



Scoping Notice for Proposed National Ecological Observatory Network Project Environmental Assessment

You're Invited!

Public Scoping Meeting

December 2, 2014

6:00pm - 8:00pm

Homewood Suites

1023 Baxter Lane, Bozeman, MT

Open House format with a brief presentation at 6:00 PM

Yellowstone National Park has received a proposal from the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) to install an ecological research and monitoring site. The site would include infrastructure, such as a meteorological tower, soil sampling plots, instrument hut, aquatic monitoring equipment, and associated footpath. This monitoring site would become part of a continental-scale ecological observatory designed to enable understanding of the impacts of climate change, land-use change, and invasive species on ecology. NEON is supported through the National Science Foundation (NSF) Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction Program.

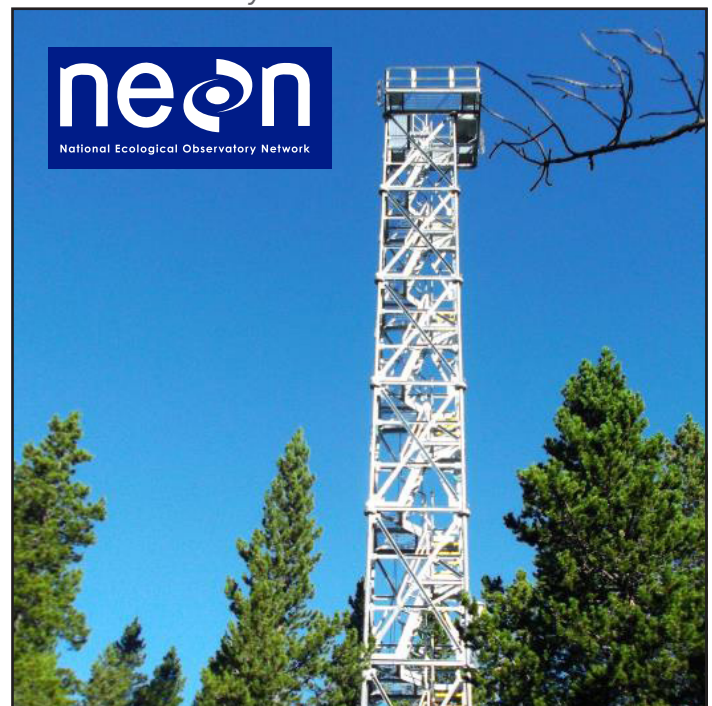
NEON's mission is to gather data over the next 30 years that would permit the study of ecological responses to environmental change. Data will be collected from 106 sites (60 terrestrial, 36 aquatic and 10 aquatic experimental) across the U.S. (*including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico*) using monitoring equipment and field sampling. The sites include 20 terrestrial and 20 aquatic "core" research sites located in wildland areas that would remain in place for 30 years and several "relocatable sites" that will move approximately every five to ten years.

Project Information

Under NEON's design framework, Yellowstone National Park has been proposed as a core site for the Rocky Mountain region because it is representative of the area's vegetation, landforms, climate, and ecosystem. Additionally, NEON has proposed relocatable sites in Bozeman, Montana and nearby Paradise Valley, Montana. Information and data would be available to the public through an online portal that would enable scientists, educators, planners, and decision makers to map, understand and better predict the effects of human activities on ecological systems and effectively address critical ecological questions and issues.

The site proposed by NEON is located approximately 9 miles east of Mammoth Hot Springs and 0.3 miles south of Grand Loop Road near the intersection of the entrance of the Blacktail Plateau Drive (see map). Key infrastructure at the site would include: a meteorological tower of approximately 60 to 70 feet in height with sensors that measure a suite of atmospheric variables, a footpath, conduits, precipitation collection system, fencing, and an instrument hut near the tower to house gas analyzer instruments and other equipment. Throughout the sites, there would be approximately 50 to 55 permanent sampling plots that would be identified for biological sampling. Additional aquatic observations are proposed to be collected at nearby Blacktail Deer Creek approximately 2.5 miles west of the proposed meteorological tower location. These sites, among others that meet the project objectives, will be considered and evaluated during the planning process.

Core Tower in Rocky Mountain National Park



Public Scoping

The National Park Service is preparing an Environmental Assessment to evaluate the NEON proposal in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). As part of public scoping, Yellowstone National Park is hosting a public meeting on the proposal on December 2, 2014 in Bozeman, Montana (see details on front page). In addition the park would like to receive your thoughts, concerns, or comments about this proposal. Comments may be submitted through the Park's online system at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ynpneon>, hand delivered to the Park's Mailroom in the Administration Building at Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, during the public meeting, or mailed to the following address:

Compliance Office

Attention: NEON Proposed Core Site Project

P.O. Box 168

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 82190

Comments will not be accepted by fax, e-mail, or in any other way than those specified above. Comments must be received by midnight MST, December 21, 2014. **Please Note:** Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

