



Envision the Future of the Moose-Wilson Corridor  
Moose-Wilson Corridor Comprehensive Management Plan - Scoping Newsletter

DEAR FRIENDS,

The National Park Service (NPS) is initiating planning for the future of the Moose-Wilson corridor in Grand Teton National Park, and we are requesting your comments during the scoping period beginning December 6, 2013, to February 6, 2014.

The Moose-Wilson corridor comprises about 10,300 acres in the southwest corner of the park. This exceptional area has a remarkable variety of natural communities, cultural and wilderness resources, and opportunities for visitor enjoyment. Moose-Wilson Road extends 7.7 miles through the area and is the primary access to several park destinations, including Death Canyon and Granite Canyon trailheads, Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve, White Grass Ranch and Murie Ranch historic districts, and Sawmill Ponds overlook. The corridor also provides unmatched wildlife viewing opportunities for a range of iconic large mammal species.

Developing a comprehensive management plan for the Moose-Wilson corridor is critical to ensure the protection of key resources, values, and visitor experience. This newsletter provides you with information about the planning effort and ways you can participate. By sharing your ideas and opinions about how the Moose-Wilson corridor should be managed, you can help us shape its future.

Thank you for your interest in the Moose-Wilson corridor. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
Kevin Schneider, Acting Superintendent  
Grand Teton National Park  
John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway

TALK TO US – WE’RE LISTENING

We are asking you to share your thoughts, concerns, and vision for the future of the Moose-Wilson corridor. Your input is very important in guiding the planning team’s work. You can share your comments with us at the open house, on the NPS website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MooseWilson>, or by mailing your comments to us.

YOU’RE INVITED!

The National Park Service will be hosting an open house in Jackson, Wyoming, on Tuesday, January 14. The purpose of the open house is to gather public input on the Moose-Wilson Corridor Comprehensive Management Plan strategy and vision. The open house will provide participants with information about the corridor and the planning process. Please join us and share your ideas on the plan at the following location:

Tuesday, January 14, 5 to 8 pm  
St. John’s Medical Center  
Moose-Wapiti Classroom  
625 East Broadway  
Jackson, WY 83001

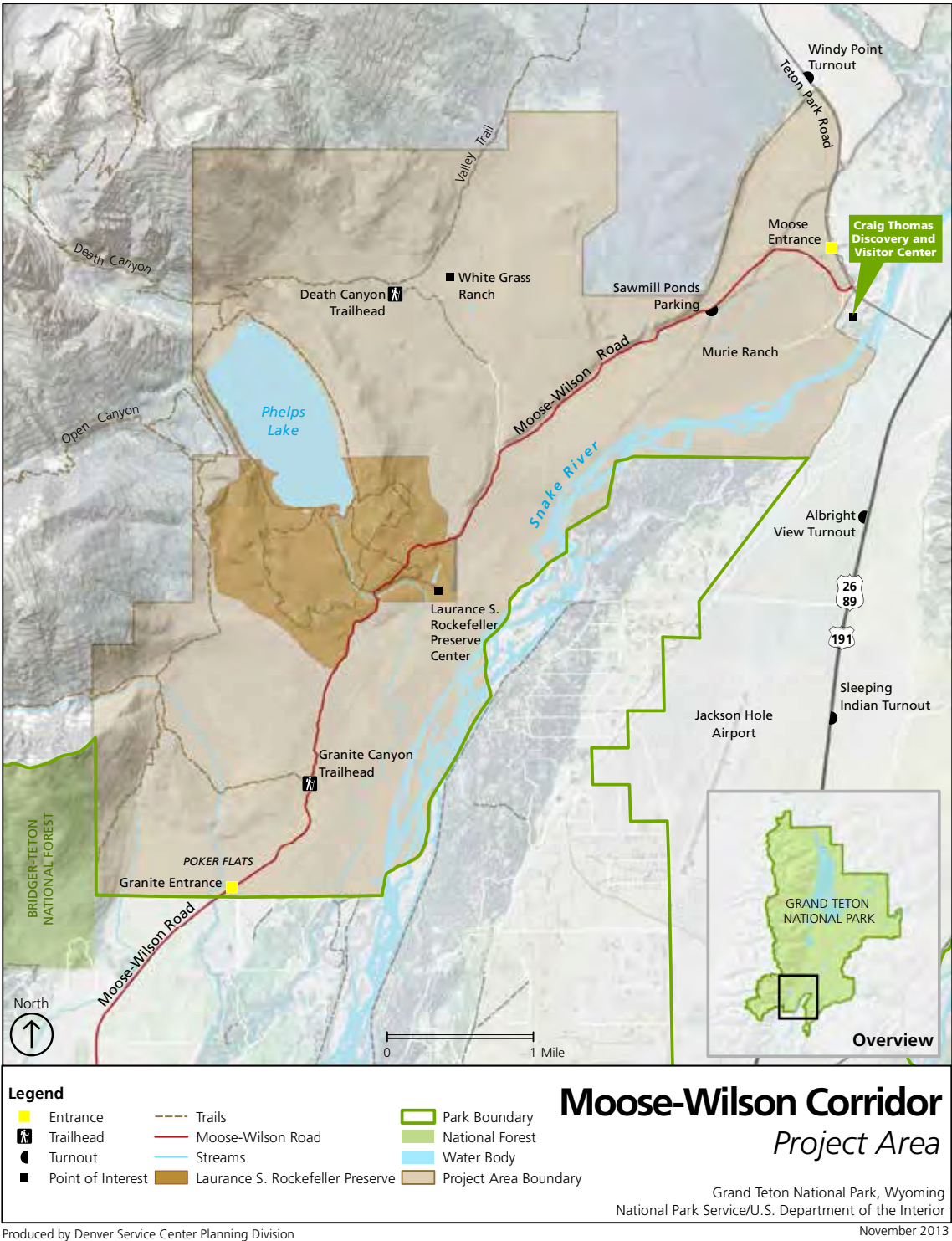
PURPOSE OF THE CORRIDOR COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of the plan is to determine how best to provide appropriate opportunities for visitors to use, experience, and enjoy the area while protecting park resources. This plan will comprehensively examine several management options within the corridor to ensure the protection of significant national park resources and values.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

To determine the appropriate future management strategies for the Moose-Wilson corridor, the plan will

- evaluate the importance and purpose of the Moose-Wilson corridor as a visitor destination within the park
- clearly define the necessary conditions for park visitors to understand, enjoy, and appreciate these resources and values
- distinguish the corridor’s fundamental and other important resources and values
- identify the desired resource conditions linked to these resources and values
- analyze a range of management alternatives for maintaining these desired resource conditions







PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

The public scoping period, between December 6, 2013, to February 6, 2014, is the ideal time for you to share your thoughts, concerns, and vision for shaping future management of the Moose-Wilson corridor. Your responses would help guide the planning team in developing the corridor comprehensive management plan, including the consideration of various alternatives for managing the corridor. We would also appreciate your responses to the following questions:

- 1. What do you value most about your visits to the Moose-Wilson corridor and why?
- 2. What do you think are the most important issues affecting the Moose-Wilson corridor? Issues can be concerns, opportunities, or topics needing further discussion.
- 3. Do you have any comments about the fundamental resources and values for the Moose Wilson corridor as described in the newsletter?
- 4. What aspects of the Moose-Wilson corridor do you hope will continue into the future? What changes would you like to be made in the corridor for the future?
- 5. What other comments or suggestions do you have?

You can share your comments with us on the NPS user-friendly website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MooseWilson>. The questions listed above are included on the website, and submitting your responses is quick and easy. Alternatively, you can submit comments at the open house on Tuesday, January 14 or by mailing your comments using the return address on this newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you.

MOOSE-WILSON CORRIDOR ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

One of the first steps in any planning process is the scoping or “discovery” phase in which initial ideas about what the plan should address are assembled. The planning team has begun this step by developing a preliminary set of issues and opportunities involving the park’s Moose-Wilson corridor. Please review the topics below and then share your thoughts with us about how these issues could be resolved or if there are other topics that should be considered as part of the comprehensive management planning effort.

- Human-wildlife Interactions. How can the National Park Service best balance providing wildlife viewing opportunities, minimizing human impacts on wildlife, and mitigating safety concerns associated with potentially dangerous wildlife such as moose, black bears, and grizzly bears observed within the corridor?
- Historic Character. What is the most appropriate way to maintain the rustic, narrow, winding, slow driving experience and historic character of Moose-Wilson Road?
- Bicycle and Motor Vehicle Use. What strategies are most appropriate in managing increasing traffic volumes and uses along the Moose-Wilson corridor?
- Visitor-related Resource Impacts. How can the National Park Service manage visitor use in the corridor to ensure that this use does not impact ecological communities, exceptional scenery, wildlife behaviors / wildlife viewing opportunities, or conflicts with other visitor uses?
- Visitor Experience. What is the most appropriate way in which the National Park Service can provide increased interpretation and education about the resources, values, and wilderness character along the Moose-Wilson corridor?

FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

A foundation document describes a park’s purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values. A foundation document was completed for Grand Teton National Park in 2006 that defines these essential elements and provides basic guidance for planning and management decisions.

The comprehensive management plan for the Moose-Wilson corridor will be shaped by the purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values of Grand Teton National Park. This unique corridor contains a number of fundamental resources and values essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. To better understand this relationship, excerpts from the park’s foundation document are provided below, followed by descriptions of each fundamental resource and value found within the Moose-Wilson corridor.

PURPOSE OF GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

The park purpose is the foundational reason(s) the park was established. A park purpose statement is grounded in a thorough analysis of the legislation (or executive order) and legislative history of the park and may include information from studies generated prior to the park’s establishment.

The purposes of Grand Teton National Park are to

- preserve and protect the spectacular scenery of the Teton Range and the valley of Jackson Hole
- protect a unique geologic landscape that supports abundant diverse native plants and animals and associated cultural resources
- protect wildlands and wildlife habitat within the Greater Yellowstone Area, including the migration route of the Jackson elk herd
- provide recreational, educational, and scientific opportunities compatible with these resources for enjoyment and inspiration

SIGNIFICANCE OF GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

Park significance statements express why the park’s resources and values are important enough to justify national park designation. They describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context and are directly linked to the purpose of the park.

The following are the significant statements of Grand Teton National Park:

- The iconic mountain landscape of the Teton Range rises dramatically above the flat valley of Jackson Hole creating a compelling view that has inspired people to explore and experience the area for thousands of years. The sudden rise of rugged peaks contrasts with the horizontal sagebrush flats. Glacial lakes at the foot of the mountains reflect and expand the view. Opportunities to view an impressive array of wildlife are extraordinary. The awesome grandeur of the ever present Teton Range under changing weather conditions and seasons provides a superlative setting for unmatched visitor experiences.
- Grand Teton National Park preserves one of the world’s most impressive and highly visible fault block mountain ranges, which abruptly rises 7,000 feet and is juxtaposed with landscapes shaped by glacial processes and braided river geomorphology. The Teton Range is one of the continent’s youngest mountain ranges, yet exposes some of the oldest rocks on earth.
- Grand Teton National Park is the heart of one of the earth’s largest intact temperate ecosystems with a full complement of native Rocky Mountain plants and animals, including grizzly bears, wolves, North American bison, pronghorn, and one of the world’s largest elk herds.
- The park represents one of the most notable conservation stories of the 20th century, which continues to inspire present and future generations. The formation of the park, a process that took more than half a century, was a struggle between private economic interests and a concern for conserving the Teton Range and valley floor. From prehistoric times to the present day, numerous diverse cultures, cultural trends, and values influenced the Teton Range and Jackson Hole valley.
- Within the park, visitors can easily experience peaceful solitude, wilderness character, and a rare combination of outdoor recreational and educational activities, world-renowned wildlife and landscapes, and the cultural amenities of a vibrant community throughout the year. Visitors of all abilities and interests can enjoy opportunities for physical, emotional, and inspirational experiences in an unspoiled environment.
- As part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the park offers easily accessible and unparalleled opportunities for scientific research and educational study of temperate zone natural systems and processes in a range of elevations and the human relationships to these systems. The relatively pristine landscape serves as a “control” or baseline for scientific study.





FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES OF GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. Fundamental resources and values are closely related to a park’s legislative purpose and are more specific than significance statements.

The following are the fundamental resources and values of Grand Teton National Park:

- Scenery
- natural beauty, wildlife, clean air, relative lack of development
  - sagebrush flats that provide a platform for viewing

- Geologic Processes
- Teton and other faults
  - ongoing glacial/hydrologic processes
  - volcanic history and linked underground geothermal features and systems
  - braided river geomorphology

- Ecological Communities
- geography, location, size, and connectivity of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
  - extreme topography in a small area that leads to diverse vegetation communities
  - full complement of native birds and mammals—natural predator-prey interactions that reflect the health of the ecosystem
  - natural disturbances—fire, landslides, flooding, drought, insect infestations— influence the landscape

- Aquatic Resources
- lakes, free-flowing water
  - riparian habitat for native species, including Yellowstone cutthroat trout and Snake River cutthroat trout
  - clean water, including outstanding natural resource waters

- Cultural History and Resources
- American Indian use and spiritual reverence
  - history of the fur trade and westward expansion reflected in place names, paintings, photographs, homestead structures, and dude ranches
  - story of “crucible of conservation” evident in structures such as the Maude Noble Cabin, Murie Ranch, and Rockefeller Parkway
  - mountaineering history of the Teton Range

- Natural Soundscapes
- sounds associated with predator avoidance, prey detection, mating, and other behavioral interactions
  - biological sounds such as birds singing, fish splashing, and elk bugling
  - physical sounds such as waterfalls, rapids, wind in vegetation, and thunder

- Visitor Experience in an Outstanding Natural Environment
- spectacular setting and quality natural environment
  - opportunities to observe wildlife
  - full spectrum of access, ability level, and activities year-round
  - wilderness character, opportunities for solitude, natural lightscapes, natural soundscapes

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES OF MOOSE-WILSON CORRIDOR

As an integral part of Grand Teton National Park, the Moose-Wilson corridor contains most of the park’s fundamental resources and values listed above. The following provides a description of these resources and values as they relate to the park’s broader foundation document.



**Scenery**

The Moose-Wilson corridor contains an exceptionally wide variety of scenery that can be viewed throughout the seasons. The iconic peaks of the Teton Range and its high-elevation canyons offer a unique view not readily found in other areas of Grand Teton National Park. Stunning views of Phelps Lake and Death Canyon can be found along trails within the Laurence S. Rockefeller Preserve. Other exceptional scenic landscapes within the corridor include the Snake River, forests, sagebrush flats, and wet meadows and wetlands. These diverse scenic landscapes and visual qualities foster a sense of discovery and provide visitors with opportunities to view wildlife, especially along Moose-Wilson Road.

Geologic Processes

The Moose-Wilson corridor provides a glimpse into the geologic forces shaping this region. Earthquakes generated on the Teton fault lifted the Teton Range to the west, while melting glaciers left behind outwash plains carved by the Snake River to the east. Small earthquakes occasionally shake the region, suggesting the power of future mountain-building earthquakes. Evidence of past glaciations flanks the corridor. Terraces carved by melting glaciers rise above the modern river; while piedmont lakes dammed by glacial moraines lie at the mouth of U-shaped canyons. All the while, rainfall and freeze-thaw cycles cause landslides and rock falls.



**Ecological Communities and Wildlife**

The Snake River’s extensive riparian habitats are closer to the Teton Range in the Moose-Wilson corridor than at any other location in the park, providing an outstanding representation of the park’s major natural ecological communities within a relatively limited geographic area. Aspens, chokecherries, willows, various conifers, and other vegetation provide forage and exceptional cover for protection of wildlife. Consequently, a large variety of wildlife can be found in this small area. This natural constriction between the river and the mountains functions as an important wildlife corridor within Grand Teton National Park. Prominent wildlife species within the corridor include grizzly and black bears, wolves, elk, moose, beavers, and migratory birds.

Aquatic Resources

The Moose-Wilson corridor contains a portion of the designated wild and scenic Snake River; its associated floodplain and riparian areas; Phelps Lake; and a complex system of high-value wetlands, mountain seeps, springs, and streams. The mountain streams, such as Granite and Open Canyon creeks and others, drain critical cold water into the Snake River, providing important refugia for spawning fish species and cold water aquatic species. The diverse aquatic communities in the corridor provide important habitat for beaver and other wildlife, as well as sustain appropriate visitor uses.

Cultural History and Resources

For at least the last 10,000 years, people have traveled and settled along the Snake River corridor at the base of the Teton Range. The long span of American Indian presence in the area is reflected in the archeological record, tribal oral histories, and the enduring cultural connections retained by tribes associated with the park. European American fur trappers entered the area in the early 19th century followed by government explorers, prospectors, and homesteaders. Cattle ranching and later dude ranching became important economic activities during the 20th century. Two significant dude ranches along the Moose-Wilson Road corridor (Murie Ranch and White Grass Ranch) are designated historic districts—Murie Ranch is one of only two national historic landmarks in Grand Teton National Park. The histories of Murie Ranch and the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve are also associated with resource stewardship and the emerging national conservation movement in the 20th century. Moose-Wilson Road, first developed in the latter 19th century as a wagon road serving local ranches and residences, meets the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Natural Soundscapes and Acoustic Resources

Because of the diversity of habitats and wildlife species, the Moose-Wilson corridor has abundant and diverse natural sounds that not only enhance visitor experience, but serve a critical ecological role. Spring’s early morning bird chorus heralds the arrival of migrants and the resumption of breeding activities for many species of wildlife. Territories are defended and mates are attracted through the use of songs and calls. In the wetland areas, amphibians join the chorus for the same purposes. Summer brings thunderstorms and the sounds of insects during warm afternoons. Elk bugling in the fall portends the upcoming winter season with both its winter snow storms and impressive silent nights. The sound of flowing water from the Snake River and its cascading tributaries and the common sound of wind pervades the forests and sagebrush flats year-round. These sounds add depth and meaning for visitors, as does the opportunity to hear nothing—the sound of silence.



Visitor Experience in an Outstanding Natural Environment

The Moose-Wilson corridor provides an excellent area in which visitors may immerse themselves in the spectacular natural setting of the Teton Range. Visitors have extraordinary opportunities to observe wildlife, experience solitude, explore wilderness<sup>1</sup>, appreciate dark night skies, and participate in the silence and sounds that come only from nature. The Moose-Wilson Road provides a gateway to many of these unique experiences. Whether hiking to Phelps Lake, accessing climbing routes and wilderness areas through Granite and Death canyons, exploring the historic districts of White Grass Ranch and Murie Ranch, or discovering the Laurence S. Rockefeller Preserve, visitors of the Moose-Wilson corridor can become intimately involved in one of the most scenic and rustic road corridors found in any national park.

<sup>1</sup> The Moose-Wilson corridor contains potential wilderness and abuts recommended wilderness along the western and northern boundaries. These areas are managed to protect the wilderness character qualities including natural, untrammeled, undeveloped, and opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK  
ATTN: MOOSE-WILSON PLANNING TEAM  
PO DRAWER 170  
MOOSE, WY 83012-0170

OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300



### DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS

Data collection during the summer of 2013 was led by researchers from Utah State University through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service. Research will help determine visitor-use patterns, areas and levels of user-created impacts (such as user-created parking areas and associated trails), and the adequacy and efficiency of existing formal parking facilities. Data collection efforts will continue in 2014.

Additional data will be collected during the summer of 2014 by researchers from Pennsylvania State University through a different cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

Research will be used to evaluate existing social conditions and will help park staff understand visitor perceptions of issues, problems, desired conditions, and values related to the Moose-Wilson corridor. Visitors will primarily be asked about the types of experiences they participated in and the quality of those experiences.

Together, these studies will inform the planning process and efforts to assess the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated, while sustaining the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences within the corridor.

### RELATED PAST PLANNING DECISIONS

In 1998, the National Park Service completed an environmental assessment and approved a Finding of No Significant Impact to help improve visitor services and experiences and resource protection through better law enforcement, access control, information opportunities, and emergency services at the park’s southwest entrance (Granite Canyon) to the Moose-Wilson corridor. Although the environmental assessment focused on specific actions related to the Granite Canyon entrance, NPS staff and some members of the public recognized the need for a comprehensive management plan for the corridor.

The National Park Service also completed a parkwide transportation planning effort in March 2007, which allowed implementation of several actions within the Moose-Wilson corridor. The Record of Decision for the plan’s environmental impact statement authorized the realignment of 2.5 miles of the northern portion of the road; construction of 3.3 miles of separated, shared-use pathways along the southern end of the road between the park boundary and the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve; testing of various adaptive management strategies for traffic management on Moose-Wilson Road; and wildlife research and monitoring related to these actions.

There have been two significant changes within the corridor since the 2007 Record of Decision: (1) grizzly bears have expanded their range and now frequent the corridor, and (2) the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve has been transferred from private ownership to the National Park Service. The preserve is now open to the public and is subject to the requirements of the donor. These changed conditions, as well as the unique importance of the corridor as it relates to natural communities and wildlife diversity, led the park to identify a critical need for a new planning effort that comprehensively addresses all of the corridor’s significant issues together.

### PLANNING SCHEDULE

Milestone	Completion Date	Public Input
Public scoping.	Fall-Winter 2013	Review the newsletter, attend the open house, and provide your comments.
Collect data on vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian use of the road, trails, and parking lots and impacts to resource areas within the corridor.	Ongoing	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at: <a href="http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MooseWilson">http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MooseWilson</a> .
Conduct visitor surveys within the corridor to determine visitor perceptions of issues, problems, desired experience, and values.	Summer 2014	
Develop a range of alternatives.	Winter 2014	Review the preliminary alternatives newsletter, attend the open house, and provide your comments.
Prepare draft Moose-Wilson Corridor Comprehensive Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement.	Winter 2015	Review the plan, attend the open house, and provide your comments.
Prepare final Moose-Wilson Corridor Comprehensive Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement.	Summer 2015	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at: <a href="http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MooseWilson">http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MooseWilson</a> .
Prepare Record of Decision.	Fall 2015	

To learn more about the Moose-Wilson corridor planning effort visit [go.nps.gov/moose-wilson](http://go.nps.gov/moose-wilson)