



Welcome

**Parkwide Commercial Stock Outfitter Concession
Contracts/Environmental Assessment**

Public Scoping Meetings

March 2013

Why are we here?

- Yellowstone National Park is proposing to issue new concession contracts for commercial guided saddle and pack stock tours
- The NPS is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) to evaluate alternatives and impacts associated with activities proposed as part of a new prospectus.



Overview of the EA Process

- Public Scoping Comment Period for EA—February 28, 2013 to April 15, 2013*
- Public Scoping Open Houses—March 2013 (Bozeman, Jackson, West Yellowstone, Gardiner, Cody)*
- Preparation of the EA—Summer/Fall 2013
- Release of the EA for public comment—Fall 2013*
- Issuance of Decision on EA

* Opportunities to provide public input and comment on the EA.

Purpose and Need for the Action

- To prepare a new prospectus for issuance of concession contracts for guided saddle and pack stock tours
- To continue and improve unique visitor experiences in the park using saddle and pack stock tours
- To renew and evaluate the methodology for implementing saddle and pack stock contracts according to applicable rules and regulations
- Standardize operational protocols to ensure the protection of park resources and values through monitoring and adaptive management

Potential Impact Topics for Analysis

- Geology and Soils
- Vegetation
- Wetlands
- Water quality
- Wildlife
- Special Status Species & Yellowstone Species of Concern
- Visitor Use and Experience
- Cultural Resources
- Health and Safety
- Socioeconomics
- Park Operations



Potential Issues to be Addressed

- Transport and proliferation of exotic plants by commercial stock animals
- Impacts to soils and vegetation by stock and degradation of trails
- Changes in commercial saddle and pack stock use over time and associated impacts
- Conflicts between commercial saddle and pack stock users and hikers
- Quantifying day use of commercial saddle and pack stock users
- Potential for disease transmission from commercial stock

Prospectus Development

- Contracts Expire in 2013
- Yellowstone Park will issue an one extension for 2014
- Yellowstone Park expects to issue new concession contracts for 2015
- 45 existing contracts
- Yellowstone Park expects existing operators will have a preferential right for the new concession contracts

Current Commercial Operations

- The concessioner provides guided saddle and pack tours within the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park
- The terms saddle and pack stock include horses, mules, burros and llamas
- Both overnight and day rides are currently authorized
- Concessioner provides a safe enjoyable tour, ensuring that resources are accurately interpreted and protected

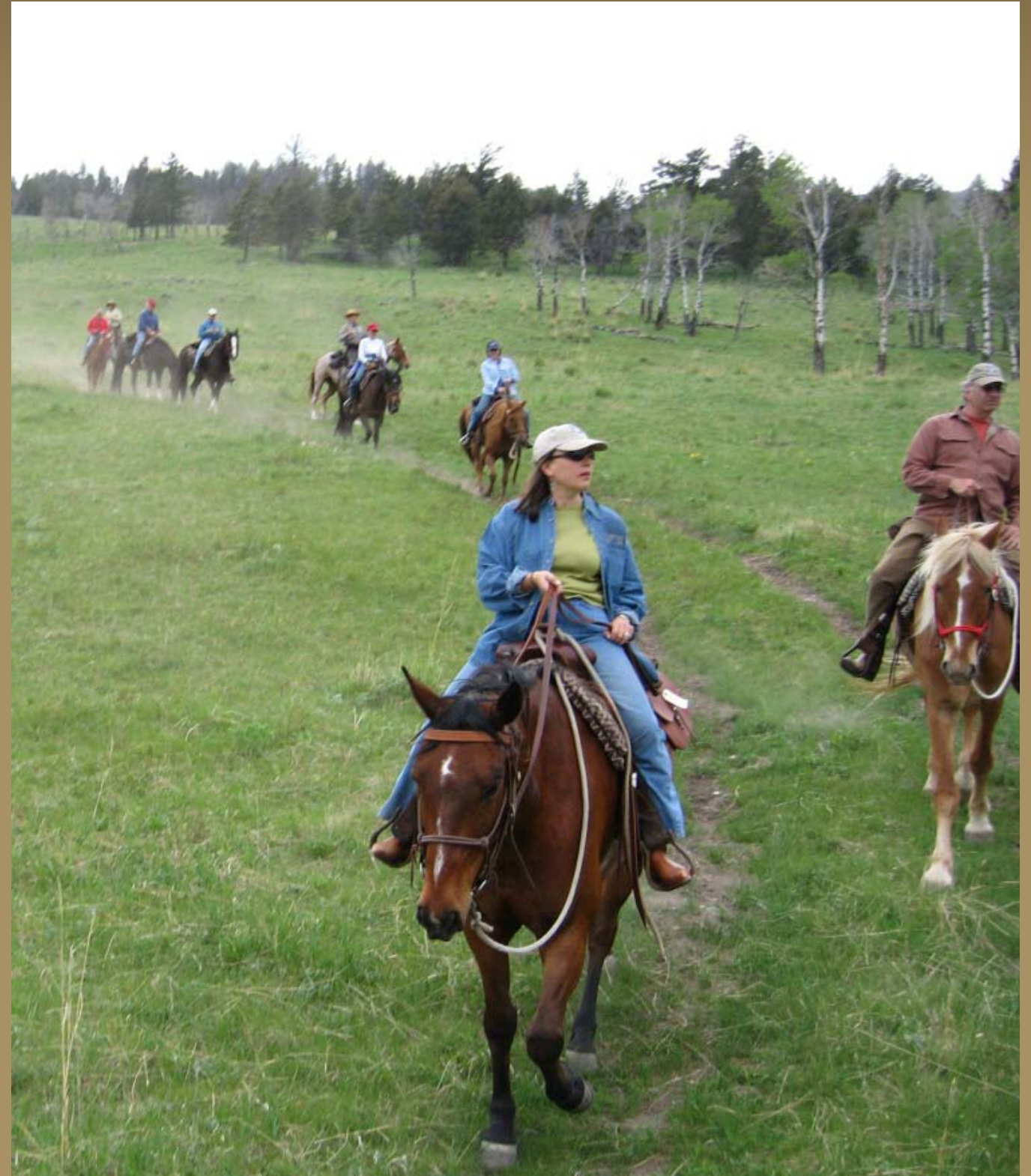
Overnight Rides

- Stay in designated sites
- Reservation system
- Overnight rides are permitted off-trail from campsite
- Coggins Test
- Trails closed for Commercial Stock



Day Rides

- Day rides are reported in advance
- Groups travel in single file
- Day rides stay on designated trails
- Exception for off trail travel: fishing or advance approval



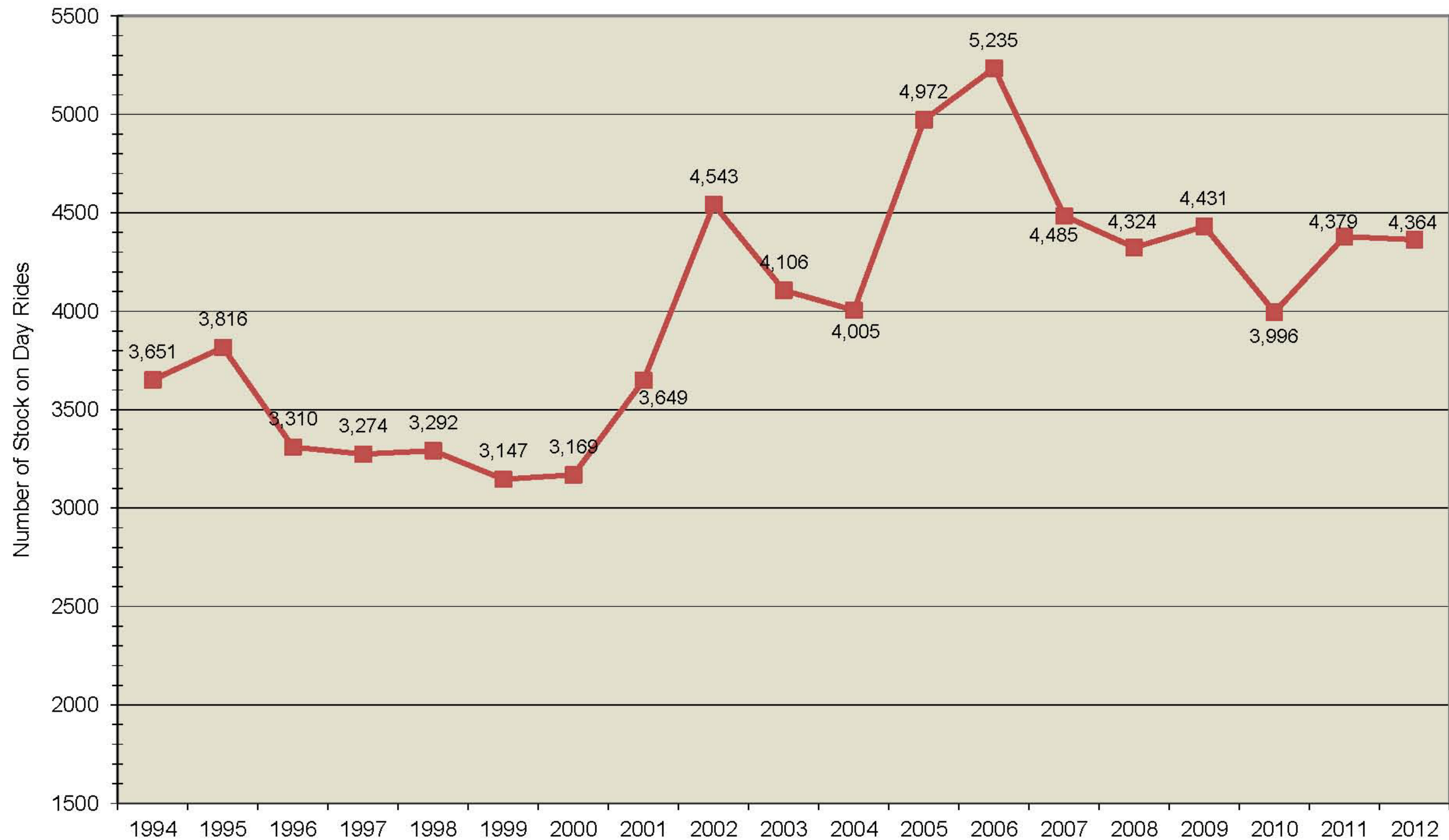
Campsite Environment

- Camp Organization
- Campfires
- Toilet Facilities
- Food Storage
- Food Sanitation
- Site Clean-up



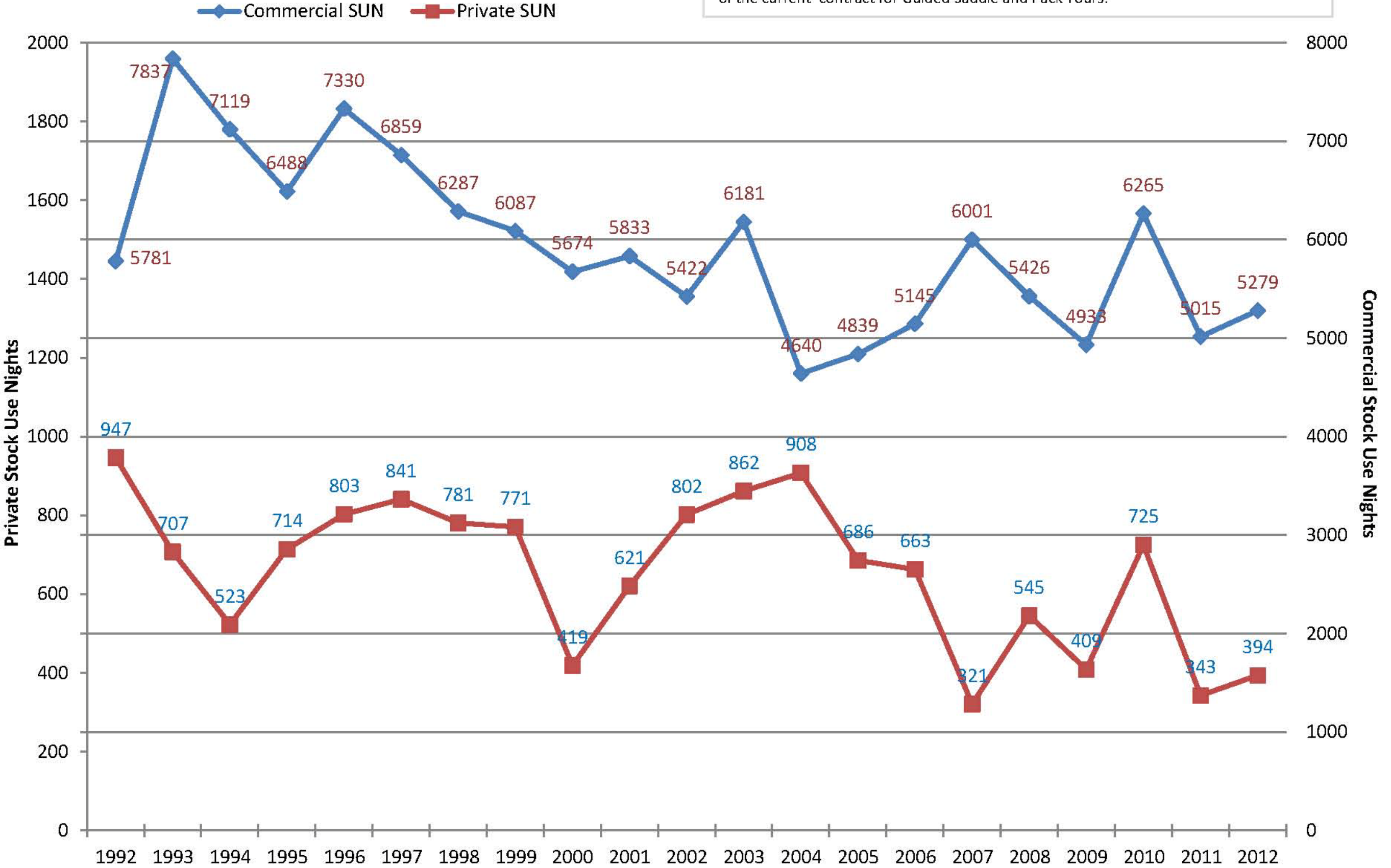
Yellowstone National Park Commercial Stock Use

Number of Stock on Day Rides 1994-2012



Yellowstone National Park Stock Use Nights 1992-2012

Note: In 2000, 2007, and 2011 there were extended closures (due to fire, high water, wet conditions) in the backcountry which impacted overall use and the total number of permits issued. In 2007, Yellowstone started requiring all stock users to possess proof of negative coggins tests for all equine stock brought into the park. 2004 was the first year of the current contract for Guided Saddle and Pack Tours.



Please provide us your comments!

- We need your input on development of the EA and prospectus
 - What issues do you feel need to be evaluated in the EA?
 - Are there specific actions that should be addressed in the prospectus?
 - What are your concerns regarding commercial saddle and pack stock tour operations in Yellowstone National Park?
 - Other issues, comments or questions??

How to Comment on the EA

You can comment in a number of ways:

- Fill out the form at this meeting and put into the comment box
- On-line at the Planning, Environment and Public Comment Website (PEPC) <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/stockEA>
- Hand deliver your comments to Yellowstone National Park's Mailroom in the Administration Building in Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming
- Mail your comments to:
Yellowstone National Park
Attn: Parkwide Commercial Stock Outfitter Concession Contacts/EA
PO BOX 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

Questions?

