



## Cultural Resources

The National Park Service (NPS) conducted a cultural resource survey of the study area (approximately 585 acres) to identify archaeological and historical structural sites that may be affected by the proposed project and would require further consideration under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The NPS is required to take into consideration effects on historic properties, which are defined as significant cultural resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

A total of 46 cultural resources are located within the study area, 31 of which are in the defined Area of Potential Effects, which is the portion of the study area where effects, directly or indirectly, could occur to historic properties from construction of the North Entrance Road. Those effects that are determined to be adverse would require mitigation to resolve. Alternative 2 – the NPS preferred alternative – has the fewest historic properties that would be directly impacted by the project.

Alternative	Total Cultural Resources	Historic Properties and Potential Historic Properties	Direct Impact	Potential Indirect Impact
No Action (1)	8	6	8	0
Center Alignment - NPS Preferred Alternative (2)	21	5	9	12
Old Gardiner Road Alignment (3)	16	8	11	5
Gardner Canyon Alignment (4)	16	8	9	7



View of Ft. Yellowstone and Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel

## Two Highways: Parallel but Intertwined

### Old Gardiner Road and the North Entrance Road

In 1872, Superintendent Nathaniel P. Langford decided that Yellowstone needed wagon roads or the park would “remain unvisited except by the few who are willing to endure the privation and exposure incident to horseback travel.” Federal funding was later secured for a wagon road between Gardiner, Montana, and Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming. Construction of the Old Gardiner Road, the original entrance into the park from the north with access to the Mammoth Hot Springs, was completed in 1879.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was responsible for managing the park’s roads in 1883. Due to the difficulty of traversing the Old Gardiner Road in the snowy seasons, Lt. Dan C. Kingman abandoned the alignment and oversaw the construction of the North Entrance Road through Gardner River Canyon, completed around 1884. The Roosevelt Arch was completed in 1903.

The North Entrance Road consistently required costly maintenance throughout history due to landslides, flooding, and the 1959 earthquake. At times like these, the Old Gardiner Road was occasionally improved and used until the North Entrance Road could be repaired. Following the 2022 flood that destroyed the North Entrance Road, the Park transformed the Old Gardiner Road from a gravel road to a paved, two-lane highway. For now, the Old Gardiner Road has once again become the primary route between Mammoth Hot Springs and Gardiner.



Old Gardiner Road 2022

## Yellowstone: Before the Park

Most of the cultural resources identified during the survey are archeological sites associated with Indigenous occupation of the area, including artifact scatters and sites with architecture such as stone alignments, circles, and cairns. Indigenous artifact scatters are concentrations of flaked stone reflecting the production or rejuvenation of stone tools. Other cultural resources reflect Euroamerican activity, including historical roads, trash scatters, and stone cairns that may represent land boundaries or pathway markers.

Caption: Obsidian projectile points. Left dates 1000-500 years Before Present (BP); right dates 3500-1400 BP.

Citations: James, Thomas R. 2024. Class I Data Inventory And Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey For The North Entrance Road Replacement Project, Yellowstone National Park. Controlled by Yellowstone National Park, Branch of Cultural Resources. On file with the National Park Service, Denver, Colorado.

Anon. n.d. Mammoth to Gardiner High Road National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. On file with the National Park Service, Denver, Colorado.

Culpin, Mary Shivers. 1991. North Entrance Road Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. On file with the National Park Service, Denver, Colorado.

