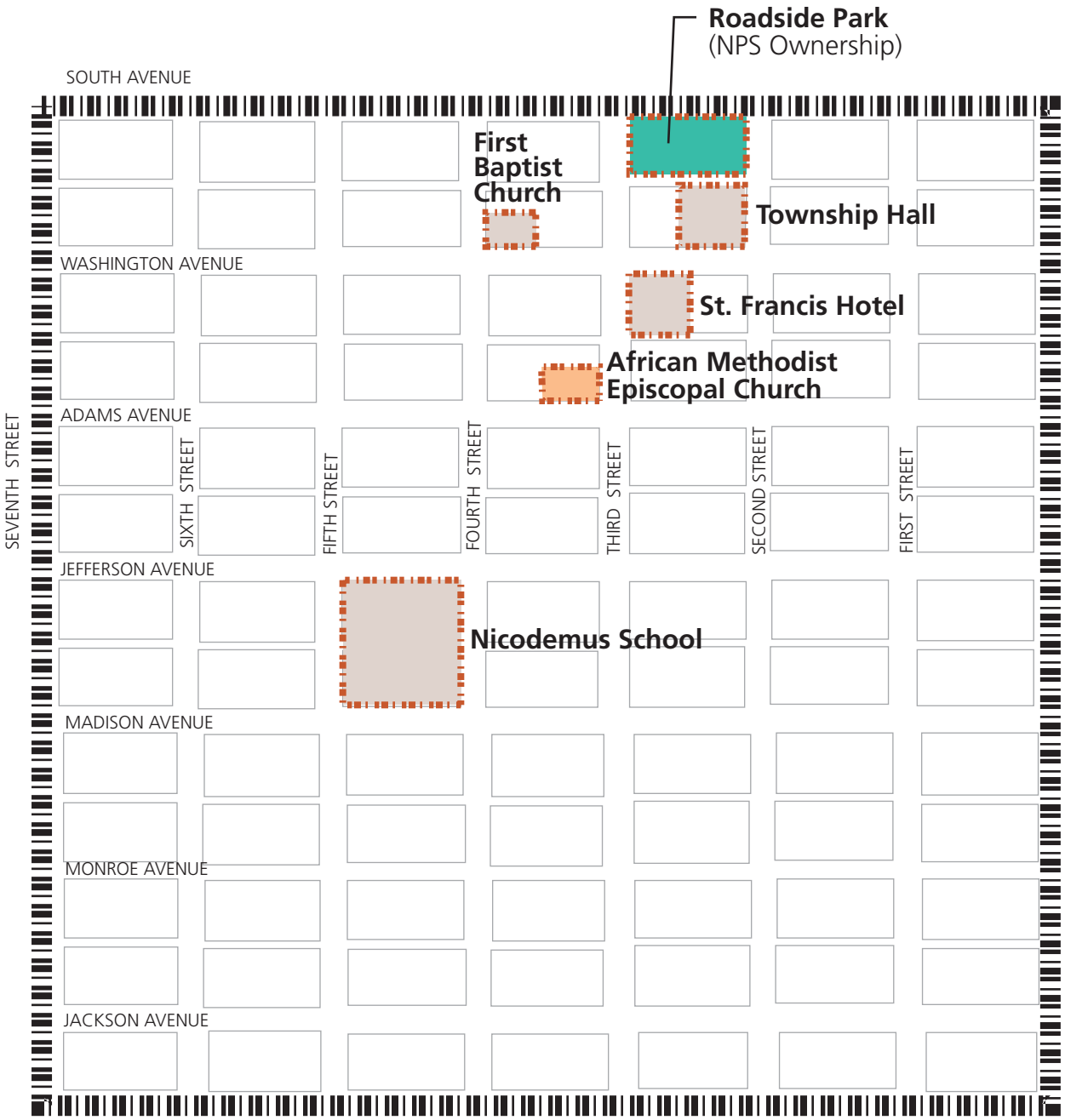
The National Park Service would adaptively use historic structures or lease properties within the landmark district to accommodate administrative and support functions.

Boundary Adjustment

A minor boundary adjustment (addition) would be required (through congressional action) to provide a location for the visitor contact facility. Boundary adjustments of units within the national park system must meet certain criteria to comply with federal law. Those criteria are outlined in Section 3.5 of the National Park Service's *Management Policies 2001*. A discussion of boundary addition needs and their relationship to Section 3.5 criteria follows.

To be effective, a visitor contact facility must be where visitors would be attracted to it and receive orientation/ interpretation upon or soon after their arrival. Preparing visitors before they venture out into the national historic site would enable them to achieve deeper understanding and appreciation of Nicodemus. Alternative 3 identifies the best location for this purpose as the Roadside Park because it is on the most heavily traveled road in the vicinity, U.S. Highway 24. This road is also part of a "heritage corridor" promoted by nearby towns to attract visitors to the region, further enhancing the effectiveness of this location as an initial contact point for travelers. The Roadside Park is quickly recognizable to travelers as a public facility and has complementary amenities (for example, shade, parking, water, and picnic facilities) that would attract visitors to the visitor contact facility area.

Historically, a limestone block restroom facility was located in the center of the Roadside Park. Small buildings and facilities typically are associated with roadside rest areas, so the construction of a visitor contact facility would not, in and of itself, detract from the character of the Roadside Park. The new visitor facility would be much larger than the original structure, but would be placed in such a way as to minimize impacts on the cultural landscape. Having this facility near the historic structures would encourage visitors to explore the national historic site on foot either alone or by guided tours. For the reasons stated above, the Roadside Park was selected as the location that would most "enhance public enjoyment related to park purposes" (Section 3.5). Having the visitor facility near to the historic structures also facilitates maintaining the facility, making it "feasible to administer" (Section 3.5).



Orientation / Support Area

Story Area

Spiritual Area

Traditional Use Area

National Historic Landmark District

National Historic Site

Note: Orientation / support area for administration functions to be determined

200 Scale in Feet 800
400 600

NORTH

ALTERNATIVE 3
Learning Place

NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / KANSAS
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"Other alternative" properties were also evaluated for meeting the above needs (Section 3.5). Those properties included locations on Highway 24 at the northwest and northeast corners of the national historic landmark district and locations well inside the district. Because these other properties did not offer the advantages of location, those properties were discarded from consideration. It is anticipated that less than 1 acre would be required for developing the visitor contact facility. Because the property is owned by Nicodemus Township, a political subdivision of the state of Kansas, acquisition of the property depends upon willing donation of this property by the Nicodemus Township Board to the National Park Service.

Staffing and Operations

On-site staff would include a superintendent, administrative staff, maintenance staff to care for NPS-managed properties, NPS rangers-interpreters to operate the visitor contact facility, and an education specialist. Technical expertise related to preserving cultural properties, community planning, collections management, and archeology could be provided on or offsite, in cooperation with other nearby NPS areas, by NPS regional and central offices, or by contractors.

Costs

These costs are based on FY 2003 dollars and should be used for comparison of the alternatives, not for budget projections.

TABLE 3. COST ESTIMATES, ALTERNATIVE 3

AREA	DESCRIPTION	COST
Visitor contact facility	Construct new facility with orientation and interpretation	$1,132,000
A.M.E. Church	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$470,000
St. Francis Hotel	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$180,000
Old First Baptist Church	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$260,000
Township Hall	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$1,420,000
Nicodemus School	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$140,000
TOTAL (one time costs)		$3,602,000
Staffing and operations	Including superintendent, clerical staff, maintenance staff, ranger/ interpreters, education specialist	$840,000
Administrative office	Adaptive use of historic structure — lease space	$40,000
TOTAL (annual costs)		$880,000
LIFE CYCLE TOTAL (25 years)		**$13,857,153**

NOTE: Land acquisitions costs are not included in this estimate and would be additional to the totals estimated here. Life cycle cost is an estimate of one-time and annual costs over a period of 25 years, expressed in today's dollars.

ALTERNATIVE 4: JOINT STEWARDSHIP (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

Alternative Concept

Nicodemus would retain its character as a living, evolving community, and the public would be invited into the community at several areas where onsite interpretation would be provided and in-depth stories would be told. The National Park Service would present interpretive programs, workshops, and skill development opportunities in consultation with community residents and organizations.

Management Areas

In this alternative, a portion of the Roadside Park would be acquired by the National Park Service from a willing Township Board for the purpose of constructing a visitor contact facility and would be included in the national historic site boundary. (If this property exchange were not possible, the National Park Service would seek to acquire land for the facility outside the national historic landmark district as in alternative 2.) Additionally, the National Park Service would acquire or lease space elsewhere within the national historic landmark district to house administration functions. Both facilities would be included in the orientation/support areas.

As in all the alternatives, the A.M.E. Church would be in the spiritual area.

The St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and the Old First Baptist Church would be included in the story area to provide opportunities for in-depth interpretation of the Nicodemus story for visitors. This would represent the eventual NPS goal. Until properties were acquired by the National Park Service from willing sellers/donors, use of the structures would remain in the control of the owners.

The traditional use area would include the Township Hall and the portion of the Roadside Park not acquired by the National Park Service.

Orientation and Interpretation

Orientation to the national historic landmark district and national historic site would be provided at the visitor contact facility in the Roadside Park. In-depth interpretation of the Nicodemus story would occur around and within the historic structures managed by the National Park Service in the story management areas. The National Park Service would strive to minimize disruption of the town and cultural landscape in design and implementation of facilities and services.

The National Park Service would consult with the community in preparing a long-range interpretation plan. Additionally, the National Park Service would coordinate with the community in exploring the wide variety of media and programs that could be offered by the National Park Service and/or jointly with residents and local organizations. If community members chose to provide interpretive services, the National Park Service would offer interpretation training and assistance to help develop their interpretive programs and skills.

Resource Preservation and Management

The National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. Church. A higher level of treatment than stabilization would be anticipated under this alternative for the church. The National Park Service would seek to acquire the St. Francis Hotel, Old First Baptist Church, and Nicodemus School from willing sellers/donors. If the Nicodemus First Baptist Church congregation agreed to NPS acquisition of the Old First Baptist Church, national historic site management would cooperate with First Baptist Church officials to make the building available for church and community activities. The National Park Service would request a cooperative agreement from the Township Board to allow some public access to the Township Hall. The National Park Service would stabilize the Township Hall if it was in danger of being physically lost. The National Park Service would also seek donation by the Township Board of a small portion of the Roadside Park for a visitor contact facility. Traditional uses would remain at the rest of the Roadside Park.

Until the National Park Service acquires historic site properties, it would seek façade preservation easements to preserve the integrity of the national historic site properties. Ultimate treatments for the four national historic site properties under NPS management could encompass a range of options, including stabilization, preservation, and rehabilitation (see glossary). The most appropriate treatment option for each property would be that which maximizes its educational and interpretive value and would be consistent with the *Secretary's of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Under the Historic Sites Act and the legislation establishing the national historic site, the National Park Service has authority to enter into agreements with property owners to protect, preserve, and maintain the historic buildings that remain in private ownership. The National Park Service would also provide technical assistance (see glossary) to the community that would help guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district.

The National Park Service would provide appropriate curatorial storage for objects associated with Nicodemus and its residents, consistent with objectives of the national historic site's collection management program. Collections would be available to residents, researchers, and the general public for investigation and viewing, consistent with NPS policies.

The National Park Service would conduct archeological investigations in the national historic site and national historic landmark district. This information would assist in resources management and in the national historic site's interpretation program. Archeological materials would be catalogued, curated, and stored at the historic site.

Facilities and Development

Circulation and parking for residents of Nicodemus would remain as they are now. Dedicated visitor parking would be provided at orientation sites and some interpretive facilities. Visitor circulation around the sites would be directed to

provide a cohesive interpretive story. Visitor circulation also would be directed in such a way that traditional circulation pathways would not be interrupted.

A new visitor contact facility would be constructed at the Roadside Park.

The National Park Service would adaptively use historic structures or lease properties within the landmark district to accommodate administrative and support functions. If properties were not available, the National Park Service would purchase property within the national historic landmark district and construct facilities for administrative functions.

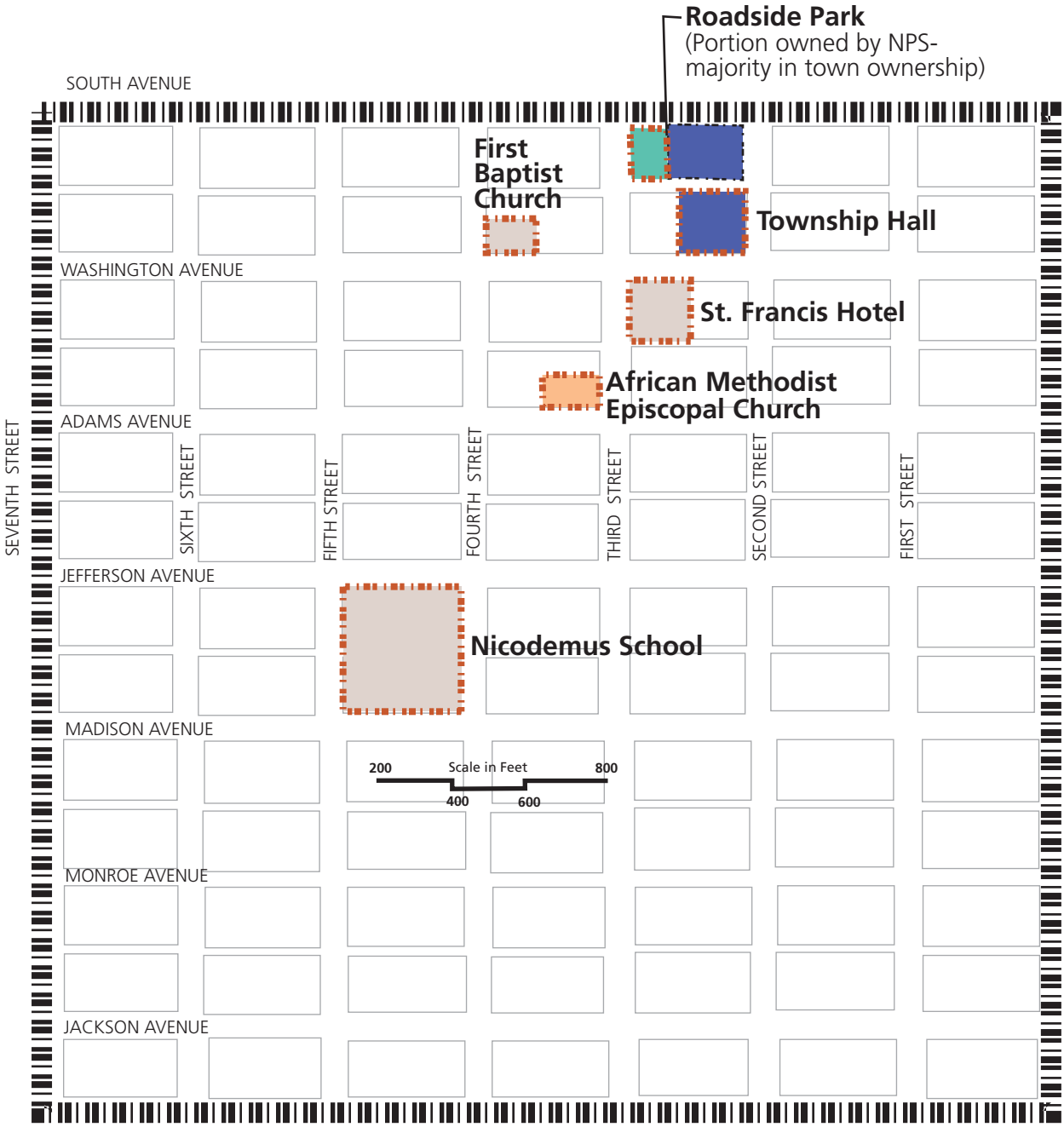
Boundary Adjustment

A minor boundary adjustment (addition) would be required (through congressional action) to provide a location for the visitor contact facility. Boundary adjustments of units within the national park system must meet certain criteria to comply with federal law. Those criteria are outlined in Section 3.5 of the National Park Service's *Management Policies 2001*. A discussion of boundary addition needs and their relationship to Section 3.5 criteria follows.

To be effective, a visitor contact facility must be where visitors would be attracted to it and receive orientation/ interpretation upon or soon after their arrival. Preparing visitors before they venture out into the national historic site would enable them to achieve deeper understanding and appreciation of Nicodemus. The preferred alternative identifies the best location for this purpose as the western third of the Roadside Park because it lies on the most heavily traveled road in the vicinity, U.S. Highway 24. This road is also part of a "heritage corridor" promoted by nearby towns to attract visitors to the region, further enhancing the effectiveness of this location as an initial contact point for travelers.

The Roadside Park is quickly recognizable to travelers as a public facility and has complementary amenities (for example shade, parking, water, and picnic facilities) that would attract visitors to the visitor contact facility area. Historically, a limestone block restroom facility was located in the center of the Roadside Park. Small buildings and facilities typically are associated with roadside rest areas, so the construction of a visitor contact facility would not, in and of itself, detract from the character of the Roadside Park. The new visitor facility would be much larger than the original structure, but would be placed in such a way as to minimize impacts on the cultural landscape. Having this facility near the historic structures would encourage visitors to explore the national historic site on foot either alone or by guided tours. For the reasons stated above, the Roadside Park was selected as the location that would most "enhance public enjoyment related to park purposes" (Section 3.5). Having the visitor facility near to the historic structures also facilitates maintaining the facility, making it "feasible to administer" (Section 3.5).

"Other alternative" properties were also evaluated for meeting the above needs (Section 3.5). Those properties included locations on Highway 24 at the northwest and northeast corners of the national historic landmark district and locations well inside the district. Because these other properties did not offer the



Orientation / Support Area

Story Area

Spiritual Area

Traditional Use Area

National Historic Landmark District

National Historic Site

200 Scale in Feet 800
400 600

NORTH

Note: Orientation / support area for administration functions to be determined

ALTERNATIVE 4
Joint Stewardship
(Preferred Alternative)

NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / KANSAS
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
DSC / MAY, 03 / 030 / 20,005

back of map

advantages of location, those properties were discarded from consideration. It is anticipated that less than 1 acre would be required for developing the visitor contact facility. Because the property is owned by Nicodemus Township, a political subdivision of the state of Kansas, acquisition of the property depends upon willing donation of this property by the Nicodemus Township Board to the National Park Service.

Staffing and Operations

On-site staff would include a superintendent, administrative staff, maintenance staff to care for NPS-managed properties, and NPS rangers-interpreters to operate the visitor contact facility. Technical expertise related to preserving cultural properties, community planning, collections management, and archeology could be provided on or offsite, in cooperation with other nearby NPS areas, by NPS regional and central offices, or by contractors.

Costs

These costs are based on FY 2003 dollars and should be used for comparison of the alternatives, not for budget projections.

TABLE 4. COST ESTIMATES, ALTERNATIVE 4

AREA	DESCRIPTION	COST
Visitor contact facility	Construct new facility with orientation and interpretation	$1,132,000
A.M.E. Church	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$470,000
St. Francis Hotel	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$180,000
Old First Baptist Church	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$260,000
Nicodemus School	Rehabilitation, maintenance	$140,000
TOTAL (one time costs)		$2,182,000
Staffing and operations	Including superintendent, clerical staff, maintenance staff, ranger/ interpreters	$620,000
Administrative office	Adaptive use of historic structure — lease space	$40,000
TOTAL (annual costs)		$660,000
LIFE CYCLE TOTAL (25 years)		**$9,873,365**

NOTE: If necessary, emergency stabilization Township Hall could cost up to an additional $980.000. Land acquisitions costs are not included in this estimate and would be additional to the totals estimated here. Life cycle cost is an estimate of one-time and annual costs over a period of 25 years, expressed in today's dollars.

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF THE ALTERNATIVES

	Alternative 1: No Action	**Alternative 2: Community Stewards**	**Alternative 3: Learning Place**	**Alternative 4: Joint Stewardship (Preferred Alternative)**
Alternative Concept	NPS would continue its current management course to preserve and interpret the resources of Nicodemus National Historic Site.	Nicodemus would remain a living, evolving community. Unless the community chooses otherwise, visitors would see the town function as it has traditionally. At the community's request, the National Park Service would provide technical assistance or training in community planning/ development, interpretation, and cultural resources preservation. Regardless of the eventual level of NPS presence onsite, NPS management would strongly focus on community decision-making and on noninterference in the living community.	Nicodemus would function as a learning center where the public would experience with onsite interpretation and in-depth stories told at a variety of sites. Students would have "classroom" opportunities to learn about Nicodemus and its lessons and stories. The National Park Service would present interpretive programs, workshops, and skill development opportunities in consultation with community residents and organizations.	Nicodemus would retain its character as a living, evolving community, and the public would be invited into the community at several areas where onsite interpretation would be provided and in-depth stories would be told. National Park Service would present interpretive programs, workshops, and skill development opportunities in consultation with community residents and organizations.

	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Community Stewards	Alternative 3: Learning Place	Alternative 4: Joint Stewardship (Preferred Alternative)
Management Areas	None	**Orientation/Support Area** visitor contact facility adjacent to national historic landmark district **Spiritual Area** A.M.E. Church **Traditional Use Area** the remaining four national historic site structures Roadside Park	**Orientation/Support Area** Roadside Park (for visitor contact facility) space within the national historic landmark district for administrative functions **Spiritual Area** A.M.E. Church **Story Area** St. Francis Hotel Nicodemus School Old First Baptist Church Township Hall	**Orientation/Support Area** NPS-owned portion of the Roadside Park leased or acquired space for management/administration **Spiritual Area** A.M.E. Church **Story Area** St. Francis Hotel Nicodemus School Old First Baptist Church **Traditional Use Area** Non-NPS-owned portion of the Roadside Park Township Hall

	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Community Stewards	Alternative 3: Learning Place	Alternative 4: Joint Stewardship (Preferred Alternative)
Orientation and Interpretation	Orientation and basic interpretation would continue at the Township Hall. Private interpretive services would continue at the discretion of the providers.	Orientation and basic interpretation would be at a visitor contact facility near the national historic landmark district. Interpretation in town would be provided at discretion of community members. National Park Service and community would jointly prepare a long-range interpretation plan (LRIP); if community members chose to provide interpretive services, the National Park Service would offer interpretation training.	Orientation would be at the Roadside Park; from there visitors would follow a suggested tour route to the various structures for portions of the Nicodemus story. National Park Service would prepare a LRIP in consultation and coordination with the community. National Park Service would work with the community to develop programs for regional schools.	Orientation would be in a new facility at the Roadside Park. In-depth interpretation would be within and around NPS-managed historic structures. National Park Service would prepare a LRIP in consultation with the community; if community members chose to provide interpretive services, the National Park Service would offer interpretation training and technical assistance. National Park Service would also coordinate interpretation activities with the community.

	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Community Stewards	Alternative 3: Learning Place	Alternative 4: Joint Stewardship (Preferred Alternative)
Resource Preservation and Management	National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. Church. National Park Service would stabilize four non-NPS-owned national historic site properties only if they were in imminent danger of loss. The four non-NPS owned properties would be considered for acquisition by the National Park Service only if they were in imminent danger of being physically lost. The National Park Service would pursue a cooperative agreement with the Township Board to maintain the Roadside Park. National Park Service would continue to curate and maintain collections consistent with agency policy.	National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. Church, which would receive a higher level of treatment than stabilization Other national historic site properties would remain in non-NPS ownership. Roadside Park would be included in the national historic site boundary, but would remain in the ownership of Nicodemus Township. National Park Service would provide technical assistance to the community in stabilizing or rehabilitating historic buildings to ensure the long-term preservation of the historic site properties and the associated cultural landscape.	National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. Church, which would receive a higher level of treatment than stabilization. National Park Service would seek to acquire the four non-NPS-owned national historic site structures (from willing sellers/ donors). National Park Service would seek to acquire the Roadside Park (for visitor contact facility) if Township Board was willing. Most appropriate treatment option for each property would be that which maximizes its educational and interpretive value.	National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. Church, which would receive a higher level of treatment than stabilization. National Park Service would seek to acquire St. Francis Hotel, Old First Baptist Church, and Nicodemus School (from willing sellers/ donors) Township Hall would remain in Township ownership; the National Park Service would see a cooperative agreement for some public access to the Hall. National Park Service would seek donation by the Township Board of a small portion of the Roadside Park (for a visitor contact facility). Traditional uses would remain at the rest of the Roadside Park. Most appropriate treatment option for each property would be that which maximizes its educational and interpretive value.

	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Community Stewards	Alternative 3: Learning Place	Alternative 4: Joint Stewardship (Preferred Alternative)
Resource Preservation and Management (cont.)	Archeological investigations and management actions would be taken consistent with NPS policy if needed.	With the exception of the NPS-managed resources from the A.M.E. Church, objects would remain in non-NPS ownership. If these objects were stored in a local facility, the National Park Service could extend technical curatorial support. If requested, National Park Service would provide technical assistance for the investigation, management, and disposition of archeological resources in the national historic landmark district.	The National Park Service would also provide technical assistance to the community that would help guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district. National Park Service would provide appropriate curatorial storage for objects associated with Nicodemus and its residents. National Park Service would conduct archeological investigations in the national historic site and national historic landmark district.	The National Park Service would also provide technical assistance to the community that would help guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district. National Park Service would provide appropriate curatorial storage for objects associated with Nicodemus and its residents. National Park Service would conduct archeological investigations in the national historic site and national historic landmark district.
Facilities and Development	Circulation at the national historic sites would continue as it is now. National Park Service would continue to operate out of leased or temporary facilities.	Circulation at the national historic site would remain as it is now. A new visitor contact facility would be constructed near the national historic landmark district. NPS support and administrative functions and visitor parking would be accommodated at the new visitor contact facility.	Circulation and parking for residents of Nicodemus would remain as they are now. Dedicated visitor parking would be at orientation sites and some interpretive facilities. Visitor circulation would be directed to provide a cohesive interpretive story. A new visitor contact facility would be constructed at the Roadside Park.	Circulation and parking for residents of Nicodemus would remain as they are now. Dedicated visitor parking would be at orientation sites and some interpretive facilities. Visitor circulation would be directed to provide a cohesive interpretive story. A new visitor contact facility would be constructed at the Roadside Park.

	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Community Stewards	Alternative 3: Learning Place	Alternative 4: Joint Stewardship (Preferred Alternative)
Facilities and Development (cont.)			National Park Service would adaptively use historic structures or lease properties within the landmark district to accommodate administrative and support functions.	National Park Service would adaptively use historic structures or lease properties within the landmark district or construct new facilities to accommodate administrative and support functions.
Boundary Adjustment		Minor boundary adjustment would be required to include the Roadside Park in the national historic site boundary.	Minor boundary adjustment would be required to include the Roadside Park in the national historic site boundary.	Minor boundary adjustment would be required to include a portion of the Roadside Park in the national historic site boundary.
Staffing and Operations	Onsite staff would continue to consist of a superintendent, NPS rangers, and maintenance staff and an offsite administrative technician. Administrative support would continue to be provided by staff at Fort Larned.	Onsite staff would consist of superintendent, maintenance staff, and rangers-interpreters. Administrative staff, and technical expertise related to preservation of cultural properties, community planning, collections management, and archeology could be on or offsite.	Onsite staff would consist of superintendent, administrative staff, maintenance staff, education specialist, and rangers-interpreters. Administrative staff, technical expertise related to preservation of cultural properties, community planning, collections management, and archeology could be on or offsite.	Onsite staff would consist of superintendent, administrative staff, maintenance staff, and rangers/ interpreters. Administrative staff, technical expertise related to preservation of cultural properties, community planning, collections management, and archeology could be on or offsite.

MITIGATION

The following measures have been incorporated into the plan to avoid or reduce impacts on national historic site resources, visitors, and the community:

The preservation of historic structures/ buildings and cultural landscapes would be conducted in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*.

All ground-disturbing activities would be preceded by site-specific archeological surveys, and, where appropriate, subsurface testing to determine the existence of archeological resources. If archeological resources were discovered, the resources would be identified, evaluated, and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed — if necessary in consultation with the Kansas state historic preservation office. In the unlikely event that human remains of any origin were discovered during construction, they and any associated objects would be treated respectfully in accordance with the beliefs of their cultural affiliation and according to applicable laws. If remains were of American Indian origin, provisions of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act would be implemented.

The preservation of historic structures or construction of new facilities would involve some localized disturbance of soils and vegetation, although most work would occur within previously disturbed areas. Construction impacts would be mitigated by appropriate erosion control, site restoration techniques, and dust and emission controls.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying the criteria suggested in NEPA and guided by the Council on Environmental Quality. In the National Park Service, this requirement is met by (1) disclosing how each alternative meets the criteria set forth in section 101(b), which are listed in table 2 below, and by (2) presenting any inconsistencies between the alternatives analyzed and other environmental laws and policies (Director's Order 12, 2.7.E). According to section 101, this alternative would cause the least damage to the biological and physical environment, and best protect, preserve and enhance historic, cultural and natural resources. Although all alternatives in this plan rated well, the preferred alternative (Joint Stewardship) best met the criteria of section 101(b), and is the environmentally preferred alternative.

In the process used to select the environmentally preferred alternative, alternatives 3 and 4 were found to have the best overall potential for protecting and preserving the historic, cultural, and natural resources of Nicodemus National Historic Site. The preferred alternative rated high in all categories except two (achieving a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of

TABLE 6. ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS

Criteria	Alternatives			
	1	2	3	4*
Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.	1	1	2	2
Ensure safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings for all Americans.	1	1	2	2
Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.	1	1	1	2
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.	1	2	2	2
Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities.	1	2	1	1
Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.	1	1	2	1
Total Points	6	8	10	10

1 = This is given to the alternative that somewhat meets the criteria.
2 = This is given to the alternative that fully meets the intent of the criteria.

Note: There were no "low" ratings because elements that were not environmentally sound were eliminated from consideration.

life's amenities; enhancing the quality of renewable resources and approaching the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources).

In the criterion designed to measure the balance between population and resource use that would permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities, alternative 2 rated higher than the other alternatives. Under alternative 2, the greatest number of the historic structures in the national historic site would remain in private ownership and control, thus leaving opportunities for the individual owners to develop compatible private business ventures.

Alternative 3 scored better than alternative 4 on the last criterion for the reason that each of the properties in alternative 3 would be rehabilitated to accommodate visitor services, interpretation and education activities, thus "recycling" old structures for present-day uses and reducing the size of the visitor center. In addition, other historic structures within the national historic landmark district. would be leased for administrative and support services in alternative 3.

Though the total scores for both alternative 3 and 4 are equal, the criteria where alternative 4 outscored alternative 3 pertains more directly to the mission of the National Park Service, and so has a

higher value than the criteria that alternative 3 scored higher than alternative 4. With regards to the criterion that stipulates "attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation" alternative 4 provides a high level of resource preservation for the historic structures within the national historic site. Also, in following one of the guiding principles of this planning process, "to foster an atmosphere in which community events and the characteristics of self-determination can continue," the proposal to keep the Township Hall in the control of the citizenry retains the evidence of self-governance that sustained the town for 130 years and provides a focus for local government activities. Therefore, the preferred alternative was chosen as the environmentally preferred alternative for this criterion as well.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER EVALUATION

The planning team discussed expanding the national historic site's boundary to include the entire national historic landmark district. Such an action did not appear feasible because of the lack of public and political support and because of concerns about potential federal ownership of lands. Although future circumstances might bring merit to reconsidering this approach, it is not feasible or desirable at this point.

The planning team considered the development of a full-service visitor center/museum/ administrative center/curatorial facility. This alternative did not appear feasible because of the high costs of constructing and operating such a facility.

The planning team considered an alternative that would have emphasized total self-determination of the residents of Nicodemus to direct the development and operation of the national historic site. The National Park Service would have facilitated the decision-making process, but it would not have taken an active role. It would have responded to the direction of the community. The team discarded this approach as unresponsive to the mandate of the national historic site's enabling legislation. Elements of this concept have become part of Alternative 2, Community Stewardship.

The planning team also considered an alternative that would have emphasized the use of Nicodemus as a "living classroom" where students would have learned about the history, significance, and meaning of Nicodemus while studying and applying research, documentation, and historic preservation techniques. This alternative would have envisioned an ongoing series of seminars, workshops, and on-the-job training in history, archeology, historic preservation, and curatorial practices. A formal education center would have served as an anchor for this proposal. Because of the distance from food and lodging facilities, the center would have included a dormitory and cafeteria. This alternative did not appear feasible because of the high costs of constructing and operating the center, as well as the lack of an audience for the programs. Elements of this concept have become part of Alternative 3, The Learning Place.

TABLE 7. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

Impact Topic	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Community Stewards	Alternative 3: The Learning Place	Alternative 4: Joint Stewardship (Preferred Alternative)
Cultural Resources	Under the no-action alternative there would be a minor long-term beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. Church and a long-term, moderate, adverse impact on the four remaining non-NPS owned historic structures. Impacts on the cultural landscape, ethnographic resources, archeological resources, and museum collections would be negligible.	Alternative 2 would have a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. church and a minor, long-term, beneficial impact on the four remaining non-NPS owned historic structures. Impacts on the cultural landscape and museum collections would be minor, long-term, and beneficial. Impacts on archeological resources would be negligible. The increased likelihood of visitors intruding at times on community activities associated with the historic properties could result in a minor, long-term, adverse effect to the community's use of these ethnographic resources.	Alternative 3 would have a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. church and the other four historic structures (St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, Township Hall, and Old First Baptist Church) that would be acquired by the National Park Service. Impacts on the cultural landscape would be minor, long-term, and beneficial due to NPS technical assistance to guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district. There would be a minor, long-term, adverse impact on the cultural landscape due to the addition of a new NPS orientation structure within the national historic landmark district.	Alternative 4 would have a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. church and the St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and Old First Baptist Church that would be acquired by the National Park Service. There would be a minor, long-term, beneficial impact on the Township Hall, which would remain in town ownership. Impacts on the cultural landscape would be minor, long-term, and beneficial due to NPS technical assistance to guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district and minor, long-term, and adverse due to the addition of new NPS structures within the national historic landmark district.

Impact Topic	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Community Stewards	Alternative 3: The Learning Place	Alternative 4: Joint Stewardship (Preferred Alternative)
Cultural Resources (cont.)			Changes in use of the four historic properties acquired by the National Park Service as well as the increased likelihood of visitors intruding at times on community activities associated with the historic properties would result in a minor long-term, adverse effect on the community's use of these ethnographic resources. Impacts on archeological resources would be negligible. Impacts on museum collections would be moderate, long-term, and beneficial.	Changes in use of the St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and Old First Baptist Church as well as the increased likelyhood of visitors intruding at times on community activities associated with the historic properties would result in a minor long-term adverse effect on the community's use of these ethnographic resources. Impacts on archeological resources would be negligible. Impacts on museum collections would be moderate, long-term, and beneficial.
Visitor Experience	There would be no noticeable change in visitor use or experience associated with Nicodemus.	Alternative 2 would have a minor beneficial effect on the visitor experience.	Alternative 3 would have moderate long-term beneficial effect on the visitor experience.	Alternative 4 would have moderate long-term beneficial effect on the visitor experience.
Socioeconomic Environment	Visitor intrusions on the community would continue to be long term and negligible. There would be no change in land use or economic opportunities for the community.	Alternative 2 would result in minor, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy. Adverse impacts on the community from NPS activities and visitors would be long term and minor. There would be no change in land use.	Alternative 3 would result in minor to moderate, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy. Impacts on the community's social environment from NPS activities, visitors, students, and land use changes would be long term, adverse, and moderate.	Alternative 4 would result in minor to moderate, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy. Impacts on the community's social environment from NPS activities, visitors, and land use changes would be long term, adverse, and minor

CULUTRAL RESOURCES

Historic Structures

In 1983, the NPS Historic American Buildings Survey produced site plans for Nicodemus Township, the town site, and a few specific properties based upon land transfer records, oral interviews, and aerial photographs from 1938, 1947, and 1953.

Historic property inspection reports have been completed on all historic structures that contributed to the national historic landmark district designation. The condition of these five structures was reevaluated in the 2002 "Historic Structures Report" (Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects, Ltd.). Five of these structures remain: the Old First Baptist Church, St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Nicodemus Township Hall. The Old First Baptist Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church are not in use. The St. Francis Hotel and Nicodemus School are seldom used. The Township Hall is used for community meetings and other functions, especially the Emancipation/Homecoming celebrations, and as the NPS visitor contact facility. Other historic structures that were included in the original national historic landmark district have since deteriorated or collapsed and the remains have been removed.

Structure	Built/ Condition	Notes
St. Francis Hotel	1880 / Fair	
A.M.E. Church	1885 / Poor	Owned by National Park Service
Old First Baptist Church	1907 / Fair	
Township Hall	1939 / Good	
Nicodemus School	1918 / Fair	Recently stabilized by National Park Service

Cultural Landscapes

The initial phase of a cultural resource inventory of Nicodemus National Historic Site was conducted in July 1997. The inventory focused on current landscape features since there is little documentation of historic characteristics. A cultural landscape report was completed in 2003 (Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects, Ltd, and OCULUS). More in-depth research on historic features of the landscape is needed to conduct the second phase of the inventory. Oral history interviews and review of historic photographs and maps would be necessary to elicit this information.

Exposed openness is probably the most character-defining feature of the town of Nicodemus. The town was originally surrounded by prairies, which were converted to agricultural fields over time. The grid pattern of platted town lots, typical of Western towns, shaped the settlement landscape. The commercial district was historically located along two blocks of Washington Avenue. Although residences were scattered throughout the

Figure 8. Few structures obstruct the Kansas countryside.

town site, most residential, commercial and civic structures were concentrated in a six-block area. The remaining homes were interspersed with farmland gradually blending in with agricultural homesteads in the surrounding township. Today the town of Nicodemus is more visually isolated and solidly surrounded with farmland, with only occasional standing structures and ruins scattered across the township.

Places in the larger community (the original town site, Spring Creek and the South Fork of the Solomon River, the former Welton/Scrugg's Grove and baseball diamond, the former communities of Fairview and Mount Olive, the Nicodemus and Mount Olive Cemeteries, and the locations of former dugouts and sod dwellings) and the overall agricultural character and use of the township are historically significant and in most cases continue to be important symbols and landmarks in the eyes of the Nicodemus community.

Formerly a Kansas Department of Transportation rest area, the general appearance and layout of the Roadside Park is typical of many found in Kansas. It provides a tree-shaded area with two picnic shelters and three tables. The oldest living residents recollect planting the elm shade trees during their childhood. Other amenities include two barbecue pits, a freshwater spigot, two trashcans, a firewood box, and two security lights. The Kansas Department of Transportation removed the restrooms several years ago. The Roadside Park is on the south side of U.S. Highway 24, on the north boundary of the national historic landmark district. The park is about 150 feet north to south by 300 feet east to west. The associated parking area is between the Roadside Park and U.S Highway 24. A Kansas State Historical Society sign provides a brief history of Nicodemus.

A travelers information station radio transmitter (1610 AM) gives a history and invites listeners to visit Nicodemus and the national historic site visitor center.

The Kansas Department of Transportation returned the area to Nicodemus Township ownership several years ago.

Ethnographic Resources

Nicodemus National Historic Landmark District as a whole constitutes an ethnographic resource due to its significance as one of the oldest, continuously occupied African American town in the West. In all, five separate groups of African Americans left the persecution and poverty of the Upper South and Mississippi in the years immediately following Reconstruction to seek a better life in Nicodemus. Although in its peak population years, African American settlers lived both on town lots and dispersed rural homesteads throughout the township, they comprised a definable community of people centered by the town itself. The town of Nicodemus (as demonstrated by the structures designated for the national historic site) represents the five pillars of African American communities: home, church, school, business, and organizations that grew out of a tradition of mutual assistance.

Today, strong kinship ties to Nicodemus are valued, not only by people living in the town and the outlying township and other parts of Graham County, but by many descendants and former residents who now live in other areas of the United States. The annual Emancipation/ Homecoming Celebration demonstrates an association with place, and the return of descendants of Nicodemus' founding families is what makes Nicodemus so unique. These celebrations, held annually since 1878, reflect the intense commitment to sustain the town's cultural heritage.

Documentation of the ethnographic resources of Nicodemus was initiated in 1983 through a collaborative effort of the National Park Service, Kansas State Historical Society, Kansas State University, and Entourage, Inc. (NPS 1986). This project included oral history interviews with local residents familiar with the history of the town site. Two other oral history projects have increased knowledge of traditional values and activities at Nicodemus. In 1999 Dr. Jennifer Michael of the National Council for the Traditional Arts ("Everyday Life in Nicodemus") conducted a series of oral history interviews. Twenty-nine oral histories that informed the 2003 "Cultural Landscape Report" were collected.

Archeological Sites

Although only small-scale archeological investigations have been conducted in the national historic site boundaries (NPS 1996, NPS 2000), many potential archeological sites have been documented (NPS 1986). These potential sites include many buildings, particularly in the commercial blocks of Nicodemus, that have been removed or torn down, and the sites of dugouts (the first homes of the original settlers) located in the township. Most properties probably had pit toilets and possibly trash middens, which could also provide valuable information on the social history of Nicodemus through most of its 126-year history.

National Historic Site Collections

The main national historic site collection consists of 139 objects from the A.M.E. Church. These objects include hymnals, church records, and furniture (including a pulpit). There are 54 items on record as "archives" at the NPS Midwest Archeological Center; these are records of NPS archeological investigations conducted before an A.M.E Church stabilization project. A "Scope of Collections" (see Recommended Studies Needed" section) has been funded for completion in fiscal year 2004 and will establish the guidelines for the types of objects that are relevant for acquisition into the national historic site's museum collection.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

About 32,000 visits to Nicodemus National Historic Site were recorded in 2002. Most of these visits included stops at the Roadside Park facilities and some tours of the town site. Fewer visits (about 4,200) were made to the visitor contact facility at Township Hall.

Informational signs on U.S. Highway 24 advise visitors to tune to a local radio station for a story about Nicodemus. The broadcast, narrated by actor Danny Glover, also invites travelers to visit Nicodemus and the Nicodemus National Historic Site visitor contact facility. Because Nicodemus is a town, visitors can see all of the primary historic buildings at any time. Although the small size of the town is generally conducive to visiting on foot, sometimes temperature extremes tend to encourage visitors to tour in their vehicles.

The visitor contact facility is in the Township Hall. NPS rangers staff the visitor contact facility daily during the summer months and less frequently throughout the remainder of the year, depending on staff availability. Here visitors receive a brief orientation to the site, general information, and personal interpretive services from NPS staff. Additional services available at the facility include a site brochure, exhibits, video programs, and a cooperating association sales outlet. An interim site brochure and walking tour pamphlet/map provide visitors more information and interpretation. Rangers, when available, also provide guided tours through Nicodemus. The national historic site sponsors special speakers for the Emancipation/ Homecoming celebrations.

There is an informational wayside exhibit at each historic structure. Restrooms are available in the Township Hall, with two wheelchair accessible outdoor toilets nearby the hall. Other amenities, such as water and picnic tables, are provided at the Roadside Park on Highway 24 and also in front of Township Hall. The community of Nicodemus provides no service stations, stores, or motels, but it does have a small restaurant. Nearby towns providing some or all of these services are Bogue (5 miles west), Hill City (12 miles west), and Stockton (20 miles east). A local heritage tourism service provides a barbecue and history tour by horse-drawn wagon (reservations required).

Figure 9. The Nicodemus Township Hall and NPS visitor contact facility.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Population and Economy

The northwestern region of Kansas has the lowest population density in the state. Graham County had a population density of 3.3 persons per square mile in 2000. Although agriculture has historically been a major factor in the economy, its role is declining. Future projections for the regional economy indicate that the strongest growth would occur in service-producing industries (education, health care, government).

Graham County was organized in 1880. By 1910 the population of the county hit a high of 8,700. Since 1910 the county has declined in most census years, reaching a low of 2,946 in the 2000 census. The estimated population in 2002 was 2,847 (US Bureau of the Census). About half of the county's residents live in Hill City, the county seat. The remaining residents are scattered on farms and small outlying communities. About one-fifth of the work force is employed in farming. Per capita income for Graham County was $18,050 in 2000.

Nicodemus has retained its historic agricultural character and setting. However, like in other small, unincorporated Kansas towns, the declining regional agricultural economy has caused a significant drop in both population and the local economy. The current population of Nicodemus Township is about 60. The town of Nicodemus, which had a reported population of 73 in 1910, has about 20 residents today, many of whom are over the age of 60. There are no commercial establishments in Nicodemus, other than the non-profit Western National Parks Association bookstore in the NPS visitor contact facility. A privately operated business provides horse-drawn wagon tours of Nicodemus. In 2001 residents of the Nicodemus Township began a flour-

milling cooperative using locally grown wheat. The co-op produces flour branded as "Promised Land Flour" and pancake mix branded as "Nicodemus Pancakes." The co-op promotes the preservation of Nicodemus on their products and literature. Although their mill was originally in Nicodemus, it is currently in larger facilities in Bogue.

Landownership and Use

Current landownership within the national historic site is a combination of private and public. Among the historic structures listed above, only the Township Hall and the A.M.E. Church are publicly owned. The others are held privately: the Old First Baptist Church is owned by the congregation, the Nicodemus School is owned by the American Legion, and the former St. Francis Hotel is privately owned.

Access and Orientation

On U.S. Highway 24, Nicodemus is 12 miles east of Hill City, Kansas, and 39 miles north of Interstate 70. A two-lane highway, U.S. 24 is lightly traveled east of Nicodemus averaging less than 875 vehicles per day. Traffic doubles on U.S. 24 west of Nicodemus leading into Hill City, a local hub for school and business activity and the junction of north-south highway U.S. 283. The Solomon Valley Heritage Alliance, Inc. was recently formed to promote heritage tourism and economic development along U.S. 24. Commercial air service is available in Hays, Kansas, 60 miles south of Nicodemus.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

INTRODUCTION

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that environmental documents discuss the environmental impacts of a proposed federal action, feasible alternatives to that action, and any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided if a proposed action is implemented. The National Park Service has prepared this *General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment* in accordance with this act and its implementing guidelines. Following public review of the plan, the National Park Service will issue either a finding of no significant impact and acceptance of one of the alternatives as the approved plan to implement or a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement. Additional compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act may be required during the design and implementation phases of the approved plan.

This section analyzes the environmental impacts of implementing the four alternatives on cultural resources, visitor use, and the socioeconomic environment. This analysis provides the basis for comparing the effects of the alternatives. The impact analysis and conclusions were based largely on the review of existing literature and studies, information provided by NPS experts, and professional judgment.

Due to the conceptual nature of the alternatives, their potential consequences can be addressed only in qualitative terms. Before undertaking specific actions proposed in this management plan, the National Park Service would determine whether additional compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act is required or not and whether more detailed environmental documents would need to be prepared.

METHODOLOGY

Impacts can be direct, indirect, or cumulative. Direct impacts result from specific actions, such as demolition of historic structures. Indirect impacts occur after project completion and are a result of changes in visitor-use patterns or management of resources fostered by implementation of an action. Cumulative effects are the impacts on the environment that result from the incremental impact of the proposed action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other action. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time.

Potential impacts are described in terms of type, either beneficial or adverse effects. Potential impacts are also described in terms of context (site-specific, local, or regional effects), duration (short-term, lasting less than one year or long-term, lasting more than one year), and intensity (negligible, minor, moderate, or major). Because definitions of intensity vary by impact topic, intensities are defined separately for each impact topic analyzed in this document.

Cultural Resources Intensity Definitions

In this environmental assessment, impacts on cultural resources (historic structures, cultural landscapes, ethnographic resources, and museum collections) are described in terms of type, context, duration, and intensity, which is consistent with the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) that implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These impact analyses are intended to comply with the requirements of both the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR Part 800, *Protection of Historic Properties*), impacts on historic structures, cultural landscapes, ethnographic resources, archeological resources, and museum collections were identified and evaluated by (1) determining the area of potential effects; (2) identifying cultural resources present in the area of potential effects that are either listed in or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places; (3) applying the criteria of adverse effect to affected cultural resources either listed in or eligible to be listed in the national register; and (4) considering ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects.

Under the Advisory Council's regulations a determination of either *adverse effect* or *no adverse effect* must also be made for affected, national-register-eligible cultural resources. An *adverse effect* occurs whenever an impact alters, directly or indirectly, any characteristic of a cultural resource that qualify it for inclusion on the national register, e.g., diminishing the integrity of the resource's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. Adverse effects also include reasonably foreseeable effects caused by the actions proposed in the alternatives that would occur later in time, be farther in distance, or be cumulative (36 CFR Part 800.5, *Assessment of Adverse Effects*). A determination of *no adverse effect* means there is an effect but the effect would not diminish in any way the characteristics of the cultural resource that qualify it for inclusion on the national register.

CEQ regulations and the NPS *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-making* (Director's Order #12) also call for a discussion of the appropriateness of mitigation, as well as an analysis of how effective the mitigation would be in reducing the intensity of a potential impact, e.g., reducing the intensity of an impact from major to moderate or minor. Any resultant reduction in intensity of impact due to mitigation, however, is an estimate of the effectiveness of mitigation under the National Environmental Policy Act only. It does not suggest that the level of effect as defined by Section106 is similarly reduced. **Cultural resources are nonrenewable resources and adverse effects generally consume, diminish, or destroy the original historic materials or form, resulting in a loss in the integrity of the resource that can never be recovered. Therefore, although actions determined to have an adverse effect under Section 106 may be mitigated, the effect remains adverse.**

A "Section 106 Summary" paragraph is included in the impact analysis sections for cultural resources under the alternatives. The Section106 summary provides a preliminary determination of effect based on currently available information. The state historic preservation office will be invited to participate in the development of future implementation plans, and a formal determination of effect will be sought at that time.

Historic Structures

Negligible: Impact(s) is at the lowest levels of detection — barely perceptible and not measurable.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Minor:
Adverse impact — impact would not adversely affect the character-defining features of a National Register of Historic Places eligible or listed structure or building.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.
Beneficial impact — stabilization/ preservation of character-defining features is in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Moderate:
Adverse impact — impact would alter a character-defining feature(s) of the structure or building but would not diminish the integrity of the resource to the extent that its national register eligibility is jeopardized.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *an adverse effect*.
Beneficial impact — rehabilitation of a structure or building is in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Major:
Adverse impact — impact would alter a character-defining feature(s) of the structure or building, diminishing the integrity of the resource to the extent that it is no longer eligible to be listed in the national register.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *adverse effect*.
Beneficial impact — restoration of a structure or building is in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Cultural Landscapes

Negligible: Impact(s) is at the lowest levels of detection — barely perceptible and not measurable.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Minor:
Adverse impact — impact(s) would not adversely affect the character-defining patterns and features of a National Register of Historic Places-eligible or listed cultural landscape.

For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Beneficial impact — preservation of character-defining patterns and features is in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*.

For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Moderate:

Adverse impact — impact(s) would alter a character-defining pattern(s) or feature(s) of the cultural landscape but would not diminish the integrity of the landscape to the extent that its national register eligibility is jeopardized.

For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *an adverse effect*.

Beneficial impact — rehabilitation of a landscape or its patterns and features is in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*.

For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Major:

Adverse impact — impact(s) would alter a character-defining pattern(s) or feature(s) of the cultural landscape, diminishing the integrity of the landscape to the extent that it is no longer eligible to be listed in the national register.

For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *adverse effect*.

Beneficial impact — restoration of a landscape or its patterns and features is in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*.

For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Ethnographic Resources

Negligible: Impact(s) would be barely perceptible and would neither alter resource conditions, such as traditional access or site preservation, nor the relationship between the resource and the affiliated group's body of practices and beliefs.

For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect on traditional cultural properties traditional cultural properties would be *no adverse effect*.

Minor:

Adverse impact — impact(s) would be slight but noticeable but would neither appreciably alter resource conditions, such as traditional access or site preservation, nor the relationship between the resource and the affiliated group's body of practices and beliefs.

For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect on traditional cultural properties would be *no adverse effect*.

Beneficial impact — would allow access to and/or accommodate a group's traditional practices or beliefs.

For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect on traditional cultural properties would be *no adverse effect*.

Moderate:

Adverse impact — impact(s) would be apparent and would alter resource conditions. Something would interfere

with traditional access, site preservaion, or the relationship between the resource and the affiliated group's practices and beliefs, even though the group's practices and beliefs would survive.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect on traditional cultural properties would be an *adverse effect*.
Beneficial impact — would facilitate traditional access and/or accommodate a group's practices or beliefs.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect on traditional cultural properties would be *no adverse effect*.

Major:
Adverse impact — impact(s) would alter resource conditions. Something would block or greatly affect traditional access, site preservation, or the relationship between the resource and the affiliated group's body of practices and beliefs, to the extent that the survival of a group's practices and/or beliefs would be jeopardized.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect on traditional cultural properties would be *adverse effect*.
Beneficial impact — would encourage traditional access and/or accommodate a group's practices or beliefs.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect on traditional cultural properties would be *no adverse effect*.

Archeological Resources

Negligible: Impact is at the lowest levels of detection — barely measurable with no perceptible consequences, either adverse or beneficial, to archeological resources.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Minor:
Adverse impact — Disturbance of a site(s) results in little, if any, loss of significance or integrity and the national register eligibility of the site(s) is unaffected.
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.
Beneficial impact — Maintenance and preservation of a site(s).
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Moderate:
Adverse impact — Disturbance of a site(s) does not diminish the significance or integrity of the site(s) to the extent that its National Register eligibility is jeopardized. For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *adverse effect*.
Beneficial impact — Stabilization of a site(s).
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

Major:
Adverse impact — Disturbance of a site(s) diminishes the significance and integrity of the site(s) to the extent that it is no longer eligible for listing in the National Register. For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *adverse effect*.
Beneficial impact — Active intervention to preserve a site(s).
For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would *no adverse effect*.

Museum Collections

Negligible: Impact is at the lowest levels of detection — barely measurable with no perceptible consequences, either adverse or beneficial, to museum collections.

Minor:

Adverse impact — would affect the integrity of few items in the museum collection but would not degrade the usefulness of the collection for future research and interpretation.

Beneficial impact — would stabilize the current condition of the collection or its constituent components to minimize degradation.

Moderate:

Adverse impact — would affect the integrity of many items in the museum collection and diminish the usefulness of the collection for future research and interpretation.

Beneficial impact — would improve the condition of the collection or its constituent parts from the threat of degradation.

Major:

Adverse impact — would affect the integrity of most items in the museum collection and destroy the usefulness of the collection for future research and interpretation.

Beneficial impact — would secure the condition of the collection as a whole or its constituent components from the threat of further degradation.

Visitor Experience Intensity Definitions

Negligible: Visitors would not be affected or there would be no noticeable change in visitor experience or safety.

Minor: Changes in visitor experience or safety would be detectable, although the changes would be slight. The changes would affect a relatively small number of visitors, a localized area, or have barely perceptible consequences to most visitors.

Moderate: Changes in visitor experience or safety would be readily apparent and would affect a relatively large number of visitors.

Major: Changes in visitor experience or safety would be severely adverse or exceptionally beneficial, highly noticeable, and would affect relatively large numbers of visitors.

Socioeconomic Environment Intensity Definitions

Negligible: the impact would be barely detectable and would have no discernable effect on the community of Nicodemus.

Minor: the impact would be slightly detectable but would not have an appreciable effect on the local economy or population, or local land use within the community of Nicodemus.

Moderate: the impact would be clearly detectable and could have an appreciable effect on the local economy and population, and it could affect local land use within the community of Nicodemus.

Major: the impact would have a substantial, highly noticeable influence on the local economy and population and would result in extensive local land use changes within the community of Nicodemus.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are defined as "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such actions" (40 CFR 1508.7). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. Cumulative impacts analyzed in this document consider the incremental effects of the alternatives in conjunction with the anticipated continuing net loss of population within the community of Nicodemus and surrounding Graham County.

IMPAIRMENT OF NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE RESOURCES OR VALUES

In addition to determining the environmental consequences of the preferred and other alternatives, NPS *Management Policie*s (NPS 2001) and Director's Order-12, *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making*, require that potential effects be analyzed to determine whether or not proposed actions would impair the resources or values of the national historic site.

The fundamental purpose of the national park system, established by the Organic Act and reaffirmed by the General Authorities Act, as amended, begins with a mandate to conserve park unit resources and values. NPS managers must always seek ways to avoid or minimize to the greatest degree practicable adverse impacts on park unit resources and values. However, the laws do give the National Park Service management discretion to allow impacts to park unit resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a park unit as long as the impact does not constitute impairment of the affected resources and values unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise. The prohibited impairment is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS manager, would harm the integrity of the park unit's resources or values, including opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values. An impact to any park unit resource or value may constitute an impairment. However, an impact would more likely constitute an impairment to the extent it affects a resource or value whose conservation is

- necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park
- key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park; or
- identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents

A determination of impairment is made within each "Conclusion" section for impacts on historic structures and districts, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes.

IMPACTS ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

Alternative 1: No Action

Analysis. The National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. Church. The National Park Service would also preserve the structure to maintain the building's integrity and character. This would be a minor long-term beneficial impact.

The four remaining historic structures (St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, Township Hall, and Old First Baptist Church) would continue to be non-NPS owned, and the National Park Service would stabilize these properties only if they were in imminent danger of being physically lost. Although loss of the structures would be prevented, without the availability of funding and technical assistance from the National Park Service, it would be unlikely that owners of the four historic properties could keep up with the maintenance and preservation needs of these aging structures. Some loss of integrity of these historic properties could occur over time, which would be a long-term, moderate, adverse impact.

The historic structures and their environs are features or components of Nicodemus' cultural landscape. The historic structures would be stabilized if necessary to prevent their loss. Impacts on the cultural landscape would therefore be negligible.

This alternative would not alter the community's use of the five national historic site properties. Therefore, there would be a negligible impact on ethnographic resources.

NPS artifacts, which include objects from the A.M.E. Church, and their associated records have been documented, stabilized, and stored. The National Park Service would continue to curate and maintain collections under its management in accordance with agency policy. Consequently, impacts on museum objects would be negligible.

Archeological sites would be surveyed, inventoried, and evaluated under National Register of Historic Places criteria of evaluation to determine their eligibility for listing in the national register as staff and funding permit. All ground-disturbing activities such as structure stabilization would be preceded by site-specific archeological surveys and, where appropriate, subsurface testing to determine the existence of archeological resources. If archeological resources were discovered, the resources would be identified, evaluated, and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed — if necessary in consultation with the Kansas state historic preservation office.

In the unlikely event that human remains of any origin were discovered during construction, they and any associated objects would be treated respectfully in accordance with the beliefs of their cultural affiliation and according to applicable laws. If remains were of American Indian origin, provisions of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act would be implemented. With implementation of archeological investigations before ground-disturbing activities to ensure that archeological resources were understood and that they would not be damaged or lost, potential impacts on archeological resources would be negligible.

Cumulative Impacts. Because the continued net loss of population within the town and county would not contribute to the impacts associated with the no-action alternative, there would be no cumulative impacts under this alternative.

Conclusion. Under the no-action alternative, there would be a minor long-term beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. Church and a long-term, moderate, adverse impact on the four remaining non-NPS owned historic structures.

Impacts on the cultural landscape, ethnographic resources, archeological resources, and museum collections would be negligible. There would be no cumulative impacts. There would be no impairment to national historic site resources necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the site's enabling legislation or key to the cultural integrity of the site.

Section 106 Summary. In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations (36 CFR 800) implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Park Service finds that the no-action alternative could have an adverse effect on the St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, Township Hall, and Old First Baptist Church due to the potential diminishment of their integrity over time. The determination of effect for other historic properties is anticipated to be no adverse effect.

The preservation of historic structures/ buildings and cultural landscapes would be consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*, NPS *Management Policies 2001*, and Director's Order-28 (*Cultural Resource Management Guideline*). More detailed treatment plans would be developed in consultation with the Kansas state historic preservation officer.

Alternative 2: Community Stewards

Analysis. The National Park Service would continue to own and adaptively reuse the A.M.E. Church. A higher level of treatment than stabilization would be anticipated under this alternative for the A.M.E. Church. Compared to the no-action alternative this would result in a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the church. The four remaining historic structures (St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, Township Hall, and Old First Baptist Church) would continue to be non-NPS owned and the National Park Service would stabilize these properties only if they were in imminent danger of being physically lost. However, the National Park Service would also provide technical assistance to the community to help ensure the properties' long-term preservation. Loss of the integrity of these historic properties over time would be less likely to occur due to this increased support, which would be a long-term, minor, beneficial impact.

The National Park Service would, if necessary to prevent their physical loss, stabilize the four non-NPS owned historic site properties that contribute to the cultural landscape. (As stated above, the A.M.E. church would receive a higher level of treatment than stabilization). In addition, the National Park Service would provide the community with technical assistance to guide long-term preservation

of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district. These actions would enhance protection of the cultural landscape, a long-term, minor, beneficial effect. Although a new visitor contact facility would be constructed under this alternative, it would be outside the national historic landmark district and would have a negligible impact on the cultural landscape of the landmark district.

This alternative would not alter the community's use of the five national historic site properties. However, visitation would be likely to increase somewhat under this alternative and there would be an increased likelihood that visitors could at times interfere with or impose on community activities associated with the properties. This could be a minor, long-term, adverse effect on the community's use of these ethnographic resources.

As with the other alternatives, NPS artifacts, which include objects from the A.M.E. Church, and their associated records have been documented, stabilized, and stored. The National Park Service would continue to curate and maintain collections under its management in accordance with agency policy. In addition, the National Park Service would provide technical curatorial assistance for the stabilization and preservation of private collections related to the five national historic site properties and would recommend upgrades to a local facility should it be necessary to remove and store such collections. Impacts on museum collections would be minor, beneficial, and long term due to the improved curatorial capabilities and facility within the community.

As under the other alternatives, archeological sites would be surveyed, inventoried, and evaluated under National Register of Historic Places criteria of evaluation to determine their eligibility for listing in the national register as staff and funding permit. All ground-disturbing activities such as structure stabilization or rehabilitation would be preceded by site-specific archeological surveys and, where appropriate, subsurface testing to determine the existence of archeological resources. If archeological resources were discovered, the resources would be identified, evaluated, and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed – if necessary in consultation with the Kansas state historic preservation office.

In the unlikely event that human remains of any origin were discovered during construction, they and any associated objects would be treated respectfully in accordance with the beliefs of their cultural affiliation and according to applicable laws. If remains were of American Indian origin, provisions of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act would be implemented. With implementation of archeological investigations before ground-disturbing activities to ensure that archeological resources were understood and that they would not be damaged or lost, potential impacts on archeological resources would be negligible.

Cumulative Impacts. Because the continued net loss of population within the town and county would not contribute to the impacts associated with alternative 2, there would be no cumulative impacts under this alternative.

Conclusion. Alternative 2 would have a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. Church and a minor, long-term, beneficial impact on the four remaining non-NPS owned historic structures.

Impacts on the cultural landscape and museum collections would be minor, long term, and beneficial. Impacts on archeological resources would be negligible. The increased likelihood of visitors intruding at times on community activities associated with the historic properties could result in a minor, long-term, adverse effect on the community's use of these ethnographic resources. There would be no cumulative impacts. There would be no impairment of national historic site resources necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the site's enabling legislation or key to the cultural integrity of the site.

Section 106 Summary. In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations (36 CFR 800) implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Park Service finds that alternative 2 would have no adverse effect on historic properties.

The preservation of historic structures/ buildings and cultural landscapes would be consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*, NPS *Management Policies 2001*, and Director's Order-28 (*Cultural Resource Management Guideline*). More detailed treatment plans would be developed in consultation with the Kansas state historic preservation officer.

Alternative 3: The Learning Place

Analysis. The National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. Church and would also seek to acquire the other four historic structures (the St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, Township Hall, and the Old First Baptist Church) and the Roadside Park. The historic structures would be adaptively reused and a higher level of treatment than stabilization of these buildings would occur under this alternative. This would include preservation of the façades in the short term and further treatment such as preservation or rehabilitation to accommodate educational and interpretive uses in the long term. Compared to the no-action alternative this would result in a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact.

The National Park Service would stabilize and provide a further level of treatment to the five national historic site properties that contribute to the cultural landscape. In addition, the National Park Service would provide technical assistance to the community that would help guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district. These actions would enhance protection of the cultural landscape, a long-term, minor, beneficial effect. An orientation facility would be constructed at the Roadside Park within the national historic landmark district under this alternative. The impact of this new structure, however, would be minimized because it would be constructed in a style compatible with other buildings in Nicodemus and would be located near the perimeter of the town to minimize intrusion on the overall landscape. Construction of a new building would thus have a

minor, long-term, adverse impact on the cultural landscape.

This alternative would alter the community's use of the four currently non-NPS owned historic properties (St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and Old First Baptist Church) should the National Park Service acquire them, because the National Park Service would then manage use of these buildings. In addition, visitation would likely increase under this alternative and there would be an increased likelihood that visitors could at times interfere with or impose on community activities associated with the properties. These changes in use would result in a minor long-term, adverse impact to the community's use of these ethnographic resources.

As with the other alternatives, NPS artifacts, which include objects from the A.M.E. Church, and their associated records have been documented, stabilized, and stored. The National Park Service would continue to curate and maintain collections under its management in accordance with agency policy. In addition, the National Park Service would provide curatorial storage and would manage artifacts or materials associated with Nicodemus. Impacts to museum collections would be moderate, beneficial, and long term due to the much improved curatorial and management capabilities provided by additional curatorial storage within the community.

As under the other alternatives, archeological sites would be surveyed, inventoried, and evaluated under National Register of Historic Places criteria of evaluation to determine their eligibility for listing in the national register as staff and funding permit. All ground-disturbing activities such as structure stabilization or rehabilitation would be preceded by site-specific archeological surveys and, where appropriate, subsurface testing to determine the existence of archeological resources. If archeological resources were discovered, the resources would be identified, evaluated, and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed — if necessary in consultation with the Kansas state historic preservation office.

In the unlikely event that human remains of any origin were discovered during construction, they and any associated objects would be treated respectfully in accordance with the beliefs of their cultural affiliation and according to applicable laws. If remains were of American Indian origin, provisions of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act would be implemented. With implementation of archeological investigations before ground-disturbing activities to ensure that archeological resources were understood and that they would not be damaged or lost, potential impacts on archeological resources would be negligible.

Cumulative Impacts. Because the continued net loss of population within the town and county would not contribute to the impacts associated with alternative 3, there would be no cumulative impacts under this alternative.

Conclusion. Alternative 3 would have a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. Church and the other four historic structures (St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, Township Hall, and Old First Baptist Church) that would be acquired by the National Park Service.

Impacts on the cultural landscape would be minor, long-term, and beneficial due to NPS technical assistance to guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district. There would be a minor, long-term, adverse impact on the cultural landscape due to the addition of a new NPS orientation structure within the national historic landmark district.

Changes in use of the four historic properties acquired by the National Park Service as well as the increased likelihood of visitors intruding at times on community activities associated with the historic properties would result in a minor long-term, adverse effect on the community's use of these ethnographic resources.

Impacts on archeological resources would be negligible. Impacts on museum collections would be moderate, long-term, and beneficial. There would be no cumulative impacts. There would be no impairment to national historic site resources necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the site's enabling legislation or key to the cultural integrity of the site.

Section 106 Summary. In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations (36 CFR 800) implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Park Service finds that alternative 3 would have no adverse effect on historic properties.

The preservation of historic structures/buildings and cultural landscapes would be consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*, NPS *Management Policies 2001*, and Director's Order-28 (*Cultural Resource Management Guideline*). More detailed treatment plans would be developed in consultation with the Kansas state historic preservation officer.

Alternative 4: Preferred Alternative

Analysis. The National Park Service would continue to own the A.M.E. church and would also seek to acquire the St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and the Old First Baptist Church. The historic structures would be adaptively reused and a higher level of treatment than stabilization of these buildings would occur under this alternative. This would include rehabilitation of the façade in the short term and further treatment such as preservation or rehabilitation to accommodate educational and interpretive uses in the long term. Compared to the no-action alternative this would result in a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact. The Township Hall would continue to be non-NPS owned and the National Park Service would stabilize this property only if it were in imminent danger of being physically lost. However, the National Park Service would also provide technical assistance to the community to help ensure the property's long-term preservation. Loss of the integrity of this historic property over time would be less likely to occur due to this increased support, which would be a long-term, minor, beneficial impact.

The National Park Service would, if necessary to prevent its physical loss, stabilize the Township Hall and provide a further level of treatment to the other four national historic site properties that contribute to the cultural landscape. In

addition, the National Park Service would provide owners with technical assistance to guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district. These actions would enhance protection of the cultural landscape, a long-term, minor, beneficial impact. An orientation facility would be constructed at a portion of the Roadside Park and a new facility for administrative and support functions might also be constructed within the national historic landmark district under this alternative. The impact of these new structures, however, would be minimized because they would be constructed in a style compatible with other buildings in Nicodemus and would be located near the perimeter of the town to minimize intrusion on the overall landscape. Construction of new buildings would thus have a minor, long-term, adverse impact on the cultural landscape.

This alternative would alter the community's use of three of the currently non-NPS owned historic properties (St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and Old First Baptist Church) should the National Park Service acquire them, because the National Park Service would then manage use of these buildings. Although the Old First Baptist Church would still be made available for community activities it would be through arrangement with the National Park Service. In addition, visitation would likely increase under this alternative and there would be an increased likelihood that visitors could at times interfere with or impose on community activities associated with the properties. These changes in use would result in a minor, long-term, adverse impact on the community's use of these ethnographic resources.

As under the other alternatives, NPS artifacts, which include objects from the A.M.E. Church, and their associated records, have been documented, stabilized, and stored. The National Park Service would continue to curate and maintain collections under its management in accordance with agency policy. In addition, the National Park Service would provide curatorial storage and would manage artifacts or materials associated with Nicodemus. Impacts to museum collections would be moderate, beneficial, and long term due to the much improved curatorial and management capabilities provided by additional curatorial storage within the community.

As under the other alternatives, archeological sites would be surveyed, inventoried, and evaluated under National Register of Historic Places criteria of evaluation to determine their eligibility for listing in the national register as staff and funding permit. All ground-disturbing activities such as structure stabilization or rehabilitation would be preceded by site-specific archeological surveys and, where appropriate, subsurface testing to determine the existence of archeological resources. If archeological resources were discovered, the resources would be identified, evaluated, and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed — if necessary in consultation with the Kansas state historic preservation office.

In the unlikely event that human remains of any origin were discovered during construction, they and any associated objects would be treated respectfully in accordance with the beliefs of their cultural affiliation and according to applicable laws. If remains were of American Indian origin, provisions of the

Native American Graves and Repatriation Act would be implemented. With implementation of archeological investigations before ground-disturbing activities to ensure that archeological resources were understood and that they would not be damaged or lost, potential impacts on archeological resources would be negligible.

Cumulative Impacts. Because the continued net loss of population within the town and county would not contribute to the impacts associated with alternative 4, there would be no cumulative impacts under this alternative.

Conclusion. Alternative 4 would have a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on the NPS-owned A.M.E. Church and the St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and Old First Baptist Church that would be acquired by the National Park Service. There would be a minor, long-term, beneficial impact on the Township Hall, which would remain in town ownership.

Impacts on the cultural landscape would be minor, long-term, and beneficial due to NPS technical assistance to guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district and minor, long-term, and adverse due to the addition of new NPS structures within the national historic landmark district.

Changes in use of the St. Francis Hotel, Nicodemus School, and Old First Baptist Church as well as the increased likelihood of visitors intruding at times on community activities associated with the historic properties would result in a minor, long-term, adverse effect on the community's use of these ethnographic resources.

Impacts on archeological resources would be negligible. Impacts on museum collections would be moderate, long term, and beneficial. There would be no impairment to national historic site resources necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the site's enabling legislation or key to the cultural integrity of the site.

Section 106 Summary. In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations (36 CFR 800) implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Park Service finds that the alternative 4 would have no adverse effect on historic properties.

The preservation of historic structures/buildings and cultural landscapes would be consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*, NPS *Management Policies 2001*, and Director's Order-28 (*Cultural Resource Management Guideline*). More detailed treatment plans would be developed in consultation with the Kansas state historic preservation officer.

IMPACTS ON THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Alternative 1: No Action

Analysis. Overall the visitor experience would not change. NPS orientation and interpretation would continue to be limited. Private interpretive services would continue at the discretion of the providers.

Cumulative Impacts. Because there would be no new impacts associated with

this alternative, it would not contribute to impacts of other actions. Consequently there would be no cumulative impacts under the no-action alternative.

Conclusion. There would be no noticeable change in visitor use or experience associated with Nicodemus.

Alternative 2: Community Stewards

Analysis. There would be a minor beneficial effect on the visitor experience under this alternative. Visitors' knowledge and understanding of Nicodemus would be enhanced by the addition of a visitor contact facility where visitors would receive orientation to the site and more comprehensive interpretation of the site's story. Preparation of a long-range interpretation plan and provision of NPS assistance and training to the community in developing interpretive programs and skills would also help expand the range and enhance the quality of interpretive services available to visitors.

Construction activities associated with facility construction and possible stabilization of historic structures would have visual and noise intrusions near the work sites. Impacts on visitors would be minor and short term.

Cumulative Impacts. If the population of Nicodemus continues to decline, the community's character as a living, evolving community would be affected. Also affected would be the opportunity for visitors to experience and interact with the community as an integral part of their visit. This would be a minor to moderate long-term adverse effect depending on the net loss of population and its effect on the continued viability of the community. Alternative 2 would contribute a minor short-term adverse effect and minor long-term beneficial effect to the overall cumulative impact on the visitor experience.

Conclusion. Alternative 2 would have a minor beneficial effect on the visitor experience. Cumulative impacts on the visitor experience would be minor to moderate due primarily to the continued decline in the local population. Alternative 2 would contribute a minor short-term adverse effect and minor long-term beneficial effect to the overall cumulative impact on the visitor experience.

Alternative 3: The Learning Place

Analysis. There would be a moderate beneficial effect on the visitor experience under this alternative. Orientation to the site would be improved with the addition of a new visitor contact facility. Expanded interpretive and in-depth educational opportunities around and within the site's historic structures would enhance visitors' and students' knowledge and understanding of Nicodemus. Preparation of a long-range interpretation plan would also help expand the range and enhance the quality of interpretive services available to visitors.

Construction activities associated with facility construction and preservation of historic structures would have visual and noise intrusions near the work sites. Impacts on visitors would be minor and short term.

Cumulative Impacts. If the population of Nicodemus continues to decline, the community's character as a living, evolving

community would be affected. Also affected would be the opportunity for visitors to experience and interact with the community as an integral part of their visit. This would be a minor to moderate long-term adverse effect depending on the net loss of population and its effect on the continued viability of the community. Alternative 3 would contribute a minor short-term adverse effect and minor to moderate long-term beneficial effect to the overall cumulative impact on the visitor experience.

Conclusion. Alternative 3 would have moderate long-term beneficial effect on the visitor experience. Cumulative impacts on the visitor experience would be minor to moderate due primarily to the continued decline in the local population. Alternative 3 would contribute a minor short-term adverse effect and minor to moderate long-term beneficial effect to the overall cumulative impact on the visitor experience.

Alternative 4: Preferred Alternative

Analysis. There would be a moderate beneficial effect on the visitor experience under this alternative. Orientation to the site would be improved with the addition of a new visitor contact facility. Expanded interpretive opportunities around and within the site's historic structures would enhance visitors' knowledge and understanding of Nicodemus. Preparation of a long-range interpretation plan and provision of NPS assistance and training to the community in developing interpretive programs and skills would also help expand the range and enhance the quality of interpretive services available to visitors.

Construction activities associated with facility construction and preservation of historic structures would have visual and noise intrusions near the work sites. Impacts on visitors would be minor and short term.

Cumulative Impacts. If the population of Nicodemus continues to decline, the community's character as a living, evolving community would be affected. Also affected would be the opportunity for visitors to experience and interact with the community as an integral part of their visit. This would be a minor to moderate long-term adverse effect depending on the net loss of population and its effect on the continued viability of the community. Alternative 4 would contribute a minor short-term adverse effect and minor to moderate long-term beneficial effect to the overall cumulative impact on the visitor experience.

Conclusion. Alternative 4 would have moderate long-term beneficial effect on the visitor experience. Cumulative impacts on the visitor experience would be minor to moderate due primarily to the continued decline in the local population. Alternative 4 would contribute a minor short-term adverse effect and minor to moderate long-term beneficial effect to the overall cumulative impact on the visitor experience.

IMPACTS ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Alternative 1: No Action

Analysis. The current low levels of visitation would likely continue. Impacts from visitor intrusions on the community and

its lifestyle would continue to be long term and negligible. The no-action alternative would not change land use or economic opportunities in the community.

Cumulative Impacts. Because there would be no new impacts associated with this alternative, it would not contribute to impacts of other actions. Consequently there would be no cumulative impacts under the no-action alternative.

Conclusion. Visitor intrusions on the community would continue to be long term and negligible. There would be no change in land use or economic opportunities for the community.

Alternative 2: Community Stewards

Analysis. There would be some limited economic effects to the community of Nicodemus under alternative 2. This alternative would likely encourage some increase in visitation to Nicodemus, which would create economic opportunities for residents related to visitor services, such as presentation of private interpretive programs to the public. There might also be some temporary job opportunities for local labor during construction of the visitor contact facility and from stabilization of historic resources. Overall, increased economic opportunities would result in minor, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy.

Adverse impacts on the social environment of the community would be long term and minor. Minimal onsite staffing and the limited role of the National Park Service proposed under alternative 2 would not greatly affect the local population and culture. Use of a small portion of the Roadside Park for a visitor contact facility, would not preclude Emancipation/ Homecoming celebrations and other community activities from continuing. Construction activities associated with this facility and possible stabilization of historic structures would result in short-term visual and noise intrusions on residents. Increased visitation would increase the likelihood that visitors could at times interfere with or impose on community's or resident's activities or intrude on individuals' privacy. However, visitation would be expected to remain low, and visitor parking and basic orientation and interpretation would be provided at the visitor contact facility, thus minimizing disruption to the community. There would be no change in land use.

Cumulative Impacts. If the population of Nicodemus and surrounding Graham County continues to decline, adverse impacts on the community and local economy would be minor to moderate depending on the net loss of population and its effect on the continued viability of the community. Alternative 2 would contribute a minor beneficial economic effect to the overall cumulative impact. It would also contribute a minor adverse effect on the community's social environment to the overall cumulative impact.

Conclusion. Alternative 2 would result in minor, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy. Adverse impacts on the community from NPS activities and visitors would be long term and minor. There would be no change in land use. Cumulative impacts on the community and local economy would be minor to moderate due primarily to the continued

decline in the local population. Alternative 2 would contribute a minor beneficial economic effect and a minor adverse impact on the community's social environment to the overall cumulative impact.

Alternative 3: The Learning Place

Analysis. Alternative 3 would involve more extensive NPS expenditures in the community than in alternatives 1 and 2, as well as an increase in staffing. Potential demand for housing, acquisition of historic properties, and leasing of properties within the town for NPS administrative or support facilities would boost the local economy. Alternative 3 would also encourage an increase in tourism to Nicodemus. There would be a potential for economic opportunities for residents to provide a wide variety of services to visitors and students. There may also be some temporary job opportunities for local labor during construction of new facilities and from preservation of historic structures. Overall, increased economic opportunities and increased NPS and visitor-related expenditures in the community would result in minor to moderate, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy.

Impacts on the social environment of the community from NPS management activities and development, increased visitation and student use, and changes in land use would be long term, moderate, and adverse. Limited onsite staffing would not greatly affect the local population and culture. Use of a small portion of the Roadside Park for a visitor contact facility, would not preclude Emancipation/ Homecoming celebrations and other community activities from continuing. The facility would be designed and located to blend with the surrounding community environment to minimize its visual intrusion. Construction activities associated with this facility and preservation of historic structures would result in short-term visual and noise intrusions on residents. Increased visitation coupled with an influx of groups of students to a variety of interpretive sites within the town would increase the likelihood that visitors would interfere with or impose on the community's or resident's activities or intrude on individuals' privacy. Identification of dedicated visitor parking at some interpretive sites within the town might also be disruptive to town residents. The National Park Service would manage public circulation through the town in a manner that would minimize disruption to residents. There would also be a change in land use should the National Park Service acquire the four non-NPS owned national historic site properties.

Cumulative Impacts. If the population of Nicodemus and surrounding Graham County continues to decline, adverse impacts on the community and local economy would be minor to moderate depending on the net loss of population and its effect on the continued viability of the community. Alternative 3 would contribute a minor to moderate beneficial economic effect on the overall cumulative impact. Alternative 3 would also contribute a moderate adverse impact on the community's social environment to the overall cumulative impact.

Conclusion. Alternative 3 would result in minor to moderate, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy. Impacts on the community's social environment from NPS activities, visitors, students, and land

use changes would be long-term, adverse, and moderate. Cumulative impacts on the community and local economy would be minor to moderate due primarily to the continued decline in the local population. Alternative 3 would contribute a minor to moderate beneficial economic effect and a moderate adverse effect on the community's social environment to the overall cumulative impact.

Alternative 4: Preferred Alternative

Analysis. Alternative 4 would involve more extensive NPS expenditures in the community — as described in alternative 3 — as well as an increase in staffing. Similar to alternative 3, potential demand for housing, acquisition of historic properties, and leasing of properties within the town for NPS administrative or support facilities would boost the local economy. Alternative 4 would also encourage an increase in tourism to Nicodemus. There would be a potential for economic opportunities for residents to provide a variety of services to visitors. There might also be some temporary job opportunities for local labor during construction of new facilities and from preservation of historic structures. Overall, increased economic opportunities and increased NPS and visitor-related expenditures in the community would result in minor to moderate, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy.

Impacts on the social environment of the community would be similar to alternative 3, however, student groups would not be actively encouraged and the National Park Service would seek to acquire one less structure. Limited onsite staffing would not greatly affect the local population and culture. Use of a small portion of the Roadside Park for a visitor contact facility would not preclude Emancipation/ Homecoming celebrations and other community activities from continuing. The building would be located and designed to blend with the surrounding community environment to minimize its visual intrusion. Construction activities associated with this facility and preservation of historic structures would result in short-term visual and noise intrusions on residents. Increased visitation to interpretive sites within the town would increase the likelihood that the public would interfere with or impose on the community's or resident's activities or intrude on individuals' privacy. Identification of dedicated visitor parking at some interpretive sites within the town might also be disruptive to town residents. The National Park Service would manage public circulation through the town in a manner that would minimize disruption to residents. There would also be a change in land use should the National Park Service acquire three of the non-NPS owned national historic site properties. Impacts on the community's social environment from NPS management activities and development, increased visitation, and changes in land use would be long term, adverse, and minor.

Cumulative Impacts. If the population of Nicodemus and surrounding Graham County continues to decline, adverse impacts on the community and local economy would be minor to moderate depending on the net loss of population and its effect on the continued viability of the community. Alternative 4 would contribute a minor to moderate beneficial economic effect on the overall cumulative impact. Alternative 4 would also

contribute a minor adverse impact on the community's social environment to the overall cumulative impact.

Conclusion. Alternative 4 would result in minor to moderate, long- and short-term benefits to the local economy. Impacts on the community's social environment from NPS activities, visitors, and land use changes would be long term, adverse, and minor. Cumulative impacts on the community and local economy would be minor to moderate due primarily to the continued decline in the local population. Alternative 4 would contribute a minor to moderate beneficial economic effect and a minor adverse effect on the community's social environment to the overall cumulative impact.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION / PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In summer 1997 the public was notified that a general management plan for Nicodemus National Historic Site was getting underway by means of announcements in the media. The opening of the scoping process coincided with the Emancipation/ Homecoming Celebration held in July. Hundreds of people attend this special event every year, and many questions, comments and suggestions were gathered from the attendees. Progress reports on the general management plan were shared with the public at each of the subsequent Emancipation/ Homecoming celebrations.

After preliminary alternatives were crafted, members of the planning team met with each of the affected property owners to discuss the planning process and address their specific concerns. Throughout the process, informal discussions were held with township, county, and state government officials as the plan progressed.

With the release of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Assessment*, a series of public meetings will be held in Nicodemus and the surrounding area to discuss the plan with the public and gather additional input.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the National Park Service has consulted with the Kansas state historic preservation officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In July 1997 letters were sent to both inviting their participation and involvement in the process. Copies of the internal draft document were shared with both agencies.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began in August 1997 with a request for a list of federally listed threatened and endangered species that may occur in the vicinity of Nicodemus. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service responded that there was no suitable habitat remaining in a natural state and it was highly unlikely that any threatened or endangered species would occur in this location. Based on that assessment there has been no further consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

APPENDIX A: ENABLING LEGISLATION

SEC. 512. NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE. 16 USC 461 note.

(a) FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(A) the town of Nicodemus, in Kansas, has national significance as the only remaining western town established by African-Americans during the Reconstruction period following the Civil War;

(B) the town of Nicodemus is symbolic of the pioneer spirit of Afican-Americans who dared to leave the only region they had been familiar with to seek personal freedom and the opportunity to develop their talents and capabilities; and

(C) the town of Nicodemus continues to be a valuable African-American community.

(2) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are—

(A) to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations, the remaining structures and locations that represent the history (including the settlement and growth) of the town of Nicodemus, Kansas; and

(B) to interpret the historical role of the town of Nicodemus in the Reconstruction period in the context of the experience of westward expansion in the United States.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) HISTORIC SITE.—The term "historic site" means the Nicodemus National Historic Site established by subsection (c).

(2) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(c) ESTABLISHMENT OF NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Nicodemus National Historic Site in Nicodemus, Kansas.

(2) DESCRIPTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The historic site shall consist of the first Baptist Church, the St. Francis Hotel, the Nicodemus School District Number 1, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Township Hall located within the approximately 161.35 acres designated as the Nicodemus National Landmark in the Township of Nicodemus, Graham County, Kansas, as registered on the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to section 101 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470a), and depicted on a map entitled "Nicodemus National Historic Site", numbered 80,000 and dated August 1994.

(B) MAP AND BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION.—The map referred to in subparagraph (A) and accompanying boundary description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Director of the National Park Service and any other office of the National Park Service that the Secretary determines to be an appropriate location for filing the map and boundary description.

(d) ADMINISTRATION OF THE HISTORIC SITE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the historic site in accordance with this section and the provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including the Act entitled "An Act to establish a National

Park Service, and for other purposes", approved August 25, 1916 (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.), and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666, chapter 593; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

(2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—To further the purposes of this section, the Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with any interested individual, public or private agency, organization, or institution.

(3) TECHNICAL AND PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may provide to any eligible person described in subparagraph (B) technical assistance for the preservation of historic structures of, the maintenance of the cultural landscape of, and local preservation planning for, the historic site.

(B) ELIGIBLE PERSONS.—The eligible persons described in this subparagraph are—

(i) an owner of real property within the boundary of the historic site, as described in subsection (c)(2); and

(ii) any interested individual, agency, organization, or institution that has entered into an agreement with the Secretary pursuant to paragraph (2).

(e) ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary is authorized to acquire by donation, exchange, or purchase with funds made available by donation or appropriation, such lands or interests in lands as may be necessary to allow for the interpretation, preservation, or restoration of the First Baptist Church, the St. Francis Hotel, the Nicodemus School District Number 1, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, or the Township Hall, as described in subsection (c)(2)(A), or any combination thereof.

(2) LIMITATIONS.—

(A) ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY OWNED BY THE STATE OF KANSAS.—Real property that is owned by the State of Kansas or a political subdivision of the State of Kansas that is acquired pursuant to paragraph (1) may only be acquired by donation.

(B) CONSENT OF OWNER REQUIRED.—No real property may be acquired under this subsection without the consent of the owner of the real property.

(f) GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the last day of the third full fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall, in consultation with the officials described in paragraph (2), prepare a general management plan for the historic site.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In preparing the general management plan, the Secretary shall consult with an appropriate official of each of the following:

(A) The Nicodemus Historical Society.

(B) The Kansas Historical Society.

(C) Appropriate political subdivisions of the State of Kansas that have jurisdiction over all or a portion of the historic site.

(3) SUBMISSION OF PLAN TO CONGRESS.—Upon the completion of the general management plan, the Secretary shall submit a copy of the plan to the Committee on Energy and

Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

APPENDIX B: FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE LETTER OF FINDINGS ON THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Kansas Field Office
315 Houston Street, Suite E
Manhattan, Kansas 66502-6172

August 21, 1997

MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Director, Midwest Field Area, NPS, Omaha, NE

FROM: Field Supervisor, Kansas Field Office, FWS, Manhattan, KS

SUBJECT: General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Nicodemus National Historic Site

This is in response to your undated letter, received in this office August 7, 1997, requesting information on federally-listed threatened and endangered species which may occur in the vicinity of the newly established Nicodemus National Historic Site, in Graham County, Kansas. We have reviewed the draft Task Directive for this effort which you provided, and determined from this that all areas proposed for inclusion in the Historic Site are located within the city limits of Nicodemus. Despite this being a rural area, it is still a developed town site, with little or no suitable wildlife habitat remaining in a natural state. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that any threatened or endangered species would occur at this location, and it is my opinion that they need not be included in your assessment.

If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Dan Mulhern of this office. Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

cc: KDWP, Pratt, KS (Environmental Services)

WHG/dwm

William Hill

GLOSSARY

The following definitions describe the meaning intended by the National Park Service in preparing this document.

Archeological Resources: The National Park Service defines archeological resources as "physical evidences of past human activity, including evidences of the effects of that activity on the environment" (DO-28, NPS *Cultural Resource Management Guideline,* 1996).

Character-defining feature: A prominent or distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of a historic property that contributes significantly to its physical character. Structures, objects, vegetation, spatial relationships, views, furnishings, decorative details, and materials may be such features.

Contributing feature: An aspect of a person, place, or thing that contributes to or shares a part of the significance of the whole.

Cultural landscape: A geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.

Cultural resource: An aspect of a cultural system that is valued by or significantly representative of a culture or that contains significant information about a culture. A cultural resource may be a tangible entity or a cultural practice. Tangible cultural resources are categorized as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects for the National Register of Historic Places and as archeological resources, cultural landscapes, structures, museum objects, and ethnographic resources for NPS management purposes.

Ethnographic Resource: Objects and places, including sites, structures, landscapes, and natural resources, with traditional cultural meaning and value to associated peoples. Ethnographic resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are called traditional cultural properties.

Ethnography: Part of the discipline of cultural anthropology concerned with the systematic description and analysis of cultural systems or lifeways, such as hunting, agriculture, fishing, other food procurement strategies, family life festivals, and other religious celebrations. Ethnographic studies of contemporary people and cultures rely heavily on participant observation as well as interviews, oral histories, and review of relevant documents. Applied ethnography uses ethnographic data and concepts to identify contemporary issues and design feasible solutions.

Interpretation: Educational services that provide opportunities for people to form their own intellectual and emotional connections to the park's/site's resources and thus come to a greater appreciation of the significant aspects of the country's natural or cultural heritage portrayed by those resources. At Nicodemus, interpretive services and programs will provide opportunities for visitors to make intellectual and emotional connections

with the human stories represented by the site's buildings, landscape, and artifacts, and thus come to a greater understanding and appreciation of the historical context in which its founders and homesteaders came to Nicodemus, the perseverance and self-determination that characterized African Americans who contributed to the development of the American West, and how the Nicodemus community grew and changed in the context of late-19th and 20th century America.

Museum collection: An assemblage of objects, works of art, historic documents, and/or natural history specimens collected according to a rational scheme and maintained so they can be preserved, studied, and interpreted for public benefit. Museum collections normally are kept in park/site museums, although they may also be maintained in archeological and historic preservation centers.

National Historic Landmark (NHL): A district, site, building, structure, or object of national historical significance that possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and/or culture, and is designated a national historic landmark district by the Secretary of the Interior under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and entered in the National Register of Historic Places.

National Historic Site: A unit of the national park system authorized by the Secretary of the Interior (under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935) or by Congress for the purpose of preserving and interpreting a location that is nationally significant due to its association with broad themes in American history or an individual or group who influenced the course of American history; or because it is a strong example of a major architectural style.

Preservation: The act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses on the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation: The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Stabilization: Action to render an unsafe, damaged, or deteriorated property stable while retaining its current form

State historic preservation officer (SHPO): An official within each state appointed by the governor to administer the state historic preservation program and carry out certain responsibilities relating to federal undertakings within the state.

Technical assistance: Technical expert advice on techniques related to preserving, stabilizing, repairing, or

restoring cultural and, less frequently, natural resources. Cultural resources include historic structures, artifacts, archeological resources, and cultural landscapes. The assistance/advice might be provided when responding to individual requests and formally through special projects, workshops, courses, and similar efforts. Under some alternatives, assistance also includes assisting with writing grants for preservation and restoration work. In some alternatives that prescribe more substantial support from the National Park Service, assistance would also include the actual stabilization or preservation of resources.

Visitor contact facility: A visitor contact facility is a structure that contains staff and media interpreting the story of the national historic site. Interpretive media may include videos, exhibits, artifacts, and similar objects. See the definition of *interpretation* for a better understanding of the purpose of a visitor contact facility. Such facilities usually offer sales items, such as books, that provide visitors with opportunities to learn more about the history of the area. A visitor contact facility contains basic amenities, such as restrooms and drinking water, to support visitor comfort.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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