



Update: Draft Range of Alternatives and Scoping Results

New Long-Term Winter Use
Plan and EIS
Yellowstone National Park

August 2010





Why a New Plan?



- Interim plan expires at end of 2010-2011 winter season.
- Previous long-term plans rejected by courts.
- A decision is needed on the long-term direction for winter use in the park.



New Long-Term Plan: Scoping



- Public Scoping occurred between January 29, 2010 and March 30, 2010.
- Scoping is an opportunity for the public to provide early ideas about purpose for the plan, need for the plan, objectives, and alternatives that should be considered.
- The NPS received 9,099 scoping comments. The NPS used the scoping comments to make modify the objectives and to develop the draft range of alternatives.



Alternatives

- Where Purpose and Need define “the problems,” Alternatives are different ways to solve the problems
- Alternatives are the “heart” of the NEPA environmental planning process
- They provide a full range of options for decision makers





Developing a Range of Alternatives

- Alternatives must meet all objectives to a large degree and resolve the purpose of and need for action
- Alternatives are within stated constraints, including NPS policies
- They must be reasonable





Alternatives must be reasonable...



- Economically and technically feasible
- Display common sense
- Meet the objectives of taking action
- Not necessarily the cheapest, easiest, or favorite solution



How Alternatives are Developed



Review of NPS Organic Act, NPS Management Policies, Other Related Federal Requirements



Review of Park's Enabling Legislation, Purpose and Significance



Develop Purpose, Need, and Objectives



Develop Range of Alternatives based on Federal Laws and Policies, **Public Input (Scoping)**, Science, and Practical Management Experience



Alternatives must include...



“No Action”

- Means no snowmobile or snowcoach access after interim rule expires (2011).
- Alternatives are compared to No Action (the baseline) to determine both beneficial and adverse effects.

Alternative 1 is “No Action” – No Snowmobile/Snowcoach Use

- After the 2010/2011 winter season, no public use of over-snow vehicles (OSV) would be permitted in Yellowstone.
- Only non-motorized winter access into the park (on foot, ski, and snowshoe) would continue.



Alternative 2: Continue Snowmobile/Snowcoach Use at 2008 Plan Limits



- Winter access to the park via snowmobiles and snowcoaches would continue under present limits: up to 318 snowmobiles and 78 snowcoaches per day.
- All current OSV requirements would continue, including entry only with OSV guides, restrictions on hours of operation, and only snowmobiles that meet “Best Available Technology” (BAT) requirements.
- BAT also would be developed and implemented for snowcoaches by 2014/2015 season.



Alternative 3: Return Snowmobile/Snowcoach Use to 2004 Plan Limits

- Snowmobile and snowcoach use levels would be allowed to increase to the levels set in the 2004 plan – up to 720 snowmobiles and 78 snowcoaches per day.
- All current OSV requirements would continue, the same as under alternative 2, above, including development and implementation of BAT for snowcoaches by 2014/2015.





Alternative 4: Mixed-Use: Snowcoaches, Snowmobiles, and Wheeled Vehicles (Road Plowing)



- Visitors could enter Yellowstone in the winter by multiple motorized methods.
- The roads from West Yellowstone and Mammoth Hot Springs to Old Faithful would be plowed for park access in wheeled, commercial, multipassenger vehicles (buses and vans).
- The South Entrance road would be groomed for use by up to 30 snowcoaches and 100 snowmobiles per day, all required to be BAT.
- The East Entrance to the park (Sylvan Pass) would be closed to OSV use. Nonmotorized winter access would continue.



Alternative 5: Transition to BAT Snowcoaches Only



- Motorized access to the park would be in BAT snowcoaches only. Snowmobiles would gradually be phased out, beginning in the 2014/2015 season, when all snowcoaches would be required to meet BAT standards.
- Snowcoaches would replace snowmobiles within a five-year period (depending on snowcoach user demand).
- This alternative initially provides for both snowmobile and snowcoach access under present levels – 318 snowmobiles and 78 snowcoaches per day.
- After the 2014/2015 season, snowcoach numbers would be allowed to increase to 120 per day, with a corresponding decrease in the number of snowmobiles during the five-year phase-out period.



Alternative 6: Implement Variable Management

- OSV and visitor use would be managed for a greater variety of winter experiences by setting times and places for higher and lower levels of use, including additional opportunities for undisturbed skiing and snowshoeing.
- OSV entries into Yellowstone would have a winter season limit of up to 32,000 snowmobiles and 4,600 snowcoaches, and a daily limit of up to 540 snowmobiles and 78 snowcoaches.
- Up to 25 percent of snowmobile entries would be available for unguided use.





Project Schedule

- Scoping: January – March 2010
- Draft EIS and Proposed Rule on Public Review:
March - April 2011
- Issue Record of Decision and Final Rule:
October 2011
- Decision Implemented: December 2011





For More Information:

- NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment Web Site (PEPC):
 - PEPC: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>
 - Select “Yellowstone NP”
 - Select “Winter Use Plan”
- Yellowstone’s Winter Planning Web Page:
 - Yellowstone’s Web Page: www.nps.gov/yell
 - Select: “Future of Winter Use”
 - Go to: “A New Winter Use Plan: How You Can Participate...”
 - Select “More”





Thank You for
Participating in this
Winter Use Planning
Webinar