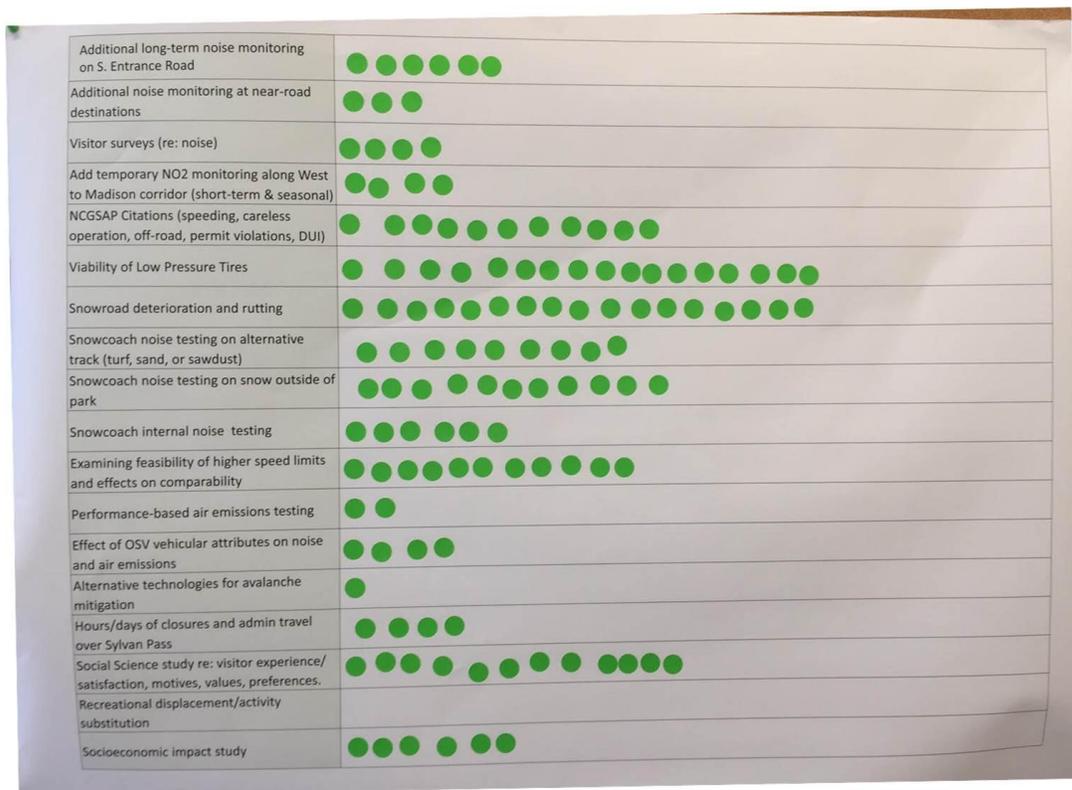


Winter Use Adaptive Management Public Meeting Notes
Group Exercise and Discussion around Prioritization of Suggested New Metrics
August 10, 2015
West Yellowstone, Montana

In the afternoon portion of the public meeting, participants were asked to consider new metrics or topics suggested by working group members in the Draft Adaptive Management Plan. Participants individually scored suggested metrics/topics based on importance, feasibility, measurability, and urgency, and then placed “sticky dots” on a poster next to the top seven metrics/topics that they scored highest. The result is shown below; the metrics/topics most popular among participants have the most sticky dots next to them. This exercise was not a vote but was used as a conversation starter. The prioritization exercise was followed by a group discussion in which individuals were asked to share with the group why they scored various metrics/topics higher than others. For more information the metric prioritization tool, see pages 59-60 in the Draft Adaptive Management Plan.

The result of the sticky dot exercise is shown below, followed by notes from the group discussion.



Snowroad Deterioration and Rutting

- This topic is important because the condition of the road is the basis for everything we do.
- The condition of the snowroad affects so many other things; is important for safety, emissions, noise, etc.

Viability of Low Pressure Tires

- We’ve seen good progress with low pressure tires, but we need to test them out under a wider variety of snow depths and conditions

Social Science Study/Studies

- The NPS has received the most comments on the Human Dimensions chapter of the draft plan. Many think it should be more focused and directly address specific questions around winter use. We can also use social science to support other impact topics.
- We have a new social scientist on staff, Ryan Atwell (Ryan_Atwell@nps.gov). Ryan can help guide us through the development of more specific questions, if that's what we would like this chapter to do, and develop methodology to answer them. Email Ryan if you have ideas or would like to be part of this working group (contributing ideas doesn't necessarily sign you up for the working group).

Speed Limits

- Some have expressed interest in examining higher speed limits for bombardier snowcoaches in less developed parts of the park. This would help both drivers (driver fatigue) and passengers (better visitor experience) given the long distances of these trips.
- Question as to whether Xanterra will be bringing their bombs up to new BAT standards: Xanterra may keep some.
- A change to snowcoach speed limits would require a change to the final Rule and some level of NEPA.
- The NPCA is concerned about discussing changes to the final Rule at this stage after only one year of implementation (and a low snow year). Advocates for getting a few more years of Rule implementation under our belt and continuing to collect data.

The Non-Commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program (NCGSAP)

- Concern that the draft plan states that the NPS will evaluate the NCGSAP for continuation or termination after three years of data collection; this would be capricious.
 - Three years of data may be premature; the NPS will ensure this program is no more impactful than commercially guided trips but will look at trends over time to ensure an accurate and fair comparison.
- Suggestion that the NCGSAP allow only one permit per person per season to afford more people the opportunity to enter under this program.
- The BAT language needs to be clearer to ensure everyone is aware of the need to rent BAT sleds and to ensure people obtaining permits are aware of the rental costs.
- The NCGSAP working group is concerned that people are securing a permit for more days than they are utilizing, resulting in unused days. A progressive permit fee could be a better solution (i.e. the user would pay more for a longer trip) to incentivize people to only reserve days they plan to use.
 - The NPS may look at changes this year, recognizing that the lottery is not far away. Could make additional fee changes in the future.
 - Concern that the program is already expensive, don't want to increase cost too much.
- Several Wyoming snowmobilers were very happy with this program and their trips last winter.
- Some rangers were not particularly accommodating of NCGSAP.
 - There were growing pains educating NPS about this program and we'll work to continually improve.
- It would be helpful if ranger staff could print or access permits and other required documentation ahead of time.