

Winter Use Adaptive Management Program Working Group Guidelines

I. PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Background

The National Park Service (NPS) released a final Plan/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Plan/SEIS) for winter use in February 2013, a signed the Record of Decision (ROD) in September 2013, and a final Rule in October 2013. Together, these documents outline a new paradigm for winter use management in Yellowstone National Park (the Park), including a policy framework for the development of a collaborative adaptive management program for winter use.

Adaptive Management Program

Adaptive management describes both the program and the process the NPS will use to continually monitor, evaluate, and improve winter use management in Yellowstone National Park, and ensure that impacts stay within the levels specified in the final Plan/SEIS and ROD. The winter use Adaptive Management Program has three central objectives:

1. To evaluate impacts of OSV use and help managers implement actions that keep impacts within the range predicted under the Selected Alternative;
2. To gather additional data regarding the comparability of impacts from a group of snowmobiles versus a snowcoach;
3. To reduce impacts on park resources after implementation of the Selected Alternative by gathering additional data regarding the overall social and ecological impacts of winter use and using those data to guide future management decisions.

Development Process for the Adaptive Management Plan

To meet these three central objectives, the Park will develop a winter use Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) that outlines how the park will collect information relevant to these objectives going forward. The NPS will collaborate closely with the public and other partners on the development of a long-term and sustainable AMP.

Development of the AMP will proceed via working groups, which will be composed of interested individuals who will provide feedback and discussion on developing a monitoring strategy for a particular park resource or impact topic. Each working group will be led by a NPS-appointed subject-matter expert. Working groups will provide feedback on what resource conditions or indicators should be monitored to address key scientific uncertainties, and on how to design a fiscally sustainable, efficient and feasible monitoring strategy to achieve key monitoring objectives going forward. Park managers will then use the results of winter use monitoring and stakeholder input to make decisions that best protect park resources and the visitor experience.

Impact Topics and Points of Contact

The following resource impact topics will be addressed by working groups in preparation of the winter use Adaptive Management Plan:

Impact Topic*	Participants**	NPS Lead	Email Address	Phone Number
Wildlife	Scott Christensen, Tim Stevens, Tim French, Kim Raap, Brad Johnson, Sue Bury, Bruce Gourley, Bart Melton, Chris Edelen, Ron DuCharme	John Treanor	John_Treanor@nps.gov	307.344.2505
Air Quality and Soundscape	John Catton, Travis Watt, Bart Melton, Kim Raap, Fred Button, Amy MacKenzie-Sanders, Kurt Angersbach	Shan Burson/ Ann Rodman	Shan_burson@nps.gov ann_rodman@nps.gov	307.739.3584 307.344.2216
Human Dimensions	MarySue Costello, Jack Welch, Jeremiah Reiman, Jeanine Roberson, Amy Beegel, Kim Raap, Ray Darville, Jan Stoddard, Pat Stevens Williams, Amy MacKenzie-Sanders, Brad Johnson, Tom Burge, Kurt Angersbach, Bart Melton, Chris Edelen	Wayne Freimund	Wayne.freimund@umontana.edu	406.243.5184
Operations and Technology	Kim Rapp, Randy Roberson, Jack Welch, Clyde Seeley, Bill Howell, Jason Howell, Scott Carsley, Travis Watt, Don Bachman, Dan Stusek, Bart Melton, Bruce Austin	Wade Vagias	Wade_vagias@nps.gov	307.344.2035
Non-Commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program	Scott Christensen, Chris Jourdain, Bart Melton, Bert Miller, Kim Raap, Jeremiah Reiman, Jack Welch, Dave Hodges, Bruce Austin, Barbara Shesky	Alicia Murphy	Alicia_murphy@nps.gov	307.344.2627

*The following stakeholders and individuals wish to be involved in all working groups: Bart Melton (NPCA) and Kim Raap.

**This is preliminary list of participants who have expressed interest in joining the Working Groups. Any and all participants may join a working group at any time by contacting Adaptive Management Coordinator, Alicia Murphy, at (307) 344-2627 or alicia_murphy@nps.gov.

Tasks

Each working group will work with NPS staff and other working groups to complete the following tasks:

1. Identify critical knowledge gaps or uncertainties about the impacts of winter use on the specified park resource or impact topic.

2. Use the critical knowledge gaps or uncertainties identified to define priority research questions around which to focus future monitoring and research efforts.
3. Prepare an effective, feasible, and fiscally sustainable monitoring strategy to address the adaptive management program's three objectives (as specified in the final Plan/SEIS and ROD), and to inform priority research questions about winter use's impacts on a specified park resource or impact topic. Specifically, each working group's monitoring strategy should contain the following elements:
 - a. Introduction to Impact Topic
 - b. Summary of the Science
 - c. Statement of Monitoring Objectives (Short-Term and Long-Term)
 - d. Monitoring Plan
 - i. Text Describing:
 - Monitoring and Research Needed to Address the three (3) WUAMP objectives as they relate to the specified impact topic:
 - What basic monitoring is needed to evaluate impacts of OSV use and help managers implement actions that keep impacts within the range predicted under the Selected Alternative;
 - Brief Description of Monitoring Studies
 - What research and monitoring is needed to gather additional data regarding the comparability of impacts from a group of snowmobiles versus a snowcoach;
 - Priority Research Questions and Rationale
 - Brief Description of Proposed Studies
 - What other research is needed to reduce impacts on park resources after implementation of the Selected Alternative by gathering additional data regarding the overall social and ecological impacts of winter use and using those data to guide future management decisions.
 - Priority Research Questions and Rationale
 - Brief Descriptions and Rankings of Studies to Inform Priority Research Questions
 - ii. Table Illustrating a Prioritized List of Proposed Monitoring and/or Research Studies, Methods and Timelines for each WUAMP Objective, and Projected Costs for Each Monitoring Study

II. PARTICIPATION

Roles

Adaptive Management Program Coordinator – oversees the entire Adaptive Management Program, adaptive management plan development and working group process. Supports working groups and working group leads, leads monthly Adaptive Management Team coordination calls, oversees development and writing of the Adaptive Management Plan, schedules adaptive management team meetings, ensures consistent and regulation communication between the NPS and all interested parties, and ensures program web page is up-to-date.

Working Group Leads – NPS subject matter experts who lead the working groups by scheduling working group meetings, coordinating with working group members and directly supervising the development of

a monitoring strategy for the Adaptive Management Plan focused on their impact topic. NPS leads will support the efficient and effective progress of each working group by providing information and resources, including maintaining a working group page with relevant resources on the winter use adaptive management program web page: <http://www.nps.gov/yell/parkmgmt/wuamp.htm>. NPS leads will represent their Working Group on monthly coordination calls and at Adaptive Management Team Meetings.

Working Group Participants - Participants will provide thoughtful and constructive feedback to the NPS on the development of a monitoring strategy for their working group's impact topic, on current and future results of monitoring and research, and on adaptive management actions that may be implemented in the future. Any and all participants can join a working group or the working group mailing list at any time by contacting Adaptive Management Coordinator, Alicia Murphy, at (307) 344-2627 or alicia_murphy@nps.gov.

Adaptive Management Team –The Adaptive Management Team is the broader public engagement body that encompasses all working groups, and will provide feedback on the overall Adaptive Management Program and the Adaptive Management Plan drafts. The team is composed of the Adaptive Management Program Coordinator, all working group leads, working group participants and other interested parties. The Team will focus on the Adaptive Management Program in its entirety, and will meet regularly to coordinate across impact topics, and to provide feedback to the NPS on Adaptive Management Program operations. The team will discuss the results of monitoring, how those results are related to the impacts that were described in the final Plan, and, if warranted, discuss potential adaptive changes that may be considered by the NPS. Participants can join the Adaptive Management Team and Team mailing list at any time by contacting Adaptive Management Coordinator, Alicia Murphy, at (307) 344-2627 or alicia_murphy@nps.gov.

Expectations for Participation

- Participants represent themselves, the interest group, or government for which they are listed, and are responsible for keeping that group informed.
- Participants commit to being prepared for and to participating in all working group meetings to the fullest extent possible. These responsibilities include:
 - Attending the majority of working group meetings (NPS anticipated each group will have 3 meetings minimum before the June 2014 Team meeting)
 - Preparing for meetings by reviewing all advance meeting materials sent by the working group leads and/or the Adaptive Management Program Coordinator
 - Bringing relevant information, issues and concerns to the table during meetings
 - Following through on NPS staff requests for information and assignments when necessary
 - Reviewing and commenting on meeting minutes
 - Reviewing and providing comments to working group lead on Monitoring Strategy
- Other public agency staff who participate in the Working Groups agree to share relevant information and respond to information requests by the NPS in a timely manner.
- Participants agree to treat each other with respect throughout the process. They will listen to each other to seek to understand the other's perspective, even if they disagree. One person will speak at a time. Members will participate fully in letting the group know their perspective. At the same time, members will respect time constraints and will share the speaking time with others.

III. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Decision-Making

- Ultimate decision-making authority for the winter use Adaptive Management Program rests with the National Park Service. Factors such as staff time, NPS research budget, and overall Yellowstone National Park priorities may impact the extent to which this plan can be adopted. Additionally, park management will decide what changes need to be made in the event that monitoring reveals that impacts to park resources have exceeded the levels established in the 2013 final Plan/SEIS.

Open, Respectful, and Inclusive Process

- All Working Group meetings will be open to the public.
- Participants can join a working group or the working group mailing list at any time by contacting Adaptive Management Coordinator, Alicia Murphy, at (307) 344-2627 or alicia_murphy@nps.gov.
- All participants agree to maintain the respectful tone at all meetings and outside all meetings, including all e-mail correspondence. Any reporting to constituents, speaking to the press or other discussion of the meetings will focus on issues, not on individuals.

IV. COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Resources and Commitments

- The WUAMP webpage (<http://www.nps.gov/yell/parkmgmt/wuamp.htm>) will serve as the central clearinghouse for information about working group activities and the winter use adaptive management process. A section of the WUAMP web page (<http://www.nps.gov/yell/parkmgmt/ampgrp.htm>) will be dedicated to the working groups, and will contain up-to-date content including working group meeting dates, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, supplemental information and other resources such as adaptive management plan drafts as these documents become available.
- The NPS commits to regularly communicating with all working group participants, to keeping the WUAMP and WUAMP working group webpages up to date, to sharing information as needed and in a timely manner, and to ensuring that the working groups achieve their objectives.

V. SCHEDULE AND TIMELINE

Schedule

1. Early January 2014 Working Group Email Announcement that includes working group participant lists, Working Group Guidelines and information on the state of the science for each resource impact topic.
2. January 2014 Kick-Off Call to discuss working group strategy and scheduling for 2014, and to take questions and comments on the working group guidelines.
3. Monthly Team Coordination Calls (Feb. 2014-July 2014) facilitated by Rebecca Garvoille
 - a. Brief 10-minute Working Group report-outs by 6 (six) NPS leads:

- i. What are you working on? What have your discussions focused on and what were the outcomes? Where are you in the process?
 - ii. What do you need from me and/or the larger group? More coordination with other groups? More information? Feedback?
 - iii. What do you have planned for the next month?
 - b. One to two, 30-minute issue discussions that require attention from and coordination with the larger adaptive management team, as needed.
- 4. Working Group Meetings - at least three one-hour meetings from Feb. 2014-July 2014. (Scheduling up to the discretion of each working group but needs to be communicated to the Adaptive Management Program Coordinator). The suggested focus of these three meetings is as follows:
 - a. Meeting #1: Discuss and Prioritize Current Monitoring and Research Needs
 - b. Meeting #2: Discuss and Define Monitoring and Research Studies
 - c. Meeting #3: Review and Discuss Draft Monitoring Strategy
- 5. Adaptive Management Program Team Meeting in Wyoming (June 2014)

Timeline

Task	Jan. 2014	Feb. 2014	March 2014	April 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	Aug. 2014
Working Group Guidelines Distributed to Participants and NPS Staff								
Working Group Kick-Off Conference Call								
Monthly Team Coordination Calls								
Task	Jan. 2014	Feb. 2014	March 2014	April 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	Aug. 2014
Working Group Meetings (3 minimum)								
Deadline #1: Provide Statement of Monitoring and Research Needs								
Deadline #2: Define Draft Monitoring Strategy								
Deadline #3: Distribute Draft Monitoring Strategy to Working Group for Review and Comment								
Adaptive Management Program Team Meeting								
Deadline #4: Deliver Draft Monitoring Strategy to AMP Coordinator								
AMP Coordinator Finalizes Draft AM Plan								
Release of Draft AM Plan to Public								