

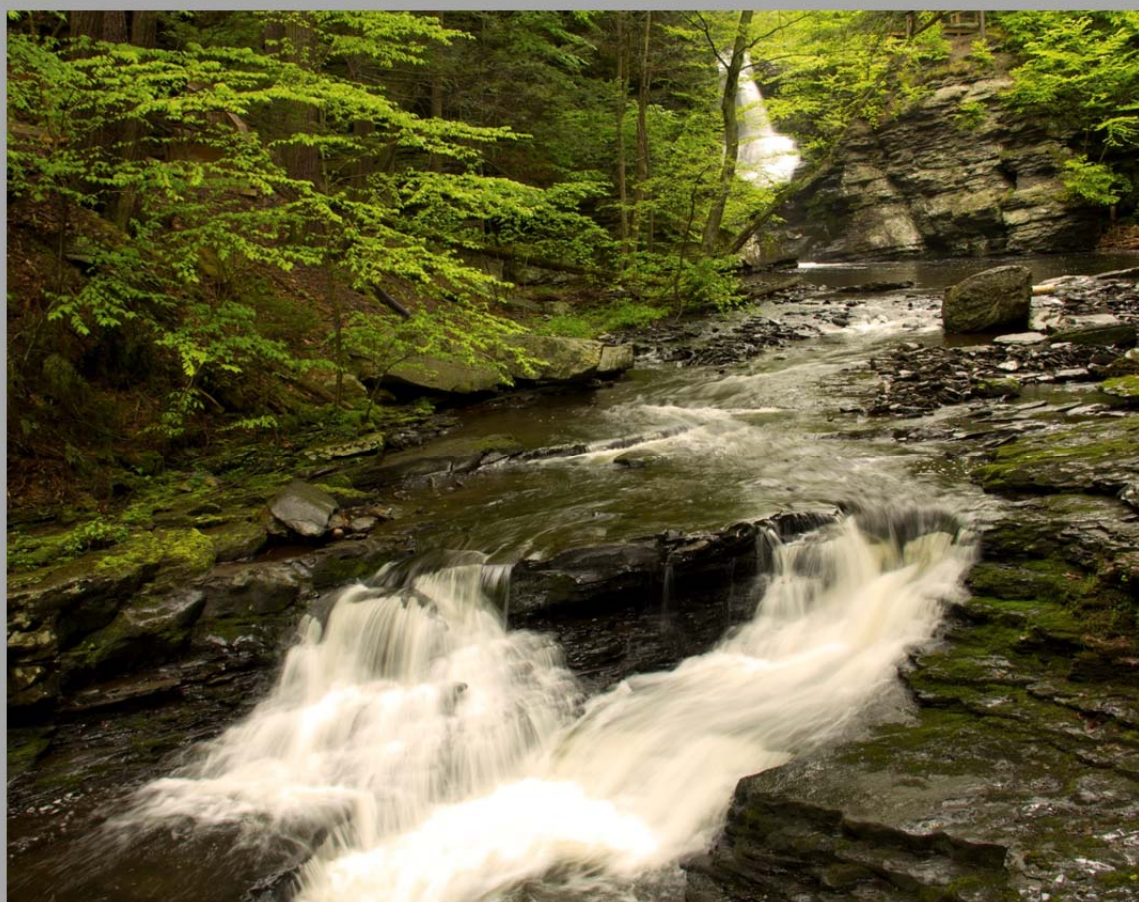
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River
Pennsylvania and New Jersey

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Public Scoping Comment Summary Report

Visitor Use Management Plan



December 2015

SUMMARY

The purpose of the Visitor Use Management Plan (the plan) for Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (the park) and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River is to determine appropriate opportunities for visitors to safely use, experience, and enjoy the park and to develop strategies to concurrently protect resources. The plan will examine management options to support health and human safety, and to enhance the protection of natural, cultural, and scenic resources and values, while providing visitors with opportunities to be inspired through personal connections with those resources.

In 2014, the park completed a foundation document which listed a Visitor Use Management Plan as their highest priority planning need to assess visitor use patterns, determine what services and facilities need to be available to accommodate different types of use, and ensure quality recreational opportunities while protecting natural, cultural and scenic resources for future generations. As noted in the foundation document, the plan will address visitor use for the entire park. The foundation document also noted that the outdated 1987 General Management Plan (GMP) is a key issue of concern, and the GMP zoning may no longer be adequate or appropriate. Therefore, the plan will act as a GMP amendment to re-evaluate guidance for visitor use and experiences.

The plan is needed to provide a framework to: (1) enhance opportunities for the park's key visitor experiences; (2) minimize impacts to resources and visitor experiences caused by visitor use; (3) assess the appropriateness of current and new/evolving visitor opportunities while considering visitor safety and resource protection; (4) align public expectations for use with availability of resources or infrastructure; (5) increase understanding of existing and emerging visitor interests, use characteristics, patterns, and trends; (6) manage visitor demand and expectations at popular destinations; and (7) to identify and evaluate various visitor use management strategies.

The outcome of the plan includes a prioritization of appropriate uses at various locations throughout the park. The plan will set priorities for resource protection where visitor use occurs, and will utilize partnerships on a landscape scale to enhance visitor experience.

In August 2014, the park initiated planning for the Visitor Use Management Plan by facilitating an internal scoping meeting attended by an interdisciplinary team of National Park Service (NPS) managers, specialists, and researchers. The purpose of this meeting was to understand the objectives, desired outcomes, and the need for a Visitor Use Management Plan at the park. Following this meeting, the park conducted civic engagement by holding two public listening sessions open to the public and two focus group meetings for stakeholders and land managers.

Following the civic engagement efforts, the park's planning team held a workshop to work through process steps to inform the plan, establish the goals and desired conditions, and develop management strategies. The public was able to review these possible management strategies through the public scoping newsletter, at the three public scoping meetings, a webinar, and on NPS's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website.

This comment analysis report provides a summary of the public comments received during the public review of the possible management strategies. Although the analysis process attempts to capture the full range of public concerns, this content analysis report should be used with caution. Comments from people who chose to respond do not necessarily represent the sentiments of the entire public, and may not accurately reflect existing conditions, directions, or situations. Furthermore, this was not a vote-counting process, and the emphasis was on content of the comment rather than the number of times a comment was received. This report is intended to be a summary of the comments received, rather than a statistical analysis.

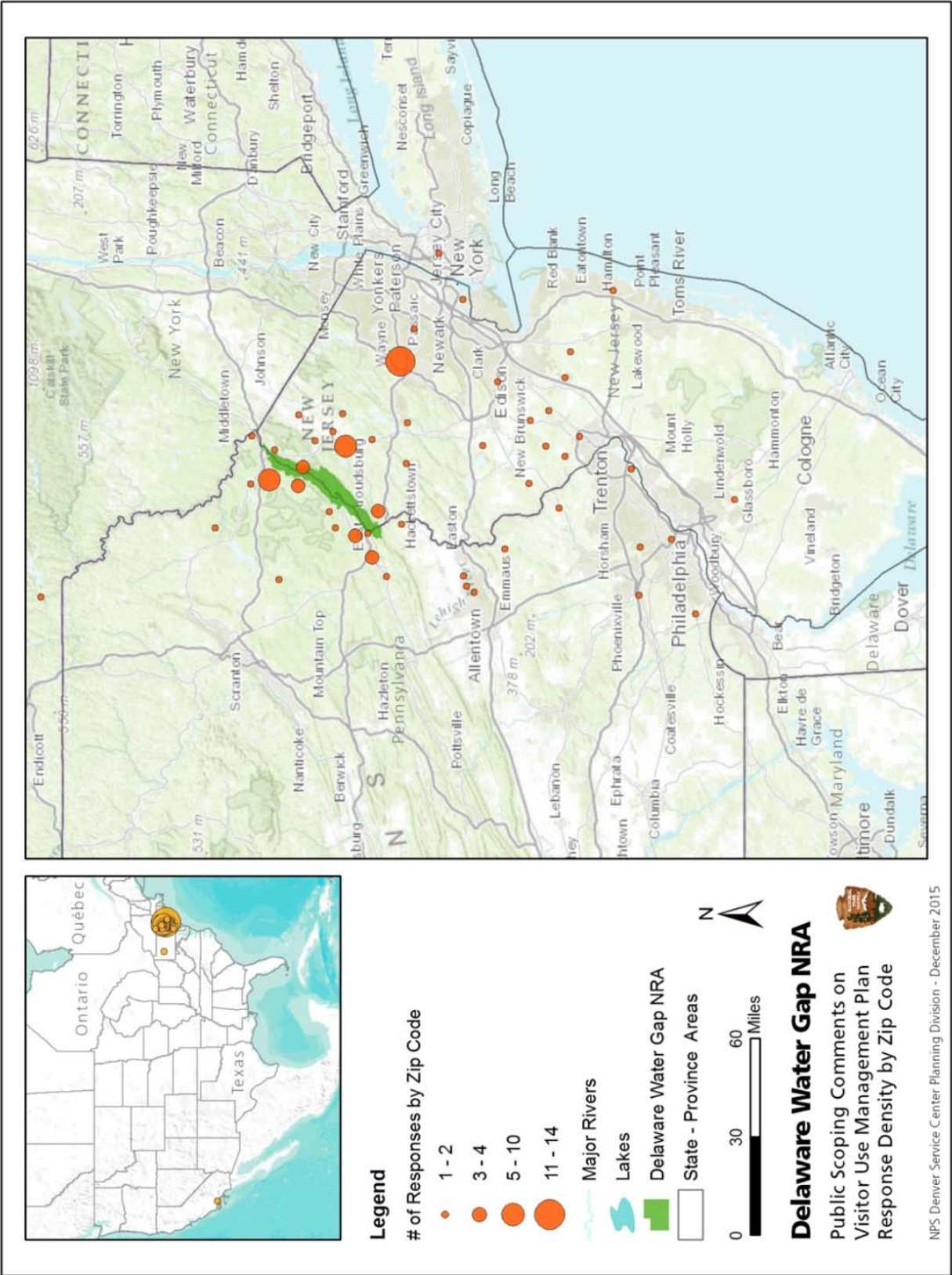
A Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement was published in the Federal Register on July 29, 2015. On August 24, 2015, the NPS released the Public Scoping Newsletter for the Visitor Use Management Plan to the public for review and comment. The newsletter included a description of the purpose and need, goals of the plan, a list of issues the plan will address, and possible management strategies.

During the scoping period, three public meetings were held in Pennsylvania and New Jersey from September 10 – 12, 2015. Meetings were held in Sparta, New Jersey (September 10th); Matamoras, Pennsylvania (September 11th); and Bushkill, Pennsylvania (September 12th). Each scoping meeting consisted of an open house format that began with a brief presentation. NPS staff were on hand to visit with meeting attendees and to answer questions. A total of 148 individuals attended the public scoping meetings. Additionally, the park hosted a webinar for those individuals that could not attend the meetings in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The webinar took place on September 16, 2015. A presentation was given during the webinar followed by a question and answer session. The webinar was attended by 22 people. Following these meetings, the posters and recorded webinar were posted on PEPC for public review.

The public scoping comment period was open from September 8 through October 9, 2015. The public were able to submit their comments on the project electronically through the PEPC website, by mailing comments to the park, and by emailing comments to the park. All comments received via mail and email were transcribed into the PEPC system. During the public comment period, 114 individual correspondences were received. Of these, a majority (84 correspondences) were submitted directly through the PEPC system.

The following table presents the distribution of public comments that were submitted during public scoping. In addition, 8 comments were submitted without demographic information, representing approximately 7 % of the correspondences received. The figure on page 3 presents a visual distribution of the public scoping comments by state.

Distribution of Public Scoping Comments by State		
State	Number of Correspondences	Percentage of Correspondences
New Jersey	59	51.8 %
Pennsylvania	42	36.8 %
New York	4	3.5 %
California	1	0.9 %



In addition to the general public, members of the following agencies and organizations submitted comments on the visitor use management plan. All comments, whether from an organization, a public individual, or a federal agency, are analyzed and considered equally.

- Adventure Sports Canoe, Kayak, Raft Rental
- Aero Club Albatross
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- Delaware Currents
- Delaware Riverkeeper Network
- East Stroudsburg University
- Fairview Rod & Gun Club
- Friends of Marie Zimmermann
- Happy Farm
- New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP), and Historic Preservation Office (HPO)
- New Jersey Legislature
- New Jersey Outdoor Alliance
- New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
- Pennsylvania Equine Council
- Pike Commissioner
- Pike County Federation of Sportsmen Club
- Ridge Riders Motorcycle Club
- Roxbury Area Model Airplane Club
- Sparta Historical Society
- Walpack Historical Society
- Washington Crossing Audubon Society

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Primary terms used in this document are defined below.

Correspondence: A correspondence is the entire document received from a commenter. It can be in the form of a letter, email, written comment form, note card, open house transcript, or petition. Each piece of correspondence is assigned a unique identification number in the PEPC system.

Comment: A comment is a portion of the text within a correspondence that addresses a single subject. It should include information such as an expression of support or opposition to the use of a potential management tool, additional data regarding an existing condition, or an opinion debating the adequacy of the analysis.

Comment Summary: A comment summary is a grouping of multiple comments that is centered on a common subject. Comments that portray the same idea are summarized into one comment summary and are followed by representative quotes from some of the individual used to create the summary.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PLAN SCOPING COMMENTS

The public comments were analyzed and comment summaries were written to summarize the public comments. The comment summaries were organized by possible management strategies presented in the public scoping newsletter. The public comments also included original ideas on management strategies and those topics are also covered in the comment summaries. The comment summaries are organized into the following categories:

- Camping and Overnight Opportunities
- Day-Use Picnic and Recreation Sites
- Expanded and Changed Recreational Opportunities
- Interpretation and Education
- Operational Strategies
- River Access
- River Camping
- Trails and Trail Use
- Miscellaneous Comments that May Be of Interest to the Park in Future Planning Efforts
- Hunting in the Park
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process

For a description of the possible management strategies, please refer to the scoping newsletter, available at: www.parkplanning.nps.gov/dewa.

The scoping newsletter listed three topic questions (1 – 3) to prompt responses from the public, and the PEPC website listed one additional question (4):

1. Which strategies in each topic do you like the best? Why?
2. Which strategies do you think the NPS should not consider? Why?
3. Do you have any new ideas or changes to existing ideas that you think the planning team should consider?
4. Do you have any other thoughts on visitor use management and visitor activities you think the planning team should consider?

The public comments received were in response to those questions, as well as from observations on other issues pertaining to the management of the park. The topics that received the majority of the comments were in response to the questions presented and include expressions of opinion on appropriate recreation activities and management of the park.

All comments, regardless of their topic, were carefully read and analyzed and are presented in this report. All comments will be considered when refining the management strategies for use in the visitor use management plan. Commenters will continue to be notified of the project's progress, and are encouraged to visit the NPS PEPC website at www.parkplanning.nps.gov/dewa to view information pertaining to this project.

CAMPING AND OVERNIGHT OPPORTUNITIES

Expansion of New Camping Opportunities: Commenters expressed support for new camping opportunities, including tent camping, walk-in and bike-in sites, and cabin rentals. Creating these sites where surrounding habitats will sustain little impact is important to several commenters. An example of an appropriate place for a new campground is agricultural areas, where the land could be replanted to provide shade for campers. Additionally, car camping sites could be created in previously disturbed areas; providing parking areas close to the campsites would be a way to reduce impacts from soil compaction from vehicles. The Namanock Area on Old Mine Road was suggested as a site that could be used as a new camping site. Cabins provide additional camping locations, while protecting historic structures. One commenter expressed opposition for RV camping sites within the park; another commenter was not supportive of walk-in and bike-in sites. One commenter cautioned against bikes or motor vehicles in newly established campgrounds in an effort to protect wildlife in these areas.

“I support new bike in and walk in campsites. There is a lot of need for hike-in sites currently, and if the McDade Trail is connect to other regional bike trails, bike-in sites will be wonderful for cyclists who want to tour the region. I support creation of other campgrounds also, as it seems that need keeps expanding. I also would love to see the park renting historic houses as cabin rentals. For those who can afford it, they would offer a wonderful experience. Cape Cod is investing a lot in similar houses they've ended up with, and charge significant rent, which supplements park income. I support this strategy.”

“DRN supports NPS development of new primitive or low impact tent camping and some walk in and bike in only expansions especially if done in areas that are already disturbed or compacted where no forest clearing will be needed. For example, perhaps setting up new camping areas in agricultural lands and planting fast growing native trees in agricultural lands to begin converting these locations to shady areas for campers would be a good option to pursue to help increase forested buffers. Additional walk in or bike in campsites along trails where there is not sensitive habitat is a good idea and could be a way to increase camping without bringing along increased compaction. However foot traffic itself can cause compaction and spread of invasive species so a permitting system could be implemented to ensure over use does not lead to environmental degradation and severe compaction of soils.”

“Limited car camping could potentially be added in already impacted areas again where forests or native vegetated buffers and floodplains are not disturbed. Establishing short walk in sites with wheel barrows for gear and designated existing parking areas for car campers could be a way to increase car camping without increasing the roads and compaction that comes with campsites where cars can drive up to their campsite. Walk in sites are also highly prized by many car campers currently at Dingmans Ferry Campground.”

“Emphasize "IMPROVE" or develop available camp grounds in EXISTING AREAS for small pop up trailers and tent camping only. The Namanock Area on Old Mine Road, could be used to a much greater potential with platform tent sites added for small groups augmented by sites for more simple single or family camping units. Some hike-in or bike-in only sites could also be accommodated in this area. Keep the camping limited to an area that can be well supervised as we frequently witness hiker/hunter/boater abuse of the park evidenced through mountains of litter and even unauthorized camp fires. Do not provide new camping or concession operated facilities but rather upgrade and enhance what already exists.”

“DRN does not support the development of new RV camping and believes that RV parks are located outside of the park for families who want to RV camp nearby.”

Camping-Related Concessions: Several commenters support concession-operated campgrounds at the park, stating that the concessions would provide revenue that could offset the need for increased fees.

“An important aspect for camping that is needed is that more should be done to educate campers and concessionaires on proper camping etiquette. Dingman's Ferry campground, for example, has made some improvements in 2015 with a list of rules highlighted at camp check in but frankly people are not going to read the fine print. Bears need to be better protected by a stronger camping etiquette policy and a better job needs to be done to ensure campers are not attracting bears with their coolers and garbage left out at campsites quite routinely - day and night. If concession staff had more training in this matter they could, in turn better educate campers since they are often the main interface with campers at check in.”

“I believe it would be good to develop new or improve existing concession operated campground as long as the development of these campgrounds does not distract from the River corridors natural features.”

“New vehicle, tent & RV camping, excellent way to generate income. Sites keep visitors semi-concentrated, easy to police & maintain. Have stores at each site for basics, outdoor gear, bait & tackle. A commercial presence for the sake of generating income for the park such as snacks/food; outdoor gear, hats & Tee's; bait & tackle w/live bait appropriate for the waters-shad, fathead minnows, worms, crickets. Ventures such as these, as well as the vehicle & RV camping would offset higher, or more entrance/usage fees.”

Separate Camping Sites: Commenters suggested that some sites need to be separate from others. For example, group sites should be separate from other camping to prevent noise disturbances to smaller groups or individuals. Additionally, canoe camping sites should be separate from other camp sites, as this arrangement makes canoers feel safer.

“Group sites would be OK as it seems larger and larger groups are using the park ...and they need to be in a separate area to prevent noise and conflicts.”

“Keep canoe camping sites away from the bike trails. The campers feel insecure when they have strangers hiking , or biking, right by their campsite. Especially when they are in their tents at night. The park wants to eliminate island camping, but the campers feel safer on the islands because it is inaccessible to the bikers and hikers of the McDade trail.”

DAY-USE PICNIC AND RECREATION SITES

Day-Use Sites: Commenters support the redesign or expansion of day-use sites with parking where necessary, as long as needs for recreation and the natural environment are well-balanced. Sites should be established where recreation has already created an impact on the environment. Commenters are open to a fee or to permitting to help fund the maintenance of new sites; one commenter suggested permitted access for local residents. One commenter stated that proper management can greatly improve day-use sites without the need for redesign or expansion. Those commenters that do not support expansion of parking for day-use sites state that the current parking conditions help to limit the number of people that can visit an area. Additionally, commenters are not in favor of adding new parking areas in the floodplain and riparian buffer habitat. One commenter suggested that parking areas be more dispersed, as this would help to spread visitors out in the park.

“Increasing capacity of day-use sites makes sense since crowds are certain to come whether or not there is enough room to accommodate them. However, any cost increase required to support the improvements must come mainly from the population causing them. Cost should not just be spread evenly among all users of the park, i.e. people who are not using the high traffic/volume facilities. The concept of expanding or implementing permits for overnight parking for those using specific facilities (eg. boat launch for fishing) should be pursued. Any changes to trail or facility use should be approached in a manner that accommodates the most amount of uses possible. Nothing is more frustrating than looking at an area designed for singular use that is going unused.”

“We need more picnic areas on the New Jersey side, and I believe more "natural" areas rather than those developed like Turtle Beach and Watergate.”

“the AMC supports efforts to improve river access for paddling sports, swimming and picnicking along the Delaware River or other beaches within the park while also balancing a need to preserve the natural environment Those efforts should be considered in light of the sites' current levels of use and the need to protect the natural outdoor experience. Improvements such as increased picnicking opportunities near the river should take place at popular locations that currently have lifeguards on patrol in order to preserve the remote nature of less popular sites.”

“Expanding specific sites for larger groups and requiring a permit would help cover the costs of maintenance.”

“Permits could control number visitors to area/day. But overflow visitors would need another high-use area or they'd spread out and do damage in unregulated park areas. It's probably not PC, but I'd like to see "local resident" permit access sites. So those of us who live nearby can readily utilize the park without being intimidated by crowds. Perhaps a permit for unlimited launch/river access versus a day pass fee structure for Local versus day visitor. (Kind of like seasonal beach passes).....”

“Your list should include more dispersed parking. This is necessary for spreading out such activities as hiking, hunting, fishing, etc.”

Day-Use Sites with Sensitive Resources: Some commenters suggest that sensitive day-use sites should be closed if sensitive resources are being affected by recreational uses. These closures should be made on a case-by-case basis. Examples of sites that should be considered for closure include Hialeah picnic area, and Dingmans. One commenter stated displeasure that the sensitive site Van Campen's Glen is currently closed as a picnic area.

“DRN strongly supports closing sites (temporary or permanent) where sensitive resources and habitat restoration and protection is needed. Preserving these areas is a critical component for the quality and preservation of the River corridor.”

“I am not happy (as I have told Leslie Morlock) that Van Campens Glen is no longer a picnic area. I have been picnicking there for years. I would like to see it returned to being a picnic area (yes, I understand that it was changed because of sensitive habitat).”

“Any sensitive or scenic locations should be limited in access and routinely assessed for visitor impacts and shut-down if they are abused, with corresponding news media as to why.”

“We support the National Park Service's right to make case-by-case decisions to limit visitation to, or temporarily close, sites with sensitive ecological habitats, like Hialeah Picnic site, if necessary, but would recommend against their permanent closure.”

Day-Use Site Suggestion: One commenter suggested that the trash receptacles at high use sites be replaced with bear proof containers, as the trash is often overflowing at the end of busy weekends.

“Along those same lines, currently at some day use areas there are garbage cans that are not bear proof and often overflowing after busy weekends. It would be wise to turn all garbage receptacles into bear proof options that also include recycling options (as is present in some of the locations) or require carry in carry out.”

EXPANDED AND CHANGED RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equestrian Use: Commenters expressed support for equestrian use at the park; there were no comments that sought removal of this form of recreation. While some commenters support continuation of the current levels of equestrian use, others wish to see use areas expanded, either with equestrian-only trails or mixed-use trails. Commenters suggested that equestrians should have access to trails in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey and trails near the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River. An additional suggestion included campsites that accommodate horses.

“I think expansion of equestrian trails in the park would be fantastic. We are losing valuable riding lands due to urban expansion and land development. Having areas that are dedicated to equestrian trails are awesome, but I think you can also develop trails that can be shared by bikers and riders and hikers- with emphasis on respectful awareness between the groups. I have seen it work in other areas. It would be fantastic to see some riding down near the river for horses- the trails in place are excellent footing and I think could be easily used by equestrians. I think equestrians can bring volunteers if welcomed by the park service to help maintain trails- we have the United States Pony Club in the area for one that is willing and is required to help with such project all around the county and in other parts of the world that have Pony Clubs- I would like to see more equestrian access in the park and I would also like to give back to the park by organizing some volunteers to help with the trails and preservation of this beautiful park.”

“We are always interested in seeing sustainable Equestrian trails expanded and opportunities for overnight camping established on public land. There are very few trails devoted to or shared with equestrians in this park Agriculture is the number one industry in Pennsylvania and horses are about the second largest segment of large animal agriculture. The open space maintained in pasture and crops grown to support the equine industry is very necessary to support wildlife. The various services and products utilized by people who own horses is a great help to support our economy. National figures indicate 70 percent of horses are recreationally used and trails are an opportunity as a secondary job for retired show or race horses. Maybe more importantly, horse trails get people out of doors and create an opportunity for people to appreciate nature unwind in a natural setting that they may not otherwise access. The historic use of horses in the US is iconic for the National Park Service and is something that should be preserved in this fast passed world particularly on National Park Service(our) lands. Camping for Equestrians is also sorely missing in northeast Pennsylvania. With an expansion marked sustainable trails dedicated equestrian camp sites camping could become an opportunity allow horse access while controlling the over use of trail.”

“Expanding mountain biking and equestrian use in existing or new areas as mountain bikers often ride at a relatively fast pace and increase the risk of harm to reptiles and amphibians on and adjacent to paths and increased horse-snake interaction may result in increased wanton killing of the snakes. - Allow mountain biking and equestrians only on existing trails (equestrians should only be allowed on the McDade trail)”

Mountain Bike Use: Commenters voiced both support and opposition for expansion of mountain bike use on the trails within the park. Supporters of mountain bike use requested expansion of current trails to include a network of more challenging trails. Those opposed to new mountain bike trails stated reasons such as damage to wildlife and habitat, intensive management requirements, and the potential to attract off road vehicles.

“I support development of mountain bike trail system. I think the park would be a prime area. Make clear where biking is not allowed, but allow it and develop trails (maintained by mountain

bike groups?) for this purpose. Mountain bikers can be good park partners to help develop and maintain the trails.”

“PLEASE NO NEW BIKE PATHS or LOOP TRAILS, PARTICULARLY ON NARROW NJ SIDE. Water Gap is priceless habitat for wildlife much of it endangered or threatened such as Bobcat and Timber Rattlers. Both sides are "Important Bird Areas." NJ side is best in state for many species that breed nowhere else, particularly migratory Warblers. Cerulean Warblers that ought to be listed as federally-threatened (or endangered) find refuge in Water Gap and numbers increasing despite precipitous declines elsewhere. Old Mine Road on west side of Kittatinny Ridge and Mount Tammany is too narrow for extra biking lane without blasting steep ridge slopes. Likewise Kittatinny Ridge on east side is too steep and foothills too hilly for construction of a bike path. Would be very environmentally damaging. At Water Gap wide openings into forests could abet spread of invasive plants and cowbirds. Rattlers might warm bask in sun-warmed bike paths late in the day and get run over by cyclists too intent on workouts. Losing too many hemlocks to the invasive and disastrous Woolly Adelgid to risk more warming sunshine assisting Adelgid survival throughout winter.”

“Seen first hand problems caused by 22' wide (10' trail plus two 6' mowed sides) Lawrence-Hopewell Trail (LHT) and Connector 'bike path highways' running through environmentally sensitive areas- -mainly Mercer Meadows, but also Carson Road Woods and looming re-route through Stony Brook floodplain. Mercer Meadows' trails wash out frequently. Bikers demand constant maintenance. Huge swale to divert run-off was built through rare grassland birds' breeding fields. Its now eroded into a several feet deep gully requiring further clearing, rock dumping, and herbicide use to (counter-intuitively) speed up waters to stop erosion. Trails keep widening from use and maintenance until virtual roads. Another trail now has huge ditch dug 2X in one year to divert waters but ditch eroded couple of feet into shale bedrock and run-off dumped into forest further drying out vital fields. Trails require repeat gravel patching and dust that clouds streams and sediments wetlands. The asphalt alternative would have increased flooding from impervious surfaces. Swales and ditches dry out wetlands and lower water table. Bike paths are a magnet and entrance for ATVS, rut-causing Mtn. Bikers, snowmobiles, and trucks illegally sneaking in at night where they never used to be- -particularly after snowfalls and warm nights. Off leash dog numbers, trash, and fireworks up... plus now drones in sensitive areas.”

“Also develop trails (more challenging trails) for mountain bikes. There is a large biking community and many would be willing to help maintain and pay to ride well maintain trails.”

Lifeguarded Swim Areas: Commenters both oppose and support adding more lifeguarded swim areas in the park. Those in support of additional lifeguarded swim areas would like to see services expanded. Conversely, other commenters want to avoid adding lifeguard services at less developed sites like Crater Lake to avoid further damaging environmental resources and it needlessly uses park personnel.

“Add life-guarded swim areas at less developed river or non-river sites. Especially on the New Jersey side this is needed”

“Do not expand life guard services to less developed areas. This spreads the Park personnel too thin and encourages too much harmful usage at sensitive areas.”

“We are disinclined to support the posting of lifeguards at more remote and less developed sites like Crater Lake, which we believe would threaten their remote wilderness character by attracting larger groups of visitors.”

Models Airplane Use: Commenters views on the use of model airplanes at the park varied greatly. While there were no comments suggesting that model airplane use expand beyond Hialeah Air Park, commenters gave a variety of reasons for retaining this area, including the movement to electric planes that produce less sound, the lack of maintenance costs to the park, and increased visitation to the park from model airplane club advertisements. Hialeah Air Park also acts as an emergency landing field for gliders. Commenters who would prefer to have model airplane use at the park restricted or removed referenced noise as the reason.

“use of model airplanes may be restricted to specific areas to mitigate noise disturbance or use conflicts”

“Elimination or relocation of the Hialeah Air Park. This model airplane flying site which has existed since before the parks formation is an asset to the park drawing both consistent repeat visitors and new visitors. This asset is also monitored and maintained at no cost to the park service. The recreation of model airplane building and flying is becoming un obtainable in the densely populated north-east, as private development has eliminated a number of flying sites and the few remaining are under duress. This is an opportunity for the National Park Service to provide and preserve a recreational opportunity which might otherwise not exist. While the development of a model airplane flying site may appear fairly simple, it is actually quite costly. There must me accommodations for entrance to the site, parking which includes car pulled trailers and which should be relatively close to the flight line, a shaded picnic area for lunches as most flyers come for the day, a porta-john must be present, and of course a well maintained grass runway. Additional fencing and visitor management provisions such as ropes, posted rules and a place for displaying the required AMA license of each pilot while they are present. It is highly unlikely that any local club could afford such an undertaking, and most likely the park budget would also not have sufficient funding available. Preservation of the existing site is, in the writers opinion, the best for both the park and the parks model aviation enthusiast visitors.”

“I feel the NPS should not consider doing away with the flying that takes place a Hialeah Air Park. This activity has been a staple at this site for over thirty years. Flying and viewing it is indicated in your own website as a thing to do in the Park. It is still on your Site. To be honest there has been a trend in RC Modeling to get away from the more noisy fuel planes to electric planes. You folks have quite a few areas in the Park that have become policing issues, Adams Creek, Toms Creek, Van Campens Brook to name a few that I have heard about. Hialeah Air Park has never been that type of problem. Why not just deal with known the known areas.”

“There is another reason DEWA should keep Hialeah Air Park. The Air Park is right in he middle of Shawnee Hotel, the Shawnee Time Share units, the rental units by Shawnee Ski Area, and all of the stuff at Fernwood. many of the people that travel to the Gap and stay in these facilities, as well as Stroudsburg, are members of the national RC organization, the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Through the AMA, they are aware of the existence of Hialeah Air Park. We are listed on their website with directions. The advent of smaller electric planes allows RC enthusiasts to pack a plane in their car and come to the field. And they do. They come, ask if they can fly, we introduce ourselves to them. Whoever is there that day, makes them feel at home. It is good for the Park guests, good for us, and VERY good for the Park.”

“I'm writing to voice our concern about the possible moving or closing of the Radio Controlled Model Airplane Field near Smithfield. As glider pilots we are worried that the loss of the local emergency landing area would compromise safety. Our club has a 40 year history of using this field as a safe emergency bail-out for local soaring above the Kittatinny Ridge. Although an emergency landing in this field is not a common occurrence, once or twice every few years, it is

important an open field is maintained for safe glider flying. If this field is to be closed or moved Aero Club Albatross should be involved in the process of finding an appropriate field in the vicinity. We believe the model airplane field should remain in it's present location. It is an enjoyable attraction for visitors to the area and is congruous with park recreation."

"No model airplanes, which would also lead to drones being used in park. Visitors should come to park to enjoy nature."

Swimming at Waterfalls and Creeks: Concerns from commenters about allowing swimming in creeks and at waterfalls include resource protection, visitor safety, and the ability to recreate freely. For protection of resources and visitor safety, commenters' suggestions varied between prohibiting swimming at all creeks and waterfalls to designating appropriate areas for this use and to prohibiting other areas. Several commenters suggested that all areas should be open to swimming at the visitors' own risk; signs could be posted to make visitors aware that the area is not serviced by lifeguards.

"I believe designating appropriate creek swimming locations and disallowing swimming at some creeks for resource and habitat protection is extremely important."

"I believe that allowing swimming at waterfall pools will lead to uses incompatible with protection of these areas which are too beautiful to turn into public swimming pools. Disallow swimming at popular, easy to access waterfall pools."

"Closing areas because of safety hazards seems to be and has proved to be ineffective. Banning swimming at areas and requiring life jackets would require tremendous man-power (again that is not available) and would likely still be ineffective. This could also force people to more difficult to monitor areas to swim life jacket free, etc which would likely make access for rescues/recoveries more difficult. While I am aware of the dangers that can arise inside natural environments I am also of sound mind that many/most incidents in this recreation area occur because of poor choices people make. All of the rules and regulation in the world can not convince or force people to make better decisions. Education (and possibly more day-use life jackets like those at Smithfield) certainly may. More rules and regulations likely will not solve or even help the problem but they certainly will increase the manpower needed to ATTEMPT to enforce and also increase paperwork (not cool)."

"I approve of designating appropriate creek swimming locations. Our young people need to be able to swim in, and explore, creeks like we older folks did as kids, and not just swim in swimming pools."

"Disallow swimming at all waterfalls /creeks for public safety, Childs Park is one of the worst areas with the amount of people using it for swimming in the summer you really can't enjoy the trail system"

"We have seen this summer how far tourists will hike to cliff jump. It would be awesome if the park was open minded towards extreme sports. Adding lifeguards or disallowing swimming creates rules, and one must feel free in nature. Just post signs so tourists are aware of the risk."

Other Expanded Recreation Opportunities: Commenters support other forms of recreation, including whitewater paddling, golf, and Frisbee golf. In addition, roads and trails should be open to dual sport motorcycle riders. Bicycle rentals and field rentals for soccer games and tournaments could be a way to add more recreational opportunities at the park and increase revenue.

“In addition to supporting improvements to the paddling opportunities on the main stem of the Delaware River, AMC recognizes the unique and cherished opportunities of whitewater paddling on tributaries to the Delaware River within the park, and supports continued access to these areas for whitewater paddling.”

“Stay inclusive of as many outdoor recreational activities as possible. Keep model flying, keep golf, add Frisbee golf, add mountain biking and equestrian trails.”

“In the topic of RECREATION: Allowing a network of trails and unmaintained roads for Adventure and Dual Sport Adventure and Dual Sport Motorcycle owners often plan trips around locations which offer varied terrain. Pavement is everywhere, dirt roads are not. If you offer it, they will come and pay to do so. You will have people planning rides from all over the tri-state area if you offer a significant amount of dirt roads and trails. These bikes are NOT ATVs or motorcross bikes and should not be lumped together for these discussions. These bikes are meant to get riders to isolated scenic areas so that the rider can also experience the solitude of the forest. Create a new topic for the creation of dirt roads and trails for Adventure and Dual Sport Motorcycles, separating them from ATV use. Stop creating automatic bias against this type of riding by creating the illusion that these bikes will “tear up” the land.”

“Possibly bike rentals for sections of McDade Trail? I feel like that would be very popular and profitable”

“Would you ever consider letting us soccer club rent some land from you and put in soccer fields. Soccer fields are not invasive to land. You have removable goals and you just line the fields. The soccer clubs would be responsible for cleanups etc. The club could have a River tournament every year that you play soccer one day paddle the next. They could set up something w/Dingmans campground. Also would you consider a shooting/clay bird range on some of the land? Soccer is a very family friendly sport and would bring lots of money to our area.”

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

Repurposing of Historic Structures: Commenters agree that historic structures should be restored or repurposed as other facilities such as museums, meeting locations, rental properties, and farming homesteads. Structures suggested to be repurposed include those in Walpack Center (i.e., The General Store, the church, village homes) and the Turner Store. Commenters suggested establishing partnerships with organizations such as Sandyston Historical Society and Preservation NJ.

“The Rosenkrans House Museum in Walpack Center serves as a public “story board” (interpreted by Walpack Historic Society members) to park visitors interested in learning about the social and agricultural history of the Twentieth Century residents of the area. Restoration and repurposing of remaining structures in the village could serve as a centralized “HUB” for visitor activities. As an adjunct to The Rosenkrans House Museum (which is in serious need of maintenance attention) the adjacent Post Office/General Store could provide additional museum space for historic photographs and other artifacts of the area. The old General Store with its existing glass display counter would be such an attractive addition if filled with colorful penny candies, cookies, salt pretzels, etc. and perhaps a lemonade and coffee urn. It could possibly be self sustaining if selectively offered on weekends and seasonally staffed by volunteers or a Park Service intern or employee. The church could be repurposed as a Visitor’s Center; providing educational and rest facilities and serve as New Jersey’s National Park Service base of operations. A more grandiose vision would be to install a modest commercial kitchen in the church basement to provide a basic menu of the soup, sandwich and cookie variety for park visitors both within the village and possible supply vendor areas within the park. Existing village homes could be rehabilitated as group or family vacation rentals and also provide seasonal hunting and fishing accommodations. The proximity to The Flatbrook and its fishing popularity is absolutely priceless. A Park Service employee residing within the church or one of the residences (as one is currently occupied) would help to maintain an oversight presence to prevent ill use and nuisance issues. It would seem the possibilities for rehabilitation and repurposing of The Walpack Center would be a rich resource for the DEWA VUM Planning Team to explore and not terribly difficult to implement even if need be, done on a modest scale.

“Rentals in historic houses another good income generator for structures that DO NOT have significant history attached. Otherwise structures treated like Millbrook Vill. Re-purpose structures: yes, otherwise they rot or burn, use to generate \$\$ where possible”

“I am strongly in favor of repurposing the abandoned historic structures for visitor use and services but only in such a way that the historic fabric that make these buildings special and worthy of listing on the National Register is not compromised which I believe can be accomplished. I would also recommend pursuing additional park partners, such as the Sandyston Historical Society, to utilize and care for one of the abandoned buildings within their area.”

“DRN does support adaptively re-purposing some of the historic structures for visitor use and simple education services or meeting areas (not food concessions) and to avoid increased building footprints in the park with new structures.”

Visitor Center: Commenters see the need for one or more visitor centers at the park to help inform the public about the resources of the park. Suggested locations include the current check-in stations located on U.S. Route 209 in Pennsylvania at the north and south ends of the park, close to Routes 80, 84, and 739, the northern end of the park in New Jersey, and in Milford Borough. Commenters also recommended information that should be supplied at the visitor centers: guides/maps to the park, regional sights and events, history of the area, resources, opportunities, and regulations of the park, and information on local

accommodations. Both new construction and repurposing of existing structures were suggested for the new visitor center facility.

Commenters who are not in favor of a new visitor center feel that the current visitor centers should be improved, as the lack of a visitor center is not a large concern at this time. Most importantly, a new visitor center should not be constructed, due to the cost and impacts on wildlife and habitat.

Commenters gave several alternatives to traditional visitor centers, including using the contact stations at the north and south ends of the park as drive and walk-through visitor centers and obtaining a mobile unit that can travel to different parts of the park.

“interpretation and education - increase staff presence in park - allows for better education and monitoring of visitors Increase the Park's presence at local events like the recently held Stroud Fest. DEWA needs to be seen as a vital, integral part of the community. Construct a highly visible, state-of-the-art visitor's center. A location close to the Route 80 corridor would be ideal. It should contain interactive displays, guides to Park as well as regional sites and events and general information for residents as well as guests to the area.”

“I agree with any that would preserve the historic home but some of them need to be restored and run as museums. If an information/visitors center is constructed it should focus on the history of the area (not the natural history everyone has this), display artifacts, be interactive. Build a museum perhaps in one of the historic buildings that emphasizes the history of the area. (not the natural history). Offer more interactive programs for the public.”

“As a business owner in Milford Borough that is dependent on tourism, I know that we have an urgent need for a visitor's center at the northern end of the DWGNRA. For visitors arriving from the Milford exit off of I-84, or coming up Route 206 from New Jersey, there is no visitors center or other public information resource available. At one time the Callahan House served this purpose, when that was managed by the Pike County Chamber of Commerce, but no longer. The Chamber of Commerce does have an office on Harford Street and they allow distribution of brochures, but they don't function as a true visitors's center with professional staff expert concerning the resources and opportunities and regulations in the DWNRA. The primary private sector economy in Pike County is tourism and nowhere is that more critical to the retail economy than in Milford Borough. The viability and vitality of Milford's commercial center is heavily dependent on visitors' ability to get timely and accurate information. There also are no public washroom facilities in Milford, for which there is an urgent need to accommodate visitors. There are a number of existing structures between the 209/739 intersection at Dingman's Ferry and the entrance to Milford that would be appropriate for such a facility. I strongly urge the NPS to consider creating a visitor's center to service the northern end of the DWGNRA.”

“Construction of a visitor center for education and information should only be considered if there is a crying need for one. Building a center would most likely be one of the highest expenditures being considered, and creation of one must be balanced against the fact that by visiting a large park such as DEWA, people will more than likely prefer to spend time outdoors rather than inside a building learning about a park that is right outside the window.”

“Building a permanent Visitor Center would rather see a mobile unit you can move around the Park and due festivals and fairs like Upper Delaware River Recreational Area does”

“Using the two current pay stations at both ends of US209 as drive and walk through Visitors Centers. Can be manned by volunteers and Partners such as the Friends of DEWA.”

Signage: Signage at the park needs to be improved. Commenters noted that the park and areas within the park need more appropriate signage, including equestrian areas and historic buildings. Signs should be placed at the north and south contact stations on U.S. Route 209, helping to create a destination for visitors. Signage is also necessary to warn visitors of potential wildlife concerns, such as venomous snakes and bears. Informational kiosks could also provide helpful information for visitors, including information on fishing and boating. Additionally, trails could be marked with mile markers to aid in emergency response.

“Please consider the signage for equestrian usage. When I have ridden in the park in the past, I wasn't sure if I was riding in a horse-riding approved area. I think most people who use the park would recognize that certain uses are better in some areas than others, but if there aren't adequate signs, you can't really be sure.”

“Any newly created & existing campgrounds need to be clearly marked/identified as venomous snake territory and provide information regarding the laws against harming the snakes and what to do when one is observed. Although information is currently provided to campers upon arrival/registration, given past interactions and reactions, it is unclear if campers read such documents. - Increase/improve signage...in general; include wildlife and laws, do's and don'ts, contact telephone numbers for all hours, etc.”

“DRN does support increased and simple signage for visitor education. Again, the placards on picnic tables for picnic and camping etiquette in bear country is also needed.”

“Every time I drive into the park, I wonder, "How would anyone know they are entering a national park?" I think the first thing the park needs is real NPS signage at the north and south contact stations on 209, as well as at major entry points in NJ.”

“Informational kiosks including fishing rules and information should be provided, which can also highlight the need to flush and clean boats before launching in other bodies of water.”

“Post location indicators along widely used trails, such as the McDade trail, which would be similar to mile-markers on our highways. This would be to identify locations to first responders in the event a visitor needed to report an emergency (medical, fire, or hazard).”

Formal Education Programs: The creation of formal education programs is supported by the comments. Commenters believe that visitors of all ages should understand park ethics and learn how to interact with the natural environment. The success of the bald eagles in the park could be used to get visitors interested in local conservation. Additionally, visitors should learn about the rich history of the park and the surrounding areas. It is important to provide education to all visitors; therefore, educational items may need to be produced in multiple languages. The NPS should reach out to local schools to work towards expanding environmental education. Opportunities for education should exist in the form of self-guided tours, virtual tours, and group tours.

“Education is so important, offering classes to teach children AND adults how to interact with nature and to respect what is there and to preserve it for future generations. Many people are not accustomed to "country living" when they vacation in rural areas. How do you deal with black bears? What vegetation is native to the area? Explanations on how being in nature fosters wellness in the body and mind. PR that includes relaxation for the body, mind and spirit. More than ever people are looking to visit places that will provide fun while relieving stress and angst.”

“We are pleased to note that Bald Eagles have been restored in the Delaware River Valley. The wintering population is growing and the Park Service should provide Winter viewing areas for the public to be educated and involved in this continuing wildlife success story. After all, it was accomplished by cooperation between federal and state agencies along with the help of many volunteers.”

“the history needs to be told...i am not a big fan of plaques/history signs. but maybe group tours etc ...virtual tours or self guided tours more cultural events on the nj side”

“DRN supports an established fee for complex interpretation programs and increased staff presence and formal education programs. There is a definite need to educate visitors of the park and these programs could go a long to preserving the area for many generations to come. In this way families can go from being simple swimmers of the park to being stewards of the park with increased knowledge of the region and the impact humans have on it. It would be important that educational programs are available in multi languages since diverse populations come to enjoy the park. Perhaps a volunteer core could also be used to help increase this presence as well.”

“Heritage tourism should be developed, as DEWA encompasses an area that has a rich history which needs to be put forth. It would offer more diverse opportunities for visitors and disperse use, which would not directly impact the natural resources. Those who had ancestors living here once, express interest in locating small burial grounds where some are buried - but which now cannot be accessed. There is enough historic fabric to draw those interested in architecture, art, etc. - to study the evolution of building styles, or to see places like the Zimmerman Farm or the Walpack Church interior. Also realize that some of the "visitors" are your immediate neighbors - living just past the bounds of the park, while others are from other countries - make both feel equally welcome.”

“Most of the problems throughout the NPS are caused by people. The education pertaining to ecology, environment and stewardship of our lands needs to start in our public schools. I know, this is beyond the scope of the NPS, except to promote, wherever & whenever possible the aforementioned. Imagine if people that visited our parks actually knew better?”

Interpretation and Education Suggestions: Commenters suggested several new interpretation and education opportunities, including development of programs that will target Spanish-speaking visitors, whose visitation numbers are increasing, recruiting Spanish-speaking students for employment at the park, creating community service projects to help restore and maintain historic structures, incorporating the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Grey Towers into the visitor experience, and creating a natural museum at the park much like The Wild Center in Adirondack Park. One commenter suggested that the park should be focused on getting local people into the park to form a greater connection between the local visitors and the NPS. Suggestions included woodworkers opening a shop in a repurposed building, re-enactments, conservation logging, tapping trees for sap, camps (survival skills, nature, farm), and local residents running a CSA farm within the park.

“I support development of or expansion of day use picnic areas, as well as public education efforts to teach non-traditional park users how to care for their park. The park should hire some native Spanish speakers to help with the educational effort, to ensure we reach this growing population of visitors with our pack in/pack out and leave no trace philosophies. It takes educational effort over a long period of time to get the message across. As park visitation increases and evolves, I think it is critical that we increase our staff dedicated to educating non-traditional visitors. These visitors need to be educated in a way that acknowledges that this is a new experience for them, and informs them of our expectations. Sometimes it needs to be done in

a different language in order to reach people in a way they will understand and feel welcome. When done right, individuals will become ambassadors in their communities and help spread the word. We also need signage and handouts in Spanish, where appropriate, to emphasize the pack in/pack out philosophy, and Leave No Trace. These were new concepts decades ago for many of us, and are now new to a changing park population.”

“Why provide cabin rentals in historic homes? Who will maintain them? Are these the structures abandoned by the Island Dam project? Community service projects could possibly make these campable and camping there would require somehow to give back, to make the site better than when you left it.”

“To address our changing demographics, I'd like to see the park recruit native Spanish speaking students who desire careers in conservation, to work in interpretation. SCA might be able to help with this? or a Spanish speaking cert. I'd also like to see us create more areas where large groups are accommodated and welcomed, whether for a small rental fee, or by permit, or just first come first served. On hot summer weekends, people in the city want to be near water and the hispanic population tends to want to be in large groups. We can accommodate this, and welcome this population better than we currently do.”

“The Wild Center in Adirondack Park (Tupper Lake, New York) is an excellent model for a natural museum which could someday be incorporated in the Delaware Water Gap park.”

“I think activities which utilize and conserve the natural environment- including money-making activities, such as offering guided wildlife tours, woodworkers who can open a shop in a reclaimed building, those who wish to re-enact live in another era while living in the park, forestry activities including successional forest habitats, conservation logging, tapping trees for sap, etc could engage the locals by utilizing their rural living skills, make revenue for the park, and demonstrate to visitors what rural living is all about. Survival skills camps, nature camps, farm camps - appeal to those who want to get out of the mess of modern live temporarily as visitors, but also to those who live that way as a course of habit, as instructors and stewards of parcels of the DWGNRA. So this would get locals into the park to oversee it, benefit from rural living skills and activities, and would provide the NPS with potential revenue and visitors with immersion in what rural living is all about. My overall thoughts are that locals may avoid the park due to high use. Involving locals in park services - locals running a farm/CSA with weekly pickups and farmer's market participation. This get local families into the park for a purpose (pick up food). The farm could also serve as an educational site both for visitors and the local community. Building could be retrofitted or build to serve as camping cottages for families, so the site is overseen, and heavy use is minimized. Farming and growing food - not just commodity crops/feed, would involve the immediate public and also allow park visitors a chance to see a working farm. The more that locals can be involved with "boots on the ground," the better we can utilize the park and the better we can "patrol" the park -there is a lot of illegal use going on (and some is local folks, of course). The more local folks use and enjoy and feel ownership of the park, the less chance for anyone to do damage/vandalize, illegal hunting, etc. The high school could have an environmental learning center where activities are regular held throughout the year. Using local residents as park stewards and liaisons, working in conjunction with NPS, might be a good way to move forward. Conservation forestry, wildlife habitat, natural farming systems, old-world skills, geology/archaeology studies, etc should play an important role in maintaining the park and involving those interested in studying and learning from the natural environment.”

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES

Implement Entrance Fees: Commenters expressed many ideas and concerns regarding entrance fees. While some commenters do not feel the park should implement an entrance fee, others would be in favor of entrance fees but do not see how the collection of fees would be successful due to the many entrances of the park, including those visitors who use boats and enter the park via the river. Other commenters are supportive of a fee and offered suggestions for implementation, such as reduced fees for local residents, ensuring the fee collected is used to better park resources (i.e., staffing, maintenance), providing week-long fee passes, combine the fees with public education, and slowly implement the fees over several years.

“We understand that an increase in services may require fees. While we would support the concept of implementing an entrance fee for all area users, we do not believe that it would be practicable, considering the multiple entrances to the park, nor do we feel that it is appropriate to increase fees at current fee sites, which are appropriate as is.”

“I am very supportive of the idea of a user fee that is implemented slowly over a period of a few years. NPS could establish kiosks at the high traffic entry points of the park and slowly educate the public over time. Fees could be for day use, or could be for longer periods up to a year. This would provide a buy-in for the public, which would improve the quality of use and respect for the park. Communities adjacent to the park should have a reduced fee or an annual fee that reflects their proximity to the park. People generally have a more positive perception of an experience when they have to give even a token amount for it. They will not take it for granted if they feel they are contributing to its upkeep.”

“An entrance fee could be a potential concept since most national parks have a similar entrance fee structure - this might also help limit automobiles using the park road as a commuting road. If an entrance fee was established a week long pass or similar structure that would cover a family that was visiting for a week at multiple locations and facilities would be appropriate - in this case the week long pass would be good for as many visits and areas of the park. We believe the park already offers year long passes for visitors who frequent areas so that should also be an option for people who recreate regularly.”

“Trying to implement an entrance fee is impractical as there are multiple access points thus it could not be enforceable.”

“Use a portion of the entrance fee to support increasing law enforcement throughout the park and habitat management.”

“I support implementation of an entrance fee to support staff levels to help with both education of park visitors and monitoring of resources (waterfalls, etc).”

Fees and Tolls on U.S. Route 209: Some commenters see an opportunity to create a driving loop in the park by using U.S. Route 209 and Old Mine Road and visitors that use this loop should pay a fee. Conversely, other commenters do not want to pay fees or tolls on U.S. Route 209 because they pay for use of that road through New Jersey taxes.

“A scenic driving loop should be developed utilizing Route 209 and Old Mine road, similar to Acadia's Park Loop Road or Cades Cove loop in the Smoky's. A fee should be charged to travel this route and the route should have a designated walking/biking path in the shoulder. Potential scenic pull-offs should be investigated.”

“tolling 209 / River road and Old Mine road to generate funds to maintain roads throughout the Park or changing areas like Kittatiiny to a fee area. On the Seasonal Pass being able to have more than one household vehicle registered to them and giving a discount for locals or past holders by cut off date”

“You should not charge for camping on the river and if you decide to do that then I would expect the sites to be clean have a clean Port-a-potty. I don't believe you should make 209 inside the park the toll road!! Because, I already pay for that road through taxes. I buy may year pass each year. How are you going to regulate it. Are you going to charge the buses? (School) If you were to charge and toll on top of parking fees this would just deepen the wound for the local people.”

Increase Fees at Current Fee Sites and Adding New Fee Sites: Commenters do not want to see a blanket increase in fees at the park, as it puts a larger burden on local visitors. Local residents pay taxes and purchase boat, hunting, and fishing licenses and cannot afford to pay fees each time they visit the park. Local visitors should receive a discount on the fees. One suggestion was to increase the fees where the park is having issues with noncompliance, in the hopes that the higher fee would reduce traffic to these areas and reduce the costs associated with monitoring and maintenance.

Other visitors are in favor of increasing the fees at current sites and adding additional fee sites. The fees collected at these sites should be used to maintain these areas and provide education about them. Commenters voiced a concern in the ability to enforce payment of fees.

Commenters offered additional suggestions for collecting fees, including charging higher fees on weekends, fees for larger groups, and fees associated with increased amenity (i.e., waste disposal and toilet facilities) and Pocono Pony services.

“Across the board implementation of new fees for park use should not be pursued. If there are certain areas of the park that are experiencing issues with population volume then those areas must be targeted for any new/increase in fees. Not only will this most likely deter some people from wanting to pay thereby reducing volume, it also targets the individuals most responsible for required improvements and costs. Local residents should not be unduly burdened with having to support infrastructure improvements due to large volumes of outside/out-of-state visitors who are less likely to care as much about how they leave the park than those who use it regularly for multiple activities. Offer discounts for local residents who use the park year round. Most locals already pay for boat, hunting and fishing licenses and are also charged for use of certain facilities. Increasing costs to these parties penalizes the very population who already contributes greatly to state land management.”

“Adding additional fee areas would be difficult to enforce, Possibly creating a parkwide visitor pass that would allow access to all areas might work better. Monitoring this access will be too staff intensive and staff would be better used to protect sites.”

“We do, however, feel that it is permissible to increase the number of fee sites throughout the recreation area and to have those fees applied to additional resources and programing for those locations.”

“Expand for groups: Not around the lakes, then a fee for large groups to cover additional maintenance of sites that will accommodate them Formalize unofficial sites: No, keep the "off the beaten path" look.”

"I think you should have the Pocono Pony run during the week at least 2 days a week. You could even charge a pass fee for used to offset the cost of gas man-hours."

Concession Opportunities: Commenters varied on their opinions on allowing more concessionaires into the park. Those who favored additional concessions suggested that the added revenue would be beneficial to the park. Several commenters cautioned that the park should retain its natural feel and limit amenities. Suggestions included repurposing historic or other empty buildings for concession operations, providing seasonal food trucks, and allowing concession owner/operators to live on site at the park. Commenters opposed to concessions in the park cited increased trash, higher maintenance costs, potential wildlife habituation, increased traffic, and potential overdevelopment.

"Concessions of any kind, especially food, do not belong in the park at all. Increasing beach attendance is a bad idea, exponentially when coupled with concessions. It would mean more littering and more pollution in the water and woods. Packaging, receipts, bags, cups, cans and bottles will wind up in the river. Human waste content will increase in the water as it does in Round Valley and Spruce Run Reservoirs. Responsible stewardship comes first, and it is your responsibility to protect the Delaware River."

"I am not in favor of concession opportunities for visitor services at the launch sites, - as I feel the number of concessions would continually grow, and the park areas would take on the appearance of a "shopping center" rather than a nature area."

"Increase concession partnerships to provide services and provide funding. Consider many small funding sources, and don't look for any one major fix. Adding Concession to existing structures may be difficult, but incorporating things like Food Trucks on a season basis can provide service and income."

"I think keeping things natural and limiting "amenities" is one way to announce that the park is mostly meant for solitude and nature. Yet with so much demand, boating access/picnics/food/rv camping, etc would be extremely successful.. The park wants to know whether to provide these things on a wider scale, or partner with towns to do so (NO IF IT MEANS FAST FOOD AND HOLIDAY INNS> yes, if folks want to dine at a local mom and pop restaurant, visit an antique store or "general store" and stay at a local campground, b and b, or cottages (I think we need these). Utilize existing properties and develop managed sites where a family/overseer lives in on the property (for security/vandalism reasons and greater presence of personnel to deter) and acts as a liaison for visitors. Think family housekeeping cabins, converted housed into family stay apartments, farm bed and breakfast stays (Farms.. more later...) Any HIGH INPUT Camping, RV connections, playgrounds/pools - I think keeping these outside of the park, or near already high-impact/high-use areas, is best."

"Year-round concession-operated vehicle/RV campgrounds: o Increased traffic will increase the risk of harm to reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. o Increased food/trash presence often attracts rodents and other mammals. Rodents in turn, attract snakes increasing the risk of human-snake interactions and consequently wanton killings of snakes and/or public injury. o During cooler spring and fall months, the warmth of engines and/or generators may attract snakes as they attempt to avoid cooler temperatures, increasing the risk of human-snake interactions and consequently wanton killings of snakes and/or public injury. - If concession-operated vehicle/RV campgrounds must exist, restrict them to winter use and winter recreation to avoid harm to reptiles and amphibians, and decrease human-snake interactions."

“DRN does not support the addition of concession type (food) services at beaches and other designations. Food concessions bring with it crowds, more maintenance and more garbage and would detract from the remote character and simple picnic options that are currently in the DWGNRA. When people want to go to a restaurant or quick stop deli they can simply leave the park and frequent a nearby establishment. This brings revenue to the local economy while make the park a respite as it was intended to be.”

NPS Presence throughout the Park: Commenters agree that a greater NPS presence is needed throughout the park, especially at popular sites, and in areas of sensitive resources. Commenters stated that recreational opportunities in the park cannot be expanded without more law enforcement and additional staff since the park is unable to properly manage present sites under the current level of staffing. Park staff and law enforcement should be available for resource protection, as well as education. Specifically, commenters support dedicated river staff who would support, maintain, and protect the river. Additionally, several commenters suggested re-establishment of a ranger station in New Jersey, as there is a lack of NPS presence on the New Jersey side of the river.

“Most important increase NPS presence throughout the park at popular sites, this will help to alleviate some of the situations which were mentioned in previous strategies. - -Also very important to establish a dedicated park staff to support, monitor and maintain river activities. Past history I believe would show that 20 years ago with a river district staff there were much less issues with misuse of park facilities and degradation of river sites. NPS needs to have a presence on the river . It is your most popular resource and probably the least protected. I also feel strongly that the river is your most important asset and maintaining a quality natural experience for all it's users is imperative. By establishing a river district staff dedicated to the river itself much would be accomplished.”

“ANOTHER REASON NOT TO EXPAND RIVER ACCESS; OR OPEN MORE RECREATIONAL SITES, AS THE PRESENT ONES LACK PROPER MAINTENANCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT. When the Park first came into being approximately 37-39 Law enforcement Rangers were on duty. Now with the Park having more visitations and users we have a below minimum force incapable of policing and assessing the resources. Any and all Management Strategies are senseless without MORE LAW ENFORCEMENT RANGERS. Without more law enforcement rangers any all plans for the future of the Park are meaningless.”

“Permanent New Jersey District Ranger Station.. Historic Structure Use. Instead of a new visitors center and more importantly would be the re-establishment of the New Jersey District Ranger Office; permanently providing presence on the NJ side of the Delaware. This NJ Headquarters could also be used in part as a type of visitor center providing information, encouragements and other objects connected with the History or Bio-diversity of the region. It may also encourage the obvious need for addition Law Enforcement Rangers on the NJ-side. It defies logic not to man both sides of the Park considering the magnitude of the collective problems of negative impacts and aberrant behavior problems.. Occupation of a selected Historic Structure or structures by the Law Enforcement Rangers would also satisfy Preservation objectives in maintaining these structures.”

“We support an increased NPS presence throughout the park to promote education and stewardship of park resources, as well as strategies which would enhance the overall user experience and expand recreational opportunities in the park. We strongly support establishing dedicated park staff to support, monitor and maintain river activities, and would also urge NPS to consider an expanded volunteer role for groups like the National Canoe Safety Patrol to assist in this effort.”

Additional Operational Strategy Suggestions:

Create Volunteer Programs: To increase NPS presence throughout the park, commenters suggested that the NPS work with local volunteer organizations. Volunteers could aid in patrols, education programs, and interpretation. One volunteer suggested that visitors could earn fee waivers for volunteer hours.

“Work to join forces with other local groups (Open Space Commissions, State Parks, etc.) to expand and enrich the region's outdoor opportunities. Work through local, state and federal elected officials to push for increased funding for this Park.”

“DRN also supports increased fees to increase needed NPS presence throughout the park and would also suggest establishing volunteer corps like the National Canoe Safety Patrol to assist in this effort of increased education, safety and patrolling on the River and trails.”

“Having a team of Volunteers working as "Ambassadors In the Park" helping Rangers with interpretation, visitor contact (such as on trails, waterfalls) and being eyes and ears for enforcement in keeping visitors safe.”

“As the Superintendent's message emphasizes the NPS two-part strategies; provide rec. access while protecting the resource, it seems little consideration is given to the more global issue affecting local communities & counties. A suggested strategy is more consideration being given to the wider group of users (the work so far seems parochial) & crafting a more collaborative approach to volunteerism (see Gettysburg NMP - Adopt a Position Program) so that users will be drawn from a wider area, local economic development will be a result & local stewards (volunteers) will help offset increasing cost due to increased usership. I'd like to have seen a visioning process that refines the broad goals noted in the Super's message to what the Park may be in 5, 10, 20 years and then align that with various strategies.”

“Work with the communities that neighbor DEWA and reach out to those who live right alongside it. Too often, it seems there is not enough communication or collaboration. DEWA took parts of our communities, but it seems we have little input into something that affects our way of life as the residents in or around DEWA. Folks say they don't feel these listening sessions are more than required exercises.. as their input largely has gone ignored. Work more closely with local representatives, as hired contractors have sometimes not interpreted the overall history of the area or of a specific site correctly - which only widens the level of distrust.”

“With increasing fees perhaps offer credit to volunteers. This may provide an incentive to volunteers and help reduce the need for more stuff. For example if a group of bikers volunteer 15 hours of time maintaining bike trails they can receive a few days worth of fee waivers, while non volunteering users must pay the fee.”

Native American Presence: One commenter stated that American Indians that were displaced from the area the park occupies should be given opportunities to live or work in the park.

“This dilemma of land management within the confines of the Ancient homeland of the Munsee Mohican Lenape and other indigenous peoples whom inhabited these landscapes and were wrongly deprived of their homes by the Europeans and Americans; should not be excluded from some plan of reoccupation or employment within the Park Unit. Zionist Israel should be our example of possibilities, especially when we see the injustices and prejudices' of the past. Many documents and Historical sources can be used to promote this endeavor. It should not been seen

as fantasy but as a real possibility. Native American presence would surely encourage a bigger conscience in the respect and recognition of the resources.”

Revenue from Fines and Penalties: The park should be able to retain the revenue from fines and penalties that originate in the park. A commenter stated that currently, these funds go into the general revenue; however, the park lacks money for maintenance, monitoring, and restoration projects.

“When Park Rangers issue fines or penalties the revenue is not returned to the Park Unit effected or even the National Park Service itself, but goes into the general revenue. This is a form of unjust enrichment or some outdated policy that needs correction. It would or does effort the moral of any Law Enforcement Agency. Local Police forces are enriched by their fines and penalties as are their Municipalities. THIS UNJUST ON-GOING POLICY OR LAW MUST BE AMENDED. Having written about this to my Congressional Representatives in the past and receiving no specific answer is also revealing in the lack of concern for the National Park Service; it should only require some small legislation to amend or be accomplished with executive order. This continued seemingly minor reality should be amended ASAP.”

“Congress should immediately amend the issue of fines going back into the general revenue instead of back to the Park Unit. This is an unjust policy that enriches others rather than the effected party, it also is a moral factor in any enforcements needed.”

RIVER ACCESS

River Access Points: Commenters had varying thoughts on providing separate river access points for different users groups. For those that prefer separate access points, the reasoning stated was safety. Often picnickers use the river at these points for swimming and barbequing, making launching a boat unsafe. Some commenters specified that commercial users should have separate access from park visitors, as commercial vehicles often block access in the parking lots and launches. Commercial vehicles also detract from the park experience for other visitors. Commenters who do not wish for separate access are concerned that this strategy would limit access opportunities.

“By providing or designating separate access points for different users it should prevent some of the conflict. However the staff must be available to enforce the access use. There are always problems at Bushkill, Smithfield and Kittinnay because picnickers/swimmers are utilizing the boat access areas and making it unsafe to launch a boat both powered and non-powered - -expanding picnic opportunities at more access points may help to spread the use out away from the ramps.”

“Providing separate areas for boat ramps, overnight users, and recreational day use is safer. People barbequing and swimming at the boat ramps in the same parking lot is not safe. Enforcement patrols seen this year at Bulls Island-great! Parking however on weekends does get crazy so perhaps more parking is needed or a shuttle system.”

“Provide or designate separate access points for day/overnight user and commercial users,run into issues with commercial users blocking access areas with their vehicles and trailers and launches at Smithfield / Bushkill and Dingmans sites”

“Generally, I don't feel it is necessary to have separate access points for day users, overnight users and commercial user. However, separating the commercial operators from the private boaters at Smithfield beach would be beneficial. Why not have the commercial operators continue to use the "loop" at Smithfield beach, while the private boaters use either the motor boat launch, or the emergency launch.”

“Provide separate access points for day, overnight and commercial users. Seems inevitable that this would limit possibilities. I often canoe and hike on my own, or with a couple friends. I'd be very disappointed if my access options were more limited because, e.g., some were strictly for commercial users.”

“DRN also supports better control or NPS rules of liveries that are utilizing these river launch areas. It has been monitored by DRN staff and members that liveries often monopolize the put in locations by parking and idling their vans and trailers along the river edge as they wait for a large group of paddlers to arrive at the take out. This practice makes it difficult for others with their own private canoes to easily access and load and unload and also detracts from visitors present at the location while also increasing air pollution that deposits in the nearby River. No idling signs may be a way to limit air pollution from cars during loading and unloading while also educating the public to air pollution but liveries staff should certainly use BMPs and proper etiquette while frequenting these locations if they are continued to be allowed to use these facilities. Paddling liveries can do a lot to educate the thousands of people they bring to the region every year and they are a good partnership to have so more people enjoy and learn about the Delaware River.”

Improvements to Existing Sites: Current river access points need improvements before new sites are created, according to commenters. The NPS should maintain, enhance, and patrol the current river access points. Some sites need enough parking to accommodate the current use, as well as road improvements. Other sites have boat launches with inclines that make it difficult to put in or take out boats. Sites identified for enhancements and repairs include the Camp Namanock Area, the Cadoo Road picnic area and boat launch site, Smithfield, Namanock Access Site, Eshback, and Kittatinny Point.

“If not that then you should put in a place where you can lock up your kayak wear while you retrieve your vehicle. Also some of your kayak take outs lunches or very hard to do for older folks someone who is by themselves. Ex. Smithfield to steep for and older person to bring up or down by themselves. Milford beach steep and during the muddy season for your feet stink. I pay the same price as boat people and should have reasonable launches.”

“With the river being one of the largest draws to the Park I think all the straties are good points Poxano is the only true boat launch in NJ and has limited parking and Namanock Access could use more road improvement and better access "steps" to the picnic/restroom area and all fee areas should offer picnic areas none at Bushkill and very limited at Dingmans. Mooring rakes to lock your canoe/kayak too while traveling back and forth for your vehicles”

“River Access can be improved and multiple sites and more parking spaces and help many areas so long as more spaces are offered to handle current use (Eshback) and not offered in an attempt to stuff more people in. More ergonomic launches (Kittatinny Point comes to mind on the needing improvement list) but how to improve those sites is likely a topic for another meeting (or one meeting per site!. Managing current day use sites simply need to be more proactive.”

“Improve and expand boating launch sites in Camp Namanock Area. Do not expand River access beyond that which can be supervised by Park Staff. I am also strongly opposed to additional River access as it is so hard to police and demands too much of the Park Service's rather limited resources to adequately maintain. The intrusion and destruction of any park land necessitated by more parking lots and widened roads to accommodate boat trailers and vehicles is absolutely alarming. MAINTAIN, ENHANCE AND PROPERLY POLICE THAT WHICH WE ALREADY HAVE.”

“The NPS/DEWA should restore the Cadoo Road picnic area and boat launch site in Montague, and begin maintaining and monitoring that site on a regular basis, as it does for other sites within the park. This site has not been restored since the damage done by hurricanes Irene and Sandy. Additionally, the dumpster was removed, and park rangers do not monitor the site on a daily basis, whereas rangers previously monitored that site twice daily during the summer months. This is the only river access site in Montague. Per its agreement with the NPS/DEWA, Montague Township maintains Cadoo Road. The NPS/DEWA needs to maintain this river access site.”

New Jersey Boat Launches: Some commenters wish to see new boat launches on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River, while others state that new boat launches are not necessary. Commenters in support of additional launches in New Jersey stated that the launches would support hunters and anglers who use the park. Other commenters believe there are a sufficient number of boat launches in Pennsylvania to accommodate those using motor boats. Additionally, new boat launches could have impacts on wildlife in the area. Several commenters support non-motorized boat launches in New Jersey in previously disturbed areas along Old Mine Road.

“Provide added boat ramp in NJ - as the better ones remain on the PA side at this time.”

“Significant users of the Recreation Area are the public that hunts and fishes in this tract of land and the streams and rivers that dominate the area. Little attention is given to improving or adding facilities and programs that would benefit these users of the Recreation Area. Our constituents believe that boat launching and fishing access sites should be developed on the New Jersey Side of the Delaware. Minimally, two new additional boat launching sites should be developed on the NJ Side of the river”

“DRN does not support the addition of a boat ramp for motorized boats on the NJ shoreline. Motorized boats already are heavily used on the southern portion of the DWGNRA at Kittatiny, Worthington, and Poxono and there are plenty of access points on the western side of the Gap in Pennsylvania.”

“ENSP prefers not to have boating access on the NJ shoreline as it increases the risk of human-snake interaction and harm to snakes and turtles by vehicles and people. It would exacerbate the issues already existing at Turtle Beach.”

“DRN would support a small canoe only/non-motorized access or dock on the New Jersey side north of Poxono if it was placed along an existing impacted area along Old Mine Road and no new roads would have to be cut to access that non-motorized boat dock or launch. The character and remote nature of Old Mine Road is charming and efforts need to be made to keep that remote while on the Pennsylvania side there is already more access and canoe access for park visitors.”

“These could include the provision of additional boat ramps on the New Jersey side of the park, particularly north of Poxono, as well as the expansion of parking opportunities and hardened surfaces, or redesigns at the most popular launch sites, for example, Smithfield Beach, that would accommodate additional use as appropriate.”

Picnic Sites: Several commenters would like additional picnic sites near the river, especially in New Jersey, as there are currently few of these sites along the river. Other commenters feel that picnic sites along the river will create issues with other users and wildlife. Enhancements at current picnic sites could include the addition of bear proof trash receptacles.

“Enhance picnic opportunities near access points. Even those not utilizing the river could enjoy the atmosphere with their families.”

“Enhance picnicking opportunities near river access points. Why? Because there are so few places to picnic on the New Jersey side, and the ones there are (Watergate, Turtle Beach) are scorched earth- -meaning there are hardly any trees for shade, just open areas, not good the skin.”

“DRN does not necessarily support enhancing picnicking opportunities near river access sites with the exception of ensuring there are bear proof recycling and garbage outlets at more established areas and clear signage for carry in and carry out at more remote locations - bilingual signs would be key as well. These river access sites are already crowded and by adding additional picnic tables or grills- it would only increase garbage and more crowding to areas that are already crowded. For any picnic areas, as indicated above, better bear signage on picnic tables should be displayed to better educate the public and protect the native black bear population. Black bear populations may be another reason to limit establishing more established picnicking opportunities.”

“Similarly parking and picnic areas should not be near the river. - The creation of new or expansion of current picnic areas and recreation sites as it will likely impact the "resource" - snakes, turtles and small mammals, and possibly breeding birds.”

Parking Issues: Commenters offered varied comments on parking at river access points. While new parking areas will bring in more visitors, the parking area should not exceed the number of people the area can accommodate. Those who do not wish to see more parking areas cite environmental impacts. The NPS could designate overnight parking, which could eliminate parking concerns for overnight campers and boaters; however, this would limit parking for day-users.

“river access points - expand available parking at some launch sites - will encourage more usage by visitors”

“DRN does not support the expansion of parking at some launch sites to accommodate additional use and overnight use due to the development this would cause to the floodplain and the existing riparian areas that are important to river water quality. The existing often large parking areas themselves help establish the carrying capacity of that particular launch area while protecting a visitors experience by limiting crowding.”

“To protect overnight campers and paddlers, NPS could, as is suggested, provide overnight parking for AT users and overnight paddlers through permit and through designating some existing parking areas as "only for overnight guests - no day users". In that way those coming to enjoy the resource for several days are not outcompeted by day users. At locations where NPS staff man a gate, if the lot is full, they can educate travelers to other locations where they may be able to access the River or a kiosk could be provided to show those access points if a manned station is not present.”

River Access Suggestions: Commenters made several suggestions for river access at the park, including: the addition of on-shore fishing locations and areas designated to non-motorized boating.

“The addition of on-shore fishing areas would be very helpful. For people who don't own a boat, the boat ramps are no use. More areas for people to fish on land would be not only appealing, but boost interest in fishing on the Delaware.”

“The preservation of quiet paddling opportunities that do not expand on motorized boat ramps where motorized boats would impact the water quality and the quiet serene nature visitors seek out currently in the park.”

RIVER CAMPING

Permitting System: Commenters support a permitting system for river camping. Permits allow the NPS to better manage the campsite, eliminate illegal camping, and reduce crowding. Permits allow the NPS to review park guidelines and regulations with visitors and the fees associated with permits will accommodate processing of the permits and management and maintenance of the campsites. In addition to permitted sites, boaters expressed a desire to have smaller primitive sites that are not included in the permit system. Some commenters feel a permitting system is not needed for river camp sites. The first come, first served system that has been in place for years has worked well and should remain in place. One commenter suggested that only targeted areas be subject to permitting, as NPS staffing is too thin to cover the tasks of permitting all sites.

“DRN would support a permit and fee system for existing primitive river campsites in order to better manage those existing sites and to minimize illegal camping.”

“River Camping- a paid permit system should be in place. The (affordable) fees would pay for processing, regular site scouts, and toilet management. This way you know who is using the site. A daily scout keeps the site clean and fees can be imposed for trashing the site. If this system works, open it up to more sites. Managing it is key.”

“I support that river camping sites are better managed with a permit system to reduce crowding or illegal camping along the river corridor. A carry in carry out policy is critical in these areas where the river is so nearby and more education and signage could help with garbage and other issues at these places. Restoration and native plantings in these camping areas could also help limit foot traffic.”

“I often camp when canoeing the river, particularly around Walpack Bend. I'm open to a reservation and fee system. I would support removable seasonal toilets or additional environmentally-friendly outhouses. On a recent canoe trip, I found all the campsites in Walpack Bend occupied, mostly by what appeared to be large groups that had settled in for the weekend, some with loud music (and probably alcohol). I do believe such groups should be required to get a permit and given guidelines about noise, alcohol, trash, etc. At the same time, I hope that smaller campsites would be offered/maintained/restricted to smaller parties (say, 6 or fewer people?) in popular areas such as Walpack Bend.”

“Permits mean more office personnel to manage and more rangers in the field to enforce. I have heard from all manner of park personnel (from John Donahue in public meeting to the personable maintenance staff at the access areas) that park manpower is spread very thin and permits would mean spreading thinner yet. I am in favor of targeted permit systems in identified areas to increase visitor access (those with special needs, nonprofits organizing large groups, etc) but beyond that no mass permit systems.”

“I appreciated the fact that you added some new sites this year - even though they were permit only cluster sites - but we really need more primitive campsites. This is what our customers, and visitors to the park, really want. They want to feel like they are in the wilderness and not be camping right next-door to other groups. I have been in the business of running canoe trips on the river for the past 50 years, - and I don't feel that the river usage is any greater today than it was 30 years ago. We don't need, - nor do I want, - a permit system. It has worked out well over all these years with campsites available on a first come first serve basis as long as we had the number of campsites that we always did before the flood of several years ago. We Now have less than half that number.”

Number of River Campsites: River camping is perceived as a unique experience at the park and commenters had varied opinions on river campsites. Commenters that feel river camping is part of the park experience believe that elimination of the campsites will hurt local businesses. Some commenters would like to see the campsites reduced to only those that are within supervised concession areas due to trash left by visitors. Other commenters would like to keep the number of campsites the same, as more campsites would increase crowding. Expanding the number campsites may reduce conflicts between users; however, new campsites should be established in previously disturbed areas and the ecological and scenic values of the park should be retained.

“River camping. I think more added sites will create too much crowding and take away from the beauty the day-trip people come to see.”

“Increase the number of primitive sites. I truly believe, and hear from my customers, that most campers on the river are specifically seeking primitive sites. I am not saying or implying that group permit sites are not needed and I appreciate all that Valley View, Rivers Bend, and the new Alosa sites offer but those sites should not now or ever be considered a replacement for the extremely popular primitive sites. If the National Park Service feels as though waste is an issue and want to implement a carry-out system for waste we can support that but the number one goal with regards to River Camping should be to AT LEAST restore the number of pre-flood sites and hopefully increase where possible from there.”

“DRN would support a permit and fee system for existing primitive river campsites in order to better manage those existing sites and to minimize illegal camping. If additional paddle in sites are pursued, those sites should be limited to areas already disturbed in order to not impact the riparian corridor or existing forest. For example campsites could be tucked in at existing agricultural lands that are conventionally farmed and those areas could be planted with native fast growing trees to establish forested primitive sites over time. Already some agricultural lands have illegal camping on them due to proximity of the ag land to the River. Efforts to increase riparian buffers in these existing farmed areas and peppering camping in those agricultural areas could help improve water quality and camping while limiting the amount of conventional farming that is done in the park.”

“we welcome the addition of new overnight lodging facilities for the many hikers, paddlers, and cyclists who participate in outdoor recreation at the Delaware Water Gap. Those may include new walk-in or bike-in camping opportunities along trails, the establishment of cabin rentals in historic houses, the creation of additional camping and lodging opportunities for specific user groups (like cyclists or equestrians) as appropriate, as well as additional camping sites, particularly primitive and cluster sites along the river, which may be managed through a permit or fee system. We would like to emphasize the need for these additional camping facilities to be built in a way that maintains the ecological and scenic values of the park. For this reason, we support the expansion of sites to accommodate larger groups as appropriate, and would like to see smaller, more remote sites remain less developed.”

“Eliminating river camping will hurt the businesses that have a very good and lasting relationship.”

“Eliminate river camping in all but the existing and hopefully supervised/policed concession areas. We are very tired of picking up the detritus left by inconsiderate and careless campers in unauthorized areas.”

Human Waste Removal: Commenters offered a variety of suggestions for human waste removal. While some people are in favor of the pack-in, pack-out method at primitive sites because it promotes park ethics, several commenters are concerned that visitors will not comply. Composting toilets at campsites were suggested, as long as habitat clearing would not be needed to install them and they are not placed in the floodplain. At heavily used sites, removable seasonal toilets are preferred.

“To minimize harm, DRN would support NPS efforts to require pack in and pack out of garbage and human waste. This practice also helps encourage campers to tread lightly in riparian areas. The presence of a remote (low maintenance) small compost pit toilet like that seen in back country areas of the nation could be supported as long as access roads would not have to be built to access those pit toilets for maintenance and those compost toilets were located far out of the floodplain.”

“River camping is very popular. If anything, we do need, at the very least, to keep what we have or add more. Since we started the reservation system this year, I had the chance to ask some of the folks how they liked having a reserved site. Some were very thrilled because they fish until later in the day. So by the time they get to a site most are full or taken but by having a reservation it certainly makes it less stressful. Also, for families with children, the reservation system is a bit of a piece of mind just knowing they have a site. These sites should have removable seasonal toilets. Also, some folks just like not having a planned site, they would prefer to be secluded and away from other campers. I do believe that site like this should still be made available but these particular sites should have the Pack in -Pack out of human waste and trash. Do Not eliminate river camping. People will do it anyway.”

“I support clusters of campsites to be managed through permits and fees, as well as requirement of pack-in and pack-out for all campsites. I support seasonal toilets or outhouses for the sites which are heavily used.”

“river camping - install removable seasonal toilets - pack-in, pack-out of human waste rarely works well.”

“We would also support the installation of additional environmentally-friendly outhouses and seasonal toilets at campsites, which would simplify the camping experience as well as protect the integrity of nearby water sources.”

River Camping Suggestions: One commenter suggested that river campsites be set up like the Alosa campsites in the Bushkill area.

“River Camping I think the Park could benefit from more areas like Alosa campsites they were set up nice with portable restrooms and the campsites where far enough apart and with the reservation system you could take your time and enjoy the river not worrying about finding an open campsite.Allow river camping at Namanock”

TRAILS AND TRAIL USE

Staffing: Commenters noted a need for more NPS presence on the trails for maintenance, visitor education, and law enforcement. Without additional staffing, a permitting system would not be successful at the park.

“We are fully supportive of increased staffing to support additional trail maintenance, visitor education, and staff presence, for example, through more staff patrolling the park.”

“Without major staffing increase, most of the ideas to restrict use or incur permit uses is impractical - so reroute those which affect sensitive resources.”

“visitors are making their own trails. Like to climb up STEEP hillsides, don't seem to like easy trails. Environmental damage is being done b/c of visitor-blazed trails. Also vandalism and partying. I don't want to hike on crowded trails. That rude people, litter, parties are a problem. As a local, I'd like to access some low-key trails, in remote areas, and feel comfortable doing so. If more visitors are inclined to stay on "popular trails," near high-use areas, and if patrols were increased to deter problem folks in all park areas, the park would be used more by those who actually live here. SO it's a balance between keeping areas remote and quiet, but not a beacon for partyers, and keeping the masses out of areas where nature needs to provide solitude for back-country users. Of course the environmental impact of heavy use is severe, so having too much use in one area is an issue. Balancing heavy use trails (maybe more, to lessen impact) with the need for solitude.”

Creation of Loop Trails: Commenters are supportive of a loop trail, suggesting that it would be popular with visitors. Commenters expressed interest in a loop trail in New Jersey that would mirror the McDade trail to make one large loop trail in the park. The creation of loop trails should incorporate existing trails and rights-of-way as much as possible to avoid new habitat disturbance. Loop trails may require more parking. While some commenters would prefer the loop trails to be non-motor vehicle trails, others would enjoy a scenic driving loop. Loop trails should remain open year round with park staff or volunteers to keep them free of snow.

“trails and trail use - increase staffing to support management - park is seriously understaffed Create a "sister" trail similar to the McDade Trail on the New Jersey side of the Park. Design this so that it creates a continuous loop ringing the Park.”

“More loop trails would be the way to go, but then you will need more parking.”

“Developing a loop trail is an interesting concept DRN would support as long as it is a foot trail and utilizes as much as possible existing trails, like the MacDade trail, to limit new trails and foot traffic and the invasive species and soil compaction and stormwater runoff foot traffic can bring. Existing scars on the land like electrical ROWs and pipeline ROWs should also be considered for these new trails and view sheds since they are already cleared and harmed areas.”

“A scenic driving loop should be developed utilizing Route 209 and Old Mine road, similar to Acadia's Park Loop Road or Cades Cove loop in the Smoky's. A fee should be charged to travel this route and the route should have a designated walking/biking path in the shoulder. Potential scenic pull-offs should be investigated.”

“Develop a park wide loop trail but also designate it a non motor vehicle multi-use trail trails following the NJ state parks model (hiking, biking, horses). With the development of a park wide loop trail, perhaps consider keeping it usable all year by performing snow clearing on it. If staffing does not permit, perhaps consider recruiting volunteers to do so.”

Rerouting and Closing Trails: Rerouting and closing of trails would be acceptable for visitor safety, resource protection, and trail sustainability. One commenter would prefer the NPS create more challenging trails off of existing trails, rather than rerouting them.

“the AMC is strongly supportive of efforts that improve and protect trails and trailheads. These might include rerouting trails to minimize erosion issues and improve trail sustainability. This would increase user interest while alleviating the maintenance burden for both park employees and volunteers.”

“Creating more challenging trails off existing trails, rather than rerouting them, would keep people entertained and on trail, reducing damage as a result of adventure seeking.”

“We would discourage the closing of trails, unless due to safety, resource protection or trail sustainability concerns.”

“DRN would also support the closure of some trails or the reroute of trails to protect the creeks and other resources and in order to preserve sensitive habitats.”

Create Hardened Trails: Commenters support creating boardwalks, stone, and viewing platforms in popular areas to protect natural resources and to provide wheelchair access, such as the one currently in Dingman Falls. One commenter suggests completing wildlife surveys prior to creating of hardened trails to reduce impacts. The McDade trail should continue to be improved for a wider variety of visitors.

“I support creation of more boardwalks to viewing platforms, as a way to accommodate larger crowds and protect natural resources. Dingmans is a great example of huge crowds which have minimal impact thanks to the boardwalk system. I strongly support staffing to manage trails: maintain, patrol, educate visitors, manage permit system, etc.”

“Creating hardened trails to be wheelchair accessible is acceptable, but if people are coming out to nature, they really should experience the softness of the woods floor. Giving tourists such a crutch will not help change them from city dwellers into tree huggers.”

“Trails fall into a similar category as camp sites in my opinion. Visitors to the Park interested in hiking seek this area because of the natural beauty. Hardened trails and curbing, etc. detract greatly from the Natural Beauty and are also a an unnecessary environmental burden to install and maintain. I, again, am not implying that, in limited supply, there is not a need to offer some form of manicured, hardened trail to increase accessibility to all of the parks visitors but this should not be the focus as it is not what a majority of the park visitors/customers and coming here for. Most all park visitors can find a paved trail or a high school track to walk around if they just want to walk: they come here to experience the challenge and unparalleled natural beauty that this recreation area offers. Perhaps offering an increase in natural trails can help spread visitors out.”

“ENSP recommends NPS conduct surveys for wildlife and sensitive habitats in areas targeted for boardwalks or viewing platforms in an effort to minimize disturbance to animals currently using the sites.”

“Budget for additional TSA surfacing improvements to the McDade Trail to make it a more usable path for a wider variety of visitors. The two mile section currently being completed is a good start but needs to encompass much more of the MRT.”

Parking Area Design: Commenters support better parking area design as a means to prevent visitors from creating new parking spots and increasing impacts on the resources. Additional efforts could include signage to overflow parking areas and permitting. These measures could reduce conflicts and overcrowding.

“To reduce overflow parking at trailheads, we would support design solutions like curbing, striping, and paving to better define parking areas, and the implementation of parking systems and permitting where parking overflow is currently a problem.”

“Creating better defined parking areas would cut back on people destroying the environment creating their own spots.”

“Proactive management of parking areas can effectively control trail over crowding and use conflicts.”

“Implement curbing, paving, or other solutions to help balance resource use. Provide signage to near by alternatives for overflow during peak seasonal use.”

Permitting: While some commenters are supportive of a permitting system to prevent overcrowding of the trails, others are not in favor of this practice. Permitting is not necessary at the current levels of use and could deter some visitors from using the trails when desired.

“DRN would support a permit system for some popular trails to reduce crowding and impacts to the resource and visitor experience.”

“Permit system for popular trails, unless it's really easy to get a permit on short notice (e.g., when you arrive at the trailhead)- -IF things aren't overcrowded at that point.”

“Although some trailheads, such as Dunfield Creek, can become crowded on busy weekends, - I don't feel that it is necessary ,at this point , to require a permit system.”

Viewsheds: If viewshed observation points are to be created, it should be done where the area is previously disturbed to avoid removal of mature trees. Additionally, wildlife surveys should be conducted to reduce the potential for impacts during overlook creation.

“Creating new view sheds should be limited or not pursued if it means cutting of mature trees for a view on steep slopes. If view sheds could be established on already impacted and cleared areas like existing ROWs, then that would be something DRN would support since the area is already highly impacted.”

“ENSP also recommends that areas identified as "scenic vistas" or potential viewing areas along the ridgelines be surveyed for and avoid Timber Rattlesnakes and Northern Copperhead critical habitats (dens and associated transient basking areas, gestation and birthing areas) to minimize disturbance to the snakes and human-venomous snake interaction. Surveys for any species should be conducted by qualified and experienced personnel. ENSP supports the idea of hiring additional staff for the maintenance and patrolling of trails (and roads, if possible).”

Single-Use Trails: Some commenters prefer some trails be single use (i.e., equestrian, mountain biking); however, other commenters feel that single-use trails are not conducive to providing recreation opportunities to a wide variety of visitors.

“To the extent that it is warranted, we would support the creation of single-user-group trails, for example for equestrians or mountain bikers only.”

“With the exception of some trails and delicate areas, creating more single use trails or converting existing trails needs to be done with care so it does not make it inaccessible for other users. Designating trails hiking only which would otherwise be suitable for multi use is not fair. That would be about as fair as having biking only trails.”

Carriage Roads: One commenter suggested that secondary roads should be converted into gravel roads that would be multiple-use trails that could accommodate hiking, biking, equestrian, and motor vehicles. These trails could be used year round or seasonally, could be incorporated into park loop trails, and could accommodate concession opportunities. Another commenter suggested repurposing old roads into hiking and biking trails.

“Where practicable, secondary vehicle roads should be converted into multi-use gravel roads (hiking, biking, horseback riding, etc.), similar to Acadia's carriage roads. These could remain available for NPS authorized vehicles for patrolling, fire, and rescue, and for public use during special events if needed. Additional gravel 'carriage' roads could be installed to create desirable loops, consistent with general trail strategies. Concession agreements could be available to local equestrian/carriage businesses.”

“Allow for re-use of old roads as hiking or biking trails and do keep DEWA's existing trails open so people are not destroying natural resources to open up their own. Return use of former parking areas that are no longer accessible due to their overall conditions.”

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST TO THE PARK IN FUTURE PLANNING EFFORTS

National Park vs. National Recreation Area: Some commenters are concerned that Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area will be redesignated as a national park, which could change the enabling legislation and activities permitted in the park. Other commenters would like to see the designation changed so the park could benefit from the funding that the change would provide.

“Although perhaps beyond the scope of this plan and NPS' authority, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area should be redesignated as a National Park and allocated the funding necessary for improvements and operations.”

“Firstly, is the use of misleading terminology, which appears in the first paragraph of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River planning documents, regarding the word "Park". The document refers the 4.5 to 5 million visitors to the "Park" each year, which misleads the public to believe it is a National Park. This should be corrected immediately, and the proper terminology inserted and explained in the document. The hunters and anglers of New Jersey have cause to be suspicious of misleading terminology, since there is an established history of organizations with different agendas using it as a method to wrongfully shape public opinion. This misleading terminology is currently being repeated and perpetuated in all communications regarding the future uses allowed in the Recreation Area.”

Wilderness Designation: One commenter stated that the park should be congressionally designated as wilderness.

“I WANT THE AREA CONSIDERED WILDEERNESS AND CITED AS SUCH. THE ENTIRE SITE, ESPECILLY IN NJ SHOUDL BE DECLARED WILDERNESS”

Park Units: One commenter suggested that the park be managed under two different plans, one in Pennsylvania and one in New Jersey. Another commenter suggested that the park and the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River be combined into one park unit. Another commenter suggested that the wild and scenic designation of the river be extended into Knowlton and that the NPS should determine how to retain the dark sky status of the park.

“Combine the DEWA and Middle Delaware units into one, large Park unit. Rename this Park with a short but locally relevant brand. Try to avoid using the word "Delaware" anywhere in the name. It confuses too many people.”

“WE NEED TWO DIFFERNET PLANS FOR DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE RIVER”

“OTHER HIGH POINTS: The park is a dark night sky area.... how to keep it that way.. The park would LOVE to see the Wild and Scenic river designation extend into Knowlton. It offers serious protection from development and could even help with the industrial area in Portland, a s well as with visual emcumberance. Big hurdle in Knowlton, but approached properly could be feasible.”

Wildlife Management: Several commenters suggested that a black bear sanctuary be created in the central part of the park. Areas suggested include the Hill 1415 complex area of the Kittatinny Plateau and Wallpack Bend. Bears should not be removed unless they are nuisance or a threat to human life. Deer populations should be better managed in the park.

“Deer need to be managed much more but please don't close for winter use (unless just a few designated days for hunts) and don't remove bears unless really a nuisance and no Bobcat hunts if contemplated.”

“A BLACK BEAR SANCTUARY SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED. The prime core habitat of the DEWA can support a higher density of an indigenous Black Bear Population. Areas like Hill 1415 Complex area of the Kittatinny Plateau. Wallpack Bend should be considered as a sanctum off limits to hunters or less hunted over time allowing the right to life to exist in order that the Black Bear Resource can be shared by all and not dominated by hunters.”

“Areas set aside for wilderness biodiversity parts of the park should become sanctuaries for the life within the parks prime core habitats. "Celestial Bear Comes Down to Earth" in New Jersey area for bear study for density. Hunters should not dominate the Black Bear resource as they were enjoyed by naturalist and many AT hikers passing through New Jersey.”

Facilities Management: One commenter suggested removing the bug zappers from restroom facilities, as they harm pollinator species as opposed to those that are considered nuisance species.

“Bug zappers should also be removed from the bathrooms of the campsites. These bug killers science has shown, are ineffective at killing mosquitoes and instead kill beneficial insects and pollinators and having them in the campground is not in alignment with NPS goals.”

Habitat Management: Commenters expressed a need for habitat management and restoration. Invasive plant species management is needed to enhance the natural landscapes and visitor experience. Plants such as Japanese knotweed, barberry, and multiflora rose are noted as an issue at Wallpack Bend, VanCampens, and Big Flat Brook. The habitats of the park should be managed for species diversity. There is a lack of successional habitat, which is identified as a reason for dwindling numbers of migratory birds. Habitat of sensitive species should be protected. Owners of rights-of-way in the park should be responsible for enhancing the habitat within those rights-of-way. Additionally, floodplains should be protected against the construction of any new hard structures and new heavy visitor traffic, as floodplains and riparian corridors provide important functions for the ecological community.

“Attention need also be given to exotic invaders and restoring landscapes; for example the Wallpack bend area, where Forts Hyndshaw & Wallpack once stood. A Hire employed and volunteer workforce to eradicate Japanese Knotweed in the area to bring out the American in it.”

“I love the park pretty much as it is, but I do have one suggestion: please work on weeding out the invasive plants and, I suppose, animals (though as far as I know there are no Burmese Pythons as in the Everglades). Some of these plants, like Knotweed, are just a nuisance, but some are dangerous to hikers and fishermen, like Barberry and Multi-Flora Roses, because of their thorns. Those roses are especially hard on waders worn by anglers who frequent streams like Van Campens and Big Flat Brook and even parts of the Delaware. Environmental groups like The Nature Conservancy seem to have no trouble getting volunteers (wearing thick gloves, of course) to pull out the Multi-Floras on their land, and I don't see why the Park Service couldn't do the same. There is a section of Van Campens Brook just above the glen that is so thick with those roses that I wouldn't walk through them in jeans, let alone waders. Too bad - I used to catch some nice trout in there.”

“Of additional concern is the fact that the plan does not mention habitat improvement for any species of wildlife. Early successional habitat is becoming mature forest, which is causing the disappearance of migratory and resident game and song bird species. The result is ecological

imbalance, plus a diminished outdoors experience for hunters and bird watchers who use the Recreation Area. While NJOA is aware that volunteers are working to address this shortfall the fact is that success hinges on a comprehensive plan and expressed commitment by both federal and state governments to keep early successional habitat and the associated wildlife species alive and well in the Recreation Area.”

“With existing ROWs the operator should be required to enhance the ROW with additional native plantings, meadow plantings and woody shrub plantings where feasible to improve visitor experience where these linear impacts were allowed in the first place. Hand control of invasives should also be required versus spraying of pesticides to control invasives along these ROW corridors. No new ROWs should be allowed in the park as they affect visitor enjoyment, fragment sensitive areas, cause severe erosion, increase stormwater runoff and are a permanent scar on the landscape.”

“Protecting habitat of sensitive species and increasing overall diversity of native flora and fauna should have priority. I am especially concerned about declining species like the Cerulean Warbler.”

“In general, no new development of "hard structures" or extensive "softer impacts" that could still cause compaction (due to heavy foot traffic) or forest loss in existing undisturbed 500 year floodplain and riparian corridor of the River or tributary streams. Forests and wide and healthy diverse native (and existing exotic invasive buffers that should be restored) riparian buffers are important to visitors' experience and to maintaining and improving the water quality of the Delaware River and its tributaries. As such, NPS efforts should be conducted in a way to limit any new disturbance to these sensitive linear areas along the River and tributary streams. For specific strategies, efforts should be made to implement these strategies in existing areas of disturbance (e.g., agricultural lands, already compacted soils with no forests, existing historic structures and farmsteads and existing building foot prints, etc.) while also weaving in restoration and infiltration retrofit practices to these existing areas to restore habitats and native riparian buffers and floodplains. As such these strategies will be ultimate improvements to the habitat in the DWGNRA while also providing new opportunities for visitors.”

Carrying Capacity: The park should conduct carrying capacity studies to determine appropriate visitation limits. Visitation has an impact on all aspects of the environment, including water quality, wildlife, and habitat. The resulting carrying capacities can provide limits for any permitted activities.

“The development of a carrying capacity for the park to protect water quality and to help establish what permits are needed to sustainably manage visitors.”

“Carrying capacity for wildlife's sake is serious issue. Bobolinks left MM breeding fields when boardwalk built. Some state-listed breeding birds have retreated or just left. Numbers down overall but some species starting a comeback. At Carson breeding birds also down. Long-eared Owls unlikely to ever return due to amongst other factors, the trail being routed near roost site and increasing traffic.”

“With this scoping work, DRN suggests a possible water quality study or carrying capacity study, perhaps in coordination with DRBC, to determine the carrying capacity of visitors for the river as it relates for example, to water quality and habitat on a daily basis. For example, for popular high use places like Milford beach or Smithfield beach that are often packed on hot days in the summer, the existing parking helps maintain a certain carrying capacity of people and swimmers at those busy locations. If we consider all the paddlers and boaters also on the river on those hot

days, (including paddlers and boaters renting from livery services using the park) - a carrying capacity analysis may be a way to quantify use for the river to ensure water quality protection. Trail carrying capacity may also be part of this study in order to put a daily cap on visitors to specific trails, especially popular trails in the DWGNRA - to preserve the experience of visitors and protect wildlife needs and resources in those high use areas. It has been discussed in prior round table meetings, for example that fecal coliform could be one of the possible indicators to examine for such a river carrying capacity study and examples of similar studies have been conducted in other areas and for other rivers . More research has been done in recent years related to fragrances, sunscreens and other manmade healthcare products entering water bodies that impact aquatic life and this too could be examined as part of a carrying capacity study. Motor boat traffic is another big concern in the Delaware Water Gap that needs to be considered for carrying capacity and that if increased, can lead to additional hydrocarbon pollution inputs to the River and air pollution while also causing noise, safety concerns, wildlife disturbance, and detract from the human enjoyment for non-motorized hikers, paddlers, and bikers in the DWGNRA .”

Farming Practices: One commenter suggested that farms operating within the park should be required to follow organic farming practices, as opposed to conventional agricultural procedures, including restrictions on herbicide and pesticide use.

“Related to farming in the park, efforts should be made to ensure organic practices are required in those areas rather intensive conventional agriculture that appears to currently be GMO based and highly sprayed with herbicides and pesticides. For example, hay fields would be less impact on the DWGNRA, contribute to grassland bird species possibly having the option to nest (if farming practices were implemented and timed that allowed for songbird nesting) then the planting of corn, soybeans or other GMP crops.”

Historic Structures Management: Historic structures within the park should be evaluated to determine which of these structures are able to be stabilized and restored, as they are a significant part of the park’s history. Examples of structures that should be evaluated include Birchenough House and Dodd House on Old Mine Road and Westbrook-Bell Farm in Sandyston Township. One commenter suggested that sellbacks with historical easements maintained by the NPS may be required to preserve historic structures. Another commenter stated that the NPS should not establish long term leases on historic sites or farm houses, despite the revenue these leases generate. Instead, local volunteer groups should be engaged to help restore the properties.

“my general suggestion is to continue with utmost haste to evaluate those structures with historic and or social and cultural value that can be saved and proceed with at least rudimentary repairs to keep them standing. The Birchenough House and Dodd House on Old Mine Road (the proximity to Peter's Valley makes these properties especially attractive) are in dire need and have historic relevance. The Westbrook-Bell Farm in Sandyston Township is an historic treasure that would be an easily accessible tourist site garnering a lot more interest if it were more vividly interpreted by the Park Service or an historic minded group.”

“There are currently approximately 100 historic properties in the park (containing homes and support structures), and if we are to be successful in maintaining the majority of what survives, it will require a multi-faceted approach which may also include, in some instances, sellbacks with historical easements maintained by the NPS. The surviving historical buildings are a significant part of the cultural landscape which enhances the visitor's experience. All due care should be given to maintain these resources as they are a vital part of the collective.”

“NPS should not establish long term leases on any more historic sites or farm houses. While leases may provide revenue for the park through commercial use, these have rarely been beneficial to the Park or the site in the long term. It would be much better to partner with local volunteer groups to oversee sites and work with NPS to assess need for restoration of the structure or sustainable maintenance.”

Roads: Commenters stated that the roads in the park, both paved and dirt, need general maintenance and repair. The roads are not welcoming to visitors and exclude visitors from some destinations. Some roads are a hazard to vehicles and visitor safety. Commenters requested that some roads remain open or are reopened for access, including U.S. Route 209 and Ennis Bridge.

“our dirt roads are in abysmal condition and yet we seek to invite the public to visit our treasures. Maybe that one issue could be addressed first and foremost and with some haste. At least have Old Mine Road groomed and ready for the annual Van Campen Day this October?”

“What is needed are good roads to allow park visitors to move around freely & safely through the park. Millbrook Village is barely visited because very few people even know it's there & how to access it. This is compounded by the fact that the section of the Old Cooper Mine road that leads through the park, through Worthington and onto I-80 is not passable. For all the Engineering feats this country has done & was supposed to do (The Tocks Island Dam), you would think they would come up with a way to secure the rock surface above the road. The road going from Millbrook to the Flatbrook is also a disgrace. There are lakes, ponds & waterfalls for hikers & families to see and enjoy, but they cannot because of the limited access. Give us good roads to access the Appalachian trail, Butter Milk Falls, Crater Lake (old Lake Success) , Blue Mt. Lakes, etc. Maintained toilets along the way would be a plus.”

“In particular, it would be very nice to see a large section of Raymondskill Road paved. It's a very narrow road to begin with, but many times with oncoming traffic you are forced into potholes. I've gotten a flat tire on that road before from that reason.”

“Open the Ennis Bridge (along State Fish & Game lands) to provide access to Peters Valley, the Walpack Valley and access to the Old Mine Road and the Dingmans Ferry Bridge in order to reduce traffic in and by-pass Layton”

“Keep 209 open to traffic.”

Shuttle Service: Commenters would like to see the Pocono Pony and other shuttle services continue to run with expanded service for visitors.

“Expand the number of days that the Pocono Pony Shuttle operates. This would make use of Park facilities easier for visitors and reduce the number of vehicles on our roads.”

“I think you should have the Pocono Pony run during the week at least 2 days a week. You could even charge a pass fee for used to offset the cost of gas man-hours.”

“The Transit in the Park service that runs Memorial Day through Labor Day is a great service and hope you can continue to fund this service into the future and feel most users would be willing to pay a fee for this service or make a seasonal pass for this service to offset some of the cost and maybe extend or be able to sign up for the service for a few select days in the fall and late spring”

“Shuttle service may be needed on Old Mine Road to run every hour?”

Accessibility: Handicapped access should be improved in the park, and handicapped access should be provided throughout the park and be designed into the plans for any new destinations in the park.

“Handicapped access for boaters, anglers and hunters should be provided at all access facilities in the Recreation Area.”

“In my estimation DEWA is one of the poorest examples of handicapped accessibility of any Federal land managing agencies I have ever seen. I see nothing mentioned.”

“In addition, both Watergate and Turtle Beach seem to be rather inaccessible for those with permanent or temporary disabilities (I am currently out on disability and would not be able to travel the distance from the parking area to the picnic area at either of these locations). You should make any new areas more accessible to the handicapped and improve access at already established locations.”

Loud Music and Alcohol: Commenters expressed an interest in banning alcohol and loud music from the park. A large amount of waste is left in the park from visitors consuming alcohol and not packing the bottles and cans out with them upon departure. Loud music disrupts the park experience.

“Alcohol should be banned on the river itself; or allowed in a discreet form; canteens or growlers, no can or bottles. More areas should be considered for Alcohol bans such as Blue Mountain Lakes which has become a giant ASHTRAY and Drinking area. The parking lot trash receptacles are always full of mostly alcohol related cans and bottles. The Dam area and surrounding shoreline are constantly polluted with illegal fires and associated trash, litter is tossed all about in an attempt to hide it, almost all of it alcohol related.”

“I would like to see a ban on loud music implemented so that all visitors have the opportunity to experience the natural world, an experience different from being in an urban area. When loud music is allowed, it is heard not just by those who enjoy it, but also those who don't enjoy it. It takes a lot away from the experience of being in the park. Ban loud music at beaches and other public areas so that visitors can enjoy the natural world they are visiting. They can use earphones if they can't live without music. Music might be permitted at picnic areas which could be rented for special use. A group could rent the space for their picnic, and it would be located far enough away from others that the music wouldn't bother other visitors. Right now the loud music is very intrusive.”

Trash: The park should implement and enforce a carry-in, carry-out policy for garbage. One commenter suggested that cameras be installed in known problem areas (i.e., Jennings Site, Blue Mountain Lake, Adams Creek) to identify individuals that do not comply with this policy.

“Carry in Carry out in remote camping or hiking areas, with register fees associated with usage in a good and responsible way to protect the resources. Take-on Take-off for canoeist on the Delaware itself with inventories and bans of certain materials or products.”

“Cameras should be installed at various places of abuse to possibly identify individuals or groups that vandalize or trash areas, Jennings Site, Blue Mountain Lakes, Adams Creek; sure Law enforcement knows of many more. Parking along Old Mine Road in places like Jennings should be Posted No Picnics No Fires Along the River Shore, and enforced by Law Patrols of the Rangers and State Fish & Games Officers. Many people fishing here do not have license. Glass

bottles should also be banned at water sights especially or in the Park as a policy. Broken glass present a safety hazard and glass bottles are heavy in trash & litter removal. Like aluminum most ends up in a mixed trash heap, incurring costs on the Park Service. Smokers should be asked by posted signs to police their butts; or areas abused by smokers leaving butts and packs about should become banned from smoking; subject to fines by Law Enforcement.”

Aspinall Water Wheel: The park should restore the Aspinall Water Wheel as a means for generating electricity for the community.

“Restore the Aspinall Water Wheel and generate electricity for or community.”

HUNTING IN THE PARK

Hunting is an activity that shall be permitted on park lands, as stated in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area's enabling legislation. This plan will not change any provisions or language of the enabling legislation of the park.

Hunting Opportunities: Commenters are concerned about changes in hunting, fishing and trapping regulations. Commenters explained that visitors that hunt, fish, and trap use the park during non-peak months and are generally responsible stewards of the park. One commenter suggested that hunting should be monitored.

"Hunting should be more closely monitored."

"No restrictions on hunting, fishing, or trapping should be considered outside of those already in place. Hunting, fishing, and trapping activity should not be impinged. These uses typically occur in the "off season" (outside of summer) and are usually low impact. Hunting, in fact, would seem to be required to manage populations of local fauna to protect the flora of the park. Do not restrict its use in the park, again, outside of rules already in place. Hunters and fishers are characteristically very responsible people who have a vested interest in seeing the park maintained and cared for. Therefore, they are eyes and ears in all areas of the park and can report on any troubles or issues they come across."

"A lot of people out there are worried about you changing the national recreation area to a national park. Hunting is not allowed in a national park and we do not want to lose our hunting. Don't change the designation"

NEPA PROCESS

Section 106 Consultation: One commenter expressed concern about impacts on historic structures and stated that consultation with the SHPO under Section 106 would need to occur.

“Based on the level of detail provided in the Visitor Use Management Plan Survey, assessment of potential impacts to historic properties is not possible. These strategies will require additional consultation to assess impacts under Section 106, if selected for implementation. The HPO anticipates consultation with the National Park Service to develop ways to implement the plan in a manner which avoids, minimizes, or mitigates for potential affects to historic and archaeological properties.”