



Dixie National Forest
Forest Service
U.S. Department of
Agriculture

Multi-use Visitor Path

Bryce Canyon National Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



October 2014

PROJECT NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT AND DISTRICT RANGER

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the National Park Service (NPS) and United States Forest Service (USFS), we are pleased to share with you the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Multi-use Visitor Path at Bryce Canyon National Park and Dixie National Forest. This newsletter will introduce you to the alternatives we considered to relieve safety issues for all visitors who use nonmotorized transportation to experience the park and forest areas near Bryce Canyon City. The agencies' preferred alternative reflects many of the ideas you shared with us early in the planning process. Now we invite you to review the EA and let us know what you think.

To hear more about the project, please join us for a public open house on Tuesday, October 14, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Bryce Canyon City Public Safety Building, 700 West 100 North, Bryce Canyon City, UT. You will have the opportunity to discuss the EA and alternatives in more depth and provide comments directly to NPS and USFS personnel. Through November 3, you may also submit your comments on the EA online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/brca> or mail them to the park or forest.

We welcome your continued participation in this effort, as together we shape the future management of these significant public lands. If you have questions at any time during this process, please contact Dan Cloud, Bryce Canyon National Park, at Daniel_Cloud@nps.gov or (435) 834-4720. You may also contact Nick Glidden, Dixie National Forest, at nvglidden@fs.fed.us or (435) 865-3747.

Sincerely,

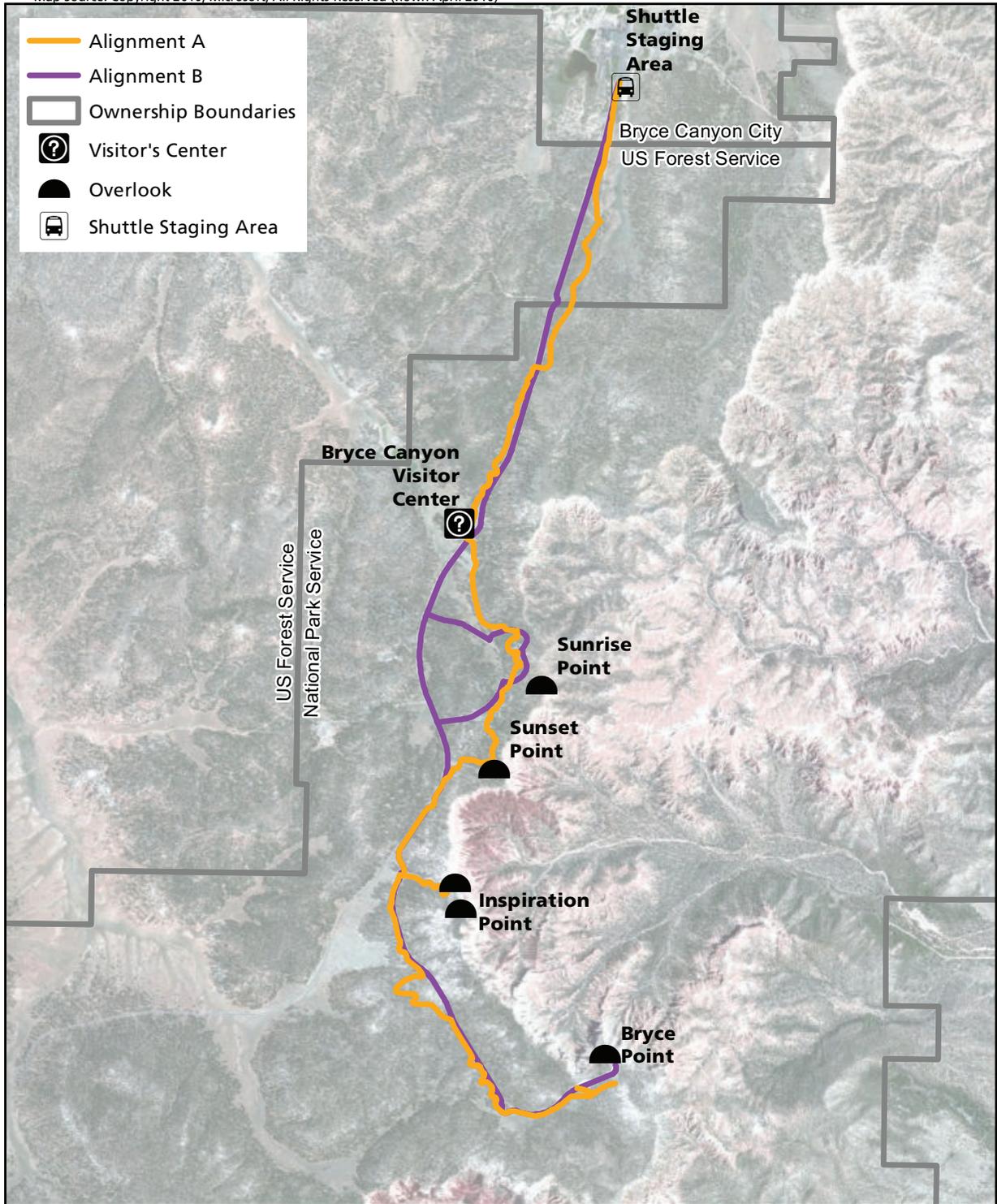
Jeff Bradybaugh, Superintendent
Bryce Canyon National Park

Paul H. Hancock, District Ranger
Powell Ranger District,
Dixie National Forest



ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENTS

Map Source: Copyright 2010, Microsoft, All Rights Reserved (flown April 2010)



ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The park developed two action alternatives to respond to the project purpose to relieve safety issues for visitors of all ages who choose to use nonmotorized transportation to experience the park, adjacent USFS areas, and Bryce Canyon City.

No-action Alternative

The proposed multi-use visitor path project would not be constructed under the No-action Alternative. Congestion, user conflicts, and visitor and transportation safety issues in the park would continue and could worsen as visitation increases. Bicyclists and pedestrians would continue to share State Route 63 and the main park road with motorized vehicles. Because the path would not be built, much of the vegetation and soil in the park and forest would remain undisturbed, although social trailing would likely continue in high visitor use areas of the park.

Alternative Alignment A – The Preferred Alternative

Alternative Alignment A would run approximately 7.3 miles from the shuttle staging area in Bryce Canyon City to Bryce Point in the park. Approximately 12 rest areas would be developed along the length of the path. This preferred alternative alignment would generally parallel State Route 63 and the main park road while providing separation between users and vehicles to improve safety. The path would provide maximum direct access to key visitor destinations such as the Lodge and Sunrise Point. Path spurs would be developed to provide access to parking areas for Sunrise Motel, Sunset cabins, Sunset Point, and Inspiration Point, as well as the future parking lot west of Bryce Point. Connections to these parking areas would accommodate visitors who bring their own bikes to the park. The path would also connect to six existing shuttle stops and three which are planned for development. The Preferred Alternative would be designed to meet the applicable accessibility guidelines.

Alternative Alignment B

Alternative Alignment B would run approximately 7.2 miles from the shuttle staging area in Bryce Canyon City to Bryce Point in the park. Approximately 9 rest areas would be developed along the length of the path. This alternative alignment would be designed as a separated path, distinct from State Route 63 and park roads; however it would remain as close to the alignment of existing roads as possible. Unlike the Preferred Alternative, Alternative Alignment B would not connect directly to key visitor destinations. Instead, it would largely rely on low-speed, existing park roads to provide this access, such as the roads branching from the main park road to Sunset Point and Inspiration Point. The path would connect to three existing shuttle stops and three which are planned for development. Alternative Alignment B would be designed to meet the applicable accessibility guidelines.



Background

In 1992, Bryce Canyon National Park recorded its first year with more than one million visitors. Since that time, the park has recorded only five years of visitation under one million. The park has seen a continuous increase in annual visitation from 2005 to 2012, with visitation exceeding 1.2 million in 2009–2013. In 2010, over 436,500 vehicles entered the park, an increase of approximately 90,000 vehicles from 2005. With such increases in visitation and traffic congestion, cyclists and pedestrians need a way to travel to and within the park that is safer, provides a better visitor experience, and promotes pedestrian and cycling travel between nearby communities and the park. The increasing number of vehicles entering Bryce Canyon National Park bring with them increasing pressure on the park's transportation system and infrastructure.

Project Goals

In consultation with partner agencies, regulatory agencies, key stakeholders, and the public, the park and forest have developed goals for the Multi-use Visitor Path project relating to visitor experience, access and connectivity, resource protection, asset management, and sustainable operations.



What's Next in the Process?

We incorporated the ideas you shared during the public scoping phase of this process. Tell us how we did.

Please see below to discover what happens next after you share your comments:

- 👉 Analyze public comments: November 2014
- 👉 Begin USFS Objection Process: November 2014
- 👉 Prepare and sign final decision document: December 2014
- 👉 Notify public of decision: December 2014
- 👉 Begin construction of the path: 2015



Example Kiosk

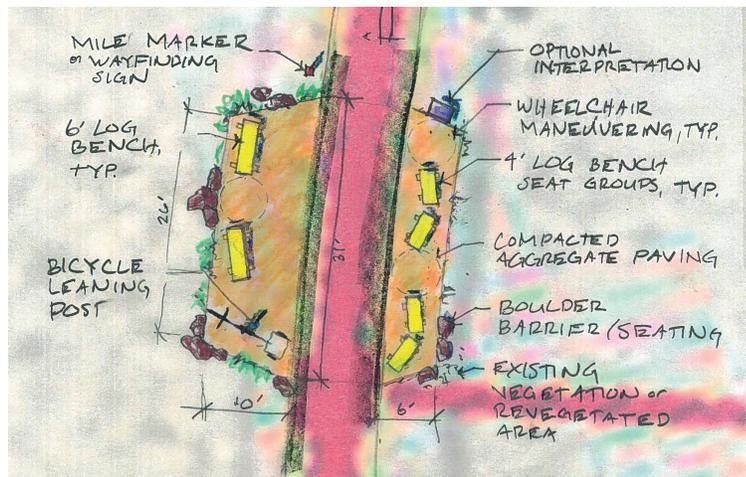
ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL ACTION ALTERNATIVES

The multi-use visitor path would be designed to improve access to park and forest lands, meet accessibility requirements, accommodate projected volumes and types of use, minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources, and avoid wetlands and Utah prairie dog colonies. Path spurs would provide visitors access to key viewpoints and other landscape features. Rest areas would be located approximately every one-half mile. There would be no change in the park entrance fee structure.

Allowable uses for the path would include running, walking, bicycling, skateboarding, skating, rollerblading, and winter uses such as skiing and snowshoeing. Mobility impairment devices would be allowed on the path, but other motorized vehicles (e.g., all-terrain vehicles) would not be allowed. Leashed dogs would also be allowed on the path. Equestrian use of the path would be prohibited.

The path would connect with the shuttle bus staging area in Bryce Canyon City to help encourage visitors to leave their vehicles outside the park, bring their own bikes, or rent bikes locally. Bike racks would also be provided at shuttle stops. The park and forest will follow and maintain compliance with current state bike helmet regulations.

Amenities such as bike racks, signs, and benches would be designed and placed at key rest area locations along the path. Wayfinding and interpretive signs along the path would maintain a consistent look and feel while also meeting NPS and USFS guidelines. Other signs such as warnings for pedestrian and vehicle crossings would be placed along the path and intersecting roads and trails to minimize potential conflicts at intersections. Advanced warning at intersections of the path with roadways would be placed in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.



Rest Area Design Concept

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK AND DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST MULTI-USE VISITOR PATH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to provide written ideas, concerns, or suggestions during the comment period for the Multi-use Visitor Path Environmental Assessment. The environmental assessment will be available for public review through November 3, 2014.

The USFS Objection Process

The Powell Ranger District of the Dixie National Forest is cooperating with the NPS in conducting the environmental analysis of the Multi-use Visitor Path project. The NPS is the lead agency, therefore the project is being conducted in accordance with NPS procedures. The proposed path crosses some lands administered by NPS and other lands administered by the USFS and each agency will issue an independent decision regarding their respective lands. Given that there will be separate decisions, and that the two agencies have different decision processes, it follows that there must also be separate avenues for the public to seek redress. For National Forest System lands, the public has the right to object to a decision. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object to USFS decisions must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 281 Subparts A and B.

Specifically, an individual or organization wishing to establish USFS objection eligibility must provide substantive comments concerning the portion of the proposed project that crosses National Forest System lands, and to do so by the closing date of the comment period. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments during the public comment period established by the responsible officials are eligible to file an objection under §218 and be involved in the formal USFS issue resolution process.

One comment period is being conducted for both NPS- and USFS-managed lands. Interested parties need only submit one written comment that can relate to only forest lands, only park lands, or both. The USFS responsible official will consider the comments and determine whether they are relevant to National Forest System lands and are eligible for the USFS's objection process.

Comments can be submitted online by visiting <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/brca>. Comments also may be sent to the park or the forest at the addresses below.

Bryce Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 640201
Bryce, UT 84764

Dixie National Forest, Powell District
225 East Center
Panguitch, UT 84759

Keep track of project status by regularly visiting <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/brca>. Thank you for participating in this important planning process!

Please note that all submissions will be made available for public inspection in their entirety. Your name and address will become part of the public record. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. Such request will be honored to the extent allowed by law.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Would you like to be added to the park's email list for upcoming events and press releases? _____

Comments:



Share Your Thoughts

Submit comments through November 3 and find periodic project updates on the park planning website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/brca>

Check back often and share your thoughts at any time.

Place
Postage
Here

**Multi-use Visitor Path Project
Bryce Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 640204
Bryce, UT 84764**