



Chapter 5 Consultation and Coordination





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INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the history of public involvement prior to and during the development of the *Draft Commercial Services Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. It summarizes coordination with federal and state agencies and tribal governments, and lists agencies, organizations and individuals that received copies of the document.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement in the planning process helps to ensure that the National Park Service understands and considers the public's interests when considering alternatives and making decisions about public lands. Public involvement activities provide the means for the public to participate in the planning process, identify issues and alternatives, and express thoughts, ideas, and concerns. Public participation helps to identify the types of actions to be included in the plan, as well as the range of alternatives and impacts that should be addressed. In addition to public involvement during the commercial services planning process, extensive opportunities were offered to the public to comment on commercial services during the development of Glacier National Park's 1999 *General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (NPS 1990c). The comments submitted during that process were also considered during development of the *Draft CSP and Draft EIS*.

The following concerns were expressed by the public during the development of the *General Management Plan and EIS* that are relevant to the *Draft CSP and Draft EIS*:

Continue Current Access and Visitor Use

An overwhelming majority of comments objected to the possibility of losing public access and visitor opportunities and strongly expressed a desire to keep the park "as it is." Most people want visitor facilities to be retained, including ... grand hotels and other lodging, and campgrounds. The majority said they would like other traditional uses of Glacier National Park to continue,...

Manage the Park to Protect Resources, While Allowing Visitor Use

Most who commented about natural and cultural resources asserted that the park's

paramount priority should be to protect these invaluable assets and lessen the impact of visitation whenever possible. They went on to say that human use consistent with preserving these resources must continue, that people are now part of Glacier's ecosystem, and that habitat can be protected without keeping people out.

Preserve Wildlife Habitat

Most respondents said that they believe that wildlife is central to a true Glacier National Park experience and that habitat should be preserved. Those who commented about wildlife also stressed the need to minimize interactions between animals and people.

Emphasize the Retention of Facilities In the Park

Commenters said that removing facilities from inside the park and replacing them outside the park would result in a loss of valued traditional visitor experience. The public generally did not favor moving facilities outside the park. (NPS 1999c, 6-8)

SCOPING FOR THE COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN

The scoping period for the *Draft CSP and Draft EIS* began with the publication of the "Notice of Intent" in the *Federal Register* on September 12, 2000. As part of the process, a scoping newsletter was made available to the public in November 2000, a Commercial Services Plan Web page was established, and five open houses were held in December 2000. The newsletter introduced the *Commercial Services Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*, explained what commercial services are and what the plan would do, and reviewed decisions reached in the 1999 *General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* regarding commercial services. The newsletter also introduced the Commercial Services Plan Web page and invited the public to attend public open houses. Individuals or groups were also invited to share comments, concerns, and ideas by using the online response form or mailing comments to the park by December 30, 2000. Meetings were held with the Blackfeet Tribal Council, private landowners in Apgar and special interest groups.

The Commercial Services Plan Web page provided the public with information on the plan and planning process, identified opportunities for the public to provide comments and ideas, and made available an online comment form.

Open houses were held in Kalispell, Missoula, Great Falls, and Browning, Montana, and in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, in December 2000. Approximately 250 people attended.

TABLE 5-1. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES FOR THE COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN

Location	Date	Number of People in Attendance
Kalispell, MT	December 4, 2000	92
Missoula, MT	December 5, 2000	43
Great Falls, MT	December 6, 2000	25
Browning, MT	December 7, 2000	31
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada	December 7, 2000	56

Over 200 comments were received from the public during the scoping period. These comments were in the form of letters, Web site responses and comments recorded at open houses. In addition, notes on public comment at the public meetings were captured on flip charts and retained as part of the record. Public comments fell into several categories.

- **Lodging Facilities**

Respondents generally said that traditional lodging experiences are important to the character of Glacier National Park and that overnight accommodations should continue to be provided in the park. Most comments supported the rehabilitation of existing lodging facilities but objected to new development in the park. Generally, comments raised objections to an increased number of rooms for overnight accommodations, but suggested small expansions of currently developed areas, such as expansions of the cabins at Rising Sun and Swiftcurrent.

Respondents favored keeping the park as it is and rehabilitating the historic lodging facilities to reflect their primary motif. The public generally said that facilities should be rehabilitated but should maintain a rustic character with few added amenities.

- **General Visitor Services**

While the majority of respondents strongly objected to the commercialization of the park in general, many comments made specific suggestions regarding visitor services. Respondents suggested adding services, such as coin-operated laundry facilities, additional shower facilities, more convenience stations, picnic tables outside the cabins at Swiftcurrent, galleries for local arts and crafts, a small-scale food/drink service at Logan Pass, and expanded services in the North Fork area. Some comments also favored limited retail sales by more than one concessioner.

- **Natural Resources**

Most people who commented on natural resources said that the park's first priority should be to protect natural resources and lessen the impact of visitation while continuing to provide visitor services. Respondents expressed concern about impacts to wildlife, habitat loss, water quality, noxious weeds management, soil compaction, and noise pollution. Commenters also said that the park must be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

- **Affordability**

Many respondents expressed concern that visitor services and facilities would become too costly. They went on to say that some facilities, such as Swiftcurrent and Granite Park Chalet, should be kept affordable. Commenters were also concerned that park entrance fees would increase as a result of hotel rehabilitation.

- **Funding**

Comments expressed a wide range of opinions regarding rehabilitation funding. Suggestions to fund rehabilitation include using taxpayer money, increasing park fees or park lodging rates, using a percentage paid by the concessioner, using private money, and using National Park Service allocated funds.

- **Guided Activities**

Most people who commented on guided activities said that group size limits should be placed on all guided activities.

- **Transportation**

Several respondents suggested that a shuttle system should be implemented in the park. Many respondents said that they would like a shuttle system that would transport hikers and visitors between visitor service areas and trailheads within the park. Other respondents favored a shuttle system that would transport visitors from areas outside of the park into the park. Participants also said that they would like the park to keep the red bus tours and to make them affordable for everyone.

- **Horses**

The majority of people who commented on horse use support public and private horseback riding facilities in the park. Most respondents expressed a desire for the park to expand the horse trail system and provide more horse facilities at campgrounds and trailheads. Several comments suggested that horse campgrounds and trails should be kept separate from general campgrounds and trails, and a few comments suggested eliminating horse traffic on trails.

- **Employee Housing**

Of the few comments received regarding employee housing, all stated it should be placed outside of the park and that no new employee housing should be constructed inside the park.

- **Campgrounds**

Comments received regarding campground facilities reflected various opinions. While some commenters said that campgrounds should remain primitive and that no additional RV sites should be added, the majority of commenters expressed a desire for campgrounds to be upgraded and expanded. Respondents suggested providing more services in campgrounds, allowing more sites for RVs, revegetating campgrounds between sites to provide privacy, and providing camping in additional areas of the park. Commenters also indicated that campground rates are too high and should be kept commensurate with facilities/services provided.

- **Chalets**

Various comments were received regarding chalets. Most of these comments supported the continued operation of chalets as they are now with the option of using Granite Park Chalet as a hiker shelter and Sperry Chalet as a full service lodging facility. However, some commenters supported repairing Granite Park Chalet as a full service chalet. A few respondents expressed concern about the impacts of chalets on wildlife and said that chalets should be phased out completely.

- **American Indians**

Comments stated that American Indians should be involved in park interpretation and commercial services. Commenters also wanted to ensure that local tribes would be allowed to use the park for religious and cultural purposes.

- **Length of Season**

While many commenters expressed concern that an extended park season would adversely impact wildlife, other respondents supported off-season use of the park. Many respondents suggested that existing roads should be groomed in the winter for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. They also suggested that winterized day lodges should be operated in at least one location on the east

side of the park and one location on the west side of the park. One commenter also said that the park should be opened for therapeutic recreation programs during the winter.

- **Boats**

The majority of people who commented on boats said that they favor small-scale boat tours and the use of private boats on park lakes. Others suggested that limits should be placed on the amount of horsepower allowed in boats that can be used in motorized use areas and that the amount of guided float trips should be reduced.

- **Fishing**

One commenter said that lakes should be stocked with fish again.

- **Bicycling**

One commenter suggested that bicycle accessibility should be maximized in developed areas.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT AND INVOLVEMENT AFTER RELEASE OF THE DRAFT COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN AND DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The *Draft Commercial Services Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement* was released to the public in May, 2003 for a 60-day review period. Comments were initially due July 30th, but due to the extreme fire season in and around the park, the comment period was extended until August 15th. Public open houses and hearings were held during the month of June in Kalispell, Missoula, Browning and Great Falls, Montana and in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. Approximately 70 people attended these meetings.

By the end of the comment period, Glacier National Park had received approximately 430 written comments, including transcripts of the testimony heard at the meetings, and comments received by telephone and email. No form letters were received. Every letter, email and transcript was numbered and read by members of the park staff. Substantive comments, as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act, are those that question either the range of alternatives or the accuracy of the information in the document, or comments that correct misinformation or offer new alternatives and issues not addressed in the draft plan. We have responded to letters that contained substantive comment in Chapter 5 Consultation and Coordination.

Most of the comments received were supportive of the Plan and preferred alternatives, with some notable exceptions. The services and preferred alternatives that drew the heaviest comment were the future of Granite Park Chalet, guided motorcycle tours, guided bicycle tours, the numbers proposed for group size on guided hikes, guided underwater diving, guided horseback rides and some of the proposals at the developed areas. Public comments are summarized below.

AGENCY COORDINATION

Agency coordination is essential for the identification of potential environmental impacts of a project and its alternatives. It also provides information regarding other agency planning efforts and proposed plans for a project area that contributes to the analysis of cumulative impacts.

Agency coordination was accomplished through correspondence, telephone communication, and review of project-related materials. Letters were sent to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Additional meetings, review and discussion have occurred with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Historic Preservation Office. All written correspondence received from agencies prior to release of the draft is contained in Appendix 5.

During the public comment period of the Draft CSP and Draft EIS, agency comments were received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. A letter was received from the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council and a meeting was held with the Council on May 1, 2003.

RECIPIENTS OF THE DRAFT COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN AND DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Elected Officials

Max Baucus, United States Senate
Conrad Burns, United States Senate
Flathead County Commissioners
Glacier County Commissioners
Judy Martz, Governor of Montana
Fred Matt, Chair, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council
James St. Goddard, Chair, Blackfeet Tribal Business Council
Dennis Rehberg, United States House of Representatives

Federal Agencies

Department of Interior, Office of the Solicitor
Flathead National Forest
Kootenai National Forest, USDA, Supervisor's Office
Lewis and Clark National Forest
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Canadian Government Agencies

Waterton Lakes National Park

State and Provincial Agencies

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana State Clearinghouse
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Organizations

Anti-Cruelty Society
Backcountry Horsemen
Browning Public County Library
Coalition for Canyon Preservation

Columbia Falls Branch Library
 Cut Bank Library
 Flathead Conventions Bureau
 Flathead County Library
 Flathead Economic Development Corporation
 Friends of the Bitterroot
 Glacier Country Regional Tourism Commission
 Glacier Natural History Association
 Glacier Park Associates
 Glacier Park Foundation
 Glacier-Waterton Visitor Association
 Great Falls Public Library
 Great Falls Tribune
 Missoula Public Library
 Montana Wilderness Association
 Montanans for Multiple Use
 National Parks Conservation Association
 Partners in Parks
 Trust for Public Lands
 Whitefish Branch Public Library
 Wild Wilderness
 Wilderness Society, Northern Rockies Regional Office

Concessioners

Belton Chalets, Inc.
 Glacier Park Boat Company
 Glacier Park, Inc.
 Glacier Wilderness Guides, Inc.
 Mule Shoe Outfitters, LLC
 Sun Tours
 Waterton Inter-Nation Shoreline Cruise Company, Ltd.

A complete listing of individuals who received a copy of the *Draft CSP and Draft EIS* is on file at Glacier National Park.

LIST OF PREPARERS

Name and Title	Responsibility/ Contribution	Education	Years Exper- ience
Architectural Research Consultants, Incorporated			
John P. Petronis, AICP, AIA, Architect/Facility Planner	CSP Purpose and Need, Site Planning, Site Alternatives Planning	M. Business Administration M. Architecture	29 years
Robert W. Robie, AIA, Architect/Facility Planner	CSP Project Overview and Coordination	M. Architecture	28 years
Andy Aguilar, Facility Planner/ Intern Architect	CSP Site Analysis, Site Alternatives Planning	M. Architecture	19 years

Name and Title	Responsibility/ Contribution	Education	Years Exper- ience
Jennifer Abbott, Technical Editor	CSP/EIS Production	M.A. English	27 years
Stephen Burstein, Planner, AICP	CSP/EIS Socioeconomic Environment, Impacts	Master of Urban and Regional Planning	18 years
Bethann McVicker, GIS Specialist	CSP/EIS GIS and Mapping Production	B. S. Anthropology	9 years
Flo Padilla, Graphics Specialist	CSP/EIS Mapping Production	A. Architectural Drafting	14 years
Jay Petronis, Assistant Graphics Professional	CSP/EIS Computer Graphics and Site Plans	B.A. Fine Arts	10 years
Janice Schmitz, Graphics Specialist	CSP/EIS Computer Graphics	B.A. Fine Arts	14 years
Cherry / See Architects			
Edith Cherry, FAIA, ASLA, Architect, Landscape Architect	Historic Structures Reports and Cultural Landscape Reports	M. Architecture	37 years
National Park Service–Glacier National Park			
Mary Riddle Cornell, Environmental Protection and Compliance Specialist	Project Leader, Plan and EIS	B.S. Environmental Studies	19 years
Jan Knox, Chief, Concessions Management	Project Leader, CSP Statement, Prescriptions and Standards, Necessary and Appropriate Services	B.S. Business Administration	23 years
Fred Babb, Chief, Project Management	Project Leader, Site Design and Analysis	B.L.A. Landscape Architecture and Planning	36 years
Tara Carolin, Ecologist	EIS Document Review and Compilation	M.S. Wildlife and Range Resources	12 years
Dave Lange, Supervisory Biologist	EIS Document Review and Compilation	B.A. Wildlife Conservation	33 years
Jennifer Asebrook, Biological Sciences Technician	EIS Vegetation, Wetlands	M.S. Plant Ecology	13 years
Gordon Dicus, Biological Sciences Technician	EIS Vegetation, Wetlands, Aquatics	M.S. Wildlife Biology in Progress B.S. Biology	5 years
Kimberly D. Frymire, Biological Sciences Technician	EIS Vegetation	B.S. Biology B.A.E. Secondary Education	5 years
Steve Gniadek, Wildlife Biologist	EIS Wildlife	M.S. Wildlife Biology	31 years

Name and Title	Responsibility/ Contribution	Education	Years Experi- ence
Meg Hahr, Biological Sciences Technician	EIS Wildlife, Aquatics	M.S. Environmental Studies	6 years
Joyce Lapp, Supervisory Horticulturist	EIS Vegetation	B.S. Soils Science B.S. Horticulture	17 years
Dr. Leo F. Marnell, Senior Scientist	EIS Aquatics	Ph.D. Aquatic Ecology	30 years
William Michels, Biologist	EIS Aquatics	B.A. Park Administration	32 years
Rick Yates, Biological Science Technician	EIS Wildlife	M.S. Wildlife Biology	23 years
Richard Menicke, GIS Manager	GIS Mapping Support	M.S. Environmental Sciences	12 years
Lon Johnson, Cultural Resources Specialist	Cultural Resources	B. Architecture	24 years
Jack Potter, Assistant Chief Resources Management	EIS Document Review	B.A. Political Science B.S. Forestry	34 Years
Allison Rowland, Biological Sciences Technician	EIS Document Preparation	M.S. Biology	1.5 years
John Waller, Wildlife Biologist	EIS Wildlife	M.S. Fish and Wildlife Management	15 years
Dekker, Perich & Sabatini			
Michael Burkett, AIA, Architect	CSP Site and Contextual Analysis and Design	B. Architecture	14 years
Paul Cavin, Intern Architect	CSP Site and Contextual Analysis	B.S. Concentration in Architecture	9 years
Lynn McClain, AIA, Architect	CSP Design, Planning, Presentation	B. Architecture	32 years
Patti Van Leer, Presentation Specialist	CSP Graphics and Presentation	M. Architecture	19 years
Johns A.S.L.A.			
Robert Johns, ASLA, Landscape Architect	CSP Site Analysis, Site Alternatives Planning	B. Landscape Architecture	43 years
Land & Water Consulting, Inc.			
Barry Dutton, Certified and Registered Professional Soil Scientist	EIS Soils	M.S. Forestry and Soil Science in Progress B.S. Forestry	28 years
Larry Read & Associates			
Larry D. Read, PE, Civil Engineer	CSP Utilities	B.S. Civil Engineering	19 years

Name and Title	Responsibility/ Contribution	Education	Years Experi- ence
Marron and Associates, Inc.			
Ken Marron, Senior Environmentalist/ Planner	NEPA Specialist, EIS Project Overview	M.C.R.P. Environmental Planning	42 years
Shari Grossarth	EIS Project Leader, Environmental Consequences	B.S. Conservation Biology	4 years

CONTRIBUTORS

National Park Service–Glacier National Park

Michael Holm, Superintendent
 Suzanne Lewis, Superintendent until Feb. 02
 Pete Hart, Acting Superintendent, Feb. 02-August 02
 Jerry O'Neal, Assistant Superintendent
 Denis Davis, Assistant Superintendent until Feb. 02
 Gayle Burgess, Park Architect
 Jerry Burgess, Park Civil Engineer
 Jack Gordon, Park Landscape Architect
 Jack Polzin, Section 106 Review
 Dave Dahlen, Chief of Interpretation
 Bill Hayden, Interpretation
 Dayna Hudson, Project Management Assistant
 John Kilpatrick, Chief of Facilities Management
 Bernadette Lovato, Concessions Management
 Karene Manus, Concessions Management

Charlie Logan, Park Ranger

Magi Malone, Librarian

Kris Meredith, Concessions Management

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National Park Service–Intermountain Region

Chris Marvel, Lead Planner

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GLACIER NATIONAL PARK RESPONSES TO SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN AND DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

We received 431 comment letters and testimony at public hearings on the *Draft Commercial Services Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. All comment letters were reviewed to determine which comments were substantive.

Comments, as defined in NPS-12: NEPA Compliance Guidelines, are considered substantive if they:

- Question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information in the environmental impact statement
- Question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of the environmental analysis
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the environmental impact statement
- Cause changes or revisions in the proposal

Since many letters from individuals contained identical substantive comments, we have summarized them in the section, “Grouped Responses to Individual Comments.” Each comment is followed by our response.

Following the grouped responses is the section, “Responses to Individual Comments” with facsimiles of the letters we received from federal agencies, elected officials, state agencies, tribal governments, organizations, concessioners, other businesses and special interest groups that contained substantive comment. Beside each reproduced letter or hearing testimony is our response.

Where appropriate, changes were made to the *Final Commercial Services Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement*. If changes were made in response to a comment, they are noted in the response.

GROUPED RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

Granite Park Chalet

1. ***We cannot visit Granite Park Chalet under limited services because we cannot carry in the equipment we would need for an overnight stay. Leaving the chalet as a hiker shelter makes it less accessible to many visitors including families, the elderly, city dwellers and the less able.***

The National Park Service received many comments regarding the inability of individuals to carry full packs into Granite Park Chalet, revealing some confusion about what the level of service is that is currently offered at the Chalet. There are currently several options for a trip to Granite Park. Linens may be rented at the chalet, which negates the need to carry in your own bedding. There is some food (in the form of backpacker meals) available for purchase, and the kitchen is completely equipped for cooking. Many comments from guests at the chalet expressed surprise and delight at the availability of food and kitchen supplies. Therefore, guests do not need to bring bedding or cooking supplies, and may only need to bring a minimal amount of food and their own personal gear similar to what they would need at Sperry Chalet. Additional transport services may be arranged with a concessioner to pack personal gear in for guests. A guided hike option including

meal preparation is also available to visitors. These options eliminate the need for guests to carry heavy packs to the chalet for an overnight experience, and make the chalet more accessible to less able visitors. A backcountry facility by definition may not be totally accessible to all people. There are other overnight facilities in the park that provide full services for guests, but part of the experience of the backcountry chalets is the effort to get to them. The National Park Service wishes to provide a full range of opportunities for visitors to experience the park. The lower cost of Granite Park Chalet is considered by many to be an attractive option for a backcountry experience.

2. *Glacier National Park should establish an affordable chalet system or hiker huts throughout the park.*

It is unfortunate that so many of the historic chalets that once existed in Glacier National Park have been removed, torn down or burned. Most of the park's backcountry is proposed wilderness, and is managed as such. National Park Service management policy prohibits the construction of permanent structures in proposed or designated wilderness.

3. *The park should build another structure for a hostel at Granite Park, and return the chalet to full services.*

Other than addressing the utility system, the National Park Service does not think it is appropriate to construct new structures and expand the capacity at Granite Park.

4. *We were told that if Granite Park Chalet was not converted to a full service facility, it would be closed down completely.*

This information is incorrect.

5. *The Granite Park Chalet experience as a hiker shelter is lacking because the traditional full-service operation included staff trained to offer opportunities for environmental education.*

We appreciate your comments, and those of many others, regarding the need for educational services at the chalet. Under the terms of the next concession contract, the concessioner will offer educational opportunities at the chalet. These opportunities will be informal and formal.

6. *The park should return the chalet to providing full service or its integrity as a national historic landmark will be affected.*

The national historic landmark nomination was based on architectural significance and not on the level of services provided.

7. *The park should assess a surcharge for visitors to Granite Park Chalet to fund the wastewater disposal system in order to provide full services.*

A surcharge to fund waste disposal would be impractical. For a surcharge to fully fund the proposed improvements in alternative B, at a total cost of \$1.65 million, over 20 years, over the 2,000 people that stay there each summer, the additional cost per person would be about \$50-\$60 per night. In addition to other costs per night at the hiker shelter, the cost would be approximately \$130 per person or \$260 per couple. A period of 20 years would be required to accumulate the capital to fund the improvements. With alternative C, returning to full service, at a total cost of \$2.38 million, the additional charge would be about \$65-\$70 per night, for a total cost of approximately \$400 per night per couple. Furthermore, the funds for these improvements must be provided up front. It should also be noted that currently, the National Park Service subsidizes the utility costs at both chalets by roughly two-thirds.

- 8. *The preferred alternative for Granite Park Chalet is flawed, since the 1993 Environmental Assessment stated that “because of elimination of food and linen service, certain values imbued in the historic visitor use experience would be lost.”***

Under the preferred alternative, linens and some food would continue to be available for purchase by visitors to Granite Park Chalet. We do not feel that these services have been eliminated to the extent of losing “certain values imbued in the historic visitor-use experience,” as you mention.

- 9. *There is no evidence that the quantity of gray water needed for full service could not be handled by the current system or a reasonably priced, revised system.***

We received the compliance order from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality on October 27, 1992, stating that the existing wastewater treatment system was inadequate for the present level of use by both staff and guests, thus forcing us to close the chalet.

- 10. *The comments from the 1993 Environmental Assessment for the Management of Backcountry Chalets should be incorporated into the current Environmental Impact Statement.***

The 1993 Chalet Environmental Assessment was prepared because at that time, it appeared that the National Park Service might be forced to close the chalets to the public. Alternatives to closure were assessed in that EA. Many comments urged the National Park Service to find a solution that would keep the chalets open and retain a highly valued, traditional visitor experience in Glacier National Park. At that time, the public comments overwhelmingly supported a full-service chalet as an alternative to closure. The public comment was based on information presented in the EA on cost and resource impacts which have been determined to be incorrect. New information exists, including the impacts of rehabilitating the chalets, and costs have increased significantly. It would not be appropriate to use public comments that are based on inaccurate or outdated information. However, it should not be assumed that the National Park Service did not consider the comments received on the 1993 EA. While the planning team may not have read each of the letters, many individuals who work at the park participated in that effort and in turn participated in developing the commercial services plan. They brought background and knowledge to the project as we proceeded.

- 11. *We were misled regarding fund-raising for restoring both chalets to full services. Donations were made to “Save the Chalets” with the understanding that we were contributing towards rehabilitating the chalets to offer full services.***

The Save the Chalets foundation (a group that was formed by committed members of the public) pledged to raise \$1.2 million for the \$2-million planned rehabilitation of Granite Park Chalet, but was only able to contribute \$37,000 after expenses. Combined with additional funds provided by the National Park Service, there were only enough resources to rehabilitate Sperry Chalet to a full-service facility and to complete some structural repairs at Granite Park Chalet, costing \$4.5 million to date. Granite Park was reopened to provide overnight accommodations with common cooking facilities.

- 12. *Converting Granite Park Chalet to a full-service hotel is inappropriate or is not in keeping with the General Management Plan, the Organic Act, or the Endangered Species Act. It would degrade the environment, impact wilderness, cause the park to lose historical resources and use limited funds poorly.***

This is not our preferred alternative; however, the General Management Plan recognized that operation of the backcountry chalets is an appropriate use of these historic buildings. The 1974

Wilderness Plan and Recommendation for Glacier National Park created 25-acre enclaves around the chalets within the proposed wilderness.

The Organic Act requires the National Park Service to protect cultural as well as natural resources. Furthermore, the chalet is a national historic landmark. See the response above.

We are consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assure that we are in compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

The National Park Service preferred alternative would have fewer impacts than the full service alternative, because full service would require a much larger wastewater treatment system. Either of the alternatives preserves and protects these national historic landmark properties. The preferred alternative costs less than the full service alternative.

13. What is the official position of the Glacier Fund concerning the status of Granite Park Chalet?

The Glacier Fund is not an advocacy organization, and the board does not take positions on issues; rather, it assists the park in fulfilling its mission by funding projects requested by the park.

Commercially Guided Day Hiking

14. Group size limits for guided hikes are too large, especially for boat tour groups on specified trails.

For commercially guided hikes, a 12-person group size would apply to trails in the backcountry zone. Larger group sizes would be permitted on trails in the Day Use Zone. The guided hike group size limits proposed in the plan were derived from park experience, the zone prescriptions in the General Management Plan, and recreational literature. The park feels these limits would ensure a high quality experience. Group sizes of 50 for Grinnell Lake, Grinnell Glacier, and St. Mary Falls Trails would continue to be permitted to accommodate all potential boat tour passengers in order to allow the boat concession to continue to offer guided hikes as part of the service.

15. There should be limits on group sizes for guided backpacking trips.

The commercial services plan did not propose any changes to guided backpacking services. These services are currently subject to restrictions on group size; the number of people in a guided backpacking trip is limited to eight per site including the guide, with occasional exceptions made for groups of up to 10 during the shoulder season. There is also a limit on the total number of people per night allowed in the park with the guided backpacking concession.

Guided Underwater Diving Tours

16. The park should limit the number of underwater diving tour groups per day per site.

The National Park Service would carefully consider the potential for impacts to park resources when developing an operating plan and contract for guided diving tours. Limits on the number of groups per day per site would be included in the operation plan for this service.

17. *What is the estimate for the number of certified divers who would come to a remote park to dive?*

There are a number of individuals who come to the park for recreational diving; the demand for a commercial guided diving tour service is unknown. The park was asked to consider this activity by local diving companies in the past.

18. *Guided underwater diving tours would represent a tremendous pressure on park resources with additional boat traffic and pollution, and it would be difficult to enforce protective measures.*

We disagree that the tours would represent tremendous pressure on park resources. The contract for such services would be designed to protect park resources, and we do not anticipate a large demand. The park would also develop an operation plan for guided diving tours to protect resources.

19. *Guided underwater diving tours would not appeal to many visitors, and cold waters pose dangers to those who participate.*

The National Park Service included guided underwater diving tours because local diving companies expressed interest in them. There are cultural resources submerged in the lakes that are of great interest to people involved in this activity. The park would take economic feasibility and safety into consideration when developing contracts for concessioners to offer underwater diving tours.

Public Showers

20. *It is unclear which campgrounds would get public showers.*

We would determine where public showers would be added during the design phase. Locations would depend on funding and need for the service.

Boat Tours and Transportation (Boat Taxi)

21. *The park should exclude all motorized boats except the DeSmet, and the DeSmet should be required to have the cleanest, most efficient motor possible.*

This exclusion was considered but rejected by the General Management Plan. Boats with motors greater than 10 horsepower are restricted to four lakes in the park that are not within the proposed wilderness. Three of these lakes have a long history of motorboat use. Motorboat use on these lakes is regulated through maximum noise thresholds (82 decibels at 25 meters [36 CFR §3.7]), “no wake” zones, and seasonal closures to protect resource values. Many of the tour boats currently operating on park lakes have a long history of providing tours in the park. Your suggestion for a clean, efficient motor will be taken into consideration. The concessioner currently uses bio fuels in the tour boats.

22. *There should be limits on the total number of boats allowed per day at each location.*

Alternative B for boat tours would add vessels at Lake McDonald and Two Medicine Lake. The commercial services plan addresses only commercial boat tours. At this time, the National Park Service does not limit the number of private boats on park lakes, and this is outside the scope of

the commercial services plan. There are limits on the numbers of boat tours that are offered each day.

23. *The park should add a water taxi at Waterton Lake.*

There are currently vessels that provide boat tours and transportation on Waterton Lake.

Guided Interpretive Motor Vehicle Tours and Public Transportation Service

24. *The park should encourage use of the red buses to lessen the impacts of private vehicles in the park.*

The red buses have been recently renovated and are in use by the transportation concessioner as tour buses. The concessioner would be the main source of promotion of this service, although the park visitor centers do offer information on bus tours. Other shuttle buses currently provide a less expensive option for shuttling hikers to trailheads. The park will implement an optional shuttle service during the rehabilitation of the Going-to-the-Sun Road that should reduce the impacts of private vehicles.

25. *Commercial shuttling of private vehicles should be restricted from the corridor between Avalanche Creek and Sunrift Gorge and from Logan Pass due to congestion at these parking lots.*

This alternative was considered but rejected because the service was proposed to allow hikers to complete loops by accessing one trailhead and coming out at another. Several popular trails are along the corridor. In addition, this service could result in reduced congestion by allowing hikers to park only one car instead of two.

Commercially Guided Bicycle Tours

26. *Do not impose further restrictions on bicycle tours or cycling.*

The plan addresses only commercial guided bicycle tours, not private cycling.

The National Park Service proposes to set a limit to prevent group sizes and the number of groups from becoming excessively large and hazardous, given the traffic congestion and safety issues with traveling the Going-to-the-Sun Road. The Road is maintained at its historical width, which makes bicycle and automobile use tight. There are restrictions on vehicle length and width. There is an hour restriction for bicycles already in place: during the summer season, the Road from Apgar to Sprague Creek and from Logan Creek to Logan Pass is closed to bicycles between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

27. *According to the Uniform Vehicle Code, bicycles ARE vehicles.*

The text in Chapter 2 has been changed to read, “The limits on size would be established to ensure a quality visitor experience on these tours and avoid conflicts between **motorized** vehicles and bicycles.”

28. *The plan should indicate that guided bicycle tour regulations would not affect private bicyclists.*

The commercial services plan addresses only commercial services in the park, not private recreation. Private bicyclists would not be impacted by the preferred alternative which limits

group sizes and the number of commercial tour groups that can cross the Going-to-the-Sun Road per day. The text in the plan has been changed to emphasize this.

Guided Motorcycle Tours

29. Guided motorcycle tours would create too much noise to be acceptable in the park. Guided motorcycle tours would create noise and air pollution, and the park could not effectively manage large groups of motorcycles. Guided motorcycle tours should be subject to noise restrictions.

While we initially determined that guided motorcycle tours met at least one of the criteria for “necessary” and all of the criteria for “appropriate” to be considered as a commercial service, we have reconsidered our ability to manage this service in a manner that meets all of the appropriate criteria. In particular, it would be difficult to manage the cumulative noise level from groups of motorcycles in these tours in order to prevent a deleterious impact on the experiences of others using the park. In such an instance, the service would fail to meet the criteria to consider it an appropriate commercial visitor service. Although individual motorcycles are and will continue to be welcome to use the park roads, there is limited support for guided group motorcycle tours as a commercial visitor service. Guided motorcycle tours do not meet the necessary and appropriate criteria and are no longer being considered in this plan.

30. The park should limit the number of guided motorcycle tour groups allowed per day.

Guided motorcycle tours do not meet the necessary and appropriate criteria and are no longer being considered in this plan.

Developed Area Alternatives

31. Lake McDonald Lodge should be open during the winter for overnight and day use. Winter trailhead facilities are needed at Lake McDonald Lodge and Rising Sun.

In the 1999 *General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, the park did not select the alternative that included providing overnight accommodations in the winter because of questionable economic viability, and the potential for impacts to wildlife. In addition, the National Park Service was concerned about future demands associated with opening the facilities in winter, including requests for transportation such as motorized snow coaches. With the adoption of the selected alternative for winter use in the General Management Plan, the park provides parking at the end of plowed roads.

32. The Stewart Motel should be torn down, not converted to employee housing. What happened to the old plans for employee housing in the Lake McDonald area?

The preferred alternative would not convert the Stewart Motel to employee housing, but it would remove the motel and replace it with new guest motel buildings that better fit the site to address some life safety and code issues with the property. An upgraded motel with parking would make better use of the site and would be more compatible with the historic scene. The site would continue to be used as a motel in order to keep the existing number of rooms in the park. The Stewart Motel is on privately owned land and is owned in fee simple by Glacier Park Incorporated, not the National Park Service. Glacier Park Incorporated or a future concessioner would be responsible for the new building. Local residents would be kept informed during the

design process for this proposal if it is pursued. The previous plans for the Lake McDonald Lodge area were considered but rejected and are discussed in Chapter 2 on page 2-75 of the *Draft CSP and Draft EIS*.

33. *Do not convert the Lake McDonald Post Office area into parking. It would create noise and air pollution near inholder cabins. Expand parking at the Coffee Shop; do not remove it.*

Noise and air pollution should not increase significantly with the proposed reorienting of the parking at Lake McDonald; there are currently several large parking lots in this area.

34. *The park should not pave Swiftcurrent Trail for accessibility.*

Paving of the Swiftcurrent Trail may involve a material other than asphalt. The park has successfully used other materials which resemble soil but meet accessibility guidelines. Glacier National Park is trying to create additional opportunities for visitors who are physically challenged.

35. *Extending the operating dates of the concessioners would make hiring seasonal employees difficult, and could impact wildlife.*

The National Park Service has discussed how alternative types of housing might expand the opportunity to hire from a wider range of the work force, including retired individuals or couples. Impacts to wildlife would be minimized with the help of the Biological Assessment being prepared for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It describes measures we would implement to minimize impacts to threatened and endangered species, and states that we would revisit operating dates annually to ensure that conditions have not changed significantly.

36. *Housing employees in Motel Units 1, 2 and 3 in Swiftcurrent would not achieve separation of guest accommodations and employee functions.*

The preferred alternative for Swiftcurrent provides good separation of guest accommodations and employee functions and pairs well with the preferred alternative at Many Glacier. Housing employees in the motel units would concentrate employee functions in Area I, and guest accommodations would remain in Area II.

37. *The park should not build additional guest cabins in Area II along the Many Glacier Road.*

Most likely, only two cabin rings would be added given the site constraints and addressing the issue of the sense of arrival. The replacement of Motel 4 by a cabin ring with enough screening and setback between the road and the ring would address the seclusion and concerns about sense of arrival. Turning radius, parking space, lack of screening and noise are all problems associated with the existing parking and cabin relationships. It was thought that the relocation of parking would allow for site enhancements around the cabins.

38. *The park should convert Motel Unit 4 in Many Glacier to employee housing.*

With the relocation of the trailhead to Area III, there would be better separation of visitors and employees by converting Motels 1, 2 and 3 to employee housing.

39. *How can the government offer a commercial service operation to one company without putting the service up for bid?*

The National Park Service does not anticipate offering commercial service contracts to any business without putting the contract out for competitive bid, although the law does allow it in

certain circumstances. In many cases, the National Park Service feels there are economic reasons for a particular service to be operated by a single concessioner. This concessioner would still compete for the contract through the bidding process.

40. The park should require any new commercial services to recycle waste and participate in a parkwide transit program.

A requirement of any new concession contract is the development of an Environmental Management System that requires the concessioner to operate sustainably, and reduce waste and resource consumption.

41. The park should not expand any of the developed areas when current infrastructure is overburdened.

The park's General Management Plan recommends maintaining a minimum of 500 guest rooms. Addressing health, life safety and ADA compliance issues may result in a loss of overnight rooms. Finding locations for lost rooms may require new construction in developed areas; infrastructure would be improved concurrently to support any new facilities. Utility upgrades and improvements at developed areas were considered beyond the scope of the commercial services plan, and they would be addressed separately as needed.

42. All commercial services including roads and buildings should be removed from the park.

The General Management Plan stated that the park will continue to offer services that provide these opportunities to visitors. The National Park Service only allows commercial activities in the park that are consistent with these purposes.

43. A greater effort should be made to find employee housing outside the park.

Relocating concessioner and National Park Service employee housing, maintenance facilities, and administrative structures outside the park would not be practical in all cases. Certain support functions need to be near the park to provide for security and services. Relocating housing to an area outside the park would require the purchase or lease of land and the construction of new facilities. This would pose unique funding challenges. The funds from entrance fees and the park's operating budget are restricted to projects within the park boundary.

The concessioner must retain roughly 500 employees each year. Having employees on site to allow for split shift work and close supervision is preferable for the concessioner. Employees are attracted to working in the park because they can live and recreate here. Housing employees at locations remote from the park would complicate the task of recruiting and retaining seasonal employees. Requiring the concessioner to provide transportation for employees from a remote housing site to the work area would increase the concessioner's operating expenses and would affect the economic feasibility of the contract.

44. The park should require concessioners to improve recycling efforts.

This issue was addressed on page 2-1 under the Vision for Commercial Services section. We will work with the concessioners to improve recycling efforts. See the earlier response on this subject.

45. Any new support facilities for concessioners should be located outside the park.

Your suggestion to locate new support facilities for concessions outside the park is good. This suggestion will be considered where appropriate. For instance, some concessioners like Glacier Park, Inc. own facilities outside the park that provide support services to facilities inside the park.

46. *The park should analyze the “ecological carrying capacity” for commercial and private activities.*

The park takes impacts on natural and cultural resources into consideration with each new proposed development or activity. Carrying capacity analysis is very complex, because it must consider both sociological and economic factors. It is difficult to achieve realistic and meaningful numerical capacities. The General Management Plan began the process of determining carrying capacity by creating management zones and defined visitor experience and resource conditions. The next step is to determine indicators and standards in each zone that achieve the defined visitor experience and resource conditions. However, there has been disagreement within the science community about how to do this and the effectiveness of these indicators and standards. In the absence of numerical capacities or impact thresholds, i.e. limits of acceptable change, the National Park Service manages group sizes and approved services conservatively and at levels we feel confident would not likely result in environmental degradation. The commercial services plan does not propose “unlimited facilities, activities and visitors” as described in the comments.

47. *The park should find methods for visitors to kennel animals.*

See Appendix 1.

48. *The park should contract with horse packers to deliver supplies to the backcountry instead of using helicopters.*

We use stock whenever possible to pack supplies into the backcountry. The National Park Service attempts to use the minimum tool required to complete a task in the backcountry. In some cases, a helicopter is considered the minimum tool, such as when pack stock cannot safely reach a location, or in the example of hauling waste out of Granite Park, when using pack stock would require many more trips along the trail with associated impacts, and increased risk of employee exposure to pathogens. A helicopter was able to complete waste removal this spring in several hours, and with less impact, compared to the several days it would have taken to haul the waste out with stock. The National Park Service carefully examines every request for administrative use of helicopters. All administrative use of aircraft must comply with the park’s Aviation Management Plan. This plan seeks to minimize flights to only those that are essential to accomplish the park’s mission when other alternatives are not feasible. All flights must be approved by the park superintendent. In addition, for all flights, the National Park Service consults with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding impacts to threatened and endangered species.

**COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE
DRAFT COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN AND
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT THAT WERE OUTSIDE THE SCOPE**

The park should offer “no campfire” loops in campgrounds for visitors who wish to avoid smoke.

Your suggestion for a “no campfire” loop in campgrounds has been forwarded to the Visitor Use Division that manages campgrounds in the park.

The park needs more access for the walking challenged, including more trails.

We will take your comment into consideration. This plan does propose that the Swiftcurrent Trail be made accessible. The park continues to work on this issue to meet visitor needs. The preferred alternatives in all areas call for improved pedestrian access.

Too much emphasis is placed on opening the Going-to-the-Sun Road as early as possible.

The road opening plan has not changed. The park traditionally has tried to open the Going-to-the-Sun Road by early June.

The National Park Service should expand campgrounds on the east side of the park.

Expanding the campgrounds in the park is beyond the scope of the commercial services plan.

The Glacier Natural History Association should remove their book sales from the area of the Logan Pass Visitor Center with views of the pass.

We will take your suggestion into consideration when the West Side Discovery Center is constructed.

The park should allow foreign contractors to bid on the Going-to-the-Sun Road rehabilitation.

Although the hiring of specific contractors is outside the scope of this plan, foreign companies may bid on federally funded construction projects, and Canadian companies are treated as U.S. companies when a contract is quite large (covered by Part 25 of the Federal Acquisition Regulations, and the North American Free Trade Agreement).

The park should implement seasonal trail closures on the Reynolds route and install a pit toilet at Haystack.

These suggestions are outside the scope of the commercial services plan because trails are not a commercial service. Seasonal trail closures are implemented as needed due to concerns about wildlife or other resource, and safety.

The park should limit extended overnight parking at Logan Pass.

This suggestion is outside the scope of the commercial services plan because Logan Pass is not considered a commercial service. This suggestion will be considered if other measures are unsuccessful.

The park should continue vista clearing and should do more to control knapweed. The park should restore vegetation in campgrounds.

These issues are outside the scope of the commercial services plan. Campground restoration has been accomplished in some areas with Fee Demonstration money. Vista clearing along the Going-to-the-Sun Road will be done as part of ongoing maintenance of the road and in accordance with a Vegetation Management Plan being conducted under the Going-to-the-Sun Road Management Plan. Weed control is an annual program that is being reevaluated in an Exotic Vegetation Management Plan that is underway. Revegetation is implemented whenever ground is disturbed.

The park should remove cabins on acquired private property.

We are currently considering removal of three cabins on acquired property. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, the cabins must first be evaluated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If the cabins are determined to be eligible for listing, the park will comply with 36 CFR 800 and the National Environmental Policy Act.

The park should increase the quantity and quality of the shuttle service, including mandatory shuttle use during the busiest times of day.

This issue is beyond the scope of this plan, however to clarify, the park considered but rejected the idea of a mandatory shuttle in the 1999 General Management Plan. The Going-to-the-Sun Road rehabilitation project will incorporate a shuttle system as part of the mitigation. This system will be used as a model for a more permanent but optional shuttle service. The concessioner currently operates a hiker shuttle.

The park needs to implement a public transportation system. The park should charge a fee for private vehicle use on the Going-to-the-Sun Road to encourage shuttle use. Backcountry visitors should be required to obtain a permit to park private vehicles overnight.

This issue is beyond the scope of this plan. The Going-to-the-Sun Rehabilitation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement will develop a parkwide transit system to reduce congestion on the Road during the rehabilitation effort. We will take into consideration your suggestions for fees for private vehicles and parking permits for backcountry travelers.

The park should not limit the use of private vehicles across Going-to-the-Sun Road.

There are no plans to limit the use of private vehicles in the park.

The funds to maintain the Going-to-the-Sun Road should be obtained by charging an extra fee to those driving the Road. Those visitors who stay overnight should have a pass so they would not have to pay a fee each time they leave and enter the park.

Although this is not an issue related to commercial services, the Going-to-the-Sun Road Rehabilitation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement determined the cost of road repairs to be \$120-170 million. To raise this amount by charging a fee to visitors would take many years, and the condition of the Road would deteriorate significantly in that time. The funds would be needed up front. The park has requested funding from Congress to begin rehabilitation as soon as possible.

The park currently offers a seven-day or yearly pass for visitors.

The park should increase opportunities for horseback riding in the park, including having more than one commercial operator, improving access sites for stock users, and revisiting party size limits, stock numbers and recreational grazing rules.

This issue is outside the scope of this plan. Group size limits would be addressed in the Backcountry Management Plan when it is revised. The number of concessioners offering horseback trips will be determined when a prospectus is prepared. Please see response to letter #291.

No horses should be allowed in the park because of impacts to park resources.

Horseback riding is a traditional recreational use of the park that would continue under this plan. This issue was addressed in the General Management Plan. The commercial services plan does not address private stock use, but there are regulations in place to protect park resources from impacts due to private stock use.

Provide bicyclists times to ride the Going-to-the-Sun Road by implementing a one-way designation for vehicles at various times of the day.

This issue is beyond the scope of this plan. However, in the Going-to-the Sun Road Rehabilitation Environmental Impact Statement, the park stated that there would be no restrictions on private vehicle use over the Road. A one-way designation would restrict many travelers, including those traveling over the Road for business unrelated to the park. This designation was considered but rejected in the General Management Plan.

Provide a bicycle path on the non-alpine portion of the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

This issue is outside the scope of the commercial services plan. Adding a bicycle lane to the Going-to-the-Sun Road would require widening the road. The width of the Road is one of the contributing elements to its designation as a national historic landmark; therefore the road will not be widened and bicycle lanes will not be added.

The park should restrict use of private vehicles on the Going-to-the-Sun Road to allow safer opportunities for bicyclists.

This restriction was considered but rejected in the General Management Plan. During scoping for the Going-to-the-Sun Road Rehabilitation, it was determined that the park should not at any time restrict private vehicles from crossing the Road. Restrictions on group sizes for guided bicycle tours and encouraging the use of shuttles and tour buses are some of the ways in which the National Park Service is attempting to reduce congestion on the Road and ensure an enjoyable experience for all park visitors. In the spring as plowing operations progress up the Going-to-the-Sun Road, there are opportunities for hikers and bicyclists to use the road without motor vehicle traffic.

The park should add trails for mountain bicycling and off road motorcycling.

This issue is beyond the scope, however the park's backcountry is designated as proposed wilderness and in accordance with National Park Service policy for management of proposed wilderness, wheeled vehicles are prohibited.

The park should improve historical displays such as those from the Great Northern Railroad era.

This suggestion will be taken into consideration as interpretive displays are developed for the sites during the design phase.

The park should avoid adding lighting in campgrounds, and should replace current light sources with low-level lighting to reduce impacts.

We agree with your comment on lighting; it is a sensitive issue to provide for safety and security while not detracting from the natural and historic sense of place. The National Park Service is exploring options to correct the existing lighting and will assure that future projects use appropriate low-level lighting.

The National Park Service should allow ice fishing.

This issue is beyond the scope of this plan, however lake fishing is now open all year; details are provided in the park fishing regulations. Commercial fishing of any kind is prohibited in Glacier National Park.

The National Park Service should expand the trail system.

Expanding the trail system is outside the scope of this plan. Many trails have been closed over time due to environmental damage or in order to protect sensitive sites. Building more trails might help distribute use in certain areas, but there would be direct impacts on wildlife, vegetation and soils in undisturbed areas.

The Granite Park and Highline areas should be closed to the public when grizzly bears are using the areas.

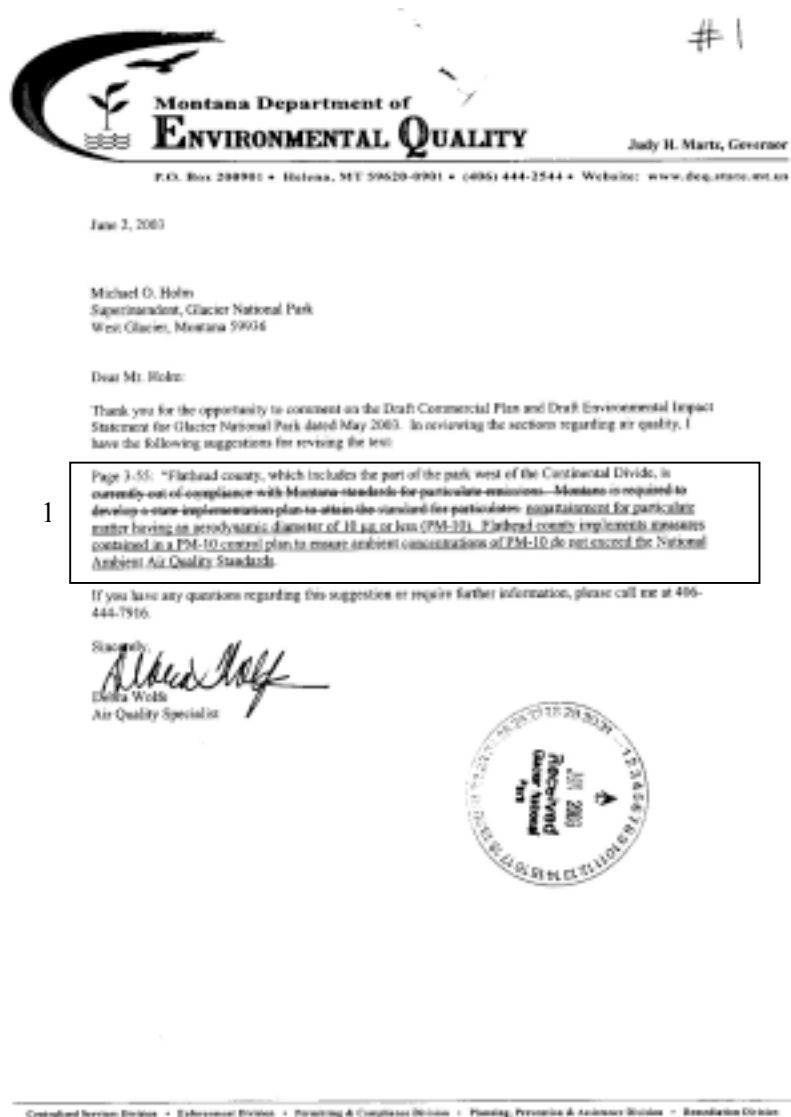
When grizzly bear activity is reported along trails, the park, under the Bear Management Plan, considers closure of trails and areas as appropriate.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS FROM OTHER FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, INDIAN TRIBES, ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES

See the following pages.

Comment

Response



1. The text has been revised. Thank you for your comments.

Comment

Response



"Scott Silver"
 <ssilver@wildwilderness.org>
 07/14/2003 05:29 PM
 MGT

To: "glac_public_comments@nps.gov"
 CC:
 Subject: Glacier Draft Commercial Services Plan COMMENTS

Dear Glacier NP Comment Recorder -

Wild Wilderness is a 13 year old recreation / conservation organization with supporters in all 50 states. We focus primarily upon the issue of Wilderness management and strive to ensure that designated wilderness is managed as wild Wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act and all associated laws and regulations. As a second focus, we strive to halt the juggernaut that should rightly be called - "The Corporate Takeover of Nature and the Disneyfication of the Wild". When it comes to the NPS, oft-times our task seems near enough impossible. I submit the following comments as the Executive Director of Wild Wilderness and do so in the context of our second focus area.

First off, it is our hope that NPSA's Glacier Park Action Alert Dated July 10, 2003 (appended) is not the only such Action Alert circulating. It is far too weak and is used here only as a point of reference.

I would start by disagreeing with NPSA on at least the first half of point #4 below. I see no need or justification for commercial bike tours and support elimination of such commercial tours from within Glacier NP.

Now, I ask, do these tours currently operate??? Does the tour operator shuttle customers to a staging area near the pass and let them coast to their parked car or does the operator they let people ride unguided from one end of the park to the other and provide nothing more than a return shuttle? I'd have a major problem with the former because what I've described is non-motorized wreckeretainment and nothing more. It would be akin to renting Segways, something inappropriate within any National Park. I would likely support a straight-forward bicycle shuttle service. The devil would, of course, be in the details.

I am extremely surprised (shocked actually) that the NPSA Alert makes no mention of the proposed commercial scuba program. There's no NEED for such a venture nor can it possibly be justified. This proposed activity is commercial opportunism at its worst. Commercial scuba should under no circumstances be permitted.

I must also question the first part of #2, below. Are commercial guided hikes really required??? I don't see why the park needs to be cluttered with flocks of tourists being led by private guides. It is far better to let park rangers do all of the nature interpretation that takes place within the park.

If the NPS does not wish to provide all conceivable interpretative experiences, then let your visitors discover the park on their own. Equally important --- let visitors who do not wish to avail themselves of these tours have the opportunity to experience their park WITHOUT having to rub shoulders with these traveling flocks.

And finally, I can not see how NPSA justifies supporting commercial bike and hiker tours while opposing commercial motorcycle tours. Wild Wilderness agrees with NPSA that these motorcycle tours are inappropriate and should

Comment #140 (Wild Wilderness)

1. The current commercial authorizations do not allow what you describe; bicycle tour operators may have a support vehicle to assist riders along the route, but cyclists are not driven to Logan Pass, for example, to coast down. These tours usually originate on the west or east side of the Going-to-the-Sun Road and bicyclists ride across the road. Permits are issued accordingly. Permits have also been issued for other locations in the park including Many Glacier and Two Medicine.

The public transit system that will be implemented during the rehabilitation of the Going-to-the-Sun Road will include a system for private bicycles to be carried by the shuttle vehicle.

Comment

Response

not be permitted. We, however, suggest that all COMMERCIAL activities (including non-motorized ones) should also be kept to the barest minimum.

The Glacier Commercial Services Plan is, to be blunt, an obscenity. As with so much the NPS does these days, this draft plan is an exercise in "commercialization, privatization and motorization" which seeks little more than to promote industrial tourism and generate opportunities for private profit by its concessionaire-partners!!

As part of Wild Wilderness' official comment I wish to include the following quotes by Ed Abbey and John Muir and submit them as if these persons were alive to speak these words to you today. If you can not accept these comments as the words of Abbey and Muir, then please accept them as the comments of Wild Wilderness instead.

"Now here comes another clown with a scheme for the utopian national park: Central Park National Park, Disneyland National Park. Look here he says ... better yet do away with the campgrounds altogether, they only cause delay and congestion and administrative problems --- these people want to see America, they are not going to see it sitting around a goddamned campfire; take their money, give them a show, send them on their way -- that's the way to run a business"
- Ed Abbey, Desert Solitaire

In these ravaging money-mad days...San Francisco capitalists are now doing their best to destroy Yosemite Park...often thinly disguised in smiling philanthropy...These temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism seem to have perfect contempt for nature, and, instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains, lift them to the almighty dollar.

-- John Muir, 1909

Thank you for considering these comments and entering them into the official record.

Scott Silver, Executive Director
Wild Wilderness
248 NW Wilmington Ave.
Bend, OR 97701

phone: 541-385-5261
email: ssilver@wildwilderness.org
Internet: <http://www.wildwilderness.org>



"North Fork Hostel"
To: <glac_public_comments@nps.gov>
cc: <nfhhostel@nfhhostel.com>
Subject: Commercial Services Plan
07/15/2003 09:16 AM
CST

141

Superintendent
Attn: DCSP/DEIS
Glacier National Park
West Glacier, Montana 59936

I support the Glacier's preferred alternative for future management of Granite Park Chalet. The chalet would continue to be operated as a hiker shelter with restroom, water and cooking facilities. This alternative is less expensive for both taxpayers and chalet users than an alternative proposal to establish full-service dining and lodging. This full-service alternative, which would require on-site housing for eight employees, also would increase demands on water, sewage, gray-water disposal systems. The hiker shelter system has been operated very successfully in recent years by Glacier Wilderness Guides, and it has proved popular with guests with minimal environmental impacts in a sensitive alpine environment.

I support the park's proposal to allow for guided day hiking for cultural and natural history interpretive purposes. However, it should be stated that this is not an acceptable substitute for guided hikes by Glacier interpreters, which should be increased instead of diminished. NPCA also supports the proposal to establish limits on group hikes, although these group limits should be applied to hikes led by the Park Service as well as commercial guides. Forty people in a hiking group is simply too many for a variety of reasons.

I oppose the park's proposal to permit commercially guided motorcycle tours. The number of private motorcycle trips through the park has grown in recent years, and many of these motorcycles are inappropriately loud. Increasing motorcycle use by allowing commercially guided tours is not an appropriate commercial use of the park.

I oppose the park's proposal to restrict commercial bicycle tours. Glacier's Going-to-the-Sun Road is one of the finest places in America to ride a bicycle, and this opportunity already is unfortunately restricted due to very real safety concerns on the congested Sun Road. Instead of restricting bicycle use, Glacier should focus on developing a multi-modal transportation plan that provides for safe and convenient transportation options by car, shuttle bus or bicycle.

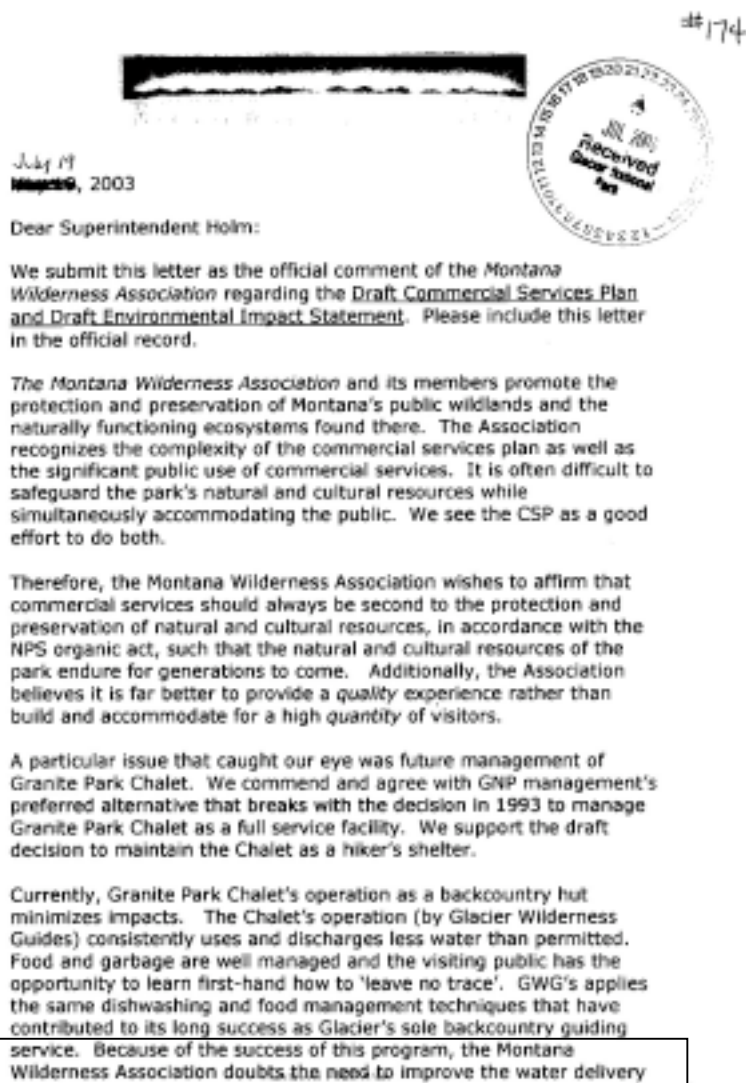
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Comment #141 (North Fork Hostel)

1. This plan addresses only commercial services. Determinations of group size for the general public and for National Park Service naturalist-led hikes will be addressed in the Backcountry Management Plan when it is revised. The number of National Park Service-led hikes is a factor of operating budgets, but we will consider your suggestion when we look at the 2004 summer season.
2. See response # 30 in Grouped Responses to Individual Comments.
3. During the rehabilitation of Going-to-the-Sun Road, an expanded transportation system will be in place (dependent on funding). A more permanent system will be developed after the rehabilitation is complete. The permanent system will be based on the successful aspects of the temporary system. Any transportation system will provide for bicycle transport.

Comment

Response



Comment #174 (Montana Wilderness Association)

Thank you for your comments.

1. We do not feel that supplying potable water will lead to dramatic increases in water usage at the chalet or gray water discharge. Nonpotable water and bottled water is currently available at the chalet and in the nearby creeks, and we are able to meet the required usage guidelines for discharge. We feel that encouraging hydration by chalet visitors and day users helps prevent hypothermia and dehydration, and will lessen the dependence on bottled water that has to be packed in. We also feel that making potable water available at the chalet will limit the environmental effects of people using nearby creeks to fill water bottles.

1

system. Such improvements, if not strictly limited, would likely lead to dramatic increases in water usage at the Chalet as well as gray water discharge. We expect that the cost of providing potable water will be excessive.

In our experience visiting the Chalet, it is quite something to watch the overnight guest filing down the trail a quarter mile to retrieve water. Visitors learn an important truth about the value of a commodity so often taken for granted. On the other hand, walk-through visitors are advised to carry their own water and are not usually provided water at the Chalet. The cost of this "self-sufficiency" is dramatically less than for providing a spigot at the chalet, and something the public has accepted as the norm for years now.

Finally, construction at the Chalet should always be kept to the minimum to preserve backcountry and wilderness integrity and experience. Extensive water works would diminish this experience for most of one season, we speculate. We would ask the Park Administration to always err on the side of preserving the visitor experience. In the case of Granite Park Chalet, that experience is wilderness, not convenience.

On the matter of human waste, the Association recognizes the need for a long-term solution. We support the proposed intent to replace existing restrooms. However, we are skeptical of the need to increase the number of toilets, unless this increase would lead to fewer flights to remove waste, or other operational efficiencies. We are aware of the considerable cost in providing this kind of public service, and trust that the Park's decision will be based on need. The problems associated with the Sperry Chalet toilets (cost and functionality) should be avoided.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We may submit other comments on the CSP, as we continue to review its contents.

Respectfully submitted,



Dave Hadden
Montana Wilderness Association
755-6304/837-0783/paddler@digisys.net

Comment

Response



MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

225 North Roberts • P.O. Box 201201 • Helena, MT 59620-1201
 • (406) 444-2694 • FAX (406) 444-2696 • www.montanahistory.org •

#184

July 15, 2003

Michael O. Holm
 Superintendent
 National Park Service
 Glacier National Park
 West Glacier, MT 59936

Ref: Commercial Services Plan Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Holm:

I reviewed the Draft EIS you sent to us regarding your proposed work on the commercial services buildings at Glacier. After reviewing your preferred alternatives to the work, I see nothing that causes great concern for us, but look forward to reviewing those projects in greater detail as you develop them.

Thank you for consulting with us.

Sincerely,

Pete Brown
 Historic Architecture Specialist

File: NPS/Glacier/2003053001



STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE • 1418 8th Ave • P.O. Box 201202 • Helena, MT 59620-1202
 • (406) 444-7715 • FAX (406) 444-0375

Comment #184 (Montana State Preservation Office)

1. Thank you for your comment. At this point in the planning process, the required documentation is not available to conduct section 106 compliance. When that documentation, as defined by 36 CFR 800, becomes available, we will conduct Section 106 compliance.

Comment

Response



Keith Hammer
 <keith@swanview.org>
 07/23/2003 08:50 AM
 CST

To: glac_public_comments@nps.gov
 cc:
 Subject: Granite Park Chalet

220

Dear Folks at Glacier:

Please keep Granite Park Chalet managed as a hiker shelter as it has been in recent years.

Please do not change its management to a more plush, full-service facility.

The way the Chalet is managed now fits nicely into the full spectrum of facilities offered in Glacier.

Sincerely,

Keith J. Hammer
 Chair - Swan View Coalition
 --

Keith Hammer
 Swan View Coalition
 3165 Foothill Road
 Kalispell, MT 59901
 406-755-1379 (gh/fax)
 keith@swanview.org
 http://www.swanview.org

"People Helping People Help the Earth."

 ORIGINAL

Comment #220 (Swan View Coalition)

Thank you for your comments.

Comment

Response



"Neal Wedum"
nwedum@montana.gov
07/30/2003 02:19 PM
CST

To: <glac_public_comments@nps.gov>
Cc:
Subject: Granite Park Chalet alternative proposal

#273

<?xml:namespace prefix = st1 ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:smarttags" /> July 30, 2003
<?xml:namespace prefix = o ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />
Superintendent Mick Holm
Glacier National Park
West Glacier, MT 59936

RE: Draft Commercial Services Plan for Glacier National Park
Granite Park Chalet, Alternative C

Dear Superintendent Holm:

In response to the request for public comment regarding the Draft Commercial Services Plan for Glacier National Park, we submit the enclosed alternative interim proposal for full service operation of Granite Park Chalet until all the necessary requirements are fully implemented for Alternative C.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Terry Abell

Neal and Pam Wedum

Kathleen Larson Phillips

Terry Abell
PO Box 68
Whitefish, MT 59937
862-3531

Neal and Pam Wedum
PO Box 1036
Choteau, MT 59922
466-2548

Kathleen Larson Phillips
822 West Watson
Lewistown, MT 59457
538-8770



granite proposal.doc

 ORIGINAL

Comment #273 (former Save the Chalet Foundation)

Thank you for your comments and work preparing another alternative for our consideration. We have reviewed and considered your proposal as well as consulted with the Public Health Service. Given the staffing level that would be required for operation, hygiene requirements and other aspects of the proposal, it does not appear to reduce the projected gray water production sufficiently to fall within the existing 100-gallon capacity of the current system. Without modifications to the gray water system as outlined in alternative C, full services would not be feasible. Please see "Alternatives Considered But Rejected" in the *Final Commercial Services Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement*. Many of the actions proposed in your alternative are already included in the existing operations, such as limiting water use and waste discharge and collaborative use of helicopter flights.

Comment

Response

In Response To A Service That Is Necessary, Full Service At Granite Park Chalet, Alternative C, Provides The Following:

- a) visitor understanding and appreciation of park purpose and significance
- b) enhancement of visitor experiences consistent with the park area philosophies
- c) assists the park in managing visitor use and educating park visitors
- d) is an essential service and facility not available anywhere outside Glacier National Park

In Response To A Service That Is Appropriate, Full Service At Granite Park Chalet, Alternative C:

- a) is consistent with the purpose and significance of GNP
- b) is consistent with laws, regulations and policies applicable to Waterton Glacier International Peace Park and the National Park Service
- c) does enhance public health and safety
- d) does not significantly impact or impair park resources or values
- e) lies within parameters established for other park uses and activities
- f) includes the general public in participation in limited recreational opportunities

Therefore, we submit the following proposal with the intention of meeting the needs of the draft commercial services plan and draft environmental impact statement, in favor of Alternative D, for full service at Granite Park Chalet.

Response

Comment

An Interim Proposal

Combining 80 Years of Appropriate & Quality Traditional Full Service

And

21st Century Technology Methodologies

Full Service American Plan

(Alternative C)

Including the General Public (250-300 day hikers)

A Unique and Unparalleled Back Country Experience

GRANITE PARK CHALETA NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Experience the Wilderness of Glacier National Park

Explore the Trails, Geology, Flora and Fauna

Teach the Cultural History of the Chalets

Through staff orientation and visitor contact, increase public awareness of the park service's charge to serve and protect.

GRANITE PARK CHALET

(Full Service American Plan)

- I. Cultural, historical and traditional service at Granite Park Chalet (GPC)
 - A. Provide overnight guests with American Plan Service.
 - B. Recreate a historical and cultural experience for all overnight guests.
 - C. Continue the living oral cultural history of GNP and its origin, including all chalets and hostels within GNP.
- II. Continue traditional quality back country style service to the general public
 - A. Continue the excellence tradition of daily ala carte for the public.
 - B. Provide information, advice, first aid, food, and guidance to 250-300 day hikers.
 - C. Provision of potable water (NPS) and food (concessionaire).
 - D. Engage guests in dialogue regarding modern environmental ways all people can preserve and protect GNP.
 - E. Staff will be available upon need for all back country emergencies. All staff will be trained in first aid, CPR, and encouraged to gain certified first responder A status.
 - F. Staff will be willing to assist NPS whenever and however needed.
- III. Cooperative partnership with Glacier National Park (GNP)
 - A. GNP/Concessionaire cooperation and flexibility to meet NPS Guidelines and concessionaire needs.
 - B. Concessionaire will seek to provide the highest environmental standards, while providing cultural, historic full services to the public.
 - C. Periodic meetings, at least annually, to ensure good cooperation, understanding, and awareness of NPS and

Response

Comment

concessionaire changes and procedures which effect the operations.

IV. Environmental Objectives*

- A. Restrict potable water to the public in order to reduce grey water volume (spigot only).
- B. Utilize 21st Century wilderness practices wherever prudent to do so.
 - 1. Sanitizing Soap Cleansers (No water; no pipes) in personal hygiene areas.
 - 2. Meter both input as well as output of water.
 - 3. Encourage pack in, pack out procedures.
 - 4. Teach, through role modeling, conversation, and educational resources the importance of GNP's wilderness.
- C. Restrict kitchen grey water and guest usage to the least amount possible.
- D. Employ new techniques as applicable to full service operation whenever conducive to environment.

*Concessionaire Environmental Methodologies

- 1. Linen brought in by horse/sherpa.
- 2. Daily controlled usage of potable water on premises.
- 3. Paper products for meals and ala carte service (flatware only when necessary).
- 4. Allow concessionaire flexibility in opening/closing dates.

Interim Environmental Guidelines

- 1. Concessionaire will seek to control waste disposal, simplify food preparation, cooking, and baking methods.
- 2. Concessionaire will seek to minimize the number of supply trips into GPC.
- 3. Integrate freight and helicopter trips, only when NPS is already utilizing a helicopter for back country needs. Concessionaire would pay one half of flying time, reduce number of pack trains,

| Response | Comment |
|----------|---|
| | <p>and be available regardless of seasonal operation to implement the exchange of heavy and bulky items such as wood, linen and paper products.</p> <p>4. NPS will complete the treatment system for potable water (for the general public as well as overnight guests) usage during the interim period (chlorination, etc.).</p> |

Comment #284-285 (Trumand Hall)

(#284-285) 1

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5 GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
6
7 COMMERCIAL SERVICES
8 PLAN/DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
9
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11
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13 OPEN HOUSE and PUBLIC HEARING
14
15 ORIGINAL
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21
22 THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2003
23 BLACKFEET COMMUNITY COLLEGE
24 BROWNING, MONTANA
25 5:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

GOODMAN REPORTING - (406) 863-4828
P.O. Box 1182 Whitefish, MT 59937

Thursday, June 26, 2003

(From 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. an Open House was conducted, during which time the public was able to ask questions, offer comments verbally and/or in writing to park staff, or have their comments recorded by a court reporter. No comments were offered.)

MR. FRYE: This portion of the Open House is an opportunity for you all, if you wish, to make comments, public comments that are recorded and become part of the record, as do written comments as well.

We have an hour set aside for this part of the session. There really are a very few people who have indicated an interest in making a comment, publicly. But we certainly will entertain those who have indicated on this sign-in sheet that they'd be interested in doing that.

Right now, we have Trumand Hall indicated an interest and then, really, that's it. But I don't want any of you to feel that you can't take the opportunity to get up and say what you'd like to say.

MR. HALL: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Trumand Hall. Everybody knows me by Mouse, all over the world, because of my outfit.

GOODMAN REPORTING - (406)863-4828
P.O. Box 1182 Whitefish, MT 59937

Comment

Response

3

1 I was over to see this beautiful young lady
2 over at the reservation the other day, Jan Knox, and I
3 unloaded my bag of tricks on her the other day. Because
4 as I go through the book here, what's going to happen to
5 the horseback riding in Glacier National Park?

6 If you all read your book here, it says you're
7 probably planning on trucking horses from different
8 areas in the Park to the Two Medicine area, which I
9 think is very uncalled for, and I think it's very
10 dangerous. A good example would be like our Browning
11 basketball team used to be hauled over the mountains in
12 that league, and we had to kill nine children in the
13 mountains before we stopped that. And I think by
14 trucking horses and people back and forth up and down
15 those roads, it isn't a matter of when, it's how many.

1

16 It's going to happen. So I think it's uncalled for when
17 the trailheads are right there behind the GPI's lodge on
18 somewhat their property. And I also control all the
19 land, the tribal land, up to the Park line. So I got
20 full control of the land behind the lodge that these
21 trailheads are on.

22 I believe that Glacier National Park is the
23 most beautiful place in the world. I could go to my
24 tribal council and have them try to back me because I am
25 a tribal member. But I am also a good outfitter. And I

GOODMAN REPORTING - (406)863-4828
P.O. Box 1182 Whitefish, MT 59937

1. See the description of the alternative in Chapter 2, Horseback Riding and Horse Packing Services.

Horses would not have to be trucked to the Two Medicine area from other areas of the park.

Comment

Response

4

1 would like to make my comments on this. I am an
2 outfitter and I think I'm first class. You can come
3 check me out. I'll give anybody a ride to any
4 destination I know just to see what I do.

5 So what I'd like to open up here is this. Is
6 the trailheads are on our property, whether it's -- it
7 ain't my property, it's GPI's property. But if my
8 contract is up, some other person takes it. There is no
9 sense in packing human beings and animals up and down
10 these roads for another twenty years. Someone's going
11 to lose a life when everything is right there and can be
12 utilized from GPI.

13 Another comment that I'd like to make is the
14 lady that used to operate the boat up at Two Medicine
15 Lake, she told me there were 10,000 people rode that
16 boat and just about every one of them would ride a
17 saddle horse from Upper Two Medicine back to the lodge
18 at East Glacier on the Mount Henry trail. But they are
19 scared of grizzly bears. So I guess these are the
20 comments I'd like to say.

21 The service is badly needed, whether
22 it's -- I'm not looking at this as a Blackfoot Indian,
23 I'm looking at this as an outfitter. And I think it is
24 badly needed in the area. I don't know; they tell me,
25 what, two million people go through Glacier National

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2

2. The Mount Henry trail is now included in the revised preferred alternative.

5

1 Park. And I think by putting this all together and not
2 trucking animals and utilizing GPI's trailheads along
3 with the Mount Henry trail and a few other trails that
4 could be used, there is only good established business
5 that will go a lot further in the next twenty years.
6 And by utilizing me as a tribal member, I also own and
7 operate a big cattle ranch in -- the town of East
8 Glacier is in the middle of my ranch. I take rides down
9 to Two Medicine drainage. I take rides to the top of
10 Looking Glass which has been compared to Switzerland.
11 So we -- as a tribal member, I have something to offer
12 Glacier National Park and I hope, in return, Glacier
13 National Park has something to offer me. Thank you.

14 MR. FRYE: Thank you, Mr. Hall.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. FRYE: Is there anyone else who would
17 like to -- Dan, would you like to make a comment or not?

18 MR. HAYS: No.

19 MR. FRYE: Anyone else?

20 And your name?

21 MR. DES ROSIER: Fred Des Rosier.

22 MR. FRYE: Okay; Fred. Do you want to come
23 up?

24 MR. DES ROSIER: Not really. There's some
25 background noise that kills the hearing aids. If you've

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P.O. Box 1182 Whitefish, MT 59937

6

1 got a hearing aid, it's hard, you can't hear.

2 So I might be way off base; I don't know. But
3 I think we should expand the camping on east side of the
4 Park. The old St. Mary's campground at the foot of the
5 upper lake, you're going to expand the cabin camps or
6 redevelop the cabin camp at Many Glacier. And I think
7 we should expand the campground at Two Medicine at the
8 trailhead for Scenic Point. That's been a disturbed
9 area for years and years. It wouldn't have any adverse
10 effect on the environment to expand that campground a
11 little bit.

12 I think we should maintain the historic service
13 at Granite Park so that's a full facility; meals and
14 lodging. And I think we should expand the trail system.
15 When I was a boy, there was 1500 miles of trails in
16 Glacier Park, and now there's half that much. And I
17 think some of those old trails should be opened and
18 expanded and used.

19 And I think that we should allow ice fishing on
20 the lakes on the east side of Glacier Park. If you have
21 the stamina to ski into Slide Lake or Red Eagle, you
22 should be able to bring home a fish. In the years past,
23 they always said Well, we don't have the staff. The
24 Park isn't there for the staff. The Park is there for
25 the enjoyment of the people. And that's my comments;

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P.O. Box 1182 Whitefish, MT 59937

Response

Comment

7

1 thank you.
2 {Applause.}
3 MR. FRYE: Would anyone else like to follow
4 Fred to the stage?
5 {No response.}
6 MR. FRYE: Okay; just a couple of quick
7 things. As I mentioned at the beginning, you do have
8 the opportunity to submit written comments through the
9 30th of July, which will be entered into the record as
10 well. And I would encourage you, certainly, to do that,
11 if you have comments, that you either didn't want to
12 mention this evening or that come to mind as you think
13 about the plan. And once again, thank you very much for
14 coming this evening; we appreciate it. Thanks.
15 {Hearing in recess until the close of the
16 evening at 8:00 p.m.}
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24 --o0o--
25

GOODMAN REPORTING - (406) 863-4828
P.O. Box 1182 Whitefish, MT 59937

Comment

Response

5-46



"John Frederick"
<johnd@nfhhostel.com>
07/30/2003 02:52 PM
CST

To: <glac_public_comments@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Draft Commercial Services Plan

#287

North Fork Hostel and Square Peg Ranch
80 Beaver Drive
Folebridge, MT 59928-9778

29 July 2003

Superintendent Mick Holm
Attn: DCsp/DEIS
Glacier National Park
West Glacier, MT 59936

Dear Superintendent Holm:

I would like to make some comments on the Draft Commercial Services Plan.

Bicycle tours are fine, but motorcycle tours are too noisy. At least bicycles are quiet.

Comment #287 (North Fork Hostel, Square Peg Ranch)

Thank you for your comments.

| Response | Comment |
|----------|---|
| | <p>Commercially-led hikes hikes for natural history and cultural education purposes are fine provided that the numbers of hikers are not very large. A large bus unloading at a trailhead and a mob of people going down a trail are equally unattractive.</p> <p>I have a hostel in Polcebridge because it gives people a chance to stay somewhere cheaply.</p> <p>Granite Park Chalet is certainly more expensive, but it allows individuals to stay at Granite Park Chalet who could not afford to stay at Sperry Chalet. I endorse the concept of Granite Park Chalet being used as a hiker shelter similar fashion to that of a hostel.</p> <p>I apologize for being slow to send this to you, but the Wedge Canyon Fire complicates everything including receiving or sending mail. In fact, I could not get connected to the internet connection this afternoon and will send this at the first opportunity.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>John Frederick</p> |

Comment

Response



"Carol T. Place"
 <carolplace@scfstat.net>
 07/06/2003 10:06 PM
 CST

To: <glac_public_comments@nps.gov>
 Cc: <carolplace@scfstat.net>
 Subject: Comments - DCSPI/DEIS

291

Thank you for mailing the Draft Commercial Services Plan and Draft Environment Impact Statement (DCSP/DEIS) for Glacier National Park (GNP), Montana for review and comment. The "book" definitely portrays a considerable amount of time and effort spent towards trying to keep or enhance GNP (our "Crown Jewel") for all visitors to enjoy.

Tour de Great Falls is a guided tour business located in Uln and Great Falls, Montana that was granted operating authority by the Montana Public Service Commission in 1995 to provide transportation service for tours in Montana. As the business owner of Tour de Great Falls (TdGF), currently operating with 22-passenger and 13-passenger large picture-window tour buses, the following comments are respectfully submitted for consideration and implementation:

Request #1: Presently TdGF is prohibited from providing tourists with the Going-to-the-Sun Road (GtSR) interpretive tour experience in our vehicles. It is requested that TdGF be granted approval for unlimited access to provide our customers with this wonderful GtSR interpretive tour experience on our vehicles. If unlimited access is not granted, then the request would be for at least 30 GtSR access permits to be granted per season.

Reasons: We have people from all walks of life, including those with disabilities, foreign visitors, senior citizens, non-drivers or people without transportation, drivers afraid to drive mountainous roads, etc. who are visiting the Great Falls area with a limited amount of time. They desire our one-day tour to GNP, including the GtSR, but are unable to take the tour since we do not have the minimum number of passengers required by the current concessioner (Sun Tours) for a departure from Browning later than the scheduled 8:30 a.m. timeframe. In the past, we have left Great Falls at 5:00 a.m. with under six customers and linked up with Sun Tours for their superb tour over the GtSR. However, not all people are able to participate at such an early departure time, especially with an approximate 8 p.m. return to Great Falls, thus they are deprived of access to their beautiful GNP. Those people would benefit from the additional flexibility and convenience of our interpretive tour service over the GtSR, along with other general public tourists desirous of receiving more information on a guided tour.

With TdGF transporting customers over GNP's GtSR, this would have a positive effect for the people to not only receive an enjoyable educational interpretive experience with safer and easier sightseeing which they may not otherwise have, but it may also be a positive impact in other areas. It would result in fewer vehicles producing wear and tear on the roadway, exhaust emissions/pollution, energy/fuel consumption, sound pollution, vegetation damage, soil erosion,

Comment #291 (Tour de Great Falls)

1. Federal regulations prohibit businesses from operating in park areas except in accordance with the provisions of a contract or permit. The only commercial operators currently authorized to conduct motor vehicle tours on the Going-to-the-Sun Road from Lake McDonald to Rising Sun are Glacier Park, Inc. and Sun Tours. Non-scheduled, infrequent commercial motor vehicle tours are allowed to enter the park from the west and travel as far as Lake McDonald Lodge, and from the east as far as Rising Sun Motor Inn, without written authorizations. When contracts for transportation concessions within the park are rewritten, the National Park Service will consider increasing opportunities for other companies, but the details of the contracts are outside the scope of this plan.

When determining the appropriate number and type of authorizations issued for conducting a particular necessary and appropriate commercial service in the park, the National Park Service must consider many aspects: Will it be necessary to require that the commercial operator provide this service on a regular basis so that it is available daily, weekly, etc. to the visiting public? If we want a business to provide the services in the park every day, then we must consider the financial viability of the business to assure that it can remain in operation and be available to provide those services. Is the opportunity still feasible if one, two, three or more operators are handling the demand, or have we created an environment where none of them are viable? Are there other factors that will affect the financial viability of the business?

There are currently two types of authorizations that can be used to allow commercial operators in the park.

Concessions contracts are used when a commercial operator will be required to provide a service. The National Park Service will

Comment

Response

wildlife disturbance, and multiple vehicles taking up valuable parking spaces in parking lots/pullouts/road shoulders, etc. that are already overcrowded. There would additionally be a positive benefit to the GNP, local communities, and Great Falls economies as tourists would stay an extra overnight/day or more.

- 2 **Request #2.** In the past, TdGF has been assessed a commercial vehicle entry fee of \$100, good for seven days. It is requested that instead of the flat \$100, this entry fee be graduated according to the number of customers and days. An example would be \$10 for the vehicle and \$5 per person aboard the vehicle, up to a maximum entry fee of \$100.

Reason: In the event of TdGF providing a tour for one-to-ten people to the GNP GtSR, the variable entry fee cited would make it more affordable for both the tourists and TdGF.

- 3 **Request #3.** Since TdGF also provides Step-on Guide service, it is requested that approval be granted for our business to conduct Step-on Guide service both in commercial vehicles and in our customer's private vehicles throughout GNP where commercial transportation is allowed.

Reason: This would benefit the tourists by giving them a better national park experience with them receiving a more informative sightseeing excursion.

TdGF's request for Guided Interpretive Motor Vehicle Tours and Step-on Guide Services throughout GNP, where commercial transportation is allowed, meets the "Necessary and Appropriate" criteria as outlined in the DCSP/DEIS.

Please visit our website www.GreatFallsHistoricTrolley for additional information regarding our TdGF Guided Tours and Step-on Guide operations. We also operate the trolley "Historic" tours daily (June-September) and provide shuttle service in the fascinating community of Great Falls, Montana.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the above comments/requests. Since today (July 30, 2003) is the last day for submitting comments on the DCSP/DEIS, a copy of this email is also being forwarded by U.S. Postal Service to Superintendent, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT 59936.

Respectfully submitted (with prayers for rain on those forest fires),

Carol T. Place
Tour de Great Falls
P. O. Box 27
108 Old Ulm-Cascade Road
Ulm, MT 59483-0027
Phone: 406-771-1100

determine specific conditions and perimeters for the service, determine the number of contracts that will be issued for the

service, and award the contract(s) through a competitive selection process. Contract requirements are typically more stringent and investments may be required. Facilities in the park may or may not be assigned. Since the concessioner will be required to provide the service, it is incumbent on the National Park Service to assure that there is a reasonable opportunity for the operator to realize a profit.

Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) will be used when the service will be authorized, but not required. The number of CUAs is typically not limited because they are not issued through a competitive evaluation process. A CUA is issued to any qualified operator who is willing to agree to its terms and conditions.

Unlike a contract, there is no assurance of an opportunity to realize a profit and typically no facilities are provided in the park.

Because it is the operator's discretion to provide the service or not, services may not always be available to the visiting public in the park.

To assure that we have reliable tour and transportation services in the park, it is unlikely that these services would be authorized under a Commercial Use Authorization. The number of authorizations that are appropriate for any given service must be determined at the time the authorization is issued. For those reasons, it is inappropriate to specify the number of contracts that will be issued for a service in a 20-year planning document such as the commercial services plan. However, your comments will be considered when we consider the future of tour services in Glacier National Park.

2. This is beyond the scope of the commercial services plan. The park does not set fees for bus tours. These fees are set nationally by the National Park Service in consultation with the travel

Comment

Response

industry. They are consistent across the country, and are reviewed annually. This method for determination of fees is equitable.

3. The step-on guide service proposed in the commercial services plan would be operated by a concessioner who would be selected through a contract bidding process.