

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abiotic: characterized by the absence of life or living organisms.

Biodiversity: the diversity of plant and animal species in an environment.

Biotic: pertaining to life or living organisms.

Browsing: when used in reference to deer, describes the eating of shoots or twigs of shrubs and trees.

Carrying Capacity (K): sometimes called “biological carrying capacity,” this is the maximum number of animals of a species that can live in a given environment. Carrying capacity is not a static number but an ever-changing target that will vary, short-term, with weather and range conditions, and long-term with gradual alterations in habitat and vegetation communities.

Cervid: a member of the deer family Cervidae, comprising deer, caribou, elk, and moose.

Compaction: the compression of soil layers reducing the ability of plants to survive, reducing water infiltration capacity, and increasing water runoff.

Critical habitat: as defined in the Endangered Species Act (1973), pertains to: “(i) the specific areas within the geographical area occupied by the species, at the time it is listed in accordance with the provisions of section 4 of this Act, on which are found those physical or biological features (I) essential to the conservation of the species and (II) which may require special management considerations or protection; and (ii) specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by the species at the time it is listed in accordance with the provisions of section 4 of this Act, upon a determination by the Secretary (of the U.S. Department of the Interior) that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species.”

Cumulative impacts: are actions that, when viewed with other actions in the past, the present, or the reasonably foreseeable future, regardless of who has undertaken or will undertake them, have an additive impact on the resource this project would affect.

Depredation: a term used by state wildlife agencies to describe animals that cause economic damage to private landowners by destroying structures, consuming feed or preying on domestic animals.

Direct impacts: occur as a result of the alternative in the same place and at the same time as the action.

Ecosystem: a system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their environment.

Endangered: defined by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and listed in the Federal Register as being in danger of extinction.

Estuarine: found in that part of the mouth or lower course of a river in which the river's current meets the sea's tide.

Erosion: the processes by which the surface of the earth is constantly being worn away.

Exclosure: a fenced area designed to exclude one or more species.

Exotic: see “non-native.”

Extinction: disappearance from the earth.

Extirpation: disappearance from a specified geographic area.

Fecundity: the birth rate or number of live births per female, usually over one year.

Forbs: non-woody, broad-leaf, flowering plants that are neither grasses nor grasslike.

Genetic variability: the range of variation within the gene pool of a population, thought to reflect the possible range of genetic adaptations to changes in the environment.

Genotype: the genetic makeup of an organism or group of organisms with reference to a single trait, set of traits, or an entire complex of traits.

Geographic Information System (GIS): a specialized form of database that allows collection and manipulation of spatial information.

Guild: a classification of organisms based on common resource utilization, not taxonomy.

Home range: the area that an animal uses for obtaining food, mates and caring for its young.

Hydrologic: pertaining to the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the water.

Impairment: the NPS Organic Act of 1916 and the NPS General Authorities Act 1970, as amended, require park managers to ensure that park resources and park values remain unimpaired. Section 1.4.5 of the NPS Management Policies (2001) states: "The impairment that is prohibited by the Organic Act and the General Authorities Act is an impact that, in the professional judgement of the responsible NPS manager, would harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values." See Section 4.4 (Definition of Terms).

Indirect impacts: are reasonably foreseeable impacts that occur removed in time or space from the proposed actions. These are "downstream" impacts, future impacts, or the impacts of reasonably expected connected actions.

Intradermal: going between the layers of the skin.

Intraspecific: between members of the same species.

Irruptive: pertaining to a relatively sudden and marked population fluctuation which occurs at irregular intervals and can have serious long-term ecological and /or economic consequences.

Mast: the fruit, including berries and acorns, of oak, beech or other forest trees.

Maximum Sustained Yield (MSY): the population level of a given species at which the output of young is highest. In deer, this population usually equals 50% - 65% of the carrying capacity.

Microclimate: the climate of a small area, such as a plant community or wooded area, which may be different from that in the general region.

Mitigation: defined in environmental regulations (NEPA) as a measure that will result in reduction of environmental impacts by altering the proposed action in some way. A DEIS must include a discussion, but not adoption, of the “means to mitigate adverse environmental impacts” (40 C.F.R. 1502.16(h)).

Native: as described by NPS Management Policies (2001), pertains to a species that has occurred or now occurs as a result of natural processes on lands designated as units of the national park system.

Natural Resources: as described by NPS Management Policies (2001), these include: physical resources (such as water air soils etc.), physical processes (such a weather, wildland fire etc.), biological resources (such as native plants, animals and communities), ecosystems, and highly valued associated characteristics such as scenic views.

Necropsy: a post-mortem examination performed on an animal, or the equivalent of an “autopsy” on a human.

Niche: the role a species plays in its natural habitat or ecosystem.

Non-native: as described by NPS Management Policies (2001), describes a species that did not evolve in concert with the species native to an ecosystem, and occupies or could occupy park lands directly or indirectly as the result of deliberate or accidental human activities. Sometimes called “exotic,” “alien,” or “invasive.”

Recruitment: birth and survival of young to the age at which their survival rates approximate those of adults in the population.

Range: the geographical extent of a species or subspecies.

Riparian: pertaining to, situated or dwelling on the bank of a river or other body of water.

Rut: the mating season for certain species, usually ungulates.

Scoping: the early stage of the NEPA process is called the “scoping” period. During scoping input is gathered on issues the public feels should be addressed in the upcoming DEIS. This input is important to help park managers determine what types of alternative should be considered.

Scrub: a large area covered with low trees and shrubs.

Sedimentation: the deposition or accumulation of mineral or organic matter by water, air, or ice.

Species richness: the sum total of species in an area.

Steroid: any of a large group of fat-soluble compounds, such as bile acids and sex hormones, most of which have specific physiological actions.

Subspecies: sometimes called a “race”, a genetically distinct geographical subunit of a species.

Threatened: defined by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and listed in the Federal Register as likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future (see “endangered”).

Understory: the plants growing beneath the main canopy of a forest.

Ungulate: belonging to the group of hoofed animals (the former order Ungulata), including the odd-toed perissodactyls (including horses and rhinoceros) and even-toed artiodactyls (including cows, deer, and pigs).

Watershed: the region or area drained by a river, stream, etc.

Zona Pellucida: the proteinaceous layer surrounding the ovum of mammals.