



Revised - March 12, 2013

Parkwide Commercial Stock Outfitter Concession Contracts/ Environmental Assessment

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) to analyze impacts associated with the issuance of new concession contracts for guided saddle and pack stock tours in Yellowstone National Park (YNP). Currently, the park has 45 concession contracts for guided saddle and pack stock tours. Commercial stock outfitter day use has increased by approximately 50 percent over the last 15 years. Commercial stock outfitter use nights have averaged around 5,500 over the past 6 years. This project presents an opportunity to consider a range of alternatives for management and to analyze the impacts of commercial stock outfitter use in YNP.

An EA will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) to provide the decision-making framework that 1) explores a reasonable range of alternatives to meet the project objectives; 2) evaluates potential issues and impacts to park resources and values; 3) identifies mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts; and 4) describes an approach for conservation decisions over the coming decades.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

The Plan/EA will analyze a comprehensive toolbox of methods that may include:

- ❖ Limits to Day Use
- ❖ Resource Monitoring
- ❖ Trail Management
- ❖ Adaptive Management
- ❖ Safety Considerations
- ❖ Parking/ Trailhead Requirements
- ❖ Stock Waste Management

PRELIMINARY RESOURCES AND CONCERNS

The Plan/EA will analyze potential impacts to a number of resources including:

- ❖ Geology
- ❖ Soils
- ❖ Vegetation/ Rare Plants
- ❖ Wetlands
- ❖ Water Quality
- ❖ Wildlife
- ❖ Special Status Wildlife Species & Yellowstone Species of Management Concern
- ❖ Cultural Resources
- ❖ Visitor Use/ Health & Safety
- ❖ Socioeconomics
- ❖ Park Operations



NEPA PROCESS AND TIMELINE



Project milestones include:

- ❖ Project Initiation: August 2012
- ❖ Public Scoping: Closes April 15, 2013 **
- ❖ Analysis: Spring 2013
- ❖ EA Preparation: Summer 2013
- ❖ Public Review of EA: Summer/Fall 2013 **
- ❖ Decision: Fall 2013

**** Opportunity for Public Comment**

YOU'RE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE!

We ask that you help the park review/develop the purpose, need, objectives, and alternatives for commercial stock outfitter use for this environmental assessment. Please join us at one of the public meetings to begin this process. If you cannot attend the public meetings but would like to provide comments, you can still participate online or in writing. Comments may be submitted on-line to <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/stockEA> the website for the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) database, hand-delivered during normal business hours to the Mailroom in the park's Administration Building in Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, or mailed to:

Yellowstone National Park
Attn: Parkwide Commercial Stock Outfitter Concession Contracts/EA
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

Comments must be received by **April 15, 2013**.

Please note that names and addresses of people who comment become part of the public record. We will make all submissions from organizations, businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses available for public inspection in their entirety. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. Although you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

You are encouraged to attend one of the two remaining public meetings that will be held during the public scoping comment period. Presentations on the Commercial Stock Outfitter Concession Contracts/EA process will be held the same evenings as presentations for the Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) Plan public meetings. The presentations for the Commercial Stock Outfitter Concessions Contracts/EA process are scheduled as noted below:

March 18, 2013: Gardiner, MT
Yellowstone Association Headquarters, Classroom 1
308 Park Street, Gardiner, MT
6:00 - 7:00 pm

March 20, 2013: Cody, Wyoming
Park County Library, Grizzly Hall
1500 Heart Mountain Street, Cody, WY
5:30 - 6:30 pm