

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yellowstone National Park
Wyoming, Montana, Idaho



Lake Area Comprehensive Plan/ Environmental Assessment



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LAKE AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to implement the Lake Area Comprehensive Plan/Environmental Assessment (LACP/EA) in Yellowstone National Park (YNP). The Lake Area consists of the portions of Lake Village, Fishing Bridge, and Bridge Bay locations of the park included in the planning boundary.

The purpose of the LACP/EA is to enhance visitor experience and employee working and living conditions while preserving the natural, cultural, and visual resources in the Lake Area by setting desired future conditions for resources and visitor experience and guiding development while minimizing impacts to resources. The basis for the comprehensive plan originates from ongoing and future changes to natural systems, improvements needed in pedestrian and vehicular circulation, changing visitor and employee facilities, and to provide guidance for future development. Conditions affecting habitat for threatened and endangered species have changed and increased knowledge has provided information relative to the management of several species. Resource mapping has been conducted within the planning boundary, providing consolidated data for planning reference.

What is comprehensive planning?

As used in this document, comprehensive planning defines zones, prescriptions, and design standards of where and how development can occur, setting **acceptable limits of change** to development that supports the area's significance and fundamental resources and values.

As resources and visitation patterns change, some services, facilities (buildings, roads, and parking areas), and utilities in Yellowstone's developed areas may also need to change. These changes may be in the form of upgrades, restoration, removal, and/or adaptive reuse and may have the potential to impact the park's natural, cultural, and scenic resources and visitor experience. The comprehensive plan provides a framework for decision-making that NPS staff, managers, and partners will use when developing and evaluating project proposals for the Lake Area. The plan defines desired future conditions for resources and visitor experience that are based on the area's significance and fundamental resources and values. The plan sets acceptable limits of change for development projects that support these desired future conditions. Rather than evaluating projects individually, on a case-by-case basis with separate environmental compliance analysis, YNP proposes a comprehensive assessment of projects for environmental impacts. The plan will identify suitable locations, building sizes, functions, and design standards for those projects and ensure that they fall within the area's acceptable limits of change. Impacts assessed in this plan are for the proposed actions as described in the document. Future actions would be evaluated in terms of consistency with the plan, level of impact to resources, and appropriate level of compliance, and would be documented as described in Section 1.5.7.

This EA has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide the decision-making framework that 1) analyzes a reasonable range of alternatives to meet objectives of the proposal, 2) evaluates potential issues and impacts to Yellowstone's resources and

values, and 3) identifies mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts. The park conducted public scoping from July 6 to August 6, 2010 to assist with the development of this plan; comments were received in support of the plan. Comments received during the public review of this document will be considered in the subsequent final plan.

The LACP/EA consists of three alternatives; the no-action alternative and two action alternatives, one of which is preferred.

In Alternative A, the No Action alternative, park managers would continue to rely on direction from the 1974 Master Plan, 1988 Fishing Bridge Development Concept Plan, and the 1993 Lake/Bridge Bay Development Concept Plan for planning guidance in the Lake Area. A comprehensive plan for levels of acceptable change (including planning zones, planning prescriptions, and design standards) would not be developed and therefore, projects not evaluated in past plans would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Updated desired future conditions, fundamental resources and values, and area significance statements would not be identified to guide future development. Projects from these plans that have not been completed are analyzed in this alternative, which would result in a net increase of 127,000 square feet (2.9 acres) in building footprint and 270,000 square feet (6.2 acres) net increase in pavement. Implementation of this alternative would have moderate adverse impacts to special status species, historic structures, cultural landscapes, and park operations.

Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative, proposes moderate development in the Lake Area in order to better meet resource and visitor issues and needs. This alternative provides planning zones, prescriptions, design standards, and projects that guide a net gain of 121,000 square feet (2.8 acres) of building development and 430,400 square feet (9.9 acres, mostly within the existing footprint of the Fishing Bridge RV Park) of pavement. Example projects include pedestrian-only traffic between the Lake Hotel and Lake General Store and moving Lake Lodge cabins away from Lodge Creek. See the full project list in Chapter 2. Implementation of this alternative would have moderate adverse impacts to special status species, historic structures, and cultural landscapes.

Alternative C, the second action alternative, also proposes moderate development in the Lake Area to better meet resource and visitor issues and needs. However, it accomplishes this with planning prescriptions and projects that are different from Alternative B and guide a net gain of 116,000 square feet (2.7 acres) in building development and 586,000 square feet (13.5 acres, mostly within the existing footprint of the Fishing Bridge RV Park) in pavement. It also proposes additional visitor services such as more laundry facilities at the Bridge Bay Campground and a floating pier for visitor use near the historic Fish Hatchery. Implementation of this alternative would have moderate adverse impacts to special status species, historic structures, and cultural landscapes.

For each alternative, park staff analyzed the potential environmental impacts that would likely occur, divided into the following categories: geology and soils, wetlands, vegetation and rare plants, water resources/water quality, wildlife, special status species, climate change, archeological resources, ethnographic resources, historic structures, cultural landscapes, visitor use and experience, scenic resources (including night sky), natural soundscapes, human health and safety, and park operations.

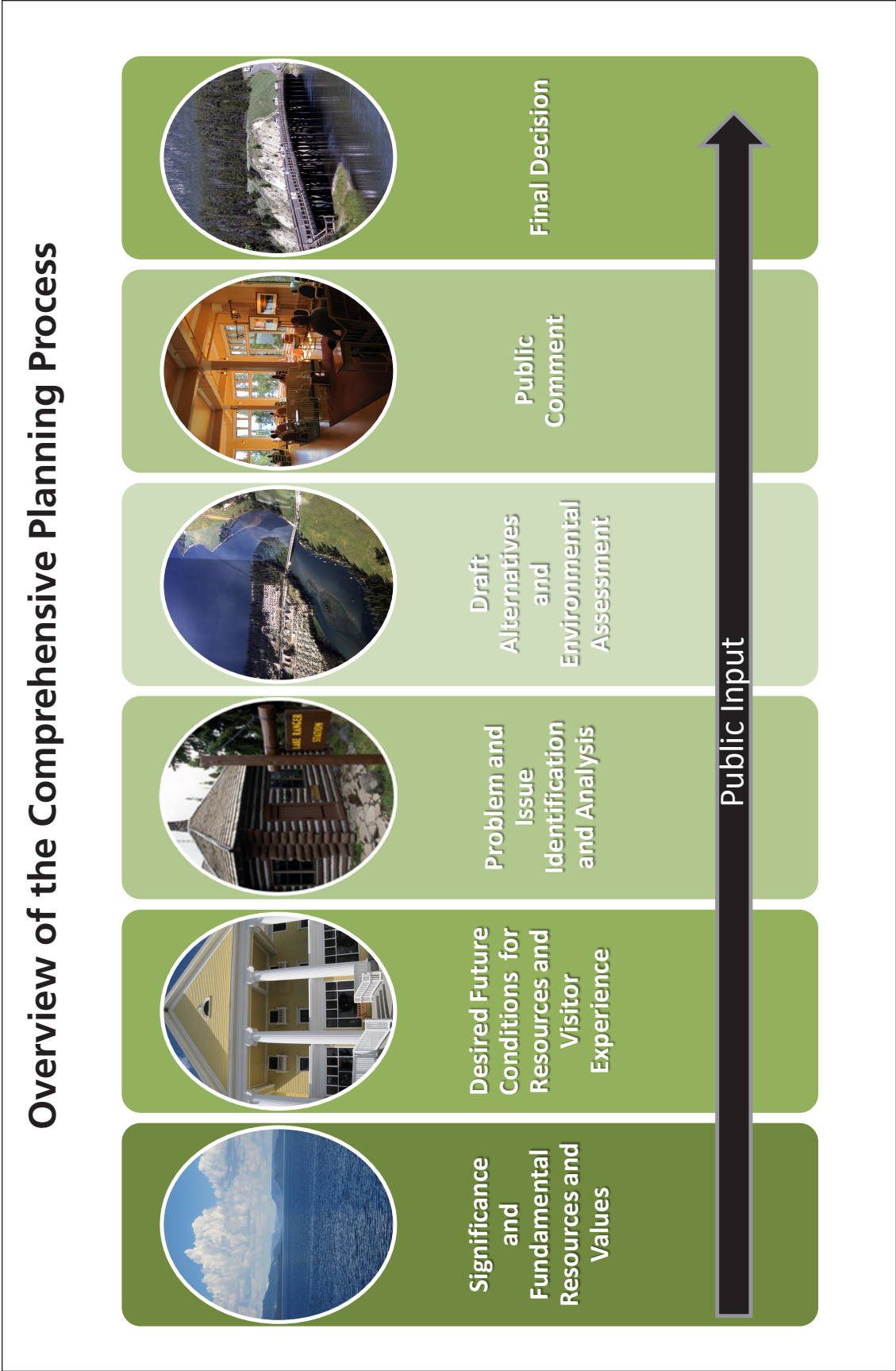


Figure i-1 The comprehensive planning process identifies the area's significance, fundamental resources and values, and desired future conditions (or goals). This will allow park managers to make informed decisions regarding development in the Lake area. The plan is currently in the Public Review step, which is the public's opportunity to provide feedback relating to this plan.

Lake Administration & Fishing Bridge - Alternative B (Preferred)



Figure i-2 Lake Administration & Fishing Bridge - Overview of Alternative B (Preferred)

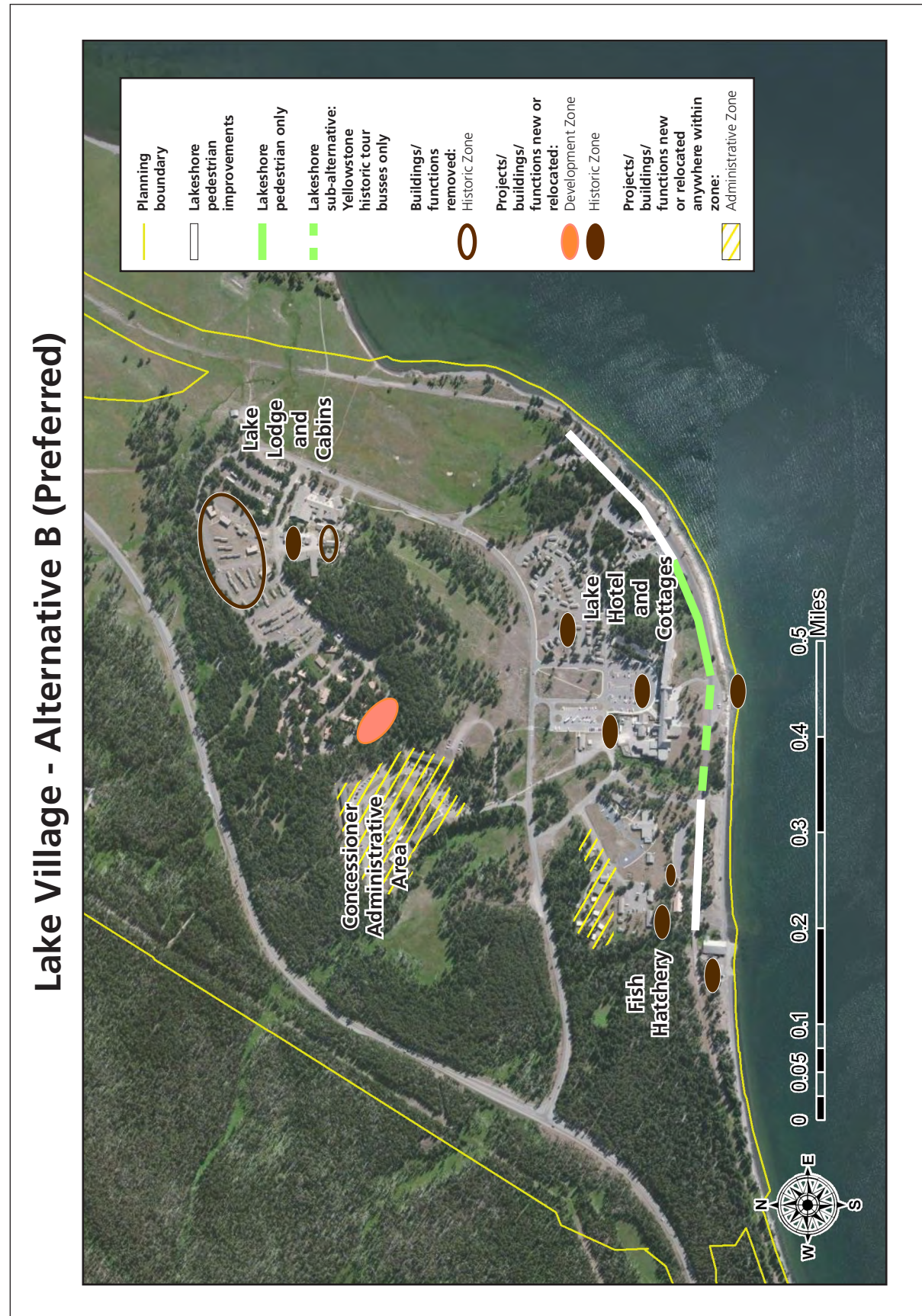


Figure i-3 Lake Village - Overview of Alternative B (Preferred)

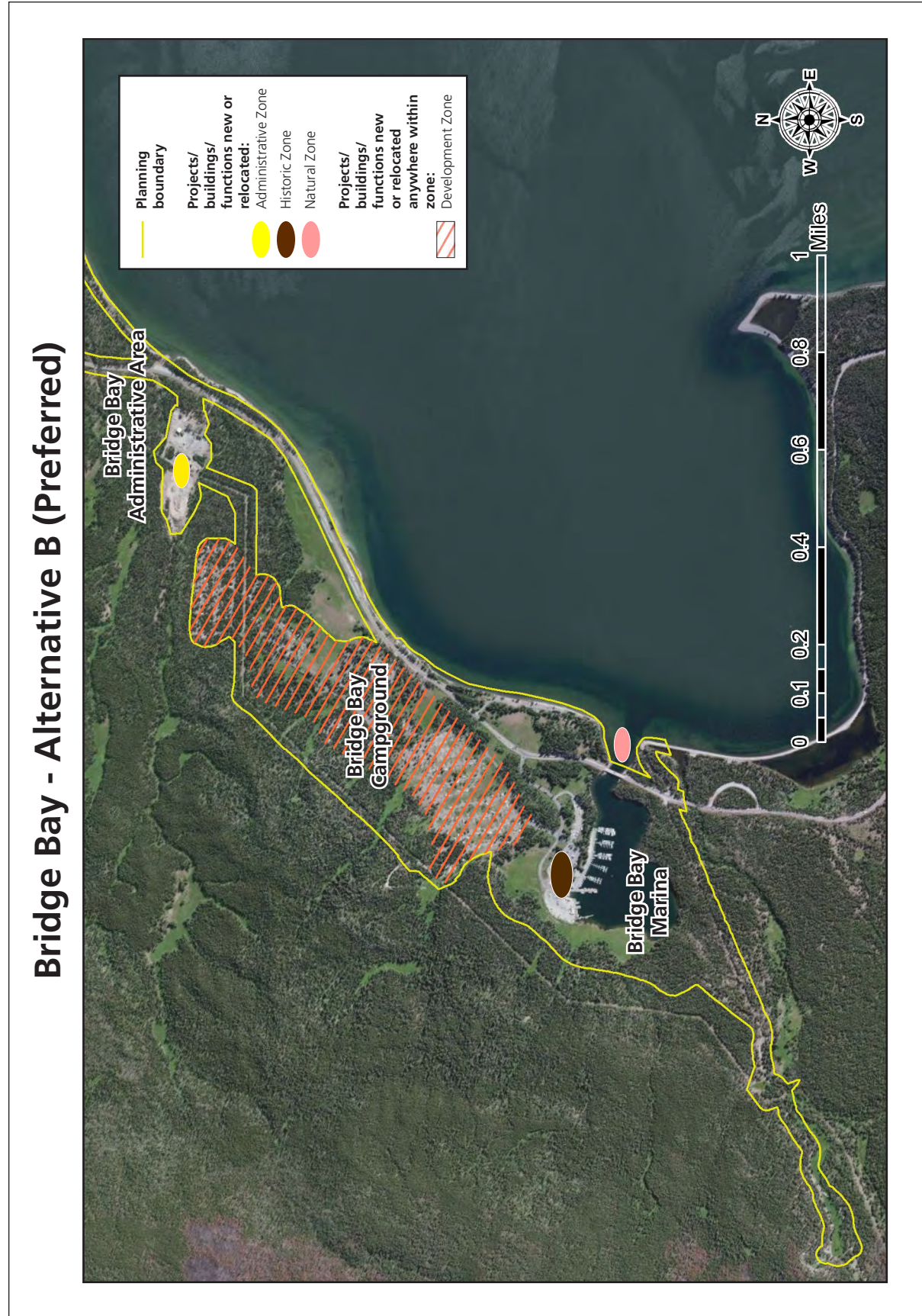


Figure 2-8 Bridge Bay - Overview of Alternative B (Preferred)

Proposal Review Process

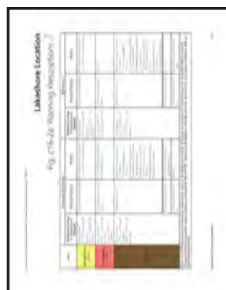
The planning process involves use of the following: planning locations, zones, and prescriptions, design standards, and planning strategies. Together they guide development in the Lake area.



1. Find the **Planning Location** of your proposal (example [Figure 1-2](#)).



2. Identify the **Planning Zone** in which your proposal occurs (example [Figure C-7.1.2](#)).



3. Verify whether your proposal fits one of the categories shown in **Planning Prescriptions**, and whether it falls within net gain for footprint (example [Figure C-7.2.1](#)).



4. Apply **Design Standards** to your proposal (example [Figure C-7.3.3](#)).



5. In the Lakeshore Location, **Planning Strategies** give you further guidance (example [Appendix B](#)).

Figure i-5 Proposal Review Process

HOW THE LACP/EA IS ORGANIZED

The following summarizes the organization and highlights important sections of this document for the reader:

Chapter 1: Purpose and Need explains the basis for the LACP/EA, the planning process, and background information on NPS policies and planning efforts that guide this analysis. The project area is indicated in Figure 1-1 and the planning locations are shown in Figure 1-2. Planning components are illustrated in Figure 1-3. There is also a section describing desired future conditions for resources and visitor experience in the Lake Area and a list of resource impact topics important for evaluating alternatives.

Chapter 2: Alternatives Considered describes the proposed alternatives in detail. Tables 2-1 through 2-3 compare alternatives. Figure 2-4 indicates action alternative zones while Figure 2-5 provides a summary of the action alternative's design standards. Each location also features figures that indicate their specific zones. Table 2-4 summarizes each alternative by location and Table 2-5 shows how each alternative meets the plan's objectives.

Chapter 3: Affected Environment describes the existing environmental conditions in the Lake Area for those resource impact topics identified in Chapter 1. The information in this chapter provides the baseline for analysis.

Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences disclose the environmental effects of the proposed alternatives on the resource impact topics identified in Chapter 1 and described in Chapter 3. This chapter is organized by resource topic. For each resource topic, methodologies, assumptions, and intensity levels are identified followed by details on impacts for each alternative. Cumulative impact analysis and mitigating measures are also provided in this section. Table 4-1 summarizes the environmental impacts by alternative.

Chapter 5: Consultation and Coordination describes the scoping conducted, agencies, organizations and persons contacted for this CP/EA, and a list of preparers. Also included in this chapter are related laws, policies, and regulations and the bibliography.

Appendices: Provides scoping and consultation correspondence (Appendix A), planning strategies (Appendix B), planning prescriptions and design standards (Appendix C), and a list of historic structures (Appendix D).

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BMP	Best Management Practice
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGP	Construction General Permit
CLI	Cultural Landscape Inventory
CWA	Clean Water Act
dba	Decibels, A-weighted
DO	Director's Order
HD	Historic District
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
E.O.	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESB	Emergency Services Building
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GYA	Greater Yellowstone Area
GYE	Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
HABS	Historic American Building Survey
LACP/EA	Lake Area Comprehensive Plan/Environmental Assessment
Lake Hotel	Lake Yellowstone Hotel
Leq	Equivalent Continuous Noise Level
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LID	Low Impact Development
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPS	National Park Service
OPA	Oil Pollution Act
PEPC	Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website
RV	Recreational Vehicle
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SPCC	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure
SWMP	Stormwater Management Plan
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	Underground Storage Tank
YCR	Yellowstone Center for Resources
YNP	Yellowstone National Park
YPSS	Yellowstone Park Service Stations

PUBLIC COMMENT

You may submit written comments through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/lakecompplan>) or mail comments to the superintendent at the address below. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your comments (including your personal identifying information) may be made publicly available at any time. While you may request in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Comments are due by midnight, March 2, 2012 MST.

Superintendent Daniel Wenk
Yellowstone National Park
Lake Area Comprehensive Plan EA Comments
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

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