



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rushmore
National Memorial

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Mount Rushmore National Memorial News Release

Finding of No Significant Impact Determined for New Backcountry Trail System

(Keystone, SD) – The National Park Service (NPS) issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for a Mount Rushmore National Memorial environmental assessment (EA) titled *Yellow Wolf Loop Trail*. The FONSI was signed by Acting NPS Midwest Regional Director David Given on July 31, 2009.

The NPS has selected Alternative 3 – Multi-Loop Trail (the preferred alternative) for implementation after a thorough review of the alternatives and their impacts on cultural, natural and social resources, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and State Historic Preservation Office, and consideration of comments received during a public review in February 2009.

Topics of concern identified during the scoping process, and evaluated in the EA, included water resources, vegetation, wilderness, wildlife (including sensitive habitats and special concern species), cultural landscapes, archeological resources, visitor use and experience, park operations, security, and American Indian religious concerns. Mitigation measures described in the EA and FONSI will be implemented to minimize adverse impacts.

The new backcountry trail system will provide new visitor experiences at the memorial while showcasing the diversity of natural and cultural resources at the park. It will also provide opportunities for interpretive waysides and ranger programs on the natural resources, cultural history, old growth forest, and geology.

The approximately 9.8 miles of trail in the proposed system would be constructed in phases along with accompanying visitor comfort stations, information kiosks, and trailheads. The multi-loop trail will encompass the memorial and will provide several shorter sub-loops to allow shorter hikes on the trail and hikes of varying length and difficulty.

Next steps for the creation of the backcountry trail system include the design of the trail and phased construction. Community input and involvement will be sought during the creation of the trail system. In the next year, Mount Rushmore will be soliciting input on trail design, volunteer help with trail construction, and suggestions on the official name of the trail. As “Yellow Wolf Trail” is a placeholder name for the proposed trail, the memorial plans on having a trail naming contest with area school children to determine the names of the smaller sub-loops and larger trail system as a whole.



This project is planned in conjunction with the National Park Service's Centennial Initiative, celebrating 100 years of national parks in 2016. The Yellow Wolf Loop Trail FONSI is posted on the NPS's Park Planning website, <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Copies are also available at the Mount Rushmore National Memorial Information Center in the park. For further information, call (605) 574-2523.

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