



Draft Winter Use Plan and Supplemental EIS Yellowstone National Park

July 2012





Public Meeting Agenda

- Sign-in/Open House
- Presentation
- Question and Answer Period
- Public Comments
- Resume Open House (if time allows)



The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)



- Is a legal requirement for federal agencies, but is better described as an environmental planning process.
- Imposes analysis and public review requirements on federal decision makers.
- In this case, requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).



Why is a Winter Use Plan Needed?



- A special regulation is required to allow snowmobile or snowcoach use (36 CFR 2.18).
- 2007 US District Court vacated EIS, Record of Decision, and Regulation that allowed 540 snowmobiles and 83 snowcoaches per day (air, sound, wildlife impacts).
- Interim plan in effect since 2009 expired at end of 2011-2012 winter season.
- A decision is needed on the long-term direction for winter use in the park.



Why Prepare a Supplemental EIS?



- The NPS is preparing a SEIS in order to be responsive to the more than 59,000 comments received on the 2011 Draft EIS.
- The 2011 Final EIS and Record of Decision made a one-year decision, allowing the 2009 interim regulation to remain in place for one additional year.
- A new Record of Decision and regulation must be in place if OSV use is to be allowed in the park.



Supplemental EIS Process—What Is Different?

- Based on public comments received on the 2011 Draft EIS, the NPS:
 - Modeled air and sound impacts using updated assumptions;
 - Reconsidered best available technology (BAT) for snowcoaches;
 - Updated the adaptive management strategy;
 - Updated assumptions regarding the operation of Sylvan Pass;



Supplemental EIS Process—What Is Different?

- Based on public comments received on the 2011 Draft EIS, the NPS:
 - Is considering opportunities for non-commercially guided access;
 - Is considering managing oversnow vehicles by transportation events rather than numbers alone;
 - Dismissed alternatives 3, 4, 6, and 7 as presented in the 2011 Final EIS, from the range of reasonable alternatives that is analyzed in detail.



Alternatives: Considered But Dismissed

- Technical or economic infeasibility;
- Does not meet project purpose or need;
- Duplication with other, less environmentally damaging or less expensive alternatives;
- Conflict with an up to date park plan or other policy such that a major change in the plan or policy would be needed to implement;
- Too great of an environmental impact.





Issues Carried Forward For Detailed Analysis

- Potential for greater than “minor” impacts
 - Air
 - Sound
 - Wildlife
 - Visitor Use and Experience
 - Health and Safety
 - Socioeconomics
 - Park operations and management



Alternatives Carried Forward for Detailed Analysis in the Supplemental Draft EIS



Alternative 1 (No Action): No Snowmobile/Snowcoach Use



- Alternatives are compared to No Action (the baseline) to determine both beneficial and adverse effects.
- Interim regulation expired at the close of the 2011-2012 season; no public use of OSVs would be permitted in Yellowstone.
- The park would not issue a new regulation allowing over-snow vehicles (OSV).
- Only non-motorized winter access into the park (on foot, ski, and snowshoe) would continue.



Elements Common to all “Action” Alternatives

- Best Available Technology would be required for snowcoaches by the 2017-2018 winter season.
- The interim plan limits 318/78 would be in place during the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 winter seasons.
- The road from the North Entrance to the Northeast Entrance would remain open to private and commercial wheeled vehicles.
- Up to 50 snowmobiles per day would be allowed on the route to Cave Falls—in addition to the snowmobile limits in each alternative.
- An adaptive management plan would be developed with stakeholder involvement.





Alternative 2: Continue Snowmobile/Snowcoach Use at Interim Regulation Limits



- Up to 318 snowmobiles and 78 snowcoaches per day.
- All OSV requirements under the interim plan would continue, including entry only with commercial guides, restrictions on hours of operation, and only snowmobiles that meet “Best Available Technology” (BAT) requirements.



Alternative 3: Transition to BAT Snowcoaches Only



- Initially allows up to 318 snowmobiles and 78 snowcoaches per day.
- Once the current fleet of 78 snowcoaches achieve BAT (2017-2018 season), snowcoaches would begin to replace snowmobiles over a three-year period (by the 2020-2021 season).
- Snowcoach numbers would be allowed to increase to 120 per day, with a corresponding decrease in the number of snowmobiles during the three-year phase-out period.
- Sylvan Pass closed to OSVs once phase-out is complete.



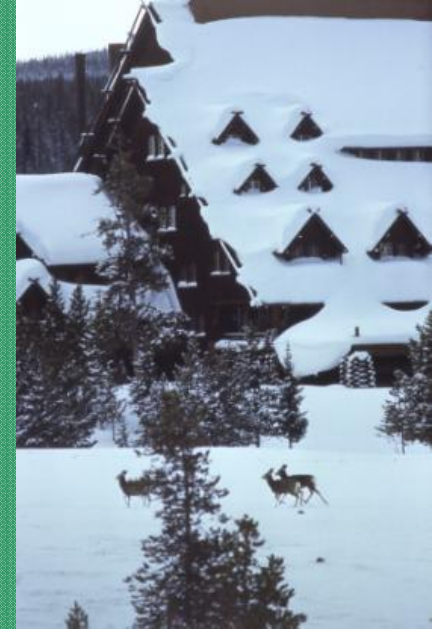
Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative): Manage OSV Access by Transportation Events

- New alternative with a new approach: limit impacts of OSV use by managing number of transportation events rather than vehicle numbers alone.
 - Humans and wild life react to events, rather than individual vehicles
- Better protect park resources while allowing appropriate visitor use;
- Market based approach;
- Based on premise that impacts of snowmobiles and snowcoaches on air, sound, wildlife and visitor use and experience are comparable.
- Encourages advances in OSV technology;
- Offers flexibility to operators and visitors.



Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative): Manage OSV Access by Transportation Events

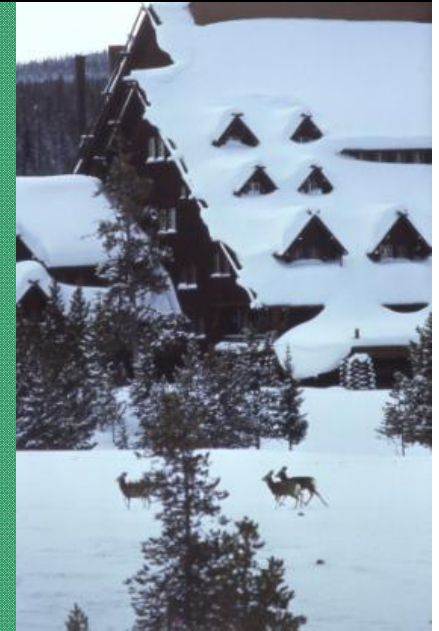
- Up to 110 transportation events would be allowed each day.
- Operators would decide whether to use their daily allocation for snowmobiles or snowcoaches, but no more than 50 transportation events each day could come from snowmobiles.
- A transportation event would initially equal one group of snowmobiles (maximum group size of 10, average of 7, averaged over the season) or one snowcoach.
 - The size of a transportation event could grow if enhanced BAT standards for sound emissions are met.





Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative): Manage OSV Access by Transportation Events

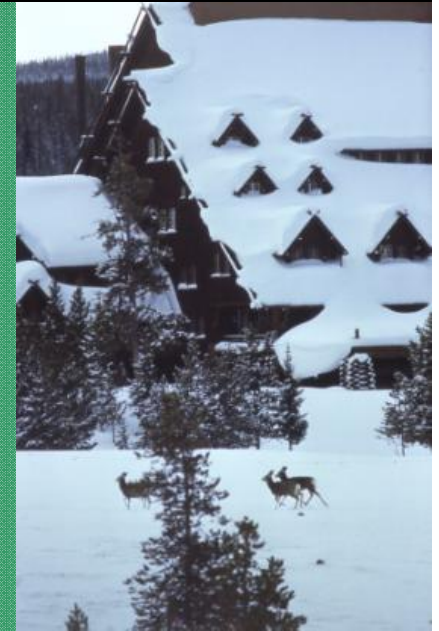
- BAT requirements for snowmobiles would initially be the same as in recent years.
- For snowmobiles, beginning in the 2017/2018 season:
 - Maximum dBA would be lowered from 73dBA to 67dBA
 - maximum CO output allowed would be lowered from 120 g/kWH to 90 g/kWH.
- Snowcoach BAT would be required beginning in the 2017/2018 season:
 - EPA Tier 2 technical requirements
 - No louder than 75dBA





Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative): Manage OSV Access by Transportation Events

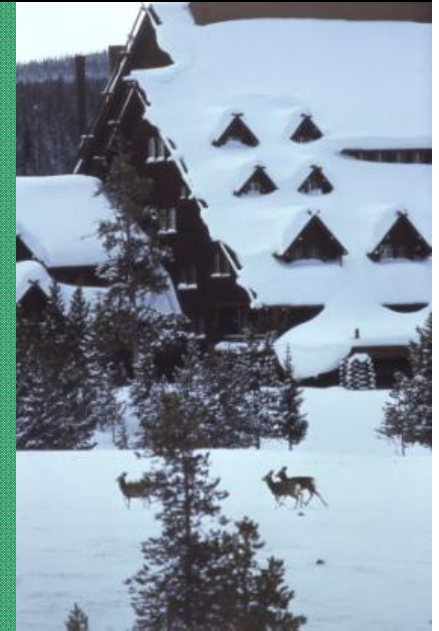
- OSV use would be 100% guided
 - Four non-commercially guided snowmobile groups of up to five snowmobiles per group would be permitted daily, one from each entrance.
- Sylvan Pass would be open, pursuant to the Sylvan Pass Working Group Agreement.
- 2-year transition; OSV use at interim rule levels (318 snowmobiles/78 snowcoaches for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 winter seasons.





Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative): Manage OSV Access by Transportation Events

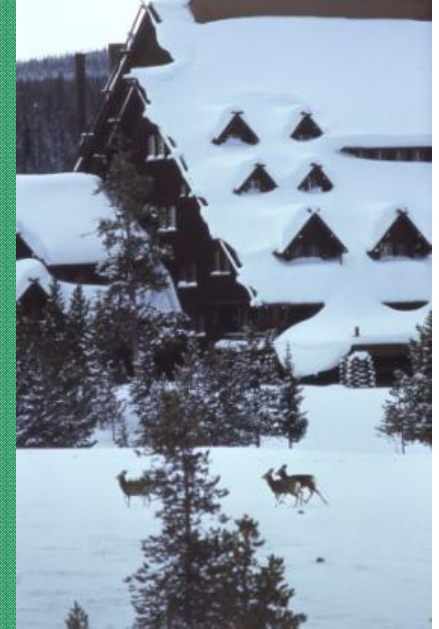
- Potential OSV numbers:
 - Between 20 and 480 snowmobiles; and
 - Between 60 and 106 snowcoaches in the park per day.
 - If maximum allocations are used for snowmobiles, there could be an average of up to 342 snowmobiles in the park each day.





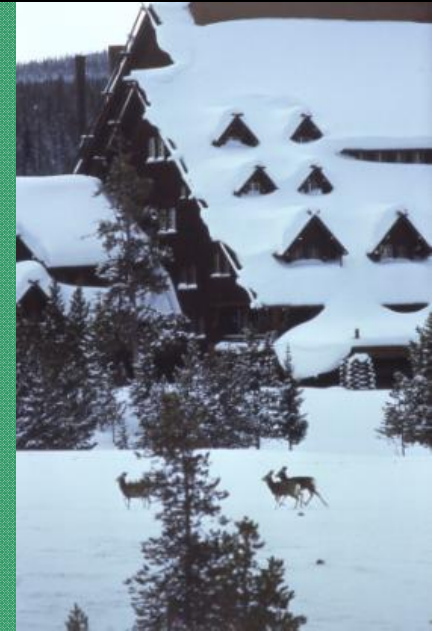
Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative): Manage OSV Access by Transportation Events

- Enhanced BAT (E-BAT)
 - If additional sound emission standards are met (65 dBA for snowmobiles and 71 dBA for snowcoaches), the average number of snowmobiles per group could rise from 7 to 8 (still max of 10 per group) and snowcoaches could rise from 1 to 2 per transportation event.





Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative): Manage OSV Access by Transportation Events



- Potential snowmobile numbers under E-BAT:
 - Still maximum of between 20 and 480 per day
 - Daily average if all allocations are used for snowmobiles could rise from up to 342 to up to 388 per day.
- Potential snowcoach numbers under E-BAT:
 - Due to the potential doubling of the number of snowcoaches, there could be between 120 and 212 snowcoaches in the park per day.



Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative): Manage OSV Access by Transportation Events

	STANDARD BAT	E-BAT
SNOWMOBILES PER DAY	20 to 480	20 to 480
SNOWMOBILE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE DAILY AVERAGE	342	388
SNOWCOACHES PER DAY	60 to 106	120 to 212



Submitting your comments on the Supplemental Draft EIS

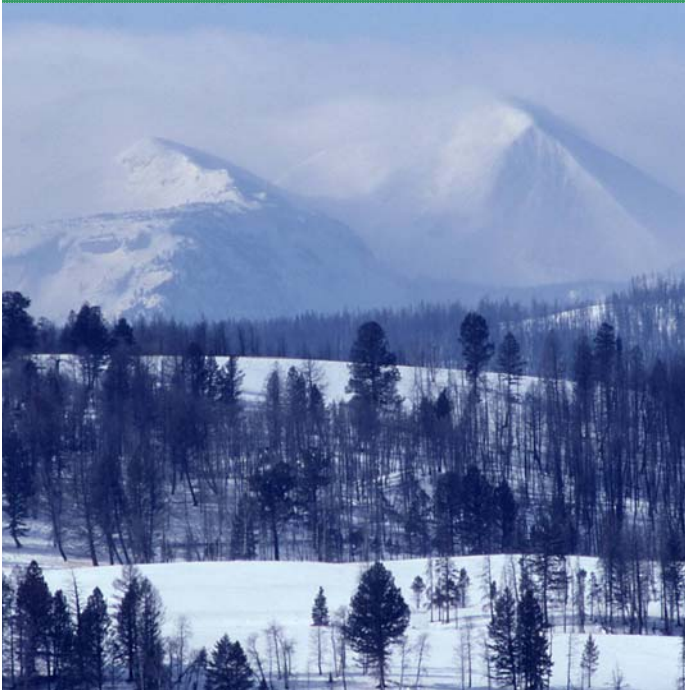


Substantive Comments

- Not a Vote
- Purpose, Need, Objectives
- Range of Alternatives
- Elements of Alternatives/Preferred Alternative
- Impact Analysis
- Additional Studies/Data



How to Provide Comments During the Comment Period



- Accepting comments tonight orally and on comment cards.
- You can submit comments directly on-line on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/YELL>



How to Provide Comments During the Comment Period

- **Mail written comments to:**

Yellowstone National Park
Supplemental Winter Use Plan EIS
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

- **Hand deliver comments to:**

Management Assistant's Office
Headquarters Building
Mammoth Hot Springs
Yellowstone National Park, WY





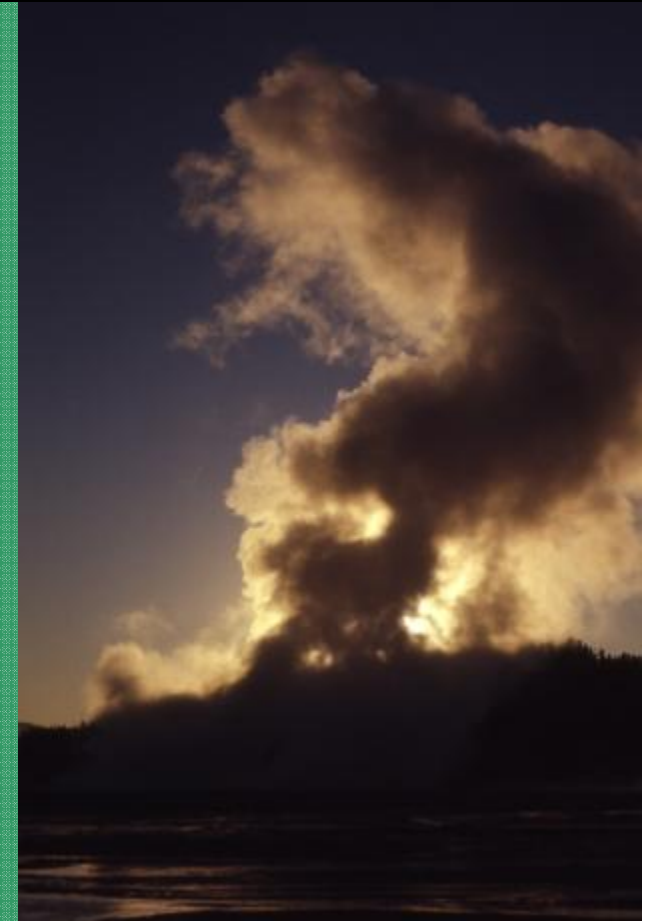
Next Steps

- Supplemental Draft EIS Comment Period closes August 20, 2012
- Proposed Regulation
- Review and Consider Comments
 - Revise Supplemental Draft EIS
 - Respond to Comments
- Fall 2012—Final Supplemental EIS, Record of Decision and Final Regulation



For More Information:

- NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment Web Site (PEPC):
 - PEPC: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/YELL>
 - Select “2012 Supplemental Winter Use Plan EIS”
- Yellowstone’s Winter Planning Web Page:
 - www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/winteruse.htm





Thank You for
Participating in this
Winter Use Planning
Process