# IMPACT OF BANNING SNOWMOBILES INSIDE NATIONAL PARKS ON SMALL BUSINESS

## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TAX, FINANCE, AND EXPORTS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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# THE IMPACT OF BANNING SNOWMOBILES INSIDE NATIONAL PARKS ON SMALL BUSINESS

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**THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2000**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TAX, FINANCE AND EXPORTS,
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
*Washington, DC.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m., in room 2360, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Donald A. Manzullo [chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Chairman MANZULLO. We are going to start our Subcommittee hearing.

Congressman Stupak is here. Bart, if you want to go up here to the witness table, we are going to start with you. And then as Senator Craig Thomas may be coming in now, or he will probably come with the second panel, at which time we will interrupt the testimony of the second panel to accommodate the time of the Senator.

Why is this Subcommittee, and this member in particular, who represents a medium Rust Belt city in the flat Midwest, concerned on this hot July day about snowmobiling in our national parks? The reason is quite simple: there are more than 4 million snowmobilers in North America, including 58,000 in Illinois. Plus, snowmobiling contributes over $9.2 billion a year to the U.S. and Canadian economies and provides 65,000 jobs, mostly in small businesses.

Many of my constituents are avid snowmobilers who travel great distances to tour our national parks. Ninety-five percent of snowmobilers consider it family recreation. They spend an average of $120 per day. The Department of Interior did not take into account, as required by law, the impact of the proposed snowmobile ban, upon small businesses, when it made its grandiose press announcement last April in defiance of SBREFA, which we worked very hard to pass, and which has been totally ignored by this Federal agency. This proposal will hurt a variety of small businesses in the rural towns adjacent to national parks. In addition, the snowmobile ban inside national parks has the potential of hurting small businesses like dozens of snowmobile dealers in northern Illinois, Seward Screw Products in Seward, Illinois, which makes pistons that go into snowmobile brake systems, and Bergstrom Skegs of Rockford, which manufactures after-market traction and control products for snowmobiles.

The purpose of the hearing is to put real, live faces on the small businesses that would be negatively impacted by such a snowmobile ban. Until the Department of Interior recognizes and deals with these negative impacts, at the very minimum this ban should be put on an indefinite hold.

I now yield for an opening statement from my good friend from New York, which has a tremendous number of snowmobiles and is also the home to my good friend the ranking minority member, Mrs. McCarthy

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I used to go to Vermont almost every single weekend and a lot of times when I was not skiing, I was snowmobiling also.

Thank you for scheduling this hearing to discuss the economic impact the national parks ban on snowmobiles will have on local businesses. I would like to thank Congressman Stupak as well as our second panel of witnesses for taking time out of their busy schedule to be here with us this morning. The recent decision by the National Park Services to ban snowmobiles from national parks raises some interesting questions.

From an environmental perspective, I believe it is difficult to contest some of the arguments made concerning the pollution from snowmobiles. It is my understanding that up to one-third of the fuel delivered to snowmobile engines goes straight through and out the tailpipe without being burned. Furthermore, lubricating oil is mixed directly into the fuel and is expelled as part of the exhaust. Obviously, this is a concern.

However, I am also concerned that the interests of small businesses surrounding national parks were neglected when a decision was reached to ban snowmobiles from the parks. Moreover, I am concerned that the decision to completely ban snowmobiles from national parks is a response of lax enforcement of current laws dealing with snowmobile use. Environmental protection is a concern for many of us; however, I believe the interests of all affected parties need to be taken into consideration as well.

Therefore, I look forward to the testimony from our witnesses, and I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you, Congresswoman McCarthy. Mr. Stupak, we are going to enforce the 5-minute rule because we want to get through here as far as we can before the tyranny of the bells takes place with multiple votes. It is a privilege to have you here. The Congressman and I were elected together in 1992. He represents the northern part of the great State of Michigan, including the Upper Peninsula. Congressman Stupak.

## STATEMENT OF THE HON. BART STUPAK, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. STUPAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Congresswoman McCarthy. Good to see you again.

Let me just summarize my statement. I am actually in a markup. I am going to have to run down there.

But let me—the U.S. Department of the Interior in a quote from Assistant Secretary Barry when they made the announcement said, "The time has come for the National Park Service to pull in its welcome mat for recreational snowmobiling. Snowmobiles are noisy,

antiquated machines that are no longer welcome in our national parks. The snowmobile industry has had many years to clean up their act and they haven't." .

That statement there, the arrogant attitude that they have, because I don't think they ever have been on a snowmobile—they obviously know nothing about the industry. They obviously did not consult anyone in the industry. They obviously have never been to northern Michigan. They obviously—really, really I don't know about you, Mr. Chairman, but really got me going on this issue because they really have not looked at all at what the industry has done for many years and if they even knew their own regulations.

At Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, which is one of four parks in my district, we have restrictions on where snowmobiles can go. In my district, this park, or ban if you will, would ban snowmobiling on 10 miles, 10 miles, 10 of the most critical miles, because it is probably the most beautiful scenery in our district. There are other parts of that national park where snowmobiles do not go, like on the dunes that are on Lake Superior. We do not go on them because snowmobilers are good, conscientious people. They do not want to do anything to harm the environment. They do not want to do anything to degrade a national park.

So when the ban came out a number of years ago, based on an executive order in 1972 and 1977, snowmobilers, the local park people, got together and they said there are certain areas we should stay off. We do not want to pollute. We do not want to degrade the environment. We do not want to harm critical, sensitive environmental areas. So the local parks like Pictured Rocks got together and put forth where they would move their snowmobiles back and forth and they developed trails. And it has been a great recreational enjoyment for people in my district, people from your district or New York, wherever, who come to my district and snowmobile, and it has been a great activity for everyone.

It has been a huge economic impact for my district. I am pleased that you have invited two of my constituents, Mr. Gerou and Mr. Stein, who will testify later. Mr. Gerou could not be here at the last minute, something came up. But he actually, Stan Gerou actually owns two motels and a snowmobile trail grooming business in Munising and he has a contract with Pictured Rocks to groom the 10 miles of trail. To lose that contract I am sure would be devastating economically to him.

[Mr. Gerou's statement may be found in appendix.]

But even Grant Peterson, the local superintendent of the park, when we have talked to him, he said I have never, never in all the time I have been here ever had any problem with snowmobilers. They do not go out there and rip up the place. They have been very good about staying on the 10 miles that we restrict them to. They are not on the dunes. He has never seen any economic or environmental damage done in the Pictured Rocks National Park and he was beside himself when they made this announcement.

And the announcement just basically said we are going to pull the welcome mat. They did not explain to the American people that there are certain parks like Pictured Rocks that have special regulation. You just cannot make an announcement and overrule the rules and regulations in these 27 special parks. Again, it shows the

arrogant attitude of the National Park Service for some Assistant Secretary to just say we are going to ban this without really knowing and following the rule of law. If you want snowmobilers to follow the rule of law, I think we should start with the Park Service and Mr. Barry, and he should follow the rule of law. So the national parks must first issue a new rule to overturn the special regulations and just cannot simply make an announcement and expect it to carry the weight of law.

There is a process to follow here and they haven't followed it. They have not even published a proposed rule or regulation in the Federal Register. They have not taken comments. So anything this Committee can do to block this ill-conceived attitude of the Park Service we certainly would appreciate it.

I do not blame the local folks. They have worked well with us this northern Michigan. But you just give some of these folks out here who, because of pressure from some environmental groups who have never been probably to northern Michigan and have never been on a snowmobile, to start saying that they are environmentally destroying the area and they are antiquated machines and they are pollution, they just really do not understand the situation.

So I appreciate you holding this hearing. I see my time is up and thank you again.

[Mr. Stupak's statement may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you, Congressman Stupak, for that very compelling firsthand testimony.

Our second guest on our first panel, Congressman Collin Peterson, from the State of Minnesota. We have worked together on a lot of ag issues, especially dairy, where we have learned that milk is thicker than blood.

Mr. PETERSON. Hope we have a better result on this.

Chairman MANZULLO. Yes. Congressman Peterson, we are trying to impose the 5-minute rule, please.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. COLLIN PETERSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really want to thank you for your leadership and recognizing the aspect of this that sometimes gets forgotten and holding this hearing on the National Park Service's ban on snowmobiles and the impact on small businesses. I appreciate the chance to be here and associate myself with what I heard of my colleague's remarks here from Michigan.

I represent the Seventh District of Minnesota, which is the home of Arctic Cat and Polaris Snowmobiles, but in addition to that I was one of the few Members of Congress who were a professional snowmobile race driver back in my younger years before I came to my senses. It is a great start. And for those of us that are up in the cold country in the wintertime there is not a whole lot to do. We can go ice fishing, but that gets boring after a while, and snowmobile riding is one of the great pastimes that we have and we take offense when people monkey with it.

To say that this industry has an important economic impact on local communities and small businesses in my district would be a dramatic understatement. In Minnesota alone the snowmobile in-

dustry is estimated to generate over a billion dollars of economic impact. Much of this activity is through small businesses in my district that supply manufacturer parts and service and the nearly 200 small business dealers that sell and service the machines manufactured in my district.

Small businesses such as Automan Engineering, Product Research and Design, Detroit Lakes Manufacturing, Straight River Manufacturing, and dozens more small machine and welding shops throughout the Seventh District do business with Arctic Cat and Polaris. In turn, these small businesses are able to maintain jobs and generate economic activity within the local communities in my district.

When I first was elected we had a big shortage of jobs in my district. Now, in a lot of these small communities, the problem is we can't find enough people to fill out those jobs and one of the reasons is the tremendous activity within the snowmobile manufacturing area.

The snowmobile industry also means jobs for rural communities and small businesses because it directly employs about 10,000 people throughout the Snow Belt. Over half these employees are in Minnesota and most of them in my district. And indirectly job creation is estimated apparently at tens of thousands nationwide. Snowmobile use generates positive economic activity, as I said, through machine sales and service, but also tourism. Nationwide, snowmobilers spend over $9 billion in direct expenditures for the sport.

In the Seventh District of Minnesota and many other communities across the Snow Belt this direct support is for small businesses. Cafes, motels, resorts, fuel stations and other local businesses receive the benefit of increased economic activity in the wintertime because of this sport.

Often, this additional revenue comes during a time of the year when the other businesses have been reduced because of obviously the weather situation. Whether directly through the manufacturers or indirectly through tourism, the snowmobile industry is a critical cog in the economic wheel of the Seventh District of Minnesota and other areas throughout the Snow Belt.

Although rural communities too often are left behind in the recent national economic prosperity and small businesses have struggled to maintain their viability, I am pleased to report that the snowmobile industry has been a bright spot for the Seventh District and other areas in the Nation because they have provided a reliable source of economic activity for several of those communities that I mentioned, and as I said, the unemployment rates remain very low throughout my district partly because of this industry.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, any activity affecting the health and well-being of snowmobile demand and use affects my rural communities and small businesses. The proposed snowmobile ban by the U.S. Park Service is such an action. The Park Service decision to ban snowmobiles from our national parks in my opinion was totally arbitrary and without any factual basis. A complete and scientific review of the environmental impact was not completed before the proposed action, and I think that this reckless proposal failed to

consider the impact that such a ban would have on the workers and small businesses throughout the United States.

You know, whatever they are trying to accomplish here, if they really think that this congestion and pollution is a problem, I would suggest that cars are a much bigger problem than snowmobiles, and if this is what they want to do, what they ought to really be looking at is banning cars in Yellowstone Park, because that is doing a lot more damage to Yellowstone Park and these other areas than snowmobiles are.

So implementing an arbitrary ban on snowmobile use within our national park would have a devastating impact on small businesses in north and western Minnesota and the Snow Belt. I think the other thing that worries us is that this is just the tip of the iceberg and that the next thing that you are going to see is that they are going to want to ban snowmobiles in all of the Federal land, Forest Service land, BLM land, and the next time is going to be ATVs, all-terrain vehicles. They are going to want to try to ban those from those areas. This is bad enough, but I am very, very concerned about the precedent this would set and the kind of things that would come in the future which would have even a bigger negative economic impact.

So thanks for your leadership. We look forward to working with you.

Chairman MANZULLO. I appreciate that. I have just a couple of questions to both Members of Congress. Did anybody from the Department of Interior contact you in advance of this ruling coming out?

Mr. PETERSON. Not me.

Mr. STUPAK. No, Mr. Chairman. In fact, we have an internal document that we were able to obtain from the National Park Service and what they did, basically they had their own little group that got together and decided to put forth this ban and they talk about the meetings they had and who was there. No one was from the snowmobile industry, no Members of Congress.

Chairman MANZULLO. Could you state who was there? Is it a lot of people who were there?

Mr. STUPAK. Representatives from the parks. They did not list every one of them. I will be happy to share this memo with you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Any outside groups besides the parks?

Mr. STUPAK. The Blue Water Network Petition, which is an environmental group associated with 60 other environmental organizations.

Chairman MANZULLO. The environmental organizations were invited to come, but the people actually impacted were not invited to come to this meeting?

Mr. STUPAK. The way I read it, the recommendations and results of the 2-day service workshop on snowmobile policy for the National Park Service were held; 55 people from the Department and National Park Service, including representatives of 33 of the 42 national parks in which snowmobile use occurs, and some other groups in here. They mostly talked about Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. It appears from this memo that is where the emphasis came from and some videotapes on wildlife that they had

in these two parks, and from that the conclusion was that we should ban snowmobile use.

Chairman MANZULLO. I would like to have that document, plus your testimony, be made a part of the record. Perhaps we should have a second hearing before the Subcommittee and bring in the National Park Service and the people who feel that they can make regulations without talking to the people which are impacted by them.

Mrs. McCarthy.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, again, for the testimony. Bart, you and I talked about this a little bit last night, and you actually had some what you felt would be solutions or at least how we could work through this. I was wondering if you could share that with us.

Mr. STUPAK. Sure. The snowmobile organizations, throughout the United States and especially in northern Michigan, if there is a problem, like say at Pictured Rocks, with snowmobiling, let's work with them, work the solution out. Let's allow the local supervisors and park personnel to work on any regulations or needs that they have to work out.

As I said, in Pictured Rocks it is a huge park in my district. There is only 10 miles that snowmobilers, that the Park Service agreed they could use. To now pull the rug on those 10 miles, or the welcome mat if you will, just does not make any sense. So instead of having snowmobilers going where they are welcome in the national park, so what are you going to do? Say no snowmobiles are there? How are you going to enforce it? You will not find the snowmobilers going only on the 10 miles; they will go everywhere, even over the critical and sensitive areas.

So number one, let the snowmobilers and the people work it out. Number two, those parks that actually have these rules and regulations, let's review them. Number three, if there is environmental damage, put forth the evidence and let's discuss it with the snowmobile groups. Number four, let's look at the economic impact to our communities and our areas before you start making these bans.

That is really part of the purpose and mission of the national parks. Not only do they have to protect the parks and the national forests and all of that, but they have to have use and access. And when you are up in Munising, you get 2 to 300 inches of snow a year; the only way you are going to have access is basically through snowmobiles. And if it is restricted to 10 miles, it has worked out well for us. As I said, Grant Peterson, the local supervisor, had never had troubles with snowmobilers, no environmental ecological damage to our park. And for someone in Washington to get together because there is a concern about Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons to withdraw the whole system is just ludicrous.

Mr. PETERSON. Could I—Arctic Cat has been—is working on new technology, I think all manufacturers are going to four-stroke engines. That is happening in the outboard engine area as well. And they, last year, took a big portion of their four-strokes and moved them into Yellowstone in their concession there. So they have been moving as fast—actually faster than the agreement was to try to get ahead of this pollution problem.

So I think the industry is trying to work on this, but my own view of what is going on is that this has nothing to do with pollution. These people do not want motorized activity in these parks. That is what this is about. Except their cars to get there, you know. But they do not want ATVs. They do not want snowmobiles. They want—this is a whole different attitude. They want this wilderness experience. We have been fighting this in the Voyageurs National Park and BWCA in Minnesota for years where they are trying to ban motor vehicles and snowmobiles and float planes and everything else.

So that is really at bottom of what is going on with this Blue Water outfit, whatever their name is. They are a bunch of environmental groups and they are really—they are concerned about pollution, but the bottom thing that they are really after is getting motorized traffic all out of these parks. And eventually it is going to be BLM land, Forest Service land, and the whole works because that is what they want.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Following up with that, and I want to go back to the papers that you had, Bart, as far as—and something that you said, Congressman Peterson, as far as there was no scientific proof, no—the impact study hadn't been done before all of these regulations came down?

Mr. PETERSON. Well, as I understand what happened in Yellowstone, one of the interesting things is that Yellowstone was exempted from this regulation, as I understand it. So this does not apply to Yellowstone, which is where the——

Chairman MANZULLO. But as part of the overall scheme to include it.

Mr. PETERSON. Yes, apparently there is a lawsuit going on or some kind of a deal, whatever it was. Where a lot of this started when these snowmobiles start up in the parking lot at Yellowstone, there are 7 or 800 of them and they are idling getting ready to go for the day and they went in and monitored and did the testing right there. They did not do it out on the trail.

So you could—again, I think they were setting this thing up to get the conclusion that they wanted, because they had a different agenda that they were trying to accomplish. So the way we view this, there has not been any kind of a scientific look at this that is fair in our opinion. And what they are doing is they are using this 1972 executive order to use as the reason, for the basis for doing this. I don't know that anybody envisioned in 1972 that this was going to be what the outcome of that executive order was.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. I would just like to follow up with one thing. For many years during the summer, my husband and I used to go fishing. Now, with that obviously we had to go out onto the beach. We got our permits, we went through all the testing. And for many years it was just a number of us that fished. We would be on the shores of the beaches and it was absolutely wonderful.

And then, of course, as word leaked out that more people could go on the beach, then we saw these younger people, unfortunately, start doing damage to the dunes. That is when we had the Long Island Beach Buggy Association. A number of us that were concerned about this started regulating just those that came onto the beach ourselves because we did not want them to ruin it for us.

And I think that is something that unfortunately happens all the time. And as Bart had said, my concern would be if we closed down these trails, and you think—certainly I am concerned about the small businesses that are in the area, you are going to have your snowmobilers go out there and they are going to find their ways because, you know, they go out at night. We certainly did. But we did follow trails mainly for safety issues.

So hopefully we can work something out to make it conducive for everybody. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. So you had a beach buggy?

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Yes.

Chairman MANZULLO. And you used to race snowmobiles? Okay. I have just one question. Collin, do you have any national parks in your congressional district?

Mr. PETERSON. No, I do not.

Chairman MANZULLO. But in an adjoining congressional district?

Mr. PETERSON. Yes, it is close to me. Voyageurs National Park.

Chairman MANZULLO. Congressman Stupak, you have four?

Mr. STUPAK. I have four, Mr. Chairman. I have Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore down by Traverse City. Snowmobiles are not allowed there because it is basically dunes areas. We know that; we respect that. We have Pictured Rocks. We have Isle Royal. You couldn't get a snowmobile out there, because it is in the middle of Lake Superior, if you wanted to. And Keweenaw National Park, which has probably on average 350 inches of snow every year. That is all owned by private and the village of Calumet in the area and there is no real Federal landholding there, so they cannot restrict us there.

Chairman MANZULLO. Are there any state parks in your areas that restrict motorized vehicles?

Mr. PETERSON. I have a lot of state parks and you know while they are restricted to the extent that you have to go on trails and so forth, which is the way it should be, I do not have any where they have banned the use of motorized vehicles of any kind, other than to put them on trails.

Mr. STUPAK. I have lots of state parks, and again, in the critical dunes areas, which are in Pictured Rocks and Sleeping Bear, and other parts of Michigan on the Lake Michigan side, Lake Superior side and even on the Lake Huron side, they do ban the snowmobiles and we respect that. We are happy to do it. We work with the parks, be it the state, local, and Federal folks because we do not want to do anything which would harm the environment. So we do have some restrictions placed on them and everyone abides by those restrictions.

Mr. PETERSON. Plus the trail system, and I assume you have it in Michigan too. We have a tremendous trail system in Minnesota that when I was in the legislature I helped establish and fund the grooming. It not only makes a better situation in the park, it is a better deal for private landowners because it puts the people on a trail and they are not out running all over their fields, and it is a safety issue. They are not running into fences, running into the ditches. We have had a lot of people in Minnesota over the years killed because they have run into a barbed wire fence or something.

So I mean the system we have got works. It makes a lot of sense. The problem is, as I say, you have people that just do not like these vehicles and have a different agenda.

Chairman MANZULLO. Are there any links between state parks and the national park systems where the trails come together?

Mr. STUPAK. Oh, yeah.

Mr. PETERSON. Sure, and between us and Canada I have been dealing with up in my Lake of the Woods area, where they closed down the border stations. The biggest issue has been how to get these snowmobilers back and forth in this remote area. We finally put in video phones and we have been having trouble making them work when it is 40 below. But we have got not only hooked up between private and public and state, we also have trail systems hooked up between us and Canada.

Mr. STUPAK. The trails are all connected and run across the Upper Peninsula, Lower Peninsula, through towns, private land.

Chairman MANZULLO. So to ban the trails in the National Park System would interrupt the state trails.

Mr. STUPAK. Exactly.

Chairman MANZULLO. So it would be major links that would be eliminated in the whole system.

Mr. STUPAK. It very well could be. It depends on where the links are.

Chairman MANZULLO. Here is Senator Thomas. You have always been great at timing.

Mr. STUPAK. I will make sure that you get this memo, the one that I referred to.

Chairman MANZULLO. Senator Thomas, we are under the 5-minute rule and you came just in time.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. CRAIG THOMAS, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WYOMING**

Senator THOMAS. Well, our darned voting interrupts the thing. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be here. I am glad that your Committee is taking a look at this effort on the part of the Park Service to ban the use of snowmobiles in a number of parks, and I am pleased to have a chance to talk about that. I am chairman of the Park Subcommittee in the Senate, a native of Cody, Wyoming, right outside of Yellowstone Park, so parks have been part of my life forever.

I am concerned about it because of the impact it can have, of course, on the gateway communities. I am concerned about it also because it is my belief that parks have at least two purposes. One is to preserve the resource, the other is to provide for a pleasant visit for the people who own the parks, and that is the taxpayers of this country.

So what is really interesting to me and concerning me is the process more than anything. The unilateral decision on the part of the Park Service to ban snowmobiles is troubling for a number of reasons, I think. Basically there are two: One is that the park, by their own admission, has not managed the use of these machines. It has gone on in some cases as much as 20 years without any management on the part of the Park Service. And the other, of course, is that some of the information they use in terms of science

involved, this does not seem to be accurate. There have been no standards set by EPA or any of the other agencies which the manufacturers of snow machines indicate they would be willing to do if they knew where they had to go and before they invested their money.

So, really, that is really the issue here. We have no real idea of what the impacts may or may not be or how they can be changed. There has been no attempt, particularly on the part of the parks—for instance, in Yellowstone there is an opportunity you could separate the machines from cross country skiers so that if they were conflicting you could do that. And you can manage those things, and that is what the park is supposed to do is manage this resource.

So I think the alternative that they have chosen is simply to say that we are not going to do that any more. And, of course, in the instance that you are concerned about it does have a substantial impact on the economy of the surrounding gateway communities, plus of course the snow machine is a fairly large industry and in some States has a good deal of—I want to say, also, that in addition to the economics of it, I am very concerned about the access question.

We have seen a lot of that in this administration, whether it be parks, whether it be roadless areas, whether it be Antiquities Act or the purchase of more Federal lands, there seems to be an effort, a movement by this administration to replace their present legacy with one of Theodore Roosevelt kind of thing and reduce access to public lands.

I live in a state where half of the state belongs to the Federal Government, and, obviously, my first priority is to help maintain those resources but I am also committed to the notion that they can be used and maintained at the same time, and that is what they are for.

So I would just hope that we would urge the Park Service to move forward in finding ways. Take some time. We have an amendment—I am not sure we will push it on the Interior bill—which says here is some money, take some time and study this thing and see what impacts it has, not only on the surrounding communities, what impacts it really has on the resource—there is very much a question about that—and certainly take a look at how it can be managed so that it could continue to exist to give people access without damaging the resource.

So, really, that is, Mr. Chairman, that is about the size of it. And as I say, I think I hear all the time, well, we have lots of other places you can use machines, and that is true, the forests and so on. But this is simply a movement into an area that I think is not the right thing for agencies to do, and that is just to make unilateral, knee-jerk decisions here in Washington rather than going through some of the alternatives that are available so that that could continue.

So thank you very much for the chance to be here.

[Sen. Thomas's statement may be found in appendix.]

Mrs. McCarthy. Thank you, Senator. The testimony that we heard from our colleagues was interesting. Let me state that I am an environmentalist, but I will say also that I also know these

groups work very hard because, let's face it, if we are going to take these trails and damage them, those that do snowmobiling will take away the beauty that actually is why they are in there.

So I think it was mentioned earlier before you got here that we should have a full Committee hearing and delve into this, but apparently time is of the essence if this was a proclamation that was put down. Is this taking effect immediately?

Chairman MANZULLO. There will be proposed regulations coming out in September, but this Subcommittee is doing what the National Park Service should have been doing all along: getting input from the people who are impacted.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. But we will have to take care of this before this next winter comes so it will not impact our small businesses. We will work it out one way or the other. I think there is certainly room for everyone to be accommodated and I think that is what we should be doing, especially on the Federal Government level. We have to take the interests of the local people, certainly people that want to go into the woods, which is absolutely beautiful, and, yes, working with the manufacturers because I think if they are willing to come up with machines that certainly are in better condition and have less emissions as far as air pollution we will try to work with them also.

So I am looking forward—hopefully you will get some money into the Interior Appropriations that we can look into this and actually have evidence one way or the other on deciding this issue. I thank you, sir.

Chairman MANZULLO. Senator, did anybody from the National Park Service ever contact you or your office with regard to banning snowmobiling in the National Park Service?

Senator THOMAS. Not really. We have sort of a unique thing going on in Wyoming in which there has been over the last year and a half a winter use study going on in Teton and Yellowstone Parks, brought about partially because of some suits and so on, and it had to do with the movement of buffalo and, you know, whatever. And so that was part of it. And during the course of this, before that was completed and indeed before even all the statements that had been submitted had had a chance to be reviewed, and we worked hard to get a cooperative agency thing in here for local governments, before they even had a chance to do it, frankly, an Assistant Secretary at Interior announced that they would ban use of snow machines in parks.

So the answer to your question is no.

Chairman MANZULLO. Congressman Thune.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Chairman, I do not have any questions at this point. Thanks.

Chairman MANZULLO. Okay. Senator, we thank you for coming.

Senator THOMAS. It has been my pleasure.

Chairman MANZULLO. Let us know what we can do on this side. Do you have a further question?

Mrs. MCCARTHY. No, no.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you very much.

Senator THOMAS. Thank you. Stay in touch, please.

Chairman MANZULLO. Let's have the second panel come up and we will get started there.

Okay. We have our second panel here. Let me briefly introduce everybody. From my right to the left is Kevin Collins, Legislative Representative from the National Parks Conservation Association; then Dr. James Abbott, President of the University of South Dakota; Clyde Seely, owner of the Three Bear Lodge and West Yellowstone Conference Hotel, West Yellowstone, Montana; Bob Stein, owner of Alger Falls Motel in Munising, Michigan. Is that right?

Mr. STEIN. Munising.

Chairman MANZULLO. This is in Mr. Stupak's district. And John Lyon, owner of J&J Sport in Sycamore, just outside of my district, but in the Speaker's district.

We will start first with Mr. Collins from the NPCA. Thank you for coming and we are adhering to the 5-minute rule, so if the gavel comes down you have 20 seconds to sum up.

**STATEMENT OF KEVIN COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE, NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am Kevin Collins, with the National Parks Conservation Association, and I request that in addition to my own written testimony, testimony from Peter Morton, who is a Ph.D. national resource economist with the Wilderness Society and also testimony from some folks from West Yellowstone, Montana, who could not be here today, be included in the record.

Chairman MANZULLO. We will include that.

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you. As the only witness here today who represents the other side of the argument, I will try my best to summarize the main points that many of us believe are important on this issue.

Today's hearing looks specifically at the impact of snowmobile restrictions on small businesses. We believe that it is the primary mission and concern of the National Park Service to protect and preserve national parks and we believe that that ought to be the primary concern of Congress as well. We do not dismiss the impact on small businesses or large businesses for that matter. But in our opinion, the first concern ought to be for the protection of the national parks.

Let me say that I believe that the snowmobile manufacturers have consciously decided to exaggerate the economic impact that restrictions on snowmobiles in national parks will have. The International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association has an extensive Web site that lists their position and various facts. They say that West Yellowstone, Montana, quote, will close down if the park transitions to a snowcoach economy. I think that is a fairly outlandish claim and I think if you look at the letters from businesspeople in West Yellowstone, you will be inclined to agree.

But they then go on to claim that, quote, the phenomenon will repeat itself 27 times across our Nation, creating wintertime ghost towns across America. I think that is an extraordinary exaggeration.

Let me try to correct some of the misstatements that I think have been made today. The National Park Service has not taken a unilateral action to ban snowmobiles. As the chairman noted,

there is a proposed rule that will be released by the Park Service. It is my understanding that that rule will look specifically at each of the 28 some national parks that currently have authorized use, and will deal with each of them and their specific circumstances individually.

There are really only three or four national parks at which snowmobiling plays a significant part in the local economy, and there is really no place where snowmobiling inside the park is the only recreational snowmobiling opportunity.

Congressman Stupak spoke eloquently about Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and it is currently true that Pictured Rocks sees a fair amount of snowmobile use, 26,000 snowmobiles a year, but that pales in comparison to the almost 300,000 snowmobiles that are used and registered in the state. And those people, according to the Association of Manufacturers, those people drive about 114 million miles on their snowmobiles just in the state. It is amazing.

The state has 6,000 miles of snowmobile trails outside of the national parks and the situation really is the same all around the country. According to the American Council of Snowmobile Associations, there are about 130,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails specifically for snowmobiles. There are an additional hundreds of thousands of acres of Forest Service lands, state lands that are open to snowmobiles and other uses.

Of that, there are less than 700 miles of roads open to snowmobiles in national parks. I find it hard to believe that prohibiting snowmobiling on just 700 miles of road is going to create winter ghost towns around the country.

I think it is important to note that the town of West Yellowstone, which has been cited and will be cited later today, as one that would be greatly impacted by any changes in regulation at the park, is clearly divided on the snowmobile issue. Many business owners believe that the removal of snowmobiles from the park will provide economic diversification and actual growth in the winter economy, and I have submitted some letters to the record that state that.

Over 150 West Yellowstone businesspeople, elected officials and residents, which is actually nearly a third of the town's voting population, have signed a petition asking for a healthy park and a healthy economy, and I think that sums it up rather nicely. The message from the businesses and people of West Yellowstone is: Protect Yellowstone National Park and you protect our community and you protect our economy.

I think it is worth looking at the broader picture of snowmobile use, particularly near West Yellowstone. Again if you do some searching on the Internet, you come up with some promotional materials for snowmobiling opportunities near West Yellowstone. It says, for the hard core snowmobile enthusiast there are more than 900 snowmobile trails that are available from the Yellowstone area. That does not include the national parks.

I have a map which is difficult to see, but I will submit for the record, that shows in yellow and red all the Federal areas that are open to snowmobiles outside of the national park. Right here in the center where you see the lake is the national park. All of this is other public lands, Federal lands open to snowmobiles. This is

West Yellowstone. There are plenty of recreational snowmobile opportunities outside the park.

On the other hand, snowmobiling has become a big part of many people's livelihood, particularly near Yellowstone, and these people have built their businesses based at least in part on decisions that the Park Service has made. The Park Service has clearly for 20 years or so, specifically allowed snowmobiles and in many cases they have encouraged snowmobile use.

Chairman MANZULLO. Mr. Collins, we are at the end of 5 minutes. I will give you 20 seconds to wrap up.

Mr. COLLINS. I think it is fair and reasonable for this Committee, Congress, and the Park Service to work together to try to smooth the transition to a non-snowmobile winter economy for West Yellowstone. But I think the primary paramount concern needs to be the protection of the national parks. Thank you.

[Mr. Collins' statement may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you for coming. Congressman Thune, could you introduce your constituent?

Mr. THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me just say that I appreciate the opportunity to have this hearing to talk about this issue. This is an issue which is important to the people of South Dakota, as well as the people in a lot of areas across this country, of national parks. And I am pleased and honored to have with us a distinguished South Dakotan, the President of the University of South Dakota, someone with an extraordinary resume of both public and private service having been very successful in business as an attorney, former state legislator and currently president, as I said earlier, of the University of South Dakota. And I think he will probably speak to the impact that this proposed regulation would have on a number of jobs. There is a Polaris facility in Vermillion, which is home to the University of South Dakota. President Abbott is someone who can understand firsthand the impact that jobs and economic development have on a college town like that.

So I am delighted to have him here today and to hear from him and look forward to what he has to say. Good to have you here, Jim.

**STATEMENT OF DR. JAMES ABBOTT, PRESIDENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA, VERMILLION, SD**

Dr. ABBOTT. Thank you, Representative Thune. Mr. Chairman, thank you, other members of the Committee.

I am pleased to be here today and honored to be here today to speak to you on behalf of the impact—of the economic impact of the proposed ban on snowmobiles in Federal parks. I do not consider myself an expert by any means on snowmobiling nor do I snowmobile. But I do think the impact is significant and could certainly be significant to South Dakota and to my hometown of Vermillion. "Current hometown" is a better description.

I am president of the University of South Dakota, a small public university with an enrollment of approximately 6400 students in Vermillion, South Dakota, a town of 12,000, including students.

I will make my presentation as quickly and simply as possible. I specifically, in addition to my written comments, would simply like to emphasize two points. First of all, I think it would be dif-

ficult to overestimate the impact of snowmobiling in South Dakota and to tourism, which is, in fact, our second largest industry. Winter travelers in South Dakota spend an average of $281 a day as opposed to summer travelers, who spend approximately $144 a day. And among those surveyed by the Department of Tourism of the State of South Dakota, snowmobiling was overwhelming the number one activity respondents said that they participated in in South Dakota, or passed through South Dakota to participate in. 47.2 percent of those responding participated in snowmobiling as opposed to 9.4 percent who visited, for instance, Mount Rushmore, which would be our major tourist attraction.

I think it is also important to point out that in states like South Dakota with a very small population and a diverse geography it is important to maintain an economic base all through the year, and not just the summer.

Our economy is heavily dependent upon agriculture and tourism, and certainly it needs to be a year round industry, not just a summer activity.

I would also like to comment on the effect of snowmobiling in the Vermillion area and on the University of South Dakota because of the Polaris plant that is located in Vermillion, South Dakota. It is, if I am correct, the largest single plant in the State of South Dakota in one site. Vermillion simply is a one-economy town in most respects in that the university accounts for a huge number of the percentage of jobs. I think it is important to note that the effect of Polaris Sales, Inc., in Vermillion was the creation of 153 jobs and $32 million in annual earnings. That translates to an indirect economic effect of about 146 more jobs and another $20 million and approximately 3300 added jobs and $52 million in annual earnings in the state. So there really is a multiplier effect.

On the University of South Dakota alone it makes a tremendous difference because we have at least 55 students who each year are able to find a paying job, much better paying than normal at the university.

The other thing I think that is a very important thing to note about Polaris is that in our small town of Vermillion, Polaris itself is 10 percent of the commercial tax base of the city. An enormous number, not in terms of dollars but in terms of impact that it would have. And I am under no illusions that generally speaking when an activity is affected, it is the plant in the smaller areas and the less populated areas and those areas further from a major metropolitan areas which tend to be phased out.

So it is important to our economy, it is important to the University of South Dakota and it is important to the State of South Dakota that snowmobiling be protected in some fashion. I thank you for the opportunity to be here today and appreciate the opportunity to speak with you.

[Dr. Abbott's statement may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you, Dr. Abbott.

Clyde Seely.

**STATEMENT OF CLYDE SEELY, OWNER, THREE BEAR LODGE AND WEST YELLOWSTONE CONFERENCE HOTEL, WEST YELLOWSTONE, MT**

Mr. SEELY. Mr. Chairman, my name is Clyde Seely. I am honored and pleased to come before you today. I bring to you over 30 years of firsthand experience regarding snowmobile rentals and related businesses in Yellowstone National Park and West Yellowstone, Montana, gateway community of about 1000 people. I first came to Yellowstone in 1958 as a laundry boy and have since acquired and have listed my other affiliated businesses on the cover page.

I would like to share with you my observations and my best assessment of what a snowmobile ban would do to us and our community. I would also like to share with you why I believe the all-snowcoach alternative will have negative impacts on the economy as well.

I currently employ over 220 people, many with families. Our payroll is in excess of $2.5 million. We provide retirement plans as well as insurance plans for our employees. A ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone will cause great economic harm, not only to ourselves but to our employees. Cuts will have to be made. The first cut would be employee insurance, then employees, then retirement plans, then more employees. Of course, the last dime would have to go to the bank to satisfy our loan requirements. I don't believe they would just forget about that.

At Three Bear Lodge, 52 percent of our total annual revenue comes from the winter months. We believe that a ban on snowmobiles would cut our winter revenue by 60 to 70 percent. We currently operate 260 rental snowmobiles with the vast majority of people going into Yellowstone at least once during their stay. Yellowstone was the catalyst for bringing over 60,000 people to West Yellowstone who entered the west gate in 1998.

Let me preface the next part by bringing to your attention that the ban on snowmobiles that we are talking about in Yellowstone today, is the extension of the National Park Service EIS. Their preferred Alternative G would replace snowmobiles with a snowcoach-only alternative. This plan is fraught with many problems, ill-thought out assumptions and in the end simply does not work.

Chairman MANZULLO. Clyde, let me interrupt you. Could you define a snowcoach?

Mr. SEELY. They have evolved over the past 20 or 30 years. They used to be a more antiquated machine than they are now. We currently use new vans, 15-passenger vans. We convert them by taking off the wheels, putting on a large track system on the back and ski on the front and they carry 10 people.

Does that answer it? Okay. Thank you.

If this alternative, along with a ban on snowmobiles, is implemented, the result will be financially catastrophic. We also operate a fleet of snowmobiles. We advertise with equal emphasis snowmobiles and snowcoach and find only about 5 percent of the people choose to go on snowcoach, whereas 95 percent prefer the snowmobile. I proved as the boy the old adage you can lead the horse to water, but you can't make him drink. We can offer Yellowstone snowcoach trips and hype it up as much as possible, but when it

comes right down to it, the snowcoach will only satisfy a niche market and will fail dismally in satisfying the public's rights and wishes to access Yellowstone. If that fails, so will our economy.

There are real economic concerns with the snowcoach plan. One, there is no feasibility study nor business plan that states that the all-snowcoach plan will work. Two, snowcoaches, as we know them, will cost between 65 and $80,000 per coach and will only carry about 10 people. Instead of becoming a cheaper mode of transportation, it becomes a more expensive way to see the park than by snowmobile.

Number three, rental snowmobiles are bought new and sold after each season, thereby freeing up capital. The snowcoach will have to be a long-term investment with a low rate of return and sit idle during the summer months.

Number four, indoor storage facilities are a must. Land for such facilities is extremely expensive if not impossible to obtain in our little town. The cost of building such facilities would be horrendous.

I have read the testimony and listened to the testimony of Kevin Collins, and I strongly disagree with some of the slanted misinformation and misrepresentations. I and the State of Wyoming will be happy to follow up with a rebuttal of these misrepresentations and misleading comments. Please enter into the record the copy of the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce letter, a letter from our mayor, a fact sheet from our school, and a Montana snowmobile study. All bear out the huge financial impact a ban on snowmobiles would have.

In closing, may I summarize by saying about 95 percent of the economy in West Yellowstone is tourism-related. The ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone will bankrupt many in West Yellowstone that are based financially on a year-round economy. It will lower the quality of life for the employees, if not place some on the unemployment rolls. It will severely strain the school, town and services in West Yellowstone.

I implore you to take the necessary action to keep snowmobiles a part of the economy of the West Yellowstone and Yellowstone area. I thank you for caring enough about us to invite us here today. I think we should rise above political agendas and do the things that are right, and it is not right to financially devastate a community.

I would be happy to answer questions regarding whatever whenever.

[Mr. Seely's statement may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. We appreciate you coming here from Montana. We will make, of course, your written testimony and the attachments thereto, including the statement from the Board of Trustees for Wolverine School District No. 69 in West Yellowstone, Montana.

The next witness is Bob Stein.

**STATEMENT OF BOB STEIN, OWNER, ALGER FALLS MOTEL, MUNISING, MI**

Mr. STEIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am here today because of the Department of the Interior's ruling on the banning of snowmobilers in most units of the Na-

tional Park System, specifically Miners Castle Road that is located in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

Back in 1972, I came to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan from Chicago, Illinois. My wife and I came to go snowmobiling and see the Miners Castle, a sandstone rock formation that is in my opinion the most beautiful part of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. I was extremely impressed with the area and in 1975 decided to buy the Alger Falls Motel, a 17-unit motel located 9 miles south of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

At the time the motel only employed two persons, my wife and myself, and accounted for less than 10 percent of my total business.

Since then, by aggressively promoting the area for snowmobiling, the Miners Castle area has become the flagship for all advertising in Alger County. The closing of the parks to snowmobiling is the worst threat to my business that I can imagine. The mere mention of these trail closures has prompted numerous concerned calls and letters from customers and residents alike.

Snowmobiling has always been permitted in the area that is now known as the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Slowly, one by one, the places that were once open to snowmobiles have been closed down. Snowmobiles are now only allowed in the Miners Castle area on roads that are open to all vehicles. Roads are not plowed in the winter and no damage is done, for there needs to be at least 8 inches of snow on the road before grooming can take place.

Two years ago, we started grooming the Miners Castle Road, pleasing the tourists and the locals alike who can now experience the beauty of the castle during snow covered months, which in a climate such as ours can account for as much as 6 months of the year. Few people could make the seven-mile walk up the road to see the beauty of this piece of scenery. The road is presently open to all users in the winter, motorized and nonmotorized. The closure would affect only snowmobiles.

The only other way that this landmark can be seen is from Lake Superior, and due to the treacherous conditions of the ice this method is very hazardous. Although it would be impossible to predict because the area has always been open, I would expect a decline of at least 30 percent in my winter business from this. My motel now employs four persons. That would have to be dropped to two and a half persons. There would be a significant decrease in my season's occupancy and I am sure other businesses, be it hotels, restaurants, gift shops, would see the same effect. This would be devastating to the local economy that is dependent on the tourism this trail helps to attract.

Again, I cannot emphasize too greatly that this threat is the biggest problem that I can imagine for my business. My daughter and her husband are now contemplating buying my motel after I have been in business for 25 years. If this trail is closed, it would not be possible for them to purchase the motel. They would have to leave the area. My family would break up.

My business has experienced years where there was lack of snow and bad economy. These are factors we cannot control. As a community we suffered together and held on until the next year with hopes that the weather and the economy would be on our side. The

closing of these parks is something we cannot control and are trying to keep open the parks to snowmobiles.

In closing, I would hope that the Miners Castle trail and the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore remains open to snowmobiling so those of us who live here in that area may continue to make a living and people may experience the beauty of the Pictured Rocks no matter what the season. Thank you for the opportunity to be here.

[Mr. Stein's statement may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you, Bob. I appreciate it. Our next witness is John Lyon. Mr. Lyon.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN LYON, OWNER, J&J SPORT, SYCAMORE, IL**

Mr. LYON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee members, for the opportunity to address you today. I am John Lyon. I am a small business owner from Sycamore, Illinois, a rural community in northern Illinois. We own and operate the oldest Yamaha dealership in the State of Illinois and we are one of the original Yamaha motorized dealers in the Nation.

We are, similar to many other small businesses involved in the snowmobile industry. What we are really proudest of ourselves is that our dealership is rated number one in the State of Illinois in customer satisfaction and we have maintained that rating for a number of years. We have a pretty good feel for what our customers want and what the snowmobilers desire.

I am also involved to a greater degree in snowmobiling, in that I am a volunteer for the Illinois Association of Snowmobile Clubs. I have been on that association's board for 8 years and for the past 3 years I have been its president. I am very concerned about what happens to our friends who enjoy the winter sports and enjoy being out there on their snowmobiles.

In Illinois, we have 58,000 registered snowmobiles. We are not the largest in those numbers, but we are the fifth largest snow state in the country.

Snowmobilers very much enjoy the mobility of being out in the wilderness, and we are truly environmentalists. We are very concerned about where we use our snowmobiles and we are out there to see the winter beauty.

Because of the need to find a place to operate a snowmobile, we are a very mobile group. It is not a problem for us to travel many hours to find an enjoyable place to ride. So even though we do not have a national park in Illinois where we can snowmobile, it is not a problem for us to travel 6, 8 hours or 25 hours to the Yellowstone area to enjoy the winter splendor.

Of concern to us is a statement that was made by Mr. Barry. He said that the snowmobile industry had many years to clean up their act and that they hadn't. This really is not the case. We are very concerned about what goes on and the industry actually, since 1994, has reduced emissions of snowmobiles by 50 percent.

It is probably one of the few industries that actually went to EPA and said "regulate us" and EPA said we do not have any way to do that. And the industry went out on their own and helped have testing developed so the EPA could regulate the industry and give us some standards so that we know where we are going.

Mr. Barry's statements will most assuredly have a negative effect on the small snowmobile business. The small snowmobile business in the United States accounts for about 2,000 dealerships. These dealerships employ roughly 20,000 people. And on the tourism and outside part of it, there are 65,000 additional jobs. In our personal business, one-third of our revenue is derived from snowmobile sales, service, and related accessories, which would include things like trailers to make our snowmobile experience mobile.

In our four-state area, snowmobiling is a $3 billion business. It is roughly half of the U.S. effect of snowmobile tourism and a third of the international business.

This is a family sport. This is something for everyone in a family group to enjoy. The average age of the snowmobile owner is 41 years, so they are fairly stable people. The annual family income of that group is $60,000. Snowmobiles are known as money spenders in the tourism business. Unlike other groups, snowmobilers are not afraid to spend some money when they go to use their snowmobile.

In the United States last year, there were 137,000 snowmobiles sold, new snowmobiles. That is 65 percent of the world market. This country is the snowmobile capital of the world. In the United States, there are roughly 2.3 million snowmobiles registered at this time.

Chairman MANZULLO. John, you have got 20 seconds to wind up.

Mr. LYON. 80 percent of snowmobile operations is on groomed trails or roads. And we as a group believe in good valid science, we want to be respected users of the land, and we are here to do anything we can to help you make a decision on the proper use. Thank you.

[Mr. Lyon's statement may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you very much. Congresswoman McCarthy has another hearing. Why don't you go first.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Collins, I just want to follow up on some of the things that you had said. Obviously, after hearing all the testimony, your job certainly is to protect our land, and I agree with you on that. But being that, you know, this regulation has come down without really any warning to anybody, and did I misunderstand when you said that this was only going to affect Yellowstone, or is this going to affect all of our national parks?

Mr. COLLINS. There are two processes occurring roughly simultaneously. Yellowstone and Grand Teton are going through a winter use plan development, which Senator Thomas referred to. Separate from that, the Park Service is in the process of putting together a proposed rule that would deal with the other 25 some national parks that authorize snowmobile use.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. May I follow up on that? Being that the national parks are for everyone, and they are, when you were coming up with deciding to come through with these regulations did you not think that it might be a good idea to have the input of those that would be affected by it mostly, especially those that are snowmobilers and those that are in the business? And I know it is not up to the national parks to be concerned about the businesses in the area, but one thing I have found out about being down here

in Washington, lack of communication and education of people is sorely lacking.

Could this not have been avoided by meeting with everyone, whether here on the Congressional side or on the Senate side, to work it out before it came down to this, where everybody is so contentious about it because you are going to affect livelihoods?

Mr. COLLINS. I need to make clear that I do not represent the National Park Service. We are a private nonprofit advocacy group.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. I apologize.

Mr. COLLINS. That is okay. I will say that the Park Service at Yellowstone went through an exhaustive public comment—public hearing comment process. They got about 46,000 comments on the Yellowstone plan. For the other issue here for the other national parks, that the Park Service surrender a legal responsibility to follow the directives that are in a couple of executive orders, the Code of Federal Regulation, the organic act that controls the national parks, and that is what they are trying to do is respond to those legal requirements, and as I said, they have not made a final decision they are coming out with a proposed rule.

Essentially what they have said is we have looked at regulations that govern snowmobiles. We are not in compliance. We need to figure out a way to get into this compliance.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Going back to Yellowstone and the area that you are definitely going to be closing off, do you have any estimate on how many snowmobiles go into that area?

Mr. COLLINS. On an average winter roughly 65 to 70,000 something like that. Just in the park.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you, Mrs. McCarthy. Mr. Thune, do you have any questions you wanted to ask?

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Chairman, I would just again comment on—I think this sort of ties into another issue that is impacting my State right now and another issue which Dr. Abbott is acquainted with because his original home town is Yankton, and that is the personal watercraft ban. And I think what Senator Thomas was alluding to earlier is this precedent that establishes in terms of the process by which these decisions are being made and these regulations are being proposed. And I guess that to me is one issue. The policy is another issue.

But frankly, I have been very concerned about the process that has been employed. And I would suggest just to the panel, and perhaps ask a question about how might we better incorporate the suggestions and input of you all in doing this so that the people who are impacted by the decisions that are being made actually have an opportunity to talk about what impact that will have?

There is going to be a comment period, obviously, if and when they propose this regulation. But would you be in favor of some public hearings? I mean, how can the stakeholders, the people who are impacted, the small businesses that are out there that we are concerned about, actually have a voice in what is being done here? Anybody care to answer that?

Mr. LYON. I would believe that what we are doing here today is a beginning of that and that most of us small business owners have never been involved in this sort of thing. My involvement today

comes from the fact that we came to Washington in the fall and learned a lot about what goes on and now that something is really impacting us, it is time for us as small businesses to make a decision to get involved in our government if we really knew how it worked.

And so I would say that from our side, we need to better educate our fellow businesspeople as to what is going on and try to get input to you and let them realize that you want our input. And I don't know how to get that really initiated so maybe if we had some in put from you, if we had public hearings, we could get more people involved. They have stayed away from it because it has not directly affected them. And now there is a direct effect coming that we are very concerned will be a trickle down into the other industries. In our business we do not just sell snowmobiles, we sell ATVs and motorcycles and all the related products, and the concern is if this action can happen at this time it can happen to everybody else, including people on snowshoes.

So I really do not have an answer to your question, other than we want to be involved, we need to be educated on how to be very involved.

Mr. THUNE. Has there been any, that you are aware of, interest on behalf of the Small Business Administration in terms of examining this? Has it sort of been—has the SBA—and I don't know the answer to that, maybe the chairman does, but are any of you aware—because that is the job that they are responsible for as an agency of the government, is to determine what impact some of these things will have on small businesses?

Mr. LYON. I am not aware.

Mr. COLLINS. Congressman, may I address your first question? I would just like to say that we are fully supportive of the public comment process because it offers us an opportunity as well to get our views in, and I think that process will be extraordinarily extensive. If the demand merits it, I suspect there will be public hearings. It is an opportunity really for everybody to weigh in, snowshoers, environmentalists, manufacturers, snowmobilers. It is an even playing field for everyone and we are all going to take advantage of it.

Mr. SEELY. May I respond to that as well? We have offered on numerous occasions to meet with the local Park Service and sit down and get things out on the table and work out a solution to the problem. We have been ignored. It seems to me that part of the problem is they make a decision, this is where we are going, but they haven't figured out how to get there. They are using Alternative G now, but it does not work. They haven't asked anybody yet why or how the snowcoach alternative is going to work.

And there needs to be that process of on the ground people working with them, with firsthand knowledge, to help them arrive at a solution that works instead of picking one and then hoping that it will work. We have had no response, but I might add within the last couple of weeks, we have had a listening ear and we hope that will continue.

Mr. THUNE. I would, Mr. Chairman—I think that is a great suggestion, probably too intuitively obvious but we ought to have the stakeholders sit down with the agencies that are supposedly—and

see, obviously, there is a set of objectives here that they are trying to reach but there are also a lot of consequences that I don't think they have anticipated, and I think the people who are impacted by those consequences need to be at the table. And as far as the public process is concerned, I think that is why the hearing that you are having today is important because it does give us another forum in which to have some of these issues raised and questions asked, and I would hope that that would continue.

And I think as the representatives of the people, and the Congress, that we ought to have a role in trying to resolve this issue in a way that minimizes the disruption and negative economic impact that could be felt by a lot of the people at the table this morning. And I would say, too, as someone who comes from South Dakota, that tourism is critical in our state and at this time of the year, summer tourism, and as President Abbott noted in his testimony, that is very important. But we also have significant winter month tourism into the Black Hills of South Dakota and beyond, heading out into some of your states and we all benefit from the economic activity that that generates.

So this is a serious economic issue in terms of the way that it impacts. It is also, I think, an issue of public access to public grounds, properties, and for recreational use. And that is the broader issue which we are getting into on a lot of other levels right now with personal watercraft, but I appreciate your testimony. It is certainly enlightening in bringing us up to speed what some of those impacts are. And I would also suggest that if you have data—some of you indicated in your testimony that the facts that are being put out there are not representative of the actual reality—I think we need to get what that data is. We want to obviously ensure that the right information and the decisions are made based upon good information, so to the degree that you could furnish that I would welcome that, and I yield back.

Chairman MANZULLO. Congressman Thune, I appreciate that. I would stress that the reason that we are having this hearing is that the people impacted have been denied any opportunity to get their voice involved in the governmental process. When Mr. Lyon was in our office, last October, we chatted generally about different things. Then when this notice came down in April, our office contacted you and said there is something significant going on that could destroy the industry and your industry had been blind-sided by it.

So that is why we are having you here. It is a shame. It is a tragedy that we have to have a congressional hearing in order to hold fairness going into a decision that tremendously impacts your livelihood.

Congressman Hinojosa.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree that the presenters have given good input, certainly very informative to me. I come from an area of the country that does not have snow and, therefore, I did not know many of the things that I heard this morning. I have a lot of respect for entrepreneurs and those risk takers that set up businesses and make their livelihood the way you do.

I have a couple of questions, I will address them to Clyde Seely. I know that from listening to and reading some of the material that was given to us for this hearing that there are people who claim that wildlife is heavily impacted. In the area that I come from, tourism is very important. Hunting is very important. And so I took interest in some of the material that was given to us to read. Many small businesses in the West and Northwest, especially in Montana, gain huge revenues from hunting. And during that season, if there are constant groups of recreational snowmobilers, it will create difficulties for those hunters.

My question to you is are there any public lands in which the local or State governments restrict snowmobiling use on public lands during hunting season because of the adverse impact on hunting game?

Mr. SEELY. That does not happen very often there. Of course, we are talking about Yellowstone mainly here, and of course there is no hunting in Yellowstone. In Forest Service surrounding Yellowstone, it is not a very sportsman like thing to do, to go hunting on snowmobiles. I am not aware that that happens a lot. I am not sure what kind of an impact it would have—if it does one way or another.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Another question also for you, Clyde. Do you believe that an economic impact analysis should also include the economic costs of continuing the snowmobiling in national parks, including the cost of pollution, the cost to wildlife, and the cost of the degradation of the national park itself and how that will impact future attraction?

Mr. SEELY. Yes, I always believe in good studies and good science. But the problem is in the past some of it has not been good science and most, underline "most," of the information that is out there today is antiquated. It is not current. It is not accurate.

But I believe there is a real need to get accurate, current information. That is the answer to the first part.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Well, I understand. We both agree then that we do need that economic impact analysis to be able to make good decisions. Mr. Chairman, I cannot help but agree with you that we need to have public hearings for stakeholders and that we hear both sides, that we try to find consensus where this industry can survive but that we also respect those visitors to the public lands. I think that we also have a responsibility to listen to their concerns and to make sure that they are also heard and that their wishes are also respected.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MANZULLO. That is a very interesting set of questions. Do you have ATVs that go across the lands there in your congressional district, Congressman? All-terrain vehicles or motor bikes in your part of the country?

Mr. HINOJOSA. Well, hunting in south Texas is done slightly differently. We do a lot of walking for the bird hunting, and we have to do a totally different type when we are hunting for deer. So, you know, the vehicles that we get to, our pickups, jeeps, that is the answer to your question.

Chairman MANZULLO. You have a congressional district that still has a tremendous amount of unemployment. Is that correct?

Mr. HINOJOSA. Yes, we are celebrating the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. This last month it was 12.5.

Chairman MANZULLO. We really appreciate your insights. Congressman Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. I apologize for not being here to hear the testimony but I will review the testimony. We unfortunately around here have three hearings going on at the same time and you obviously can't be in more than one place, so you get parts of each one of them.

My principal comment would be—and I do not necessarily have any questions, but this is not particularly unusual—what has happened over time is Congress has turned over its power to a bunch of Federal agencies and they have run amuck in all kinds of areas. And oftentimes even though there is a public comment period because by law they are supposed to hear from the public, they pretty much have in mind what they want to do, and to comply with the law they will hold a hearing here and there and listen to people but they really know what they want to do.

And I think that is not the way that our Founding Fathers ever intended this country to be run. I think they intended for the public to elect people to make the decisions on their behalf. And if the people did not like the decisions that their elected officials were making they would get rid of them. But in essence what we have done over time is we have given up that right to a bureaucracy which is extremely powerful and over time perhaps we can make some changes in that area, but it has been very slow.

I certainly do sympathize with many particularly small business owners that have been very adversely impacted over time with a whole range of government agencies, not just the Park Service. You have the EPA and OSHA and many others who make decisions and really oftentimes just do not look at the impacts that it will have on people's jobs and people's lives. Not to say that those agencies do not do an awful lot of good. I have kids. I want them to breathe clean air and drink clean water as well. So there are environmental things that we need to take into consideration. But I sympathize to a considerable degree with the testimony that I understand that you all made today.

I want to thank the chairman for holding this hearing, and I would like to see more of these. I think it is very important. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. We should have a hearing out in Yellowstone in the height of the snowmobile season.

I have several questions here, but I would like to do something a little bit unusual. Mr. Collins, I do not want to put you on the spot. Unfortunately, in our country there is this tremendous divide between the people that use the word "environmentalists" and people that are involved in businesses. I have a 14-year-old with asthma. My wife is a microbiologist. We raise cattle, and we have obviously a tremendous interest in keeping the air clean, keeping the creek clean, and making sure that there is a healthy environmental balance.

And unfortunately, people cross swords and everybody gets hurt on both sides. What I would like to do is really open up the panel here to see if anybody has any questions that they want to ask

anybody else on the panel. Any comment on what Mr. Collins said or, Mr. Collins, if you have any comment on some of the other testimony that was given.

Mr. COLLINS. I guess I do. I have been waiting for someone to explain to me the clear link between the health of a $9 billion industry and the closing of really a few national parks to snowmobiles. I guess I should mention that when you look at the number of use of snowmobiles in national parks, after Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, Voyageurs, Pictured Rocks, it drops off to an almost insignificant level.

So—and I understand, I am not saying that there are not individual businesses that could be severely impacted but I have heard a lot of statements about the size, importance, significance of this industry as a whole.

Chairman MANZULLO. Mr. Stein, all 10 miles would be closed?

Mr. STEIN. That is correct, 10 miles would be closed in Pictured Rocks.

Chairman MANZULLO. Is that 100 percent of the trails in Pictured Rocks?

Mr. STEIN. It is 100 percent of the trails in the park.

Mr. COLLINS. I would respectfully disagree. It is my understanding that there are a number of roads in the park over which the Park Service does not have jurisdiction and so that even if they wanted to, they would not be able to close that to snowmobiling.

Mr. STEIN. It is a county road that would remain open to snowmobiling, but it is on a park boundary, I believe. It is not within the park. Roads within the park would be closed.

Chairman MANZULLO. What is the significance of that? This is a good exchange. It is too bad that it did not take place before the press release was issued. But go ahead.

Mr. STEIN. It is a link in our trail, as you mentioned before. It is to Miners Castle trail. The entire trail length is 18 miles long.

Chairman MANZULLO. Did you have a picture of his park or was that just Yellowstone?

Mr. COLLINS. No, that was just Yellowstone. Sorry.

Chairman MANZULLO. Okay. Go ahead, please.

Mr. STEIN. And this would close that trail, an 18-mile trail link, which also 8 miles down that trail links up to another trail. But it is called the Miners Castle trail because that is the most important feature on this trail. That is why people take this. After they do that, then they go ahead and do other things. But to close that is just cutting off your main attraction in the area, your flagship. Just the publicity alone——

Chairman MANZULLO. So the Miners Castle Road and the snowmobile trail that goes by that would be closed.

Mr. STEIN. The trail actually runs right up to it. It does not go by it. It goes up to the Miners Castle, it turns around in the parking lot that is used to park vehicles all summer, buses and whatever, and then it returns from that point. The trail we use, again, it is used by motor vehicles, buses, trucks, diesel vehicles all summer long, and that is the trail we use for the few snow covered months of the year.

Chairman MANZULLO. Clyde, you have a comment?

Mr. SEELY. I would like to take this opportunity to respond again, to reopen the issue that I brought up about Mr. Collins' statement. He refers in his testimony to a $5 million impact on West Yellowstone from Mr. Duffield's study, and it is my understanding from the State of Wyoming that they receive—they read that study. They report a $13 million impact on the five counties, 70 percent of that impact comes through or is apparent in West Yellowstone, which equates to about $10 million a year and not 5, and that is a significant impact on a little town of 1,000 people.

The State of Wyoming, using Duffield's own numbers came up with a $50 million impact. And using their own data, Wyoming's own data, they come up with the real impact in the five-county area to be more like $130 to $150 million. And so it is a significant difference from what has been whitewashed before.

I would like to also call attention to the survey or this so-called petition that went around. I have read this thing. I am a supporter of a healthy economy and healthy park, and I have hardly any problem signing this. There is one little statement there. This petition does not say anything about banning snowmobiles. These people are not in favor of banning snowmobiles. Some of my employees that have signed this. I wouldn't mind signing it too, with the exception of one little statement.

He also says that 150 businesses and residents have signed this petition. 150 businesses? I counted quickly seven businesses. I count some that have signed twice. It is ludicrous.

Chairman MANZULLO. The chairman is from Chicago. You can sign as many times as you want. [Laughter.]

Mr. SEELY. And then there are some that I can't read. This is a poor representation of the community. I was involved with a survey conducted by the Chamber of Commerce and 90 percent of the respondents of these surveys on two different occasions are in favor of keeping the snowmobiles in the park, and to misconstrue this I think is an insult of our intelligence.

Chairman MANZULLO. Let me throw something in here. Senator Thomas said this morning that there has really been a lack of enforcement of the regulations within the park with regard to the snowmobiles? Did he say that?

Mr. SEELY. The Park Service has admitted that. Don Barry has admitted that. Mike Finley has admitted that. They have ignored any regulations that they say they have been mandated to all these years.

Chairman MANZULLO. So this must be the bane of the problem. And yet there are some parks such as in Mr. Stein's area—is it Pictured Rocks?

Mr. STEIN. Pictured Rocks.

Chairman MANZULLO. Was that 10 miles agreed upon by the people there or was that an order or edict? Do you know how that came up?

Mr. STEIN. As far as I know, that just came up on this closure order last November or last October. I do the grooming also for the Park Service. Mr. Gerou grooms through a contract from the Munising Visitors Bureau and I am president of the Munising Visitors Bureau. Last October when I got my permit to groom the trail into the national park they had said it had been going so good with

so few problems that I would not have to renew it yearly anymore. It was the first time that they gave me a 2-year permit to groom the trails within the national park. And then this April we find out that the trails were closed.

Last October I thought things were going fine. We had no problem. Nobody ever asked me about it. I have no idea how it came about other than what I read in the paper. I have still not been told anything as far as my grooming, except what I see as far as the closure goes. I have never been notified not to groom the trail or that we did anything wrong.

Chairman MANZULLO. Mr. Collins, do you have a copy of Duffield's study? Is that readily available? Clyde, have you read it?

Mr. SEELY. I do not have it. I just referred to it through his statement.

Mr. COLLINS. I do not have a copy on me. Those numbers are included in the draft EIS and it is supposed to go to final fairly soon; is that correct?

Mr. SEELY. Yes.

Mr. COLLINS. Yeah, they are putting the final touches on the final EIS as we speak.

Chairman MANZULLO. Was he hired by the National Park Service?

Mr. COLLINS. He was a consultant hired by the National Park Service.

Chairman MANZULLO. For this particular study.

Mr. COLLINS. Yes.

Chairman MANZULLO. Do you know if there were any other people hired?

Mr. COLLINS. I don't know.

Chairman MANZULLO. Dr. Abbott, you would have been a good person, with your background, that could have contributed a lot to this study of impact on economic impact of a snowmobile ban. Where is John Duffield from?

Mr. SEELY. Missoula, Montana.

Chairman MANZULLO. It is Missoula, not Manzullo. Does anybody else have any questions of each other on the panel? Dr. Abbott?

Dr. ABBOTT. I guess I would just like to make a couple of comments. First of all, as someone who does not have a direct pecuniary interest, I am never sure why a proposed ban has to be all or nothing. It does not make any sense to me. In our little area, 30 miles from where I live there is a state park and a national park that bound each other. And they simply agreed to have—actually it is watercraft, but all the watercraft you want above the lake and quarterhorse only below the lake on the river. Those kinds of compromises make a great deal of sense to me.

The other thing I would like to comment on is the economic impact. It seems to be the impression that the only economic impact that ought to be considered by conservationists is the entire degradation of the industry. But in effect really small towns in thinly populated states, often a 15 or 20 percent drop in business makes a huge difference to the cafes, hotels, plants, et cetera. We are not talking about whether Mr. X goes out of business necessarily. We are talking about his ability to stay open or to close is often 15 or

20 percent margin, not 50 or 75 percent. I think that is an important thing to consider.

And I also think it is important to consider that not everybody involved in this issue is a direct stakeholder. There are also other kinds of people who are involved on the periphery who do not snowmobile at all, as I do not, nor do they hunt or anything else, but still consider that they have an interest in what people are allowed to do in those parks and I think that has been ignored.

Mr. COLLINS. May I respond to that?

Chairman MANZULLO. Of course.

Mr. COLLINS. I guess I would respond to the last piece about how people without a direct interest also have an interest. And I would argue that one of those categories of people are visitors, for example, to Yellowstone National Park who go to Old Faithful, which is one of the most popular destinations, and in the winter are disturbed by the sound of snowmobile noise. Now, some people are not and some people are. But clearly there are a lot of visitors who find the noise of snowmobiles at Yellowstone in the winter to be an objectionable part of their experience at the park.

I am not saying that those people have precedence, but their opinions certainly need to be weighed. So there are a lot of people out there who are stakeholders.

Chairman MANZULLO. I haven't been to the geyser, but it is my understanding that particular area is loaded with gas stations, roads, motels and hotels. It is an area that, like it or not, has become commercialized because it was the first thing to see out there. But would you do away with the cars, the motels, the noise, and anything that interferes with the sound of the geyser?

Mr. COLLINS. No, I agree that it is currently a built up area. I would argue, however, that the Park Service is right to take whatever steps it reasonably can to reduce the impact, reduce the noise, reduce the disruption.

Chairman MANZULLO. It was my understanding that the complaint about the noise, and I may be wrong, was just that point in the morning when the snowmobilers got together and then left and dispersed to go on the various trials. Is that a correct statement that I just made?

Mr. COLLINS. It may be correct for some people. For other people there really is constant noise at Old Faithful all day from a variety of sources.

Chairman MANZULLO. You have been out there.

Mr. COLLINS. I have been to Old Faithful. Not in the winter, but there is noise from a variety of sources. And it is reasonable for the Park Service to look at these noise sources and say which can we control and how are we going to address this.

Chairman MANZULLO. We have about 5 minutes. Very quickly now, please discuss the issue about pollution, noise, antiquated engines of the snowmobiles. I think you had mentioned that in your written statement.

Mr. SEELY. May I respond to that?

Chairman MANZULLO. Yes, quickly.

Mr. SEELY. The community of West Yellowstone has been very proactive in handling this problem. We began using ethanol in all of our rental snowmobiles 2 years ago, which cuts the pollution

down by 35 percent. We began as a community, it was our direction, our initiative, to begin preselling park passes so that the machine would not have to stop and wait in front of the ranger's station. So now they use express lanes and go right on through.

Arctic Cat, who supplies our snowmobiles has come out with a four-stroke snowmobile. They will provide 50 of those to us next winter, and the following winter as many as we want, as many as the town wants that no longer burns oil. It is a four-stroke snowmobile. It burns only gasoline. Their economy is increased three times. The noise—Don Barry and I had our own little experiment. The noise decreases by three times with the four-stroke versus the two-stroke. In a year or two you will see technology of the snowmobile manufacturers changed drastically and they will come in compliance with the constraints of the Park Service.

Chairman MANZULLO. John, do you have a statement?

Mr. LYON. I just had one quick statement. In Illinois there are 2,500 miles of trails and 2,250 miles are on private lands. We are responsible users or those landowners wouldn't let us be there if we did not take care of their property.

Chairman MANZULLO. We have to wind this up. I want to thank all of you. This has been a super hearing. Mr. Collins, I really appreciate your minority status here, but this did not turn out to be anything other than a real meeting of people with genuine interests. I think we have all learned a lot of things here. We have learned about links of the National Park System with the state parks and the emphasis on them. We have learned about tremendous new technologies that cut down on the noise, and dramatically decreases the pollution levels.

I would hope that organizations such as yours, Mr. Collins, perhaps might be open to further restrictions, which the industry has been asking for itself, rather than an outright ban on snowmobiles. I would suggest that all of us keep an open mind and perhaps somewhere down the line this thing could be worked out to the benefit of the environment and to the people who live near the parks.

Again, thank you very much for coming. I can't tell you how much I appreciate it. The subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:45 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

DONALD A. MANZULLO, ILLINOIS
CHAIRMAN

CAROLYN McCARTHY, NEW YORK
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

# Congress of the United States
## House of Representatives
106th Congress
## Committee on Small Business
Subcommittee on Tax, Finance, and Exports
B-365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6320

**REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN DONALD A. MANZULLO**

July 13, 2000

Why is this Subcommittee and this Member in particular, who represents a medium-size "Rust-belt" city in the flat Midwest, concerned on this hot July day about a ban on snowmobiling in our national parks? The answer is simple: there are more than four million snowmobilers in North America, including 58,000 in Illinois. Plus, snowmobiling contributes over $9.2 billion a year to the U.S. and Canadian economies and provides 65,000 jobs, mostly in small businesses.

Many of my constituents are avid snowmobilers who travel great distances to tour our national parks. The median age for snowmobilers is 41, married, with children who also snowmobile. Ninety-five percent of snowmobilers consider it family recreation. They spend an average of $120.00 per day on lodging, food, gas, rentals, and shopping. These snowmobilers stay an average of two nights per trip away from home three to five times a year. A snowmobile ban will make many of the small rural communities just outside national parks ghost towns in the winter, further destroying the tax base in rural America.

The Department of Interior did not take into account, as required by law, the impact of this proposed snowmobile ban will have on small businesses when it made its grandiose press announcement last April. This proposal will hurt a wide variety of small businesses in the rural towns adjacent to national parks. In addition, the snowmobile ban inside national parks has the potential of hurting small businesses like the dozens of snowmobile dealers in northern Illinois, Seward Screw Products of Seward, which makes pistons that go into snowmobile brake systems, and Bergstrom Skegs of Rockford, which manufactures after-market traction and control products for snowmobiles.

The purpose of this hearing is to put real, live faces on the small businesses that would be negatively impacted by such a snowmobile ban. Until the Department of Interior recognizes and deals with these negative impacts, at the very minimum, this ban should be put on indefinite hold.

**Subcommittee on Tax, Finance & Exports**

**Impact of Banning Snowmobiles Inside National Parks on Small Businesses**

**July 13, 2000**

***Opening Statement***

**Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-4th)**

Thank you Mr. Chairman for scheduling this hearing to discuss the economic impact the National Park Service's snowmobile ban will have on local area small businesses.

I would also like to thank Senator Thomas and Congressman Stupak, as well as our second panel of guest witnesses, for taking time out of their busy schedule to be here this morning.

The recent decision by the National Park Service to ban snowmobiles from national parks raises some interesting questions.

From an environmental perspective, I believe it is difficult to contest some of the arguments made concerning the pollution emitted from snowmobiles.

It is my understanding that up to one-third of the fuel delivered to snowmobile engines goes straight through and out the tailpipe without being burned.

Furthermore, lubricating oil is mixed directly into the fuel, and is expelled as part of the exhaust. Obviously, this is concern.

However, I am also concerned that the interests of small businesses surrounding national parks were neglected when a decision was reached to ban snowmobiles from the parks.

Moreover, I am concerned that the decision to completely ban snowmobiles from national parks is in response to lax enforcement of current laws dealing with snowmobile use.

Environmental protection is a concern for many of us. However, I believe the interests of all affected parties need to be taken into consideration as well.

Therefore, I look forward to the testimony from our guest witnesses.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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**Congress of the United States**
**House of Representatives**
**Washington, DC 20515–2201**

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REGIONAL WHIP

Testimony of Representative Bart Stupak
Hearing of the Small Business Subcommittee on Tax, Finance, and Exports
Impact of National Park Service Snowmobile Ban on Small Businesses
July 13, 2000

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this critical hearing and providing me with the opportunity to testify today before your Subcommittee.

My Congressional District is marked by hundreds of miles of criss-crossing, snowmobile trails. Venture into almost any small town in the region and you can see the economic importance of snowmobiling. From small cafes to motels to restaurants, the region depends on the money spent by snowmobilers. This spending is particularly vital for Alger County, Michigan, which is home to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

Each year, our park lures 21,000 snowmobilers, who are drawn to the towering cliffs overlooking the shores of Lake Superior. It is from those cliffs where snowmobilers enjoy majestic views of the multicolored, sandstone formations found in the park. Of particular interest is Miners Castle. This destination is the most beautiful attraction in the park. Miners Castle earns its name from the sandstone formation that juts into and above Lake Superior and closely resembles a castle -- complete with towers and turrets. It leaves most visitors awestruck.

By banning snowmobiles from Pictured Rocks, the incentive to visit the park during the winter is greatly diminished. People come to Pictured Rocks because of Miners Castle's beauty. Without the chance to see this landmark, snowmobilers will choose some of the other 6,000 miles of snowmobile trails in Michigan.

When the Park Service made its April 27, 2000, announcement banning snowmobiles, environmental degradation to the park units was of paramount concern. I do not dispute that degradation may be occurring in some of the affected 27 park units. But that is not necessarily the case in Pictured Rocks. The park superintendent there indicated that he has never restricted snowmobiling on the park's 10 miles of trails because he saw no sign of ecological destruction. Moreover, no environmental studies have been conducted to indicate that damage is occurring in Pictured Rocks. Without such environmental justification, it is difficult for the Park Service to assert that snowmobiles should be banned in Pictured Rocks.

I am perturbed because the Park Service did not appear to analyze the economic impact of the snowmobile ban on the local communities. The Small Business Administration was not notified of this announcement nor was a study conducted to determine the impact on small businesses.



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No mention was made of how rural communities and economies would suffer when snowmobiles would be banned from National Parks. Nor was any mention made about how the seasonal employment rate in areas near National Parks would drop following a ban on snowmobiling.

There is no doubt that banning snowmobiles from Pictured Rocks will cause economic harm to the surrounding communities. The unemployment rate in Alger County, where Pictured Rocks is located, hovers around 6 percent in the best of times. Alger County is not the type of place which can easily absorb the economic loss of 21,000 annual snowmobilers. Jobs WILL be lost in Alger County following the implementation of a snowmobile ban in Pictured Rocks.

I am pleased that two of my constituents were invited to testify today before the subcommittee to illustrate the harm such a ban would have on small businesses. Bill Stein is a motel owner in Munising, Michigan, which is located just outside Pictured Rocks. His establishment caters to snowmobilers visiting Pictured Rocks. A ban of snowmobiles would be disastrous for Mr. Stein. A second constituent, Stan Gerou, was unable to be here today but provided written testimony for the hearing. Mr. Gerou owns two hotels and a snowmobile-trail grooming business in Munising. He has a contract with Pictured Rocks to groom its 10 miles of trails. To lose that contract would be equally devastating for Mr. Gerou.

I hope that the National Park Service will complete a thorough economic assessment before implementing a ban on snowmobiles. Of course, the National Park Service must first issue a new rule to overturn the special regulations that allow snowmobiling in the affected 27 park units. The Park Service cannot simply make an announcement and expect it to carry the weight of law. There is a process to be followed here. The process includes publishing a proposed rule or regulation in the Federal Register, taking comments from the public, and issuing a final rule.

I understand the need to monitor environmental damage caused by snowmobiles in our national parks but let us be sure this damage is "real" rather than "perceived." Let us not forget to analyze the economic benefits of snowmobiles in our national parks. Our rural economies and small businesses deserve to have their voices heard when balancing economic and environmental concerns. They must not be forgotten.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman for inviting me to testify before your subcommittee today. This issue cannot be overlooked as we strive to bolster rural economies and small businesses. I am grateful that you have shed light on a snowmobile ban's impact.

CRAIG THOMAS
WYOMING

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-5003

## *STATEMENT OF SENATOR CRAIG THOMAS*

JULY 13, 2000

Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing today to discuss the recent decision by the Department of Interior to prohibit snowmobile activities in most of the units of the National Park System. I am glad the House Small Business Committee is holding this hearing because the Park Service's efforts will certainly impact small businesses and the economy of many local communities in Wyoming.

The unilateral decision by the Park Service to ban snowmachines in our nation's parks is troubling for a number of reasons. First, by its own admission, the National Park Service has failed to manage snowmobile activities in our parks. In most cases, the agency has no idea of what impacts snowmobile use may or may not be having on our natural resources. The Department of Interior never sought funding to monitor and test snowmobile usage in the parks and has no definitive scientific evidence to support the ban.

Secondly, there has been no attempt by the Park Service to seek alternatives or mitigate adverse impacts of snowmachine use in the parks. Instead of looking for reasonable solutions that would help the small business people in my state and around the country who rely on having access to our nation's parks, the agency's only solution is to ban snowmachines altogether.

The Department would appear to prefer to have our park's managed by the Court System instead of the Park Service employees assigned to the task. Of course, managing resources properly is much harder than making unilateral announcements. It is more difficult to carefully weigh competing recreational activities on federal lands such as skiing, hiking and boating than it is to close the gates. Unfortunately, the Clinton Administration believes the only reasonable solution to land management decisions is to reduce access to our public lands.

Mr. Chairman, I could go on about the unfair nature of the Park Service's decision to ban snowmachines, but the point is clear. Rather than look for innovative ways to address this situation and minimize the potential impact of snowmobiles on the parks, the agency has taken an action which will eliminate hundreds of jobs, impact communities around the country and could destroy a thriving American industry. Instead of managing this issue, the Department of Interior has decided to abdicate its responsibility and simply say that snowmobiles will be banned.

Having grown up on the eastern border of Yellowstone National Park, I experienced first hand the solemn beauty of our parks. All of us who enjoy the wonders of these national treasures are better from their existence. We all have an obligation to strengthen and improve our parks. However, this doesn't mean we should erect a fence around our public lands as this administration seems determined to do. Rather, diligent stewards, willing to make difficult decisions, are needed who will protect the role of visitors and the welfare of the land alike.

Thank you once again Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee today.

**Statement of**

**Kevin Collins**
**Legislative Representative**
**National Parks Conservation Association**

**on**

**Snowmobiles in National Parks**

**Before the Subcommittee on Tax, Finance and Exports**
**House Small Business Committee**

**July 13, 2000**
**Washington, D.C.**

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, my name is Kevin Collins and I am a Legislative Representative for the National Parks Conservation Association. NPCA is America's only private, nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated solely to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the National Park System. NPCA was founded in 1919 and today has more than 400,000 members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the subject of snowmobiles in the National Park System.

In addition to my own written testimony, I request that testimony from Peter Morton, Ph.D., a resource economist with The Wilderness Society, as well as that of several residents of West Yellowstone, MT, be submitted into the record.

The question of whether snowmobiles should be used in the National Park System can be looked at from many different angles. Today's hearing looks specifically at the economic concern of small businesses that profit, directly or indirectly, from the use of snowmobiles in the parks. This is certainly a valid concern and one that NPCA takes seriously. Nevertheless, NPCA believes that the **overriding concern** must be for the health of the national parks themselves and the treasures they contain.

Our bottom line is whether snowmobiles present an acceptable or unacceptable impact on national parks. After a great deal of consideration, we have concluded that snowmobiles are not appropriate or acceptable in the National Park System. This was not an easy decision for us, and I'd like to explain how we reached it.

NPCA believes that the more people who experience the national parks, the greater public support there will be for protecting and preserving the entire National Park System. We do not take lightly charges that public "access" to the parks is being unreasonably restricted.

In this case, those who oppose the Park Service's decision have portrayed it as the worst kind of unilateral bureaucratic arrogance. NPCA believes that on the contrary, the Park Service has demonstrated an unusual willingness to assess its own actions and admit that it has been in the wrong. The agency's recent action is a commendable effort to come into compliance with important regulations it has ignored for too long.

In its April 26th announcement, NPS admitted that "...years of inattention to our own regulatory standards on snowmobiles generated the problem we have before us today." There is no question that for years the Park Service has been in direct violation of the two Executive Orders and the federal regulations that are supposed to govern snowmobile use in the national parks.

Executive Order 11644, signed in 1972 by President Nixon, states that, "Areas and trails shall be located in areas of the National Park system, Natural Areas, or National Wildlife Refuges and Game Ranges only if the respective agency head determining that off-road vehicle use in such locations will not adversely affect their natural, aesthetic, or scenic values." In the majority of cases, the Park Service appears to have made no such determination before allowing snowmobile use in national parks.

Over the years, the Park Service also ignored requirements to monitor the ongoing impacts of snowmobiles on park resources. That is one of the reasons their recent announcement came as such a shock to many people. Without any monitoring or assessments by the Park Service, there was little reason for people to suspect that snowmobiles might be a problem.

But snowmobiles are a problem. The snowmobiles of today are extraordinarily polluting and noisy machines. They are neither clean nor quiet, in spite of the manufacturers' claims. The air pollution from snowmobiles in Yellowstone is dramatic and disgusting. It is unacceptable that park rangers must have fresh air pumped into the West Entrance gatehouses because the snowmobile exhaust is so overwhelming.

It is equally unacceptable to allow into <u>any</u> national park machines that by their very design discharge raw gasoline and oil into the environment. Or machines that shatter winter quiet with high decibel noise. Or machines that disturb and harass wildlife. Or machines that make it impossible for other park visitors to enjoy the unique qualities of the park. This is obvious to most Americans.

The core mission of the National Park System is to preserve unique, nationally significant places, items, and experiences so that they will remain in their original, unimpaired condition for future generations to appreciate. Many recreational activities can be enjoyed in national parks without compromising that core mission. Unfortunately, snowmobiling is not one of them.

It is also essential to note that the mission of the National Park System is **NOT** to provide economic benefits to nearby communities and businesses. Having a national park nearby is an economic asset for which any community would be grateful. Nevertheless, this fortunate byproduct of the park's existence must not be allowed to dictate park management policy.

**Snowmobiles in National Parks**

Annually, there are over 180,000 snowmobiles that use 28 parks in the lower 48 states. The vast majority of this use is in just five parks: Yellowstone, 65,000 – 70,000; Voyageurs, 35,000; Rocky Mountain, 27,000; Pictured Rocks, 26,000; and John D. Rockefeller Memorial Parkway, 17,000. In most of the other 23 parks where snowmobile use is authorized, there is very little use.

On April 26, 2000, the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks issued a memo to the director of the National Park System that the Park Service had failed to comply with the various regulations, executive orders, and laws regarding snowmobile use. The memo also noted a "strong consensus within the National Park Service, shared by myself and others in the Department, that snowmobile use in most areas of the National Park System is not an essential or appropriate means of providing winter access to our national parks."

The memo directed parks that currently allow snowmobiles to "immediately review its existing special regulation, and within one year, amend, modify or replace the regulation as necessary to comply with this directive and with the existing Executive Orders and national rule standards, including the requirement for an on-going monitoring program." In a press release, the Park Service said, "The net effect of this renewed enforcement effort will be the significant reduction of recreational snowmobiling in most units of the system."

**What Has the Park Service Really Done?**

The April 26th announcement has been portrayed as a unilateral, blanket ban on snowmobiles in national parks. It is nothing of the sort.

First, the announcement specifically excluded Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and the John D. Rockefeller Memorial Parkway because those parks are already going through a public process to address winter use; and Voyageurs because that park is developing a general management plan that will include snowmobile use.

Second, the announcement noted that there would be several general exceptions under which snowmobile use could be appropriate, including: transit needed to access other areas where snowmobiling is permitted; access to private land in parks (limited to roads open to motor vehicles in other seasons) and; snowmobile use on roads that are outside the jurisdiction NPS.

Finally, NPS is planning to issue a proposed rule this August that would solicit public comments on when, where, and to what degree snowmobile should be allowed in national parks. My organization will be commenting on this proposal, as will the recreational snowmobiling community, snowmobile manufacturers, and affected small businesses. This public process is a reasonable and appropriate method of considering all aspects of this debate.

**What Will the Real Impact Be?**

There is substantial disagreement over the economic affects of any changes to the NPS snowmobile policy. I am particularly grateful for the help of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition in preparing the following testimony on the economic situation in West Yellowstone, Montana.

The community of West Yellowstone is clearly divided on the issue of phasing out snowmobiles from Yellowstone Park. Many business owners believe that removal of snowmobiles from the park will provide for much need economic diversification and allow for economic growth. The winter economy of West Yellowstone has been flat since the 1980s -- a mass transit snowcoach system could allow for more visitors into the park with less impact, thereby leading to growth in the local economy. (Please see the comments of Doug Edgerton that I have submitted to the record.)

Over 150 business owners and residents in West Yellowstone signed a petition in support of the phaseout and asking for support during the economic transition. ( the comments of Jackie Mathews and the petition in the record.) Dozens of letters from West Yellowstone business owners and residents send a clear message that a healthy park leads to a healthy economy. (See letters in the record.)

A snowcoach system will provide access for the same number, if not more, of winter visitors. There are also opportunities for expanding the season into late November and early December if rubber-tracked snowcoaches are used. This expansion of the fall shoulder season (currently one of the slowest periods) would greatly benefit the economy local. (See graph of Resort Tax Collections for the Town of West Yellowstone, 1995-2000 in the record).

Overall, the economic impact on a snowmobile phaseout from the park on West Yellowstone has been greatly exaggerated. The economist on contract with the Park Service for economic analysis for the EIS recently conducted an economic impact assessment for the five surrounding counties. He found that the impact to West Yellowstone would be barely perceptible, even without mitigating efforts such as expanded marketing to attract other winter visitors. (John Duffield, Bioeconomics, Inc.)

The economic analyses for the snowcoach only alternative (G) were computed in two ways. Each was based on an assumed 33% reduction in winter visitors, with 37% of nights spent in West Yellowstone (out of the 5 surrounding counties). Local multiplier effects are included. One method predicted an approximately $4.5 million impact. A second method estimated an approximate $5.2 million impact. In economic terms, these two figures are so close as to be virtually the same.

The winter economy in West Yellowstone has been stable since the 1980s, with no significant growth. In contrast, the summer economy has been growing steadily within normal economic fluctuations. The local economy is driven by park visitors, and as a whole (summer and winter) has been growing at 10% per year because of summer growth.

Significantly, there have been fluctuations of up to 15% in one year from which the economy has recovered without adverse or lasting effects. For this reason, Duffield categorized the potential $5 million loss to West Yellowstone's winter economy as inconsequential to the economy as a whole and not involving adverse, lasting impacts. Furthermore, with an aggressive marketing scheme to attract new and replacement visitors and an expanded fall shoulder season, the dip in winter revenue can be mitigated further.

The key to transitional success for gateway communities after the phaseout will be to attract similar, or higher, levels of winter visitors. This can be accomplished through additional marketing and public education. The Park Service and state tourism boards should assist with this public education effort as they did following the 1988 fires. After the fires, some local business owners in West Yellowstone warned of impending economic doom. They were proved wrong. Yellowstone National Park is such a strong draw that people will continue to visit under most circumstances. Now we have the exciting opportunity to offer a less polluted, less congested and quieter Yellowstone to the public. I am convinced that any business initially lost will be quickly replaced and regained by winter visitors eager to see and hear Old Faithful erupt without the constant drone of snowmobiles.

## How will restrictions on national parks affect other recreational snowmobiling opportunities?

According to the American Council of Snowmobile Associations there are approximately 130,000 miles of groomed and marked snowmobile trails in the United States. There are also thousands of square miles, such as national forest roads and state lands, that are open to snowmobiles but not explicitly designated for snowmobiles. **In contrast, there are only about 700 miles of roads and waterways open to snowmobile in national parks -- and 300 of those miles are excluded from the NPS April 26 announcement.**

Many states have thousands of miles of designated trails for snowmobilers to enjoy. Promotional material from the state of Wyoming does not even mention Yellowstone National Park, but does promise that "with over 2,200 miles of snowmobile trails, you can access some of the most scenic back-country in the world."

Furthermore, a snowmobile promotional site on the Internet proclaims, "For the hardcore snowmobile enthusiasts, there are more than 900 miles of trails that are available from the West Yellowstone area. You can head north of town towards the town of Big Sky, Montana where the cornices are big and the powder is deep. Or continue west of West Yellowstone into one of the largest snowmobile valleys in the world near Island Park, Idaho and connect onto the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail system in Wyoming." (http://www.sledcity.com/features/wyellowstone.cfm)

According to the American Council of Snowmobile Associations, recreational opportunities in other states include:

Colorado -- over 3,000 miles of trails
Idaho -- over 7,200 miles of trails
Maine – over 12,000 of trails
Michigan -- 5,800 miles of trails
Minnesota -- 20,000 miles of trails
Montana – 3,700 miles of trails
Wisconsin -- 25,000 miles

National parks provide only a tiny fraction of the recreation opportunities available to snowmobilers, but snowmobiles contribute a disproportionate amount of noise, pollution, and congestion in Yellowstone and other national parks.

## It is Reasonable to Regulate Harmful Activities in National Parks

It may be politically challenging to restrict snowmobile use in national parks, but it is not unprecedented. There are many things that we used to do in national parks but don't anymore: We don't feed garbage to the bears, dump burning logs off of cliffs to create a spectacular "firefall," break off stalagmites for souvenirs, or exterminate wolves as vermin. We learn as we go. And sometimes we learn that we've been wrong and we have to take painful steps to put things right. We're doing it in the Everglades right now and hoping we can get back a fraction of what we have lost. That is what we are trying to do at Yellowstone and elsewhere.

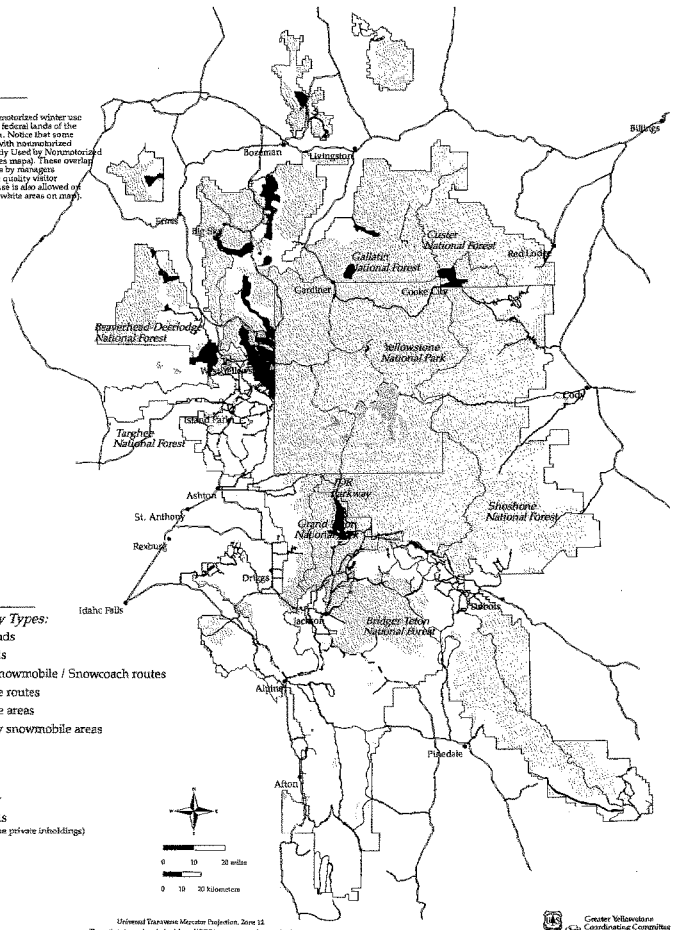
We should be striving to keep national parks extraordinary places, not convert them to the same busy, noisy, polluted places in which many of us live. Restricting snowmobiles in national parks will negatively affect only a few businesses, but it will be a huge step toward fulfilling our national pledge to keep our parks protected today and for future generations.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions.

# Terrain Currently Used by Motorized Use

## Description:

This map shows where motorized winter use is currently occurring on federal lands of the Greater Yellowstone Area. Notice that some motorized uses overlap with nonmotorized uses (see Terrain Currently Used by Nonmotorized Use and Visitor Use Issues maps). These overlap areas are where decisions by managers may be needed to ensure quality visitor experiences. Motorized use is also allowed on some non-federal lands (white areas on map).




## Legend:

*Current Activity Types:*

- Primary Roads
- Scenic Roads
- Groomed Snowmobile / Snowcoach routes
- Snowmobile routes
- Snowmobile areas
- Backcountry snowmobile areas

*Other Features:*

- Federal lands (including some private inholdings)
- Lakes

Universal Transverse Mercator Projection, Zone 12
Thematic information derived from USGS base maps, various scales.

Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee
Federal Land Managers in the Greater Yellowstone Area
1994

**TESTIMONY OF JAMES W. ABBOTT**
**PRESIDENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA**
**VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA**

**TO**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON TAX, FINANCE, AND EXPORTS**
**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**July 13, 2000**

**The Impact of the National Park Service Ban of Snowmobiles on Small Businesses and the Rural Economy**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Subcommittee. I am honored to appear before you today to speak on the impact of the National Park Service Ban of Snowmobiles on Small Business and the Rural Economy.

My name is James W. Abbott, and I am President of The University of South Dakota, a small public university with an enrollment of approximately 6,400 students. Our university is situated in Vermillion, a rural community with a population of about 12,000, including students. I have been the president of USD for four years. Prior to accepting my current position, I was involved in the private sector as a lawyer, a small business owner, a member of various boards, and a concerned citizen--a background which allows me to consider the matter at hand from a variety of viewpoints.

I will endeavor to make my presentation as concise and to-the-point as possible. The key point I wish to impress upon you today is simply this: It would be difficult to overestimate the impact of a plant or business such as Polaris Industries to The University of South Dakota, the City of Vermillion, and Clay County. I believe the continuation of the National Park Service ban will have a significant negative impact on the university, city, state, and region.

While I recognize that I am here to testify primarily on the local impact of the current ban, I feel it necessary to address the subject from a slightly broader perspective. In brief, the state of South Dakota is a large, sparsely populated, upper midwestern state primarily reliant on agricultural for economic survival. With only 700,000

people, South Dakota is hardly a mecca for heavy industry and indeed, at best we have a tenuous hold on the light industry we've been able to attract to our towns and cities.

Mount Rushmore National Memorial is our most recognizable tourism landmark. Tourism is, in fact, our number two industry, contributing $593 million to our economy in 1999, an amount that equates to an estimated $1.48 billion impact on our state's economy. One in 12, or 30,267 jobs are attributable to tourism, according to state tourism data.

According to the 1999 Intercept Study by the South Dakota Department of Tourism, average visitor spending in South Dakota totals $144.26 per day, per travel party. Winter travelers, however, spend an average of $281.54 per day, per travel party, up from $234.17 per day in 1997, according to the Department's 1998-99 Winter Conversation Study. Among those winter travelers surveyed, snowmobiling was overwhelmingly the number one activity respondents say they participated in while in South Dakota. 47.2 % participated in snowmobiling as opposed to 9.4 % who visited Mount Rushmore, for example. Nearly 75% of the respondents did their traveling during January and February, an increase from 40% in 1997. In 1999, more than 80% of the respondents spent up to a week at their destination, an increase from 60% in 1997. The average South Dakota traveling party included 4.3 people in 1999, up from 3.6 people in 1997. In short, and I apologize for stating the obvious, it's safe to say that winter recreation in general, and snowmobiling specifically, is a significant and growing aspect of our tourism industry and ultimately, our overall economy. There is virtually no corner of the state which does not benefit from winter travelers. A healthy snowmobiling market brings visitors from several states; tourists who spend money in motels, gas stations, restaurants, and retail outlets.

Winter enthusiasts enjoy South Dakota's snowmobiling opportunities, especially in the Black Hills of western South Dakota. Furthermore, many visitors travel through on their way to, or on their return from, Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming and Montana, a top snowmobiling destination in the western United States. In short, if snowmobiling in South Dakota is threatened, our economy and the economy of the entire region will be affected negatively as well. Other rural midwestern and mountain states visited by winter travelers on their way to South Dakota, and/or beyond to Yellowstone, also reap economic benefits, which should not be overlooked or minimized.

The community of Vermillion where I live, do business, and am responsible for the well being of the University and its enrollment, is situated on the north bank of the Missouri River. Its population, including students, is

11,967 of a total county population of 15,370. We do not have a national park, nor does winter recreation visitor spending significantly impact our economy directly. We are, however, home to a Polaris Industries distribution center. Polaris Sales, Inc., is one of a small number of clean, light industrial manufacturers willing to make a significant investment in our rural state.

Prior to the arrival of Polaris, according to 1990 surveys, Clay County had a total employment of 7,000, of which 5,191 were employed within the city limits of Vermillion. 1999 data from the Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. state profile of South Dakota indicate that employment in Clay County increased to 8,470 total jobs. The bulk of those jobs are still located in the city of Vermillion. The University of South Dakota itself currently employs an average of 2,257 employees (full- and part-time), according to the USD Payroll Department. During the regular school year, that figure rises to over 2,400. Statistics are, no doubt, subject to wide interpretation. It is clear, however, that Polaris has contributed significantly to the local economy.

U.S. Department of Commerce economic multipliers may be used to estimate the impact Polaris has on the economy of South Dakota. The immediate direct effect of the Polaris Sales, Inc. operations was the creation of approximately 153 jobs, and $32 million in annual earnings. The indirect economic effect is an estimated 146 added jobs and $20 million in annual earnings. The total estimated impact of this company to the South Dakota economy is approximately 300 added jobs and $52 million in annual earnings. Economic impacts were estimated using industry averages and include the direct impact of the plant, the impact on industries that supply Polaris with materials and equipment, and the impact of increased consumer spending throughout South Dakota. Data was provided by the South Dakota Department of Labor, Labor Market Information center using the Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II), U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistic Administration, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The Polaris distribution center, built in 1997, is one of the more recent additions to the Polaris corporate infrastructure. I believe that, should this ban even moderately affect the snowmobiling industry, the Vermillion outlet would be one of the first factories targeted for closure. Decreased activity would reduce demand for parts, garments, and accessories for which our Polaris distribution center is responsible. The Vermillion Polaris center pays $197,000 annually in taxes to the community, approximately 10% of our entire city commercial tax base. It also employs 55 USD students, providing a reliable source of much needed income for our students and their families. Without Polaris in Vermillion, the tax burden would shift to the remaining businesses. Due to

the enormous amount of land owned by non tax-paying entities, the result could be a domino effect which would further stress an already burdened tax-paying business community.

In summary, I would like to reiterate how difficult it would be to overestimate the impact a plant or business such as Polaris Industries has on not only our university and community, but also on similar communities scattered across the region. A continuation of the ban will cause a significant negative impact, and the ripple effect of such a ban will impact thousands of small business owners, employees and outdoor enthusiasts.

## Testimony for the Subcommittee on Tax, Finance, and Exports

**Clyde G. Seely**
**July 13, 2000**

My name is Clyde Seely. I am honored and very pleased to come before you today. I bring to you over 30 years of first-hand experience regarding snowmobile rentals and related tourism businesses in Yellowstone National Park and West Yellowstone, Montana, a main gateway community to the Park with a population of 1000. I grew up on a farm and began working at Three Bear Lodge in West Yellowstone as a laundry boy in 1958. Eventually I worked up the ladder and bought the motel in 1970. I have since acquired and listed my other affiliated businesses on the cover page. I would like to share with you my observations and my best assessment of what a snowmobile ban would do to us and our community. I would also like to share with you why I believe the "all snowcoach" alternative, which is poorly thought out, will also have a negative economic impact on our businesses and on our community.

I would also add that I am a founding director of the National Alliance of Gateway Communities. That organization, comprised of gateway communities to all the National Parks, is seriously concerned about the economic impact of National Park Service policies such as the snowmobile ban on nearby communities, businesses and families.

- **Economic impact of a snowmobile ban on our employees and our businesses**

I currently employ over 220 people, many with families. Our payroll is in excess of $2.5 million dollars plus all applicable taxes. We provide retirement plans as well as insurance plans for our employees. A ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone will cause great economic harm, not only to ourselves but to our employees. Cuts will have to be made. The first cut would be employee insurance, the second cut would be employees. The third cut would be the retirement plans. The fourth would be more employee cut backs. Of course, the last dime would have to go to the bank to satisfy our loan requirements. I don't believe they will just forget about that.

Snowmobile related income varies according to the type of business we operate; at Three Bear Lodge 52% of our total annual revenue comes from the winter months. We believe that a ban on snowmobiles would cut our winter revenue by 60-70%. That would bankrupt us. We have been renting snowmobiles since 1971 and were the first to introduce complete package tours of "Winter in Yellowstone." We currently operate 260 rental snowmobiles, with the vast majority of people going into Yellowstone at least one day during their stay. Yellowstone was the catalyst for bringing nearly 60,000 people to West Yellowstone who entered the West Gate in 1998. Once there, many enjoy riding on the forest trails outside the Park for the sheer fun and enjoyment of snowmobiling. Even though snowmobiling in Yellowstone is restricted to roadways with no off-trail riding and low speed limits, most people come to see Yellowstone in the winter by snowmobile.

- **Impact on the public expectation and viability of the "all snowcoach" plan**

We also operate a fleet of snowcoaches. While we believe the snowcoach opportunity should be increased, it should only be increased as fast as the demand by the public increases. A forced use by eliminating a traditionally preferred use will cause great financial harm. We believe that if Alternative G, the "all snowcoach" alternative is implemented with a ban placed on snowmobiles, the results will be catastrophic. We advertise throughout the United Sates and some foreign countries with equal emphasis on snowmobiling and snowcoaches and find that only about 5% of the people choose to use the snowcoach, whereas 95% prefer the snowmobile. I proved as a boy the old adage: "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." We can offer Yellowstone trips and "hype" it up as much as possible, but when it comes right down to it, the snowcoach only satisfies a niche market and will fail dismally in satisfying the public's rights and wishes to access Yellowstone. If that fails, so will our economy.

- **Economic impact on current and future snowcoach operators**

It has been stated by the Park Service that it would take 184 snowcoaches to replace the transportation void left by the snowmobile ban. First, we have proven that the market for the snowcoach is not that large a market. Snowcoaches, as we know them, will cost between $65,000 and $80,000 per coach and will only carry about 10 people. Instead of becoming a cheaper mode of transportation, it becomes a more expensive way to see the Park than by snowmobile. (See Winter Use Plan DEIS, Vol. 1, p. 288) conventional financing will be almost impossible to obtain because of the lack of a workable business plan and the uncertainty of the "if you build it, will they come?" scenario. Current snowcoach technology is far from proven, resulting in breakdowns and expensive retrievals. Rental snowmobiles are bought new and sold after each season, thereby freeing up capital. The snowcoach will have to be a long-term investment with a low rate of return and would sit idle during the summer months.

Indoor storage facilities for snowcoaches are a must. Land for such facilities is extremely expensive, if not impossible to obtain in our little town. The cost of building such facilities would be horrendous. Unless the Government supplies the snowcoaches and the facilities for the same, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the private operator to successfully operate in the black.

- **Economic impact on the business community**

I would like to enter into the record a letter from Jack Clarkson, President of the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce. His letter states the rather obvious, that most businesses in the town would be negatively impacted if the snowmobile ban decreases our tourism base.

- **Economic impact on the school district**

I am including a fact sheet for the record from our West Yellowstone School District. We have a bond indebtedness of $2,815,657.50 and a budget of $1,424,213.53. I have asked them to assume there was a 20% decrease in the number of students and indicate the result of such a loss of enrollment. Such a decrease in enrollment would result in a $135,743.99 deficit per year.

- **Economic impact on the Town of West Yellowstone**

I am including a letter from Mayor Jerry Johnson stating the economic concerns over the impact that a ban on snowmobiles would have on the town and the services that it provides. A loss in tourism revenue translates directly to a bottom line loss of the resort tax, which largely funds the town's infrastructure and services.

- **Economic impact on Montana businesses**

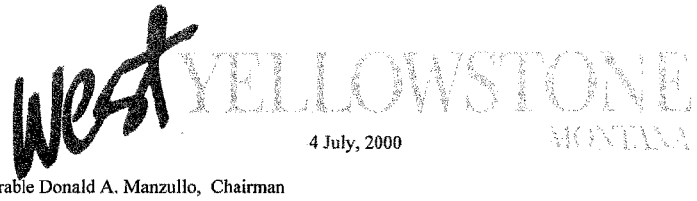
I will quote from the *1998 Update On Snowmobiling in Montana* by James Sylvester for the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, pp. 4-5. "Nonresident snowmobiles flock to West Yellowstone, an area with world class facilities and packaged tours." Our sample . . . "suggests that over three-quarters of nonresidents snowmobiling in Montana spent time in or near West Yellowstone. Note that nonresident snowmobilers spent over $44 million dollars in Montana during the 1997-98 season for daily personal expenses. Almost $16 million of this went for lodging and another $11 million was spent in Montana restaurants and bars."

In closing may I summarize by saying that about 95% of the economy in West Yellowstone is tourism related. The ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone will bankrupt many businesses in West Yellowstone that are based financially on a year-round economy. It will lower the quality of life for employees, if not place them on the unemployment rolls. It will severely strain the school, town and services of West Yellowstone. I implore you to take the necessary action to keep snowmobiles as part of the economy of the Yellowstone area.

Thank you for caring enough about us to invite us here today. Let us rise above political agendas and do the thing that is right for all. It is not right to financially devastate communities.

Attachments for the record:

Letter – Jack Clarkson, President, West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
Letter – Jerry Johnson, Mayor, Town of West Yellowstone
Fact Sheet – West Yellowstone School District #69
*Snowmobiling in Montana, 1998 Update* for Bureau of Business and Economic Research, pages 4 & 5




4 July, 2000

Honorable Donald A. Manzullo, Chairman
Committee on Small Business
Subcommittee on Tax, Finance, and Exports
US House of Representatives
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 201515

Dear Chairman Manzullo,

I am grateful to you and your Subcommittee for your interest in our economic future and for holding these hearings on the economic effect of the proposed National Park Snowmobile ban.
Our community was designated an official Park Entrance in 1907 in preparation for the first Union Pacific Railroad trains that would transport visitors to the National Park. There were many attempts made to provide transportation into the National park in the Winter months. The snow plane was tried, but was too dangerous, and occupancy was limited. The development of the snowmobile provided the visiting public with that opportunity to visit Yellowstone in Winter. The majesty and magnificence of the park beckoned to many, and the winter visitors began to come to our small community to obtain over the snow transportation, so that they could enjoy this experience on a very personal basis. There were snow coach tours available, but most preferred the "up close and personal" views of the park and it's wonders that were provided by the snowmachines.
The Yellowstone national Park Service folks were helpful in this endeavor. They groomed the roads to provide safe access, they requested that the concessionaires provide food and lodging for winter visitors. And thus the Town of West Yellowstone built a winter economy on this basis of mutual assistance and reasonable access to Yellowstone National Park. Now through a series on manipulative press releases, erroneous reporting of scientific data, and a seeming "imperial" mandate from a Department Head who is now going on to "greener" pastures, our economic viability is greatly threatened, and the visitor's access to the park is substantially reduced. Those in the business community that have provided both winter and summer services may cut back to summer only, as the winter visitor numbers will be drastically diminished. Those that are franchised and have to stay open year round will find red ink on their bottom line and may abandon their enterprise in our town. The West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce is greatly concerned regarding proposed changes in policy that would ban snowmobiles as a transportation medium in Yellowstone National Park. The economic impact on our community will be devastating. I cannot cite a single business in our community that will not be negatively affected by the proposed snowmobile ban. Nor can I identify a single business that will, in fact, enjoy an increase in customers. Once acceptable transportation within the park is removed, the visitors will cease to come to the community of West Yellowstone in the winter months. Snowmobiling is possible in many areas of the United States, but to see the wonders of our first, and most famous National Park in the winter is only available here. And this opportunity will be denied to many American citizens.
Our Community will be most grateful for any intervening steps you may be able to take to prevent the Snowmobile Ban in the National Parks.

Jack W Clarkson, President

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
P.O. Box 458 West Yellowstone, Montana 59758 406-646-7701

**Board of Trustees**
Kelly Anderson
Maggie Anderson
Ann Eagle
Perry Icopini
Bunnie Weickum

**School District #69**
**P. O. Box 460**
**WEST YELLOWSTONE, MT 59758**
**(406) 646-7617/FAX: 646-7232**

**Michael M. Smith**
Superintendent
Jr./Sr. High School Principal
**Donna Purcell**
Elementary Principal
Activities Director
**Mary Davis**
Business Manager/Clerk
**Lola Smith**
Administrative Secretary

## FACT SHEET FOR WEST YELLOWSTONE SCHOOL DISTRICT #69

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL ENROLLMENT K-6** | 136 | **1999-2000 GENERAL** | |
| **7-12** | 129 | **FUND BUDGET** | $1,424,213.53 |
| | 265 | | |

**BUILDING BOND REQUIREMENTS THROUGH 2011**

| | |
|---|---|
| PRINCIPAL | $2,125,000.00 |
| INTEREST | $ 690,657.50 |
| **TOTAL BOND REQUIREMENTS** | **$2,815,657.50** |

**AVERAGE ANNUAL BUILDING BOND PAYMENT** ***$255,000.00***

| **REVENUES FOR 1999-2000** | | **ESTIMATED REVENUES IF 20% DECREASE IN ENROLLMENT** |
|---|---|---|
| LOCAL TAX LEVIES | 691,156.73 | 690,000.00 |
| MOTOR VEH. TAXES | 70,000.00 | 65,000.00 |
| INTEREST ON TAXES | 6,500.00 | 6,000.00 |
| TUITION | 1,500.00 | 1,500.00 |
| INTEREST ON INVESTMENTS | 9,857.50 | 9,000.00 |
| OTHER LOCAL REV. | 2,141.18 | 1,000.00 |
| RENTALS | 1,130.20 | 900.00 |
| RESALE/FINES | 1,340.25 | 1,000.00 |
| STATE EQUALIZATION | 562,348.20 | 449,878.56 |
| STATE SPECIAL ED | 34,501.03 | 27,600.82 |
| STATE GTB | 19,598.28 | 15,678.00 |
| STATE CORP. LIC. FEE | 1,000.00 | 900.00 |
| STATE AERO. FEE | 12.16 | 12.16 |
| STATE PROP. TAX REIMB. | 23,128.00 | 20,000.00 |
| **TOTALS** | **1,424,213.53** | **1,288,469.54** |

**A DECREASE OF *$135,743.99* IN REVENUES**

If enrollment decreases, expenses do not decrease. You still need to operate the building, hire the teachers and supply the classrooms.

# TOWN OF WEST YELLOWSTONE

MONTANA
naturally inviting

July 7, 2000

Honorable Donald A. Manzullo, Chairman
Committee on Small Business
Subcommittee on Tax, Finance, & Exports
U.S. House of Representatives
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 201515-6320

Dear Chairman Manzullo,

The Town Council of West Yellowstone is very concerned about the potential impact of a ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park. In the short term, we believe that there would be a substantial negative impact on our community and its services. The long-term impacts can only be determined with time.

The Town of West Yellowstone collects resort tax to help offset the costs of services provided to visitors to our Town. Of our total yearly budget, 92% derives from resort tax. During the winter season when Yellowstone National Park is open for over the snow visitation, the Town of West Yellowstone collects approximately 30% of these taxes. If preferred alternative (G) is to be implemented in the time frame that has been proposed, we believe that it would have a negative impact on all services provided by the Town. The police, ambulance, fire, social services, library, and public works would all be cut back. It would result in a decrease in the quality of life and jobs.

We believe that with better management and technology, most of the problems that are occurring in Yellowstone National Park can be resolved.

The Town of West Yellowstone and Yellowstone National Park are cooperating agencies that have worked together to solve many problems in the past and will continue in the future. Thank you for this opportunity to voice our concerns.

Sincerely,

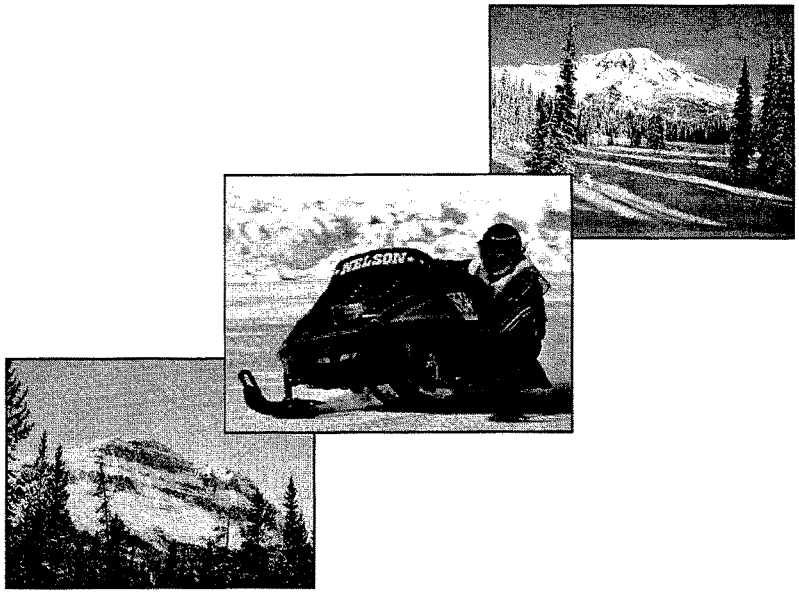
Jerry D. Johnson

Jerry Johnson, Mayor
Town of West Yellowstone

TOWN OF WEST YELLOWSTONE RECREATION AREA GALLATIN COUNTY, MONTANA

P.O. Box 1570 West Yellowstone, Montana 59758 (406) 646-7795 Fax (406) 646-7511

# Snowmobiling in Montana
# A 1998 Update




October 1998

By
James T. Sylvester
Bureau of Business and Economic Research

## Introduction

Our most recent research suggests that about 12 percent of the state's households include snowmobile recreationists. Nearly always, the whole family participates. With an average household size of about 2.5, perhaps as many as 95,000 Montanans participate in the sport each winter.

Virtually all winter visitors to Yellowstone, for instance, use snowmobiles. This is true in part because the Park's internal roads are otherwise impassable to vehicles in winter. Perhaps more important, Yellowstone and environs have been successfully promoted as a world-class snowmobiling destination.

Our estimates suggest that non-resident snowmobilers spend about $200 per activity day, including food, lodging, and often, snowmobile rental costs. On average, residents spend much less per activity day than non-residents; most of their out-of-pocket costs are for gasoline. We estimate that resident and non-resident snowmobilers buy about 4 million gallons of gasoline per season. With a base tax of $.27 per gallon, we estimate that snowmobilers in Montana generate over $1 million in revenue for the state highway trust fund.

In short, snowmobiling is a popular, revenue-generating winter recreation for Montana. It's popular with a solid share of households in the state, and increasingly popular with non-resident tourists.

## Methodology

This project was sponsored by the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department and the Montana Snowmobile Association. Bureau staff conducted the research, using a three-pronged approach, described below.

1. Several questions regarding snowmobile ownership and use were appended to the Bureau's ongoing Montana Poll. These questions were asked of a random sample of households in December 1997, and March 1998, and June 1998. The results, averaged over the three polls, provide an overall estimate of snowmobile numbers in Montana, and of the proportion of Montana households participating in the sport.

2. From its records, the Montana Department of Justice generated a random sample of 2,000 registered snowmobile owners in the state in April 1998. The BBER contacted 426 households with registered snowmobiles by telephone. 409 households completed a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview for a response rate of 96 percent. Although these characteristics may not be representative of all resident snowmobilers, they do reflect a solid sample of those who register.

3. Information on non-resident snowmobilers was gathered in another way. Between December 1997 and March 1998, the University of Montana Institute for Travel and Recreation Research (ITTR) intercepted non-resident visitors to Montana. These visitors were asked to maintain a diary of their expenditures while in Montana. Those who snowmobiled were contacted by telephone regarding snowmobile specific expenditures. Only one person contacted refused to cooperate.

## Assumptions

We used several basic assumptions to derive statewide impacts from our survey of Montana snowmobile activity. The following assumptions were applied to data from both resident and non-resident snowmobilers.

* Based on information from AAA Montana, we assumed an average gasoline

price of $1.26 during the winter of 1997-98. Prices were much higher in West Yellowstone.

*Fuel usage depends on size and age of machines as well as terrain and snow conditions; based on information from active snowmobilers, we assumed an average fuel consumption of 8.63 miles per gallon of gas.

* According to officials at Yellowstone National Park, about 55,000 visitors entered the Park from West Yellowstone between December, 1997 and March, 1998.

Other assumptions pertained to data analysis of impacts generated by **resident** snowmobilers only. Resident-only assumptions include:

* According to a July 1, 1996 estimate by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Montana has a total of 341,000 households with an average size of 2.5 persons each.

* About 10 percent of respondent households in recent Montana Polls said they owned one or more snowmobiles. The margin of error for this figure is plus or minus 5 percent.

* Again according to recent Montana Polls, snowmobiling households in Montana owned an average of 1.7 snowmobiles.

* During the 1997-98 season, slightly more Montana households participated in snowmobiling (12 percent) than owned snowmobiles (10 percent) -- based on Montana Poll data.

* Based on interviews with Montana snowmobilers, residents travel about 50 miles per activity day on their snowmobiles, and spend about $10 for snowmobile fuel.

Several important assumptions were made about **nonresident** patterns of snowmobile use and activity. All the following were derived from interviews completed by nonresident snowmobilers in Montana.

* Nonresident snowmobilers in Montana travel about 76 miles per activity day -- more miles than residents because non-residents tend to come for one purpose and want their moneys worth.

* Although they travel more miles, nonresidents spend about the same per day on fuel (about $10 on average) because gasoline costs are often covered by outfitters as part of snowmobile rental.

* Nonresidents spend about 4 days per snowmobile vacation.

## Snowmobile Numbers

One aspect of this study was to estimate the total number of snowmobiles in Montana. This is somewhat problematic because anecdotal evidence from both within the state and from trail administrators in other states suggests that many snowmobiles in private hands are never registered. By utilizing Montana Poll responses on snowmobile usage we have arrived at an estimate of about 58,000 snowmobiles in Montana (Table 1). This number generally agrees with the records of the Title & Registration Bureau; they have over 70,000 snowmobiles on record.

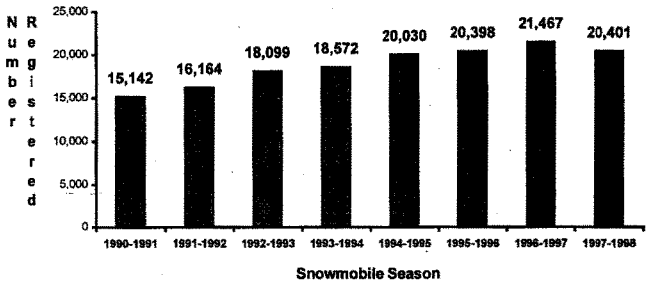
Figure 1 shows the number of snowmobiles registered with the Montana Department of Justice, Title and Registration Bureau since 1990. Our estimate suggests, about 65 percent of Montana snowmobiles are not registered. Many of these may not be actively used, used only on private lands where registration is not required, or simply not in compliance with state registration requirements.

**Table 1:**
**Number of Snowmobiles in Montana**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of households | | 341,000 |
| Proportion of households with snowmobiles | *times* | 10% |
| Number of snowmobiles per household | *times* | 1.7 |
| Number of snowmobiles | *equals* | 58,000 |

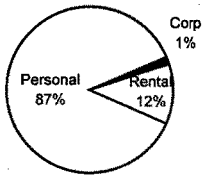
Sources: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, The University of Montana , Montana Poll; and, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

**Figure 1: Number of Registered Snowmobiles, Montana, 1990-1998**



The BBER obtained a sample of 2,000 registered snowmobile owners from the Montana Department of Justice, Title and Registration Bureau. This list was used to derive the portion of snowmobiles used by business or as rental machines. Figure 2 shows the distribution by type of ownership. About 87 percent of registered snowmobiles are registered to private individuals. Another 12 percent are owned for rental or demonstration purposes. Nearly three-quarters of the rental machines are located in West Yellowstone. Just over 1 percent of registered snowmobiles are owned by corporate or government entities.

**Figure 2: Ownership of registered snowmobiles**



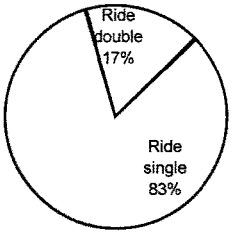

## Rider Patterns

In order to estimate total ridership, we asked:

"Does each trip member ride their own machine?"

The results showed snowmobile riding patterns that aren't too dissimilar from car commuter patterns. That is, most people ride single. Where resident snowmobilers double up, the primary reason was the second rider's youth.

**Figure 3: Non-resident and Resident Riding Patterns**




## Activity Days

One measure of the sport's popularity and potential impact is the number of "activity days," a figure roughly defined by the estimated number of snowmobilers and their average number of outings per season. Keep in mind that snowmobiling is a dispersed outdoor activity, so precise counts are virtually impossible. However, we have derived an estimate.

Montana Poll data suggested that between 9 percent and 14 percent of state residents snowmobiled during the 1997-98 season. The average household size of those completing our interview was 2.2 persons who snowmobiled, and the median number of outing days per season was 15.

A conservative estimate of 10 percent resident participation and 2.2 household members who snowmobile suggests a total of about 1.1 million activity days per season for Montana snowmobile enthusiasts.

Nonresident snowmobilers flock to West Yellowstone, an area with world class facilities and packaged tours. Our sample and results from previous studies suggest that over three-quarters of nonresidents snowmobiling in Montana spent time in or near West Yellowstone (Figure 3). About 56,000 visitors entered through the West Gate in during the winter of 1996-97, and

55,000 during 1997-98 (November through March) -- a poor season overall for snow. On average, only about 2 percent of resident snowmobiling took place in Yellowstone Park, while survey data tell us that about 25 percent of all nonresident snowmobile activity took place in the park. Using these proportions, we arrive at a total of 222,000 activity days for nonresident snowmobilers in Montana during the 1997-98 season.

Other nonresident snowmobiling occurs in the Big Hole Valley where nearby Idaho residents cross over; in and around Lookout Pass where Idaho and Washington residents make day-trips; and in northwestern Montana where Marias Pass and Eureka draw some limited Canadian visitation. Smaller numbers of nonresident snowmobilers also visit Cooke City, Lincoln, and Seeley Lake. Nonresident visits to border areas outside West Yellowstone are shorter, on average two days.

Thus, combined resident and nonresident snowmobile activity days amounted to 1.33 million during Montana's 1997-98 winter season. By comparison, downhill ski areas counted only about 1 million activity days total for residents and nonresidents alike, for the 1997-98 season.

## Expenditures

We estimated snowmobile-related spending for both residents and nonresidents in our survey of the 1997-98 season. However, our major interest here is nonresident expenditures because they are part of Montana's important nonresident tourism industry. Like other "basic" industries, tourism brings new dollars into the state economy.

Our estimates for total activity days provided the basis for estimating expenditures per day. We used spending per day, rather than per outing, because outings generally take only one day (for residents), or occupy several days (for nonresidents using package deals). We also calculated gasoline usage estimates on a per day basis, even though for nonresidents gasoline may be part of a package price.

Table 2 shows that total mean expenditures for nonresidents were almost $200 per activity day. Table 3 breaks down total nonresident expenditures for each category, using the total activity day numbers described earlier.

Note that nonresident snowmobilers spent over $44 million dollars in Montana during the 1997-98 season for daily personal expenses. Almost $16 million of this went for lodging, and another $11 million was spent in Montana restaurants and bars.

On the other hand, residents typically don't incur lodging costs and spend less on eating and drinking, and other expenses. A majority of residents don't make expenditures in several of the spending categories. As table 2 shows, residents median expenditures were about $32 per day some 16 percent of the comparable figure for nonresidents.

**Table 2: Expenditures per person per day**

| | Nonresident | | Resident | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Median | Mean | Median |
| Gas for snowmobiles | 12.76 | 10.00 | 10.15 | 10.00 |
| Gas for transportation | 14.39 | 11.11 | 10.55 | 10.00 |
| Lodging | 70.28 | 41.67 | 8.55 | 0.00 |
| Eating & drinking | 49.02 | 33.33 | 10.87 | 7.50 |
| Grocery and convenience stores | 9.48 | 5.56 | 5.63 | 4.25 |
| Entertainment and recreation places | 9.51 | 4.00 | 1.06 | 0.00 |
| Snowmobile dealers | 18.02 | 3.70 | 6.13 | 0.00 |
| Other retail | 12.11 | 7.14 | 1.46 | 0.00 |
| Other expenditures | 2.51 | 0.00 | 0.11 | 0.00 |
| Total daily expenditures | 198.08 | 116.51 | 54.51 | 31.75 |

**Table 3: Total nonresident expenditures**

| | |
|---|---|
| Gas for snowmobiles | 2,842,851 |
| Gas for transportation | 3,206,006 |
| Lodging | 15,657,962 |
| Eating & drinking places | 10,921,362 |
| Grocery and convenience stores | 2,112,087 |
| Entertainment and recreation stores | 2,118,771 |
| Other retail | 2,698,035 |
| Snowmobile dealers and repairs | 4,014,748 |
| Total nonresident expenditures in Montana | $44,131,036 |

The impact of snowmobile related spending can also be understood in terms of jobs and income. Approximately 25 percent of the nonresident spending becomes direct labor income for Montanans - income earned by people who work in lodging places, eating and drinking establishments, and other businesses that service tourists. The remaining percentage is spent on items that must be imported into Montana for sale such as film, groceries and clothing.

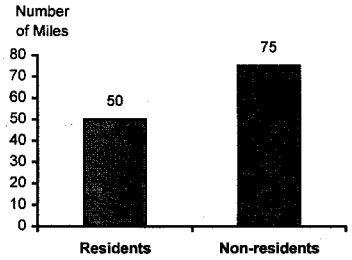
Overall, we estimate that nonresident snowmobilers generate over $11 million per year in labor income for Montanans -- or about 800 full and part-time jobs.

## Gasoline Used by Snowmobiles

Gasoline usage estimates are important because they suggest tax amounts contributed to the state highway trust fund by snowmobilers. Under current legislation a portion of these revenues are returned to snowmobilers through the trail grooming program.

We asked each respondent the average distance traveled on a typical snowmobile outing. Resident snowmobilers travel an average of about 50 miles per day. Nonresidents travel about 76 miles per day on average.

**Figure 5: Number of Miles Traveled Per Day**



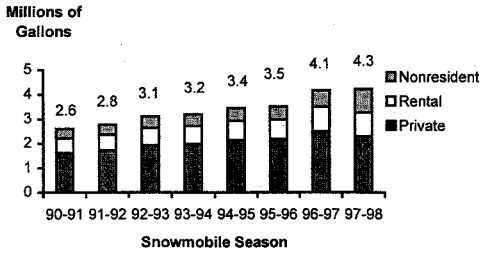

We used several additional items on the questionnaire to estimate and verify gas usage. Specifically, we asked three questions about each **working** snowmobile a household owned. Table 2 show the questions and the results compiled from respondents' answers

**Table 2: Snowmobile Characteristics**

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| How many days is that snowmobile used per year? | A median of 15 days per year. |
| How many miles per gallon does the machine achieve? | An average of 8.63 miles /gallon. |
| How many gallons of gas are used by the snowmobile each day? | An average of 6.0 gallons per day. |

These results were then used to calculate the average amount of gasoline used by a Montana snowmobile in a year and this average amount multiplied by the number of privately owned snowmobiles. Rental machine usage was derived in a similar fashion. Nonresident usage was calculated from a per day basis. Figure 6 summarizes these calculations.

**Figure 6: Gasoline Used by Snowmobiles, Montana, 1990-1998**



Snowmobilers in Montana used about 4.3 million gallons of gas during the 1997-1998 season. Privately operated snowmobiles accounted for about two-thirds of this usage or 2.3 million gallons, rental machines about 956,000 gallons, and nonresidents about 970,000 gallons. The increase in gas usage may be attributable to the increased popularity of Montana snowmobiling areas in western Montana by Idaho and Washington residents.

Montana snowmobilers do not use exotic fuels. Almost all owners (97 percent) use unleaded gasoline. Other types of fuel are used only in specialized snowmobiles, such as racing machines. Primarily this 'other fuel' is aviation gas.

Of the few nonresidents (12 percent) who brought gas to Montana, most brought only what was in their snowmobiles. Extra tanks were an anomaly.

## A Growing Sport?

We wanted some estimate of the change, if any, in snowmobiling's popularity and impact over the past several years. We reanalyzed data from previous surveys.

Table 5 shows the change. Nonresident snowmobile activity increased by 20 percent over the period, from about 185,000 nonresident activity days in 1993-94 to over 222,000 in 1997-1998.

Given the rise in activity days, it's somewhat surprising that nonresident spending did not grow substantially. One reason for this low growth is the rise in day snowmobilers on the Montana-Idaho border. These visitors have characteristics similar to Montana residents.

**Table 6: Comparison of 1988, 1994 and 1998 Studies**

| | 1987-88 | 1993-94 | 1997-98 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nonresident comparisons | | | |
| Total number of visits to destination | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Number of days at destination | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Number of days snowmobiling | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Number of nonresident activity days | 108,000 | 185,000 | 222,000 |
| Average daily expenditure per person (1998 dollars) | $178 | $151 | $198 |
| Median daily expenditure per person (1998 dollars) | $125 | $134 | $117 |
| Total expenditures (1998 dollars) | $25,998,000 | $43,667,000 | $44,131,000 |

## Wish List

Residents and nonresidents also differed when asked to rate the importance of various snowmobile facilities, enhancements, and regulatory controls of the sport in Montana. As Table 9 shows, nonresidents were far more interested than residents in additional snowmobile-related signage, including roadside directions to sites, trail markers, and nature interpretations. Most nonresidents also wished for heated shelters and outhouses. Residents, on the whole, placed much less emphasis on such facilities and enhancements.

The two groups differed markedly in the importance each placed on regulatory and safety factors. A much greater share of nonresidents than residents wanted emergency help available at snowmobile sites, law enforcement, user fees, and limited entry.

In short, nonresidents seem more worried about safety and overcrowding, and are much more likely to accept certain controls on the sport. Residents, on the other hand, seem to want unregulated access, and are more willing to accept undeveloped sites.

**Table 9: Factors and facilities desirable to snowmobilers**

| | 1994 | | 1998 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facilities | **Resident** | **Nonresident** | **Resident** | **Nonresident** |
| Plowed parking areas | 47.5 | 50.7 | 66.5 | 76.2 |
| Road sign directions to snowmobile trails | 50.0 | 83.1 | 57.5 | 75.4 |
| Snowmobile loading ramps | 17.3 | 19.7 | 17.4 | 31.7 |
| Heated shelters at the parking areas | 8.4 | 25.4 | 15.8 | 30.0 |
| Groomed trails | 53.7 | 85.3 | 56.5 | 71.9 |
| Nature interpretation along the trails | 12.1 | 45.4 | 21.7 | 50.0 |
| Trail markers and signs | 68.7 | 87.3 | 61.6 | 83.3 |
| Trail maps | 71.3 | 94.4 | 66.6 | 87.5 |
| Long trails | 69.0 | 78.6 | 58.3 | 81.5 |
| Loop trails | 63.2 | 82.1 | 57.6 | 77.8 |
| Shelters along trails | 26.1 | 55.6 | 31.6 | 54.4 |
| Outhouses along trails and parking areas | 27.5 | 63.6 | 35.7 | 50.8 |
| Regulation | | | | |
| Rider certification | 19.3 | 32.6 | 38.0 | 40.8 |
| Emergency help | 29.5 | 48.9 | 45.2 | 62.7 |
| Law enforcement on trails | 7.5 | 33.8 | 17.9 | 44.8 |
| Limits on number of people | 5.4 | 28.6 | 7.4 | 21.2 |
| Entry permits to use an area | 2.0 | 23.9 | 4.4 | 30.0 |
| Volunteer assistants | 24.0 | 38.7 | 46.6 | 57.4 |
| Discourage large groups | 8.4 | 28.4 | 8.2 | 26.8 |
| User fees for groomed trails | 10.0 | 30.5 | 18.8 | 41.4 |

## Key Issues

Our survey also offered an opportunity for respondents to comment on what they thought was the most important issue facing snowmobilers. Access to snowmobiling areas was the most frequently cited issue by both residents and nonresidents. About half of the 16 percent of nonresidents mentioned access to Yellowstone. About a quarter of nonresidents cited safety factors. Nearly half of residents mentioned access issues and about 20 percent mentioned safety particularly personal responsibility.

Overall, differences in resident and nonresident responses to this open-ended question seem to echo other findings in the survey. That is, nonresident snowmobilers as a group seem more like Montanans in their snowmobiling attitudes.

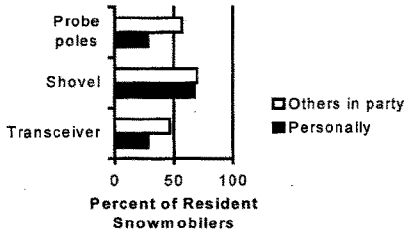
**Table 10: The most important issue facing snowmobiling?**

| | Residents | Nonresidents | Residents | Nonresidents |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access to snowmobiling areas | 43.2 | 11.2 | 46.5 | 34.3 |
| Access to Yellowstone Park | na | na | 5.1 | 16.4 |
| General access | | | 41.4 | 17.9 |
| Impact on the environment | 4.7 | 15.7 | 9.5 | 13.4 |
| Noise, smoke | 2.8 | 3.9 | 4.9 | 3.0 |
| Number of people | 1.9 | 11.8 | 4.6 | 10.4 |
| Safety | 17.6 | 32.2 | 19.5 | 25.4 |
| Personal responsibility | 5.2 | 5.9 | 10.0 | 4.5 |
| Machine power and speed | 2.4 | 7.2 | 3.2 | 3.0 |
| Safety | 10.0 | 19.1 | 6.3 | 17.9 |
| Facilities and fees | 7.1 | 8.6 | 4.4 | 4.5 |
| Other | 8.0 | 8.6 | 14.9 | 16.4 |
| Environmentalists | 2.4 | 3.3 | 7.8 | 11.9 |
| Regulations | 3.3 | 3.3 | 5.4 | 1.5 |
| Other | 2.3 | 2.0 | 1.7 | 3.0 |
| No response | 19.4 | 23.7 | 5.2 | 6.0 |

## Avalanche Preparedness

Because of the recent snowmobiler deaths and accidents caused by avalanche, we asked about avalanche preparedness. Survey results suggest about 28 percent of snowmobilers wear avalanche transceivers and carry probe poles for avalanche rescue. About twice as many companions wear transceivers and carry probe poles. Nearly three-quarters of all snowmobilers carry shovels which have other snowmobiling uses. In many cases respondents claimed they did not need to be prepared, as they did not snowmobile in avalanche areas.

**Figure 6: Avalanche equipment**



About one third of respondents said they had attended an avalanche workshop. Of this third, about half had attended one in the last year. Seminars were conducted by government experts followed by snowmobile clubs and search and rescue groups.

## Summary

In summary snowmobiling is a significant sport in the state, with significant economic impacts. According to our data, it exceeds downhill skiing in terms of activity days per season -- if not necessarily in total economic impact, given the different spending patterns for each sport.

We estimate that nonresident snowmobilers spent over $44 million in Montana during the 1997-98 winter season. In addition, residents spent about $86 million during the same period.

We estimate that snowmobilers (resident and nonresident alike) paid over $1 million directly into the highway trust fund during the 1997-98 season via gasoline taxes. It's worth remembering, as policy makers and others eye this revenue stream, that residents and nonresident snowmobilers differ markedly in some ways -- income profile, spending patterns, concerns, and desires. Development of facilities and regulation of the sport could satisfy one group at the expense of the other.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF ROBERT STEIN

I am here today because of the Department of Interior ruling on banning snowmobilers in most units of the National Park System, specifically Miners Castle road that is located in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

Back in 1972, I came to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan from Chicago. My wife and I came up to go snowmobiling and see the Miners Castle, a sandstone rock formation, that is in my opinion, the most beautiful part of the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. I was extremely impressed with the area and in 1975 decided to buy the Alger Falls Motel, a 17 unit motel nine miles south of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. At that time the motel only employed 2 persons, my wife and myself.

Since then by aggressively promoting the area for snowmobiling, the Miners Castle slowly became the flagship in all advertising for Alger County. So it is not hard to see why the closing of parks to snowmobilling is the worst threat to my business that I can imagine. The mere mention of these trail closures has prompted numerous concerned calls and letters from customers and residents.

Snowmobiling has always been permitted in the area that is now known as the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Slowly, one by one, the places that were once open to snowmobiles, have been closed down. Snowmobiles are now only allowed in the Miner's Castle area on roads that are open to all vehicles. The roads are not plowed in the winter and no damage is done , for there needs to be at least eight inches of snow on the road before grooming can take place.

Just two years ago we started grooming the Miners Castle road pleasing the tourists and locals alike, who can now experience the beauty of the castle during the snow covered months as well as in the summer. Which in a climate such as ours, can account for as many as six months out of the year. Few people could make the seven-mile walk up the road to see this beautiful piece of scenery. This road is presently open to all users in the winter, motorized and non-motorized. The closure would only effect snowmobiles. The only other way that this landmark can be seen is by Lake Superior and due to the treacherous conditions of the ice, this method is very hazardous.

Although it would be impossible to predict because the area has always been open to snowmobiles, I would expect a decline of at least 30% in my winter business. My motel now employees four persons and that would have to be dropped to 2 ½ persons. There would be a significant decrease in my seasons occupancy and I am sure that all other business, be it motels, restaurants or gift shops, would see the same effect. This would be devastating to the local economy that is dependent upon the tourism that this trail helps to attract.

Again, I cannot emphasize too greatly that this threat is the biggest problem that I can imagine for my business. In the 25 years that I have been a motel owner in this community my business has experienced years where there was lack of snow and bad economy. These are factors that we cannot control. As a community we suffered together and held on until the next year with hopes that the weather or economy would be on our side. The closing of these parks is something that we can control and are trying to keep open.

In closing, I would hope that the Miners Castle road/trail in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore remains open to snowmobiling , so that those of us who live here in that area may continue to make a living and people may experience the beauty of the Pictured Rocks no matter what season.

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# COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

## Subcomittee on Tax, Finance, and Exports

testimony by:

John M. Lyon

July 13,2000

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Committee Members for the invitation to address you today. I am John Lyon, volunteer President of the Illinois Association of Snowmobile Clubs, an organization that was founded 28 years ago by members of Illinois snowmobile clubs. My profession is that of a small business owner. My wife Sandy and I own and operate J&J Sports, one of the originating Yamaha dealerships in the United States. The business first sold off road motorcycles in 1964, added Yamaha snowmobiles in 1967 and Arctic Cat snowmobiles in 1995. We have many years of experience with snowmobilers and know them, their feelings and desires for the sport.
We are part of a very large family of enthusiasts who enjoy outdoor winter activities. Our friends and customers represent several generations of snowmobilers.

According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses represent over 99% of all employers. These small businesses employ 53% of the private work force and provide 47% of all sales in our country. Small businesses drive America, and are especially important to rural America.

Starting a small business is living the American Dream -- and the challenge of running it is difficult enough, without additional burdens imposed from government. Bans, such as the one suggested by the Department of Interior, add to the struggles of the small businessman.

"Small business" is defined by the Small Business Administration and National Federation of Independent Business as a business with less than 500 employees. To most of us small businessmen, 500 employees would be BIG business. The majority of small businesses are less than 10 employees. Most of the businesses that would be impacted by the snowmobile ban in National Parks employee less than 10 employees. That would truly have a negative impact on small businesses and communities in rural America. Winter business is not easily replaced. Outside of snowmobilers, there are few people who vacation and tour America in the cold and snowy winter months.

We are not under and have not received any federal grant, contract or subcontract in the past two years.

We live in a rural farming community, a place where being outdoors is a natural way of life. We look to expand our outdoor experience by visiting our National Parks on our snowmobiles as other visitors do during their season of choice. Members of our sport are from the youngest of children to their grandparents and own 2.3 million snowmobiles.

Our dealership is an average size small business. We employ seven people including our son Jim who is our equal and future of our business. Our services include sales of snowmobiles, atv's, and motorcycles; accessory products and parts to support them; and repair and maintenance facilities. Our business is highly regarded by our customers, as they have for many years ranked our

Yamaha dealership as number One in Illinois in customer satisfaction. Snowmobile business accounts for one third of our revenue and requires additional staff to keep up with the immediate need of our customers. Our customers are vacationers and often need repairs and services on short notice.

Because of job responsibilities, many snowmobilers are only able to take family vacations in winter. For many snowmobile children December 26 is more important than Christmas Day because that's the day they start their first snowmobile trip of the season.

To understand how the closure of National Parks affects Illinois residents and our business it's important for you to know that snowmobilers are very mobile. They're used to traveling to find snow when it's scarce in their locality. It's common for them to travel thousands of miles annually in the pursuit of enjoying the winter beauty of the land. It's our profession to assure that their enjoyment is secure. Their patronizing our store is what keeps our small business alive. Illinois is not a state with National Parks for snowmobile use, but local snowmobilers do travel to National Parks. The closest National Park to us is Pictured Rocks in Michigan. About an eight hour drive from our location, not a lengthy trip to visit such a place. This length of trip is commonplace and as you can judge, results in many dollars spent and tax revenue generated.

The average snowmobiler spends 7.2 nights each season in motels. An Illinois snowmobiler who visits Yellowstone will spend 25 hours on the road each way and affect several economies along the way. In addition, the snowmobile must be modified to compensate for use at high altitude use. Another profit center for our dealership.

Don Barry, Secretary of the Interior, announced on April 27, 2000 that our customers would be banned from National Parks. He stated incorrect and outdated data to justify his decision. Announcements such as Mr. Barry's influence people who may not know the information he (a federal government employee) used was knowingly wrong. Incorrect facts, such as those used by the Department of Interior, have already impacted the snowmobile business negatively.

People who are not familiar with the true improvements being made by the industry will probably take credence in Mr. Barry's claims that "Snowmobiles are noisy, antiquated machines that are no longer welcome in our National Parks. The snowmobile industry had many years to clean up their act and they haven't." When in fact the industry has reduced emissions by 50% since 1994 and asked EPA to regulate the industry that year. EPA standards should by released this Fall. By the National Park Service's own admission, the data regarding the impact of snowmobiles have on our Parks is incomplete. The snowmobile industry is ready and waiting for these standards, and they are confident they will have no problems attaining them.

If snowmobiles are such a problem, why does the preferred Alternative in the Yellowstone Environmental Statement not require the National Park Service to use current snowmobiles with the newest technology. By the National Park Service's own admission, the data regarding the impact of snowmobiles on our Parks is incomplete. The Park Service has made no effort to

explore or encourage cleaner technology. Mr. Barry did not inform the public that snowmobiles would continue to be used by the National Park Service employees, their families, and their friends.

The tourist driven Yellowstone area economy will certainly be devastated by a snowmobile ban.

The Department of Interior and Mr. Barry did not tell that the snowmobile manufacturers have not only improved the technology that has been used in the past, they have also developed new technology. Arctic Cat made two four-stroke concept snowmobiles available to the National Park Service this past winter. These snowmobiles were used in Yellowstone National Park.

People not intimately familiar with snowmobiles had no reason not to believe Mr. Barry and the Department of Interior. That means all of those individuals who may have been considering entering the winter recreation of snowmobiling have been discouraged from doing so now. Those individuals could have been my new customers. Our business is such that we can't afford to diminish our customer base. We have worked hard over the years with slow steady growth so that we can maintain our work force .

Those individuals, my new customers, could have also been new customers of more than 2000 independent small business owners who are snowmobile dealers in the United States. Together, me and my fellow snowmobile dealers employ more than 20,000 full time employees. We typically play a large role in our local rural economies. The majority of snowmobile dealers and located in rural America, are family owned and represent the entire holdings and future of those families. A decrease in sales for any reason, especially unfounded claims, can be a disaster to these businesses.

The four major snowmobile manufacturers provide nearly 10,000 full time jobs in the United States. Once again, the majority of those jobs are in rural America.

Another 35,000 full time jobs are generated from the tourism industry. Thousands of hotels, motels, restaurants, gas stations, convenience and grocery stores would not exist without the winter business generated by snowmobiling. Snowmobilers are highly regarded by tourist related businesses. They are known as money spenders, more so than other tourist/sport enthusiasts.

Snowmobilers are the winter economic engine in the snowbelt. Snowmobiling does not take place in developed metropolitan areas. Snowmobiling occurs in the rural and less populated areas across the United States. Many new small businesses have started as a result of snowmobile tourism. And just importantly, many business that struggled to survive to stay in business are now healthy due to snowmobiling.

I think it's important to note that in the Midwest, winter tourism income far exceeds that derived from summer tourism. In my neighboring states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan snowmobiling generates over $3 Billion annually. The majority of that money is generated in the

less developed, rural areas of the northern portions of those states. There are a total of 922,851 snowmobiles registered in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan.

While 65,000 full time jobs and billion of dollars spent annually by snowmobilers may not appear to compare with big business, remember, **small business drives America.** We are small business owners. We are located in rural America and are able to employ our staff all year round because we are in the snowmobile business. It is common in the recreational business to have seasonal employees. We provide significant income tax revenues to state and federal treasuries. We, snowmobile related small business owners, generate millions of dollars in tax revenues. The sport of snowmobiling has rejuvenated the economies of many rural communities that were devastated by the loss of big businesses. Rural communities survive because of small businesses, businesses like our snowmobile dealership.

Unfortunately, when the Department of Interior made their theatrical announcement banning snowmobiles in National Parks, they impacted many small businesses. That announcement appears to have been made prematurely, since there has yet to be any deadlines or timetables for implementing this ban. But, that's not what the general public heard. The general public heard what the Department of Interior intended them to hear. That in their opinion, snowmobiles are bad.

The average American citizen may not know that snowmobiling is enjoyed by millions of American families. They may not know that snowmobiling has been enjoyed in our National Parks for many years. They may not know that snowmobilers are average Americans, who are caring neighbors and hard working American taxpayers. The average snowmobiler is 41 years old and 75% of snowmobilers are married, with the vast majority having children at home who snowmobile. The average annual household income for a snowmobile family is $60,000.

The public was not told that snowmobilers are environmentalists. We are concerned users and enthusiasts, who not only enjoy nature, but also care about and for the environment. That is why we, snowmobilers and businesses that depend on snowmobiling, always support scientific studies. We believe in good, valid science--not the pseudo science that is often used by anti-snowmobilers and, unfortunately, the government. As an interested stakeholder in public lands, I hope this Committee and this Congress will require good science be applied for the future management of our public lands.

In summary, in the Midwest we do not have many National Parks, but our customers do travel to seek them out and spend considerable money with us, other dealers and related businesses in the quest for winter enjoyment. A fear of many is that a National Park Ban of snowmobiles will move to other National, State and private lands.

Mr. Chairman, we look to you and your colleagues on this subcommittee and in Congress to help the small businesses. We believe working together is the best way to solve problems. There are viabale alternatives available. We hope you will explore and examine the alternatives available. Your assistance will help us, the backbone of America, the small business.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I will be available for any questions you may have today or at any time in the future.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF STAN GEROU

This testimony is to address the economic impact on our community and our businesses personally, if Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore closes the Miners Castle Road to snowmobiling.

The Miners Castle road is the most beautiful of all our trails. It is a blacktop road that is used nine months out of the year by all motorized vehicles including cars, buses, large trucks and motorcycles. For the three-month snowmobile season the National Park Service wants to close this trail to snowmobilers. The Miners Trail follows the blacktop road to Miners Castle, which has viewing stations looking out over Lake Superior. It is a spectacular view. This is a very popular attraction with snowmobilers. When the papers and television ran the story of the National Park Service excluding snowmobilers from the national parks many calls were received by the motels in this area on how it would affect the snowmobiling in Alger County. This is the favorite destination of theirs. We do not feel this would have any adverse environmental effects on this area especially since it is open nine months to motorized vehicles.

It is estimated our community would lose 30% of our snowmobile business. We are a small community that relies very heavily on our tourist trade. A 30% decrease would cost our community over 2 ½ million dollars in lost revenue in a season. Our area has a combination of over 450 motel units, cabins, suites and bed and breakfasts. The area runs between 55% and 70% occupancy during this season with an average of three

people per unit. It has been written that each person spends $120.00 per day between lodging, food, gas, oil, repairs, rentals and shopping.

I personally own two motels for a total of 127 suites and rooms. This would have a devastating effect on our business. We have very little motel trade during our winter season except snowmobiles. They are our customers that carry us through to our summer season. We have expanded our motel business since we bought it in 1978 because we had two good seasons we could rely on. We started with 27 units and have added a major addition to our Days Inn and bought another 61-unit Comfort Inn five years ago. If we lose 30% of our business we are going to lose approximately $125,000.00 per year in revenue. This we really cannot afford. Besides the lost revenue we will have to lay off six to eight people.

We also have an excavating firm that does the trail grooming for the Munising Visitor's Bureau. The grooming operation employees five operators and one mechanic. We would have to cut this down to three operators and a part time mechanic.

I do not feel that the lost revenue to our community and myself personally is worth the devastation of our snowmobile business by closing a snowmobile trail that is on an existing road and open nine months out of the year to all forms of traffic.

Sincerely,

Stan Gerou

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***Snowmobile Industry Fights to Overturn National Park Service Ban***

**THE PROPOSED SNOWMOBILE BAN**
On April 27, the U.S. Department of Interior announced its intention to ban the use of snowmobiles in 27 national parks. The Department cited noise and emissions as reason for such extreme action, despite recent scientific evidence which shows new snowmobiles have significantly reduced sound and emissions.

The Department claims no new authority for such a ban, instead they have dusted off executive orders and agency regulations that have not been interpreted or enforced for three decades. While the Department is inaccurately judging the environmental impact of snowmobiles, the Environmental Protection Agency is creating its first-ever emissions standards for snowmobiles, which snowmobile manufacturers are expecting in September 2000.

**FACTS FROM THE SNOWMOBILE INDUSTRY**

- The National Park Service ban did not allow time for federal, state or local officials to work together on the issue, nor did it bring North America's 4 million snowmobilers to the table to discuss the impact of the decision.

- The studies the National Park Service is using to justify the ban are based on data gathered a decade ago using obsolete vehicles that haven't been manufactured in 10 years, using incorrect and unscientific testing procedures.

- Snowmobiles have always met all national park air quality and sound level standards. No scientific studies have demonstrated that snowmobiles cause significant harm to humans, animals or the environment.

- Snowmobile manufacturers have sought to meet high environmental standards by researching new technology and encouraging the development of emission standards by the Environmental Protection Agency — standards that will be announced in September 2000. In fact, the snowmobile manufacturers proactively approached the EPA in 1997 to request emissions standards.

- Snowmobilers have enjoyed the use of national parks for more than 30 years. The National Park Service estimates more than 180,000 snowmobiles are used each year on national park lands.

- The ban would infringe on the freedom of millions of Americans and would create economic disaster in hundreds of small towns nationwide. Tens of thousands of American jobs are dependent on the $9.4 billion snowmobile industry, including manufacturers, dealers, suppliers, and tourism industries such as hotels and restaurants.

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Edward J. Klim
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**Closing the Gate to 4 million North Americans**

**Park Service Took "Wrong Way" in Cutting Access**

The National Park Service is attempting to post "Do Not Enter" signs at the gates of 27 national parks, barring access to snowmobiling families across America.

That single-handed action is an attack on all snowmobilers, especially the seniors, the disabled and Snowmobile Moms who enjoy our national treasures in the crisp beauty of winter. It is an attempt to unravel the $9.2 billion snowmobile industry that provides 65,000 jobs. And it irresponsibly ignores the environmental advancements of the industry that is building cleaner, quieter machines.

Add to those inadequacies the fact that the National Park Service took this action without consulting with the very people that they were banning from the park is proof enough that a "Wrong Way" sign should be permanently posted outside the offices of the National Park Service. When a nationwide poll shows only 11 percent of Americans favor a ban on snowmobiles, the National Park Service should know they're headed the wrong way.

The proposed ban of snowmobiles announced in late April is plain and simple the *wrong way to do business for several reasons.*

**Stereotyping Riders**

Quite simply, Assistant Secretary Donald Barry slandered four million snowmobilers with his unilateral and irresponsible comments about snowmobile riders. Let's look at the facts. On average they are about 40 years old. More than 75 percent are married. More than 80 percent use their snowmobiles for trail riding and touring on marked and groomed trails, built and maintained by volunteer snowmobilers. And in many snow-covered states, these snowmobiles are essential vehicles for search and rescue missions, travel and emergencies. It's the *wrong way to do business* to shut out millions of responsible Americans who enjoy the beauty of winter in our national parks with family and friends.

**Economic Impact**
Snowmobiling is an important economic engine supporting tens of thousands of jobs and bringing more than $9 billion dollars into the economy every year. Certainly manufacturers make up a significant portion of that figure. But don't forget the little guys. The snowmobile industry is a tourist business. A proposed ban will be a devastating blow to tour operators, motels, restaurants, service stations and rental and repair shops bordering the parks. In fact, the Mayor of West Yellowstone has stated that the ban will, in essence, close the town down. That phenomenon will repeat itself 27 times across our nation. Creating wintertime ghost towns across America is *the wrong way to do business.*

**Environmental Advancements**
The Park Service ban also irresponsibly ignores environmental evidence.

First of all, snowmobiles have always met – and continue to meet – all National Park air quality and sound level standards. No scientific studies have shown any significant harm to humans, animals or the environment from snowmobile use. In fact, the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Dept. of Interior, U.S. Geological Group are among organizations that have researched air quality in the parks and found snowmobiles don't present a significant environmental impact.

Secondly, in all national parks, snowmobiles can *only* be operated on trails built on snow-covered paved roads – the same roads that carry millions of cars, trucks and RVs from April to November. Despite what Barry and his staff would have you believe, snowmobilers willingly stay on groomed trails and abide by strict speed limits and other regulations to enjoy our nation's treasures in their wintry, snow-covered splendor. The industry has already stepped forward to create cleaner and quieter snowmobiles and there has been exhaustive work done with the EPA to develop emissions standards.

**The "right way"**
It's not too late for the Park Service to correct its ways. First, it must abandon the proposed ban. Then it must open the system and involve all groups of people who use the parks. The Park Service needs to listen to the millions of responsible snowmobilers, including the senior citizens, the disabled, the Snowmobile Moms, the tour operators, restaurant owners – and the manufacturers. If the Park Service opens its ears, it will learn. And with this openness, will come resolution.

The parks should be enjoyed by all – not by just a few elite. A reasonable solution is possible if the Park Service is willing to start the communication process.

However, if the Park Service continues to pursue its current course of ignoring the facts, ignoring four million snowmobilers and ignoring the opinion of 80 percent of Americans, they'll be sending us all down a dangerous road. It's a dead end road where politicians in Washington decide who can and cannot use public lands without consulting the people who own them – the American people.

*That, frankly, is the wrong way to do business.*

NEWS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

**Office of the Assistant Secretary**
For Release: April 27,2000

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## National Park Service Puts the Brakes on Escalating Snowmobile Use in the National Park System

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — Interior Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Donald J. Barry, today announced a renewed commitment by the National Park Service (NPS) to immediately begin enforcing existing NPS national regulations regarding snowmobile use in the National Park System. The net effect of this renewed enforcement effort will be the significant reduction of recreational snowmobiling in most units of the System.

"The time has come for the National Park System to pull in its welcome mat for recreational snowmobiling," said Assistant Secretary Barry. "Snowmobiles are noisy, antiquated machines that are no longer welcome in our national parks. The snowmobile industry has had many years to clean up their act and they haven't."

The renewed enforcement effort on snowmobiling was prompted by a rulemaking petition that the Department of the Interior received last year from the Bluewater Network and over 60 other environmental organizations in the United States. The rulemaking petition requested that the NPS ban snowmobiling in all units of the Park System. In responding to the Bluewater petition, NPS first sent a questionnaire survey to the 42 units of the Park System that currently allow recreational snowmobiling. The surveys were designed to assess the extent to which affected units of the system had complied with existing Park Service regulations and past Executive Orders regulating snowmobile use.

"Quite frankly, we were surprised and disturbed by the results of the snowmobile survey," said Park Service Deputy Director Denis Galvin. "The surveys graphically demonstrated that years of inattention to our own regulatory standards on snowmobiles generated the problem we have before us today. In almost every instance, our administrative records were incomplete or inadequate to allow snowmobiling in parks to continue. Let me reaffirm for the American public that our national parks will be managed in full compliance with our environmental laws."

A wide range of Executive Orders, National Park System legislation and NPS regulations establish high environmental management standards that must be satisfied before recreational activities such as snowmobiling are to be allowed in a national park. Executive Orders No. 11644 (Feb.8, 1972) and No. 11989 (May 24, 1977) close all public lands to off-road vehicles including snowmobiles except where specifically authorized. Moreover, these Orders require agencies that allow off-road vehicle use such as snowmobiling to actively monitor the effects of these uses on the lands under their jurisdiction, and to immediately prohibit such uses whenever it is determined that further off-road vehicle use will cause, or

- more-

is causing, considerable adverse effects on soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat or cultural or historic resources.

The NPS Organic Act and General Authorities Act impose additional protective standards by requiring that the Service "...shall promote and regulate the use of Federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations ... to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Long-standing NPS national regulations (36 CFR 2.18) prohibit snowmobile use within units of the Park System except where designated, and only when their use is consistent with the park's natural, cultural, scenic and aesthetic values, safety considerations, park's management objectives and will not disturb wildlife or damage park resources.

The questionnaire surveys completed by those park units allowing snowmobiling revealed that virtually no monitoring of environmental effects had taken place despite this requirement under Executive Order No. 11644 (Feb. 8, 1972). The surveys also demonstrated minimal environmental information or analysis regarding possible adverse environmental effects upon park resources and values.

Deputy Director Galvin said, " there has been a growing concern within the Park Service recently regarding the appropriateness of recreational snowmobiling as a winter use in national parks. This concern has been triggered in part by the on-going winter use planning effort currently underway for Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, which has focused on the significant adverse environmental effects generated by heavy snowmobile activity in those parks."

Under the Service's new snowmobile enforcement program, snowmobiling for general recreational purposes will be prohibited throughout the Park System, with a limited number of narrow exceptions. These exceptions would apply to units of the Park System in Alaska and in Voyageurs National Park, due to provisions in their enabling legislation regarding snowmobile use. On-going planning efforts in these units would delineate the extent to which, and under what conditions, recreational snowmobiling would be allowed. In addition to park units in Alaska and Voyageurs NP, another limited set of exceptions would apply where snowmobile use was deemed necessary or essential to provide access to adjacent private lands or to inholdings within a park. The last category of exceptions involve situations where snowmobiles would be allowed to transit across a small amount of park land in order to go from one area of public or private land to another, where snowmobile use was permitted.

Under the new regulatory enforcement effort, superintendents at parks that previously allowed snowmobiling would now be expected to rigorously apply existing Executive Orders and NPS national regulatory standards and to assess whether past snowmobile activity would be consistent with any of the narrow exceptions identified by the Service. Unless the standards can be met and exception is found to apply, such activity will be terminated in the particular park.

The NPS has completed a study of the effect snowmobiles have on air quality, "Air Quality Concerns related to Snowmobile Usage in National Parks" (February 2000). The study indicated that air quality in national parks is negatively impacted by snowmobile use. Air quality degradation, videotape evidence of negative impacts on the soundscape, wildlife and air resources of Yellowstone National Park, and the compilation of public comments about the Draft winter use plan for Yellowstone NP, are all factors in the decision to uniformly enforce existing rules and to consistently apply the current standards regarding snowmobile use.

###

## National Park Service

*Under the existing laws and regulations, recreational snowmobile use* ***is currently allowed*** *in these National Park Service units.*

| National Parks | State |
|---|---|
| *Acadia* | *Maine* |
| *Black Canyon of the Gunnison* | *Colorado* |
| *Crater Lake* | *Oregon* |
| *Grand Teton* | *Wyoming* |
| *Kenai Fjords* | *Alaska* |
| *Kobuk Valley* | *Alaska* |
| *Mount Ranier* | *Washington* |
| *North Cascades* | *Washington* |
| *Olympic* | *Washington* |
| *Rocky Mountain* | *Colorado* |
| *Sequoia and Kings Canyon* | *California* |
| *Theodore Roosevelt* | *North Dakota* |
| *Voyageurs* | *Minnesota* |
| *Yellowstone* | *ID/MT/WY* |
| *Zion* | *Utah* |

| National Seashores | State |
|---|---|
| *Pictured Rocks* | *Michigan* |

| National Monuments | State |
|---|---|
| *Cape Krusenstern* | *Alaska* |
| *Cedar Breaks* | *Utah* |
| *Dinosaur* | *CO/Utah* |
| *Grand Portage* | *Minnesota* |

| Parkways | State |
|---|---|
| *Blue Ridge* | *NC/VA* |
| *John D. Rockefeller,Jr.* | *Wyoming* |

| National Historic Sites | State |
|---|---|
| *Herbert Hoover* | *Iowa* |
| *Klondike Gold Rush* | *Alaska* |
| *Perry's Victory* | *Michigan* |

| National Parks & National Preserves | State |
|---|---|
| *Aniakchak* | *Alaska* |
| *Bering Land Bridge* | *Alaska* |
| *Denali* | *Alaska* |
| *Gates of the Arctic* | *Alaska* |
| *Glacier Bay* | *Alaska* |
| *Katmai Fjords* | *Alaska* |
| *Lake Clark* | *Alaska* |
| *Noatak* | *Alaska* |
| Wrangell-St. Elias | Alaska |
| Yukon-Charley Rivers | Alaska |

| National Recreation Areas | State |
|---|---|
| *Bighorn Canyon* | *MT/WY* |
| *Curecanti* | *Colorado* |
| *Delaware Water Gap* | *NJ/PA* |
| *Lake Chelan* | *Washington* |
| *Ross Lake* | *Washington* |

| National Scenic Rivers & Trails | State |
|---|---|
| *Appalachian National Scenic Trail* | *Multi-States* |
| *Saint Croix National Scenic River* | *Wisconsin* |

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

APR 2 0 2000

Memorandum

To: Director, National Park Service

From: Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Subject: Snowmobile Use in the National Park System

Last year, the Service received a Petition for Rulemaking (hereinafter the "Petition") from the Bluewater Network and 60 other environmental organizations, which urged the Service to ban snowmobiling from the National Park System. This Petition coincided with growing concern within the Service itself about the appropriateness of snowmobiling as a winter recreational use in our national parks. The purpose of this memo is to summarize the next steps that we have mutually agreed the National Park Service (hereinafter "Service") should take regarding the general recreational use of snowmobiles in the National Park System.

In addressing the Petition, we have been mindful of the fact that the Service has been charged by Executive Order 11644 to periodically review snowmobiling and its impacts on the lands it manages and to further limit snowmobiling when necessary to remain consistent with applicable environmental laws, regulations and Executive Orders. To date, the Service has not taken any formal action under the Executive Order's requirement for periodic review and revision of its 1983 regulations on snowmobiles.

The Department and the Service have worked closely together on the question of snowmobiling in national parks with a shared desire to carry out the requirements of the laws and regulations which govern the National Park System. This guidance reflects a strong consensus within the National Park Service, shared by myself and others in the Department, that snowmobile use in most areas of the National Park System is not an essential or appropriate means of providing winter access to our national parks. To the contrary, snowmobiling in parks such as Yellowstone has demonstrated its capability for generating unacceptable environmental impacts and being inconsistent with applicable Federal laws, Executive Orders and Service regulations. In particular, recreational use of snowmobiles in our national parks is capable of disturbing wildlife, polluting the air and water of the parks, exceeding the Service-wide noise standards (36 CFR 2.12) promulgated after the snowmobile rule was adopted in 1983, and generating conflicts with other visitors' winter experience in the parks.

RESPONSE TO BLUEWATER NETWORK PETITION

In order to respond to the Petition, our two offices consulted extensively with the superintendents and other staff of all of the parks that currently allow snowmobile use pursuant to the Service's existing national rule on snowmobiles (36 CFR 2.18). The rule states that "Snowmobiles are prohibited except where designated *and only when their use is consistent with the park's natural, cultural, scenic, and aesthetic values, safety considerations, park management objectives, and will not disturb wildlife or damage park resources."* (emphasis added). What we learned was that most affected parks were not in full compliance with the regulatory standards under which recreational snowmobile use in the Park System is supposed to be governed. Given the poor quality of most parks' administrative records for on-going snowmobile activity, we believe a favorable response to the Petition is warranted.

Our conclusion is based upon the following:

- consideration of existing Federal environmental laws, Executive Orders and Service regulations which apply to snowmobile use in the National Park System, including:

    - the NPS Organic Act and the NPS General Authorities Act, which together provide that the resources and values of national parks (including air quality, natural soundscapes, native wildlife, and opportunities to experience the enjoyment of all park resources and values) must not be impaired;

    - Executive Order 11644 (February 8, 1972), which directs that units of the National Park System are closed to snowmobile use unless specifically opened in a given area, and such use may be allowed only where it will not adversely affect the natural, aesthetic, or scenic values of the parks; the effects of snowmobile use are carefully monitored; and that snowmobile use shall be limited or rescinded when adverse effects occur;

    - Executive Order 11989 (May 24, 1979), which provides that when snowmobile use will cause or is causing considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife habitat, or cultural or historic resources of public lands, the agency shall immediately prohibit such use;

    - the Clean Air Act, which establishes national ambient air quality standards to protect people's health, sets maximum allowable increases in pollution in national parks, and imposes requirements to protect visibility in national parks;

    - NPS's general regulations on snowmobiles (36 CFR 2.18), which provide that snowmobile use in National Park System units is prohibited except on designated routes and water surfaces used by motor vehicles and

motorboats during other seasons, and may only be authorized by special regulation when that use has been found to be, in a written, reviewable administrative record, consistent with the park's natural, cultural, scenic and aesthetic values, safety considerations, park management objectives, and the prohibition against disturbing wildlife or damaging park resources;

- the Draft Winter Use Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway (July, 1999) and an analysis of the public comments on that Draft Winter Use Plan/EIS, including those from the Environmental Protection Agency and State and local cooperating agencies;

- the results of a recent Service questionnaire survey on snowmobile use in those areas of the National Park System that allow it, with a special focus on management restrictions on that use, if any, the extent to which Executive Order 11644's mandatory monitoring of the environmental effects of such use has actually been employed, and the adequacy of existing Service administrative records on which the decisions to allow snowmobiling in individual parks were based;

- the recommendations and results of a two-day Service workshop on snowmobile policy for the National Park System, held on February 23-24, 2000, with participation by 55 people from the Department and NPS, including representatives of 33 of the 42 national parks in which recreational snowmobile use occurs;

- a recent Service report, Air Quality Concerns Related to Snowmobile Usage in National Parks (February 2000);

- a report by the Greater Yellowstone Winter Wildlife Working Group, Effects of Winter Recreation on Wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Area: A Literature Review and Assessment (October 1999);

- a review of videotape and photographic evidence of the impacts of snowmobile use on the soundscape, wildlife and air resources and values of Yellowstone National Park; and

- a review of draft reports based on winter visitor, summer visitor and national phone surveys regarding public attitudes on management issues affecting Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.

Based on our review of the above, it is clear that most, if not all, of the recreational snowmobile use now occurring in the National Park System is not in conformity with applicable legal requirements. Of particular concern is the fact that none of the parks surveyed that allow snowmobile use have a comprehensive program for monitoring the impacts of that use, as required by Executive Order 11644.

**Compliance With Existing National Rule on Snowmobile Use in the Park System.**

In order to ensure compliance with existing Service regulations, our two offices have concluded that all parks which currently allow recreational snowmobile use under a special regulation promulgated pursuant to 36 CFR 2.18 should repeal these special regulations immediately and halt recreational snowmobile use, unless they otherwise qualify for one of the limited exceptions described below. The Service should proceed to implement this guidance as expeditiously as possible.

The Service's response to the Petition should include:

- A reaffirmation of Executive Order 11644's general closure of the National Park System to snowmobile use, subject only to the narrow opening exceptions set forth below.

- Except as noted below, the Service should immediately begin the administrative process to repeal all current special regulations promulgated pursuant to 36 CFR 2.18 which allow general recreational snowmobile use in particular units of the National Park System.

- The narrow exceptions under which some park units would potentially be able to continue to permit snowmobile use are enumerated below. The parks in which these exceptions might apply are also listed by name. Where snowmobile use is to be allowed, designated routes should be specified in each park's special regulation. The exceptions should be limited to circumstances where:

  (1) snowmobile use transits across an eligible park on a short designated route that is used in other seasons by motor vehicles, and is necessary as the only practicable means of providing required or acceptable access to adjacent lands where snowmobiling is allowed. Such Park System units potentially include the Appalachian Trail, Dinosaur National Monument, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Grand Teton National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Zion National Park;

(2) snowmobile use is necessary to provide required winter access to private lands. Such access shall be permitted on designated routes that are open to motor vehicles in other seasons. Such System units potentially include Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial, Grand Portage National Monument, and Sequoia National Park; or

(3) snowmobile use occurs entirely within the right-of-way of a state or county owned road that is routinely maintained by that entity of government.

- These exceptions describe the conditions under which snowmobile use may potentially be allowed, but are not automatically allowed. For those units of the System that do qualify for an exception, each such unit should immediately review its existing special regulation, and within one year, amend, modify or replace the regulation as necessary to comply with this directive and with the existing Executive Orders and national rule standards, including the requirement for an on-going monitoring program. Before proposing a revised special regulation to allow continued snowmobile use under one of the exceptions described above, the Service must first make a written determination that such continued snowmobile use would be consistent with the applicable requirements of Federal laws, Executive Orders, and Service regulations. In cases where snowmobile use is allowed to continue under revised special regulations, the Service will have to develop and implement an appropriate monitoring program as required by Executive Order 11644.

Because of the Voyageurs National Park enabling legislation's more specific provision on snowmobile use in that park, Voyageurs is exempt from the above guidance, leaving snowmobile use there to be governed by the on-going planning process authorized under that statute, provided that such use is consistent with the requirements of Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 and the Service's existing national rule standard at 36 CFR 2.18.

Because the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act makes special provisions for snowmobile use in Alaskan units of the National Park System, snowmobile use for traditional and subsistence activities in those parks will continue to the extent such use is consistent with the provisions of that Act. Snowmobile use for nontraditional activities could be authorized by special regulation to the extent that such use is consistent with applicable park unit back-country or front-country management plans, the requirements of Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 and the Service's existing national rule standards at 36 CFR 2.18.

Finally, because the winter use planning effort for Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway is nearly complete, snowmobile use in those units will be governed by the final administrative action selected in the Record of Decision for that planning process.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding the guidance in this memorandum.

## *FACT SHEET*

**Enhanced Enforcement of National Regulations Regarding Snowmobile Use Throughout the National Park System**

**(FINAL 04/26/00)**

***It is the intent of the National Park Service to enhance its enforcement of its existing national regulations controlling snowmobiling within units of the National Park System.***

**Issue**

Snowmobile use has dramatically increased in the past two decades in units of the National Park Service (NPS). Typical snowmobiles use a two-stroke engine, which emits substantial amounts of pollutants such as hydrocarbons, particulate matter, carbon monoxide and a variety of air toxics. The use of snowmobiles can have an adverse impact on air quality, wildlife, natural resources, natural quiet, visitor safety, and the visitor experience on non-snowmobile users in many NPS areas. 42 National Park areas currently allow recreational snowmobile use. 14 of those are classified as Class I airsheds, the other 28 are classified as Class II airsheds.

**Impacts**

- **Air Quality** can be significantly impacted in areas of heavy snowmobile use because of the polluting nature of 2 stoke engines used in typical snowmobiles. National Parks have a legal obligation to protect the air quality in the parks from further deterioration.

- **Wildlife** can be affected by the noise and physical presence of snowmobiles. Noise can cause physiological stresses, and the presence of snowmobiles can cause changes in wildlife activity patterns and feeding habits. In addition, wildlife that are harassed by snowmobile users expend critical energy that is important for them to conserve to survive during the harsh winter months.

- **Noise** emitted from typical snowmobiles not only effects wildlife, but can impact on the natural soundscape of a park, adversely affecting the quality of the park experience for other visitors. The natural soundscape (the absence of man-made noise) is considered a natural resource of parks. The NPS attempts to prevent or minimize unnatural sounds that adversely affect the natural soundscape.

- **Safety** for visitors and wildlife can be compromised by snowmobile use. Snowmobile use can be a dangerous sport, generating a significantly higher percentage of accidents in parks compared to other means of visitor transportation. Many models can exceed 100 mph. They can present a danger to not only snowmachine users, but to non-motorized recreationalists such as cross-country skiers and snowshoes. Winding trails and high speeds can make it dangerous for all using those trails.

**The Law**

- Snowmobiles are currently regulated by Executive Orders 11644 and 11989, and by 36 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR 36), 2.18, all of which require the NPS to prohibit snowmobile use if park resources are adversely affected.

- **Executive Order 11644** issued in 1972 recognized that increased use of off-road vehicles (including snowmobiles) could impact National Parks. The stated purpose of EO 11644 was *to "... establish policies and provide for procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among various users of those lands."*

- **Executive Order 11898** issued in 1977, amended EO 11644. The amendment provided additional direction to protect public lands from impairment when it stated *"... the respective agency head shall, whenever he determines that the use of off-road vehicles will cause or is causing considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat nor cultural or historic resources of particular areas or trails of the public lands, immediately close such areas or trails to the type of off-road vehicle causing such effects..."*

- **CFR 36 2.18** states that snowmobiles are prohibited except on designated routes and frozen water surfaces that are used by motor vehicles during other seasons... or as otherwise specifically provided by federal statute. The regulations stipulate that snowmobile use can be allowed only when the use is consistent with a park's natural, cultural, scenic and aesthetic values, is consistent with the park's management objectives, safety considerations are satisfactorily addressed, when the use will not disturb wildlife or damage park resources and when conflicts with other park uses can be minimized.

**NPS Position**

- The NPS has determined that it is not in compliance with its long-standing policies regulating snowmobiles.

- Snowmobile technology has greatly expanded the range of snowmobiles and use has increased faster than the NPS previously realized, causing the agency to overlook the full impact of increased use.

- The NPS Organic Act mandates that the NPS conserve its areas unimpaired for future generations. By not effectively managing snowmobile use, the NPS has not been meeting its Organic Act mandate.

- The Blue Water Network and several other environmental organizations have petitioned the NPS to ban snowmobiles in the National Parks. The petition heightened the NPS awareness that it needed to more rigorously enforce its existing policies regarding snowmobiles and apply those polices consistently throughout the National Park System.

- While the recreational use of snowmobiles may be appropriate in other areas, the NPS believes that use of them in National Parks is inconsistent with the General Authorities Act, as amended, the Organic Act of 1916, and Park Service regulatory policies. Moreover, snowmobile use is neither a necessary or appropriate means of appreciating and interpreting park resources in winter.

**Status**

- On April 27, 2000, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Donald J. Barry and National Park Service Deputy Director Deny Galvin recommitted the Park service to strictly enforce its existing national regulations for managing snowmobile use in the National Park System.

- The existing national regulations prohibit snowmobile use in the National Parks unless the activity is found to have no adverse effects on park resources and values. Enforcement will put the NPS more in line with the NPS Organic Act and the General Authorities Act, to conserve the resources of the National Parks.

MAY 2 6 2000
LAW OFFICE

***Questions & Answers Regarding Enforcement of National Regulations on Snowmobile Use in the National Park System***

*(FINAL - 04/26/00)*

**Q. Why is the National Park Service only now enforcing its national regulations about snowmobile use?**

**A.** *The law requires that the National Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior assure that special places set aside in the park system are conserved unimpaired. A dramatic increase in snowmobile use in units of the National Park System over the past two decades has led to concerns that the NPS was not effectively protecting wildlife, air quality and other park values. Renewed enforcement of national regulations will effectively halt recreational use of snowmobiles in most units of the National Park System.*

**Q. What is the existing regulation regarding snowmobiles?**

**A.** *United States Code of Federal Regulations 36 (CFR 36), 2.18, provides regulations as regards snowmobile use in the National Parks. Essentially CFR 36 2.18 says, ...the use of snowmobiles is prohibited, except on designated routes and water surfaces that are used by motor vehicles or motorboats during other seasons. Routes and water surfaces designated for snowmobile use shall be promulgated as special regulations. Snowmobiles are prohibited except where designated and only when their use is consistent with the park's natural, cultural, scenic, and aesthetic values, safety considerations, park management objectives, and will not disturb wildlife or damage park resources. Two Presidential Executive Orders also provide similar standards for determining snowmobile use in the parks.*

Q. **<u>What are the Executive Orders that are referred to as regards snowmobiles?</u>**

A. ***Executive Order 11644**, issued in 1972 by President Nixon, and **Executive Order 11989** (amending EO11644) was issued in 1977 by President Carter. Both EO's address off-road vehicles, snowmobiles included. The 1972 **EO 11644** recognized the potential for increased use of off-road vehicles impacting National Parks, "The widespread use of such vehicles on the public lands – often for legitimate purposes but also in conflict with wise land and resource management practices, environmental values, and other types of recreational activity – has demonstrated the need for a unified Federal policy toward the use of such vehicles on the public lands." The stated purpose of the EO was to "... establish policies and provide for procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various users of those lands." The EO provided for policy changes based upon reviews of effects of use on public lands. "The respective agency head shall monitor the effects of the use of off-road vehicles on lands under their jurisdictions. On the basis of the information gathered, they shall from time to time amend or rescind designations of areas or other actions taken pursuant to this order as necessary to further the policy of this order."*

***Executive Order 11989**, issued by President Carter amended EO 11644 in 1977, "... in order to clarify agency authority to define zones of use by off-road vehicles on public lands, in furtherance of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969...". The amendment provided additional attempts to protect public lands from impairment by explicitly requiring closure to ORV use if the EO standards are violated, "... the respective agency head shall, whenever he determines that the use of off-road vehicles will cause or is causing considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat or cultural or historic resources of particular areas or trails of the public lands, immediately close such areas or trails to the type of off-road vehicle causing such effects...." Further language provides that "... each respective agency head is authorized to adopt the policy that portions of the public land within his jurisdiction shall be closed to use by off-road vehicles except those areas or trails which are suitable and specifically designated as open to such use..."*

Q. **How is this renewed commitment to strict enforcement going to affect existing snowmobile use?**

A. *Strict enforcement of existing Park System national regulations will result in the closure of most areas in the National Park System to general recreational snowmobile use.*

Q. **Where will snowmobiles still be allowed in the National Park System?**

A. *Snowmobiles will continue to be allowed in areas of Alaska and in Voyageurs National Park where statutory provisions exist in the enabling legislation. For those areas, the appropriate level of snowmobile use will be determined through on-going general management planning processes. Snowmobiling in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks will also be governed by the final Record of Decision for an on-going Winter Use EIS planning process. For all other areas of the Park System, snowmobiling will be prohibited as a general recreational activity, and will only be allowed to continue under very narrow exceptions. Snowmobiles will only be allowed where the National Park Service determines they meet specific needs such as inholders accessing their property along snowmobile routes designated by the NPS. Further cases of allowed use would be in areas of short transit crossings of a park to access other lands open to snowmobile use, or for emergency access use.*

Q. **Why are some exceptions made to snowmobile use in NPS areas?**

A. *Exceptions to snowmobile use rules will be narrowly based on necessary access or transit requirements. Examples are exceptions such as short crossing routes to access other lands open to snowmobile use, or access to private property. Inholders in parks will be allowed access along designated routes. Traditional snowmobile use in Alaska will be determined under ANILCA and recreational use of snowmobiles in Alaska parks will be determined in each Park's backcountry Management Plan.*

Q. **When will enforcement begin?**

A. *The National Park Service will immediately begin to enforce its national regulations. The effects will not be apparent until the next snowmobile season begins in the late fall of 2000.*

Q. **What triggered the need to strictly enforce NPS national regulations?**

A. *Increased snowmobile use and negative impacts on park resources has led the NPS to reassess how it manages snowmobile use. The NPS determined that it was not in compliance with its own regulatory policies and Executive Orders. Consequently, the need to protect NPS resources and comply with existing NPS policies was a catalyst. It became obvious that the variety of problems with snowmobile use called for a strict enforcement of national regulations in order for affected parks to be maintained unimpaired and to prevent other parks from developing similar problems. The Environmental Protection Agency has said that typical snowmobiles significantly impact the air quality in areas of use. A number of national parks, including Yellowstone NP, are classified as a Class I "airshed" under the Clean Air Act and there is a legal obligation to protect Park air quality. In addition, The Bluewater Network and 60 other environmental organizations petitioned the NPS in January 1999, for a rule to prohibit snowmobiles from the National Park System. They cited air quality degradation and threats to wildlife as their main concerns.*

Q. **Why hasn't the National Park Service been in compliance with its own regulations?**

A. *Over the past two decades, snowmobile technology has significantly expanded the range of snowmobiles and the use of snowmobiles in the parks has increased faster than the NPS realized. Factors the NPS did not focus on, such as air quality degradation, adverse effects on wildlife and the impact on soundsheds, have now provided evidence that we have to more closely follow our existent policy and enforce it accordingly.*

Q. **What scientific studies indicate to the NPS that air quality is actually at risk because of snowmobiles?**

A. *Studies conducted by EPA and a recent NPS study about the effects of snowmobile use on air quality have shown that the air quality is affected adversely by snowmobiles. The Clean-Air Act requirements mandate that the NPS meet specific requirements as Class I and Class II airsheds.*

Q. **What are the concerns regarding air quality degradation due to snowmobile use?**

A. *According to information from EPA, typical snowmobiles use a two-stroke engine, which emits substantial amounts of pollutants such as hydrocarbons, particulate matter, carbon monoxide and a variety of air toxics. According to engine data from the California Air Resources Board, snowmobiles produce more smog forming pollution in one hour than a normal automobile does in one day. In addition, they dump 25%-30% of their fuel, unburned out of their tailpipe. The EPA states that particulate matter (PM) emissions from snowmobiles present a serious health hazard.*

Q. **How is wildlife affected by snowmobile use?**

A. *Noise and the physical presence of snowmobiles can cause a variety of animals to alter activity patterns, feeding habits, and expend precious energy during critical winter months. According to past studies, noise produced by snowmobiles acts as a physiological stressor, producing changes similar to those brought about by exposure to extreme heat, cold, or pain. Winter is a time when wildlife need to conserve their energy for the pursuit of survival. When they are harassed by visitors they expend and waste energy that is so important to them in winter. Winter is the time of year when wildlife live closest to the edge of survival and when even slight change in their condition can mean death. Frequent cases of snowmobile users harassing wildlife have been documented in NPS areas. For example, Bison have been chased and hit in Yellowstone NP, and wolves have been chased in Voyageurs NP.*

Q. **What other concerns have triggered the need to strictly enforce national regulations?**

A. *In addition to air quality and wildlife concerns, noise pollution is a real issue. As cited previously, noise factors from snowmobiles can not only seriously impact wildlife, but can intrude upon and adversely affect other visitors park experience as well. The NPS has defined the natural soundscape (the absence of man-made noise) as a natural resource of parks. NPS policy mandates that parks strive to preserve the natural quiet and the natural sounds associated with the physical and biological resources of the parks. The NPS must monitor, prevent or minimize unnatural sounds that adversely affect park resources or the scenic and aesthetic values. Consequently, snowmobile can have a significant adverse effect on that natural soundscape, not only for wildlife but also for other visitors to the park.*

Q. **What are the primary adverse impacts that snowmobiles cause in the parks that other winter uses do not?**

A. *Snowmobiles generate greater adverse environmental impacts than other forms of winter use in the National Parks. They create the greatest potential for air quality degradation because of the typical 2-stoke engines employed for power. In addition, the significant noise generated by snowmobiles and the documented cases of harassment of wildlife, make them an inappropriate means to appreciate park resources and values in winter.*

Q. **Are there other concerns?**

A. *Safety is a concern, not only for the wildlife that are endangered by snowmobile use, but also for other visitors and snowmobile operators too. Snowmobile use can be a dangerous sport. Many models can exceed over 100 mph. They can present a danger to wildlife and to non-motorized recreationalists such as cross-country skiers or snowshoers. Travelling at high speeds on winding trails makes it difficult to brake or stop for slower moving recreationalists. Snowmobiles generate a significantly higher percentage of accidents in parks compared to other means of visitor transportation. A study by New Mexico's Public Health Department found that snowmobile riders are nearly nine times more likely to be killed or injured in an accident*

*than automobile riders are on a per-mile basis. The leading cause of death for snowmobile riders is collision with fixed objects.*

Q. **Why can't the NPS allow snowmobile use to continue as it is?**

A. *Where snowmobile use in the parks is concerned, the NPS is not currently in compliance with Executive Orders 11644 and11989, with EPA requirements for maintaining the air quality or its own Organic Act standards and regulations. In order to comply with those EO's and to meet Federal mandates and our own Organic Act intents, snowmobile use cannot continue as it has. Based on the problems that have been cited, air quality degradation, noise pollution, disturbance of wildlife, and the need to meet NPS mandates (The Organic Act), the NPS believes that recreational snowmobile use is an inappropriate and unnecessary means for appreciating park resources and values in winter.*

Q. **Will the National Park Service continue to use snowmobiles in its Parks?**

A. *NPS use of snowmobiles is limited to "what is necessary to manage public use of snowmobile trails and areas; to conduct emergency operations; and to accomplish essential maintenance, construction, and resource protection activities that cannot be accomplished by other means." Employees authorized to use snowmobiles to provide or reach essential services will not participate in recreational snowmobile use where the general public may not.*

Q. **How many National Park areas currently have snowmobile use?**

A. *Forty-two (42) National Park areas currently have snowmachine use. 14 of those are classified as Class I airsheds, the other 28 are classified as Class II airsheds. Class I areas are allowed less air quality deterioration than Class II areas, although the requirements for Class II areas are also very stringent. * See attached chart.*

Q. **Which parks have specific statuary provisions that allow snowmobile use in units of the National Park System?**

A. *Alaska parks have statutory provisions regarding snowmobile use. The only park in the lower 48 states that has similar statuary provisions is Voyageurs National Park.*

Q. **Do these national regulations affect snowmobile use in Alaska?**

A. *For units of the National Park System in Alaska, ANILCA included several provisions authorizing snowmobile use under specific conditions and criteria of the Act. Snowmobile use, subject to reasonable regulation is authorized in the parks in Alaska (including in designated wilderness) for subsistence purposes, for village-to-village travel, and for traditional activities involving like fishing or trapping. For any other snowmobile activities in parks in Alaska, the NPS will continue to rely on special regulations permitting snowmobile use, pursuant to approved backcountry management plans. In addition, in order to comply with the ORV Executive Orders, monitoring programs will be established in each park with snowmobile use.*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
106th CONGRESS
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

Subcommittee on Rural Enterprises, Business Opportunities, and
Special Small Business Problems

**Implementation of the Forest Service Roadless Policy -**
**Impact on Small Businesses**
**Oversight Hearing**
**July 11, 2000**
**Washington, D.C.**

**BlueRibbon Coalition Testimony**
**"The Regulatory Flexibility Act, Proposed Forest Service Rules, and Backcountry Motorized Recreation"**

Submitted by:

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## THE REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ACT, PROPOSED FOREST SERVICE RULES, AND BACKCOUNTRY MOTORIZED RECREATION

### INTRODUCTION

The BlueRibbon Coalition is a nationwide organization representing 500,000 motorized recreationists, equestrians, and resource users. We work with land managers to provide recreation opportunities, preserve resources, and promote cooperation with other public land users. Many of our members are small businesses who depend on access and available recreation opportunities on national forest lands. The Clinton-Gore Roadless Initiative and related proposed rules propose a grave threat to the existence of these businesses.

On May 9, the Forest Service released the Draft EIS and proposed rule for the Clinton-Gore Roadless Initiative. On the surface, it appears not as intrusive as it could be, focusing primarily on road construction within inventoried roadless areas. The full spectrum of recreation opportunities will be allowed within the inventoried roadless areas.

However, the Roadless Initiative is not intended to be a stand-alone document. The agency so states its interdependent relationship the Proposed Land and Resource Management Planning Rule (Forest Plan Rule) issued October 5, 1999 and the Proposed Road Management Rule and Policy issued March 3, 2000 (Road Rule).

These are programmatic rules. They provide the general framework for subsequent forest plans and on-the-ground actions. A programmatic rule does not mandate, for example, the closure of one road or one trail. Rather, it lays the foundation for such closures to take place.

Following is a discussion of these three proposals and their relationship. They are closely related, and compliment one another. Singularly, their effect on public access and dispersed motorized recreation is economically significant; cumulatively their effect is devastating.

### FOREST PLANNING RULE

In the proposed forest planning rule, ecosystem protection becomes the over-arching goal for which all national forests must be managed. Ecosystem restoration to a pre-European condition is how that protection is defined. Production of all other goods and services are secondary. In addition, the Forest Planning rule

* Absolves itself of responsibility toward local rural economies, stating that national forest lands should not be expected to single-handedly sustain these communities.

* Claims that national forest land should be managed to compensate for changes caused by management of private land. As adjoining private land increases production of goods and services, the public land should provide less.

Important recreational goods and services in small, medium and even large communities are provided by motorcycle, ATV, and snowmobile dealerships. Almost every small town, generally resource dependent, adjacent to public land, has one or two of these businesses. They will generally be franchised for several product lines, covering summer and winter, for example: Polaris, Yamaha, Honda, Ski-Doo.

These businesses depend on access to public land, and a network of roads and trails. Policies that will reduce or eliminate this network will have a profound impact on these businesses.

These businesses also are prominent in large metropolitan areas of the west such as Seattle, Portland, Las Vegas, and Denver. They, also, are dependent on public land access.

In the Forest Planning rule, public process is easily manipulated by officials, with the deck stacked in favor of "ecological sustainability", defined as restoration to a pre-European condition.

* It gives the responsible officer the sole discretion over what topics will be addressed in the planning process, with substantial weight given to topics related to "ecological sustainability". This decision is not subject to review, nor is an administrative record created.

* A manager can begin the public NEPA process only after and based on off-the-record processes (detailed in sections 219.4-5) are complete. Subsequent public participation becomes a sham that verifies or records objections to foregone conclusions.

When the Clinton-Gore Roadless Initiative talks about "decisions made at the local level" and locally-based public participation, this proposed Forest Planning Rule is the process they intend to follow, not the process that is in place today.

**ROAD RULE (Revised Transportation Policy)**

This proposed rule makes it clear that there will be fewer roads open to the public than are currently available. Each road will be subjected to a methodical analysis to justify its existence. This analysis was not generally available for review during the comment period. Public comments on this roads analysis were not solicited.

The agency estimates there are 287,000 miles of road that "are no longer needed" and that an additional 60,000 miles of uninventoried roads need decommissioning. This totals 347,000 miles of road or 77% of all National Forest roads.

* The agency claims lack of funding to maintain the roads. Yet, they have not requested from Congress any more than 20% of what they claim they need.

* Driving for pleasure has increased 1000% since 1950, and level 2 roads (counted in the number to be decommissioned) are acknowledged by the agency as important for dispersed recreation. More and more recreationists will be crowded onto fewer miles of road.

*Areas from which roads are removed will become "unroaded". Their management will be dictated by the same values for which roadless areas are evaluated, with resource protection values predominant.

Forest Service officials state that "decommissioning" can also mean re-assigning the road to a trail status and then maintained as a trail-50" and wider and presumably open to high clearance vehicles and dual purpose motorcycles. While this could provide some opportunity for dispersed backcountry recreation, this direction is not specified in the rule.

The motorized recreation community is in total agreement that should this roads rule be implemented, there will be far fewer primitive roads and trails on which to drive a 4WD, ride a motorcycle, or ride an ATV or snowmobile. The small rural businesses which provide and service these vehicles will vanish.

**CLINTON-GORE ROADLESS INITIATIVE**

The Clinton-Gore Roadless Initiative Draft EIS and proposed rule was released May 9. Following are some key points:

* No new road construction will occur in roadless areas. This will supercede direction that may have allowed for road construction in forest plans. Maintenance on existing, classified roads in roadless areas can occur, subject to conditions.

* Eight of the nine roadless criteria assume that human activity negatively impacts the resource:

1) Soil, water, air: Roadless areas have had minimal ground disturbing activities - these are negatively described. Presumably few or no "ground disturbing activities" will occur in the future.
2) Sources of public drinking water. Most of these are addressed in current forest plans, but the concept is expanded.
3) Diversity of plant and animal communities. This criteria claims that roadless areas are more diverse than roaded. It claims that absence of disturbance promotes biological diversity.
4) Habitat for endangered, threatened, proposed, candidate, and sensitive species. Again, the criteria claims that these species need large tracts of undisturbed land.
5) Provide for primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, and semi-primitive motorized classes of dispersed recreation. Acknowledge that the motorized user values renewal, isolation, independence, and closeness to nature in mostly undisturbed settings.
6) Reference landscapes. Appears to broaden concept of Research Natural Areas to study "large scale ecological patterns".
7) Landscape character and scenic integrity. Viewsheds are already addressed in current forest plans; this concept is reinforced.
8) Traditional cultural properties and sacred sites. This criteria claims that roadless areas, in their unaltered states, better protect these.
9) Other locally identified unique characteristics.

The proposed rule does not address unroaded areas, but defers these to local planning under the new planning rules. The above roadless values will be applied to unroaded areas as new management plans are devised. The direction is clear: to apply roadless prescriptions to vast areas now roaded but soon-to-be unroaded.

While the Roadless Initiative states that the full Recreation Opportunity Spectrum can be accommodated in roadless and unroaded areas, the constraints of the other criteria will likely precipitate road and trail closures:

*Trail activity, construction, re-construction, and maintenance are of necessity "ground disturbing activities".
*The generally unfounded claim that motorized use generally adversely affects drinking water has often been made. Current forest plans often close drinking water prescriptions to motorized use.
*Dispersed motorized recreation has often been inaccurately cited as disturbing wildlife, and an interruption to "large tracts of undisturbed land".

Implementation of these criteria via the travel planning process will likely result in significant closures of roads, trails, and access. The Initiative will result in the elimination of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) businesses located in small rural communities, and even larger cities.

**THE REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ACT AND THE FOREST SERVICE RULEMAKINGS**

While the Roadless Initiative did claim to analyze its economic impacts per the Small Business Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA), the review was inadequate and did not analyze OHV dealerships and OHV related tourism, winter or summer.

The agency issued a general disclaimer for the roads rule, stating that it merely signified a change in definitions and therefore had no economic impact.

To my knowledge, SBREFA was not addressed in the forest planning rule.

Congress should request that the Forest Service justify their determination that these proposed rules are not major actions ($100 million impact on the economy).

**SAMPLE ECONOMIC DATA ON THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED POLICIES ON MOTORIZED RECREATION BUSINESS**

OHV recreation in national forests is supported entirely by a national network of small businesses, most franchised by manufacturers to sell motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and snowmobiles. Additionally, it is supported by small businesses associated with tourism: lodges, motels, restaurants, and gas stations. These businesses generate significant revenue where there is nearby National Forest land. Their revenue in many states easily surpasses the $100,000,000 threshold that defines a major impact.

The following information on off-road and dual purpose motorcycling is excerpted from the 1999 Motorcycle Industry Council Statistical Annual (Exhibit 1). Snowmobiling data comes from a report published the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Assn. (Exhibit 2) Additional snowmobile data comes from Snowmobiling in Montana - an Update by James T Sylvester and Marlene Nesary published in 1994 by the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research (Exhibit 3) and 1993-1995 Wyoming Snowmobile Assessment by David T. Taylor, Robert R. Fletcher, and G. Jean Skidgel published in 1995 by the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Wyoming (Exhibit 4).

**National Profile on a Motorcycle Dealer**

*Nationally, an average franchised motorcycle outlet grosses $1,522,400 in sales and service.

*An average non-franchised motorcycle outlet grosses $254,000 in sales and service.

*The franchised outlet has 13.2 employees with a payroll of $351,300; non-franchised has 3.6 employees with a payroll of $68,100.

*A franchised outlet has been 17 years at the same location, and 17 years under the current owner; non franchised has been 13 years at the same location, and 14 years under the current owner.

**National Profile of a Snowmobiler**

*Average annual household income is $60,000, average age is 41, rides an average of 1,102 miles a year and has ridden for an average of 17 years. 75% are married.

*The average Michigan snowmobiler spends $4,218 each year on snowmobile related recreation, tourism, and products. The average New Hampshire snowmobiler spends $3,332 on snowmobiling. In 1994, Montana reported an annual in-state expenditure of $31,722,000 by snowmobilers, with 18,572 registered machines for an average of $3,366 per snowmobiler.

*There are 1.5 million registered snowmobiles in the United States that generate an economic impact of $6.2 billion annually.

**OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLE & SNOWMOBILE ECONOMIC DATA IN SELECTED STATES**

OHV related businesses in states where national forests present the dominant land base for OHV recreation are vulnerable to policy changes that will result in closures. Following is a snapshot of the importance of OHV recreation in these states and the small businesses that are the underpinnings of OHV recreation. All demonstrate, in each state, that there is at least $100 million impact to these small businesses that could result from the proposed national forest policies.

**Idaho**

Off-Highway motorcycles

*Idaho has 130 motorcycle sales outlets employing 1194 people with a total payroll of $29,573,000.

*The estimated value of the retail marketplace in Idaho is $107,140,000.

*In Idaho, The off-highway and dual purpose (used on dirt roads) population is 31,500 or 64% of the total Idaho motorcycle population.

It is clear that the viability of the motorcycle business alone is highly dependent on access to national forest lands. Even though 64% of the business is off-highway, if that were lost, there would not be enough of the road based business to sustain the outlet. ATVs are not reflected in these numbers. If ATV statistics were available, the OHV retail marketplace number would be much higher.

Snowmobiles

*In 2000, Idaho had 40,000 registered snowmobiles.

*Using an average annual expenditure of $3775 per year (the average between Michigan and New Hampshire expenditure) per snowmobiler, 40,000 registered snowmobiles results in an economic impact of $151 million annually. This figure combines elements of the retail marketplace and tourism.

*Idaho has 55 small businesses who sell and service snowmobiles.

*Idaho has 7,200 miles of groomed trail. The funding for these trails comes from the users via the registration program and a small percentage of the state gas tax, and is administered by the state.

Most snowmobiling in Idaho occurs on national forest lands.

There are 20,459,000 acres of national forests in Idaho.

**Utah**

Off-Highway motorcycles

*Utah has 122 motorcycle sales outlets employing 1103 people with a total payroll of $27,323,000.

*The estimated value of the retail marketplace in Utah is $143,360,000.

*In Utah, The off-highway and dual purpose (used on dirt roads) population is 26,600 or 50% of the total Utah motorcycle population.

There are 8,111,000 acres of national forest lands in Utah, affording many miles of scenic riding for OHVs. While significant acres of Bureau of Land Management lands in Utah are also available for OHV recreation, these national forest lands offer a different opportunity, desired by many. Loss of this access would result in a significant economic loss.

Snowmobiles

*In 2000, Utah had 22,543 registered snowmobiles.

*At an average annual expenditure of $3775 per year per snowmobiler, this results in an economic impact of $85,099,825 annually.

*Utah has 42 small businesses who sell and service snowmobiles.

*Utah has 1,030 miles of groomed trail. The funding for these trails comes from the users via the registration program and a small percentage of the state gas tax, and is administered by the state.

Snowmobiling in Utah is highly dependent on national forest lands. Utah's national forests are located in the state's high mountain areas where snow comes early and stays late. Utah is famous for its open-area riding, not dependent on groomed and marked trails. Almost all of these areas are in national forests.

**Montana**

Off-Highway motorcycles

*Montana has 116 motorcycle sales outlets employing 1061 people with a total payroll of $26,289,000.

*The estimated value of the retail marketplace in Montana is $75,560,000.

*In Montana, The off-highway and dual purpose (used on dirt roads) population is 15,100 50% of the total Montana motorcycle population.

There are 16,886,000 acres of national forest land in Montana. Much OHV recreation occurs on these lands, considered to provide the most desirable recreation experience. Closures and restricitions have already had an undetermined effect on this economy. Many businessmen and recreationists in Montana are fearful that proposed policies will impact them further.

Snowmobiles

*In 2000, Montana had 22,653 registered snowmobiles.

*At an average annual expenditure of $3775 per year per snowmobiler, this results in an economic impact of $85,515,075 annually.

*Montana has 53 small businesses who sell and service snowmobiles.

*Montana has 6535 miles of groomed trail.

Snowmobiling in Montana - an Update by James T Sylvester and Marlene Nesary was published in 1994 (Exhibit 3). This economic study found that the annual resident expenditures were $62,522,000. In 1994, the number of registered snowmobilers in Montana was 18,572.. The study also found that non-resident expenditures were $40,649,783. Total economic benefit from snowmobiling to Montana in 1994 was therefore $103,171,783.

National forest lands provide much of the snowmobiling opportunity in Montana. Significant economic benefit is also derived from winter use of Yellowstone National Park by snowmobile.

**Oregon**

Off-Highway motorcycles

*Oregon has 219 motorcycle sales outlets employing 1648 people with a total payroll of $40,353,000.

*The estimated value of the retail marketplace in Oregon is $199,930,000.

*In Oregon, the off-highway and dual purpose (used on dirt roads) population is 41,300 or 45% of the total Oregon motorcycle population.

There are 15,656,000 acres of national forest land in Oregon. As in the other states reported, these lands provide prime OHV experience.

Snowmobiles

*In 2000, Oregon had 17,093 registered snowmobiles.

*At an average annual expenditure of $3775 per year per snowmobiler, this results in an economic impact of $64,526,075 annually.

*Oregon has 28 small businesses who sell and service snowmobiles.

*Oregon has 6153 miles of groomed trail.

Much snowmobiling in Oregon occurs on national forest lands.

**Colorado**

Off-Highway motorcycles

*Colorado has 254 motorcycle sales outlets employing 1890 people with a total payroll of $46,250,000.

*The estimated value of the retail marketplace in Colorado is $262,450,000.

*In Colorado, the off-highway and dual purpose (used on dirt roads) population is 46,200 or 33% of the total Colorado motorcycle population.

There are 14,509,000 acres of national forest land in Colorado. As in the other states reported, these lands provide prime OHV experience.

Snowmobiles

*In 2000, Colorado had 30,000 registered snowmobiles.

*At an average annual expenditure of $3775 per year per snowmobiler, this results in an economic impact of $113,250,000 annually.

*Colorado has 56 small businesses who sell and service snowmobiles.

*Colorado has 3600 miles of groomed trail.

Much snowmobiling in Colorado occurs on national forest lands. Within the national forests are Colorado's famous high peaks and passes, many accessible by snowmobile. These lands offer some of the most spectacular snowmobiling in the nation.

**Wyoming Snowmobile Study**

In 1995, the Department of Agricultural Economics prepared the 1993-1995 Wyoming Snowmobile Assessment Final Report to the Wyoming Department of Commerce. This study found that the estimated total resident expenditure on snowmobiling was $66.1 million.

Total nonresident snowmobiling, with an estimated 766,332 use days, was found to represent over 50% of total snowmobile use in Wyoming. An average daily expenditure of $142.40 for non-residents resulted in a total annual expenditure of $109.1 million. With the multiplier effect, the expenditures by nonresident snowmobilers generated $189.4 million of economic activity in the state, created $39.9

million in earned income for state residents, and supported the equivalent of 3,063 full time jobs. This economic activity also generated a total of $4.7 million in sales tax revenue in Wyoming.

Much of the snowmobiling in Wyoming occurs on national forest land and in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. There are 2,276 miles of groomed trail in Wyoming, maintained by the state, and mostly located on national forest land. The above cited study found that 83.6% of total snowmobiling use days occurred on the state trails system. 7.9% of use days occurred in Yellowstone National Park and 1.4% occurred in Grand Teton National Park. One can logically conclude that visitors may come to Wyoming to tour Yellowstone, but will spend more time (and money) enjoying the national forests. There are 9,238,000 acres of national forest in Wyoming

**PROFILES OF SMALL OHV RECREATION BUSINESSES DEPENDENT ON NATIONAL FOREST ACCESS**

These significant amounts cited for each state and their associated statistics have a human face. They represent hard working families who work long hours to make a success of their business and serve the recreating public. Like all small businessmen, they are among the world's busiest people. Yet they always have time to actively contribute to their community, often to volunteer and support volunteers in the national forests, and attend the Forest Service's many meetings.

While many of these businesses are in small rural communities adjacent to national forests, others are in medium sized cities and in large metropolitan areas. The OHV recreation marketplace is very dependent on access to public land, but associated small businesses are in towns large and small. Following are profiles of some of these businesses:

**CARL'S CYCLE SALES - BOISE, IDAHO**

Carl's Cycle Sales in Boise, Idaho was founded by Carl Struthers thirty-four and a half years ago. Carl himself was an enthusiastic trail motorcyclist and snowmobiler, and he raised his family to enjoy these sports. He was active in the business community, and in 1985 was named Small Businessman of the Year in Idaho. His wife, son, and daughters continue in the ownership and management of the business. They strongly support local snowmobile and OHV clubs.

Carl's Cycle Sales employs 32 people, and is a franchised dealer for Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki, and Polaris. The business grosses approximately $10-$11 million in sales each year. Jack Struthers, owner-manager, estimates that three-quarters of their business is in OHV, personal watercraft, and snowmobile products. All depend on access to public land.

**BIG PINE SPORTS - FAIRVIEW, UTAH**

Big Pine Sports began in 1976; Glen and Judy Zumwalt have owned the business since 1990. Fairview, Utah, is a small rural community of 800, located about 50 miles south of Provo. Big Pine Sports is a franchised dealer for Yamaha (motorcycles ATVs and snowmobiles) , Arctic Cat (ATVs and snowmobiles), and Trek (mountain bikes). They also sell camping, hunting, and fishing supplies and other outdoor sporting goods. Big Pine Sports has 10 employees and annual gross sales of approximately $1.75 million. It is near the La Sal National Forest, and is very dependent on visitors to the national forest.

Glen and Judy Zumwalt have been leaders in Utah's recreation organizations. Judy is Editor for the Utah Snowmobile Association's newsletter *Snow Scoop*. Big Pine Sports was honored by the International Snowmobile Congress in 1999 as Dealer of the Year - Western Chapter. Glen is a founding director of the Utah Shared Access Alliance, which promotes public access and cooperation for all recreation in Utah. He is past president of the Utah Snowmobile Assn. and presently is a director. Both Glen and Judy are avid outdoor recreationists, and especially enjoy snowmobiling.

**KURT'S POLARIS - SEELEY LAKE, MONTANA**

Kurt Friede, owner-manager of Kurt's Polaris in Seeley Lake, Montana, has been in business for twelve years. Seeley Lake is a small town in the western part of the state 56 miles northeast of Missoula. It has about 3,400 residents year-round, and about 7,000 when seasonal home owners arrive in the summer.

Kurt's Polaris is the largest Polaris dealer in Montana, selling snowmobiles, ATVs and Victory motorcycles, as well as used dirt bikes. The business has five employees and annual gross sales of approximately $2.5 million.

Kurt notes that the closure of 500 miles of old logging roads in the nearby Lolo National Forest is definitely bad for business, "People have few places to ride anymore. We have thousands of miles of roads that are now closed; the average person won't even be able to take a drive into the national forest."

Kurt continues, "First it was the grizzly bear, then the bull trout, and now the lynx. Our local snowmobile club, the Seeley Lake Driftriders, worked with the Forest Service last winter and helped them find all the lynx that are around here. We thought they'd realize since we've snowmobiled around the area for years, that we had no impact on the lynx. Not so. Our help has been rewarded with proposed closures. The grizzly population has grown so that there is not room for all of them in the forest anymore. We've had one wandering around the neighborhoods this summer getting into garbage cans."

Kurt condemns the extremists who advocate closures, "I wonder who they think they're saving it for. They're not thinking clearly into the future. Tomorrow they may be physically deprived and won't be able to get there either. They're saving it for something that doesn't exist. 95% of our national forests must be open for 95% of the population."

**CLIFF'S SAW & CYCLES - BAKER, OREGON**

Kip Farmer owns and operates Cliff's Saw and Cycles, a business founded by his father, Cliff Farmer 42 years ago. It's located in Baker, Oregon, a community of 10,000 in the eastern part of the state. Cliff's Saw and Cycles sells chain saws, and Honda motorcycles and ATVs. Kip notes ruefully that the chain saw part of business has been nearly wiped out due to restrictive public land policies that have nearly eliminated logging on the nearby national forest. Cliff's Saw and Cycles employs seven, including his mother who is still active in the business. It has a gross sales of approximately $2.5 million a year. Kip estimates that 75% of his sales depend on recreational access to the old logging roads and trails in the national forests.

Kip is an active volunteer in working with the national forest to maintain trails, and says, "Many of my customers are retirees, veterans who have fought in wars and served their country. As their physical abilities have declined, an ATV gives them mobility, and the ability to still enjoy the outdoors. They've served their country. Now, their public land should be open for them to enjoy."

**FAY MYERS MOTORCYCLE WORLD - DENVER, COLORADO**

Fay Myers Motorcycle World, located in Denver, Colorado, was founded in 1948. It continues to be owned and managed by the Myers family today. Fay Myers employs a staff of 90, and has an annual gross sales of approximately $25 million dollars.

Fay Myers is a franchised dealer for Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki, KTM, Ducati, Husaberg Husquevarna, and Aprilla. Off-highway and dual purpose motorcycles, ATVs, and personal watercraft account for about half of this business. Nearly all of these depend on access to Colorado's vast public lands.

Fay Myers has been an enthusiastic supporter of motorized recreation, contributing generously to local clubs. It contributes to local charitable events, and donates equipment for volunteer clean-ups in the national forests. Employees serve on Colorado's state trails committee. The business has been a key

supporter of the Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO) which has been the means by which all local and state motorized recreation organizations cooperate statewide.

**CONCLUSION**

All of these selected states each demonstrate well over $100 million in economic activity from summer and winter OHV recreation. Each of these dollars represent a small business, families, service to customers, and significant contributors to their communities. Each businessman cares deeply about these sports, many passing this enjoyment on from generation to generation. Many become active partners with the national forest land managers in volunteering to improve recreation facilities and participating in public policy processes. These small businesses deserve the protection from potentially harmful federal regulations that RFA and SBREFA should provide.

Congress deserves a report on the impact of the National Forests' proposed rules on small OHV recreation businesses. Each proposed rule: Forest Planning, the Roads Rule (Transportation Policy), and the Roadless Initiative should be analyzed for its impact on these businesses. Since they are related and interdependent, a report should be prepared on the cumulative impact.

The Small Business Administration must be better funded to take a strong stand in defense of these national forest land dependent businesses. The SBA needs to become familiar with the industry that these network of small businesses represent. Only then, can SBA adequately monitor the land managing agencies' compliance.

My testimony represents a cursory overlook with data that is readily available. Much more could be done and a greater impact demonstrated with a more thorough analysis.

The Forest Service has generally chosen to ignore RFA, or to selectively report economic activity to minimize the impact of their proposed policies. This is certainly the case with the Roadless Initiative. The agency may respond that an honest compliance with RFA will significantly increase the analysis workload and cost. An appropriate response would be that this Roadless Initiative and EIS was never authorized by Congress and funded in the first place. We urge that the Forest Service be more concerned about the impacts and costs to small businesses.

Congress must take action to assure it receives the economic analysis reports required by RFA and SBREFA. Congress must take the required time to review and accept or reject the reports, and no Forest Service policies should be implemented until Congress' review is complete.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Submitted by,

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## Business Voices Urge Protection of Yellowstone National Park

Dear Chairman Manzullo and members of the subcommittee,

I operate a business in the small town of West Yellowstone, Montana, the main winter gateway to Yellowstone National Park. As president of West Yellowstone Citizens for a Healthy Park, I urge you to listen to the voices from my community. The majority of businesspeople and residents of West Yellowstone support a snowmobile phaseout in Yellowstone. Our message is simple: *a healthy local economy depends upon a healthy Yellowstone Park.*

For this reason, we urge you to support the protection of Yellowstone Park from snowmobiles Damage to the park from snowmobiles undermines our livelihoods. We who live and work on the doorstep of Yellowstone want the very best for this special park.

Snowmobile use in Yellowstone is damaging to the park and our community's economic well-being--we currently *lose* a great deal of business in town due to the noxious fumes, noise and congestion caused by snowmobiles. A quiet, clean mass transit system of snowcoaches will best protect the park and ensure continued winter visitation—the backbone of our winter economy.

Over 150 West Yellowstone business people, elected officials, and residents--nearly a third of the town's voting population--signed the petition "A Call for a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park" asking the Park Service and Congress to:

- Protect Yellowstone National Park and thereby ensure that visitors continue to visit West Yellowstone and support the local economy;
- Support the community of West Yellowstone as it adjusts, diversifies and rises to meet the challenges created by changes in park management.

Over thirty business owners, residents and elected officials from our town have submitted letters to Congress urging support of the snowmobile phaseout. Their message was clear: *Protect Yellowstone National Park, and our community and livelihoods will thrive.*

The erroneous message that West Yellowstone will fall into economic ruin if snowmobiles are no longer permitted in Yellowstone has been perpetuated. We are disappointed by the uncritical ear which many in Congress have lent to the special interests bent on profiting from the destruction of Yellowstone. They do not represent the best interests of the town or the park, as eloquently described in a letter from my neighbors, the Moores:

"*We are especially concerned that government agencies and elected officials not be misled by the one-sided representations made by West Yellowstone snowmobile business people to the effect that the town and the citizens of this community oppose such a ban and would be economically devastated by a prohibition in Yellowstone National Park. These views represent merely the self-interest of people who believe they have a right to exploit for personal wealth and profit the beauty and grandeur of Yellowstone National Park—even when such exploitation does permanent damage to the wildlife and ecology of the Park.*" (William J. and Peggy J. Moore, West Yellowstone, MT).

The House Small Business Committee is in a unique position to assist our town as we make this overdue and necessary transition to cleaner and quieter group transportation into Yellowstone Park. The goal must be to make the transition as easy as possible on local businesspeople. This can be accomplished by providing opportunity in the form of low interest loans and assistance to new and expanded snowcoach operations. The key component to our town's success obviously will be a continued influx of winter tourists. Yellowstone Park is a tremendous draw which will serve us well, so long as we in turn protect the park. Marketing, advertising and public education similar to that following the 1988 Yellowstone fires will allow us to minimize any dip in visitation during the transition.

In summary, we ask the subcommittee to support a sustainable economy for West Yellowstone. Snowmobiles are not a sustainable future for our town. The following help is needed:

Marketing

- Funding for the Park Service to do media and public education promoting winter snowcoach tourism in Yellowstone similar to the marketing campaign so successful after the 1988 fires.
- Funding for advertising campaigns promoting winter visitation to Yellowstone.
- Cooperative agreements with and commitments from state (MT, WY and ID) tourism offices.

Economic Development Assistance

- SBA low-interest loans for snowcoach acquisition and other business infrastructure.
- Require that snowcoach concessions be available to gateway community business owners based on current visitation patterns.
- Bring together economic development agencies to promote transition to a sustainable future.
- Provide job training and business development programs.

We would be interested in any insight the committee has as to how other communities have weathered such transitions successfully. Please join us in our endeavor to protect this special place we are privileged to call home and to ensure a successful economic transition to a winter economy based on snowcoach access to the park.

Sincerely,

Jackie Mathews

Jackie Mathews, President
West Yellowstone Citizens for a Healthy Park

Scott Cursley

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July 11, 2000

Honorable Representative Manzullo,

I am a resident of West Yellowstone, Montana and operate snowcoach tours in Yellowstone National Park. My livelihood depends upon a healthy winter economy in our community, which depends directly upon a healthy environment in Yellowstone National Park. I favor a mass transportation option for winter travel in Yellowstone for the reasons outlined below.

Air pollution and noise pollution from snowmobile use in Yellowstone and the negative impacts of these on the visitor experience is well documented and described in various testimonies and studies. Rough road conditions created by snowmobile use a have a terrible effect on the visitor experience as well. Moguls, often two feet high, develop in similar fashion as a washboard road. Extremely rough roads prevailed more than 75% of the time last year. As you can imagine, travel through the park on days when these road conditions exist is brutal. People riding snowmobiles daily ask us for rides back to town on our snowcoaches believing the ride is smoother. When road conditions are bad, many of our guests tell us they had a great day in Yellowstone, they love our snowcoaches and had a wonderful tour but will never come back because the ride was so bumpy. I am dismayed that snowmobiles so negatively impact my guests experience in Yellowstone.

Groomed snow roads deteriorate with prolonged use and therefore have a limited carrying capacity. Snowcoaches provide the potential for the maximum number of visitor use days across established snow roads. They carry ten times more people and do not create moguls as shown by the study done this spring in Yellowstone. Winter visitation in the park and its gateway communities peaked in 1993 and has not increased since. Apparently we reached our maximum visitor potential of snowmobile-dominated economy seven years ago. Snowcoaches provide the alternative for increased winter economic growth to our community by enabling more visitors to the park and therefore to our town.

The town of West Yellowstone grooms over 350 miles of snowmobile trails on the Gallatin National Forest, more than twice as many miles of snowmobile trails than exist in Yellowstone. These trails outside the park travel through incredibly scenic country, connect to other trail systems groomed in Idaho and Big Sky, and lead to mountainous areas containing thousands of acres of ungroomed powder available to snowmobile enthusiasts. Statements that snowmobiling will die and our economy will fail in West Yellowstone if mass transit is implemented in the park are absurd! Yellowstone National Park is our draw and the public will gladly visit regardless of the mode of transportation. Our economy will prosper and become more diverse as we maximize our winter potential. We will have the best of both worlds. Inside Yellowstone will be the quiet, visitor friendly, pristine experience. Outside Yellowstone the greatest winter recreational opportunities found anywhere will continue.

Sadly, the quality of the visitor experience to our area has decreased dramatically and our winter economy is stagnant. West Yellowstone will benefit from revision of winter use policies within Yellowstone National Park. We are a resilient community comprised of savvy business people. There is no doubt we will endure and prosper but we need help and guidance during the transition period. The House Small Business Committee could offer our community insight into how best to transition our local economy and maximize new opportunities. I am optimistic that with hard work and a commitment to a strong local economy sustained by a protected Yellowstone National Park, my community can emerge from this transition profitably. Potential areas of assistance include:

-Economic aid to businesses making a transition to snowcoaches
-Support to manufactures for design and production of a modern snowcoach fleet
-Marketing and promotional assistance assuring the transition proceeds smoothly and is favorable for the visitor and our community.

Change is always hard. I urge you to consider the economic potential and well being of our entire town and the protection of the park, when looking to the future winter use in Yellowstone. The only guarantee for a strong local economy well into the future is a Yellowstone National Park winter use plan that will continue to draw visitors with the least impact on park resources, wildlife and visitors experience.

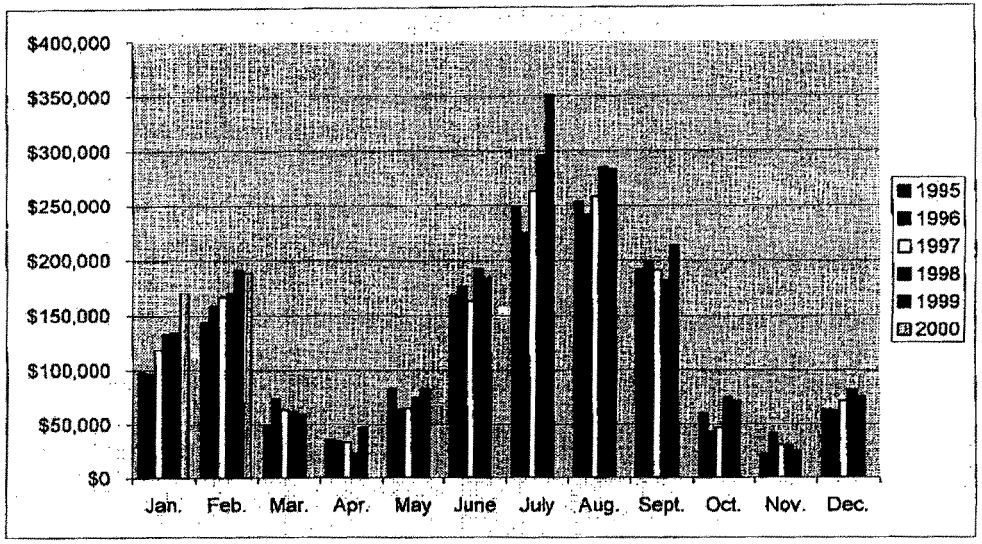
Sincerely,

Scott D. Carsley

Resort Tax Collections for the Town of West Yellowstone
1995-2000

| | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | $97,629 | $144,077 | $48,592 | $35,598 | $62,898 | $167,391 | $248,576 | $253,169 | $191,632 | $60,128 | $21,731 | $63,261 | $ 1,416,877.00 |
| 1996 | $96,354 | $158,722 | $73,821 | $34,040 | $63,799 | $176,304 | $224,551 | $241,489 | $198,720 | $42,541 | $41,821 | $62,112 | $ 1,416,270.00 |
| 1997 | $118,590 | $166,432 | $63,259 | $32,921 | $64,850 | $162,871 | $262,780 | $257,903 | $190,992 | $46,825 | $29,708 | $71,446 | $ 1,468,577.00 |
| 1998 | $132,590 | $170,241 | $61,922 | $22,321 | $75,051 | $192,231 | $295,355 | $285,061 | $182,166 | $75,044 | $29,869 | $81,410 | $ 1,605,269.00 |
| 1999 | $134,178 | $190,969 | $59,079 | $47,110 | $82,514 | $183,268 | $350,818 | $282,909 | $213,510 | $70,431 | $24,573 | $75,499 | $ 1,716,877.00 |
| 2000 | $169,921 | $188,090 | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figures reflect the month the tax was collected for, not the month it was remitted to the Town.




1998-99 winter 29% (26%) 1997-98 30% (25%)

TRACKSTAR MOTORSPORTS INC.
2610 E. 32nd Street MPLS., MN 55406
612-729-9391 Fax 612-729-5923
YAMAHA*TRIUMPH*MV AGUSTA*MuZ*MOTO GUZZI
LAVERDA*ITALJET*DUCATI*CAGIVA*BIMOTA

DEAR REP. DONALD MANZULLO,

I AM WRITING TO YOU IN REGARDS TO THE PROPOSED BAN OF SNOWMOBILES IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS. WE ARE A LARGE DEALER IN MINNEAPOLIS MINNESOTA AND EMPLOY OVER 20 PEOPE, MOST OF WHOM, WE WOULD HAVE TO LAY OFF DURING THE WINTER SEASON IF IT WAS NOT FOR SNOWMOBILE SALES AND SERVICE, WE CANNOT SOLELY RELY ON MOTORCYCLE SALES + SERVICE. IF YOU ARE NOT AWARE WINTER LASTS A LONG TIME IN MINNESOTA LASTING FROM OCTOBER THROUGH MAY. THIS BAN WOULD STRONGLY AFFECT THE NUMBER OF UNITS WE WOULD SELL EACH YEAR. I'M SURE THE LARGE NUMBERS OF TOURISTS THAT VISIT OUR NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM EACH SUMMER SURELY OUT NUMBERS, BY LARGE, THE NUMBER OF SNOWMOBILERS EACH WINTER. CAUSING PROBABLY MUCH MORE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS UPON THE NATIONAL PARKS THAN SNOWMOBILES.

THANKS FOR YOUR TIME

GENERAL MNGR.
TRACK

RaCiNg
www.trackstarmotorsports.com

BLOCKER ENTERPRISES, INC.
YAMAHA
P.O. Box 204, Route 248
Parryville, PA 18244-0204
(610) 377-0440
Fax (610) 377-8066
Kawasaki
Buell

July 7, 2000

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Manzullo

As a dealer of recreational products for the past 30 years, my family, as well as the families of my 30 employees, earn their income from the sales and service of snowmobiles, 4wheelers and motorcycles. Passage of any type of bill that would affect our customer use of their recreational vehicle would negatively affect our income and the economy of our area. Truly the operators of these vehicles do not cause damage to our National Parks or forests. These operators enjoy our natural resources and respect them. Thank you for your support.

Very truly yours,

Dennis E. Blocker

Move Outdoors in Style

7/11/00

REP. DONALD MANZULLO
409 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BLDG
WASHINGTON, D.C 20515

DEAR HONORABLE MANZULLO

AS A SNOWMOBILE DEALER I FEEL SLANDERED AND OFFENDED, BY THE COMMENTS ASST. SEC. OF THE INTERIOR DEPT. DONALD BARRY MADE IN HIS PARK CLOSURE ANNOUNCEMENT.

I DON'T THINK THEY REALIZE OR CARE AS TO THE ECONOMIC IMPACT THESE CLOSURES WILL AFFECT.

I HOPE YOU DO EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER TO RIGHT THIS WRONG!

BECAUSE THIS IS THE START OF THE BEGINNING OF MORE TO COME FROM THIS MIND SET ADMINISTRATION.

I THOUGHT I LIVED IN A DEMOCRECY AS IN WE THE PEOPLE! NOT A SOCIALIST DICTATORSHIP OF MINORITY POWER GRABBING GREEN FREAKS! TEDDY ROOSEVELT HAD THE FORSIGHT TO ESTABLISH THESE PARKS FOR ALL TO USE, NOT TO CLOSE!

SINCERELY TERRY FROLK
PRES.

F & S YAMAHA & MARINE, INC.
1800 SMITH STATION ROAD
SPRING GROVE, PA 17362
717-632-6382

**Big Pine Sports, Inc.**
340 North Milburn Road
Fairview, UT 84629

July 10, 2000

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Manzullo:

Big Pine Sports is a Yamaha-Arctic Cat motorsports dealer and sporting goods store in Fairview, UT and is active in supporting land use and safety issues in snowmobiling and off-highway vehicle sports.

After the Department of Interior's announcement that snowmobiles were "...antiquated machines...noisy...not welcome in our national parks" by Asst. Secretary Donald Barry, we drafted a letter (enclosed) for our customers to sign if they shared the sentiments expressed. It was not difficult to find snowmobilers VERY interested in sharing their views on this high-handed action. To date we have collected nearly 50 signed letters.

Putting Yellowstone and other national parks off-limits to traditional snowmobile use isn't good for our business, our industry, or our customers, who enjoy snowmobiling as a form of family recreation. Yellowstone, in particular, will affect many of our customers (and us personally!) who enjoy seeing the splendors of winter Yellowstone (without the traffic jams one encounters in the non-snow season). The other major impact in Utah is Cedar Breaks National Park, where some 6 miles of park highway (closed in the winter to automoviles) provides a link between two communities, and a major trailhead access for those two communities.

Big Pine Sports employs eight people, full time, and two people, part time. Our payroll last year was over $216,000. We have sales of about $1.5 million per year, and contribute to our local community and county not only by providing employment, but by generating sales tax revenues and supporting various community activities. Restricting traditional snowmobiling and placing other restrictions on recreational vehicles puts a considerable damper on our sales and service. Like many other small family businesses, we can't take many such setbacks without having to either cut back drastically or just close down altogether.

Our customers rely almost totally on public lands for their recreation, be it ATV, motorcycle or snowmobile. We consider ourselves extremely fortunate to live in an area where the mountains and the desert are our backyard playground. Most motorized recreationists are responsible riders and good citizens who care for their lands and operate their vehicles safely. Our local snowmobile club has 'adopted' a two-mile section of highway adjacent to a major trailhead and clean it and the trailhead twice a year for the past 9 years. Last year we moved and refurbished a Forest Service building for use as a warming hut, and we maintain it and the toilets at the trailhead in the winter. We also provide "Sub for Santa" for a number of local families each year.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this unreasonable and unscientific ban on snowmobiles in our national parks.

Sincerely,

Glen and Judy Zumwalt, owners
Big Pine Sports, Inc.

Rep. Donald Manzullo 7-7-00

Dear Sir,

We are a small Arctic Cat/Yamaha dealer in western Massachusetts. We employ six people and are very dependent on snowmobile sales and service to keep gainfully employed all six through the winter. Also we are near the Green Mountain National Forest, our customers spend much time riding there and support the economy of the surrounding area. Please keep all riding opportunities open to all users of public land, wheels, tracks or whatever - there are enough possibilities to allow everyone something.

Thank You,
Tim Rychych.

RAY'S CYCLE CENTER, INC.
332 WELLS STREET
GREENFIELD, MA 01301
TEL (413) 773-8718

RAY'S CYCLE CENTER, INC.
332 WELLS STREET
GREENFIELD, MA 01301
TEL (413) 773-8718

REP. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Bu
Washington, DC 20515

As one of thousands of passionate snowmobilers in your state, I was outraged last month when the National Park Service announced a ban on snowmobiling in our national parks.

I'm angry because the Park Service took this action without consulting the very people the ban affects: Me and four million other snowmobilers.

If you think I'm angry, wait until the American public weighs in on the issue. According to a nationwide poll by USA Weekend, 78 percent of Americans favor responsible recreational vehicle usage in our national parks. Other independent polls yield similar results.

The National Park Service did not allow time for federal, state or local officials to work together on this issue, nor did it bring millions of snowmobilers to the table to discuss the impact of their decision. That's just plain wrong.

I'm counting on you to make sure bureaucrats in Washington don't assume the power to decide who can and cannot use public lands without consulting the people who own them - the American people.

Respectfully,

Tracy Schultz
1651 Shilton Rd
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
920-743-3838

REP. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Bu
Washington, DC 20515

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I'm counting on you to make sure bureaucrats in Washington don't assume the power to decide who can and cannot use public lands without consulting the people who own them - the American people.

Respectfully,

May's Sport Center
75 W. Maple St
Sturgeon Bay WI 54235

**Ramsey-Waite Co., inc**
aka Yamaha of Springfield
4258 Franklin Blvd. Eugene, OR 97403
541-726-7625
541-741-3551 FAX

7/7/00

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Rep. Donald Manzullo:

I am writing concerning the work in Congress now being done to close the National Parks to Snowmobiles. Just the discussion of this matter has already had negative impact on our business. Customers and potential customers here bits and pieces on the news and assume areas have been already closed to snowmobile use.

As I travel throughout the Western United States, there is a lot of land here. I truly believe enough land to satisfy all desired uses of the public, i.e., snowmobiling and skiing - while protecting the wildlife and the environment. Snowmobilers like the extensive trail system that has been built, and maintained by the gas tax dollars they pay. Snowmobilers are always willing to help when the need arises to aid in search and rescue. Snowmobilers enjoy a sport that allows them to get out further to experience the beauty of the winter, when perhaps they would not have the opportunity had they not been on a snowmobile.

Because our customers feel threatened with closures, I believe they are extra careful to respect the land they recreate on.

Please continue your fight to allow free access to all recreational users on our public lands.

Best regards,

Gregory Toftdahl
Yamaha Sales.

2389 – 350th Avenue
DeWitt, IA 52742
July 7, 2000

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Snowmobile Ban in National Parks

Dear Mr. Manzullo,

I wish to express my deep disappointment by the announcement that the Department Of Interior has banned snowmobiling in national parks. I like all Americans want to do everything possible to protect and preserve the environment but, I believe the ban was based on inaccurate data and I question the validity of a federal ruling made without broader public input and testing.

According to information that I have read, the Environmental Protection Agency is currently studying the effects of snowmobiles on the environment. Many studies have been done, but have failed to produce valid results.

There are more than 4 million snowmobilers in North America who spend more than $9 billion each year on the sport. This ban will have a "trickle-down" affect on thousands of small towns and businesses across the snowbelt which depend economically on tourism.

I believe an issue that affects so many families and people of all ages deserves careful consideration and open dialogue with all parties affected. This ban infringes on the freedom of millions of people in this country who have enjoyed wintertime getaways in national parks for more than 30 years. The National Park System was created for the enjoyment of all people, including millions of snowmobilers in this country who enjoy the freedom of the outdoors.

Please take a stand against this infringement of our rights and help to get this ban lifted.

Regards,

Dennis R. Barr

Dennis R. Barr
President
**BARR SALES & SERVICE, INC.**

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

July 8, 2000

Rep. Manzullo,

We are a snowmobile dealer in the State of Wisconsin, and we wish to voice our opinion on the banning of Snowmobiles in National Parks.

We feel that this would affect our business, as we get the before business of prepping the sleds before they travel, as well as after they get back!! If the parks are closed to people, we would lose this service.

Many of our customers plan their vacations around the winter months to go snowmobiling, their favorite sport, and most of them travel to National parks for these vacations!! We should not forget also, how much money is being spent by snowmobilers when they travel to these different cities to use these parks!! Not only for the registration fees, but all the restaurants, bars, stores, shops, etc.. So you see, this does not only affect snowmobile dealers, but a lot of other people too!!

We thank you for your time in reading this letter, and considering our thoughts.

Sincerely,

Terry Boettcher

Terry Boettcher
Owner, Leisure Time Sports, Inc. Yamaha Snowmobile Dealer, Wisconsin

SEABERG
POWER SPORTS
KAWASAKI • SKI-DOO • SEA-DOO
18443 U.S. HWY 59 N.• DETROIT LAKES, MN 56501 • PHONE: 218-847-9264 • FAX: 218-847-0688

July 8, 2000

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Donald Manzullo:

My name is Russell Seaberg and I own Seaberg Power Sports in Detroit Lakes, MN. We are a four season shop with a full line of snowmobiles, ATV's, watercraft, and motorcycles. We have 15 employees. A large portion of our customer base enjoy snowmobiling, and many of them plan winter vacations that they take to Yellowstone National Park. If this national park is closed to snowmobilers it will have a devastating effect on all shops, including mine. We are about 15 hours from Yellowstone, and we take at least two trips a season, which includes about 25 of our customers per trip. They all are very responsible riders and look forward to going every year.

I encourage you to keep the National Parks open so that we can continue to enjoy them.

Sincerely,

Russell Seaberg

Russell Seaberg

Mahowald "SPORTS"
HWY 13 & 19 EAST, P.O. BOX 65
NEW PRAGUE, MN 56071
952-758-4488

July 21, 2000

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Snowmobile Ban

Dear Rep. Manzullo,

I own and run a snowmobile and motorcycle dealership and I need to tell you how deeply disappointed I am in the current administration. We have eight full time and four part time employees that will be personally affected by the ban of snowmobiles in most national parks. We have already had customers come in and tell us that they may not buy mountain snowmobiles because of this new policy. I am afraid that the ban might affect the snowmobiles like the PWC ban did, resulting in many lost jobs. If it isn't for the ability of my customers to use trails on public lands our business will be lost along with the jobs of 12 people.

Please do what you can to help us keep the right to use public property.

Sincerely,

Jim Mahowald

Jim Mahowald

BHS
BIG HORN SAFARI
2110 N. MAIN ~ SHERIDAN, WY 82801 ~ www.bighornsafari.com
Phone (307)674-6842 ~ Fax (307)674-6865 ~ Email bhsafari@cyberhighway.net

July 11, 2000

Representative Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Manzullo,

Big Horn Safari is a locally owned and family operated business that specializes in snowmobile tours and rentals as well as ATV rentals. The purpose of this letter is to tell you how snowmobile bans will affect our business and the other businesses that we help to support. Rob Schuetz of Bombardier Recreational Products recommended that we write you at this time.

During the winter season, our business employs upwards of 10 people, including 2-3 owners. Most of our wintertime staff does construction work during the spring and summer months, then go to work for us in the winter months. All of these people are avid snowmobilers who promote safety and courteous riding before all else. The guides are highly trained mechanics as well as first responders, in many accidents, that occur in the Big Horn National Forest.

Our customers are also avid snowmobilers. We live in a state with more animals than people, so we appreciate a show of good sportsmanship and an opportunity to ride in the open country available to us on the mountain. Many of our customers have expressed extreme displeasure with a potential ban of snowmobiles in the national parks system, particularly because they feel that such a ban will also affect our ability to ride in the Big Horn Mountains. These customers are the ones who are helping to spend over $6 billion annually (nationally) through their sport.

Because we are a tour and rental business, we have quite a large clientele. People from all over the country come to ride in Wyoming, especially in the Big Horn Mountains, which are just a few miles ride from our home base of Sheridan. These people come to Wyoming to ride because of our trail system and the wide open spaces available to ride in.

We have a special use permit that we pay the US Forest Service for, at a rate of three (3) percent per year. This special use permit allows us to take people on guided tours in the national forest. As you know, there are a limited number of these special use permits issued; our permit has now been expanded to allow us more "man days" in which to conduct our tours. This fact, alone, demonstrates the viability and popularity of the sport.

We had over $60,000 in tours booked with us last year; a pretty phenomenal number when you consider that our first tour did not go out until late December and the last tour ended in mid-March. Just for a cost comparison, we charge $250 per day per person; this fee includes the following items: snowmobile and clothing, gas, lodging, meals, guide, and the special use fee. We do business with all of the lodges on the mountain, as well as with local motels, restaurants, gas stations, etc. As you can tell, we have the unfortunate ability to impact a lot of sectors of the business community in a negative manner if snowmobile bans are enacted.

Initially, a ban in Yellowstone National Park will probably increase our business substantially. In fact, this was true during the 1996 snowmobile season when Yellowstone National Park was temporarily closed to

snowmobilers. For the first two (2) weeks after the closure, our business boomed; after those two (2) weeks, business dwindled down to nothing and the 1997 was the worst season for tours and rentals on record. Once people find out that Yellowstone is closed to snowmobiles, they don't want to come west at all. You can only imagine what will happen to businesses like ours if the National Forest Service changes its policies or continues with its roadless initiative. If people can't ride on trails or in the parks and meadows on the mountain, our local rental business will be severely impacted. Also, if riding becomes restricted locally, we will not be seeing the influx of out-of-state tourist dollars that we need to survive in a business that has a four (4) month season. And, bear in mind, that most of these out-of-state tourists are riding in Wyoming because of the severe restrictions in their own states. They also ride here because of the pristine beauty of the mountains; Yellowstone is unparalleled when it comes to winter riding.

One of the owners of Big Horn Safari maintains part of the trail system in the Big Horn Mountains. He grooms the trails twice weekly, checks to make sure people are not riding in the wilderness areas, and generally makes sure that his part of the trail is well-maintained. Our customers do use trails in addition to riding in the meadows; we have one of the best maintained trail systems in the country. It is self-evident that if trails need to be groomed twice weekly, they are being used quite heavily. Additionally, the snowmobilers (both in-state and out-of-state) pay a fee of $15 annually which pays for the trail grooming and staking programs. No outside money from state or federal resources is solicited; the trail program is self-supporting.

In conclusion, a snowmobile ban, of any kind, would be extraordinarily bad for everyone involved in the sport. Such a ban would negatively impact businesses that are in the recreation business and might even force some of these businesses to close. Please help fight the ban on snowmobiles!!! Give the manufacturers a chance to address the issues at hand before making any final decisions.

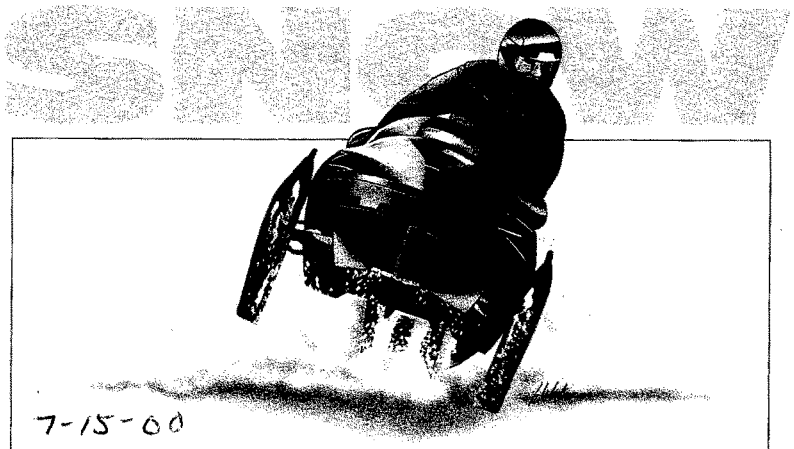
Thank you for your time and support of the recreation industry. We truly appreciate the stand that you have taken.

Sincerely,

Mike Arzy, Owner/Groomer
Ray Arzy, Owner
Monty Webb, Owner

P.S. It was good to note that you've started the ARRA with some of your fellow congresspeople. We look forward to seeing this organization become quite effective in the near future.

cc: Craig Thomas
Mike Enzi
Barbara Cubin




7-15-00

Steve's Cycle & Marine

Hello,

I am the owner of a ~~motorcycle~~ snowmobile business. We sell Yamaha + Skidoo. I oppose the bans on snowmobiles in parks or on public lands.

We have 12 employees here, everyone has been to Yellowstone and regard it as a very special trip. Seeing it on a sled is like no other trip.

Many of our customers are upset by the ban - they think more bans will come and more right to ride will be gone.

Sue Little

NP-182

© 1995 Paul Oxman Publishing 1-800-228-0787

218 736-7569

Dick Weber
Valley Motor Honda
139 E. 5th (307) 672-3492
Sheridan, WY 82801
July 18, 2000

Chairman Donald A. Manzullo
Small Business Tax, Finance & Exports Subcommittee
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Manzullo:

It is with great concern that I listen to the news of the Interior Department forcing its hand in closing the National Parks to snowmobiles!

I have been involved with snowmobile sales in our family dealership since I was eleven years old (now 44). It has been a positive part of our business for all these years, especially during the months of winter here in Wyoming.

Sure there have been ups and downs, but overall it provides three technicians, two parts people and two salespeople as well as other people in our dealership, a job for the long five months of December through April.

We have 22 full-time employees throughout our small town auto store that finds it necessary to carry other products to make ends meet! Many people in the area are concerned as to the sudden action to ban the snowmobiles, since the EPA gave the marine industry nearly a decade to "clean up their act." Shouldn't the same or some reasonable time frame be employed in this instance? I agree that snowmobiles are smoky and stinky and they need cleaned up. That can be done. We also sell watercraft and this year Sea Doo (same as Ski Doo) introduced the Direct Injection models that are EPA compliant to the year 2006. Same two stroke idea that is in a snowmobile, just brought up to the 21st century for emissions. It also gets 30-40% better fuel economy. And the performance is top of the line! It can be done!!

Why is it that environmentalists carry such a big stick? This issue, as well as the roadless issue that Clinton is pursuing have me just so frustrated. I live here and use the Big Horn National Forest for camping, skiing, snowmobiling, hiking, fishing, trail bike riding, taking the family for a ride to view the scenery, hunting and showing off our community to people that come to see us. Why does somebody with nothing better to do meddle in these matters? Come see the forest for yourself, you'll find it's just as awesome and dangerous as it has always been. Perhaps I could drop some of these folks off outside the wilderness area and let them walk home. They'd probably find out what 600,000 acres is all about!

Yellowstone Park and probably many others that are proposed to close are vital to the economies that have built up around the winter snowmobile use of the Parks. All we need to do is take a step-by-step approach to a long term solution to this issue and many parties can be satisfied. This closure is just too radical! It frightens me that it will open the door to closure of other types of public land. Aren't we all trying to make multiple use of these lands our ultimate goal?

I believe that it is irresponsible for Congress to allow this Park closure action to take place without first allowing some time for corrective action to take place. I am a die-hard snowmobile enthusiast and a realist and I am comfortable there is an acceptable solution that will allow the environment to be protected and still allow a thriving piece of our economy to continue, as well as allowing the hundreds of thousands of Americans to still snowmobile OUR National Parks!

Best regards,

Dick Weber
Valley Motor Honda
139 E. 5th (307) 672-3492
Sheridan, WY 82801
sales@valleymotor.com <mailto:sales@valleymotor.com>

P.S.- Perhaps the entire purpose behind the environmental movement recently is to drive those of us who have access to Public lands to drink and go home and beat our wives and kids. At least we wouldn't be destroying the "environment"! Get real.

**HAUCK POWER SPORTS, INC.**
2072 19th Street/West Avenue . Rice Lake, WI 54868. (715)234-6195. Fax (715)234-5485
07/11/2000

Dear Representative Donald Manzullo,

As an avid snowmobiler and the owner of a Yamaha Dealership in Rice Lake, WI, I was shocked and disappointed with the current administrations decision to ban snowmobiles in National Parks.

Our store employes 14 people and while that may not carry much clout in Washington, it means a great deal to the fourteen families dependant on snowmobiles for their livelihood.

Banning snowmobiles in public parks will directly affect these families along with the thousands of families currently enjoying our park systems year round thanks to recreational vehicles. The idea that such an act could pass with out a mandate from the people is very disheartening.

All of us who enjoy and appreciate our national parks hope your efforts are successful in stopping this unfair infringement on our use of our land.

Sincerely,

Pat Hauck

Pat Hauck
owner of Hauck Power Sports, Inc.

July 7, 2000

Dear Rep. Donald Manzullo,

This letter is in regards to the snowmobile ban in our National Parks. It has come to my attention that you are pro-sled. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for that and ask you to keep on with the good fight. I am in snowmobile sales and also an avid snowmobiler so not only is it part of my livelihood, but it is my favorite sport . It is almost unbearable to even contemplate the possibility that my family, friends and customers will not be allowed to participate in this great sport in our own National Parks. We all like to use our public lands including our National parks. As you know, avid snowmobilers are up in arms over this subject. My store employs 6 full time employees. I thank you again for your support against this ban. If you are ever in Northeast Wy please stop in.

Sincerely,

Clay Alexander

Clay Alexander
Lakeway Power Sports
301 w. Lakeway
Gillette, Wy 82718

7-11-00

SKAGIT POWERSPORTS

Rep. Manzullo,

I sell Yamaha products including snowmobiles. Our company employs up to 20 people during the Summer with a low in the Winter of 15 or so. These are good jobs paying an average of $30,000.00 per year. With the current strong economy, business is good. What concerns my customers and employees is the reduction of riding areas off road without consideration of Congress or the public. Isn't that what democracy means? Why don't we have a say? If the public votes to close an area, I will abide. BILL CAMERON

1645 Walton Drive • Burlington, Washington 98233 • Ph. (360) 757-7999 • Fax (360) 757-1090

To : Rep Donald Manzullo July 8, 2000

I would like to comment on the issue of banning Snowmobiles from the National Parks and the effect it would have on our economy. Me and my wife who was born and raised in West Yellowstone Montana. Have operated a Restraunt for 20 Years and the Winter Snowmobile industry has played big part in making this community a year around place to live. When we started the introduction of Snowmobile use in the National Park back in the sixties. The community was bussing children 60 miles round trip a day to Asthenia Idaho to School. Now we have a new school, which the Snowmobile Business has help pay for. Back then we would go to Church on Sunday and we attended Mass the Holy water was Frozen because we did not have enough money to insulate and heat the church properly. Now we have 6 different churches that operate year around, partly due to winter tourism. I have been a member of the Reserve Police dept. Search and Rescue and a Fire person all volunteer. The winter Tourist have helped bring new equipment and training to this community. It has helped create a Service community that very much helps assist the National Park Service Winter and summer. We have 15 full time people working for us and we feel if there is a ban on Snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park in the winter we will be forces to close our doors. What is real sad is the fact that this is our back yard and if for one minute we thought that it was being threatened by Snowmobile use in the winter, we would be the first to say stop. If the Park is closed to Snowmobile use in the winter their will be thousands of people from all over the world that come and enjoy the winter use deprive of just another freedom. The industry is bringing on line quieter and cleaner snowmobiles give them a chance to make this possible to the public please do not just kill a community because a small group of people do not like the freedom we have in experiencing Yellowstone in the winter. Come out and see for your self call me and we will make all

arrangements to tour the park first hand and stay in our community and see the wonderful experience of winter in Yellowstone. Again please do not deprive families and people from seeing the wonderful things my family and me have enjoyed for years. The idea behind winter use years ago was to relieve the pressure of summer and it has worked. So why fix something that is not broken. Thank you for your time

Yours truly
Mike and Dixie Klostrich
Running Bear Pancake House
406-646-7703Bus
Home 406-646-4958
Box 465 West Yellowstone Montana
59758

**OREGON TRAIL SALES & SERVICE INC.**
**OREGON TRAIL YAMAHA**
1925 AUBURN AVENUE, BAKER CITY, OR 97814
541-523-6103 541-523-3500 FAX 541-523-4239

JULY 11, 2000

Representative Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Manzullo:

Our customers are upset to think about the possible closure of public lands including National Parks to snowmobiles. Our sales and the number of jobs we can offer are greatly affected by sales of recreational products.

We support public use of public lands along with our customers. We employ ten people at the present time. We appreciate your consideration of this matter. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Respectfully,

Richard P. Toubeaux
Owner

Jim Coast Sales & Service
BOX 335
DUKE CENTER, PA 16729

July 10, 2000

Congressman Rep Don Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

I am a dealer in Snowmobiles & have 4 employees who depend on Snowmobiles to make a living.

Our Customers are very upset about the Ban on Snowmobiles in National Parks. There is no reason for doing this.

There are times when the only place our Customers can ride is in the State Park. That is the only place the Snow Conditions are right.

Snowmobiles do not hurt anything and the noise levels are very low.

Please do not Ban Snowmobiles.

Joyce Coast

LOVES PARK
ARCTIC CAT
WORLD CLASS SUPERSTORE

JUN 07 2000

May 26, 2000

Representative Don Manzullo
409 Common House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Manzullo:

As someone who makes a living in the snowmobile industry, I strongly oppose the recent ban placed on snowmobiles in OUR national parks – the result of a lopsided political agenda, constructed by a few. I write this letter asking you to help me and millions of other Americans, put an abrupt end to this and preserve our freedom. Specifically, what I am asking from you is your help and support.

The US Department of Interior has cited snowmobile sound and emissions as the reason for the ban, calling our machines "noisy" and "antiquated" and claiming we've done nothing to produce a cleaner machine. These accusations tell me this ban has nothing to do with noise or emissions. I personally work with these machines day in and day out. I've seen them take tremendous strides in both of these areas, including others!

I represent just one of Arctic Cat's 5000 + persons responsible for manufacturing, distributing, and selling Arctic Cat snowmobiles. Not to mention the hundreds of suppliers providing goods and services to Arctic Cat who also support this industry. I choose to be part of the Arctic Cat family because I believe in the product and I believe in the sport. Combined, our voting power will be felt.

I'd like my children to have the chance to enjoy viewing America's public lands in a setting that only wintertime can offer. The way that snowmobilers (who spend $9 billion annually in the US and Canada) have been experiencing it for over 30 years. I hope I can count on your immediate action to help preserve my livelihood, my freedom, and the rights of future generations to come.

Sincerely,

David Jack
Owner/Operator
Loves Park Arctic Cat

*Snowmobiles • ATV's • TigerShark Watercraft • Boat Service & Repair*
9902 N. Second St. • Machesney Park, IL 61115 • (815) 636-7636

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Manzullo:

We own a Yamaha dealership in Alpine Wyoming, very close to Yellowstone National Park, and we would like to respond to the banning of snowmobiles and how it would affect our only means of income for our family. We have been in business for eleven years, and have established many loyal customers, who snowmobile 6 to 7 months out of the year. The response to the snowmobile bans has had a huge impact on these customers, who enjoy traveling into Yellowstone National Park and other surrounding National Parks. 100% of our customers are disgusted with the thought of **PUBLIC LANDS** being turned into **NON-PUBLIC LANDS.**

Recreational vehicles are our business, our careers, our life and also that of our 8 employees. If these bans are carried out, there are thousands of people in the same business as we are, who are also ultimately going to suffer.

It is extremely unfortunate that **OUR WORLD – THE WORLD OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION – THE WORLD OF FREEDOM-** has fallen into the wrong hands, the hands of people who think they can determine how others should live their lives.

We appreciate your time and support with this matter.

Thank you,

Tanya Johnson

Troy and Tanya Johnson
TJ' Sports, Inc.

**Jim Boltz**

# CYCLE BARN

*"MOTORSPORTS SUPERSTORES"*
**LYNNWOOD - SMOKEY POINT**

P.O. Box 1335, Lynnwood, WA 98046
Tel: (425) 921-1112, Fax: (425) 921-1111
E-MAIL jimbob@cyclebarn.com

---

July 22, 2000

Representative Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Manzullo

I am appalled by recently proposed Federal action to close down (ban) the use of motorized recreation in many of our National Parks. These actions will affect me personally and professionally. I am an avid snowmobiler and have been a motorsports dealer in Washington State for over 35 years. My dealerships employ over 120 people and we have a customer base of over 15,000 current customers.

Snowmobiles are a significant part of my business – especially in the winter months. We use the repair and parts part of the business to keep our staff employed through the slow winter months when motorcycles sales are down. Without this business I can assure that we many of our employees will become "seasonally" employed – basically they will be unemployed during the slow winter season of October through February. Snowmobiling has "rounded out" the business year in motorsports – without it, we again become a "seasonal" business with unreliable job opportunities.

Snowmobiling is a big economic enterprise and recreation in Washington State. The economic impact of shutting down riding areas in Federal Parks will have a severe economic impact on rural economies that rely on the dollars the recreational snowmobilers provide during winter months. Many very small towns with limited resources will be hurt. Washington State has had a very well controlled and managed snowmobile trail management and grooming program that may well be abandoned as the riding opportunities shrink.

All in all, Representative Manzullo, I find this proposed action on closing Federal Parks to be a knee-jerk reaction to "bad information" by a small group of well funded and vocal fanatics. I absolutely do not believe these closings are in the best interest of the largest majority of citizens.

I thank you for your support on this matter and wish you the best of luck in bringing this message to the Members of Congress.

Sincerely

Jim Boltz
Owner

ROELOFSEN IMPLEMENT, INC.
595 MAIN AVE, PO BOX 371
TORONTO, SD 57268-0371
605-794-2131
FAX 605-794-2025

July 21, 2000

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep Manuzullo:

It has come to our attention that you are trying to help keep the National Parks open to snowmobiling. Enclosed is a copy of a letter we recently sent to our South Dakota senators, which might be of interest to you. We appreciate your efforts and hope that this letter, with our thoughts, on the issue will be of some help to you.

Sincerely,

Richard Roelofsen
Vickie J. Roelofsen
Richard & Vickie Roelofsen
Roelofsen Implement

July 6, 2000

U.S. Senator Tom Daschle
U.S. Senator Tim Johnson
324 Senate Hart Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Daschle and Senator Johnson:

As a South Dakota snowmobile dealer we are **very upset** with attempts to shut down National Parks to snowmobiles! We don't think you understand how this affects us out here in rural South Dakota.

Our business is located in Toronto - population 201. We live here, as well as members of our extended family, some of who are employed at our business. Our business brings customers from SD, IA, MN, NE, and ND to Toronto. We are proud of our town and work hard to keep it thriving, through our business and also through our involvement in community activities. Just last summer we were part of the project where Governor Janklow came here to dedicate a memorial honoring a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient from our town. If small towns in South Dakota are going to survive, family businesses that support communities like ours must survive! But, if you continue catering to President Clinton and Al Gore's environmentalist friends, believing the garbage they are feeding you - people like us will be put out of the snowmobile business! Let me explain.

As you know, snowfall in South Dakota the last three winters has been very minimal. Selling snowmobiles without snow is very difficult; but we have survived the last three years. We have survived BECAUSE our snowmobile customers are loading their sleds on trailers they buy from us and are driving to the "**National Parks**" to ride their snowmobiles!! To get ready for that trip they buy parts, oil, and clothing; and they have us service and repair their snowmobiles. This not only generates income for us, but also tax dollars for Toronto. These people are not going to the National Parks and wrecking the environment, many of them are families going on vacation - spending time together. Don't take away something good that parents can enjoy with their kids, especially the hard to please teenagers! We see the camaraderie it brings to a family.

Our snowmobile manufacturer (Bombardier) is working hard to develop snowmobiles which comply with the EPA emissions standards. They understand the problems and have made progress in this area. Can't these efforts be acknowledged and worked with so snowmobilers can keep riding the parks?

Please be fair, keep the National Parks open to snowmobiles, they are NOT hurting our National Parks anymore than anyone else is.

Sincerely,

Richard & Vickie Roelofsen
Roelofsen Implement, Inc
Toronto, SD

cc: Rep John Thune
Governor William Janklow
Sec of Interior Bruce Babbitt
USDA E. S. Chief Michael Dombeck

[redacted] - Hello my name is Julie Ferguson and I live in Rangeley, Maine which is a very small town along way from no where. We own our own business and guess what we do, "sell Snowmobiles" We have been doing this for 10 years and this is our bread and butter and that is no exaggeration! Our town lives to see winter come because that brings the snowmobilers here by the thousands and without them, this town would be a ghost town! In our business, we don't just sell snowmobiles, we work and repair them, sell parts, sell accessories, sell oil, also rent snowmobiles. We are sooooo BUSY from December through April, that what business, we do between these few short months, carries us through the long spring and summer when we don't have any business. People think we're crazy to work as hard as we do and put in the hours we do, but we love where we live. The environment is clean, natural, clear, the mountains are beautiful, the wildlife is plentiful, and snowmobiles has not effected any part of mother nature in any bad way or sense. Snowmobiles and Snowmobilers, have brought alot of goodness to our area. Without this recreation, we could not survive. Sometimes, I feel, that this is what our government wants us to become, victims of circumstance and be forced to go on welfare and live off our state and federal government. Is this what you want? It's not what we want. And the government and these ridiculous green people groups, need to ask the BIG QUESTION?, "How will they stop us from SNOWMOBILING? How will they keep us off the LAND? Stop and think about it, it would have to be guarded 24 hours a day 7 days a week? Are they willing to spend this kind of money to stop snowmobilers who just want to see the outside and enjoy the outside in the winter time on a snowmobile. In our area, we have tons of "moose" and "deer" Our snowmobile trails have made it possible for them to get around easier in the winter time because they can travel on our trails instead of the deep snow that we get each year. No snowmobile has ever killed a moose or deer that I know of. Moose are very Big, anywhere from 1000 pounds to 1500 pounds. They are not afraid of snowmobiles, groomers, or atvs. They actually take their own sweet time to get out of the trail. It actually makes a snowmobile trip more enjoyable to see a moose or deer because they are so pretty to look at.
Also, another point, is that motorized transportation is important because it enables the people who can"t physically walk or climb, the opportunity to get outside and it also provides them away to have something to do. We have seen many times throughout our history, that these so called non-motorized people, when hurt outside, will call us for a ride out of the woods, and then, they don't mind to ride on a snowmobile or atv.

It makes my blood boil to know that the government has agreed to ban snowmobiles. I thought this land was for the people, all the people, not just the non-motorized people. We need your help and support to help us fight this ridiculous outrage. Snowmobiles do not hurt the earth, they don't even ride on the ground, they are on top of snow. I URGE you to please help us fight this in everyway possible.
Make the government spend our money to do studies and show reports for the good side of snowmobiling and how much revenue it brings to all communities in the united states. Please URGE them to be willing to work with the manufacturers on logical solutions. LISTEN TO US - THE SNOWMOBILERS - THE SMALL SELF EMPLOYED BUSINESS PEOPLE. If the government follows through with this ban, it is going to start a devastation across our nation every where and everyone will be effected. I truly believe that the government has not thought this through and made a very bad hasty decision without going through the proper steps. PLEASE HELP US!

Sincerely,
Julie L. Ferguson Julie L. Ferguson

P.S. Our business mailing address is Rev-It-Up Sport Shop-Yamaha Dealer P O Box 1229 Rangeley, Maine 04970. Our fax # is 207-864-2665 and our tele# is 207-864-2452. Please keep me informed by mail or fax. Our e-mail address is REVITUPSHO@aol.com

**Stu Backstatter**

**From:** "Stu Backstatter" <stubackstatter@sunvalley.net>
**To:** <phil.eskekand@mail.house.gov>
**Cc:** <tricia_slevcove@yamaha-motor.com>
**Sent:** Thursday, August 17, 2000 3:18 PM
**Subject:** Snowmobile bans

Dear Representative Manzullo,

I apologize for being so late in writing you regarding the snowmobile bans in various parts of our country.

We are a small Yamaha dealer and, as the owner, I exhaust myself running the business and have little time to defend our business to our government. Still, I trust my communication with you is of value to this issue.

We employ about 6 employees at any given time.

Snowmobiling contributes significantly to our business. It also contributes to our business at a typically slower business time of the year.

We live in an area whose population is very sensitive to environmental issues. We constantly work to create an awareness of motorized issues with our customers. We ask our customers to be considerate of all other recreational forest users. When we have the opportunity we point out that manufacturers are working hard (and successfully) to address environmental issues such as noise and pollutants.

We have many customers that enjoy the trails of the forests on their motorcycles. A number of our customers are hunters and use their ATVs for hunting in the fall each year. Many of our customers enjoy using their snowmobiles on numerous trails and open areas of our forests.

I find the really sad aspect of the snowmobile ban to be that snowmobiling is often a FAMILY occasion. In this time of increased family dysfunction we are shutting down a family activity.

Thank you for listening and for your support.

Sincerely,

Stu

Stuart Backstatter
Pro-Line Sport & Power Equipment
P.O. Box 6570, 345 Lewis St.
Ketchum, ID 83340
Tel 877.prolin1
Fax 208.726.2283
Email stubackstatter@sunvalley.net

Team
WINNEBAGOLAND
Kawasaki - Yamaha - Polaris

Corner of 41 & 45
5827 Green Valley Road
Oshkosh, WI 54904

July 15, 2000

409 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Donald Manzullo:

We have been following the progress of some Washington bureaucrats to ban the use of snowmobiles in almost all of our National Parks. As the employees of a large and well respected recreational dealership we are concerned about this ban. We continue to see various forms of recreation choked by over restrictive laws and bad press. We have over 20 employees whose jobs depend on a strong recreation industry, including snowmobiling. We currently have a snowmobile customer base of 2023 people!

While the ban on snowmobiles or other motorized vehicles in National Parks may not directly affect our store as much as those closer to the parks, further restrictions on riding areas hurt all snowmobile dealers to some extent. Our customers are frustrated at the severity of the pending restrictions on riding areas. This directly affects our livelihood.

Snowmobiling is a seasonal sport. At best we have a few short months to enjoy these National Parks in Winter splendor. The closing of our parks sets a dangerous trend towards more closures. You know how difficult it will be to reverse this trend. We rely on this sport for family trips, family income, and a way to do positive things in a harsh winter season. We cannot possibly appreciate all our parks have to offer if we have to try walking in several feet of snow. We have many partially handicapped people who depend on sleds for all their recreation. Snowmobiling is their only means to enjoy the outdoors.

We feel that this loss to our sport will seriously affect our income and the growth of our sport as well. We believe that funds for better patrolling and accident prevention can be found. Politicians have access to funds that suit their own personal causes. Keeping our parks accessible should take priority over personal adjenda's or "consumer confidence" promotions. We support your fight for reasonable solutions. Please continue to fight for the rights of thousands of snowmobilers and suppliers.

Sincerely,

Paul Crowe

Paul Crowe

920-233-3070

Darrell's Inc.
240 Route 104
Ontario, NY 14519

07/17/00

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Don,

As a Ski-Doo dealer in northern New York, I am concerned that once legislation is posted for the National Parks, they will go for National Forests, State Lands, and Parks.

As a business that employs 7 people, we can for-see maybe having to change our product lines or the size of our staff. Our business is growing yearly and depends heavily on our snowmobile customers. These customers pump a lot of money into our local economy. It would be a shame to see all that money go to Canada where snowmobiling is government promoted.

Public lands are only public if the public can use them. I feel multi-use trails and roads are a necessity to promote family enjoyment and build respect for our government owned land and the people that worked so hard to keep it available to them.

Let's not lose the rights of millions to a decision made on less than the truth.

Keep up the good work,

Darrell Dietrich

Darrell Dietrich

**From:** A. Woodhouse [sno4fun@montana.com]
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 25, 2000 7:59 PM
**To:**
**Cc:**
**Subject:** Snowmobile Bans

Dear Mr. Manzullo:

It has come to our attention that you are working for snowmobilers in the area of National Park closures. We applaud you!

My husband, Steve, and I own a snowmobile sales, service and rental business in Lincoln, Montana. Trail closures in our area would force us out of business. While Yellowstone National Park is a three to four hour dirve away from Lincoln, we believe closures there will have a negative impact on the entire state. Should the snowmobiling ban take effect in National Parks, our area could easily be targeted next. We realize the environmentalists will continue to chip away at individual's freedom to recreate on public land.

Lincoln's winter economy depends on snowmobiles. With a population of about 1,500, Lincoln cannot afford to lose winter tourism. Our motels, eateries and shops are kept alive from December through March and usually into April by snowmobile tourism. Our 250 miles of groomed trails bring people from surrounding cities, as well as from almost every other state in the union and many foreign countries, as well.

Our customers have also voiced concerns about the closures. Many of our customers travel to Yellowstone National Park annually to ride and also feel we'll soon lose the right to ride here in the Lincoln area.

We depend on legislators like you to keep public land public. Thank you for your efforts on our behalf.

Sincerely,

April Woodhouse

JULY 21 2000

FROM: WARREN P. RICHIE
9310 RILEY ROAD
MARENGO, IL. 60152-9011

TO: REPRESENATIVE DONALD MANZULLO

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE MANZULLO

MY WIFE AND I ARE DEDICATED SNOWMOBILERS, WHO RIDE 2000 TO 4000 MILES EACH WINTER. WE HAVE RIDDEN IN THE NATIONAL PARKS AND ENJOYED IT VERY MUCH. WE STRONGLY OPPOSE THE RECENT NATIONAL PARK SERVICE BAN OF SNOWMOBILES IN OUR NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM. WE NEED YOUR HELP IN OVERTURNING THIS UNREASONABLE BAN TO PRESERVE THE SPORT AND ALLOW ACCESS TO SOME OF THIS COUNTRY'S BEAUTIFUL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, SWAYED BY A POLITICAL AGENDA AND MISINFORMATION PROVIDED BY A SMALL NUMBER OF ENVIRONMENTAL EXTREMISTS, HAVE COMPLETELY IGNORED THE 4 MILLION OF US WHO ENJOY THE USE OF SNOWMOBILES IN THE WINTER AND WHO ARE MOST AFFECTED BY THIS BAN.

WE BELIEVE THAT AN ISSUE THAT EFFECTS SO MANY FAMILIES AND PEOPLE OF ALL AGES DESERVES A MORE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AND OPEN DIALOGEUE WITH ALL PARTIES AFFECTED. THIS BAN INFRINGES ON THE FREEDOM OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY WHO HAVE ENJOYED WINTERTIME GETAWAYS IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS.

AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS WERE CREATED FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE MILLIONS OF SNOWMOBILERS AND ENVIROMENTALISTS IN THIS COUNTRY WHO ENJOY THE FREEDOM OF THE OUTDOORS AND WE WANT TO KEEP IT THAT WAY. YOUR IMMEDIATE ACTION ON OUR BEHALF WILL HELP PRESERVE THIS RIDING EXPERIENCE THAT IS PART OF OUR LIFESYTYLE.

SINCERELY,

WARREN P. RICHIE

FRANDSEN'S REC CENTER Utah County's Four Seasons Dealer
1480 North State • Provo, Utah 84604 • (801) 374-0602

July 19, 2000

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Manzullo;

We would like to thank you for your valued interest in the fight against banning snowmobiles from our National Parks, and would also like to present some insight on how the proposed ban would affect our business should this plan be passed.

We have been a recreational dealer in the state of Utah since 1980, selling multiple lines of recreational products, including Yamaha and Polaris Snowmobiles. We currently employ 35 employee's, with an annual payroll just over 1 million. Our snowmobile sales average 200 units per year. We feel that should this proposed bill be passed, it would severely impact the consumers interest in purchasing new snowmobiles, thus severely impacting our business and our ability to continue employment to many of our employee's. We are always in favor of new technology to reduce exhaust emissions and it has been our understanding that the Snowmobile Manufacturers are cooperative, and have already been working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to achieve reduced emissions from snowmobiles.

Because our Dealership is located in the center of the Wasatch Front in Utah, we are surrounded by several National Parks. We have always found that the public has a genuine interest to be able to enjoy their National Parks. Snowmobiles allow the public to see a unique view of their National Parks, which their tax dollars pay for. It seems that some research should be done to find out how much revenue is generated from Snowmobile Registration Taxes paid annually on Snowmobiles, and how much our National Parks benefit from this revenue.

Our customers increasingly complain about a government "from the people" instead of "for the people". It would seem that banning snowmobiles from our National Parks is a discriminatory policy, that should not be passed.

We applaud your genuine interest and valuable efforts in fighting against this plan. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely;

Clay Frandsen

Clay Frandsen, President
Frandsen's Rec. Center

Motorcycle & ATV's Snowmobiles and Personal Water Craft YAMAHA | Polaris ATV's & Snowmobiles | SEA-DOO Personal Water Craft | SUZUKI ATV's & Motorcycles

WHITE KNUCKLE MOTORSPORTS
◆◆◆
889 North 2000 West, Springville, UT 84663
(801) 489-0393 Fax (801) 489-0397
e-mail: wkms@earthlink.net

July 19, 2000

Rep. Donald Manzullo
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Snowmobile and OHV bans in national parks

Dear Rep. Manzullo:

White Knuckle Motorsports in Utah currently has 9 employees. We sell Bombardier products, which include the Sea Doo and Ski Doo lines. We also are a Kawasaki dealer selling dirt bikes and ATV's as well as street bikes.

The current land use issues have us very concerned for current and future business. With more and more land being excluded from use by people who use motorized recreation, our concern is two fold.

First and foremost is access. The current administration's catering to political pressure to close down existing roads, trails and waterway, whether accessed by snowmobile, OHV or watercraft, is prejudicial to those who use motorized recreation as a means to enjoy their families and the land. To close down currently existing roads and trails simply because others do not share the same passion is a violation of the rights we all should have to access public lands.

The vast majority of our customers have families and use these vehicles to spend time together -- to take their whole family to see the lands here in Utah. They do so by using the trails which have been in existence for years. Many, such as children, older people and those with disabilities, have the opportunity to see lands otherwise denied them. Anything that can bring a whole family together is well worth the effort required to keep trails open and environmentally healthy. As a dealership, we support programs that promote the ecological health and maintenance of such roads and trails.

Second, we worry about the economy for businesses such as ours when access to public land is denied. A dealership that is run well is an asset to the community by way of jobs, a place for people of like interests to make connections, and certainly contributes to the tax base in whatever location they are based.

We appreciate your support of these issues, and your time in reading this letter.

Very truly yours from those of us at White Knuckle Motorsports

# Proposal

**INTERLAKES SPORT CENTER**
702 SW 10th
Madison, SD 57042
(605) 256-3556 Fax (605) 256-0372

| PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO | PHONE | DATE |
|---|---|---|
| Rep Donald Manzullo | | |
| STREET: 409 Cannon House Office Building | | |
| CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE: Washington DC 20515 | | |

**We hereby submit specifications and estimates for:**

I have been in the snowmobile business since 1972, the business has had many ups + downs but nothing like the plan to ban snowmobiles from national parks will have.

We presently have 13 employees and can see our business being drastically effected by the ban. Our customers are calling and stopping to talk about this, and most find it hard to believe.

Because of the liability issues on most private land, our customers depend on access to public lands for the recreation. Outdoor recreation is very important to most people, and our business is totally reliant on recreation. THANK for you Help.

**Payment to be made as follows**

Authorized Signature: [signature]

Note: This proposal may be withdrawn by us if not accepted within _____ days.

**Acceptance of Proposal** - The above prices, specifications and conditions are satisfactory and are hereby accepted. You are authorized to do the work as specified. Payment will be made as outlined above.

Signature _____

Date of Acceptance: _____

Signature _____

**From:** Nancy Martin
**Sent:** Monday, July 24, 2000 3:46 PM
**To:**
**Cc:**

We are a snowmobile/ATV business in SW Wyoming. We employ 3 poeple and market approximately 100 snowmobiles and ATV's per year. Our business depends on the opportunity of our customers to be able to recreate on public lands.

Our customers are expressing concerns about future closures in national parks. ( Yellowstone) as well as the threat of closures in national forests. (local riding areas) this is already having an effect on sales.

Previous legislative issues have all but eliminated watercraft business in this area.

Many of our customers plan annual trips to Yellowstone National Park on their snowmobiles which is the only opportunity to view the park in winter months.

We are deeply concerned about the future of our business because of these issues. We also have a sincere concern for individual rights and freedoms in this country if this type of restriction is allowed to go forward without public input or approval.

Clare Martin

6/6/2000
The Hon. Craig Thomas
The Hon James Hansen

-1-

Gentlemen:
I would like to add my brief comments to the controversy over snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park (YNP) I have lived in West Yellowstone, Mont. for many decades.

I am on the International Society of Automotive Engineers Foundation Board and recently served on the Clean Snowmobile Challenge 2000 Advisory Board. The latter is part of SAE's Collegiate Competition series where thousands of University students compete at real engineering design programs Formula SAE; Mini Baja; Walking Man (Robot); Solar Vehicles and now clean snowmobiles.

The success of this years program at Jackson Hole, Wyo. was incredible. Next year, some 15 world-wide Universities will compete to reduce air and noise pollution while maintaining vehicle performance.

Even with the success of these modified designs, it is my opinion that "Bikes" should eventually be eliminated from the Park. Clean Snowcoaches are preferable and greatly reduce the impact on the Park's flora and fauna.

Winter travel in YNP is both remarkable and a memorable experience. It should be available to everyone.

The economic effect of snowmobile removal on the Park's gateway communities does require a transitional period of perhaps several years. These communities are strong, resilient and have weathered change in the past.

Please use your wisdom, experience and knowledge of the deleterious effect of snowmobiles on the Parks and please allow a transition period for their elimination.

Sincerely —
Arnold Siegel
West Yellowstone, MT.

6/1/00

Dear Craig Thomas & James Hansen;

I am a West Yellowstone resident. My name is Shauna Lynn Laszlo. I have lived in West Yellowstone for the past four years. I would not refer to myself as a snowmobiler. I do enjoy snowmobiling, but I do not have a passion for the sport. I have been into the Yellowstone National Park by snowmobile once. You do not really get to enjoy the pristine beauty of the park on a machine going 45 miles per hour. My income in the winter depends on snowmobilers. I feel that the majority of the repeat clientle visits here to ride on the Forest Service trails, not the National Park trails. I believe that our small community will still thrive with out snowmobile access into the Park although this will require proper advertisement from all bussinesses as well as the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce.

Thank You,
Shauna Laszlo

SHAUNA Lynn Laszlo
PO Box 694
West Yellowstone, MT
59758

June 9th 2000

To Whom it may Concern,

I would like to express my support for the National Park Services proposed ban on snowmobiling in Yellowstone Park. I am a resident of West Yellowstone and operate a backcountry Skiing business.

There is alot of talk around town that the Snowmobile ban will destroy the local economy. This view is being promoted by a few people in town who own large snowmobile rental businesses. Contrary to their belief, many people in town welcome this closure as it will end the noise and pollution that has made this town hard to live in.

The number of machines allowed in the park, and the loud & polluting nature of the machines ruins the visits of all who come in winter.

Once the Quiet returns to the Park, we will see visitors who were previously opposed to visiting the Park because of the noise & smoke. If you do not understand the magnitude of the noise & pollution I invite you to visit on a cold winter day when the sky turns the color of LA smog in our small mountain town pop. 1000.

The National Park System is instructed to protect the Parks for the future generations. The current Snowmobiling going on turns the National Park into a Snowmobile Recreation Area which it was never supposed to be.

Respectfully,

Reid Sanders Hellroaring Ski Adventures
P. O. Box 111 Yellowstone MT

June 09. 2000.

To whom it may concern:

This letter is written in support of closing Yellowstone National Park to snowmobiling in the winter. It is my opinion that the long term benefit to the Park will outweigh any short term negative impact for the town of West Yellowstone. I am one of many local business owners who feel that West Yellowstone will change but the resulting diversification will ultimately bring about a healthier mix of business that will improve life for the people who live in this area. Thank you for your consideration of my letter.

Respectfully.

Christine Quinn
P.O. Box 1028
W. Yellowstone MT
59758

TO: HONORABLE CRAIG THOMAS & HONORABLE JAMES HANSEN 6/7/2000

I AM WRITING TO YOU IN REGARDS TO THE PROPOSED BAN ON SNOWMOBILES IN YELLOWSTONE PARK. I FULLY SUPPORT THIS PROPOSED BAN AND ENCOURAGE IMMEDIATE ENFORCEMENT. I AM A RESIDENT AND BUSINESS OWNER IN WEST YELLOWSTONE MONTANA. I HAVE EXPERIENCED MANY OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF SNOWMOBILING ON OUR COMMUNITY. THE LIST OF THESE IMPACTS INCLUDE AIR AND NOISE POLLUTION, DESTRUCTION OF STREAMBEDS, DEATH OF SMALL WILDLIFE CHASED TO EXHAUSTION, AS WELL AS INJURY AND DEATHS OF INNOCENT PERSONS UNLEASHED WITHOUT ADEQUATE EDUCATION ON POWERFUL SNOWMOBILES.

WEST YELLOWSTONE MUST HAVE MORE ECONOMIC DIVERSITY IN THE WINTER MONTHS. THE SNOWMOBILES ARE A MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE FORM OF RECREATION WHICH SHOULD BE BANNED FROM YELLOWSTONE. THE OLDEST National Park IS FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL PEOPLE, NOT JUST THOSE ABOARD SNOWMOBILES. PLEASE NOTE THAT WEST YELLOWSTONE WILL SURVIVE AND POSSIBLY PROSPER EVEN MORE WITHOUT SNOWMOBILES IN YELLOWSTONE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION -

Melissa Buller

MELISSA BULLER
CO/OWNER Freehael & Wheel, Inc.
PO Box 634

June, 06, 2000

Dear, Honorable Craig Thomas and Honorable James Hansen -

As an active community member and business owner in West Yellowstone Montana, I support the park services proposed closure of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park. I feel that Yellowstone Park is not a place for snowmobiles. Simply for the facts that they are unsafe, noisy and stinky.

I support change for a healthier community. My business may suffer for a short term, but a long term value of a ~~to~~ more diverse community will bring back more money and tounsts then before. We as business owners and community members have a chance to learn a lot from this change.

Thank you for the consideration of this letter.

Best Regards -

Kelli M Sanders

Kelli Sanders
Colowner Freehed & Wheel. Inc.
P.O. Box 634
West Yellowstone MT. 59758

June 9th,

Dear Honorable Craig Thomas &
Honorable James Hansen:

Banning the use of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park would not only benefit the wildlife, and habitat within the Park, but the community of West Yellowstone as well. Preserving the integrity of our natural world for future generation will allow West Yellowstone to prosper in years to come. Without a healthy park, West Yellowstone will not continue to thrive as an economically stable community.

World class snowmobiling will still take place on the millions of National Forest acres outside Yellowstone And millions of people will continue to experience the grandeur of Yellowstone each year. Removing snowmobiles from Yellowstone National Park is a small price to pay for the conservation and preservation of the Park and West Yellowstone.

Sincerely,

Brett Fitzgerald
P.O. Box 1809
West Yellowstone, MT

June 6, 2000

The Honorable Senators Thomas & Hansen:

I am writing to support the National Park Service's new restrictions on snowmobiles from Yellowstone National Park. This policy is essential to maintain a healthy Park for all those wanting a quality wintertime experience. It is my belief that if we allow gate communities to dictate Park policy, we are allowing them to foster their own personal agendas.

I encourage you to keep moving forward with these restrictions.

Sincerely,

Carol Barney

Carol Barney
West Yellowstone, Montana

To The Honorable Craig Thomas,

The future of Yellowstone National Park and the quality of the experience are issues that need to be firmly established now. Present access conditions are having a very negative affect on the ecosystem in general.

There needs to be more of a law enforcement presence both winter and summer, particularly in the winter. As it stands now, there might as well be no regulations on the books at all. The majority of people that ride snowmobiles seem to like speed and noise. The faster and louder the better. Its quite a sight to see the blue cloud rise over West Yellowstone every morning in the winter. as two thousand snowmobile sit idling, warming up for the days run.

The wildlife in the park have a tough time making it through the winters without the added stress of being buzzed by snowmobiles. With the roads being groomed for the snowmobiles the buffalo and elk naturally travel the path of least resistance, which puts them directly in the path of the snowsleds.

There are more controlled ways of allowing the public to visit the Park in winter. Snow coaches are a much more controllable option. If the general public is allowed uncontrolled access to anything, they most certainly will abuse it to death.

The financial concerns of five or six large business owners should not dictate how a National Park is run. The construction of six new three hundred room hotels in town in the last four years demonstrates the local thinking of increasing traffic in the Park. Just the opposite needs to be planned. Don't let them tell you how many people will be put out of work. There is a very small year round population and more than enough jobs to be had. As it stands now most of the big businesses bring in temporary help from out of town. Just ask the INS how the upstanding business owners conduct their hiring.

There is too much politics and greed involved in the management of the Park and it is suffering because of it. Fix it or loose it.

Sincerely,

Hilbert Nicklas

127 Faithful Ave.
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

**Wesley D. and Janet D. Nelson**
**328 Shoshone Avenue**
**West Yellowstone, Montana 59758**

June 7, 2000

The Honorable Craig Thomas
United States Senate
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Thomas:

We are writing to encourage and urge your support, and that of your colleagues, of the National Park Service's proposed ban on the recreational use of snowmobiles within Yellowstone National Park. This proposal is not the knee-jerk response of someone newly arrived on the scene. Rather it is the considered judgment of Park Service professionals made only after years of study and public input and debate.

Some have observed that any short term negative impact on the West Yellowstone economy from implementing the proposal can be offset by promoting even greater public access to the Park by the use of snowcoaches. This means of transportation is safer and much more compatible with the health and general well being of the Park's personnel, wildlife and vegetation than are snowmobiles, which by anyone's measure cause serious air and noise pollution problems for the Park and virtually everyone and everything in the Park.

We appreciate your considering our views and will greatly appreciate your taking a leadership role in support of the Park Service's proposed ban on recreational snowmobile use within the Park.

Sincerely,

Wesley D. Nelson

Wesley D. Nelson and

Janet D. Nelson

Janet D. Nelson

June 4th, 2000

Honorable Craig Thomas

In response to the recent testimony by a small number of business interests from West Yellowstone let me make my views known.

The Yellowstone National Park is a National Park operated for the benefit of the population of the U.S not for special interest groups

By the increasing useage of the Park by snowmobiles we are jeporidizing the beauty & serenity of our National heritage for the benefit of a small number of interest groups. It must stop or we will destroy our Park.

The wild life, rivers, lakes, & forests are at risk. Our children & grandchildren will be the real losers if snowmobiles continue to operate, polute, & harass the wildlife of our National Park

Paul T. Studebaker
75 Whiskey Jug Rd

Louise Cochrane, CPA
P.O. Box 1313
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
406-646-0050

June 5, 2000

The Honorable Senator Thomas:

I am writing today as a resident of West Yellowstone, Montana to commend you on the proposed decision to close Yellowstone National Park to snowmobiling. The mayor of this little town does not speak for all of the residents, as he claims to, and as a business person here, I am not in fear for my livelihood. It is a short-sighted and narrow focus that rental agencies possess when it comes to revenues derived from the use of snowmobiles in Yellowstone. Were one to consider the thousands of miles of groomed trails available in the surrounding National Forest Lands for snowmobile use, a prudent business person would see that the snowmobile based economy will hardly suffer here. In fact, returning Yellowstone to its pristine, quiet, peaceful, winter atmosphere will promote eco-tourism and skiing, wooing back the visitors who refuse to come now because of the snowmobile intrusion.

I applaud your efforts to keep national parks extraordinary places. Closing Yellowstone to snowmobiles will be a huge step toward fulfilling the national pledge to keep these unparalleled places protected in perpetuity. Thank you for your good sense and courage to do the politically challenging thing. We no longer feed bears or exterminate wolves. By banning snowmobiles, we'll again take the steps to put things right.

Sincerely,

Louise Cochrane

Louise Cochrane

June 7, 2000

Melissa Sample
P.O. Box 2102
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

The Honorable Senator Thomas:

I would like to express my support for the decision to restrict snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park. As a resident of West Yellowstone, Montana for two years, and having worked in the tourism business, I believe it is crucial to maintain a quiet, healthy and natural atmosphere in Yellowstone National Park. In my opinion, snowmobiles distract from the natural beauty of the park. Yellowstone National Park is here to be enjoyed by all in more appropriate ways, i.e. cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowcoaches to name a few. I do not believe that the economy of West Yellowstone will suffer from the restrictions of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park. However, I do believe that this decision will force West Yellowstone to market other avenues of income such as cross-country skiing and snowmobile trails outside of the Park in surrounding National Forest Lands.

My family is looking forward to the day when we can visit Yellowstone National Park in the winter with quiet and peaceful surroundings enjoying the pristine wildlife and scenery. Thank you for your support on these restrictions of banning snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park.

Sincerely,

Melissa Sample

Melissa Sample

MADISON RIVER
OUTFITTERS
INC.
P.O. BOX 398 • WEST YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA 59758
(406) 646-9644 • FAX (406) 646-9630

June 9th, 2000

Hon. Craig Thomas,

I have been a resident and business owner in the town of West Yellowstone for the past 20 years. The snowmobile traffic in town and on Federal lands has gotten to a point that I feel has a negative impact on the town as well as Yellowstone Park.

Talking with many tourist as well as residents through the years, most have expressed the fact that they are tired of all the noise, smoke and smell of these machines. Many will never visit Yellowstone in the winter because of all the snowmobile congestion.

Controlling the harasment of wildlife, pollution of our air and water, along with the preservation of our nations first national park, is in your hands. It will be a blessing for the town of West Yellowstone and Yellowstone Park when the Federal Government steps in and controls the snowmobile problem before it gets further out of control.

I appreciate you considering my concerns for a cleaner and brighter winter future in Yellowstone Park.

Sincerely,

Dan Hull

Dan Hull

June 10, 2000

To: The Honorable Craig Thomas
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

We are writing you to share our heartfelt concern regarding the situation brought about by the use of snowmobiles in the Yellowstone Park. It is our humanitarian duty to preserve this magnificent park and to protect the health and welfare of the innocent, irreplaceable animals and plants that find this as their habitat. The entire foundation of establishing "National Parks" is to protect these areas from destruction by the human species, which has a tendency to disregard moderation when it comes to pleasure seeking and monetary gain. The noise and air pollution that threatens these treasures must be addressed immediately so that future generations may also enjoy what we vowed to protect.

Understanding the pleasures of experiencing the splendor of this area in the wintertime, we would be in favor of implementing the use of Snow Coaches and abolishing the use of private snowmobiles within the park. Because so many snowmobile paths have been established surrounding the park for public use, tourist trade should not be affected.

Thank you for taking an interest in this very important issue and we are trusting that you will be compelled to act on this before it is too late.

Sincerely yours,

Carl W. and Rosalynn Philippi
770 Moose Street
West Yellowstone, MT
406/646-9696

June 13, 2000

The Honorable James Hansen

Re: Snowmobile use of Yellowstone National Park.

Dear Sir

As a long time resident of West Yellowstone I too am concerned with the winter use of Yellowstone National Park. Since the late 1940's winter use slowly came about in Yellowstone and provided a wonderful experience for visitors. In more recent times this winter use of the park has changed, as do all things.

Since the opening of overnight accommodations in Yellowstone in 1971 the numbers of visitors slowly increased until the 1990's. Since then the numbers have grown rapidly and with little thought given to the impact on the park, either by the National Park Service or the local states and communities. Now that a look at that impact is underway, with changes to be made, much has been said regarding this issue.

Yes there are a lot more cars and visitors in Yellowstone during the summer months. The difference being that cars for the most part do not pollute the air with noxious fumes or loud noise. Cars are governed by each state as to levels of emissions both air and sound. This has not been the case with snowmobiles, and there rests the problem. With the increased numbers of snowmobiles using the park the level of pollution has increased to an unacceptable level. It is no longer a wonderful experience to visit the park in the winter.

When these issues arose in the early 1990's the local communities, state governments and the snowmobile industry had a chance to sit down and deal with their impacts on Yellowstone National Park, they chose not to. They chose to complain about their economic interests only, they chose to paint the Federal Government and Yellowstone as a mean neighbor who was going to take away their way of life. They failed to realize that their way of life was made possible because of Yellowstone National Park. They failed to deal with the noise and air pollution caused by their way of life. They failed to take into account that Yellowstone National Park belongs to the nation as a whole not just them to do with as they please.

In failing to take into account their own actions the local communities, state governments and the snowmobile industry are now faced with a change they are not comfortable with. They have no one to blame but themselves. Change is inevitable and there will be no stopping it. The time has come to deal with noise and air pollution during winter use of Yellowstone.

I strongly endorse the removal of noise and air polluting vehicles from Yellowstone National Park. The change of winter use I believe will not endanger the economies of the surrounding states or communities. As with all change new opportunities open to those who are intelligent enough to see them. The Town of West Yellowstone will continue to supply the needed visitor services to those who choose to visit Yellowstone National Park. No matter how or when they visit the park, West Yellowstone is still the best place to do it from. In the future, during the winter, it will no longer be polluted by the emissions of snowmobiles. Once again it will be the wonderful experience that visitors expect of our National Parks, not just the cash cow of a few disgruntled businesses and local government officials.

Sincerely

Paul Shea
West Yellowstone, Mt.

Yellowstone/Winter use/Snowmobiles.
April 20, 2000

In the winter of 1975 I had the privilege of working at Old Faithful. I was the bartender at the SnowLodge. This was a great job because I did not have to be in until four p.m. This gave me all day for cross country skiing. Each day after breakfast I would be off. My route took me past Old Faithful. Often I would catch it's white steaming plume. The sound of it's eruptions would be thunderously wonderful, literally shaking the ground. Then onto Castle Geyser. Castle steamed and hissed loudly almost constantly. And when it erupted the force and sound was awesome. Past Castle off to my right was a huge meadow where grass grew all winter. Elk and Bison grazed here, their grunts and winter breathing floated in the air. All along the trail, Thermal features abounded. Columns of white steam rose from the upper basin so numerously that I thought I was on another planet. But I wasn't. I was in Yellowstone. Or as it was perhaps more aptly named by 1800 tourists -- I was in Wonderland. Soon Grotto Geyser came upon me. And hear I would always take a short breather to listen to it's many steam filled exhalations, gurgles, and belches. Or perhaps the mysterious sounds emitting from it's many grottoes were excited gnomes shouting in their own way noisily unhappy with my intrusion. Then I turned left and skied through the quiet of the lodgepoles. As I skied on the Three Sisters came into view just off my left. The Three Sisters are three closely aligned cone-topped Geysers. These sisters always had something to steamingly gossip about. Their hot, water spitting chatter was most pleasing to the wintry air. As I left them I again entered the quiet of the lodgepoles. Only the quiet soft sounding swish of my skis through the powdery snow broke the sacred silence, although at times I'd be shaken out of my skin with a heavy bombing thud from a pine bough dropping it's half ton of snow. Now I broke out from the trees and across the groomed main road

and over a small wooden bridge covered with snow. The little Firehole ran beneath me. I was often treated to that soft subtle sound of a trout slicing it's dorsal fin daintily through the surface film. And now I glided into Biscuit Basin. Here I took my skis off and walked around the boardwalk. I got acquainted with the many Thermal features of Biscuit; became intimate with all the geysers, hot springs, hot pools, fumaroles and wintry wonders of this thin cinder crusted basin. Rusty Geyser went off noisily every two to three minutes. Sapphire Pool with its deepness and crystal clear blueness occasionally treated me with its violent boiling and hot surge. Many unnamed steaming vents hissed loudly as if trying to scare me away. Then there were also Shell, Avoca Springs, Mustard Springs, and many more Thermal wonders, each with their own individual and unique shouts, cries, gurgles, giggles and sighs. It was a delight to the eyes; a cornucopia of sounds to the ears. It was wonderland in winter. I would ski and walk this route everyday. And I would return for three more Winters to do the same.

Then entering early middle age, I moved thirty miles westward to West Yellowstone. I wanted always to be right next door to Yellowstone. From the Spring of 1979 through the present I have lived here. I served as Chief of Police for a few years in this western gate town to the park. During those winter months I controlled and patrolled snowmobile traffic. Each year brought many more snowmobiles. Leaving the Police Department, I bought into a restaurant and bar. The increasing snowmobile numbers financially rewarded me. Then out of that business and into my present business. My wife and I have a bookstore, only a block from Yellowstone. My wife had never been into Old Faithful during winter. So a couple of years ago we decided to spend a few days at Snow-Lodge. I wanted her to see and hear and feel what I had experienced more than twenty winters ago. And so the first afternoon we clipped into our skis and took off on my old route. Old Faithful still faithfully thundered skyward.

Castle still spouted. Grotto still gnomishly hissed. And the Three Sisters still chatted and gossiped. Biscuit Basin with all its many splended thermal wonders still splashed gayly as they did twenty some years ago. But it was different. It was very different. My wife put it most bluntly, "you can't hear a damn thing except for the roar and whine of the snowmobiles," Disappointed, we skied back to the SnowLodge. My wife went on, "That was horrible!" "The noise of those machines ruined everything," screamed my wife.

That night the moon was near full. At three in the morning I urged my wife to repeat the ski again. It was crystal clear. Quiet. Coyotes howled off away in the distance. And in the dead of the morning hours the geysers did their show; every winter wonder could distinctly be heard. A symphony of thermal active sounds. At Biscuit Basin she looked at me with tears of awe and wonder and said, "Ah...now I understand what you mean, this is wonderful. This is how Yellowstone is suppose to sound and feel." I smiled and simply said, "yes, this is how it's suppose to be."

Scott S. Clewell
West Yellowstone
Montana

## A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park

With changes in the winter management of Yellowstone Park looming on the horizon, we, the undersigned residents and business owners of West Yellowstone, Montana, would like to present our view of the economic reality and potential of our community:

- West Yellowstone is a hard-working community with a proud history of adapting to management changes in our neighboring park. Our winter economy is robust. However, the economic well being of our gateway community depends on the health and protection of Yellowstone Park.
- Changes in Yellowstone's winter use must occur in order to keep the park healthy. Reports of air and noise pollution hurt the reputation of West Yellowstone and the park, which hurts marketing efforts and tourism potential.
- Many predicted the economic demise of West Yellowstone during the fires of 1988. Today, vocal business leaders in our town are convinced that the removal of snowmobiles from Yellowstone will cause the downfall of our economy. They were mistaken in 1988, and they are mistaken now. West Yellowstone is a resilient community able to adapt and take advantage of changes.
- The West Yellowstone area boasts over 300 miles of snowmobile trail, excellent cross-country skiing trails, scenic beauty, and the world's first national park. West Yellowstone will thrive as long as the natural beauty that attracts visitors remains unimpaired.

For these reasons, we, the undersigned residents and business owners of West Yellowstone Montana, ask Senators Max Baucus and Conrad Burns, Congressman Rick Hill, Governor Marc Racicot, our State Legislators, County Commissioners and the National Park Service to:

- Protect Yellowstone Park and thereby ensure that visitors will continue to visit West Yellowstone.

- Support the community of West Yellowstone as it adjusts, diversifies and rises to meet any challenges created by changes in park management.

| Name | Address |
|---|---|
| Craig Matthews | Box 1037 W. Yellowstone, MT. 5975 |
| Vicki Matthews | 310 Elk ST W. Yellowstone, MT 597 |
| [illegible] McCormick | Box 872 W. Yell, MT 59758 |
| Chris Harris | Box 162, W. Yellowstone, MT. 59758 |
| Robert Hitchcock | Box 201 W Yellowstone 59758 |
| Richard Levis | PO Box 341 W Yellowstone MT 59758 |

**A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park**

| Name | Address |
|---|---|
| Paul Studebaker | Box 1785 W. Yellowstone MT 59758 |
| John S. Hoover | Box 1828 W. Yellowstone, MT 59758 |
| Bruce Crane | Box 2095, W. Yellowst, MT 59758 |
| Kaye Sadowski | P.O. Box 178 W. Yellowstone Mont 59758 |
| Glenn Bell | P.O. Box 586 W. Yellowstone MT 59758 |
| Nick Nicklas | Box 935 W. Yellowstone MT. 59758 |
| Tila Nicklas | Box 935 W. Yellowstone MT. 59758 |
| Rowan Nyman | Box 1371 W. YELLOWSTONE MT 59758 |
| Charlotte Crane | Box 2095 W. Yellowstone MT 59758 |
| Mary Mango | Box 702 W. Yellowstone, MT. 59758 |
| [illegible] Mango | Box 1192 W. Yellowstone, MT. 597[illegible] |
| Patrick McKenna | Box 210 W. Yellowstone MT 59758 |
| [illegible] Menzel | Box 27 W. Yellowstone MT 59758 |
| Barbara [illegible] | PO Box 835 W. Yellowstone 59758 |
| Bill Moore | Box 414 W Y, MT 59758 |
| Peg Moore | Box 414 W Y, MT 59758 |
| Bill Crabtree | Moose Horn Ranch Wy MT 59758 |
| Rob Crabtree | Moose Horn Ranch Wy MT. 59758 |
| [illegible] | PO Box 189 Wy Mt 59758 |
| Carla Johnson | Box 1448 WY MT 59758 |
| [illegible] | Box 1133 WY MT 59758 |
| Albert Menzel | Box 27 " " " |

**A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park**

| Name | Address |
|---|---|
| Amanda Sandy | 500 Campanulla W.Y. |
| [illegible] | Box 70 WestYellowstone, MT. |
| (Terry Sanchez) [illegible] | Box 583 West Yellowstone, MT. |
| Irene Colwell | Box 583 West Yellowstone, MT |
| Book Worm | 114 Canyon St. W.Y., MT. |
| Niel Sian | Box 773 W. Yellowstone MT 59758 |
| ~~Joanne Hickcox~~ | ~~Box 201 West Yellowstone, Mont 59758~~ |
| Jim Tuchta | 120 Aspen Loop Rd. West Yellowstone, MT 59758 |
| Craig Mewhen | Box 27 W. Yellowstone, MT 59758 |
| Larry Miller | Box 1080 W. yellowstone MT 59758 |
| Charlotte Miller | Box 1080 W. yellowstone MT 59758 |
| Vicki Cross | Desert Inn Motel W. yellowstone MT. 5975 |
| [illegible] | Box 132 W.Y. MT. 59758 |

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- Support the community of West Yellowstone as it adjusts, diversifies and rises to meet any challenges created by changes in park management.

| Name | Address |
| --- | --- |
| Bill Bennett | Box 1078 W.Y. MT 59758 |
| Robin Mochi (Bodywise Massage) | Box 1078 WY, MT 59758 |
| [illegible] | Box 1336 WY MT 59758 |
| [illegible] | [illegible] |

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- Support the community of West Yellowstone as it adjusts, diversifies and rises to meet any challenges created by changes in park management.

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**A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park**

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# THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

**7475 Dakin Street, Suite 410, Denver, CO 80221**
**(303) 650-5818**

**GYA Snowmobile limits: Small Business Subcommittee Statement for the Record**
July 12, 2000

My name is Peter A. Morton, I am the lead resource economist on western public land issues for The Wilderness Society, working out of the Four Corners regional office in Denver, Colorado. I have a B.A. in Business Administration and Accounting from Augustana College, a Masters of Forestry and a Ph.D. in Natural Resource Economics and Management, both graduate degrees earned from Colorado State University.

The question before us is the impact that a ban on the use of individually operated snowmobiles in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, and the Rockefeller Parkway would have on the economy of the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA). The Wilderness Society understands the concerns of local residents about the economic impacts of managerial changes, although we believe that the national interest in protection of resources must always be the paramount consideration in making such decisions. Under its Organic Act, the National Park Service is required to protect these irreplaceable resources. Moreover, under Executive Orders 11644 and 11898, the National Park Service has a mandate to manage off-road vehicles, including snowmobiles, to minimize impact on these resources. The National Park Service has no mandate to promote local economies, and we cannot ignore the fact that the resources are jointly owned by all Americans.

In this particular case, however, based on our analysis, we believe that at worst a ban on individually operated snowmobiles in Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and Rockefeller Parkway would have a minimal effect on the Greater Yellowstone Area economy, and it could have a significant positive effect.

A neutral analysis of the subject must begin with a factual analysis of the impact that a ban on individually operated snowmobiles would have on the area's economy today, rather than the impact on a few select businesses. Obviously, a ban could have a considerable impact on a business solely devoted to snowmobile rentals. But if that business represents a very small share of the overall local economy, our concern should be proportionate. In the regional economy, winter recreation expenditures are far less important than are non-winter expenditures. Only 4% to 5% of the annual visitation to Yellowstone National Park occurs in the winter season (December through March) (DEIS, Ch. 3, page 89). The direct, indirect, and induced impacts from expenditures by all winter visitors are a very small portion of the total GYA annual economic output--representing just 0.5% of the total economic output of the GYA (DEIS, Ch. 3, page 89).

We must next focus on the share of the 0.5% of total economic output that is attributable to snowmobile use, and what effect a ban would have on snowmobiling visitation. The snowmobile users

themselves can be broken into two groups, although we do not have reliable data on how many fall into each group. The first group comes to Yellowstone primarily for the recreational thrill of riding the machine. It is fair to conclude that these visitors will likely take their business elsewhere. According to the American Council of Snowmobile Associations, there are approximately 130,000 miles of groomed snowmobile routes in the lower 48 states outside our national park system. The second group comes primarily for the thrill of seeing wildlife, Old Faithful, and other scenic amenities of Yellowstone in the winter, an experience they cannot find anywhere else (see DEIS, Ch. 4, page 153 for survey results on the primary reasons for visitation to YNP). It is at least equally fair to conclude that this second group will continue to come to Yellowstone in winter, and will use the proposed snowcoach service.

We must also examine the impacts of the ban on other forms of winter visitation. The DEIS acknowledges but fails to consider the "replacement" or "substitute" recreation that will occur as a result of the agency's draft management plan. It is quite possible that the snowcoach service could attract additional winter visitors, for example the elderly, who are not interested in operating individual machines. Many visitors to national parks today arrive in tour buses and are accustomed to using group transportation. Moreover, the thesis that non-motorized recreational use will increase in the absence of intrusive motorized uses is supported by research as well as by anecdotal evidence. Research by Cordell and Bergstrom (1989) indicates that if quality non-motorized recreational experiences are provided, the future demand will also increase: if you offer it, they will come. The activities most responsive to an increase in supply include activities likely to be popular in a quieter, more natural Yellowstone, such as wildlife observation, photography, nature study, and hiking.

A fair analysis must also take into account that some potential visitors are not coming to GYA because of the documented effects of individually operated snowmobiles on air and water quality, and because of their noise volume. This includes people who enjoy the kinds of activities noted above, but there is also evidence that it includes other traditional Yellowstone users, such as anglers and cross country skiers. Consider for example, the following testimony from business owners in West Yellowstone.

> The emissions and drone of more and more snowmobiles foul our air and water, cause noise pollution, which can be heard up to 10 miles away, and displace wildlife. Our own business has suffered. Customers who used to come in winter months to fish, ski and learn fly-tying do not come anymore. Because of snowmobile noise and air pollution the Yellowstone experience has deteriorated. It used to be a quality-pristine outdoor experience. Now visitors complain of conflicts with snowmobiles, fouled air, and noisy machines marring their visit. Many tell us they will not be coming back during the winter season (quoted from a letter sent to Craig Thomas by Craig and Jackie Mathews, owners of Blue Ribbon Flies, West Yellowstone, MT).

In short, it is fair to conclude that new visitors will come to GYA BECAUSE of the snowmobile ban. Clearly, there are ample economic opportunities available to feed, lodge, supply, and guide these substitute visitors. Once they are fully taken into account, there is a distinct possibility that the ban on individually operated snowmobiles would mean no net loss in visitation and no net loss in revenue—and it could mean an increase.

We recognize that no one can accurately predict, one way or the other, whether these substitute visitors will materialize, and what their economic benefit may be (although a survey of the American public would be useful). So we would like to comment further on the specific impacts that individual snowmobile use currently has on the local economy. As I have noted, it accounts for a very small share of

the local economy. However, the effects of a ban on two specific aspects of the local economy are well worth considering.

The first is the impact on the local labor market. The economy of the GYA is not entirely dependent on recreation and park visitation, and has diversified. As a result, unemployment is relatively low, averaging 4.4% in 1997—well below the three-state average of 5.3%. The counties nearest to YNP have notably low unemployment rates (Gallatin, Montana 3.1%, Teton 2.6% and Park 4.7% in Wyoming, and Teton County in Idaho 3.2%). The economic models used in the comments by the State of Wyoming and elsewhere do not appropriately take into account the flexibility of labor markets in responding to potential job losses from a single business or industry in a diversified, efficient, low-unemployment economy. Free market advocates would normally be quick to note that in such situations, new employment opportunities arise rapidly. Service jobs lost because of a ban on individual snowmobiling could be replaced by jobs servicing substitute visitors, as we have noted. But they could also be replaced by jobs in different industries. GYA's great strength is that it is an attractive place to live and to work. Results from surveys on business location criteria by Jerry Johnson and Ray Rasker (1995) revealed that firms decided to locate or stay in Montana for such reasons as scenic amenities, rural character of towns, low crime rates, and proximity to wildlife-based recreation. In contrast, traditional "economic" reasons (e.g. labor costs, tax incentives) ranked very low as motivations for business location. In Gallatin County, Montana, for example, Health services, Engineering services and Business services now account for 37% of service sector jobs (Montana Department of Labor and Industry, 2000).

The second is the impact on the non-labor sector of the local economy. In Gallatin County, for example, non-labor income (comprised mainly of investment and retirement income) accounts for 35% of total personal income. The share is as large as it is because of the area's natural attractions and high quality of life (Power, 1996). If individual snowmobiling makes the area a less attractive place—because of air, noise, wildlife and resource impacts—this non-labor income, which accounts for a large share of local spending and real property valuation, could well decline.

During the transition to snowcoaches and to help attract substitute visitors to the area, the community, the state, as well as the National Park Service should engage in an extensive marketing campaign to lure visitors to experience the quiet and stark beauty of Yellowstone in the winter – a recreational experience many Americans may not be aware of. To help moderate any potential negative impacts on local communities, concession contracts could be tailored to be located in affected gateway communities, and Congress could research what small business programs are available to help businesses find capital to buy snowcoaches.

In conclusion, Yellowstone National Park is one of the jewels of the public estate. The federal government has an obligation to protect that jewel, and to minimize any damage to it. That is the stated purpose of the Park Service's proposed action on snowmobiling. But we should also recognize that the protection of the park's ecological resources, including its quiet and its clean air and water, is also in the best interest of the surrounding communities. As noted in the DEIS, recreation-related portions of the economy there "are dependent on the quality of the resource base the surrounds them" (DEIS, Ch 3, page 84) The non-labor portion of the area's economy is similarly dependent on the quality of the resource base. Even if continued use of individually operated snowmobiles in the Park produced net gains in local tax revenues and local income in the short term, ignoring their impact on what makes this area so precious could kill the goose that laid the golden egg for GYA. Individual snowmobiling is a very small part of that egg. There are other ways, such as suggested above, for it to produce larger economic benefits for the region.

References

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Johnson, J.; Rasker, R. 1995. The role of economic and quality of life variables in rural business location. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 11(4), 405-416.

Power, T.M. 1996. Lost landscapes and failed economies: the search for a value of place. Island Press, Covelo, CA.

**Testimony of Douglas Edgerton, Town Councilman, West Yellowstone, Montana Before the House Small Business Subcommittee on Tax, Finance and Exports On Economic Impacts of Changes in Winter Use Management in Yellowstone National Park July 11, 2000**

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I am sorry that I did not have the opportunity to address the Subcommittee personally. I believe it is important to have balanced representation from our community at such a hearing in order for members of the committee to have an accurate representation of the sentiments found in West Yellowstone.

I have served as an elected official, Town Councilman and Mayor, in West Yellowstone for seven years. I care deeply about my hometown and want the very best for my fellow citizens and this community. Throughout the years, I have watched our winter economy grow, shrink and stagnate. Our current winter economy is unsustainable, lacks diversity and has no potential for growth.

With the benefit of the local economy in mind, I ask you to consider the following questions:

- Is it good for an economy to have no potential for future growth?
- Can Yellowstone National Park and surrounding National Forest Service lands support more snowmobile use?
- How do we grow the economy of West Yellowstone, fill more motel rooms and have a more diverse winter economy?

The answers to these questions are clear:

- It is not good for an economy to have no potential for future growth.
- Snowmobiles are facing limits everywhere. The Park Service will certainly limit, if not eliminate, snowmobiles from Yellowstone National Park. Furthermore, the park roads can't deal with the numbers currently used because of impacts to the road surface.
- Use of the US Forest Service trail system surrounding West Yellowstone has reached a plateau of 95,000-100,000 snowmobile users in the past five to ten years and most likely can't support further growth. (Ron Naber, Trails Coordinator, Gallatin National Forest Hebgen Lake/West Yellowstone trail counts 1990-2000).
- The only potential for future growth of West Yellowstone's winter economy is to have more visitors in the park—and the only way to do that is through mass transit.

Clearly, the current situation has major limitations to the economy. Mass transit, conversely, has growth potential. While it is true that the town is doing well right now, there is no possibility for future growth. Indeed, the number of small businesses open in winter has tended to decrease.

Snowmobiles offer only limits, which are detrimental to West Yellowstone's economy. Many snowmobile proponents have suggested that limiting the number of snowmobiles allowed into the park is the solution. Limits to the number of visitors will never be a solution which improves or supports West Yellowstone's winter economy. In addition, a reduced number of snowmobiles in the park would be at levels so small as to be insignificant for the local economy. Limited numbers of snowmobiles are not a feasible approach from a logistical standpoint either. Mass transit won't work if snowmobiles are present because of the poor road conditions they create.

We should not be looking towards limits, but rather towards ways to increase winter visitation with less impact to the park. For this reason, the phase down of snowmobiles and the change to snowcoaches provides the greatest opportunity for a sustainable and growing economy in West Yellowstone. Snowcoaches will carry more visitors with less impact. Snowcoaches present opportunity for growth in visitation and a growing and expanding local economy. One specific example of economic growth possible is that with the use of rubber-tracked snowcoaches, the fall season could be extended well into November, further profiting the local economy. A more diverse local economy will arise as the town begins to attract not just snowmobilers, but the entire spectrum of winter recreationists eager to visit Yellowstone in winter. Many of these winter recreationists do not currently visit West Yellowstone due to the noise, fumes and congestion caused by snowmobiles.

The snowmobile operators' insistence that snowmobiles are the key to West Yellowstone's winter economy is fundamentally wrong. It is not and never has been snowmobiles. The key to West Yellowstone's economy is and always has been Yellowstone National Park.

In conclusion, I encourage members of the subcommittee to lend your expertise in small business matters to my town. In order to make a successful transition to mass transit snowcoaches by minimizing the impact to local business owners, we will need low interest loans, technical and other assistance. As Town Councilman, I am very interested in transition strategies which have been successful in other towns undergoing similar transitions in their tourism based economies. I would greatly appreciate it if you would direct any information on or tools for transition strategies to the West Yellowstone Town Council, care of my address below.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require further information. Thank you for your consideration of these comments and I look forward to your input on transition strategy as West Yellowstone works towards a sustainable winter economy which will flourish, along with Yellowstone Park, well into the future.

Sincerely,

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Menzels Curios, Inc. • 127 Yellowstone • West Yellowstone, Montana 59758

04/20/00

I operate a business on Yellowstone Avenue in West Yellowstone, Montana. The business is located 1 and 1/2 blocks west of the entrance to Yellowstone Park. My maternal grandfather was one of the first landowners in West Yellowstone, settling here in 1908. I am fourth generation native Montanan on my father's side of the family. My father, Herman Menzel, opened the doors of Menzel's Curios in the summer of 1946 after his return from the European Theatre of Operations where he was an infantry Captain during WWII. He grew up farming and ranching in Bozeman, Montana, and was an avid outdoorsman all of his life. This background has instilled a deep sense of responsibility in my family and me. We have always considered it our first and foremost priority to treat the relationship with one of our nation's most valuable resources with the proper foresight. Our role as we see it should be one of stewardship.

The unfortunate perception brought about by local special interest groups has been that the merchants and business owners of West Yellowstone are by word and action, parasitic and mercenary. I would like to suggest that there is another perspective. Those of us in the community that *do* have a feeling for our custodial obligations know that this does not reflect the attitude of the majority of businesspeople in Town.

I feel that over the snow travel in Yellowstone makes an experience available to people that is unique, offering Yellowstone's previously inaccessible winter panorama. I do not believe that the currently popular snowmobile traffic is appropriate. It obviously is not the only option. I think the snow vans and snow coaches, which are subject to DOT emissions standards make for a much preferable alternative. These lower impact vehicles also make the Park accessible to the elderly and handicapped, who may not be able to ride a snowmobile. These vehicles also facilitate cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, making the more distant areas of the Park reachable.

The issues are complex surrounding this controversial use of Yellowstone, and the solutions will require great effort on all our parts, but the primary concern must be the preservation of Yellowstone, not the immediate profit of a few.

Sincerely,

Craig Menzel

Menzel's Curios, Inc.

Calvin and Janice Dunbar
Box 368
West Yellowstone MT
59758-0368

21 April 2000

To Whom It May Concern:

Winter Use, Yellowstone National Park

Presently input is being sought relative to the winter use of the park; therefore here are some of our thoughts on the options:

We are qualified to speak to this matter. We have lived permanently all year in West Yellowstone since 1961, raising our family of two children, now adults, who lived their entire youths here. Jan is a retired English teacher and school librarian of 28 years in the W.Y. school. Cal has co-owned and operated the Food Roundup Supermarket since 1961. He is still a co-owner although retired. He served on the Town Council for eighteen years. Jan had spent every summer of her youth at the family cabin on Lake Hebgen which she still has.on USFS permit. Both of us are very familiar with the park and town matters as we have been civically active our entire residence here.

On the winter use:

There is no good reason to plow the roads to Old Faithful. It would simply become an autobahn for migrating bison and a trap for other animals who would get into the plowed road and couldn't climb up the steep snowbanks. It would be a whitewalled tunnel for motorists who could not see over the top of the plowed snowbanks as they tried to drive unfamiliar snowy skiddy roads therein (remember most of the tourists are farflung city dwellers). Visitors would have difficulty orienting themselves, their view of wildlife would be restricted and spotty and only occasionally might they emerge from this traffic tunnel to see about. Bad idea. It would cause great driver anxiety. Even in buses driven by pros, the trapped animal problem is still present. Also buses are still on the road surface well below the high snowbank for much of the trip.

Snowmobiles over the years have become overabundant, spewing smelly exhaust from the two-cycle engines, making obtrusive reverberating highpitched revving noises and carrying only a single person into the park wonderland. Something must be done, obviously.

The logical answer is the snowcoach. It is quiet, has little exhaust, being a four-cycle engine, carries a multitude of passengers so that many more people can be carried on far fewer vehicles, is under the control of a knowledgeable driver/guide who can properly inform the passengers just what they are seeing and point out the less obvious wonders these folks might miss were they on their own on an individual snowmobile. Also the guide can see that the conduct of the passengers is fitting to the park, protecting the fragile environment and the wildlife. Snowcoaches can be safer in general because most tourists have had no previous experience driving a snowmobile.

Furthermore, the snowcoach is currently being used by snowmobile operations in cases where the individual snowmobile is not applicable or desired. It would be a simple matter to augment the present fleet, as permitted by the park authorities as to number. The present personnel and shop facilities of the operators would suffice. Tourists would readily accept the snowcoach as the alternative were snowmobiles not an option. Remember, prior to the advent of the snowmobile, some thirty odd years ago, the snowcoach was in use and popular as the sole method of over-the-snow travel into YNP. It would be again. A great way to see the winter wonderland - on top of the snow.

Therefore we submit that the snowcoach option for YNP winter use be given serious consideration.

Respectfully,

Jan and Calvin

Janice and Calvin Dunbar
West Yellowstone

425 Sylvan Circle
West Yellowstone, MT
May 22, 2000

Hiram Chittenden, park historian, in 1895, noted that those closest to Yellowstone National Park should be the best stewards of the park, but, in fact, they were the worst predators. Unfortunately, this statement remains true today. Yellowstone National Park exists for the benefit of 240,000,000 Americans, not for the benefit of special interest groups in Wyoming and Montana.

The very vision of the Yellowstone National Park founders has now become the responsibility of those considering current and future park usage. Yellowstone National Park cannot sustain a quality experience for winter visitors in the face of an ever increasing assault from snowmobiles.

The amounts and effects of snowmobile pollutants in the park are well documented. These pollutants should have resulted in cease and desist orders or fines from the EPA, rather than Senate hearings.

Please serve the best long term interest and vision of the founders of Yellowstone National Park, and ban snowmobiling from the park.

Sincerely,

Bruce J. Coan, M.D.

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