



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the
Interior

Bryce Canyon National Park
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For Immediate Release
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Notice of Availability for the Environmental Assessment for the Multi-use Visitor Path

The National Park Service (NPS), Department of the Interior, and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) announce the availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Multi-use Visitor Path. The primary purpose of the proposed project is to relieve safety issues for all visitors who choose to use non-motorized 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 EA evaluates a no action alternative and two action alternatives, including the preferred alternative. 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.

Under the 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 non-motorized 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.

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 hear 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>. Written comments may also be sent Bryce Canyon National Park, P.O. Box 640201, Bryce, Utah or Dixie National Forest, Powell District, 225 East Center, Panguitch, UT 84759. Hard copies of the EA are available at the Bryce Canyon National Park headquarters, Highway 63, Bryce Canyon, UT 84764 and at the Dixie National Forest, Powell District Office at the address above. ***If you have any***

questions, please contact Dan Cloud, Bryce Canyon National Park, at Daniel_Cloud@nps.gov or (435) 834-4720 or Nick Glidden, Dixie National Forest, at nglidden@fs.fed.us or (435) 865-3747.

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 established by the responsible officials are eligible to file an objection under §218 and be involved in the formal USFS issue resolution process.

A single comment period is being conducted for both NPS- and USFS-managed lands. Interested parties need only submit one written comment that can relate to only forest lands, only park lands, or both. 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.