



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Dixie National Forest
Cedar City, Utah 84721

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bryce Canyon National Park
Bryce, Utah 84764

IN REPLY REFER TO: Multi-use Visitor Path Project

October 1, 2014

Subject: Multi-use Visitor Path
Reference: Environmental Assessment Available for Comment

Dear Friend of Bryce Canyon National Park and Dixie National Forest:

The National Park Service (NPS) and United States Forest Service (USFS) are making available for public review and comment an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Multi-use Visitor Path. The EA evaluates a no action alternative and two action alternatives. The primary purpose of the proposed project is to relieve safety issues for all visitors who choose to use nonmotorized transportation— such as walking, jogging, cycling, and cross-country skiing— to experience the park and adjacent United States Forest Service areas near Bryce Canyon City. The proposed project would begin at the shuttle bus staging area in Bryce Canyon City and continue through Dixie National Forest to key developed visitor use areas in the park. No portion of the proposed path would be constructed below the canyon rim on city, forest, or park lands, nor in wilderness areas.

With increases in park visitation and traffic congestion, cyclists and pedestrians need a way to travel to and within the park that is safer, provides a better visitor experience, and promotes pedestrian and cycling travel between nearby communities and the park. The proposed visitor multi-use path would be developed to relieve safety issues for visitors of all ages and abilities who choose to use nonmotorized transportation to reach key viewpoints and trailheads in the park and adjacent USFS areas.

The No-action Alternative represents the park's and the forest's ongoing operations and implementing existing, approved plans. The No-action Alternative assumes that the multi-use visitor path would not be constructed. Existing conditions such as congestion, user conflicts, and multimodal safety issues would continue and possibly worsen as visitation increases in the future.

Under Alternative Alignment A, the agencies' preferred alternative, the multi-use visitor path would be designed to fit into the natural topography to the greatest extent possible and would generally parallel State Route 63 and the main park road while providing separation between nonmotorized user groups and vehicles. The path would also provide maximum direct access to key visitor destinations in the park such as the General Store; the Lodge; and Sunrise, Sunset, Inspiration, and Bryce points. The path would begin at the shuttle staging area in Bryce Canyon City and continue for approximately 7.3 miles through Dixie National Forest and in Bryce Canyon National Park.

Under Alternative Alignment B, the multi-use visitor path would also be designed as a separated path, distinct from park roads; however it would remain as close to existing roads as possible. It would begin at the shuttle staging area and continue for roughly 7.2 miles through Dixie National Forest and in Bryce Canyon National Park. This alignment for the proposed path would not connect directly to visitor destinations such as the Lodge and Sunrise, Sunset, Inspiration, and Bryce points. Instead, it would largely rely on visitors making connections via low-speed, existing park roads to provide access to these destinations.

The NPS and USFS have prepared the EA to analyze potential impacts from each alternative, including the agencies' preferred alternative. Your input is needed to address remaining concerns and allow NPS and USFS staff to reach a final decision, complete the project design, and begin its implementation.



Public participation is very important to the success of the project and the NPS and USFS encourage your review and comment on the EA. **To learn more about the project, please join us for a public open house on Tuesday October 14 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Bryce Canyon City Public Safety Building, 70 West 100 North, Bryce Canyon City, UT.** You will have the opportunity to discuss the EA and alternatives in more depth and provide comments directly to NPS and USFS personnel.

The EA will be available for public review through November 3, 2014. The document is available electronically for review and comment online by visiting <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/brca>. Comments also may be sent to the park or USFS at the addresses below.

Bryce Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 640201
Bryce, UT 84764

Dixie National Forest, Powell District
225 East Center
Panguitch, UT 84759

Commentors should be aware that their entire comment—including personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While commentors can ask that their personal identifying information be withheld from public review, the NPS and USFS cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

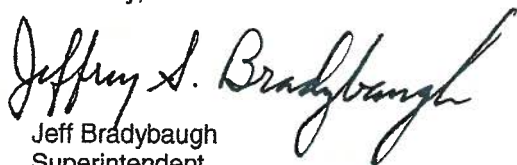
The USFS Objection Process

The Powell Ranger District of the Dixie National Forest is cooperating with the NPS in conducting the environmental analysis of the Multi-use Visitor Path project. The NPS is the lead agency, therefore the project is being conducted in accordance with NPS procedures. The proposed path crosses some lands administered by NPS and other lands administered by the USFS and each agency will issue an independent decision regarding their respective lands. Given that there will be separate decisions, and that the two agencies have different decision processes, it follows that there must also be separate avenues for the public to seek redress. For National Forest System lands, the public has the right to object to a decision. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object to USFS decisions must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. Specifically, an individual or organization wishing to establish USFS objection eligibility must provide substantive comments concerning the portion of the proposed project that crosses National Forest System lands, and to do so by the closing date of the comment period. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments during the public comment period are eligible to file an objection under §218 and be involved in the formal USFS issue resolution process. The USFS responsible official will consider the comments and determine whether they are relevant to National Forest System lands and are eligible for the USFS's objection process.

We appreciate your input on the Multi-use Visitor Path EA. If you have any questions, please contact Dan Cloud, Bryce Canyon National Park, at Daniel_Cloud@nps.gov or (435) 834-4720. You may also contact Nick Glidden, Dixie National Forest, at nnglidden@fs.fed.us or (435) 865-3747.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,



Jeff Bradybaugh
Superintendent
Bryce Canyon National Park



Paul H. Hancock
District Ranger, Powell District
Dixie National Forest

