

**COOPERATING COUNTIES'  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
REVISED ALTERNATIVE "E"**

**Criteria Used**

- I. Socio-Economic Impacts
- II. Park Infrastructure
- III. Diversity of Visitor Experience
- IV. Impact on the Resources
  - A. Air
  - B. Sound
  - C. Water
  - D. Wildlife
  - E. Thermal Features
  - F. Trees

**Principles**

The Cooperative Counties are guided by the following principles in formulating their position on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks:

1. Employ adaptive management so the plan evolves to accommodate new scientific information, legislative or regulatory mandates and changing resource conditions throughout the EIS' projected 10-year lifespan;
2. Utilize cooperative decision-making to provide opportunities for elected national, state, county and local governmental officials, as well as advocacy groups, to present their viewpoints. Encourage the National Park Service to build on and expand the relationships it has developed with the Cooperating Agencies. Using this approach will strengthen public understanding, and ultimately acceptance, of management decisions for the Parks;
3. Support sound, scientific research. Existing research, including economic projections, is inadequate and, in some instances, completely lacking on key winter use issues. Therefore, the Counties support funding to fill these crucial gaps;
4. Independent review of scientific research methods and urge NPS to coordinate it's research with independent research firms and/or regional academic institutions;
5. Support the maximum recreational opportunities that are compatible with this natural resource. A full range of appropriate winter recreational activities should be offered that reflects the individual use-numbers of each;

6. Utilize national EPA standards for the range of air constituents, including carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, methyltertbutyl ether and nitrous oxides) and particulates;
7. Address national standards for excessive sound limits;
8. Accurate monitoring and strict enforcement of speed, air and sound limits;
9. Strict adherence to applicable water and solid waste quality standards.

The Cooperating Agencies' Revised Alternative "E" emphasizes the protection of wildlife and other natural resources, while permitting park visitors access to a range of winter recreational experiences. It uses an adaptive planning approach that allows the results of new and on-going research and monitoring to be incorporated, but with independent third party review by the National Academy of Sciences.

Using criteria stated within Executive Order 11644 (as amended) and its implementation regulations (36 CFR 2.18), monitoring results demonstrating disturbance to wildlife or damage to park resources would be cause to implement actions for mitigating these conditions (e.g. closure to snowmobile use). The Cooperating Agencies' Revised Alternative "E" calls for the institution of an advisory committee to make recommendations about standards for addressing a range of issues. Local, county, state and federal agencies would participate in this committee, as well as representatives from the snowmobile industry and environmental groups.

#### ***Actions Common To All Three Parks***

This alternative would be a commitment to the development of acceptable measures for mitigating impacts, consistent with criteria in 36 CFR 2.18.

- Encourage partnerships and public participation by establishing an advisory committee (established by the Secretary of the Interior under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.) The Committee would recommend implementation of EPA emission standards as they are developed and assist with the development of new sound standards for all oversnow vehicles for the Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway.

The committee would also advise the National Park Service on scientific data regarding the long-term visitor carrying capacity of the parks, air and water quality issues, as well as the phasing and implementation of these standards by the National Park Service.

The committee would include representatives from: cooperating agencies for this Winter Use Plan/EIS; the National Park Service; and other federal, state government agencies; and from environmental groups and snowmachine interests.

The Committee shall utilize the technical expertise of all relevant sources including, but not limited to, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency; the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; state departments of environmental quality, game and fish and other natural resource agencies.

- Establish a nighttime closure into the Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway from 10 PM to 6 AM to promote public safety, improve trail maintenance and protect wildlife.
- Require the sale of only Bio-Base fuels (10% ethanol-blend fuel and synthetic low-emission oil) within the Parks beginning with the 2001-02 winter season. All commercial snowmobile operators in West Yellowstone, Montana, Jackson, Wyoming and at the other entrances would also be required to use Bio-Base fuels for all snowmobiles they send into the Parks.
- Support strict enforcement of the posted speed limit or a maximum speed limit of 45 mph.
- Establish an interim visitor carrying capacity, based on use patterns related to the past 7-year average, to address overcrowding concerns and trail maintenance issues.
- In order to better utilize existing facilities, reduce impacts on the park's environmental resources, and assure a quality visitor experience, visitor services should be dispersed throughout the park (e.g., Canyon, Grants Village, etc.)

#### ***Actions for Yellowstone National Park***

- Provide expanded non-motorized opportunities/trails away from main motorized routes by providing regular skier shuttles from Old Faithful and West Yellowstone to non-motorized areas away from these developed sites.
- Continue automobile access to northern attractions in the Tower, Roosevelt and Mammoth areas. This alternative would prohibit plowed access anywhere else in Yellowstone National Park during the winter.
- Continue scientific studies and monitoring related to park resources and winter visitor use, to be subsequently reviewed by an independent, third party. If these scientific studies and subsequent reviews substantiate that human presence or activities have a detrimental effect on park resources that could not otherwise be mitigated, the closure of selected areas of the park to

visitor use (including sections of roads) could result. Any closure would require a minimum of one year's notice.

- Restrict non-motorized uses in wildlife winter range to travel on designated trails only (zones 8 & 9).
- Address congestion and visual concerns regarding snowmobile parking at Old Faithful by relocating it away from the Visitor Center area. Reserved parking in the Visitor Center area for snowcoaches only. All parking will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Require all West Gate entrance passes to be pre-purchased at local outlets or at the Public Lands Information Center in West Yellowstone. Also promote the sale of these pre-paid passes at all park entrances.
- Restrict the length of the winter use season to the period from mid-December to mid-March.

#### ***Actions for Grand Teton and the Parkway***

- Provide additional non-motorized opportunities/trails away from main motorized routes by expanding non-motorized access within the interior of Grand Teton National Park.
- Support preservation of a route for the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail on a newly established year-round off-road path from the East entrance of Grand Teton National Park to Flagg Ranch.
- Support continued motorized use on Jackson Lake (snowmobile and snowplane).