National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271-9651

(559) 565-3341 phone
(559) 565-3730 fax
http://www.nps.gov/seki

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

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Contact Dana Dierkes (559)565-3131

Preliminary Alternatives Available for Concessions Operations at Kings Canyon National Park

The National Park Service is developing an environmental assessment to evaluate alternatives and impacts related to the future concessions operations at Kings Canyon National Park, which includes the Grant Grove and Cedar Grove areas. The current concessions contract will end October 31, 2011. The NPS is preparing a prospectus for a new contract and would like to hear public comments on the preliminary alternatives that have been developed to date:

Grant Grove Restaurant: The building has been analyzed by structural engineers who have found that significant rehabilitation is required to bring the facility into compliance. Rehabilitation would be more expensive than rebuilding the restaurant, so the park is considering the options below.

1. Rebuild the restaurant in the current location: Under this alternative, food service would be expanded and updated to reflect current visitor desires for food and beverage service. The seating capacity would stay approximately the same. The restaurant menu and style offered would be similar to that of a casual family dining restaurant or a fast casual sandwich/grill service.

2. Reduce seating and move the restaurant to co-locate with the Grant Grove Market: Under this alternative, the current building would be demolished and the restaurant would be moved into part of the market facility, just around the corner from the existing restaurant. A small addition would be made to that building. The seating capacity would decrease from the current level of 128 seats to approximately 45 seats (-65%). The offering would be a sandwich shop or grill service.

3. Reduce seating and move the restaurant to the John Muir Lodge lobby: Under this alternative, the current restaurant building would be demolished, and the restaurant would be moved to the lobby of the John Muir Lodge, approximately ¼ mile to the east. Given the limited amount of space at the lobby, it is likely that restaurant operations would be limited to more of a cafeteria-style or grill service with reduced seating capacity and fewer food & beverage options. Seating capacity would decrease from the current level of 128 seats to 45 seats (-65%). The offering would be a sandwich shop or grill service.

Lodging:

1. Maintain current operations: Under this alternative, no new cabins or lodge rooms would be added, nor would any current cabins or lodge rooms be removed. Overnight

accommodation capacity at Grant Grove would remain unchanged at 36 lodge rooms, five rustic cabins with bath, 24 rustic cabins without bath, and 18 tent cabins.

2. New Tent Cabins and Cabins without Bath: The concessioner would expand the current level of lodging operations at Grant Grove to increase the number of rustic cabins without bath and tent cabins in the Tent City and Wormwood areas. Consequently, there would be roughly 20 additional cabins. These new cabins would reflect the historic character of the area, and would be constructed using materials and construction techniques similar to the current structures. The concessioner would be encouraged to provide additional interpretation of the historical significance of the area.

Grant Grove Concession Employee Housing

1. Maintain Current operations: Under this alternative, the current Wormwood employee housing area would continue to be used, despite its substandard condition.

2. Move summer housing to Cedar Springs: The concessioner would demolish seasonal housing structures at Wormwood, which is approximately 100' from visitor lodging. It would repair the summer trailer pads at Cedar Springs, approximately ½ mile from visitor lodging, to be used instead. This area contains several trailers already and historically was used as NPS employee housing. These trailer pads would be used for seasonal concession employees only, and would be closed during the off-peak season.

Public scoping for the environmental assessment for the Concession Contract Prospectus for Kings Canyon Village Services occurred between November 18 and December 21, 2009. Six comment letters were received from individuals. A summary report of these scoping comments is available at the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment website, http://parkplanning.nps.gov/seki. Under Current Projects, select Concession Contract Prospectus, then Document List, then Scoping Summary Report.

Comments on the preliminary alternatives can be made online at the same website, http://parkplanning.nps.gov/seki. The public may also direct comments regarding this project to the park by sending an e-mail to seki_planning@nps.gov, or by mail or hand delivery to:

Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Attn: Kings Canyon Prospectus Preliminary Alternatives
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271

All comments must be received by October 23, 2010.

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. While you can ask in your comment to have your personal identifying information withheld from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. We will always make submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals.

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