



# Non-commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program Annual Report 2014-2015





**A wintery scene in Yellowstone's Upper Geyser Basin. NPS Photo-N. Herbert**

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# **Non-commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program Annual Report 2014 – 2015**



**Winter Use Adaptive Management Program  
Yellowstone National Park  
Post Office Box 168  
Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, USA 82190**

**[www.nps.gov/yell/learn/management/ngsap.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/management/ngsap.htm)**





NPS Photo-P. Olliff



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## Executive Summary

The National Park Service (NPS) developed and implemented a Non-commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program (N-CGSAP) at Yellowstone National Park during the 2014-2015 winter season. The N-CGSAP, authorized by the 2013 Winter Use Final Rule 36 CFR 7.13(l), allows members of the public to obtain special use permits to guide up to two small groups of family or friends using best available technology (BAT) snowmobiles. All snowmobile operators, including the permit holder, must complete the free, online Yellowstone Snowmobile Education Certification (YSEC) course and follow all park laws and regulations, including staying on groomed roads, obeying speed limits, and avoiding wildlife conflicts. Park managers worked with interested members of the public, through the new Winter Use Adaptive Management Program, to create a fair and reasonable program. Yellowstone's management considers the first years of the N-CGSAP to be a success and looks forward to continuing this program in the future.

The purpose of this report is to inform the public about the program's successes and challenges, and set a baseline for visitor use and resource statistics to improve future seasons under the Winter Use Adaptive Management Plan.

In general, the key findings demonstrate that the first two years of the N-CGSAP were a success.

- The lottery ran at the end of September both years and allotted permits to individuals across the country. The first-come, first-served reservation system opened to the public in early November both years and awarded numerous unallocated open permits.
- The West Entrance was the most popular, followed in order by South, North, and East entrances.
- 1,132 students have completed the YSEC course, taking a little over an hour on average to finish. The course provided useful information regarding visitor safety and resource protection, leading to successful trips by a broad range of visitors.
- Program managers were aided by a dedicated working group comprised of interested members of the public. They provided expertise in the snowmobile industry and culture, and offered feedback on program details in order to make this a thoughtful and easy-to-use program.
- Yellowstone ranger staff focused their efforts on staff and public education during the first year. Although there were a few law enforcement contacts, there were no major issues with visitors and resource protection. The second year, ranger staff resumed normal operations and cited 12 program participants over the season.



## Yellowstone's Winter Use Background

Yellowstone National Park's winters can be extremely cold with deep blankets of snow covering the landscape. Early Yellowstone employees and visitors used skis and snowshoes to brave the park's remote interior. However, in 1963, a few visitors rode in aboard the first personal snow machines, the forerunners of today's snowmobiles. The NPS decided to support this fledgling use of motorized snow vehicles; and by 1971, Yellowstone personnel were packing and smoothing the routes to Old Faithful and to park headquarters at Mammoth Hot Springs. On some days in the early 1990s, as many as 1,600 snowmobiles and snowcoaches entered the park. By the late 1990s, 150,000 winter visitors a year were flocking into Yellowstone, most on snowmobiles.

Snowmobiles in the 1990s had two stroke engines, which caused significant air and noise pollution. As more and more

snowmobiles used Yellowstone's roads, animal advocates became concerned the machines were negatively impacting wildlife, which are at their most vulnerable during the stark winter months. This concern led to over a decade of litigation, as courts and the public wrangled over the best way to protect the park's resources while providing for access to visitors.
























In 2013, the NPS completed a supplemental environmental impact statement and a final rule that allowed a limited number of snowmobiles into the park. Snowmobiles had to be cleaner and quieter under the implementation of more stringent best available technology (BAT) standards. They also had to be guided by either private or commercial tour leaders. The N-CGSAP provides the framework for privately guided tours.



Visitors arriving on snowmobile to photograph Old Faithful Geyser, circa 1970. NPS Photo-W. Keller



## Winter Use Timeline

-  1963 - first personal snowmobiles (6 total) enter the park
-  1967 - congressional hearings on year-round plowing of Yellowstone roads
-  1968 - park managers choose oversnow use instead of plowing
-  1971 - grooming of roads for oversnow vehicles (snowmobiles, snowcoaches) begins; first Old Faithful Snow Lodge opens (converted employee dormitory)
-  1990 - NPS completes first winter-use plan and environmental assessment for Yellowstone and Grand Teton
-  1992-1993 - 140,000 people visit Yellowstone in winter: about 90,000 on snowmobiles; 10,000 in snowcoaches; and 40,000 in wheeled vehicles
-  1996-1997 - harsh winter leads to more than 1,000 bison dying or being killed; wildlife protection groups sue NPS in federal court (Washington, D.C.) over winter slaughter of bison
-  1999 - rulemaking petition from environmental group asks NPS to ban recreational snowmobiling in Yellowstone and all other national park units that allow it
-  2000 - NPS decides to phase out most snowmobile use in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks on the grounds the machines damage the park's air quality, wildlife, natural soundscapes, and the enjoyment of other park visitors
-  2001 - NPS is sued over its decision to ban snowmobiles; the decision is overturned by federal court (Cheyenne, WY), and NPS begins new winter planning process
-  2003 - NPS decides managed winter-use program for snow vehicles will work and calls for guided-only entry by snowmobiles with current BAT, and limits on the number of snowmobiles and snowcoaches allowed per day; NPS is sued over this plan and federal court (Washington, D.C.) overturns it
-  2004 - NPS prepares temporary plan to limit use and require commercial guided-only access aboard BAT snowmobiles
-  2005-2007 - through legislation, Congress supports 2004 temporary plan
-  2007 - park completes 2007 winter-use plan, which allows up to 540 commercially guided BAT snowmobiles and 83 snowcoaches a day into park
-  2008 - federal court (Washington, D.C.) rejects the 2007 plan, so winter operations revert to a 2004 winter rule, which allowed up to 720 BAT snowmobiles and 78 snowcoaches a day
-  2008 - park prepares new temporary plan allowing 318 snowmobiles and 78 snowcoaches a day into Yellowstone
-  2008 - federal court (Cheyenne, WY) orders 2004 winter rule be reinstated for 2008-2009 season until NPS publishes an acceptable new rule to replace it
-  2009 - NPS completes 2008 temporary plan for winter use; Yellowstone opens on December 15 for up to 318 guided snowmobiles and 78 snowcoaches a day, and this plan will apply to winter 2010-11 as well
-  2011 - NPS issues a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on winter use, which includes a one-year rule for 2011-2012 winter use; the park and NPS immediately begin work on a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to further analyze additional issues raised during the public comment period
-  2013 - NPS releases the Final Winter Use Plan/SEIS outlining the Preferred Alternative
-  August 2013 - NPS Intermountain Region Director John Wessels signs the Record of Decision for the Winter Use Plan/SEIS
-  October 2013 - Final Rule allowing oversnow vehicle (OSV) use in Yellowstone is published in the Federal Register
-  December 2014 - first snowmobilers enter the park through the N-CGSAP



## 2013 Winter Use Final Rule

In 2013, the NPS published a Final Rule to guide winter use in Yellowstone National Park following extensive public review and comment. The Final Rule authorizes OSV use in Yellowstone and contains provisions that allow greater flexibility for commercial tour operators, provides mechanisms to make the park cleaner and quieter than what had been allowed during the previous four winter seasons, rewards OSV innovations and technologies that improve the Yellowstone experience, and allows for an increase in visitation. The Final Rule relies on impact analysis conducted through the 2013 Winter Use Final Plan/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Final Plan/SEIS).

Beginning with the 2014-2015 winter season, the previous management approach of a fixed maximum number of OSVs allowed in the park each day was replaced with a more flexible concept of managing vehicle access by transportation events, defined as one snowcoach or a group of up to ten snowmobiles, averaging seven seasonally. New BAT standards are required for snowmobiles no later than the 2015/2016 season and for snowcoaches by the 2016/2017 winter season.

Commercial tour operators can use their allocated transportation events for snowmobiles, snowcoaches, or a mix of both, as long as no more than 50 of the authorized 110 daily transportation events are snowmobile transportation events. This approach allows the proportion of snowcoaches or snowmobiles in the park each day to be adjusted, allows for an increase in the size of snowmobile groups to meet demand on peak days, and permits an increase in vehicle group size per transportation event if voluntary enhanced emission standards are met.

The plan also allows one non-commercially guided group of up to five snowmobiles to enter through each park entrance every day through a special use permit. The park worked with interested stakeholders to develop the N-CGSAP along with the Yellowstone Snowmobile Education Certification. The rule also continues to allow OSV use on the East Entrance road over Sylvan Pass.

To reinforce the central approach of the agency and a key tenant of this successful rule making, park managers will continue to collaborate with the public by implementing an Adaptive Management Program, which will combine science with public input, to ensure OSV use impacts stay within limits predicted in the Final Plan/SEIS. Included in the Adaptive Management Program is the Non-commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program.



NPS Photo-N. Herbert

# Non-commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program Overview

The N-CGSAP is managed under the Winter Use Adaptive Management Plan. Although managers expect this program to change over time, in general it allows up to four non-commercially guided snowmobile transportation events – with up to five snowmobiles per event – to enter the park daily, one transportation event per oversnow entrance. All snowmobiles must be current New Best Available Technology (New BAT). Trips can be 1, 2, or 3 days in duration and can originate from the North, South, East, or West entrances. Visitors can either bring their own current New BAT snowmobiles or rent machines from local vendors. Each non-commercial guide may lead no more than two trips per winter season, and must be at least 18 years of age with a valid driver’s license by the first day of the trip. Non-commercial guides are required to possess a non-commercial snowmobile access permit, which is awarded annually through the <http://recreation.gov> lottery system. The lottery is open for the month of September. Left-over and cancelled permits will be available on a first-come, first-served basis beginning in early November, also through <http://recreation.gov>. Permits currently cost \$40/day, plus a \$6 application fee. Non-commercial guides can be any members of the public who meet the program requirements.

Each snowmobile operator, including the trip leader, in a non-commercially guided snowmobile transportation event is required to have successfully completed the free, online Yellowstone Snowmobile Education Certification (YSEC) online training course. Trip members without a valid driver’s license or those who have not successfully completed the YSEC training course will not be permitted to operate a snowmobile in the park.

Permit holders are required to schedule a check-in at their assigned entrance for the first day of their trip. After check-in, groups may leave and re-enter the park at any entrance for the duration of their permit.

## Reservation System

The N-CGSAP allows for one group of up to five snowmobiles through each of the park’s oversnow entrances per day. Park managers implemented a reservation system to ensure these quotas were not exceeded and to allow members of the public to prepare and plan for their trips ahead of time.

# Recreation.gov

Many agencies in the federal government use the website, <http://recreation.gov>, to manage their reservations. Examples include the White House Easter Egg Hunt, USDA Forest Service backcountry cabin rentals, and wild and scenic river trip reservations. The site is managed through a contract with a private company, Active Network, who provides customer support, a secure web reservation system, a telephone reservation system, and technical expertise. Active Network charges a \$6.00 fee for each reservation or lottery application, which is non-refundable. During the first year, Yellowstone National Park charged \$40 per reservation, regardless of length (3-day maximum), for a total of \$5,880 for the season. The second year, permits were changed to \$40 per day. Fees totaled \$11,040 under this new pricing structure. During both years, permits were refundable if they were cancelled at least two weeks before the first day of the trip.

## Lottery System

In order to make the reservation system as fair as possible, the Final Rule stipulates initial permits be allocated through a lottery (tables 1 and 2). The lottery is managed through <http://recreation.gov> and is operated electronically. The lottery application period lasts for one month, during which time each member of the public can apply one time with up to eight variations of entrance/date/length of stay. The lottery system randomly selects by name and then chooses the first available variation for that individual. That name is then withdrawn from the pool, and the lottery moves on to the next randomly selected name. The lottery system runs until all names have been chosen. Once the lottery runs and the results have been certified by NPS staff, applicants are notified by email of their status. Successful applicants have two weeks to accept their allocated permit. After those two weeks, any permits not accepted or not allocated through the lottery are available via the website’s first-come, first-served permit reservation system. Cancellation permits are also available throughout the season as they occur through the reservation system.

## Lottery by the Numbers

Table 1. Overview of lottery permit statistics, by season.

	2014-2015 Season	2015-2016 Season
Number of Applicants	326	258
Number of Permits Awarded	74	57
Number of Permits Accepted	35	11



Table 2. Number of lottery applications by entrance day and location, over two seasons.

	2014-2015 Season				2015-2016 Season			
	First Choice /# of Applicants		Second Choice /# of Applicants		First Choice /# of Applicants		Second Choice /# of Applicants	
Most Popular Entrance Day	14-Feb	14	6-Feb	16	28-Dec	14	29-Dec	15
	19-Dec	11	28-Dec	12	15-Jan	11	16-Jan	9
Other Popular Entrance Days	13-Feb	11	19-Dec	11	1-Jan	9	28-Dec	8
							30-Dec	8
Applications by Entrance	West	240	West	197	West	151	West	134
	South	94	South	89	South	65	South	67
	North	23	North	29	North	27	North	25

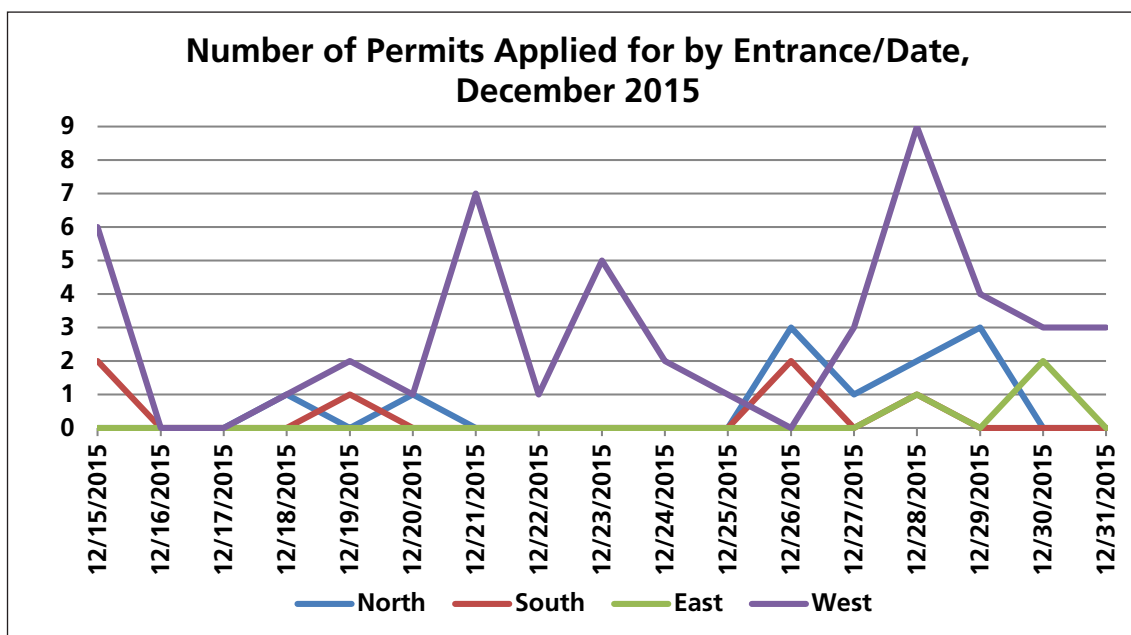


Figure 1. Number of permits applied for in the lottery by entrance and date, December.

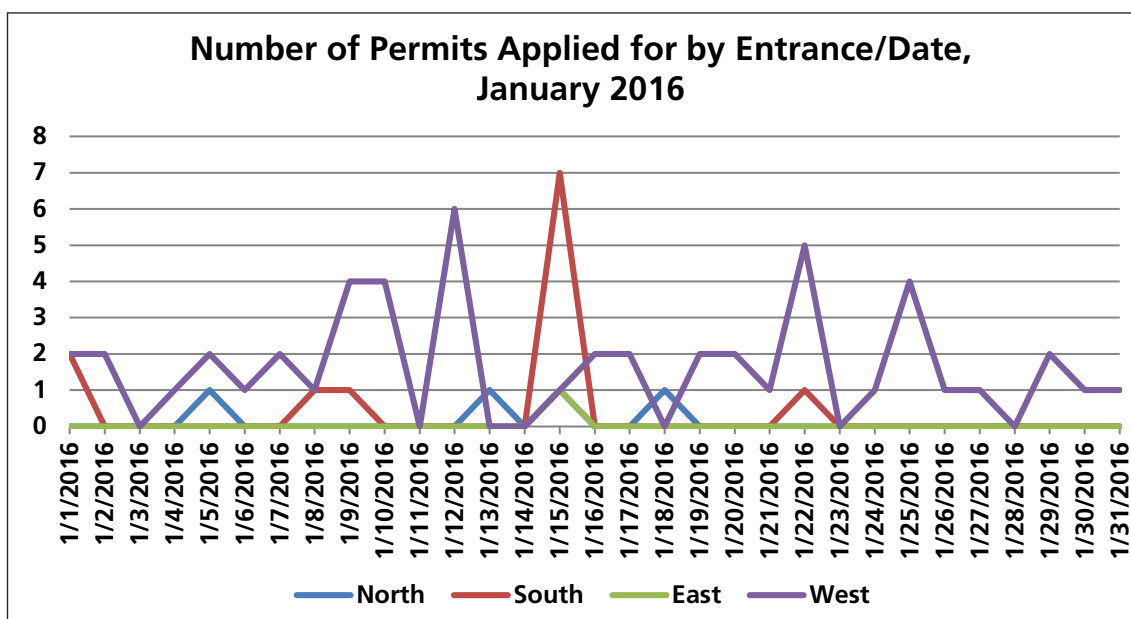


Figure 2. Number of permits applied for in the lottery by entrance and date, January.

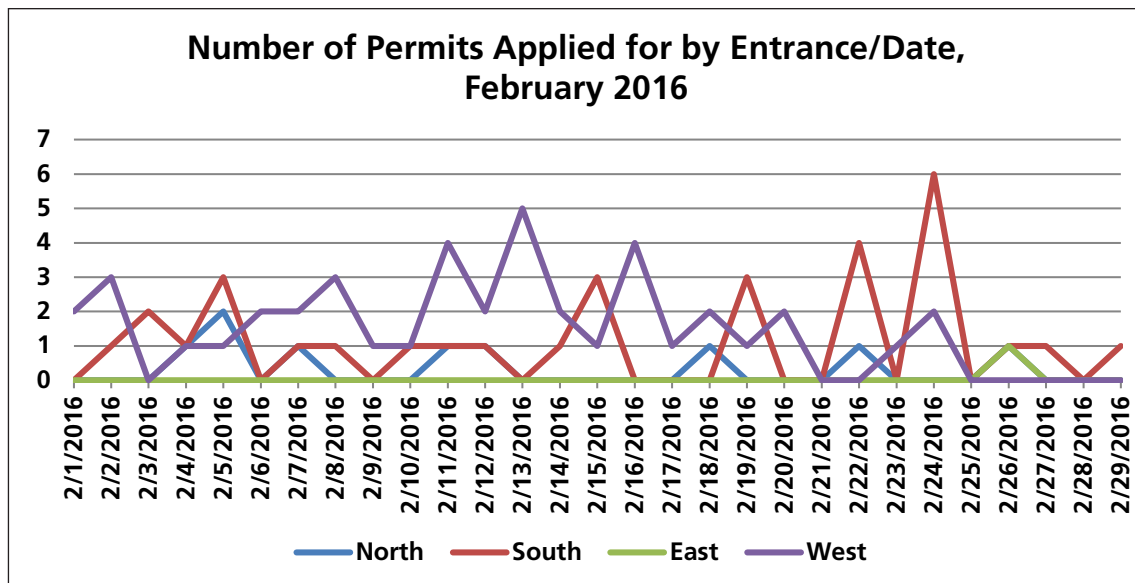


Figure 3. Number of permits applied for in the lottery by entrance and date, February.

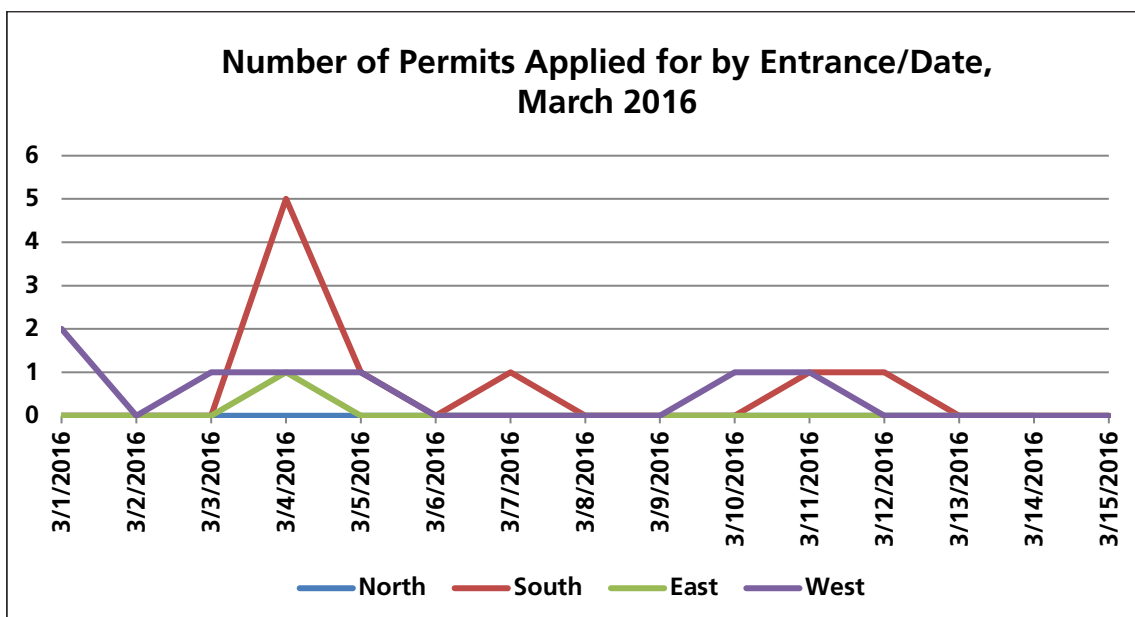


Figure 4. Number of permits applied for in the lottery by entrance and date, March.

## Lottery Results Summary

The lottery was used by more people the first season than the second (table 1). This may be because people who participated during the first year were more successful in obtaining permits via the first-come, first-served reservation system, so may have opted to obtain tickets in the same way the second year. Only 11 permits were actually accepted by applicants the second year, as opposed to 35 the first year. Program managers will continue to monitor the lottery efficacy and use rate

to determine if it is a necessary reservation system.

Holidays, such as President's Day, were the most popular application days (table 2). Applicants who requested 3-day permits were less likely to be successful than those who applied for 1- or 2-day permits. The West and South entrances have been the most popular entry points both years, followed by the North and East entrances (figures 1-4). This trend also holds true in the first-come, first-served reservation system.





Snowmobilers occasionally travel across roads that are thermally heated and can't maintain snow cover. NPS Photo-N. Herbert



## First-Come, First-Served Reservations

Once the two week acceptance period was over for the lottery, the first-come, first-served reservation system opened for those who were not successful in the lottery or who wanted to obtain a second permit. Any permits not allocated through the lottery and any cancelled permits were available in real time through <http://recreation.gov>; the public was encouraged to check back in the system throughout the season for openings. Significantly more permits were reserved through this system than were accepted through the lottery.

**Table 3. Total permits reserved, issued, and used, over two seasons. Note the 26% increase in permit utilization rate.**

Total N-CGSAP Permits Reserved and Issued		
Winter Season	2014-2015	2015-2016
Permits Reserved	185	182
Permits Issued	89	135
Utilization Rate	48%	74%

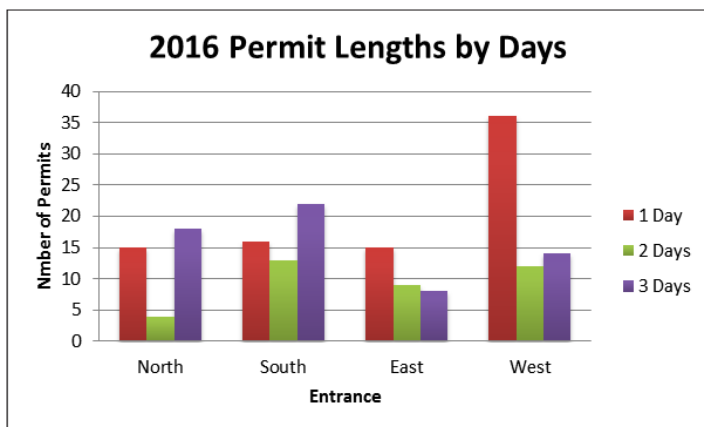


2014-2015 Season					
Entrance	# of Permits	Total # of Days Used	Average Days/Permit	Total Possible # of Days	Occupancy Rate (%)
<b>Total</b>	89	154	1.73	279	55
<b>North</b>	19	32	1.68	61	52
<b>South</b>	30	52	1.73	90	53
<b>East</b>	18	28	1.55	70	40
<b>West</b>	22	42	1.9	58	72

Tables 4 (above) and 5 (below). Overall use statistics, by entrance. The average trip length was longer during the second season and the percent of permit days used rose 20%.

2015-2016 Season					
Entrance	# of Permits	Total # of Days Used	Average Days/Permit	Total Possible # of Days	Occupancy Rate (%)
<b>Total</b>	135	254	1.88	338	75
<b>North</b>	23	45	1.95	83	54
<b>South</b>	34	79	2.32	92	86
<b>East</b>	27	48	1.78	71	86
<b>West</b>	51	82	1.61	92	89





Figures 5. Length of trips (days) by entrance, 2015-2016 season.

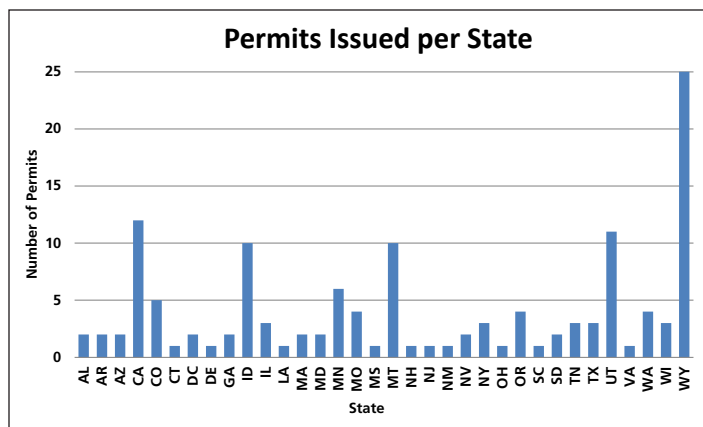


Figure 6. Permits issued, by state, 2015-2016. This figure demonstrates that visitors from across the country participated in the Non-commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program.

## Permit Use Summary

During the program's inaugural year, less than half the permits reserved were actually used. This means 52% of the permits were either no-shows or cancellations. This is likely attributed to low snow levels during that season, which forced roads to open late and close early. In contrast, 74% of reserved permits issued in 2016 were actually used. The N-CGSAP was used by visitors from across the country, although Wyoming was the most common home state (figure 6).

## Yellowstone Snowmobile Education Certification

The 2013 Final Rule authorizing the N-CGSAP stipulates that the permit holder and all snowmobile operators must have passed the YSEC course. This course is available online for free, and certification is valid for two years. The course focuses on basic snowmobile safety while emphasizing Yellowstone-specific concerns regarding riding conditions and resource protection. Students are required to print or electronically save their proof of certification and be able to provide proof of successful completion while operating a snowmobile in Yellowstone. The course is open to the public, and several commercial snowmobile tour providers also encourage their students to take the course as a good pre-trip primer.

## State of Wyoming Support

Wyoming Governor Matthew Mead and the Wyoming State Trails Program provided a substantial grant, as well as the assistance of snowmobile expert Kim Raap of TrailsWork,

Inc., to develop and implement the YSEC. In addition, the state agreed to fund the maintenance of the course through its second year. This commitment to the N-GSAP has been instrumental in the program's success.

## Eppley Institute of Indiana University

After going through the State of Wyoming's bidding process, the State, with NPS agreement, awarded the contract to build, support, and maintain the YSEC course to Indiana University's Eppley Institute (Eppley). Eppley staff created a professional course that is available online 24/7 with excellent student support. Eppley also provided an online interface for NPS staff to confirm student certification. The course and certification documentation are available on both desktop and mobile platforms.

## Course Information

Through a combination of text, videos, interactive graphics, and Yellowstone-specific photography, the YSEC focuses on safety and resource protection. While it is expected operators understand basic snowmobiling best practices, Yellowstone's environment can present unusual challenges for even experienced riders. For instance, it is very common for snowmobile groups to encounter groups of bison using the park's groomed roads for their migration and search for food. It is important that riders give the animals as much room on the roads as possible and avoid chasing or stressing them. Riders also must stay on groomed roads and be especially careful near thermal features. A frequent safety concern is navigating deep snowcoach ruts and areas of dry pavement.



## Course Statistics

The Eppley Institute gathers data on course enrollments, completions, and assessment scores. Table 6 includes data from November 1, 2014 to March 15, 2016.

Student response has been largely positive. Eppley provided a course evaluation questionnaire once students completed their certification. Of particular interest were the responses to the following question:

*“What was the most important thing you learned in this course?”*

Responses to this question were organized into the following specific categories:

- safety
- wildlife
- park requirements
- avalanche safety
- be prepared/use common sense
- weather conditions
- what to wear
- what to bring

Enrollments by Year	
Year	Enrollments
2014-2015	543
2015-2016	589

**Table 6. Enrollees, by season. Average time spent on the course: 1 hour, 8 minutes.**

- location of services
- speed limits
- snowmobile requirements
- what to do when a sled is stuck
- stopping/following distance
- parts of a snowmobile
- preparing for the trip
- riding stance and hand signals
- dangers of thermal features

Eppley has developed a comprehensive report that analyzes the effectiveness of the course and evaluation, which is available upon request from the N-CGSAP Program Manager, Ivan Kowski.



## The Winter Use Adaptive Management Program

The NPS is dedicated to continuing to work with members of the public through the Winter Use Adaptive Management Program. The goals of this program are to:

1. ensure impacts to the park remain within the range predicted by the Winter Use Plan/SEIS,
2. gather additional data regarding the comparability of snowcoach and snowmobile transportation events, and
3. gather additional social and ecological data to improve the management of winter use in Yellowstone.

Working groups were established for wildlife, technology and operations, air and sound quality, human dimensions, and the N-CGSAP. Interested citizens self-selected the groups they wanted to work with. Drawing upon the participants' broad knowledge, program managers worked closely for over a year with this diverse group to implement the N-CGSAP. The working group offered valuable expertise that influenced YSEC course content, lottery information and testing, and metrics to measure the program's success.

## Working Group Members

-  Bruce Austin, public
-  Kennedy Brown, TwoTop Snowmobile Rental, Inc.
-  Jessica Crowder, Wyoming Governor's Office
-  Scott Christensen, Greater Yellowstone Coalition
-  Dave Hodges, public
-  Christine Jourdain, American Council of Snowmobile Associations
-  Kay Lloyd, Washington State Snowmobile Association, Blue Ribbon Coalition, American Council of Snowmobile Associations
-  Deborah Mackey, Yellowstone Year-Round Safaris
-  David McCray, TwoTop Snowmobile Rental, Inc.
-  Jamie McCray, TwoTop Snowmobile Rental, Inc.
-  Bart Melton, National Park Conservation Association
-  Bert Miller, Wyoming State Snowmobile Association
-  Christina Mills, National Park Service
-  Alicia Murphy, National Park Service
-  George Pryich, Wyoming State Snowmobile Association
-  Kim Raap, Trails Work Consulting, State of Wyoming Governor's Office
-  Jeremiah Rieman, State of Wyoming Governor's Office
-  Wade Vagias, National Park Service
-  Jack Welch, Blue Ribbon Coalition



NPS Photo-N. Herbert

## Metrics of Success

The 2013 Final Rule mandates that the impacts to park resources from N-CGSAP tours be no greater than impacts from a comparable number of commercial snowmobile tours. Working group members suggested that using the same indicators found in the Winter Use Plan/SEIS would be the most efficient and practical way to measure impacts. The SEIS evaluation relied on law enforcement citations to track snowmobile impacts. To fully understand impacts from different types of snowmobile operators, NPS should track administrative, commercial, and non-commercial groups. Upon further discussion with law enforcement staff, it is clear that in addition to citations, the NPS should also monitor law enforcement contacts and warnings, as these are much more common interactions.

## Indicators

- Speeding
- Careless Operation
- Leaving the Road
- Impaired Driving
- Permit Violations
- Wildlife Interactions

Program managers review law enforcement statistics throughout the season to ensure snowmobile operators are obeying park rules and regulations, and then evaluate year-end results to determine the program's success. Impact mitigation measures may include updating the YSEC, providing clearer written documentation, providing more information during group check-ins, and other measures as circumstances warrant. Yellowstone's Superintendent retains the right to change or discontinue the N-CGSAP at any time.

## First Year Results

During the N-CGSAP's first year, NPS managers and rangers emphasized education of participants-where possible, counseling at traffic stops replaced the use of citations. The implementation of this program was also a learning process for the rangers, as they adapted to a new type of visitor during winter's controlled environment. It should also be noted that because of the low snow year, most of the park's roads closed up to one and a half months early, resulting in significantly fewer non-commercially guided tours than expected. Regardless of the newness of the program, there were few law enforcement incidents directly

tied to the program and no official citations. Additionally, review of ranger contact logs revealed several slips when snowmobilers walked over ice or snow in their heavy boots; the YSEC has been updated to address this safety issue.

## Second Year Results

Disabled Snowmobile	NPS Employees	1
	Contractors	1
	Commercial Operators	20
Wildlife Harassment	N-CGSAP	1
Motor Vehicle Accident	NPS Employees	3
	Contractors	2
	Commercial Operators	21
	N-CGSAP	2
Snowmobile Off-Road Travel	Contractors	1
	N-CGSAP	4
Permit Violation	NPS Employee	1
	Commercial Operators	1
	N-CGSAP	1
Traffic Violation	Commercial Operators	5
	N-CGSAP	4

Table 7. Citation results for the 2015-2016 winter season.

## Summary of Metrics of Success

Citation data (table 7) indicates N-CGSAP operators are not causing more impact on Yellowstone's resources than commercial operations. Additionally, citations across all user groups are low. N-CGSAP managers will continue to look for ways to improve the program's online course and program communication.

## Second Year Changes

In response to public and staff input, program managers implemented several changes to the N-CGSAP for its second year.

## Printing permits

During the first year, visitors were required to go through <http://recreation.gov>'s web interface to issue and then print their permits. However, there were cases when visitors went through this process without actually using their permits. Once permits are issued, there can be no changes or cancel-





NPS Photo-J. Peaco

lations. Therefore, park staff had difficulty tracking which permits were actually used and which were merely issued. Based on staff feedback, during the second year, check-in staff issued and printed permits themselves, once visitors arrived at entrance stations, to more accurately track which permits were used.

## Cost recovery

The Final Rule stipulates that the N-CGSAP be cost recoverable. The two largest costs associated with the program are staff hours and the YSEC on-going maintenance. Because of the generous grant from the State of Wyoming, the program's first- and second-year costs were largely covered by the \$40/permit fee. However, going forward, that fee structure will not generate enough revenue to cover program costs.

In addition to questions regarding long-term funding for the program, members of the Adaptive Management Program expressed concerns that a per-permit fee encouraged visitors to reserve 3-day permits but not actually use all three days, thus limiting the number of people able to access the park; there were no monetary incentives to only reserve 1- or 2-day trips.

To address both of these concerns, park managers decided to raise the permit fee to \$40 per day beginning in December 2015. The park also allows full refunds for cancellations made one week in advance rather than two weeks in advance, to allow greater flexibility in the reservation process. Second year numbers of occupancy and fee totals indicate this pricing structure was a success.

## Special Thanks

The National Park Service would like to extend appreciation and thanks to the State of Wyoming's Governor Matthew Mead and the Wyoming State Trails Program for program support and assistance.



For more information about the Non-commercially Guided Snowmobile Access Program, visit our website - [www.nps.gov/yell/learn/management/ngsap.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/management/ngsap.htm)



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