



Old Faithful Area Comprehensive Plan

Dear Friends,

Yellowstone National Park (YNP) has begun the process of developing a long range comprehensive plan for the Old Faithful developed area. This plan will focus on protecting the area's resources while responding to changing visitor and resource needs and conditions.

We invite your involvement early in this process to give you an opportunity to assist in developing the comprehensive plan. Your comments will help us protect the fundamental resources and values important to Old Faithful, one of Yellowstone's most visited treasures.

The Old Faithful Area is the premier destination in both Yellowstone National Park and the National Park Service. Recognized world-wide, Old Faithful Geyser draws people from across generations and nationalities to the park, where visitors can see hundreds of geysers and hot springs rise from the Yellowstone caldera within the Upper Geyser Basin. The Old Faithful Inn stands as a sentinel overlooking Old Faithful Geyser, an iconic partnership that exemplifies the National Park Service mission to preserve and protect natural wonders while providing for the benefit and enjoyment of visitors. The wealth of resources in this area has provided connections, both ancient and current, to human occupation and inspiration for thousands of years.

As facilities age and resources change, Yellowstone National Park seeks a plan to guide future decisions regarding preservation of park resources and enhancing visitor needs. Thank you for your participation in this effort.

Suzanne Lewis
Superintendent



A visit to Yellowstone's Old Faithful Area remains an awe-inspiring experience for millions of visitors from around the world every year.



What is the Purpose of the Plan?

This plan will provide a framework for future decisions that:

- Preserve important cultural and natural features and scenery within the Old Faithful developed area.
- Protect wildlife habitat and thermal systems.
- Determine ways to enhance the visitor experience at the Old Faithful Area.
- Establish desired future conditions for the visitor experience and resources within the Old Faithful Area.
- Develop guidelines to respond to changing visitor and resource needs.

Your involvement is important!

Please see the last page for information on how to send your comments or suggestions for consideration in this plan.

Why is this Action Needed?

- **Adaptation to changing thermal features:** The Upper Geyser Basin is constantly changing and contains significant hydrothermal resources, which effect and are affected by nearby buildings and infrastructure.
- **Circulation improvements for vehicles and pedestrians:** Existing circulation systems are confusing and do not fit the needs of visitors who are on foot or are in vehicles. Both visitors and employees often have difficulty finding key features within the area.
- **Visitor Experience:** A high volume of visitors want to experience the geyser basin, which is open and exposed to high elevation climatic conditions where visitors often wait for 90 or more minutes between geyser eruptions. Additionally, visitors walk long distances between parking, structures, and geyser basin features.



What is the Timeline for the Old Faithful Area Comprehensive Plan/Environmental Assessment (EA)?

Project milestones include:

- Public Scoping – May 7 – June 7, 2010
- Public Meetings
 - Old Faithful Warming Hut, May 17, 2010, 6-8 pm
 - Yellowstone Association Headquarters, Park Street, Gardiner, MT, May 18, 2010, 6-8 pm
 - Visitor Contact Station, West Yellowstone, MT May 19, 2010, 6-8 pm
- Preparation of EA – Summer/Fall 2010
- Public Review of EA – Winter 2011
- Analysis of Public Comments – Spring 2011
- Finalization of the Old Faithful Area EA, Comprehensive Plan, and expected announcement of decision – Summer 2011

Resources & Concerns

The Plan/ EA will analyze potential impacts to a number of resources, including:

- Geology, soils, and vegetation
- Wildlife and species of special concern
- Water resources, floodplains, and wetlands
- Cultural resources
- Air quality, night lighting, soundscapes
- Visitor use and experience
- Important scenic resources
- Park operations
- Public health and safety

What are the Plan Objectives?

What does the NPS wish to accomplish with this plan?

Visitor Use

- Provide the visitor with opportunities to experience and be inspired by the Old Faithful Area's resources and values
- Increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the Old Faithful Area's resources
- Improve vehicle and pedestrian circulation and parking

Public Health & Safety

- Seek to manage the Old Faithful Area for the safety of all visitors and employees
 - Reduce vehicle/pedestrian conflicts
 - Address the needs of visitors exposed to open and hot conditions and long distances

Resources

- Protect the Old Faithful Area's cultural, natural, and scenic resources, including:
 - The fragile and dynamic hydrothermal Upper Geyser Basin
 - Wildlife habitat associated with the hydrothermal areas
 - Exceptional cultural resources such as the Old Faithful Inn and the Old Faithful Historic District
 - Protect the Old Faithful Area's naturally-occurring sounds and dark night sky

Park Management/Operations

- Improve visitor services by evaluating facilities for adaptive use



Your Input Counts

Suggestions and comments from the public are solicited during the public scoping period. This is the time when any interested individual, organization, or agency can provide relevant information or suggestions for consideration in this plan. Here are some questions to consider:

- *While visiting the Old Faithful area, what sights, sounds, and experiences are important to you?*
- *What are your additional issues/concerns about the plan that you think we should consider?*
- *Do you have other ideas, comments, or suggestions for us to consider during the development of the Old Faithful Area Plan/EA?*

Written comments may be submitted through the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website, <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>, hand-delivered to the park's headquarters in Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, or mailed to:

Comprehensive Planning & Design
Old Faithful Area Comprehensive Plan
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.

Comments will **not** be accepted by phone or e-mail. We strongly encourage you to submit your comments through PEPC. Simply select "Yellowstone NP" from the drop down box and follow the link for the Old Faithful Comprehensive Plan.

All public comments must be received or postmarked by midnight, June 7th, 2010.



Please note that names and addresses of people who comment become part of the public record. We will make all submissions from organizations, businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses available for public inspection in their entirety. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. Although you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.