



GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD CORRIDOR Management Plan



A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the National Park Service (NPS), I am pleased to share with you the results of the public scoping session the park held during the summer of 2013. Thank you for submitting many thoughtful comments and ideas about the Going-to-the-Sun Road, trails, natural and cultural resources, and shuttle system.

Over the next year, we will consider your comments as we develop alternatives.

After draft alternatives have been developed in late 2014, we will share them with you for comment prior to development of the Draft EIS.

This newsletter summarizes the comments, suggestions, and observations you shared during the scoping period. You submitted proposals about appropriate road and trail use and thoughts about how to better protect the park's natural and cultural resources. You also wrote about your experiences on the park shuttle system, and expressed a sense of frustration about the lack of parking at Logan Pass and other popular spots around the park.

We also heard from a few of you that more information and data would be appreciated. We have included some research and data that the University of Montana has collected for us during the last few years to provide a snapshot of some of the ongoing studies we are using to develop and better inform this plan.

We deeply appreciate your participation in the scoping process.

If you would like more information about this project, visit parkplanning.nps.gov.

Sincerely,
Jeff Mow
Superintendent



Visitors often come far closer to wildlife than is safe or healthy for humans and animals.

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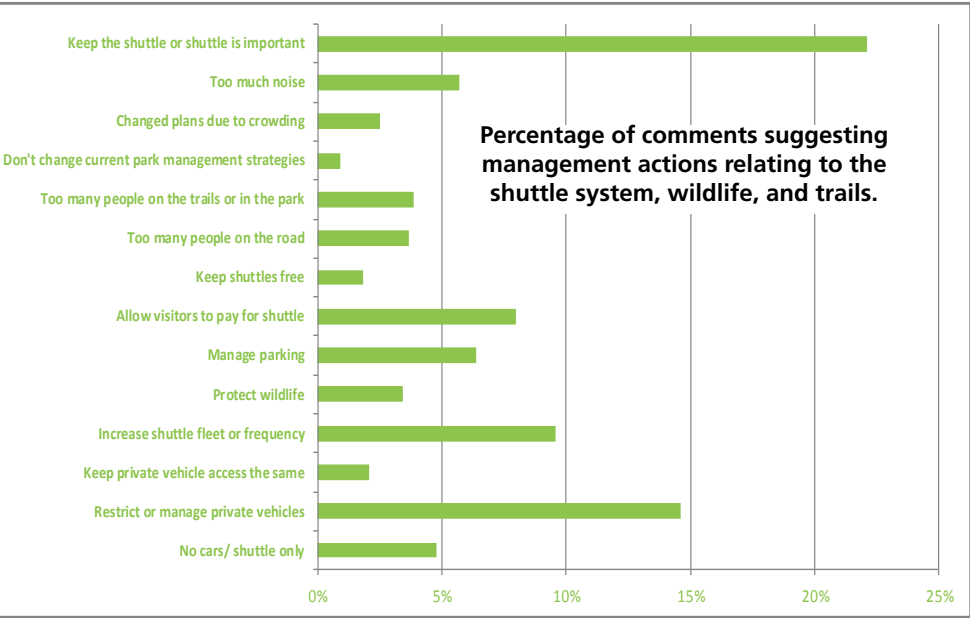
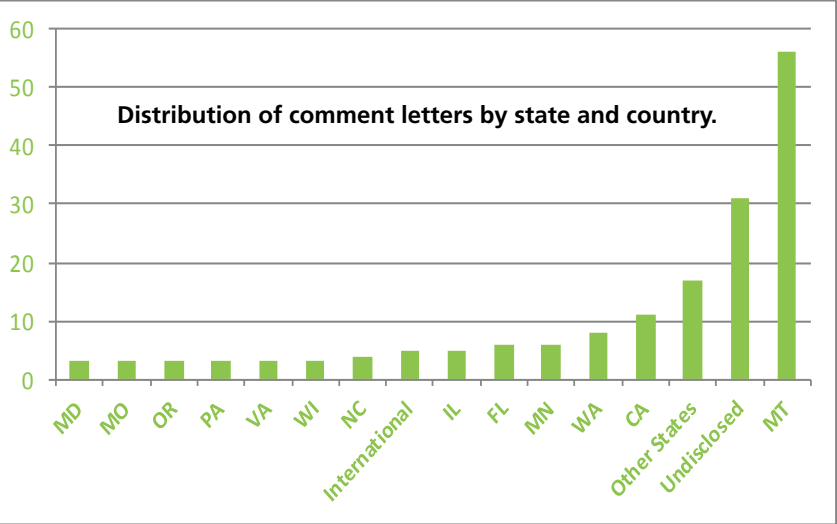
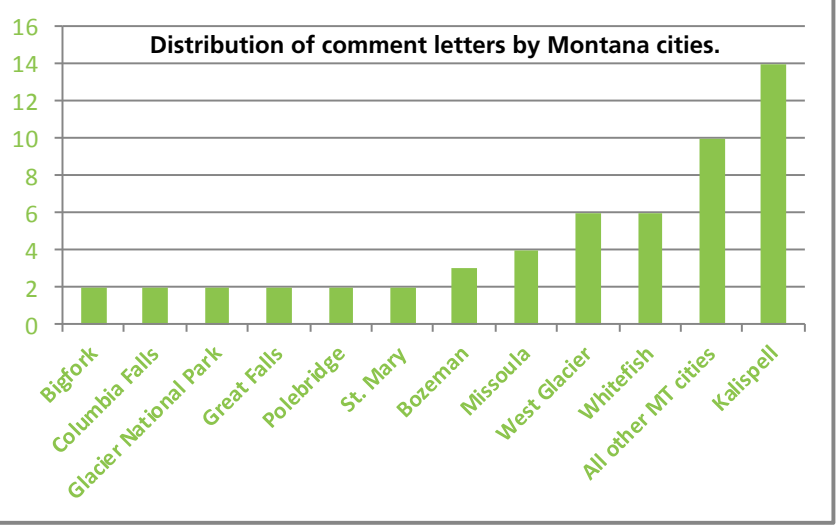
OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Going-to-the-Sun Road Corridor Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement is to identify management strategies for visitor use and experience along the road corridor, congestion, protection of natural and cultural resources, and long-term financial sustainability of the park’s shuttle system.

The park received 156 comments from individuals, families and businesses in response to the public scoping session the park held as part of the planning process. An additional 283 comments were gathered at 10 open house sessions held in the park, other Montana communities, and Waterton, Canada.

Commenters were most frequently from Kalispell, Montana. Most comments were received from Montana, California, Minnesota, Florida, and Washington. A few international commenters wrote in from Canada, England, and Belgium.

Most commenters reflected on different strategies to manage visitor use and experiences in the park. They generally fell into two different groups. Some suggested that visitors retain the level of autonomy that currently exists, with unfettered access to all areas of the park using a variety of transportation types. They said things like “I think the plan should start with a Park Service paradigm shift of enthusiastically embracing the increased visitor use.” They said that increased visitation and popularity should be celebrated, not managed. One wrote that seeing crowds of people out in the park enjoying its beauty was not a bother, and that visitors to Glacier should manage and plan



their experiences with crowds in mind. A few others indicated that the waits and crowding at Glacier is far less than they experienced at parks in California or at Yellowstone, and that a little bit of waiting is to be expected.

Others were concerned about the amount of congestion they perceived in the park and suggested the park develop ways to reduce the amount of visitors in certain areas, including roadways, trails, campgrounds, and parking lots. They said things like Glacier “is an irreplaceable treasure and the degradation of these natural resources due to overcrowding and overuse must be stopped.”

A few expressed a deep appreciation for private vehicle use, but indicated

that it might need to be reevaluated, saying things like “When will we discontinue cars and permit shuttle only? Eventually it needs to happen, but hopefully not in my lifetime.” Another offered that “between 8 am and 5 pm the shuttle should be mandatory for going over the pass during peak season. This would encourage people like myself, who are guilty of taking a personal car instead of the shuttle, to make a better choice for the park.”

Most comments focused on managing visitor vehicles and the shuttle system. A few recommended managing the number of people accessing the park rather than the number of vehicles, including suggestions like issuing a permitted entry system for access into any

part of the park or at popular trailheads similar to Isle Royal.

Many commenters focused on areas other than visitor use and services, including topics like noise, natural and cultural resources, and air quality.

Some commenters spoke directly to the experiences they had in the park, while others offered suggestions for how the park should proceed in the future. To that end, each section in this newsletter is separated into current issues and experiences, and then opportunities and ideas.

Several comments offered ideas about things that this plan will not address. Those ideas are included in this summary, but will be considered through other planning efforts and decision-making processes.

ROAD USE • PRIVATE VEHICLES • PARKING

ROAD USE/PRIVATE VEHICLES



Numerous commenters wrote in to share their experiences on the roadway, and suggest management actions to improve their roadway experiences. These included ideas about private vehicles on the road, maintenance operations, how long the road is open each season, and alternative transportation.

Experiences & Issues

Many comments expressed appreciation for the road’s historic character and recreational value.

Some commenters identified being able to drive their own car along the road as a very important element

of their trip. They appreciated being able to enjoy the park at their own pace, and also cited the importance of private vehicles for multigenerational families who have different mobility levels and changing needs.

A few commenters touched on how scared they were driving the road due to its windy, narrow configuration, with sheer drop offs. One said “a lot of senior citizens are rightly afraid to drive on the road.” Another touched on the need to dedicate one’s entire attention to other cars on the road to avoid an accident.

Others said things like “Going-to-the-Sun Road no longer offers what it was intended to offer; it is, instead,



“Going-To-The-Sun Traffic Jam”, or “Going-To-The-Sun Parking Lot.” “No one is getting the experience they would like, nor is the movement of private vehicles from Point A to Point B the highest and best use of this national treasure.”

One commenter said “This beautiful road has become choked with traffic.” Another commenter identified the stress felt during a

continued...

ROAD USE • PRIVATE VEHICLES • PARKING continued

congested visit saying “After so much stress on the travel up to Logan’s Pass (sic) this August, the next day we decided to just hike to Sperry Chalet and not deal with all the traffic past McDonald Lodge.”

A few other comments talked about pedestrians on the road, particularly at places like The Loop and Big Bend, expressing concern about the sheer number of people walking around the parking and trailhead areas, combined with the traffic.

Opportunities & Ideas

Some suggested extending the season the road is open to increase travel opportunities. A few commenters affiliated with local business or elected offices also supported this action. Some commenters suggested that an expanded season would reduce summer congestion by allowing visitors to experience the park over a greater time period. One commenter requested that the park use the latest avalanche detection technology including increased staffing and longer work days to open the road each spring.

Others recommended more law enforcement along the road to address oversized vehicles, vehicle violations, other road hazards, and better manage visitor and wildlife interactions. One requested that speeds be reduced around Avalanche and along the shore of Lake McDonald.

Some commenters mentioned other parks that rely more heavily on shuttle systems, and indicated that this model would not be an acceptable solution. Numerous



commenters suggested removing private vehicles for some periods of time during the day or night (eg 11 am – 4 pm), days of the week (eg Saturday and Sunday), or season (summer), or moving to other forms of transportation and eliminating private vehicle use entirely. A few suggested redirecting through traffic to highways outside the park. Some identified a permit system or lottery system to allow a limited number of private vehicles in each day and rely on other forms of transportation to accommodate the rest (eg. 4000

“Private vehicles provide flexibility for varied use of the park such as impromptu stops, family needs such as taking care of children, thru travel, etc.”
-from comment letter received

cars, the rest would use shuttle). Others recommended that some locations in the park like Avalanche and St. Mary Falls should be accessed by shuttle only, and remove parking for private vehicles.

A few suggested temporarily holding traffic at lower elevations until congestion clears at Logan Pass. Commenters who advocated removing private vehicles cited other NPS shuttle systems including Zion, Denali, Yosemite, and the Grand Canyon as models to consider. A few commenters recommended that whatever mass transit solution was implemented, exceptions

would have to be made for visitors with disabilities that would need a private vehicle to see the park.

Several commenters suggested making the road one way, alternating east to west and west to east to reduce the amount of two way traffic and congestion, or retain an additional lane for alternative transit only. One suggested that private vehicles only be permitted for those visitors with campground or lodging reservations.

Some commenters suggested that the park improve maintenance on other roads like the Many Glacier Road, or construct additional roads to decrease traffic along the GTSR corridor. Some commenters were adamantly opposed to additional road construction or maintenance, suggesting that as the road deteriorates, more will move to alternate forms of transportation.

PARKING

A great number of letters cited lack of parking as a frustrating trip element. Commenters generally fell into two categories with regard to parking recommendations. Some recommended building more parking lots, while others did not want more infrastructure, and recommended other strategies to reduce parking demand.

Experiences & Issues

Overall, commenters who talked about parking, both advocates for additional parking lots and those who recommended increased parking management were extremely frustrated and disappointed by the limited supply, particularly at Logan Pass and Avalanche. They talked about arriving early at these places, or avoiding them entirely. One said “I knew to avoid Avalanche as it

was crowded. I was surprised that I could not find a parking spot at Logans (sic) Pass for quite some time. I felt like I was at a mall at almost 7000 feet elevation. But I just knew it was a popular location and made it work.” Others said things like they have “witnessed really intense/inappropriate angry visitors trying to park at Logan Pass – and getting into disputes over parking spaces.” Another simply said that “there are too many motor vehicles in the corridor – congestion, noise, air pollution, people circling to wait for a place to park.” One said “Over 1 hour to try and find parking space. Twice cars jumped in front to take space we had w/ blinker on. Finally dropped off teenagers to hike and left. This has ruined trip for 2 of our guests.”

One commenter liked the improved pullouts that the park recently constructed. Another commenter was particularly concerned about Big Bend, identifying difficulty getting back onto the road after pulling off, as well as a tremendous amount of pedestrian traffic along the hillside and road, visiting nearby attractions like the Weeping Wall.

Several commenters spoke more generally on illegal parking along the road including parking in undesignated areas or double parking.

Opportunities & Ideas

In addition to physical improvements to parking areas, many suggested other strategies to manage the demand for parking spaces. The majority of commenters who suggested more parking lot management supported some sort of timed system, either with fee meters at highly trafficked parking lots, or a permit system to reserve a spot in advance at places like Avalanche, Logan Pass, and St. Mary Falls. One commenter mentioned that

other national parks have parking time limits at popular areas, like Mt. Rainier which has a two hour parking limit at the popular Paradise area. Some suggested that fees generated from parking violations



could help fund park operations. One commenter suggested the park look at the Disney Fast Pass system, explaining that a visitor could request a ticket at a location like Avalanche with a specific assigned parking time for a spot further up the road like Logan Pass. Commenters also frequently recommended that park and ride lots remain free of charge to encourage people to use the shuttle, and that the park expand park and ride lots on the park perimeter.

Some commenters suggested that hikers who plan on leaving cars at popular lots for long periods of time should be required to use alternate forms of transportation. A few others suggested that short term visitors use the shuttles, and leave parking spots for those who will be taking lengthy hikes. One suggested closing Avalanche to camping in the summer, and using that space for day parking, while another suggested relocating Avalanche campground permanently and using the additional space for parking. One recommended prohibiting overnight parking

“The GTSR has a serious parking problem. There is plenty of parking available, the problem lies in utilization of the spaces.”
-from comment letter received

at Logan Pass. A few requested increased law enforcement ranger presence at busy parking lots and other developed areas like Logan Pass as well as greater NPS presence at Apgar Transit Center.

Some commenters recommended significantly expanding parking in some areas like Avalanche and Logan Pass. One suggested the park look at developing a trailhead management plan,

which would include a few additional parking options at popular spots.

Many commenters requested additional pullouts be constructed along the road. A few mentioned placing these near Avalanche, rather than up high where there is little extra space for road expansion. Others named places like Lunch Creek, The Loop, and Siyeh Bend. A few cited the

difficulty of navigating around cars that stop to take pictures of wildlife, indicating that more designated parking is needed to accommodate this activity. Another recommended an underpass at Avalanche to help manage car and pedestrian traffic.

A few commenters recommended locating parking lots a short distance away with short shuttles running directly to them. One commenter suggested better parking space delineation in parking lots to ensure that no space is wasted.

Other commenters did not want to see more parking lots, worrying that parking lots would have unacceptable resource impacts on natural habitat, and cautioned the park only to build additional parking in a few areas, if at all.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

SHUTTLE SYSTEM

The shuttle system received the most comments of any topic. Commenters were in general very supportive of the idea of a shuttle system, and had numerous suggestions for how to improve it.



EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

Often, commenters simply indicated that they had really enjoyed taking the shuttle, that they hoped the park would continue the service, and find a way to make it financially sustainable in the long term. They said things like “We visited Glacier in 2012 and were thoroughly impressed with the shuttle system. We think it is the best thing this park has done in many years to address visitor access issues.”

Many noted that all passengers could enjoy the scenery, without having to focus on the road. A few wrote that this was the first time they had actually been able to enjoy the scenery of the park because they were on the shuttle rather than driving. Many others liked using the shuttle to access trailheads, particularly for non-loop trails like the Highline. A few others expressed unhappiness with how they perceived shuttle users were using parking lots at Avalanche or Logan Pass, and then strategically using the shuttle to get to a trailhead, while occupying a parking spot all day. Commenters were also concerned about impacts of this practice from higher numbers of hikers.

Several commenters indicated that they relied entirely on trains or planes and the park shuttle to

plan their trip to Glacier. They said things like “Took the train and the shuttle – no rental car needed. Huge! Keep it!” A few identified themselves as RV drivers, and liked that they had a way to see the road for the portion that is closed to oversized vehicles. Some indicated that they liked the system as a way to cut carbon

“Our car was our second choice but the shuttle was full, so we used the car instead”
-from comment letter received

emissions, and appreciated that the shuttles can use alternative fuel sources.

A few commenters wrote about the meaningful connections they formed with other visitors on the shuttles. With only a few exceptions, commenters

were appreciative of the bus drivers, who provided them with excellent information about the park.



Some had less positive experiences, commenting that “the shuttle system should fulfill all needs or cancel it – right now it is just mediocre.” One commenter shared that “I frequently see people struggling with the realities of public transportation. Not enough buses, not enough space on this bus, not enjoying the wait, the bus does not go where I want to go, etc.” Others cited the difficulty that visitors have relying on only train or plane and then the shuttle system within the park and no mass transit opportunities between the park and the train station or



the airport. One family wrote that they relied heavily on train and shuttle to facilitate their trip, and that they hitchhiked from West Glacier to the Apgar Transit Center.

A few commenters wrote to say that they had hoped to take the shuttle but it wasn’t possible. One had a party of 12 and was not able to find a shuttle to accommodate the whole group.

A few also wrote that they did not find the shuttles comfortable or convenient, and would not ride them in the future.

A few noted that the shuttle allows for a large number of people to visit the park, and have less impact on resources than private vehicles. On the other hand, a few commenters wondered if the shuttle had reduced congestion at all, citing that they perceived the parking lots to be just as full as before the shuttle system began. One commenter worried that the park had not examined overall carrying capacity, and that now there are simply more people in private vehicles and on shuttles accessing sensitive areas of the park, both on and off trail.

Commenters described waiting for long periods of time (ie: 45-60 minutes) and sometimes having one or two shuttles pass by because they were already full.

Comments received indicated that this occurred in multiple areas of the park, from Apgar Transit

Center to Logan Pass to St. Mary. Commenters said that this lack of frequency and availability was particularly difficult after a long day in the park, or when traveling with multigenerational families including children and elderly adults.

One commenter wrote that “We liked the shuttles, especially in the morning. Friendly, nice bus drivers. Insufficient morning shuttles from Apgar. There were 50 people lined up by 7:15 am on August 21, and only 24 got



on. Others had to wait.” Another commenter simply said that “it moves far too few people.” On the other hand, several commenters said that they liked taking the express shuttle or early buses because they were able to get out into the park early, and that these shuttles were often more reliable.

Some commenters talked about how stressful it was trying to navigate the shuttle line at Logan Pass, wondering which end was the front of the line. A few commented on the difficulty of not being able to sit down and wait, or do anything else while waiting for the shuttle for fear of losing one’s place in line.

Additionally, some commenters expressed worry that the last shuttle of the day would be full,

particularly if they were out for a long hike, and they would be left on the road with no way to get back to their lodging for the night.

OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

Some prioritized the management of the shuttle above all else, and indicated that “something must be done” including advocating for congressional support to secure permanent funding for the system. Several expressed concern about the amount of additional greenhouse gases that would be

generated if the shuttle were discontinued. Only a few commenters recommended eliminating the shuttles citing they were too costly, or did not provide adequate service. One recommended discontinuing

it, or that riders pay all costs associated with the service. One expressed dissatisfaction with shuttles and red bus tours taking up space on the road and in parking lots. One wondered if some shuttles could be made non-ADA accessible to create more space for packs and passengers that do not require an accessible shuttle.

A few commenters recommended that the park consider different recruitment strategies for drivers, including providing park housing, citing perceived high turnover and a shortage in available drivers. One wrote that the park should consider using school buses as

“A wait of 5 to 20 minutes would be more acceptable than 45 minutes or an hour”
-from comment letter received

are used at Denali National Park, and one recommended recruiting school bus drivers and offering free campsites in the summer months as an incentive. Another urged the park to consider condition of the shuttles, rather than just operating time and mileage when assessing the need for replacement. One commenter recommended that the park perform bus maintenance in the park, rather than sending buses away for repairs. Another offered that maintaining a more uniform fleet might make maintenance easier.

Commenters identified a number of reasons to ride the shuttle. A few specifically said that they thought that offering the shuttles was particularly appropriate given the impact that climate change is having on the park. Some liked taking the shuttle to avoid “jammed parking spaces” or so that all people in their party could enjoy the views.

Many commenters identified shuttle systems they liked in other places including Zion National Park. Commenters indicated

that those shuttles run quite frequently, have expanded hours, and are easily accessible. One commenter brought up Acadia National Park’s shuttle, and relayed that the system has “flashing

numbers telling arrival times”, and that it is “supported by an outside agency”. These same models at other parks were also brought up by some commenters as approaches not to emulate, saying things like “Don’t be like Zion.” A few commenters suggested that the park look to Disney for best practices with regard to integrating cars, shuttles, and parking places.

continued...

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION continued



One commenter suggested a reservation system to ensure a seat on the bus.

One commenter suggested that NPS employees and contractors should take a shuttle to places like Logan Pass so all parking spots can be dedicated to visitors.

Most commenters requested an expanded shuttle fleet and more frequent shuttles. One suggested using all available shuttle doors to unload passengers to speed up the shuttle schedule.

A few talked specifically about the experience waiting in line for the shuttles. One suggested issuing tickets to board to prevent others from cutting in line. Commenters requested longer shuttle hours and assurance that there would be room on the shuttle at the end of the day. Others simply indicated that more afternoon shuttles and shuttles later into the evening, after 7 pm, would be welcome. One commenter wrote that when shuttles are not operating, the park should be sure to cover signs so that would be riders do “not wait for shuttles that do not exist.”

Others requested more early buses, particularly to be able to do long day hikes that require a much earlier start. Another commenter asked for an on demand shuttle option for hikers,

to further eliminate hikers taking up parking spots in high use areas.

Several commenters recommended that the shuttle season to be expanded beyond Labor Day.

Some commenters recommended that the park extend route service to locations outside the park boundary, including West Glacier, Columbia Falls, or the Kalispell Airport. One suggested that a private solution be found to provide transportation between the shuttle system in park and surrounding areas if the park cannot extend operation outside its boundaries. One commenter wrote and suggested extending the transit system into West Glacier and have parking outside the park.

Some commenters also recommended that the shuttle system be expanded to Many Glacier and Two Medicine to provide alternatives to the main road corridor, as well as access to those areas for visitors without cars. Other locations suggested for expansion within the park were East Glacier and Waterton. Another commenter suggested expanding the route to Fish Creek campground. Some suggested ‘whistle stops’ at other popular spots along the road like Lunch Creek. Several recommended more frequent direct routes running from West Glacier to Logan Pass. Another suggested that some stops be less frequent, including campgrounds.

Several commenters wrote that a shuttle system is the only way to reduce parking congestion, reasoning that more parking spaces will only encourage more people to drive private vehicles. Several

also wanted to see the shuttle better used, or become mandatory for hikers, who would otherwise take up a parking spot at a trailhead all day. One commenter wrote that “the park would be better with less traffic and more shuttles.”



A few wrote that shuttles and other tour services in the park increase congestion along the road and are difficult to navigate around for private vehicles. Some also wrote that the sheer number of people riding the shuttle is causing resource damage at shuttle stops and on associated trails. One commenter said, after initially being supportive of the shuttle, “to my surprise I hope the shuttle can’t be funded and goes away. People will have to work harder to do their hikes, but overall the ones who really want to see the trails will find a way to get there.”

ADDITIONAL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Some commenters identified other means of alternative transportation along the road corridor, in addition to shuttles. One commenter recommended adding a cable car along the road to reduce or replace other forms of transit. One commenter suggested an elevated monorail, and another suggested a cog railroad system. One commenter recommended not maintaining the road further, and using it only for mass transit, bicycle, and hiker use. A few commenters also recommended that horse travel be encouraged along the road. The majority of alternative transportation comments focused on bicycles.

“It is an amazing experience to see animals and enjoy the peace and quiet before the road opens to vehicles.”

BICYCLES EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

Some commenters said they didn’t mind sharing the road with bicycles, while a few others were concerned given how narrow the corridor is, saying that bicycles in the road lead to “cars going over the line.” Another wrote “bicyclists are now an issue due to the increase in traffic. Bicyclists and motorist interactions (ie: car “bumping” bicyclists) are becoming more common. The road just isn’t wide enough in the alpine section to allow both to use the road during peak hours.”

One commenter wrote that “the park is too car-centric.” Another commenter wrote that he appreciated “Glacier National Park still being bike friendly.” Several



expressed displeasure about the current prohibition against bicycles on the road between Logan Creek and the Apgar turnoff from 11 am- 4 pm during peak season.

A few commented on how much they liked the opportunity to hike and bike the road in the late fall and spring when it is closed to other vehicle traffic.

One commenter wrote in to share that “I’m paralyzed from the waist down so I can’t hike and biking (using a hand crank wheelchair) on GTTS road is the closest I can get to escaping the crowds and getting into the back country. It is an amazing experience to see animals and enjoy the peace and quiet before the road opens to vehicles.” Another wrote that the smoothness of the road, the wildlife, and the exercise made for a wonderful experience.

OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

One requested that the park better enforce the current bicycle restriction from 11 am – 4 pm. One suggested that bicycles be prohibited along the roadway on the weekends.

Many others requested that the park develop a bicycle or

hiker lane, if not along the entire road, at least along Lake McDonald and extending up the pass as far as feasible. A few also recommended wider road shoulders for bicycle use.

One suggested that the park better market the springtime bicycle season. Another recommended that more time allowed for bicycle only traffic along the road, and one suggested a fee structure to accommodate this activity. Some recommended that the park allow bicycles along the road at all times. Others recommended that private vehicles be restricted between 11 am and 4 pm, rather than bicycles.



PARK FEES & FUNDING

Park fees and shuttle costs were a frequent topic among commenters.



EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

Many commenters said they were surprised the shuttle was free given the great value they perceived in the service. Others were surprised at the amount of each entrance fee (\$7.50) directed to fund shuttle operations, particularly because there was no additional charge.

Some commenters said that Glacier was a wonderful experience at \$25 per week.

A few commenters cited that it costs more for three bicycles to enter the park than one private automobile.



OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

Most commenters suggested that the current park entrance fee schedule be adjusted to promote different private vehicle use patterns. Most recommended greatly increasing the fee for private vehicle use or lowering the entrance fee for shuttle users, and bicyclists creating an economic incentive to use alternative transportation.

Similarly, several others suggested a toll along the road for private vehicle use, ranging from \$5-\$20 per use. Some suggested charging fees for parking. Others suggested that the fee schedule increase and decrease depending on demand and time of year. A few recommended lowering fees for bicycles and motorcyclists. A few suggested



increasing fees for RVs. One senior appreciated the one-time payment for the Senior Pass, while others requested the opportunity to renew their Senior Pass each year, citing the ability to pay a fee and the desire to contribute fee dollars to the park on a more regular basis. Others also suggested increasing fees to pay for park operations given the value of the Glacier experience. Most suggested that increases in fee revenues could be used to offset part or all of the shuttle costs.

Most commenters who brought up cost wanted to pay for the shuttle. They typically proposed some sort of fee structure that ranged from \$1-\$20, and recommended structures that ranged from charging per ride to offering a weekly rider pass. One commenter recommended paying \$5-10 for the service, and reflected that the payment comes with an “expectation of reliability and consistency.” A few commenters requested to pay a little extra for services that facilitate hikes, including certain drop off or pick up locations like The Loop. One commenter reflected that “an ice cream cone at Apgar costs \$4. They sell very well. People will have the \$4 for a ride on the shuttle!”

Other commenters indicated that they would like to pay for the shuttle, but worried that charging might deter others from using

it. Some also wrote that they appreciated that the shuttle was free and that it should be kept that way. One recommended a fundraising event to fund shuttle expenses, and another suggested establishing a program using entrance fee dollars for shuttle replacement. A few other comments urged the park to pursue grants or engage in other types of public /private partnerships to run the program.

A few commenters suggested that the park conduct different analysis based on existing data to develop an understanding of the cost effectiveness of the current shuttle, as well as the cost benefit analysis of continuing to maintain certain infrastructure like parking lots, compared with funding additional shuttle operations. Another commenter suggested the park examine the total supply of shuttles in the park, including concession provided tour services, and identify where the need for a park run shuttle exists.

One commenter suggested alternatives include an analysis of the cost to ride the shuttle versus driving a private vehicle along the same route, and to compute the average cost. Another recommended that the park focus on this financial analysis rather than just relying on greenhouse gas emissions to describe private vehicle impacts.

TRAILS

EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

Commenters identified many trails including the Hidden Lake Trail, Highline, and Avalanche Lake as extremely congested.



A few commented on alternate trail routes they used to avoid places like Avalanche and Hidden Lake Trail. St. Mary falls, The Loop and other areas along the road corridor were also cited as heavily congested, both in the parking lot and along the associated trails. One commenter shared a recent experience along the Highline Trail, “In the past we have often sat there for a long time and watched distant sheep, goats, golden eagles; but now we are reduced to counting passing people by the dozens- it feels like a sidewalk café in NY or LA.”

One commenter recommended focusing visitor use along the road corridor, and said “not a lot can be done about the congestion on the most popular trails within the GTSR corridor.” Another commented on seeing increasing numbers of visitors to the backcountry chalets and on The Loop trail.

One commenter wrote “Don’t mind seeing the high #s (sic) of people on the trail. If visitors are seeking solitude, go to the wilderness areas.” Another questioned the data the park was relying on to describe trail experiences, indicating that the percentage of visitors who thought the Highline Trail had unnatural sounds and was overcrowded was likely much higher, because the data does not reflect the people who have been displaced from those trails due to crowding.

One commenter identified additional routes that visitors are

using to climb various mountain peaks and to access Sperry Chalet.

A few comments identified challenges getting to trailheads from roads and parking areas, particularly at places like The Loop.

One commenter said “I love that some trails are wheelchair accessible! Thanks taxpayers!” Another wanted to know how



many trails are currently accessible for the mobility impaired and what requirements the park has to make more trails accessible.

OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

Most comments reflected a desire for increased management along trail corridors including greater ranger presence to prevent resource damage, manage visitor and wildlife interactions, and prevent pets on trails. Commenters wanted to keep visitors on trails and out of sensitive areas to prevent wildlife encounters and vegetation damage. A few suggested the park consider a permitting system for day use at busier trails, or limit parking to reduce the number of hikers. A few others suggested that the park allow unrestricted use on the day use trails, indicating that visitors should manage their own expectations and expect a more crowded experience.

Some commenters recommended that the park do more to maintain



and improve existing trails, including installing hardened walkways and goat-proof elevated boardwalks. One recommended the park install a boardwalk from the Logan Pass Visitor Center all the way to the Hidden Lake Overlook. Others brought up specific trails they would like to see better maintained or reopened, like Mineral Creek, Alder, and Heavens Peak Lookout. One suggested a new trail to redirect visitors away from Avalanche Lake, and another lamented that there are not more hikes on the west side of the park. One said “as many trails as possible should be maintained because Glacier is truly a hiking park.”

A few commenters brought up Lunch Creek in a variety of contexts, including a suggestion that the park better delineate a trail. A few commenters recommended that the park prepare a comprehensive trail management plan. Comments identified different objectives for the plan, including parking management at trailheads as well as managing trail use, maintenance, and carrying capacity.

EDUCATION • INFORMATION • PARK SERVICES

Many commenters made recommendations about various types of shuttle information, educational material and services they would like to see more of, or eliminated. Commenters encouraged the park to employ a mix of facility and other infrastructure improvements as well as made recommendations on food service, information campaigns, and directional signs.

EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

Restroom availability came up in a few comments, primarily related to trailheads. One commenter appreciated the toilet design at Logan Pass. Another appreciated the pit toilet on the Hidden Lake Trail.

A few commenters said there was a lack of depth in the educational material along the road corridor. Others identified a lack of information at the entrance station about the shuttle system.

OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

Several commenters requested improvements at campgrounds along the road corridor. A few asked for improvements at the walk in campsites. A few others suggested constructing larger campsites at places like Apgar to accommodate larger RVs and eliminate parking obstructions in the roadway.

A few requested running water in the restrooms at Logan Pass. One commenter requested electricity in the restrooms at Avalanche Campground. Several more recommended additional restrooms at popular trail and pullout areas like Siyeh Bend, Lunch Creek, Haystack, and Baring Falls. Commenters also suggested that the park provide

wag bags or other means for visitors to pack out human waste.

A few commenters requested more signs and striping around The Loop to help visitors find trails and properly park.

One commenter requested that signs reflect the numbers on the park newspaper to make it easier to locate destinations.



A few commenters suggested more services offered along the road, including food at places like Logan Pass. One suggested keeping Rising Sun Motor Inn open longer in the fall. A few other commenters were not in favor of any increased commercial services in the park.

Many commenters requested more information about park conditions to help them plan their trips and avoid congested areas or manage their expectations in advance.



These included requests for more information in the park newspaper to be better reflected on roadside signage; more information about trail lengths, conditions, and gear requirements; recommendations about where to take the shuttle to avoid congested parking lots; and current road and parking lot conditions to let visitors know when parking lots are full. One commenter recommended that the park work with the Montana Office of Tourism to better educate visitors before they arrive at the park. One suggested more signs along trails to identify plants or other natural features. Some also suggested that the park better provide information about visiting during the shoulder seasons. A few suggested the park have more roving interpretive rangers.

A few requested that park information promote other areas of the park in addition to the GTSR corridor so that visitors can more readily choose a less congested experience. A few others recommended that park information focus on the road corridor to reduce impacts in other areas saying things like “will not support any solution that would increase use outside the GTSR into the park’s backcountry. With the exception of additional



off-site parking, all solutions to the GTSR’s problems need to be undertaken within the GTSR corridor itself without encroaching into the park’s recommended wilderness.”

A few requested that the entrance station process be faster to reduce lines at both the east and west entrances, indicating that although the information available is beneficial, its delivery could be more efficient. Suggestions included putting photos on the Senior Pass to eliminate the need

to show additional identification, option to purchase entrance passes online, and a few commenters

Many commenters recommended that the park promote the shuttle “like crazy” to boost ridership.
-from public scoping meetings

recommended more bypass lanes for those that don’t require information or are frequent visitors. Another requested more types of entrance passes

be available online for purchase. A few commenters recommended looking at more bypass lanes for those that don’t require information or are frequent visitors.

Many comments requested more education about appropriate visitor behavior in the park including maintaining appropriate distance from wildlife, proper disposal of human waste, and avoiding trampling vegetation.

Several comments suggested showing an educational video on the shuttle buses to provide park orientation and education on natural and cultural resources. Another suggested more scientific wayside exhibits and a broader array of educational books at the bookstores. One commenter requested more information be available at the Apgar Transit Center.

Some commenters reflected on education related to the plan itself, and recommended that the park consider various strategies and campaigns to communicate the value and relevance of different potential alternatives with the public, such as changes in the shuttle program, or and managing use on trails.

Some commenters requested more information be available about the shuttle system. One suggested that the park ensure that each visitor is informed about the shuttle at the entrance. Another recommended that the park rigorously market the shuttle in and outside the park to increase use. Others requested more readily available information on the shuttle schedule, stops, and how long it takes to get to different places in the park.

GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

Logan Pass

- Transit hub and transfer point
- Limited parking
- Pedestrian conflicts
- Increased use of trails and overlooks, including increased off-trail, backcountry hiking
- New trails being created by increased, dispersed use
- Concerns about increased human encounters with wildlife in early mornings/evenings
- Congestion

The Loop

- Increased use of trails and facilities
- Limited parking
- Tight shuttle circulation
- Many hikers park here all day, reducing the number of spaces available for short-term parking

McDonald Creek

- Increasing human presence may disturb Harlequin ducks

Avalanche

- Congestion
- Limited parking
- Pedestrian conflicts
- Transit transfer point
- Terminus for large vehicles

Apgar Contact Station

- Transit delays
- Transition to visitor center

West Entrance Station

- Long wait times for visitors entering park during peak times

East & West of Logan Pass

- Visitors park elsewhere and walk along the road up to Logan Pass, which creates safety concerns
- No restrooms nearby
- Resource damage from human waste along popular trails and in the backcountry

Lunch Creek

- Social trails (unauthorized)

Siyeh Bend

- Limited parking
- Human waste issues

East Entrance Station

- Long wait times for visitors entering park during peak times

St. Mary Falls

- Limited parking
- Visitors park along the road
- Pedestrian conflicts
- Increased use of existing trails such as St. Mary & Virginia falls
- Increased number of social (unauthorized) trails

General Transportation & Visitor Use Issues (during peak use)

- General traffic and parking congestion
- Increased conflicts and safety concerns for cyclists and pedestrians
- Traffic conflicts with horse crossings and trail rides
- Poor wayfinding and orientation for visitors
- General safety concerns

Poor Conditions

Worse Conditions

During peak times & peak season (end of June to end of August), certain areas in the corridor become

H O T S P O T S

Glacier National Park
Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Transit Staging/Transfer

Transit Stop

Visitor Center

Entrance Station

Rivers / Creeks

Trail

Going-to-the-Sun Road

Paved Road

Unpaved Road

Day-Use Zone (GMP)

GMP Management Area

Glacier National Park

N

0 1 2 3mi

REVISED 2/2014

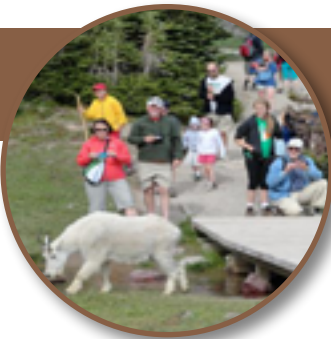
14 <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/glac>

15

GLACIER "HOT SPOTS"

LOGAN PASS

- Parking is very limited
- Put a time limit on parking
- Restrict vehicle access (season, time of day, etc.)
- Expand parking
- Assign times to park
- Clogged parking lots
- Could not find parking
- Really angry visitors trying to park
- Charge for parking
- Parking lot is taken up with NPS and contractor vehicles
- Construct an upper parking deck
- Expand pullout parking
- Put a parking lot near Logan Creek Bridge
- Educate the public about what to expect
- It's a 'must see' location
- Feels like a mall at 7000 feet
- Hold vehicles at lower elevations until parking is available
- Install picnic tables
- Open a coffee shop
- Issue timed entrance tickets like at museums
- Offer more academic books at bookstore
- Do not increase parking, it will only lead to more crowding
- Crowded
- Triple Falls may need a trail
- Restore Logan Pass as a wildlife corridor
- Put running water in Logan Pass restrooms
- Great wildlife viewing
- More NPS oversight needed
- Hard to navigate line for bus
- Shuttle is not decreasing the number of private vehicles; only increasing the total number of people
- Increase direct/non-stop shuttle service
- Shuttles are often full or not dependable
- Hidden Lake Trail is crowded; increase signage to stay on trail and away from wildlife; expand boardwalk
- Using the shuttle for loop hikes at Logan Pass is great
- Hose down parking lot to eliminate antifreeze
- Need more shuttles in general



AVALANCHE

- Put a time limit on parking
- Clogged parking lot
- Reduce impacts on Avalanche Lake Trail
- Install monorail from Avalanche to St. Mary
- Cut down trees at Avalanche to expand parking
- Trail being overused; need other hiking alternatives
- Need more shuttle buses to avoid parking at Avalanche
- Not enough parking; people are using it as a park and ride
- Need more academic information on Trail of Cedars exhibits
- Hiker/biker campsites should be optimized for group camp purposes
- Add pullouts, parking, and sidewalks
- Put a gate at Avalanche to limit number of people going beyond
- Install electricity at campground restrooms
- Use campground for parking
- Expand parking
- Limit number of hikers
- Install 'stay on trail' signs
- Crowded parking and trail
- Install underpass
- Prohibit bicycles between Avalanche and Jackson Glacier Overlook on weekends
- May need a traffic light
- Problem with human waste and inadequate restroom facilities
- Construction around Avalanche very frustrating
- Put out signs to warn about limited parking in advance
- Shuttle has not decreased parking demand
- Construct bike trail from Lake McDonald to Avalanche
- Require shuttle use only to this location

THE LOOP

- Need more clearly defined walking routes at The Loop
- Delineate parking spaces
- Increase parking using dirt fill
- New restrooms are a great addition
- Expand pullout parking
- The congestion is bad
- Need more shuttle service
- Put a time limit on parking
- Buses need more space to park to avoid bottlenecks
- Shuttles often full
- Increase in trail use, need alternative trails
- Potable water for Loop Trail should be provided
- Charge a user fee
- Need alternative trails

SAINT MARY FALLS

- Clogged parking lot
- Expand parking lot and delineate spaces
- Rope off area; people are diving at the falls
- More benches and sun shelters
- Put a time limit on parking
- Human waste is an issue
- Increase signage
- Parking is insufficient



OTHER HOT SPOTS

APGAR

- Need more NPS presence at Apgar Transit Center
- Convert visitor center to parking
- Move visitor center to Apgar Transit Center
- Apgar campground sites not accommodating for larger RVs
- Hiker/biker campsites should be optimized for shared purpose
- Need more morning shuttles
- Improve visitor center

WEST GLACIER ENTRANCE AREA

- Add third entrance lane at West Glacier
- Had to hitchhike from train to shuttle
- Traffic backs up into town from entrance station
- Provide shuttle service to gateway community

SUNRIFT GORGE

- Need more shuttle service, currently very full
- Clogged parking lot
- Expand parking
- Many social trails

SIYEH BEND

- Install a restroom
- Many new social trails
- Expand shuttle so parking is not as needed here
- Noisy trail experience
- Bad congestion

SAINT MARY ENTRANCE AREA

- Install a restroom
- Many new social trails
- Expand shuttle so parking is not as needed here
- Noisy trail experience
- Bad congestion

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES



Commenters touched on a number of different resource topics based on observed resource conditions, and visitor behaviors they saw in the park. A few comments suggested reducing blacktop surfaces or restoring most developed areas to “pristine condition.” Several worried that park resources cannot continue to sustain current and historic use levels without increasing resource damage, and urged the park to adopt sustainable strategies that benefit wildlife.

Some suggested hiring more rangers to enforce resource conservation laws and to aggressively issue citations to visitors for violations. A few others indicated that they would appreciate a little less enforcement and more warnings for first time offences for things like food storage violations.

Several comments expressed concern about specific areas in the park that they felt are overcrowded, being overused, and are suffering from generalized resource damage. Areas frequently

identified included Logan Pass, Avalanche, and Saint Mary Falls.

WILDLIFE

The most prevalent comment about natural or cultural resources related to human and wildlife encounters, particularly with mountain goats.



EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

In addition to providing management recommendations, some commenters indicated that wildlife sightings were a very important and wonderful part of their visit. One commenter indicated that wildlife sightings are rare along the road and trails due to noise and congestion. A few commenters expressed their appreciation for being able to see wildlife up close, saying things like “wildlife are becoming so acclimated to people – which is good and bad.” A few comments questioned whether or not the park has adequate staff and proper funding to protect

wildlife and adequately monitor impacts on park wildlife.

Many comments identified concerns with how close the public is getting to wildlife, and worried that this is harming both the wildlife as well as putting visitors at risk for an accident. These comments identified wildlife that have become so accustomed to visitors that they no longer move away at popular trailheads. A few expressed that wildlife don’t have anywhere else to go, and are getting crowded out by people.

One commenter wrote of an experience along Hidden Lake Trail, saying “We were appalled. . . at the complete mayhem. The trail was very crowded and people were wandering well off trail to take pictures, climbing scree slopes, tromping the vegetation right beside the signs saying “stay off.” The resource destruction, safety considerations and wildlife harassment were clearly obvious – people trying to pet baby goats.”

A few commenters expressed concern about vehicles hitting wildlife along the road, and the threat that cars can pose to animal health and movement patterns.

Some commenters were concerned about goats and other wildlife consuming antifreeze and other contaminated runoff in parking areas like Logan Pass.

A few also mentioned wildlife feeding on human food at places like Logan Pass.

Visitors stopping or parking in illegal places along the road to view wildlife were also identified as creating hazards for both wildlife and other visitors.



A few commenters expressed great concern that the shuttle was increasing visitation to trails, negatively impacting wildlife and other park resources.

One commenter questioned the available body of wildlife research in the park, and worried that the park does not have adequate baseline data to pursue new management approaches without fully understanding the current wildlife trends and therefore the ability to make determinations about future potential wildlife impacts.

OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

Comments included things like “Consider the sustainability of the goat and sheep populations – not just visitor use!!! How can we make sure we are able to sustain these resources.” Many offered suggestions to reduce wildlife encounters including recommendations to increase visitor education and signage, closing off areas where wildlife is present, and rigorously enforcing park laws and policies. A few mentioned the possibility of hazing wildlife for more hours during the day at Logan Pass to encourage animals to stay out of developed areas.

“Consider the sustainability of the goat and sheep populations – not just visitor use!!! How can we make sure we are able to sustain these resources.”



Suggestions also included cleaning the parking lot frequently, or paving with a permeable surface so that chemicals do not sit on the surface.

A few commenters suggested that the park further commit to more comprehensive wildlife monitoring, and while recognizing budget

constraints, encouraged the park to prioritize resource management and make decisions that better preserve park resources even if they are unpopular with the public. Specifically, one commenter recommended implementing a park wide wildlife monitoring program to better inform decision-making, including tracking animals like the white-tailed ptarmigan or dusky grouse, and suggested more monitoring during both summer and winter seasons.

Another commenter said that restoring Logan Pass to a wildlife corridor would benefit all park visitors.

VEGETATION EXPERIENCES & ISSUES



Commenters identified unintentionally widening trails and creating social trails as a significant concern as it related to impacts on alpine plants

and other vegetation. A few commenters expressed concern about the spread of non-native plant species or invasives across the park. One commenter mentioned the impact that vehicles in overcrowded parking lots at Logan Pass, Avalanche, Sunrift Gorge, and St. Mary Falls are having on resources.

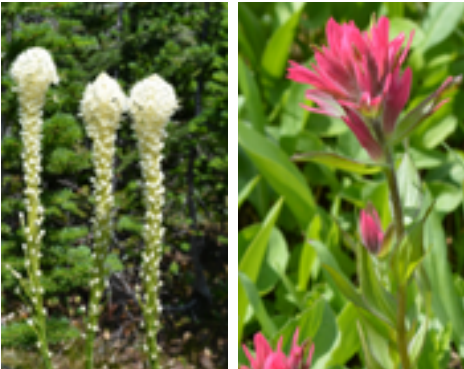
OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

Commenters suggested creating new trails in highly trafficked areas like Triple Falls and building boardwalks or overpasses to keep visitors off the ground to avoid goat interactions and trampling fragile alpine vegetation. A few suggested

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES continued



other hardened surfaces besides boardwalks as a solution. Most trail improvement suggestions related to areas around Logan Pass, particularly the Hidden Lake Trail which received a handful of comments expressing concern about the number of people off trail, trampling in a sensitive area.



Suggestions also included keeping cars from parking in unauthorized areas, additional signage, and reseeding trampled areas with native plants. One suggested focusing more restoration efforts on heavily used trails.

One commenter suggested that the park add shoe cleaners or grated wells in shuttle entryways to combat the spread of invasive weeds.

Another commenter recommended that the process for removing weeds

to be simplified so that more weeds could be removed by visitors.

WILDERNESS

EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

A few commenters brought up wilderness values and character including intrusions into wilderness that they experienced, like noise from vehicles and air tours, as well as an increased number of people on backcountry trails.

A few commenters were more general and indicated that the amount of vehicle traffic “detracts from the wilderness experience in the park.”

OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

Commenters recommended that continued visitor use and visitation increases be focused on the road corridor and not in the park’s recommended wilderness.

AIR QUALITY• CLIMATE CHANGE• RENEWABLE ENERGY

EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

Several commenters identified shuttle buses as an effective way to reduce emissions, combat climate change, and protect air quality. Some expressed concern about the current level of pollution coming

from private passenger vehicles and motorcycles, particularly from diesel engines. A few noted that they thought air pollution was getting worse and that park resources were being harmed.

OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

A few commenters suggested that the park conduct an analysis of the additional impacts to air quality and climate change if the shuttle were to be discontinued. A few commenters specifically identified that the park has a responsibility in taking climate friendly measures and serving as a role model to address climate change, providing for visitor education, and “save the glaciers.”

One comment encouraged the park to increase use of solar energy in general, and another encouraged the park to consider emerging energy technologies for future transportation requirements such as purchasing hybrid electric buses.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

Commenters expressed concern about the amount of traffic as it detracted from the historic experience along the road, as well as the road’s ability to sustain such use.



OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

A few comments touched on the historic significance of the Going-to-the-Sun Road, and recommended retaining or restoring the opportunity to “experience the road in relative tranquility.” Others identified private vehicle use as an historic use along the road and recommended retaining that use, at least at certain times or under certain conditions.

One commenter commended the park on its newer facility construction, and requested that the park continue to follow design standards that blend in with the natural and historic environment.

NOISE

Many commenters brought up unnatural sounds in the park, including one from a self-identified motorcycle rider. Comments on noise contained the most emphatic language of any received during the scoping period. Most were concerned with motorcycle noise, though other causes were also identified.

EXPERIENCES & ISSUES

The comments submitted expressed significant unhappiness with the level of noise from motorcycles, helicopters, and

roadways in the park, as well as generalized road noise spilling over into nearby campgrounds. Commenters said things like “I recently hiked into Granite Park Chalet from Logan Pass. Six miles in, the only manmade sound I could hear over the waterfalls, wind, and wildlife was the sound of loud motorcycles on the Going-to-the-Sun Road. Solitude in the park is a precious public commodity that a few visitors have taken away.” One identified noise as the biggest threat to Glacier National Park values.

Another cited a 70 mile hike through the park, during which helicopter flights were “very annoying” and “ruin the wilderness experience of the park. There are way too many flights daily!” One said “the excessively loud motorcycles were terrible.” A few commented that they come to Glacier to escape the noise, but that it is no longer possible.

Many commenters also focused on helicopter noise and the presence of helicopters in the park, citing hikes where helicopters were heard every half hour. A few indicated that they thought wilderness values were jeopardized by over flights that they heard in wilderness areas.

One commenter shared an experience at Sprague Campground where generalized traffic noise was heard for half the night. Another commented that camping, canoeing, hiking, and picnicking are all ruined by the noise in the park. Another commented that hiking near the road corridor or sitting at Lake McDonald or Saint Mary’s Lake was like “sitting at a highway truckstop.”



OPPORTUNITIES & IDEAS

Commenters suggested things like “Get rid of the helicopters as they make way too much noise and wreck the experience for everyone except the person in it.” Some recommended that the park create decibel limits on vehicles and implement vehicle checks at entrance stations to ensure that excessively loud vehicles do not enter. Others recommended temporary mufflers be provided at entrance stations for motorcycles to use during their visits. One commenter asked that local helicopter companies follow FAA altitude guidelines to stay out of valleys and well above mountain peaks. Another recommended that flights be confined to the Going-to-the-Sun Road corridor to minimize impacts elsewhere in the park. Several recommended that flights be eliminated or reduced.

PLAN DIRECTION & DATA

Most of the comments received focused on current park issues and experiences and future opportunities. However, a few commenters concentrated on different sections of the scoping newsletter, focusing on facts that the park had included, and offering comments on the plan’s stated draft vision and goals. Some of these comments have been captured in other sections of this analysis. The remainder of the comments that pertain directly to the newsletter are included below.



A view from the Highline Trail. Commenters appreciated hiking the trail, though frequently commented on excessive congestion, noise, and resource damage.

“A FEW FACTS”
Several comments requested more facts and data to better describe park conditions, including the estimated length that visitors park at Logan Pass, as well as simply “as much data as possible” to inform solutions. A few requested access to the data that informed the summaries in the newsletter.

A few commenters suggested a more consistent synthesis of data, as well as reasoning behind why the park picked certain years for data snapshots over others.

One commenter requested an analysis of the spread of non-native plant species at shuttle stops versus other places in the park to see if there was a difference.

A few questioned whether or not the park really would see an increase in visitation over time, stating that they didn’t “think we are going to see that many more visitors to Glacier than currently seeing.” Another wondered if the increase in trail use could be attributed to the baby boomer generation visiting the park, and if those numbers would decline as that generation becomes less active.

A few suggested more graphics and tables to portray data including visitation and traffic reductions or increases. One commenter specifically questioned the traffic reduction, and recommended that the park analyze traffic between 2008 and 2012 to see how the shuttle has affected private vehicle usage over a longer duration.

One commenter noted the analysis of carbon dioxide emissions of private cars compared with shuttles, and stated that private vehicles or other forms of transportation like bicycles or other more efficient technology might not create as many emissions as the shuttles.

One commenter suggested that the park use more existing data from wildlife studies, going back into the 1990s. Another commenter suggested that wildlife data be portrayed in maps and photos and include habitat usage in



the past and projected habitat availability in the future.

One commenter requested that the park’s backcountry zone to be better defined, along with a description of which trails fall into the backcountry zone.



“NEED FOR A MANAGEMENT PLAN”
Some commenters were supportive of a management plan to address the road corridor. A few said that they were “not surprised” to see that the park is pursuing this, given the conditions they have observed in the park. A few others suggested that the park rely on the General Management Plan to inform park decision making, and that another plan is not necessary. Several comments requested more concrete ideas from the park so that the public could react, recommending that the park “Come with a plan. Share your ideas with the public and ask for feedback.” One commenter requested more

clarity on the current purpose of the shuttle, as well as the current and future funding strategies that might be considered in the plan. One commenter urged the park to “think bigger” and plan for future requirements, including road expansions and other services necessary to meet future visitor needs.

“LONG TERM VISION & GOALS”
One commenter recommended that the stated management philosophy include mention of natural resources and the biologic diversity found in the road corridor, in addition to historic character. The same commenter found that both the stated management philosophy and vision statement emphasized a scenic and historic experience, but recommended it include more emphasis on the “wild”, stating that this is the reason that so many visit and hike in Glacier.

One commenter thought the draft vision statement should include emphasis on a flexible transportation system and visitor management strategies. Another thought that the draft vision and goals were acceptable as written. One thought the “plan is on the right path.”

“WHAT THE PLAN WILL ADDRESS”
In addition to other comments that talked about monitoring wildlife trends, a few commenters recommended that the plan’s monitoring strategy be more specific, as well as rely on other parks for best practices. One commenter suggested that the

monitoring program identify how it would judge its effectiveness. One commenter recommended that the park reconsider eliminating private vehicles along the road corridor.

OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THIS PLAN
Some commenters offered observations and suggestions that will not be considered specifically under this Going-to-the-Sun Road corridor planning process.

These comments have been shared in this summary, but will be considered either as part of other planning efforts or as the park makes routine decisions about services offered. Topics brought up



“...include more emphasis on the ‘wild’. This is the reason that people visit and hike in Glacier.”
-from comment letter received

that are outside the scope of this plan include things like recycling service and other amenities in campgrounds, alternative energy use throughout the park, and scenic air tours in the park.

Additionally the Going-to-the-Sun Road is undergoing significant improvements and many of the recommendations made during the scoping period including installing better guardrails and other safety improvements are currently being addressed throughout the construction project. Other recommendations such as cross walks and pull outs will be considered under this planning process.

A FEW MORE FACTS

SHUTTLE AND PARKING LOT DATA

The park is working with the University of Montana, the Department of Transportation, and contractors to gather more information about the Going-to-the-Sun Road corridor to inform the planning process.

These tables and graphs are snapshots of some of the data that’s been collected as part of this effort.

As reports are finalized, some will be placed on the park’s planning website at www.planning.nps.gov under the Going-to-the-Sun Road Corridor Management Plan/EIS.

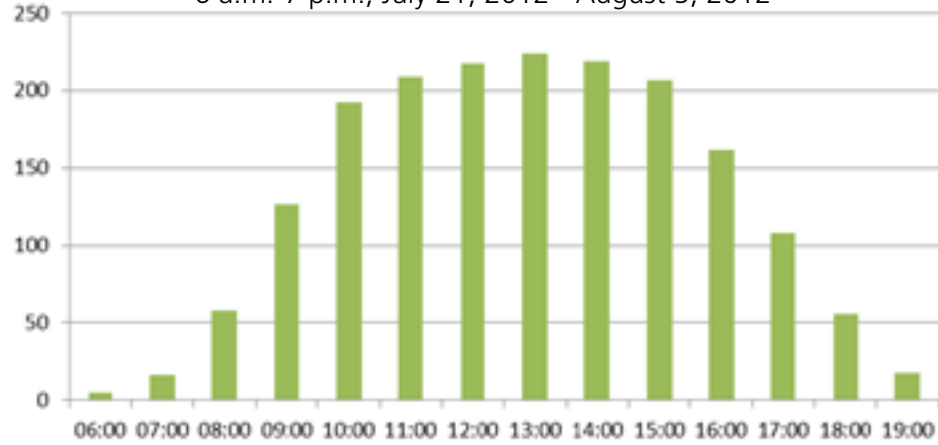


Shuttle waits and long shuttle lines were difficult for some commenters

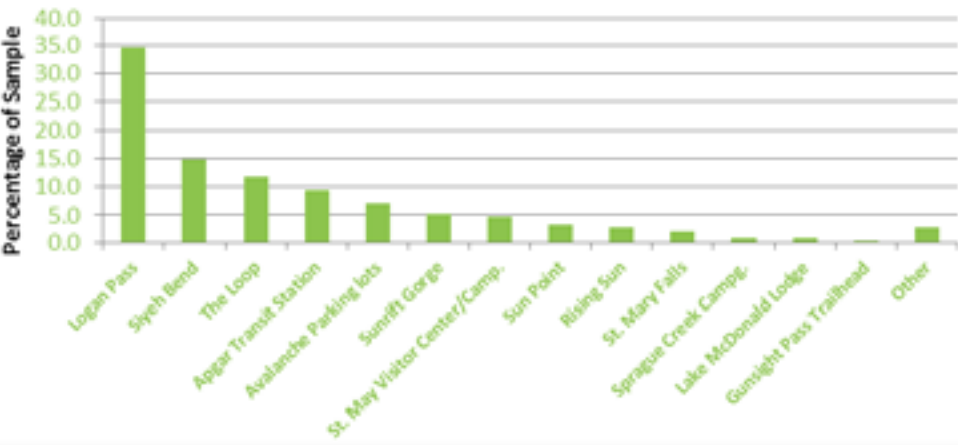


Commenters identified Logan Pass Parking Lot as a very crowded place

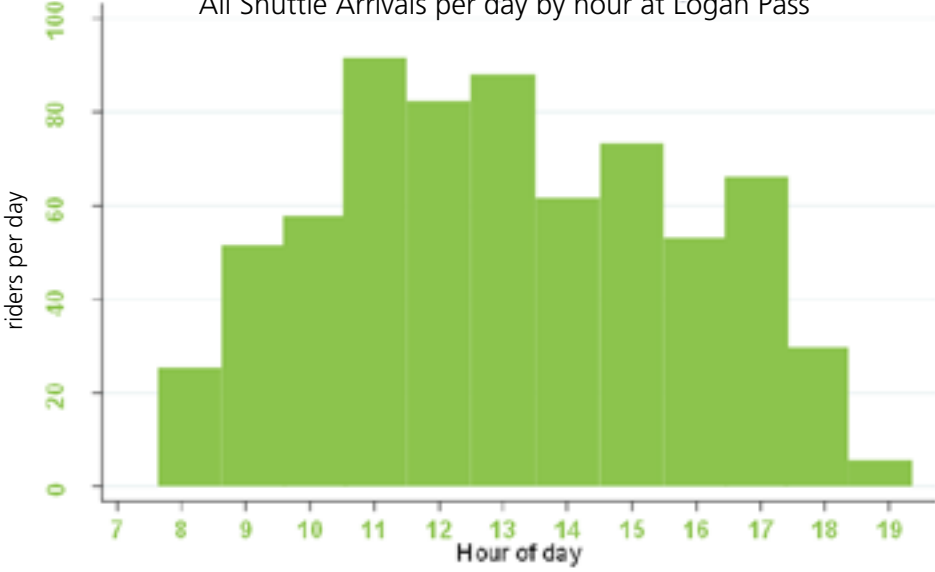
Average Total Cars in Logan Pass Parking Lot
6 a.m.-7 p.m., July 21, 2012 - August 5, 2012



Locations where Hikers Left a Vehicle in the Park



All Shuttle Arrivals per day by hour at Logan Pass



TRAIL CONDITION AND USE STATISTICS

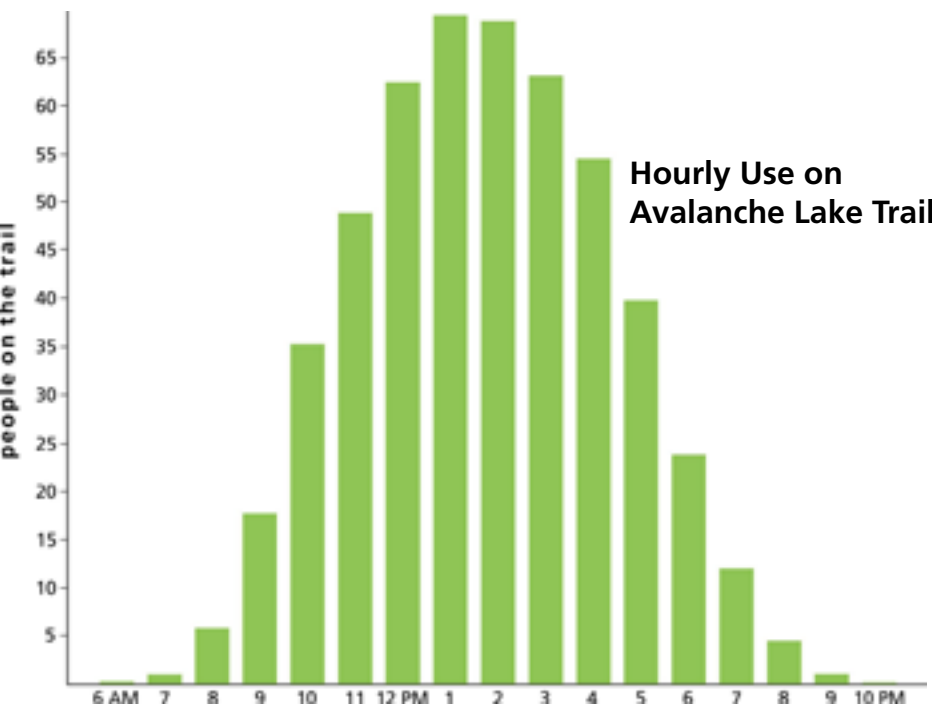
The table to the right depicts vegetation damage in some of Glacier's most visited areas.

The most common types of vegetation disturbance come from informal trails created by hikers, unintentional trail widening on highly used formal trails, and foot traffic to viewpoints or other gathering places.

Vegetation Disturbance at Popular Park Locations			
	PRESTON PARK	LOGAN PASS	HAYSTACK BUTTE
Linear ft. of informal trails present	991	1672	2317
Number of disturbed areas > 200 sq. feet	0	15 - 1118 total sq. ft.	4 - 1731 total sq. ft.
Number of disturbed areas < 200 sq. feet	4 - 99 total sq. ft.	3 - 345 total sq. ft.	3 - 320 total sq. ft.

Estimated Increases in Trail Use			
TRAIL NAME	1988 Estimated Use (May21-Sept. 5)	2011 Estimated Use (July 1-Sept. 5)*	Percent Change
Avalanche Lake	26,200	55,170	111%
The Loop	1,800	15,652	770%
Highline	13,300	19,299	45%
Hidden Lake	no data	40,280	no data
Siyeh Bend	3,300	5,642	71%
Sunrift Gorge	no data	5,185	no data
St. Mary Falls	10,400	39,102	276%
Virginia Falls	no data	15,719	no data

*From trail counter data



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

This summer park visitors will have the opportunity to participate in a survey that will be conducted by the University of Montana. The survey will obtain information on visitor responses to different types of management actions possible to address congestion and resource impacts in the GTSR corridor.

The park will also be monitoring decibel levels on the GTSR and providing interpretive information on noise levels and impacts on natural sounds.

Over the next several months, the park will develop draft alternatives that will be released in late 2014. You will have an opportunity to provide comments on these draft alternatives. The revised alternatives will be included in a draft plan/environmental impact statement in 2015.

A final plan and EIS will be prepared and a Record of Decision for the plan/EIS is anticipated in 2016.

In 2017, the GTSR road rehabilitation is expected to be completed.



FOR MORE PLAN INFORMATION:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/glac>

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West Glacier, MT 59936
406-888-7898

FIND GLACIER ON...    



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier National Park
Attn: GTSR Corridor Plan
PO Box 128
West Glacier, Montana 59936

GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD CORRIDOR **Management Plan**

