



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PO Box 168
Yellowstone National Park
Wyoming 82190

IN REPLY REFER TO:

D18(YELL)

MAY 31 2006

Dear Interested Party:

Yellowstone National Park is soliciting comments on an environmental assessment (EA) that has been prepared for a proposed project to rehabilitate the roads, parking areas, pullouts, and overlooks along the Canyon Rim, near the Canyon developed area.


The EA presents two alternatives that examine three road segments in the vicinity of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River, within Yellowstone National Park. Alternative A, is a "no-action" approach that is status-quo as to the maintenance and use aspects. Alternative B (the preferred alternative), looks at rehabilitating the road surface, drainage features, parking areas, and looks at a traffic flow direction change for the North Rim Drive. Additional items to be addressed include: inconsistent road width, various safety hazards, and inadequate visibility at pullouts and parking areas, and erosion damage. These roads; the North Rim Drive (including the Inspiration Point Spur), the Brink of the Upper Falls access road, and the South Rim Drive, are in various states of deterioration due to age, poor drainage, and increased size and quantities of vehicles. The pavement is rutted from wear in some places, and cracking because of poor drainage, poor-quality base material, and increasingly heavy vehicle use.

Road improvements would occur on the North Rim Drive 3,490 meters (2.17 miles), Inspiration Point road spur 1,450 meters (0.90 miles), the South Rim Drive 2,300 meters (1.43 miles), and the Brink of the Upper Falls access road segments 700 meters (0.43 miles). Additional improvements would occur at parking areas at Canyon Village, Inspiration Point, Grandview Point, Lookout Point, Brink of the Lower Falls, Wapiti Lake, Uncle Tom's Trail, and Artist's Point which would all be repaved and include various other improvements and repairs to items such as curbing, walkways, railings, and curb cuts. Traffic flow direction on the North Rim Drive was evaluated to determine if a change in traffic direction on this one-way road is warranted. The Artist Point portion of the project would also include the rehabilitation of the pedestrian area, paved trails, and overlook areas, along with the addition of a vault toilet. These improvements would take place in phases as funding permits, beginning with a construction contract planned for early 2007. It is anticipated the first construction phase would take approximately one or two years to complete. Variations to this schedule would vary depending upon funding availability. Alternative B (preferred) would rehabilitate the road and associated parking areas and pullouts. All roads would be rehabilitated at their existing widths. Some minor size increases in some parking lots would occur.

PUBLIC COMMENT

"If you wish to comment on the environmental assessment, you may mail comments to the name and address below or post comments online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>. This environmental assessment will be on public review for 30 days. Comments should be received no later than July 03, 2006. It is the practice of the NPS to make all comments, including names and addresses of respondents who provide that information, available for public review following the conclusion of the environmental assessment process. Individuals may request that the NPS withhold their name and/or address from public disclosure. If you wish to do this, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. Commentators using the website can make such a request by checking the box "keep my contact information private." NPS will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law, but you should be aware that NPS may still be required to disclose your name and address pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. We will make all submissions from organizations, businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses available for public inspection in their entirety."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Suzanne Lewis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Suzanne Lewis
Superintendent