

Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division NEPA Categorical Exclusion Form

Project Number: MS NP NATR 3F26

Date: 4/24/2026

Project Name: Natchez Trace Parkway Mainline Overlay from
MP 226.55 to MP 239.23

Location: National Park Service, Natchez Trace Parkway
Chickasaw County, Mississippi

CE Category 23 CFR 771.117(c)(26): Modernization of a
highway by resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation,
reconstruction, adding shoulders, or adding
auxiliary lanes (including parking, weaving,
turning, and climbing lanes), if the action meets
the constraints in paragraph (e)[..]

See [23 CFR 771.117](#) for full description of CE categories, including additional requirements when applying (c)26-28.

Project Description

This project consists of resurfacing the Parkway, including ramps, bridges, intersections and parking/pull-off areas. The work includes milling, asphalt overlay, shoulder widening, spot reconstruction, pavement markings, raised profile striping at bridge approaches, and other miscellaneous work.

Environmental Commitments and Mitigation Measures

- Rare, Threatened & Endangered Species:
 - *Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) and Tri-colored Bat:*
 - Tree removal will occur between August 1 to December 14 or February 16 to May 14.
 - Bridge and culvert work, including roadway paving above culverts and riprap placement at inlets/outlets, will occur between August 1 to December 14 or February 16 to May 14.
 - If bridge or culvert work, including paving above culverts, needs to occur between December 15 and February 15 or May 15 to July 31, a qualified biologist will inspect structures for evidence of bat use prior to construction.
 - Inspections will follow Appendix K, Assessing and Surveying Bridges and Culverts for Bat Use in the most recent version of the Range-wide Indiana Bat & Northern Long-eared Bat Survey Guidelines (<https://www.fws.gov/media/range-wide-indiana-bat-and-northern-long-eared-bat-survey-guidelines>). The guidance will be provided to the qualified biologist performing inspections.
 - Inspections will occur within two years of construction activities beginning at a structure.
 - The Bridge/Culvert Assessment Form from Appendix K will be used to

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document inspections. <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-04/bridge-and-culvert-bat-assessment-form-1.pdf>

- All culverts 24-inches or greater and 23 feet or greater in length, will be inspected per the guidelines.
- All cracks and crevices large enough to provide habitat for bats will be inspected.
- If evidence of bats is seen:
 - The NATR/FHWA will notify the Service immediately to discuss appropriate avoidance measures. No work will begin at the structure location until discussions with the Service have concluded.
 - The preferred avoidance measure is delaying work until construction can be complete between August 1 to December 14 or February 16 to May 14. If this cannot occur, the FHWA will reinstate consultation with the Service to assess impacts of the proposed activity and determine additional conservation measures.
- Regardless of when work is done, if bat use is observed, ensure habitat remains after the structure is repaired so bats can return the following season.
- If evidence of bats is not found during the inspection of a structure, but evidence or bat sightings are unexpectedly made during construction, the contractor will stop work and the NATR/ FHWA will notify the Service immediately. No work will resume at the structure location until discussions with the Service have concluded.
- Complete structure assessment forms will be provided to the NATR and FHWA by the contractor within one business day of encountering evidence of bats. FHWA will submit them to the Service when bats are documented.
- If previously unknown archeological resources are discovered during construction, all work in the immediate vicinity (600 feet) of the discovery shall be halted until the resources are identified and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary, in accordance with pertinent laws and regulations, including the stipulations of the 2008 Programmatic Agreement Among the National Park Service (U.S. Department of the Interior), the Advisor Council on Historic Preservation, and the national Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.
- Staging areas shall be confined to existing parking areas or previously disturbed locations.

Summary of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act Compliance

The listed species in Chickasaw County include Northern Long Eared Bat (Endangered), Price's Potato-bean (Threatened), Tricolored Bat (Proposed Endangered), Alligator Snapping Turtle (Proposed Threatened), and Monarch Butterfly (Proposed Threatened). There is no designated critical habitat in the project area. The project is occurring in previously disturbed transportation right of way. No suited habitat elements would be destroyed or altered by the proposed project's actions. Through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service IPaC tool and in concurrence with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Natural Resource Specialists, the Federal Highway Administration made a **"no effect"** determination for the Price's Potato-bean, Alligator Snapping Turtle, and Monarch Butterfly: The proposed project's actions would have no effect on listed species. A **"not likely to**

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adversely affect” determination was made for the two bat species due to the listed mitigations that will be in place during construction.

Summary of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act Compliance

On March 16, 2026, the National Park Service Cultural Resource experts determined the proposed federal undertaking would have **no adverse effect to historic properties**.

Additional Agency Coordination and Compliance

The FHWA Eastern Federal Lands concurs with the National Park Service Categorical Exclusion for Recurring Paving and Rehabilitation of Existing Roads along the Natchez Trace Parkway dated March 16, 2026.

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Categorical Exclusion Recommendation:

On the basis of the environmental impact information in the statutory compliance file, with which I am familiar, I believe the project should be categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis.

**KELLY NICOLE
JOY STERN**

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NICOLE JOY STERN
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Kelly Stern
Environmental Protection Specialist
Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division
Federal Highway Administration

Date

Categorical Exclusion Determination:

On the basis of the environmental impact information in the statutory compliance file, with which I am familiar, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. The project meets the 23 CFR 771.117(a) definition of a categorical exclusion. No unusual circumstances per 23 CFR 771.117(b) apply.

KEVIN S ROSE

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Date: 2026.04.27 11:34:57 -04'00'

Kevin S. Rose
Environmental Team Leader
Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division
Federal Highway Administration

Date

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Appendix A: Environmental Checklist

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act: • Are Federally-listed species potentially present in the study area? ☒ Yes, see Notesⁱ ☒ No If Yes, effects determination: ☒ No Effect ☒ May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect ☐ May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect
Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act: • Are historic properties known to be present in the study area? ☒ Yes ☐ No If Yes, will they be impacted by the project? ☐ Yes ☒ No • Will previously undisturbed ground be disturbed? ☐ Yes ☒ No • Effects determination: ☐ No Historic Properties Affected ☒ No Adverse Effect ☐ Adverse Effect, MOA Executed • Was tribal consultation completed? ☐ Yes ☒ No
Water and Wetlands: • Section 404 of the Clean Water Act Are impacts to Waters of the US anticipated? ☐ Yes ☒ No If Yes, approval anticipated: ☐ Nationwide Permit (NWP) ☐ Regional General Permit ☐ Individual Permit • Section 401 of the Clean Water Act ☐ NWP certified by State ☐ Individual Certification • Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Will the land disturbance threshold likely be exceeded to require a permit and SWPPP? ☐ Yes ☒ No • Is post-construction stormwater management review/approval anticipated? ☐ Yes ☒ No • ☒ Project is consistent with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands
Floodplains: • Is the project in a FEMA floodplain? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Floodplain not mapped • ☒ Project is consistent with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management
Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act: • Does the project meet the Section 4(f) exemption for Federal lands transportation facilities under Section 1119(c)(2) of MAP-21, 23 U.S.C. 138(a)? ☒ Yes ☐ No • Is there a use of a Section 4(f) property in the study area? ☐ Yes ☒ No If Yes, De Minimis Finding: ☐ Programmatic: ☐ Individual 4(f): ☐

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Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund:
- Was the property purchased with grant funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund? ☐ Yes ☒ No - If Yes, was documentation of approval from National Park Service Director received for the conversion or replacement of 6(f) property? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972:
- Is the project in a Coastal Zone? ☐ Yes ☒ No - If yes, will a Federal Consistency Review be completed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Right of Way:
- Is the project completely within the transportation facility's right-of-way? ☒ Yes ☐ No - If no, will the project require relocations or easements? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Hazardous Waste and Materials:
- Are hazardous materials or contamination exceeding regulatory thresholds (as set by U.S. EPA, County Environmental Health, etc.) present? ☐ Yes ☒ No - If Yes, is the nature and extent of the hazardous materials or contamination fully known? ☐ Yes ☐ No, plan for securing information provided in Notes
Section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act:
- Are there Wild and Scenic Rivers? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Eligible - If Yes, has review by the river-administering agency been completed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Clean Air Act:
- Is the project in a non-attainment area? ☐ Yes ☒ No - If Yes, is the project on the Transportation Improvement Program(TIP)/State Implementation Plan(SIP)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Highway Traffic and Construction Noise Regulations:
☐ The proposed project is a Type I project (highway on a new location, substantial horizontal or vertical alteration, new through or auxiliary lanes). Noise analysis is required. ☐ The proposed project is a Type II project (retrofit for noise abatement). ☒ The proposed project is a Type III project (noise analysis not required). ☐ Does not apply.
Farmland Protection Policy Act for Highway Projects:
Does the project displace, require acquisition of, or require an easement from farmland? ☐ Yes ☒ No
Does the project affect any other resources not listed above? Explain below and list anticipated permits:

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ⁱ Federally-listed species per U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's IPaC: Northern Long Eared Bat (Endangered), Price's Potato-bean (Threatened), Tricolored Bat (Proposed Endangered), Alligator Snapping Turtle (Proposed Threatened), Monarch Butterfly (Proposed Threatened)