PROTECTING SMALL BUSINESS AND NATIONAL PARKS: THE GOALS ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE

FIELD HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10 a.m., at the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort, 315 Yellowstone Avenue, West Yellowstone, Montana, Hon. Donald A. Manzullo (chair of the Committee) presiding.

Chairman MANZULLO. The United States House of Representatives Committee on Small Business will come to order. Can you hear back there? Is this on?

AUDIENCE. No.

Chairman MANZULLO. Is that better; can you hear me back there?

AUDIENCE. No.

Chairman MANZULLO. Got to get it real close. We're going to hold off on opening formalities and opening statements and move immediately into the testimony of Fran Mainella; is that right, who's——

Ms. MAINELLA. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO [continuing]. The Director of the National Park Service, who just happened to be in West Yellowstone on the day we scheduled this hearing. So I'm going to move immediately into your testimony. If you want to take a minute to introduce the people that are with you and the directors, et cetera.

STATEMENT OF FRAN P. MAINELLA, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Ms. MAINELLA. I'd be glad to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very pleased to be here. I'm Fran Mainella, National Park Service Director. I do want to introduce to everyone, if we could have a moment.

Currently, our acting superintendent for Yellowstone, Frank Walker, if you would please stand. And our incoming superintendent for Yellowstone, Suzanne Lewis, will you please stand. Our acting superintendent for the Grand Tetons, Steve Iobst, if you would please stand. And our incoming superintendent for the Tetons, Steve Martin, would you please stand. And also, we have with us Karen Wade, who is our regional director for all these parks, about 80 some though actually, throughout your area—90. The number continues to grow. And I just want to say thank you. I also—we have a number of people here from the Park Service but

I want to thank all of them for being here and also all of you and Mr. Chairman and Congressman Rehberg. I appreciate your willingness to allow me to speak for a few minutes today.

I think the importance, as you know, of Yellowstone is not only just an importance to this community and to this Nation and internationally, and it is important that all of us give it the energy and time and I appreciate your consideration of this.

One of the areas that I've probably been best known for and I was previously—I know some folks will—how much snowmobiling has she done? She's from the State of Florida. I was twelve years the State park director in Florida, but I have—I originally grew up in New England. I have some experience with snowmobiles.

But I think the biggest thing that—I am familiar with working with communities. And that is something that I think that you'll find that you particularly, as we hired our new—two new superintendents, one of the things we looked at is not only their knowledge of the resources and their ability to work in both visitor services and resource management, but also their ability to partner and work with communities. And I think you'll see that as an important part. It's an important part of any efforts.

And you know Secretary Norton, Secretary of the Interior, she talks about the importance of partnership and the importance of working with communities. And you will see that consistently as we go through our supplemental EIS as well as anything we do with national parks throughout this Nation.

We also know that we always have the balancing act that we make sure we protect those resources. We do not want impairment but we also want them for future generations as well as making sure that there is proper, environmentally appropriate access to our parks and also respectful—and I think in your particular Committee, the economic impacts that parks play in this community but across this Nation. And it's something that I think is very important for us. In fact, when I was in Florida, I served on the commission on tourism because of the realization that parks play such an important part in the economy of that particular State and also in the tourism role. But again that balancing that you must do between resources and the economic impact and the ability to make sure that we are all working at a successful manner.

As we go forth, as you know at this point, there has been a decision made back in November of 2000, that was going to move us from any snowmobiles in the park at all to solely snow coaches over—in a phase out program. The Committee that had come forth—in fact, the Small Business Committee that had expressed some concern on that to Secretary Norton, I believe, that took place just recently, prior to the June time was—expressed some concern about the economic analysis that was done that is required due to the Flexibility Act and the Fairness Act that acquires those things to be addressed. And this is something that as we go through the supplemental EIS, we will continue to look at the economic analysis and make sure that those appropriate reviews are done, and we will live up to those statutes.

But at the same time what we want to make sure is that we move forward with our supplemental EIS, and I want to commend both Steve Iobst and Frank Walker, particularly what we've been

doing most recently with kind of a pilot program this winter, with working with the communities more than we have ever done in the past; doing programs with the hotels and other areas. I was being briefed even more on that this morning, talk about proper using, proper—working well with the community. Selling passes at the chamber of commerce rather than at the gate as you enter the park and all the benefits that has provided, not only environmentally and probably for the comfort of the snowmobilers, but also for the partnership ability to have us all be working together at a greater manner.

In June of—29th of 2001, the Secretary did decide that we do move forward with a supplemental EIS. We're in that process now and in fact we would expect that very shortly, in the next week or two in February, we will be going on the west—on the Internet for the four alternatives that expect to come forward. And I think that it's a more diverse grouping than what we have seen in the past. We'll be having that go on.

The actual comment period won't begin until approximately March 29th, as far as the official 60 day, where the clock begins. But we want to encourage comments even earlier. That's why we're getting it on the Web early on, so that people can give comments. We've been working start moving forward with making determinations of how we go forward. And it's supposed to be, I believe November of 2002, for us to have the final determination on what we're going forward with as far as either continuing the original rule that came forward or going with one of the alternatives or some variation off of one of those alternatives.

At this point again, I think the most important thing is I wanted you to make sure you knew that we are very respectful of our obligations that we need to be making in the meeting, as far as the Flexibility Act and the Fairness Act that is required as we go through this process, and I think we're again going to be working with outside sources to help us make sure those analyses are done in a way that we feel can be substantiated and have the good science behind them so that we can go forward.

The only other things I want to just talk about again is the importance that the Secretary, Secretary Norton, plays on what she calls her four cc's, dealing with conservation but also make sure we also have cooperation, consultation and communication taking place at all times. I think when she and the President selected me to serve, that was part of what they saw in me and my past history, and I think what I will see from the superintendents that are coming on here as well as the past—some of the other folks that we have been working with, I think know that these are important parts to play and we will get our commitment to be working in that direction. I would welcome questions and again, you have my written testimony.

Chairman MANZULLO. The written testimony will be made part of the testimony.

[Ms. Mainella's statement may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. Mr. Rehberg.

Mr. REHBERG. Thank you. And, Ms. Mainella, thank you for being with us. We appreciate the opportunity timely as it was to have you here and nice to meet you.

Ms. MAINELLA. Thank you.

Mr. REHBERG. Within the various alternatives that you will be considering, once they're placed on the Internet and into the record, they can be amended thereafter based upon the context or do you have—context from the public or do you have to make a decision based upon the alternatives presented on the Internet and ultimately put up——

Ms. MAINELLA. I will—periodically you'll see me turn over to my legislative counsel and also—my understanding is we put out four alternatives but in the end we could end up, based on comments and input, with some variation that may spin off of one of those.

Mr. REHBERG. Based upon your prior history then of community involvement, that's the reason for this hearing, that's the reason I had the Missouri Breaks, the new monument up there, to try to bring additional input, give everybody their opportunity to have their day in court. Do you foresee consideration within your alternatives for the peripheral impact on the community?

And where I'm going with this is there are four million spring and summer visitors to Yellowstone Park. If there is something that disrupts the provision of services in the winter that may end up costing businesses their opportunity to do business and then there would not be the opportunity to have enough beds, motel rooms, restaurants in West Yellowstone for the spring and summer population, will your consideration of snowmobile usage within the park put in the consideration to the community for things that will ultimately benefit the park? Because you don't want to have to create that opportunity within the park.

Ms. MAINELLA. We always love to work with our gateway communities and find ways to provide opportunities in those gateway communities to meet some of the needs of the park. And as we get input and again, the Secretary, myself, and I think all our staff are really receptive to hearing from different opportunities.

And as you know, we have been experimenting with different gateway community—there's even some legislation I believe that is trying to move forward, not dealing so much with Yellowstone but just dealing with how can we work better, with—not just we as national parks but public lands as a whole, work better with our gateway communities. Because oftentimes we want to make sure the resources—hopefully we always want to make sure our resources are well protected in our parks, but in doing that it may mean if there is a need for more beds or other things, that the gateway communities can help us meet that endeavor.

In fact, we've even been looking at and this is kind of a spin off—we're doing a pilot that will be coming forth shortly on how we can do housing additionally besides being in the park for our own employees, but work with our gateway communities to find abilities to put some of our employees housing; and many of that's here already. And many of that's here already. Because partnerships are win-win. Winning means the park has to make sure that resources are well protected, the visitors well served, but also we need to make sure we work well with the community. So everybody—no one maybe gets exactly all that they're looking for but basically we feel like each has a win taking place.

Mr. REHBERG. Will those kind of alternatives show up in the—those kinds of ideas show up in the alternative?

Ms. MAINELLA. I think it's all going to depend on the comments that come in, because we shouldn't probably predetermine in advance what those comments are going to be until we open them, but we would want to be reflective of those comments and then make determinations that could hopefully reflect some of those options.

Mr. REHBERG. One final question, Mr. Chairman, and that is the chicken and the egg situation. We talked about snow coaches, but if they're not available, they're not available. Ford Motor Company has stepped forward on the buses in Glacier Park. They don't seem to be moving quite as quickly for one reason or another. Are you going to be able to take administratively a position of if certain things happen then this decision will be made, but if this doesn't happen in a timely fashion, there will be an economic disruption to the community and X will happen. Can you do that within the alternatives and ultimately?

Ms. MAINELLA. My understanding, we can, you know, as the alternatives, we can look at the alternatives, there's four to give comment on; but as we work off—I know one of the—already just from the cooperators and others, we ended up moving like an additional One-A and One-B alternative to make Ford—to push back even consideration to snow coaches as quickly as the record of decision would come forth because of not having the possibility of having them in place. You can't put something in a game plan if you can't produce that option. So you have to be ready to make whatever modifications are ready to do, you know, to reflect what—what is realistic.

Mr. REHBERG. So you would be able to spread out the time of, if there is a phasing down of the number of machines per day——

Ms. MAINELLA. That very well could be. Again, the only thing we can do is—and I think the advice we've been given is make sure when you go out with those alternatives, you're here—we're here to listen, take input and then formulate from those ideas and a work with our cooperators and help with that cooperation.

Mr. REHBERG. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MANZULLO. I have a question as to the procedure, my understanding is that you're working with a supplemental EIS?

Ms. MAINELLA. That's correct sir.

Chairman MANZULLO. That will be done when?

Ms. MAINELLA. We're supposed to have the—that out on the Internet, I would say February—in the second week of February, is that—end of the second week of February. And so that will be the four alternatives to at least start making comment on. Our official—where we print hard copy, not via the Internet but hard copy will be coming out in March. I think that final has to be out and circulated March 29th and then they have 60 days. That's where the official legal clock begins. But we want to get it out, use our Internet as a method to get this message out more aggressively so people could have more input time to make those comments and make sure we're hearing and responding accordingly.

Chairman MANZULLO. When is the proposed rule going to be issued?

Ms. MAINELLA. I would ask the——

Mr. IOBST. Rule is published on the same——

Ms. MAINELLA. This is Steve Iobst.

Mr. IOBST. The proposed rule would be published through the Federal Register, March 29th, supplemental, draft supplemental comes out for public review and March 29th when you begin the notice of availability for the Federal Register on proposed rule.

Ms. MAINELLA. That's where comments start coming in.

Mr. IOBST. And they basically parallel each other.

Ms. MAINELLA. I think what the chairman has asked, maybe, if I may, is when—I think it's November of 2002 when the actual final rule comes forth again.

Mr. IOBST. That's correct. November 15th.

Ms. MAINELLA. November 15th. So that's——

Chairman MANZULLO. Isn't the preferred method to have a period of time to comment on the supplemental EIS and then come out with the proposed rule? The way I look at it here, you could get all the information you want on the supplemental EIS, but I don't know if that information would be going into the proposed rule, because——

Ms. MAINELLA. We're mandated to work from that—those—from the supplemental EIS to lead into that rule. And so as we go forth, what would be the—as we come up with draft rule following the—when does the—after the 60 day comment period closes, which would be April 29th—May 29th, from there, Steve, then once that closes, then we go into a process of actually starting to draft some kind of final rule that would come out as a result of that; is that right?

Mr. IOBST. Draft both the final supplemental EIS as well as the final rule.

Ms. MAINELLA. Final rule and final—because this is still a draft EIS.

Mr. IOBST. And the draft EIS leads towards the record of decision which is the closure of the NEPA and the final rule is the closure of the rule making process. That's the reason why those are paralleling, is that's the time frame.

Ms. MAINELLA. The settlement agreement set that time on it.

Chairman MANZULLO. I guess my question is if people want to have input on the supplemental EIS and on those who are drafting the rule, wouldn't you want the benefit of all those comments before you do the proposed rule?

Ms. MAINELLA. We won't do the proposed rule until after all those comments have come in. In other words, you're going to go through all of——

Chairman MANZULLO. But the proposed rule is going to be open for comment at the same time as the supplemental EIS. Why don't you come up—Steve, why don't you introduce yourself.

Ms. MAINELLA. I think there's a microphone right over there.

Chairman MANZULLO. That's why we bring our assistants with us, to answer the technical questions.

Ms. MAINELLA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. IOBST. That's Steve Iobst. The last name is I–O–B as in boy, S–T, the acting superintendent at Grand Teton National Park. The approach that we're talking on the development of a proposed rule

that again parallels the same time frame as the draft supplemental EIS is that what we are going to do is—what we are proposing to do with the proposing rule is to extend the phase in period of the decision and so that when somebody sees the proposed rule, basically we are proposing to extend the implementation that then allows us to go through the supplemental environmental impact statement process, to final supplemental and then develop a final rule after the SEIS process is complete. So in effect, what you're suggesting is actually what's going to happen. But in order to meet the requirements of the settlement agreement, we do have to publish a proposed rule at the same time we come out with a draft supplemental EIS.

Chairman MANZULLO. I guess my question is that. I wasn't privy to the lawsuit or the settlement obviously, but how can you possibly draft a proposed rule without having the ability to look at the supplemental EIS and all the changes. The supplemental EIS is what drives the proposed rule.

Mr. IOBST. That's correct, and that's why we are heading towards doing a proposed rule that does nothing more than delay implementation of the current——

Chairman MANZULLO. I understand. That gives you the leeway to——

Ms. MAINELLA [continuing]. Covers us so we cannot have to be implementing the current rule by giving——

Chairman MANZULLO. I understand.

Mr. REHBERG. But you will still be following the law of public participation because they will still have the legitimate time to respond to the comments that came up that did not fit into the supplemental EIS.

Mr. IOBST. That's correct.

Mr. REHBERG. They will still—there will not be an opportunity then to delay one more time either through a lawsuit or some other argument because the dates were not met after you've considered the variables to the supplemental EIS?

Mr. IOBST. That's correct. We'll have that public comment period, again both to the draft rule as well as to the draft supplemental, realizing that the comment period for the draft rule is not a draft rule that implements an alternative. It just delays—defers implementation so that again there will be the opportunity to have a record of decision that is—that completes the EIS process, and then after which there will be a final rule making, a proposed final rule making process that will implement.

Mr. REHBERG. Did the settlement document you mentioned November 15th of 2002, is that the drop dead——

Mr. IOBST. That is in the settlement agreement.

Mr. REHBERG. It has to be done by——

Mr. IOBST. That's correct.

Ms. MAINELLA. And we've been appreciative of all the folks working with us because we want to get it on the Internet, but we want to make sure we have as much input on the front side. That's why we've been working with different options. The folks here in the community, the cooperators and others that have worked with us in allowing to us—originally we were going to get on the Internet on January 21st or something of that nature. But because we want-

ed to get more input on that before we went on the Internet—I guarantee we will be having, you know, input, plenty of time for input. In fact we're going beyond the legal requirements of input by doing it on the Internet before the actual clock starts ticking.

Chairman MANZULLO. Is the Internet site up?

Ms. MAINELLA. Pardon?

Chairman MANZULLO. Is the Internet site up yet?

Ms. MAINELLA. That's part—that's the part that's a little bit of a challenge right now.

Mr. IOBST. We realize the implications of the Department of the Interior National Park Service Internet site. Therefore we are establishing a commercial Website to post of the Website on.

Chairman MANZULLO. Do you have the address of the Website?

Mr. IOBST. It's WWW—is—no, that's not what it is.

Ms. MAINELLA. We will make sure——

Mr. IOBST. We don't have that yet. It's a commercial site that we're actually establishing through a commercial firm in Jackson, Wyoming. When we do the announcement of its availability on the Internet, which will be sometime around the first week, beginning of the first week of February, anticipating taking a few days to get it up and running, that will be announced and we also are—people that have been involved in this process starting back in early 1998, which is up—a mailing list of up to about 85 thousand, they all get a post card that has the Internet site on it as well as do they want a copy to be mailed to them on March 29th. So there will be a—and then we'll be public—you know, press releases through news media out of Yellowstone and Denver and Grand—and Jackson, Grand Teton National Park, announcing the availability on the Website and what that Website is.

Ms. MAINELLA. And we will, Mr. Chairman, make sure the Committee has all that information so we will make sure you receive that.

Chairman MANZULLO. I have no further questions.

Mr. REHBERG. I do not either.

Chairman MANZULLO. Appreciate the fact that you're here coincidentally and able to appear with us Steve.

Ms. MAINELLA. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MANZULLO. You have an airplane to catch.

Ms. MAINELLA. Actually, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to be doing some snow coaching, snowmobiling and a few other experiences and a chance again to visit with some of your constituents just yesterday, and they all wish you the best.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you so much. If we could have the second panel come up. Phil, if you could put a chair there, as we have each person testify, I'm just going to have them move to the place where Director Mainella was sitting, that way, get better eye contact with the public. Second panel.

What we're going to do is the witnesses up here will give their testimony then Congressman Rehberg and I will ask them questions. And then we're going to do something a little bit unusual for congressional committees. We're going to set up a public microphone out there and if you want to give a comment, we'll have to put a time limitation on it. We'll see where we are and then just line up to give the comments and we'll have to cut it off after a

certain period of time. We're missing somebody. Bob. Is Bob Coe here? No. Well, let's move into our opening statements and do some of the formalities now.

You might want to ask yourself a question, why did the Chairman of the Committee on Small Business travel from Washington, DC, to West Yellowstone, Montana, to convene a field hearing on snowmobile access to America's national parks and in particular, Yellowstone National Park.

This Small Business Committee has spent a considerable amount of time dealing with the Federal Government in two aspects. One is in the regulatory aspect and the other is in the competitive. We were able, in hearings this past year, to do a couple of things. It was a small business hearing that stopped the Department of the Army from buying black berets for our servicemen and women from China and other countries. So you can thank us for being out on the leading edge of that in a very contentious 4½ hour hearing.

The Small Business Committee had to subpoena in several witnesses and several documents to put an end to the disgraceful practice carried on by our own government in preferring foreign competitors for clothing and shoes as opposed to our domestic competitors. That law has now been changed. It's back into effect where it was before and it resulted in saving literally hundreds of jobs.

Secondly, we got involved with the Veterans Administration when they decided to go into the commercial laundry business. They were contracting for colleges and universities and hotels. We held a hearing in Washington, and stopped that practice. Someone from the VA came in and said, Congressman, we understand that the VA should not be in competition with small businesses. That decision by the VA saved a hundred jobs in the congressional district that I represent, which is the northern part of Illinois.

We also got involved with the Federal Prison Industries. This is an organization that makes products in the Federal prisons at wages that are about 25 cents an hour. So when people talk about importing things from China and other countries where they pay low wages, the United States itself is one of the lowest wage payers. And we got the Federal Prison Industries out of making electronics because they were knocking out hundreds if not thousands of American jobs.

So that's why we're here. We're concerned many times about an overactive government or a government that's lost its focus. This came to our attention several years ago when we discovered the trail of snowmobiling starts in the national park here and in West Yellowstone, but it has a national impact. It's a seven to eight billion dollar industry. And so we're here to talk about that. Talk about the economic impact and obviously, balancing that with the necessity to have a good environment.

My wife is a microbiologist who traveled with me but unfortunately, she's ill this morning and she's in the room. She understands this. I've practiced a lot of environmental law when I was in the private sector. We also have a teenager who's a severe asthmatic, so we have a distinct interest in making sure that the environment is clean.

The recreational use of snowmobiles has a significant economic impact on small businesses in small rural communities dependent upon winter tourism, including West Yellowstone, Montana. Production of use of snowmobiles contributes seven to eight billion dollars in the American economy, creates roughly 75 thousand jobs, most of which are located in small businesses. When the National Park Service issued its final rule phasing out snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park, it determined that the final rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. A drive through West Yellowstone, Montana, quickly will demonstrate the fallacy of that conclusion. That's when the Small Business Committee and the Small Business Administration through Office of Advocacy got involved and said this is small business.

Almost all the businesses in West Yellowstone are small and in the winter depend heavily on income from snowmobilers. In turn, the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, relies on those businesses and the tax revenue from tourists to provide public resources. Today's hearing is designed to demonstrate that protecting the beauty of Yellowstone National Park need not come at the expense of America's small businesses and rural communities.

At today's hearing, we have heard from Director Mainella about the decision making process. In addition, we'll hear from people who live near the park about the impact that snowmobiling has on their businesses and communities. We look forward to your testimony for ideas that you may have on ways to accomplish the preservation of the park and preservation of the rural economic base.

The normal standard is to limit your testimony to five minutes each. When you start approaching five minutes, you'll notice I get a little bit fidgety. When you start running over five minutes, you hear the tapping. If you go too far beyond that, then the tapping turns to a mallet smash. So—before I get into that, all the testimony that the witnesses have and any testimony of the audience, written testimony provided does not exceed two single-spaced pages—from the audience—will be made part of the permanent record. We'll keep that open for 3 weeks from today.

And we have letters from Senator Thomas and Senator Baucus.

[The information may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. Mr. Rehberg, when you give the opening statements will you introduce the representatives from the various senatorial and congressional offices? Thank you.

Mr. REHBERG. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for coming to Montana on an issue that we feel is very important to the State of Montana, from whatever side you come down. And you'll find in this State that natural resources and some of the conflict that exists within natural resources is one of the most emotional issues that occurs within our State and we're continuing trying to find ways to ameliorate the problems on both sides and trying to find some kind of a common ground; and so I appreciate you coming out.

This is a first for me, of course, this has been a year of firsts. I'm sworn in as your new United States Congressman, representing the entire State of Montana, on January third. This is my first official congressional hearing, and I thank you for coming out and

doing that. It's a little hard for me as well, the formality, because we're used to having town hall meetings in Montana where it's kind of rag tag, and everybody gets an opportunity—yeah, take your tie off and we'll just invite everybody to come and sit up here. It was important enough that I invited the Small Business Committee out to listen to the concerns within the community. Now you'll notice that this is not the Environmental and Public Works Committee, and it is specifically the Small Business Committee.

The thing that happens in government more often than not is one element or another doesn't feel their government is listening to them. Sometimes that works for us, sometimes it works against us. When the government makes the decision we agree with, we say no more public input; you've studied this thing to death, let's make the decision and move forward. Well, the other side says well, that's not fair. That's what's occurring in this situation.

The small business community and the community of West Yellowstone felt like the last administration didn't fully hear their perspective on the economic impacts that were going to occur to their families. What I've tried to accomplish over the years as your congressman is to create an opportunity or an environment for the discussion to have an ability for all sides to be heard. This is not intended to be a free for all, this is intended to provide information so that the right decisions can be made by our National Park Service within the executive branch. Until such time as we feel like everybody has had their opportunity in court or their opportunity to provide that input, then we will continue having meetings like this. So the Small Business Committee is here today to hear specifically from people, their perspective on whether there will be an economic impact on the community. And that's only fair. I think everybody agrees that that's only fair.

Consensus is always a hard thing to find, but I prefer the consensus process. I created the consensus council in Montana for the specific purposes of trying to find common grounds so people don't divvy in the corners and end up having to hire attorneys and sue their way back out. I've teamed up with Governor Mark Racicot, former Governor, now in Washington, DC, and we've introduced legislation to create the national consensus council. It's not in place to help us with this process, but it's a good format to follow.

And if you believe in the holistic approach, you will agree with our proposal of hearing from all sides, whether it be an environmental impact statement or an economic impact statement on the type of impacts that will occur within communities such as West Yellowstone, who are created merely to service the public that are coming to access our parks. And if they don't exist, then either people are going to want additional construction within their parks by the government, concessionaires or there will be a problem because there will not be the opportunities to have the motel rooms necessary or the facilities necessary to house them when they come to participate in their national park.

I would like to quickly introduce those members, and I'll just have them stand up and wave at the audience, who are here from other congressional offices. We have a representative from Barbara Cubin's office, the Congresswoman from Wyoming. Would you stand up. Thank you for being here. We have a representative—

two, actually, from Senator Conrad Burns' office. Would you both stand up and wave. There's one. And there's a representative from Max Baucus' office. Is anybody here from Senator Enzi or Senator Thomas' office? We understand that they did submit written testimony, and we thank you all for being involved.

At this time I will introduce the four representatives from Montana that I have invited to be a part of this panel. They are my constituents, and first is Jackie Mathews, Greater Yellowstone Coalition and the Blue Ribbon Flies of West Yellowstone; Clyde Seely of Yellowstone Tour and Travel. And Clyde, we thank you in addition for being here, also turning over your facility to this congressional hearing. That's very kind of you. Glen Loomis from the Yellowstone Motorsports of West Yellowstone; and Melissa Buller of Free Heel and Wheel of West Yellowstone. We thank you for being here. The other two members of the panel are from the State of Wyoming, at the request of the Wyoming delegation. Bob Coe, who has not shown up yet. He's with the Tepee Resort in Cody, and Bob Walker from the Flagg Ranch Resort from Moran.

Chairman MANZULLO. Mr. Walker, we'll look forward to your testimony. It's a five-minute clock, and I presume you'll summarize this lengthy statement that you gave me. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT WALKER, FLAGG RANCH RESORT

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman. My name is Robert Walker and I'm the CEO, majority owner of International Leisure Host, a public corporation of about 600 people. International Leisure Host operates Flagg Ranch Resort, which is located about two miles from the south entrance to Yellowstone. During the winter we offer cabin rentals, food and beverage service, gasoline, sales and other merchandise. In addition, we provide a staging point for the snow coaches and other snowmobiling operations from the south end of the park and from Jackson; Our contract is a concession contract with the National Park Service. The concession contract began in 1989. It terminates in 2009, so we have about seven or eight years to go yet.

The phase out of snowmobiling, since it's about 90 percent of our income, will obviously cause us a financial situation which we will probably close Flagg Ranch in the wintertime. The financial effects in summary during the balance of our contract will be a loss of revenue of about ten million dollars. The net income loss to the corporation for the remainder of the contract will be about one million eight hundred thousand dollars based on the last two years of operation.

We employ about 50 people during the wintertime at a gross salary of about 225 thousand dollars; and obviously, if we close, both the employment and the compensation would be eliminated. The present record of decision has an interim phase in period, which is real significant to us, in that it would allow about 90 snowmobiles to enter through the south gate of Yellowstone on a daily basis. Our contract actually authorizes 85 snowmobiles to go into the park daily, and I can't imagine that we would get the total authorization. So if you prorate that number, it would give us about ten snowmobiles a day, which would not be enough for Flagg Ranch to operate during the interim period.

A little background. In '89, when the contract was signed with the National Park Service, Flagg Ranch agreed to totally rebuild Flagg Ranch. Move it from the Snake River area down by the river, up on a bluff above the river. Since that time, we've built a new lodge, new cabins, new support facilities at a cost of about nine million dollars.

Part of the agreement in that contract was that we would get the future revenues from both winter and summer operations until 2009. We've spent about 95 percent of the money that needs to be spent and we've got about 60 percent of the income so far. So loss of the winter business is going to cause a serious problem.

Another thing in the record of decision now and in some of the alternatives in the current EIS is the snow coach alternative. Since I got involved five years ago with Flagg Ranch, one of my main efforts has been to try to improve the snow coaches and try to determine if there was a better way to see the Park.

My first impression was that the snow coaches we were using at that time and other people were using were becoming outdated or they didn't really provide the type of service and the comfort that I thought was needed to offer the snow coach as a tour. What I found out in looking at available snow coaches, a lot of my background is engineering, is the only snow coaches available at this time is to take standard off the road 15 passenger vans and convert them using over the snow equipment. There are a couple different conversions, but both of those conversions, in my opinion, offer a marginal situation, both for passenger comfort and in very bad weather, from a safety standpoint.

I went to Oregon and drove a snow coach which is being used on the Alaska north slope by a company called Tucker Snowcat for people transport. That vehicle does offer the safety aspect and they had agreed that they would build a snow coach which would have the comfort. They brought their snow coach out to Yellowstone about a year ago and we tried it. That snow coach did offer a lot of the things that should be offered, but the big thing it didn't have the capability of is the maximum speed. The maximum speed was 25 miles per hour. We feel it needs to be 45 miles an hour. The suspension system was definitely marginal.

Chairman MANZULLO. Bob, we're right at five minutes.

Mr. WALKER. Let me just summarize very quickly then. My opinion on the snow coach option is if it's going to be used, if needs to be phased in over six or seven years at a very slow rate so we can see what the economic impact is going to be. Because the surveys we've done, we're estimating that the visitation to the parks will drop to 30 percent with snow coach only use. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

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

Chairman MANZULLO. Our next witness will be Jackie Mathews from the Greater—hang on a second. Let me take Clyde Seely, if that's okay with you. Clyde.

STATEMENT OF CLYDE SEELY, YELLOWSTONE TOUR & TRAVEL

Mr. SEELY. Chairman Manzullo and Congressman Rehberg, my name is Clyde Seely. I'm honored and pleased to come before you

today. I've been in the rental snowmobile business in West Yellowstone for about 31 years. I've been in the snow coach business now for about eight years. I believe I have lived the American dream. I first came to West Yellowstone at 19 when I worked as a laundry boy. I have devoted my adult life helping to develop the community and our affiliated businesses that I have listed on our cover sheet. I am proud of our little town. We have worked hard to be a good partner with Yellowstone by providing community services to millions of visitors and park staff. We have been severely impacted with the September 11th attack on our country. We will survive that. We cannot survive the economic fallout of the impending snowmobile ban. Let us not create an economic ground zero in West Yellowstone. Ironically, this is the time when Director Mainella and Secretary Norton are promoting visiting our national parks. They have said that the parks belong to the people and can be used for renewal and for the healing of the soul. Let's not shut the people out.

I currently employ over 220 people, many with families. Our payroll is in excess of two point five million dollars. The money these employees make turns over many times in our community. The ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone will cause great economic harm to our community and those who work and live here.

At Three Bear Lodge, 52 percent of our total annual revenue comes from three winter months. We believe that a ban on snowmobiles would cut our revenues by 60 to 70 percent. We currently operate 260 rental snowmobiles. We also operate a fleet of snow coaches. While we market equally to snow coach and snowmobile clientele, only about five percent of our customers use the snow coach. Mr. Chairman, Congressman Rehberg, I have some slides. With your permission, I'd like to show these that graphically point out the effects that rely too heavily using snow coaches to replace snowmobiles. I see I'm right in the limelight. I'm going to move.

This slide shows the comparison of snowmobile and snow coach visitors through the west gate for five different years. The blue indicates snowmobile, the red snow coach. As you can see, West Yellowstone would be financially devastated if the snowmobile ban goes into effect. West Yellowstone will be financially devastated if a 330 snowmobile per day is imposed, especially if the closing day for snowmobiles is Friday after President's holiday, as has been proposed. The next few slides show the effect of such a 330 snowmobile CAP day. This is mild, however, compared to a total snowmobile ban.

Let's quickly scan through four years. These graphs represent the daily numbers of snowmobiles that pass through the west gate. The black box with the elongated X shows the effect that would have been for the past few years if only 330 snowmobiles would have been allowed in the west entrance and closed after the President's holiday, as has been proposed. All lines outside the box represent actual snowmobilers that would have been excluded from the park. This would equate to an economic loss between seven and eight and a half million dollars each year from 1995 to 2001, and I think that's conservative.

While we do not have a problem with making reasonable cutbacks on numbers of snowmobiles, we know that cutting back num-

bers of visitors will not only deny their rights to enjoy the park but also our economic well being. We have been told that new concept snow coaches would be in place to fill the void left by the snowmobile ban.

We, along with the public have been led down a primrose path right into a box canyon. These new snow coaches have never been developed. What will be the public use when the snowmobiles are gone? Who will pay the payrolls, who will make the bank payments? The current makeshift snow coaches that we use will fail dismally in satisfying the public's needs. And there are many reasons for that.

While new snow coach technology has not arrived, new snowmobile technology is quantum leaps ahead. The new four stroke snowmobile was massed produced this year. They're really clean and quiet. As I indicated, one of the fallacies with the snowmobile ban is the assumption that concept snow coaches would be on the snow in time to replace the snowmobile. Nothing could be further from the truth. New snow coaches have not been built. They have not been funded. It will be years before snow coaches can be developed and the necessary—marketing necessary completed.

The proposed one or two year transition period will do nothing but bring economic harm to Yellowstone—West Yellowstone. Our community will not be pacified and lulled into a false sense of security that it will be okay. This proposed ban is not okay. It will be financially devastating to our community. Anyone who says otherwise does not have to meet payrolls and bank payments.

My final plea is that we all work together to protect the park, to protect the public's choice of access and to protect the economic well being of Yellowstone's most dedicated partner, West Yellowstone. Together we can make it all happen. Together, we can do it right. And thank you so much for caring enough to come out here. Thanks for providing this forum for listening to our concerns. And I have included with my written testimony some attachments.

Chairman MANZULLO. Those attachments will also be made part of the record.

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

Chairman MANZULLO. Illinois, the part I come from has had two inches of snow so far. And when my wife and I drove out here just to see the snow, we were like children, to see the beauty of the State.

Our next witness is Melissa Bueller——

Ms. BULLER. Buller.

Chairman MANZULLO. Buller, I'm sorry. With the Free Heel and Wheel. I imagine you'll tell us what the name of that organization is; here in West Yellowstone, Montana. We look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF MELISSA BULLER, FREE HEEL AND WHEEL

Ms. BULLER. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before——

Chairman MANZULLO. Could we have the lights come up now, please and bring your mic up closer.

Ms. BULLER. Thank you. My name is Melissa Buller. I am co-owner of a bicycle and cross country ski store in West Yellowstone. Our store, Free Heel and Wheel has been in business for over five

and a half years. We rent and sell bicycles and cross country skis. We specialize in customer service which involves educating visitors on non-motorized activities available in our area. These non-motorized activities include biking, hiking, backpacking, trail running, snowshoeing, back country skiing and cross country skiing. Thanks to a tremendous local support and a growing base of regional customers, we have been able to sustain our business in the snowmobile capital of the world.

I believe a change regarding snowmobiling in Yellowstone National Park must occur. In our business we interact daily with people who are interested in exploring Yellowstone in a nonmotorized fashion. Currently in—a level of usage by inefficient snowmobiles has turned Yellowstone into a snowmobile park. The roads are utilized by hundreds of machines daily, thousands on holidays. These provide—these do not provide a quality experience for all visitors nor are they inviting for potential visitors. Often tourists visiting in November to ski will say they will not visit West Yellowstone or the park after Christmas because of high numbers of snowmobiles. Snow coach travelers endure extremely bumpy roads, and despite incredible grooming efforts, the park cannot keep the trails smooth with large numbers of snowmobiles.

I am not in favor of a snowmobile ban in Yellowstone. Seeing the park on a snowmobile is a tradition for many people. I do not feel this right needs to be taken away completely. I feel that a limited number of clean machines in Yellowstone would allow for independent travel along with increased snow coach and non-motorized use. Diversifying the park's winter access will attract a broader market. This broader market could potentially increase visitation with less environmental impact.

My decision to open a business in West Yellowstone was not strictly a business decision. Many who live in this area do so because of the recreational opportunities available right out our back door. There are locals and visitors who feel that as skiers, we are shut out of Yellowstone and other public lands in the winter because of large numbers of snowmobilers. Certainly, many trails could be used by skiers; however, with snowmobiles traveling at high speeds, it's simply not safe. The park could consider opening Yellowstone to skiers and snowshoers certain days of the month.

People dream of skateskiing to Old Faithful on a clear day. During periods of low snow, like December and March, the park could be open for skiers and snowshoers only. There is often not enough snow, for over snow vehicles, yet there are still ample opportunities to enjoy the park on skis. An overwhelming response to such an opportunity could prove that people will choose to see Yellowstone on their own power. This could lengthen busy seasons with the park and gateway communities with little or no impact on wildlife or resources.

The Park Service could also consider shuttle services in order to provide more economic alternative for non-motorized users in Yellowstone. Skiers also enjoy traveling independently. Presently, going to Old Faithful to ski for the day on your own is not an option unless you spend 80 to 100 dollars to rent a snowmobile. There are also wonderful guided snow coach ski tours yet not all visitors need or can afford a guided trip.

In my opinion the Park Service does not have the responsibility to maintain the economic vitality of those businesses who choose to utilize its resources. The Park Service must protect the resources and provide access in such a way that is not mutually exclusive or detrimental to the environment. The Park Service must also consider the overwhelming public support for reducing the air and noise pollution in Yellowstone. The sooner a decision is made, we can move toward. West Yellowstone has survived many economic setbacks including wildfires, government furloughs and weather. The changes that will occur in Yellowstone will be healthier for the park and West Yellowstone and the community can thrive as the winter recreation capital of the world. Thank you.

[Ms. Buller's statement may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. Melissa, you ever testified before a congressional Committee before?

Ms. BULLER. No, sir.

Chairman MANZULLO. It wasn't as bad as you thought it was.

Ms. BULLER. No, sir.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Our next witness is Jackie Mathews who's with the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Sorry about the mix up earlier, Jackie. We look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF JACKIE MATHEWS, GREATER YELLOWSTONE COALITION

Ms. MATHEWS. Hello. My name is Jackie Mathews and I want to say——

Chairman MANZULLO. You have a very soft voice so you have to be very close to the mic.

Ms. MATHEWS. I want to thank you for listening to my testimony today. I have lived in West Yellowstone——

Chairman MANZULLO. They still can't hear you.

Ms. MATHEWS. Thank you. My name is Jackie Mathews. Thank you for listening to my testimony. I've lived in West Yellowstone for 23 years. My husband Craig and I started Blue Ribbon Flies, a fly fishing retail and guiding business 22 years ago. We have customers who come from all over the world to fish here. They are drawn because of the park and the unparalleled experience of our first national park and the surrounding areas.

We believe, as business owners benefiting from Yellowstone, we owe the park in return. Our business donates one percent of its gross sales to the park through the Yellowstone Park Foundation. Craig and I are on the board of the Yellowstone Park Foundation and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. We feel we owe the park the best protection that can be given and are committed to act as unselfish stewards of Yellowstone.

When the park made the decision to phase out snowmobiles, it was based on years of science, a foundation of law and extensive public input. The EPA said that the Park Service and environmental impact statement was among the most thorough and substantial science based that they had seen supporting the NEPA document. That law of science and public opinion that form the park's decision to restore pure air, peace and quiet to Yellowstone could not be more clear.

In the most recent round of public comment, 82 percent of the thousands of citizens who took time to express their opinions told the Park Service to uphold the original decision to phase out snowmobiles. Scientists from around the country told Secretary of the Interior Gail Norton that continued snowmobile use harms the park's wildlife and is in violation of the law. Americans treasure Yellowstone and we who are privileged to live at its doorsteps bear the heaviest responsibility for its protection. Our future and the future of the town depends on the park.

I deeply care about my community and have sadly watched as our winter economy has turn into the company store single business economy, leaving out the smaller businesses as the years go past. The snowmobile ban is the best thing for West Yellowstone and Yellowstone Park. By protecting Yellowstone, it will open the doors for newer winter business growth in town.

Snowmobiling will always be an important segment of our winter economy, but no longer can it be acceptable in Yellowstone. A snow coach system into the park will open up all kinds of opportunities for local businesses. They can promote Yellowstone to everyone, not just snowmobilers. Many visitors to Yellowstone will welcome such an opportunity. Skiers, families, older people, local and regional visitors who avoid intensive snowmobile areas. The opportunities are limitless to attract new visitor groups.

We don't need more debate or controversy. This is pulling our town apart. We need help with the job at hand, implementing a snow coach system to protect Yellowstone and to provide the highest quality experience to the park's visitors and to make sure our local economy gets the help it needs to weather the transition and flourish with increased diversity.

Many business persons and residents of our town support the snowmobile phase out in Yellowstone. Two years ago, over 150 people, about one third of the voting population signed a petition. A call for a healthy economy and a healthy park, supporting the park's decision and asking Congress to go forward with the phase out. Numerous letters from townspeople have been sent to Congress urging support of the snowmobile phase out.

The message is clear. Please protect Yellowstone. Our community and our livelihoods will thrive and we will not fall into economic ruin. The House Small Business Committee is in a unique position to assist our town as we make this overdue and necessary transition. The goal must be made as easy as possible on our local business people. This can be accomplished by providing low interest loans and assistance to new and expanded snow coach operations.

The key to our town's success obviously will be a continued influx of winter tourists. Yellowstone Park's a tremendous draw, which will continue to serve us as long as we protect it. Remember, no one is closing the gates. Marketing, advertising, public education similar to that undertaken following the 1988 fires will help us minimize any dip in visitation.

Last March, because of a low snow pack, the roads to Yellowstone were closed early and the winter visitor could only enter the park in buses. The buses were packed. The city sales tax collections for that month jumped 40 percent. The people will come. We just need to be ready for them.

In summary, I ask the committee to support a sustainable economy for West Yellowstone and please don't compromise Yellowstone. It's the only one we have. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you very much.

Ms. MATHEWS. I have some attachments.

Chairman MANZULLO. Yes. They will be made part of the record.

[Ms. Mathews' statement may be found in appendix.]

Chairman MANZULLO. And this is your first time before a congressional Committee?

Ms. MATHEWS. Yes.

Chairman MANZULLO. You did very well. Thank you.

Our next witness will be Glen Loomis because Bob Coe is not here.

STATEMENT OF GLEN LOOMIS, YELLOWSTONE MOTORSPORTS

Mr. LOOMIS. I do have an overhead that I'd like to show in a minute, if somebody could turn that on for me. There she comes.

Chairman MANZULLO. Glen, you might want to use that portable mic. It appears to be hotter.

Mr. LOOMIS. My name is Glen Loomis. I live in West Yellowstone, part of a family business. We have snowmobile rentals, snow coach rentals and motels. My father visited Yellowstone in 1914 in a covered wagon. Took them 32 days to see Yellowstone. Now I didn't see that option being evaluated. Maybe they should go back and add that as an alternative. It didn't work real well in the winter, however.

I think that the main thing we have to consider is that access is really what we're talking about; winter as well as summer. How do we access Yellowstone? So let me give you a couple of issues that I'd like to touch on.

I've been on the town council going on the 11th year here in West Yellowstone. I served as mayor for five; presently the deputy mayor. Basically it seems to me what happens in Yellowstone happens to the businesses in West Yellowstone and happens to our town. We have a very cyclic response to visitation. So I'd like to show this overhead. It shows the resort tax collections for the past few years.

As you can see, we have a very cyclic impact. The summer is very heavy visitation, the Fall is almost nothing. We have a blip in the winter. The spring again is almost nothing. And yet businesses such as mine have to make monthly payments. And so you have to have some stability to make monthly payments and to make the payroll.

Ms. Mathews referred to the blip last year in March, so let me give you a thought on that. We do need diversity. We had a special snow shoot that was invited to town and they came. We had a special ski race. But the real problem is collection of taxes, resort taxes that are already delinquent. We do get some special payments on delinquent taxes. As of yesterday, the town is experiencing right now around 50,000 dollars in delinquent resort tax payments. Hopefully they'll come in. And I have to tell you, I don't care what month they come in, they need to be paid. We already are stressed.

I'd like to also point out that there's a number of things that have been discussed about technology. Things have changed. There is clean, quiet technology for snowmobiles. There are snow coaches. Our business, our family business uses this particular piece as an advertising piece. [Copy of the brochure may be found in the appendix.]

We made 180,000, and the first page talks about snowmobile tours and packages available.

The second page equally talks about snow coach tours. Year to date, our snow coach reservations equal four point six eight percent of our reservations. Why is there apprehension in my business? If there were 50 percent booking snow coaches and 50 percent booking snowmobiles, the thought that there could be an easy transition would not make me apprehensive. But when you're at four point six eight percent, where are they coming from and how are you going to change? That's of concern to me. I'd like to summarize a couple of thoughts.

We do need to protect Yellowstone. No question about it. I want it protected as much as anybody does. There are limits, so there need to be some adjustments in terms of winter use. I don't deny that. But the new technology of clean, quiet snowmobiles do not impact the land, the air or the water because they travel on the same roads as the cars do in the summertime. About 50,000 winter visitors from West Yellowstone. Almost three million for the year. Seems to me that we've got things way out of perspective in terms of what's important.

It is true, the park does not exist for the gateway communities. But think about it, the gateway communities do exist for the park. They provide the necessary support and the development so the park does not have to provide it inside their boundaries. So if we protect historical use—historical visitation—businesses such as mine may be able to succeed. But if we jump off with an immediate ban—how do we make up the four point six eight percent snow coach riders that we have now and continue to make our monthly payments while meeting the payroll. Animal impacts can be mitigated. The tests that they have already talked about, the pilot studies, show that.

Finally I'd just like to say this one thing. My major concern is to assure summer and winter access for my grandchildren and my grandchildren's children in an environmentally friendly atmosphere. And I'm tired of certain groups crying "the sky is falling" and our government rushing to eliminate access to our public lands. Thank you.

[Applause.]

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

Chairman MANZULLO. I've never had an audience applaud whenever a witness has testified.

Mr. REHBERG. Just when you're introduced they're allowed.

Chairman MANZULLO. No, that doesn't happen either. Congressman Rehberg, why don't you go ahead. First of all, I want to thank you for the quality of the testimony. It's all local. You're all local residents. You all feel very strong about this and I appreciate this.

Mr. REHBERG. Thank you. I'd like to—when—Glen, when you were talking, you pointed something out to me that I hadn't

thought about with the makeup of the panel. I wanted to—I want to address real briefly. And that is Glen, Clyde and Bob, you're all involved in the housing—besides the rental of the snowmobiles, the housing arena or the provision of an opportunity for people once they get here to stay here. So I'll ask Melissa and Jackie, do you have any involvement in the housing within West Yellowstone?

Ms. BULLER. We don't own hotels.

Mr. REHBERG. You don't own hotels or bed and breakfasts or anything like that. So you're pure service providers and they're service providers in kind of a basic industry.

Do you worry, Jackie and Melissa, that if they can't meet their payroll—these are the hard, cruel realities of making the payments on the equipment, the staff, the people that clean the rooms, the restaurant located within those, that if they don't or can't stay in business because they can't meet their payroll because they've diversified their income within their own business, snowmobiles, snowshoes, bicycles, snow machines and motel rooms, that your service provision would be financially impacted within the community. They got to have a place to stay. I guess——

Ms. MATHEWS. Are you asking if we would be—our service business would be impacted?

Mr. REHBERG. Are you worried that your service provision, your business is based upon providing service. If they go out of business and you people don't have a place to stay, what are you going to do with the people that come to rent your bikes or cross country skis?

Ms. BULLER. Is—um, one thing I'd like to point out, if you look at——

Chairman MANZULLO. Just a second. I really would appreciate if the audience would be quiet. This is a congressional hearing. We don't allow participation of that nature on the floor—I'm sorry, we do on the floor, but not in the gallery and also in the other Committee rooms. I would just appreciate if you could remain silent while the witness is testifying. This is very difficult for them to do. Thank you. Melissa, please.

Ms. BULLER. I know that neither of us want to see any of our neighbors go out of business. But what I'd like to go out—if you look at Glen's sales tax figures for the town and add up December, January and February and March, that accounts for about a quarter of our annual collections in revenue. So I believe, being the good businessmen that these men are, to make up for that—if we lose 90 percent of our winter business, they're going to lose approximately 20 percent of their annual income. I know the wildfires of '88 probably had that significant of an economic impact and they managed to survive and grow and operate more businesses.

And I also know that visitors who do use other means of transportation will stay in this town. Possibly more visitors, if we can have some control over the snowmobile use in this community. We talked to people on a daily basis who say they will not stay in West Yellowstone because of the noise and the air. So we feel that if you can balance the usage—we're not asking to eliminate snowmobiles altogether. We think it's an important part of the package. But if we can provide more of a balance, I think the community will only grow.

Ms. MATHEWS. I think that's one of the things that I was asking you for, too. As the Small Business Committee, to help them with loans and so forth to get them through the phase out time period, where they have the opportunity to diversify their own winter businesses where they won't be left high and dry either.

Chairman MANZULLO. Let me comment on that. Before a loan is given, there has to be a business plan. And part of a business plan, you have to show that there's a demand for the service; that there's a reasonable opportunity to pay back the loan. And the testimony that I've heard so far is that there's very little demand for the snow coaches. So the government would just not come in and say, we're going to help you with the transition when so far, there's nothing—no testimony deduced as to what it would be transitioning to.

Ms. MATHEWS. I think you need to take a look at our community. Our community right now is very, very one-sided snowmobile only. By opening it up, cleaning it up and turning it into a—let's say more user-friendly community during the winter months, I think you would find that the numbers of people that are drawn to this town to go into the park would probably quadruple to what we are doing right now.

The game is to get us from where we're at now to that point and help the existing businesses get through this time period. We have a huge potential, which is—I mean, which we have a huge draw, which is Yellowstone. The biggest problem we have in there right now is the situation. Most people don't want to go into the park when the park is overrun with snowmobiles that are loud and noisy and obnoxious. Change the park situation, change the town a little bit and we can all be a lot better off than what we're at right now.

Mr. REHBERG. I came to the conclusion a long time ago that government doesn't create jobs. People do. But what government does is often times create a less than favorable environment for jobs to be created. And if you want to diversify your income, you have to have an opportunity for people not to be over regulated and not to be overtaxed; and there is always that balance. Diversification of our economy is very important but what we have to do is recognize that our job is not to pick winners and losers, the snowmobile industry over the cross country ski industry. What we have to do is try to create an environment so that they can all co-exist. And I guess my question to you is, Jackie, when your clientele who are not necessarily—well, they might be snowmobilers, when they come to this community to rent your cross country skis—that's your business, I'm sorry. Do they——

Chairman MANZULLO. Fishing.

Mr. REHBERG. Oh, you're the fisher person. Do they also rent snowmobiles while they're here or are they cross country skiing specific?

Ms. BULLER. We have both users. We have some people that will rent both snowmobiles and skis. And a lot of our customers are strictly skiers or snowshoers.

Mr. REHBERG. Have you then worked with the Forest Service and National Park Service to try to create dual opportunities? It seems to me like within the National Park Service there are the roads and the snowmobiles are limited to the roads. But there's a

lot of extra park out there that is not roaded, not groomed for snowmobiles that would provide a wonderful, quiet opportunity for those that want to cross country ski to do that. Have you made those kinds of presentations and recommendations?

Ms. BULLER. Well, we would like that but the problem there is no access to those areas currently. We have one trail system on the edge of town and then we have one small trail that goes into Yellowstone from the edge of town. The other ski areas are at Old Faithful and Mammoth. And to get to those areas there's currently no inexpensive access. You are required to rent a snowmobile or take a snow coach tour. So there is no private access for a skier to just simply go into the park and ski, unless there they're skiing just on the edge of town.

That's what we're asking for. We're asking for a balance. You can see, there's probably a dozen trails that leave town and in the park for snowmobiles, and we have two very small areas. And that's mainly what we're asking for is to diversify and provide experience for both users.

Mr. REHBERG. I'd like to ask the National Park Service then two follow up questions based upon that. Can that be considered, additional off site areas as an alternative, when you're talking about the number of snow machines or motors within the park. Can it have a subset A, creating an opportunity for those that want a quiet enjoyment to have groomed trails that don't exist today?

Ms. BULLER. We're not necessarily for the trails. We're asking for access to the trails.

Mr. REHBERG. Being someone who cross countries skis, I prefer the groomed trails.

Chairman MANZULLO. Could you please state your full name and spell the last name?

Mr. SACKLIN. I'm John Sacklin. S-A-C-K-L-I-N. I'm the chief of planning and compliance at Yellowstone National Park. In answer to your question, Congressman Rehberg, during our environmental impact statement process where we look at planning for winter activities in Yellowstone National Park, we've looked at the whole wide range of winter uses be it snowmobiling, access via snow coach, snowshoeing or cross country skiing. And in our alternatives we have looked at a wide range of ways to attempt to accommodate all users. In the new supplemental environmental impact statement, a great deal of the focus of that is on snowmobiles and clean, quiet technology. But in our range of alternatives, we have looked at those non-motorized uses.

I should note, I think most people from the—from this area are aware of it. West Yellowstone, Montana, sitting on the west side of Yellowstone National Park also sits in an area of important winter wildlife habitat. I think we all recognize that winter users, be they non-motorized or motorized, can have an impact, an adverse impact on wintering wildlife. So as you think about the possible addition of additional trails, particularly in the vicinity of West Yellowstone, coming into Yellowstone National park, we need to look at other issues such as winter wildlife.

Mr. REHBERG. One additional question then, Mr. Chairman and for—in relation to someone Ms. Mathews brought up and the statement was made that it's not the National Parks Service's charge

to look at the economic impact of the ultimate rule, am I stating that correctly? That was your intimation, that their job is to look at—again, I'm sorry, Melissa. There you go. Is that a fair characterization of your statement? That they should be looking at the environment, not the economics?

Ms. BULLER. [Nodding.].

Mr. REHBERG. I guess I'd have to ask a question, because I don't know——

Chairman MANZULLO. The Regulatory Flexibility Act mandates that whenever there's a change like this, that there must be a study done on—for economic impact.

Ms. BULLER. I think that's fair, but you're looking at the impact on one specific user.

Chairman MANZULLO. Say it again, Melissa.

Ms. BULLER. Your concern is the impact on one specific business.

Mr. REHBERG. I hope not.

Chairman MANZULLO. That's all small business. That includes school districts. They get a considerable amount of money from recreation.

Ms. BULLER. I'm not saying that a partnership is not a good idea, you know, I definitely think we need to look at the economic impacts, but there are more economic impacts than the snowmobile use. We can spread the use out.

Chairman MANZULLO. Let me just throw this out. There are some groups that want to eliminate mountain bikes. What——

Ms. BULLER. It's already eliminated from the park.

Chairman MANZULLO. Where do your people——

Ms. BULLER. On the Forest Service land.

Chairman MANZULLO. Forest Service. There are some groups that want to eliminate mountain biking from the Forest Service.

Ms. BULLER. As well as snowmobiling.

Chairman MANZULLO. What would that do to your industry if they were eliminated?

Ms. BULLER. Renting of bicycles is actually a pretty small part of our business, so I would say that would definitely decrease our rental usage in the summer months. But we actually do a significant amount of our rental business occurs when the park is closed. People have the ability to bicycle in the park with no cars. And that's actually, if you look at our rental figures, we do the highest rental of our bicycles in April, when the park is actually closed.

Chairman MANZULLO. The—there's an article—Melissa, is this your publication, The Greater Yellowstone Report.

Ms. MATHEWS. I'm Jackie.

Chairman MANZULLO. Oh, Jackie, I'm sorry. Jackie, this is your publication?

Ms. MATHEWS. It's not—I sit on the—I'm a board of director on the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

Chairman MANZULLO. I was reading this yesterday. It quotes an editorial from the Casper Star Tribune on November first. Do not overturn the snowmobile decision. You didn't see this?

Ms. MATHEWS. Is that a Greater Yellowstone Coalition report?

Chairman MANZULLO. Yes. The Greater Yellowstone Report from the Greater Yellowstone Organization.

Ms. MATHEWS. I don't believe——

Chairman MANZULLO. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition. That's not your group?

Ms. MATHEWS. Yes, it is.

Chairman MANZULLO. That is your group. It quotes an editorial here. And let me read to you a couple of lines and ask each of the people here on the panel to comment on it. It said, while the gateway communities may feel a temporary impact from a ban on snowmobiles in these parks, the ban will better serve the communities by protecting a resource that will attract tourists as long as there exists a love of nature.

The Federal Government however also must recognize that a number of businesses around Yellowstone develop their winter operations on the basis of the past winter use policy. The Interior Department, Forest Service State economic development agencies in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho, and the private sector should implement programs that will help these businesses to make the transition from snowmobile inside the park to other services.

The problem is it didn't say what other services. I'd like to ask each of the people here on the panel to fill in that blank with what these other services that would be that would pick up the impact from banning snowmobiling. Clyde, let me start with you and whoever wants to comment.

Mr. SEELY. We are certainly supportive of diversity of activities here. We do not oppose reduction of snowmobile numbers as long as the snow coach, the new concept snow coach is in place and operating to maintain the historic numbers of visitors to our area, especially to our town. Because that is where we derive our economic base. We cannot wait. We do not have the staying power to think about all these grandiose ideas and maybe possible alternatives that just might be able to be developed. And in the meantime, take—make our bank payments, make our payrolls every two weeks and maybe in two to five to ten years, there might be some additional opportunity to fill up the—fill in the void. We can't wait that long. Neither can our community.

If there's going to be some alternative, we need to work for it concurrently with what we have going. The snowmobiles, given that reduction in numbers is possible, increased snow coaches, we are—Melissa and I are on the bicycle committee that she talked about, together. We're working to increase visitation in the shoulder seasons. But I don't know how you're going—you can't just all of a sudden shut the gate and open another gate and maintain the historic levels of visitation here without taking a long time to do it; and in the meantime, we're going to suffer economically.

Chairman MANZULLO. Anybody else want to comment on the editorial? Bob.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Chairman, when I first got involved in Flagg Ranch five years ago, one of the things we tried to do was to increase the number of people cross country skiing in the area. The Park Service has designated trails away from the snowmobile trails so you can ski in the park and in the totally isolated area. In fact, one of the trails goes by some hot springs that people hike into quite often as well as cross country ski.

We advertised on radio and we promoted it through our brochures. We hired a person to do guided cross country skiing tours

into those areas with zero success. Those trails today are used by less than five people per day. They go back into that area. I don't believe from our standpoint we have any chance of developing a market that is going to help us out financially. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Glen.

Mr. LOOMIS. I've been thinking about covered wagon tours in the summer, maybe. But whatever we do, it really doesn't matter. If they don't come to visit in Yellowstone on a historical basis, many of the small businesses are at risk. The government actions are real and we just need to continually work out a way that will assure that the public can access the park in the summer as well as the winter. And I don't care if they come for a snow coach ride or a snowmobile ride or to go cross country skiing or whatever. But at this point that hasn't happened and snowmobile use has expanded. Snow coach traffic has only expanded a minimal amount.

Ms. MATHEWS. I think the one thing that the Committee doesn't realize is the amount of trails—snowmobile groomed trails out of the park. In—you have in Basin alone, I believe there's a hundred miles of groomed trails where people can come to the park and continue—they can go into the park in a snow coach and they can continue to snowmobile out of the park. Nobody's taking any of that away from them. If you read most of the responses from people that come to West Yellowstone to snowmobile, the bulk of the tours would prefer to snowmobile out of the park. It's better. The trails are better. The snowmobiling itself better. They don't really have as much fun in the park as they do out of it.

The other thing too is the Committee is in a unique situation right now where—to help design or help fund the design of the snow coaches and get that off the ground and moving quickly so that there will be a fleet available in the real near future.

Mr. REHBERG. I don't disagree that there are different kinds of usage within the snowmobile hobby, but people can snowmobile anywhere in Montana. I think that the park is the draw. I guess I kind of liken it to riding the monorail at Disneyland. Disneyland is out there and if all you could do is ride the monorail, you'd never get an opportunity to see the rides or see the concessions. And so I guess my question then to you, Bob is—and maybe I missed your point and it was a question I was going to ask anyhow so maybe you can restate it in a different way. You attempted to provide free snow coach access for cross country skiers to remote locations and they did not fly—or were you going to charge them for that service?

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Chairman, Congressman. No, the location of Flagg is the end where you can go with a wheeled vehicle. So when you're in our parking lot you're less than two or three hundred feet from the ski trails or snowshoe trails. There was no reason to provide transportation. It's available right there. And those trails go back into the forest land away from the snowmobile trails.

Mr. REHBERG. If your point was to try and find the compromise with those that want to eliminate snowmobiles from the national park, would it be a reasonable compromise to perhaps provide a snow coach opportunity for those that want to cross country ski, but to be in where the action is, getting off the monorail at Disneyland and see some of the geysers and such that they wouldn't have the ability to walk all day long to get to or take more

than one day to get to. Would you be willing to consider providing snow coach accessibility for those cross country skiers?

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Chairman, Congressman, if there is a market there, we would be doing it. And right now, we take one or two snow coaches per day into the Old Faithful area. There's less than one percent of those people that go to Yellowstone that take skis with them. We do provide that service at an additional cost. If there was a market that would help us financially, we definitely would provide transportation for cross country skiing and we do now if there is a request.

Mr. REHBERG. Could I ask Clyde the same question?

Mr. SEELY. I'm not sure I got your question correct. We of course are willing to and would be anxious to provide snow coach or snowmobile rentals to cross country skiers to get them into the park. We currently do that. Did I miss your question?

Mr. REHBERG. Well, I was looking for—what we're trying to do, it seems, in the debate is trying to lessen the number of motors or at least control the number of motors at the current level. And if you do that, there's going to be an additional need or—because what's going to happen is over the course of the next ten, 20, 30 years, more people are going to want to access Yellowstone park than are right now. That's just a fact of life.

The chairman was telling me of a situation in his home State within the Forest Service, where now, because of the numbers of people accessing the Forest Service, they've banned horses. Well, we're not there yet in daily usage, but a day will come where people need an area to recreate. So if we're looking at alternatives for the National Park Service within their rule, to try and lessen the controversy of placing the caps on the snow machines themselves, if one of the ways was to provide snow coaches paid for by somebody; you own them, National Park Service owns them, somebody owns them, to load people that want a quiet cross country opportunity to get to remote sites, would that be something that ought to be included in the alternative?

Mr. SEELY. Sure. But it comes back, Congressman, it comes back to the point that several of us have been trying to make. That is in the future. That is not this next winter. And we cannot survive until those kinds of changes come about. So—and the point is that we can take these same numbers of snowmobilers and they can recreate or snowmobile outside of Yellowstone in the wonderful snowmobiling country we have in the forest is absurd because of the numbers of people that coming into Yellowstone. Yellowstone is the initial draw. And then while they're here, they go to Yellowstone, then they go outside of the park. If all of them were to go outside of the park, it would create such an overload on the trails that are existing in the Forest Service, that that would cease to become an enjoyable experience and we'd begin a death spiral there.

Mr. REHBERG. Could I refer to one of your slides and the numbers were over 50,000 visitors. I didn't see the number of days that that included. I couldn't read it quick enough and divide the number. How many people per day are we talking about on average that access the park on snowmobiles? I don't think I need the slide. He probably knows the number off the top of his head. We were looking at the various alternatives in the prior impact statement

and it talked about 330 and 700 and such. How do those numbers correlated to—on average, daily use to the slides you put up?

Mr. SEELY. I'm not sure the average daily use. I would suspect that would be around six or 700 average. But you can't just flatten everything off and have an average all the way through. The peaks and the valleys are real and you have to have the peaks in order to get to the average. And you take the peaks off and the average suddenly becomes way lower. And so that is a great concern. You can see there the—if those peaks were all flattened out and put into the valleys, then I presume that looks like maybe just looking from here, looks like 650 or 700 people—machines.

Mr. REHBERG. So the impact statement that was considered in the prior rule that the Bush administrations put on hold for consideration did in fact place the cap, didn't take into account the peaks and valleys and ultimately there would logically be an economic impact on the community.

Mr. SEELY. Exactly. The initial—the situation we're currently under is a ban that is in—that is coming up. And with that, you can see what the economic impact would be. One of the alternatives is a 330 per day cap and ending with snowmobiles after Washington's—the Friday after Washington's birthday. There's the elongated box. Everything outside of the box, as I said earlier, would go away if that alternative is accepted. We can't live with that.

Mr. REHBERG. Being a businessman, I understand the concept of supply and demand. If you decrease supply and demand continues to increase, there's going to be a rub. If they limited it to 330, how will those permits, those daily usage permits not just be distributed among you, but will there be a charge for them and will it in fact then cause an expense, an additional expense to the 330 people to access it? How is that decided within that——

Mr. SEELY. Mr. Congressman, I think that's going to have to be decided by the planning team. We would like to have some input in that, but they would be the ones who would ultimately make that decision. Not only do the rental operators need to have access with their customers into the park, but also the people that come on their private snowmobiles. And it would be a very complicated thing to implement any kind of a reduction to that extent.

Mr. REHBERG. But it could end up being a sport for the rich, getting into the National Park Service, because the permits will not be controlled by the National Park Service, it will be controlled—when you limit supply, the price goes up. It's just a fact of life.

Mr. SEELY. That's a good assumption. I don't think—at this point, we've not heard that there's going to be any additional cost for the concessionaires permits or anything like that. But supply and demand will drive the cost up. Also, the snow coach alternative initially said that it would reduce the cost for the consumer to go in the snow coach. That is not the case. We can show you charts and graphs and all kinds of background information. That is not the case. It will become a very expensive way to go.

Chairman MANZULLO. I have a question to ask of Glen. Would you explain the stream of tax income that comes from snowmobiling?

Mr. LOOMIS. You're talking about the resort tax?

Chairman MANZULLO. Right. Let me start in the opposite direction. Do the schools in the area depend upon any of the taxes generated by snowmobiles?

Mr. LOOMIS. Most of the taxes for the schools come from property tax.

Chairman MANZULLO. Okay. Mr. Loomis. The property tax generates the revenue, but the town has a city resort tax. Now that does not fund the school system, per se. It is used by the town for its resources to provide city services. About 95 percent of the town's income comes from that three percent resort tax that we were looking at. And as you can see, it's very cyclic.

That runs your sewage system and water system?

Mr. LOOMIS. Well, to some extent. The services like water and sewer are funded through user charges. They are run pretty much from these user charges. They have been supplemented in the past from our general fund, but they are primarily funded from our user fees. But the other town services provided, like police, sidewalks, streets, those kind of things, come from the general fund, which are primarily funded from the resort tax.

Chairman MANZULLO. That would be impacted.

Mr. LOOMIS. Yes. In the past, as you can see, as the park is opened and closes, the income goes up and down tremendously. Now, it's up in summer season—down when the park closes, et cetera. As the park opens, there's an influx of visitors. As it closes, it's immediately affected. Those things are real. It affects the business, it affects the income to the city from the city resort tax.

Chairman MANZULLO. Appreciate that. Do you want to go into the——

Mr. REHBERG. Let me ask one more question of Jackie, if I might. And that is you referred to a survey that had been done within the community and about a third of the Respondents or 150 people reacted positively to the comment. And I wrote down healthy community, healthy park. Is that—is that what the wording said? Did it speak specifically to an elimination of snowmobiling in Yellowstone Park and could we have——

Ms. MATHEWS. It is part of——

Mr. REHBERG. It is part of your—not the statement but the actual statement that was put out to their community for their public response. Is that part of the——

Ms. MATHEWS [continuing]. Question, it is.

Mr. REHBERG [continuing]. Presentation?

Ms. MATHEWS. Would you like me to read the header to it?

Mr. REHBERG. If you could, please.

Ms. MATHEWS. With the changes in the winter management of Yellowstone Park looming on the horizon, we the undersigned residents and business owners of the West Yellowstone, Montana, would like to present our view of the economic reality and potential of our community. West Yellowstone is a hardworking 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 rep-

utation of West Yellowstone and the park, which hurts the marketing efforts and tourism potential.

Many predicted the demise of West Yellowstone during the fires of 1988. Many local 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 '88 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, scenic beauty and the world's first national park. West Yellowstone will thrive as long as the national beauty that attracts visitors remains unimpaired.

For these reasons, we the undersigned residents and business owners of West Yellowstone, Montana, ask Senators Max Baucus, Conrad Burns, Congressman Rick Hill, Governor Mark Racicot and our State legislators, county commissioners and national park services to protect Yellowstone Park and thereby ensure the visitors will continue to visit West Yellowstone and support the community of West Yellowstone as a just, diversified and rises to meet any challenges created by park management.

Mr. REHBERG. Chairman Manzullo shared with me the hearing notes on the Subcommittee on this very issue, and that preamble wasn't in the documentation that was given to the Committee. Was that preamble on all of the petitions that were passed out, so that—what she just read is not the same as what was presented to the Committee as the petition. And so I guess my question is when people signed the petition, were they signing specifically to their belief——

Chairman MANZULLO. The petition mentioned nothing about even limiting snowmobiling.

Mr. REHBERG. So I guess my question is the preamble——

Chairman MANZULLO. It's just the statement of fact that you want to have a good quality of life and maintain the beauty of the park.

Mr. REHBERG. As I look at—I look at the petition as a call for the healthy economy and a healthy park and I'm surprised everybody in the community didn't sign. I would have.

Mr. LOOMIS. I would have.

Mr. REHBERG. But it didn't speak to the elimination of the total ban of snowmobiles.

Ms. MATHEWS. I believe it does. Mr. Chairman, partway—let's see, under the third point there. Many predicted the economic demise of West Yellowstone during the fires of '88. Today local business leaders are convinced that removal of snowmobiles from Yellowstone will cause the downfall of our economy. They were mistaken in '88 and they are mistaken now. West Yellowstone is a resilient community and able to adapt and take advantage of the changes.

Chairman MANZULLO. Let's do this. I'd like to move into allowing some of the folks to speak. Anybody here want to give a one minute statement in the crowd? Here's what I want to do. It's going to be very orderly. It's going to be limited to one minute and I'm going to gavel you down. This is an opportunity to make a comment, not to enter into a dialogue. We just don't have time to do that.

What I'd like you to do is to try to line up over here somewhere next to Glen. We'll do it on a first come first person basis. And if you folks could move the line into the area here. You're first. Go ahead, stay right there. And then sort of get behind the curtain so the rest of the people can see what's going on. Then when you make your statement, state your name clearly and make sure you spell your last name for the record.

Before we do that, let me go into something that we didn't have chance to touch on, and that is that the impact of the banning of snowmobiling is not just here at West Yellowstone National Park. This park is owned by the taxpayers throughout the entire United States. It is a federal issue and it's not limited just to the gateway communities. It's important to state that, because taxpayers throughout the country pay taxes for the purpose of the national park system. And one of the reasons that we're having the hearing is the fact that if you look at the quantitative impact on cutting back the number of production of snowmobiles, the impact is dramatic in the manufacturing sector.

Let me just give you what it means to the district that I represent. Rockford, Illinois, in 1981, led the Nation in unemployment at 27 percent. There were more people unemployed at Rockford, Illinois in 1981 than there were in 1930. Rockford is about 35 percent manufacturing based. Most cities are about 19 percent. Within that city of 150 thousand, there are over a thousand factories and many of them one and two people shops. Many of those shops make parts for all types of vehicles. They make parts for skis, they make parts for snowmobiles, for Harley Davidson motorcycles. The manufacturing chain going into snowmobiling is also significant. And where we are now, in our economy in Rockford, we're at 7.1 percent unemployment.

I just came back from China where I serve as the chairman of the American Chinese parliamentary exchange. If you look at what's going on internationally, the United States continues to slip in our manufacturing base towards a service base. And there are many areas in the city that I represent, and in Midwest cities like Cincinnati, Cleveland, or throughout the country, that are very much affected by any limitations on the number of snowmobiles that are manufactured each year. So there is that chain that goes in.

In addition, the travel industry; the long distance industry on telephones; the clothing industry; the host industry; the advertising industry, that can be tremendously impacted by the decision that is made by the National Park Service. It will reverberate across the entire country.

All right. Let's take the first person. You've been very patient. We're going to limit you to one minute.

Mr. CARSLEY. Hello, my name is Scott Carsley, C-A-R-S-L-E-Y. I have been operating a snow coach only business in Yellowstone since 1984. In other words, 100 percent of my clientele are snow coach passengers. We deal a lot with cross country skiers, which we transport in the park. And I remind the people in this room that there are other snow coach businesses which operate a camp which depend on cross country skiers for their living.

Just like to clarify a couple other points here. Peak visitation in Yellowstone during the winter months was the year 1992–1993. We had 71 thousand visitors that winter. We collected 306,000 dollars in resort tax. 1998 and '99——

Chairman MANZULLO. I have to limit it to a minute——

Mr. CARSLEY. 60,000 people. I also have two letters I would like to submit to the record.

Chairman MANZULLO. That'd be fine. You could just leave them right here on the table. That would be fine.

[The information may be found in appendix.]

Ms. MAYHUE. My name is Drusha Mayhue. M-A-Y-H-U-E. While driving here today we were driving behind a sled carriage with two snowmobiles attached to it. And I wondered how many people can afford a snowmobile to rent or to buy? The majority of people cannot afford that. I brought 44 people here to the Yellowstone area in September of 1996 and they had a great time. But those people won't come back in the wintertime with the snowmobiles as the system is now. West Yellowstone is a one horse town. They depend exclusively on snowmobiling. There is snowmobiling outside the park. It will not shut down snowmobiling.

Change is hard. I know that. I love West Yellowstone. But I wonder if when electricity was invented, if the candlestick makers, you know, started being concerned about their jobs. I'm sure they were. But in the long term. The change was better for all of—everybody.

Chairman MANZULLO. Minute's up, thank you.

Ms. MAYHUE. And I just want to say that Kennedy did say ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country. And I ask what we can do for the Park Service, not what they can do for us.

Chairman MANZULLO. All right. Thank you. Like that.

Mr. CARLSON. Thank you, Congressman. My name is Earland Carlson, Fort Dodge, Iowa, C-A-R-L-S-O-N. My wife and I are here. We have found four other couples we've become friends with over the years here. We bring our own snowmobiles. I think most of us believe it's a big world. There's room for all of us. I, for one, am hurt by the constant park bias against snowmobilers that I hear. Time won't permit examples. We think that the research was agenda based and I doubt that it can be reconstructed by a disinterested third party.

In Alaska, we heard that the caribou were going to die with the pipeline. This summer we learned that the caribou numbers have tripled since the pipeline was installed. That's not been addressed here today. One of the joys in the park is seeing mom and pop with two kids on two snowmobiles. Seven eight year old snowmobiles with the thing, going towards newer models. I see those mom and pop——

Chairman MANZULLO. Minute's up.

Mr. CARLSON. I call you to attention of dedicated to the benefit and enjoyment of the people. Tear down the Northgate if you continue this way, Park Service.

Mr. MCCRAY. Hi, my name is David McCray and I have two——

Chairman MANZULLO. Spell your last name, David.

Mr. MCCRAY. M-C-C-R-A-Y. I operate 140 snowmobiles. We have been in business since the mid sixties. My dad started the busi-

ness. And I want to come in front of you and tell you that I represent thousands and tens of thousands of families that come and visit me every year. Some of my clients have been with me for 25 years in a row and these people came first with their children, now they're coming with their grandchildren.

These people asked me to come here today and tell you that this is an important part of their life; important part of their family. They are not interested in going in a snow coach. They want to protect Yellowstone. They have this as a very special day in their life. And also my employees, they cannot take a transition period. It just doesn't happen. A transition period will—they will lose their houses in a transition period. There's a compromise, limited numbers, cleaner, quieter snowmobiles. We're going there. We're already there.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. ANDERSON. My name is Tom Anderson, A-N-D-E-R-S-O-N, from Madison, Wisconsin. Close to you, Congressman.

My wife and I have been coming to Yellowstone for probably eight or ten years. We rode yesterday on the four cycle motors. Clean, quiet. I own a four cycle engine snowmobile back in Wisconsin. I think that's the coming of our industry. If you take the 20 percent away from the businesses here that's been talked about, only reducing it by 20 percent. As a small business owner, if you take 20 percent of my economy, 20 percent of my income, I might as well close the door. I only operate on eight or ten percent of profit. Bear that in mind. There are many companies out here, mom and pop, small ones. If you take 20 percent away from them, they're going to die. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

Ms. LOEFFLER. My name is Cheryl Loeffler, L-O-E-F-F-L-E-R, and I drive a snow coach previously—previous winters. And the impacts I've seen on just environmental issues, snowmobiles being driven in the thermal mats, the bacteria mats—excuse me, and the incidents with the wildlife, I feel that there needs to be quieter machines. There also needs to be education for these machines before releasing them on the wild habitat and into the national parks or national forests. Granted, there are many trails outside the park and I understand that people come to the park to enjoy the freedom and of course I'm nervous. Sorry. But um, we really need to take a good look at this issue, not just from a small business point of aspect but also from environmental issues. And there's a lot of off-road travel from the snowmobiles and a lot of accidents just because they're not familiar with the machine themselves. I would like to see a safer environment for all persons.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Ms. DRAKE. Hello, my name is Valerie Drake. D-R-A-K-E. I live in Belgrade, Montana. I just want to talk a little bit, since the focus of this is on the economics of the town, about changing communities. I have watched not only small towns but some of the larger cities in Montana change dramatically over the last 25 years. Mills shutting down, railroads shutting down. You know, those are some of the biggies. Changes in agriculture and lumber. And then also changes in the recreation and tourism industry.

When there's a big industry that is going down, the communities are always screaming about we're going gonna die. I can sympathize with people. I know they're very concerned about—more concerned about say, feeding their families than about paying their rents and mortgages.

But what's really impressed me in watching some of these changes over the years is how people get creative and how much more quickly those communities turn around and even get stronger for that diversity than what they were. So I want to urge you to kind of take some of the this doom and gloom with a grain of salt. I know it can be very hard——

Chairman MANZULLO. Minute's up. Thank you.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you. I'm Jack Welch. W-E-L-C-H. Not from General Electric, however. I'm here on behalf—I'm president of the Blue Ribbon Coalition. It's a large group of people believing in access, using our public lands in a responsible manner. We believe that Yellowstone is an icon and should be protected. We also believe access should be provided. We feel that there are responsible ways of accessing the park. We feel that the new technology is very important and we feel that the pilot program that Fran Mainella talked about is a good example of when the Park Service steps up and manages the park for an activity, this time snowmobiling, it can be successful. So we're looking forward to continued snowmobiling in the park and thank you for coming.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Ms. PHILLIPS. Thank you. My name is Lisa Phillips, P-H-I-L-L-I-P-S. I wasn't planning on talking today because I don't like doing it, but I had to get up and remind everybody we're talking everybody about our national treasure here, something very, very special. Something we need to respect with our hearts and with our souls. It's not a place where we can all run amok.

I believe there should be a balance of different types of recreation but we can't just let everything happen here in all areas. And what's really happening, we seem to forget we're not talking about small businesses as much as we're talking about padding the pockets of large corporations like Suzuki and Yamaha. The small businesses, like these gentlemen here, I'm afraid that even they're going to get overrun by large outlet stores from the bigger businesses, the corporations. We need to be very careful where this is headed and not get too passionate because I think we all want to protect these very special national treasures that we have. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. SCHMIER. My name is Jerry Schmier, S-C-H-M-I-E-R. I've been in West Yellowstone about 34 years. I am in the snowmobile business. We run about 90 to a hundred snowmobile rentals. Been doing it for about 30 years. I'm really concerned about some of the statements that I hear. One of the representatives here that talked today had mentioned, you know, against the snowmobile thing and the coalition, and yet they don't have to survive in the winter months. As a matter of fact, good part of the winter months, they're gone. They're not here. Their business is a summer business only.

So I know that you got to have a lot of different viewpoints from a lot of different people, but believe me, if we are even cut to 500 snowmobiles in the park, it's going to be devastating. Our peak days is what we depend onto make a living. And sometimes, that's a thousand, 1,100, 1,200 snowmobiles going into the park. Keep in mind, an equal amount——

Chairman MANZULLO. Jerry, your time's up. Thank you.

Mr. SCHMIER [continuing]. But I hope that you will support the snowmobile issue. Thank you very much for being here.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you for coming.

Mr. STEINMULLER. My name is David Steinmuller. S-T-E-I-N-M-U-L-L-E-R. I live about 70 miles north of here in Gallatin Gateway, and a couple of weeks, for the second year in a row, I'm going to be spending five days back country skiing out of a facility in the canyon area of the park, operated by Yellowstone Expeditions. Guests stay in small heated structures with comfortable beds and there's a larger unit where delicious, hearty meals are prepared by the staff each day. The staff takes people out in cross country skiing in this back country area.

This is a perfect example of a commercial operation that can be encouraged and that could help make up some of the economic problems that we've heard about. Thank you. Did I say cross country skiing?

Chairman MANZULLO. Yes. Thank you. You don't have to be that nervous.

Ms. STEINMULLER. Hi, I'm Pattie Steinmuller. S-T-E-I-N-M-U-L-L-E-R, and I'm associated with David. I also did the same cross country—exclusively cross country ski in this area in the park, and in the rendezvous trail system operated by national Forest Service. I live 70 miles away in Gallatin Gateway. I stay here. I stay in this particular hotel in November, when we have cross country skiing, ski camp. I—I'm devoted to—committed to helping the West Yellowstone economy with my money and also I feel that the park is what we really deserve and need to protect. It needs to be protected unimpaired for future generations. That is the most important mission that even in the economic situation is very important. And I think the future of West Yellowstone lies in a very diverse economy. In the winter, particularly when the economy is so concentrated on the snowmobile——

Chairman MANZULLO. Your minute's up.

Ms. STEINMULLER. And it needs to be more diverse. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. HEYES. My name's Todd Heyes, H-E-Y-E-S, and it's easy for you to say don't be nervous. But I moved to Montana in '68 to go to school. I've stayed in Montana since then, earning a living in western Montana because of the beauty of the surrounding areas. In '95, I relocated to West Yellowstone. I'll try to keep this short.

All I can say is the Park Service is the golden goose that we're all talking about. You have to keep it healthy. It belongs to the whole Nation, not to just West Yellowstone. But there is room for both snowmobiles and cross country skiing and all sorts of other things. If in fact we can't sell the beauty of this area and make a living at it, we don't deserve to be in business. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. CASE. Thank you. My name is Harold Case, C-A-S-E, and you probably think I speak funny because I'm from the east. I am president of the American Council of Snowmobile Association, and I'd like to speak as a snowmobiler.

I brought 52 people from New Hampshire and Vermont here this week. Last year, I brought 29 and they would not ride in the snow coach. They're here to snowmobile in the park and they are today. Also, I came here in '92. Most of the stores in this town were boarded up. Today, look at what you have here. We come here, we spend our money. This is what helps the economy of this area. With that, I'd like to see the park stay open to snowmobiling.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. SLYKE. My name's Steve Slyke, S-L-Y-K-E, and I'm a school teacher and fly fish guide from Bozeman. As someone who often is kind of a welcomer to tourists in this region and meets hundreds of people every summer, I'm definitely an advocate of Montana and Yellowstone Park. It's a place where I fish and have a lot of fun with a lot of people out here.

One of the issues that come up is when we start discussing the West Yellowstone issues and the issues with the snowmobiles, people from Minneapolis, Atlanta, Dallas, LA, the kind of places where my clients come from, they continually hear the headlines of poor air quality and a lot of the things that are happening with regards to decibel levels up and down the streets of West Yellowstone. This place has a reputation of not having conservation first with regarding the park. And a lot of people that would otherwise want to be here for wintertime have chosen to ski and do other things, even active snowmobilers, because they've heard about what's happening in the west. And the spin out there right now is not good. And I think if we're able to diversify our economy here and have some of these other low impact, quiet sports be part of the mix or a more prevalent part of the mix, I think the economy overall——

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. SLYKE [continuing]. And my clients would be willing to come back.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. HOLLOW. My name is John Hollow, I'm a product of the park.

Chairman MANZULLO. Spell your name, John.

Mr. HOLLOW. Hollow, H-O-L-L-O-W. My mother came here from Washington, DC, was drawn to the beauty of the place. My father came from Livingston because he was drawn to the beauties of the place. And my mother was smart enough to say you can't drive——

Chairman MANZULLO. Please put the mic closer.

Mr. HOLLOW. She was smart enough to say, you can't drive me back east unless we're married; and that's why I say I'm a product of the park.

I'd like you to look at the fact that the park is this tremendous carrot. And thinking out of the box, can we use that carrot to get people to get off of a motorized vehicle. You talk about jobs, but until we get people and use what we have to get people to walk, to ski, as Mr. Rehberg does, we're going to be a society that continues to increase the number of people that die because we're not

walking. Three hundred thousand people in America will die because they're not exercising. You've got a carrot here. Use it.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. COLLINS. My name is Clark Collins, C-O-L-L-I-N-S, and I'm the executive director of the Blue Ribbon Coalition. About 20 years ago, my folks went into the park in a snow coach. They came back saying that it was noisy and smelly and uncomfortable and not that great of an experience. Shortly after that, they bought snowmobiles and they've been snowmobiling ever since.

I have now a ten year old granddaughter that is starting to snowmobile. And in about six years when she gets her driver's license and is able to go into the park, I would like to be able to go with my parents, who are still alive and actively snowmobiling, and my granddaughter and have four generations on a snowmobile trip into the park. I hope you will save that experience for us, thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. WHEELER. My name is Paul Wheeler.

Chairman MANZULLO. Spell your name.

Mr. WHEELER. W-H-E-E-L-E-R. I think what we are ignoring here again is the fact that we are talking about economics here. We're here to talk about numbers. These gentlemen would not be in business if the demand for snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park wasn't there. Yes, I bring my own machines with me. We spend probably seven to 800 dollars per trip when we come up here. But the fact is the service stations wouldn't be open, the cafes wouldn't be open and I'm looking at this from sheer numbers. I'm looking at the number of snowmobile rental agencies versus the number of bike shops or fishing shops. These gentlemen, like I said, would not be in business if the demand wasn't there from the public. I bring my family. I want to see Yellowstone National Park and I want it to see it on a snowmobile. Not a snow coach. Not on skis.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Ms. VAN POOLEN. Hello. My name is Deborah V-A-N capital P-O-O-L-E-N, and I'd like to speak to the issue of health. I wonder what is economic vitality when you don't have your basic health? I have allergies and I cannot stand to ski behind a snowmobile. The places where I can go to ski without ensuring that there will not be snowmobiles are precious and few; and I would love to be able to come in Yellowstone Park and know that I won't be inhaling exhaust fumes, which are definitely bad for my health.

I read in a report that in the winter, the pollution in West Yellowstone compares to that of Los Angeles. And I'm wondering in the future, are people gonna not be able to come here at all because the pollution is so horrendous in the winter. I would really encourage us to broaden the abilities for people to be here and allow the snowmobiles to go into the Forest Service lands, the BLM lands, but allow the skiers to have some places——

Chairman MANZULLO. Debbie, your time is up. Thank you.

Ms. VAN POOLEN. Thank you.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, my name is Jerry Johnson, J-O-H-N-S-O-N, and it's a pleasure to speak to the Committee on Small Business. I wear many hats, one of which is I'm the mayor of West

Yellowstone. Others are that we have small businesses. My family's been here since the forties and I've been here all my life.

What I want to talk to you right now is when people downplay the 30 or 25 or 20 percent that would be lost to West Yellowstone during the transition period, I own a small shopping mall in West Yellowstone and it has eight shops in it, one of which is not open in the winter, the rest are all open in the winter. And there's no one in that mall that can disagree with me that they struggle to make the rent payments. They struggle to make the payments to their purveyors. If they struggled to make their payments with what we have going on now, I struggle because they can't make their payments. If we have a transition period that is a 20 percent loss, that is going to be devastating to those small business owners.

Chairman MANZULLO. Jerry, thank you.

Ms. WHEELER. My name is Vicki Wheeler, W-H-E-E-L-E-R. I'm a mother and I bring my children to Yellowstone. I love the park. I love the colors of the park. I love the geysers in the park. I love to go to Artist's Point. I love all of it, and I bring friends with me so that they can see it. Those that don't have snowmobiles, we usually bring somebody all the time.

I don't want to destroy the park. It's never been part of me to do anything that would hurt the park. I really am grateful for the service that's provided and for the new dimension that's given to my life, because it's offered me things that I wouldn't have otherwise. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Ms. KLATT. My may name is Lois Klatt, K-L-A-T-T. Thank you for coming to listen to us. I've lived here for 35 years. I'm a skier and I ski in the park three or four days every week, and I never hear a snowmobile. I never see anybody else. The snow machines have to stay on the roads. The skiers can go anywhere. I think there's room for everybody in the park.

[Applause.]

Ms. STEELE. Hello, my name is Raynetta Steele, S-T-E-E-L-E. I own a small motel, a restaurant and a lounge and in the winter, I struggle just to stay even. And thankfully, I have a mortgager who works with me, otherwise, I wouldn't be here. And I'll guarantee you I employ about 33 people during the wintertime, and if there were no snowmobilers, I would have to close and I would not survive. Absolutely not survive. I struggle right now to stay even. I could not survive now without some help.

There are some people like Jackie, she gets her money in the summertime. I don't get that much money. She closes in the wintertime, doesn't survive. Doesn't have to survive. Melissa has her partner, herself in her industry. That's all she has to care for. But I have 33 people plus.

Chairman MANZULLO. You can talk afterwards about what their interactions are. I appreciate your statement. Thank you.

Mr. OLDROYD. My name is William Oldroyd.

Chairman MANZULLO. Spell your last name.

Mr. OLDROYD. O-L-D-R-O-Y-D. I'm a hotel operator and owner in town. Snowmobile rental operator and owner. I appreciate Glen, Bob and Clyde's comments today. I endorse everything they've said.

[Pause.]

Mr. OLDROYD. If you think the last 30 seconds have been quiet, close down the park to snowmobiles.

Mr. MUIR. Hello, my name is Tom Muir. I'm from——

Chairman MANZULLO. Spell your last name.

Mr. MUIR. M-U-I-R. My family and I have been coming to this community since 1971 on almost a continuous basis. We have snowmobiled in most areas in the North American snowbelt. The reason that we return to this community is because of the park. It's a unique feature to be able to ride your personal snowmobile and almost reach out and touch the park.

And we sincerely like to leave it the way we found it and maybe even make it a little better if possible. We're not against change, but please, do not take this unique feature away from fellow snowmobilers. Thank you very much.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Ms. HOLLOW. Janice Hollow, H-O-L-L-O-W, from Helena, Montana. Native Montanans. I'm an avid cross country skier and this weekend my husband and I came down—we left four friends up at Big Sky who will not stay here because the air's polluted. And I haven't heard anyone speak about having to pipe fresh air in. I don't know, is it a half mile or quarter mile, so the people at the gate can have fresh air to take the money of the snowmobilers. I believe in diversity. I think if we have—learned nothing from Enron, it is West Yellowstone, diversify your portfolio.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. ROOS. My name is Shane Roos. Last name's spelled R-O-O-S. I own a small snowmobile rental operation here in West Yellowstone. Kind of a unique operation that I don't have a motel or any other properties that are associated with it. I strictly do snowmobiles. So if I am put out of business, I can go do something else. I don't have any property, you know, to worry about or anything like that.

I am still concerned with the access of Yellowstone perspective on everybody's comments. I would very much disagree with limiting access to Yellowstone National Park or to any land in the United States of America for that matter at all. I've seen the technology, I have my own mechanic, I've seen the technology coming. It's already here. We have snowmobiles that use one fourth of the amount of gas as the current two cycle motors. The technology's here. It needs to be developed. Give it time to be developed. We'd all feel really stupid if we shut the park down and all of a sudden came out with a new electric snowmobile that has no pollution and no noise. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. GORDON. My name is Greg Gordon, I live in Bozeman. Heard a lot of arguments today about the economic impacts and I think a lot of that seems that some of it is speculative as to whether something will be hurt or it will increase, I think we need to keep in mind the real issue is the health of ecosystem and that with our huge growing population, that we really need to recognize that the earth has limits and we need to look at what the impacts of snowmobiling in Yellowstone are and keep that in mind. We know those impacts. We know that it causes air pollution, we know that it impacts wildlife and we recognize that. I support the ban on

snowmobiling in Yellowstone. I'm an avid cross country skier. I would support a ban on skiing if I knew that it had an adverse impact upon the area which I lived and the wildlife and ecosystem which all our life depends on.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. SCHAAP. My name is Bill Schaap, S-C-H-A-A-P, retired. I've been in the snowmobile business as an employee for many years. In 1969, I brought a group of Boy Scouts into Yellowstone when it was more or less wilderness. And those men now still thank me for that experience because there is no way to replace an experience on snowmobile in Yellowstone in the hearts of 95 percent of the people. I also have supervised and am supervising now a snow coach operation on a part time basis. I listen and see the need for people that need to have snow coaches with small children and so on. The elderly and so on. But also promoting both of these industries for years, the interest is not there nationwide. The snow coach industry on its own cannot survive. If it gradually evolves into that, I would be very surprised. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. BLUTH. Thank you for your time. My name is Rick Bluth, B-L-U-T-H. I'm from the State of Utah. I'm here as a tourist and I'd like to testify as a tourist. I come here, bring my family, spend my money here. I come here primarily because the park is here. We have the greatest snow on earth. We're bragging Utah. I don't need to come here, but I choose to come here because the park's here and I like to snowmobile and that sounds like—that was all I had to stay. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. KRAUSS. My name is Jeff Krauss, K-R-A-U-S-S, and I'm a resident of Gallatin County.

You ask a question about the economic impacts on the schools, and while it's true that the schools don't get any resort tax, generally the schools are financed by property taxes. Those property taxes are paid by buildings like this that depend on the industry. And if you take that industry away and these businesses go out of business, you will reduce the property taxes that the schools get and you will have a significant impact on the schools. And I just wanted that for the record since you asked. Thanks.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Mr. REHBERG. You have three more.

Mr. ANDREASON. My name is John Andreason and I'm from Utah.

Chairman MANZULLO. Spell your last name.

Mr. ANDREASON. A-N-D-R-E-A-S-O-N. My family has a cabin in Island Park. I rode my sled over here today just because I seen this meeting in the paper, and I wanted to come and throw my two cents worth in.

I love snowmobiling. I've had my own sled since 1969 and I've been bringing people here to the park and to the surrounding area to recreate and try to encourage people into the snowmobile industry since 1975. My family loves it. My wife broke her arm on a brand new sled two years ago, but it's just one of those things. I love snowmobiling and I would like to invite you to go for a ride anytime you want.

Chairman MANZULLO. I am right, after this.

Mr. ANDREASON. I would love to take you for a ride anytime you want to go.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. ANDREASON. I love snowmobiling and I love West Yellowstone.

Chairman MANZULLO. The lady who is in line now will be the last person that will give testimony.

Mr. WINTER. My name is David Winter and I own two retail businesses in West Yellowstone. They're not snowmobile related but all our income in the wintertime is generated strictly from snowmobilers. If you ask the majority of the businesses in town, they will all tell you that the skiing industry does not support West Yellowstone. We cannot make it on cross country skiing alone. We bought a snowmobile just to access Yellowstone in the winter because we love the park. That's why we're here.

But there is room for everybody. Skiers can go anywhere in the park they choose to go. Snowmobilers are restricted to the roads, period. And you really need to look at this impact that it's going to have on this town and businesses all over the country. Thank you.

Mr. ROBERSON. Hi, my name is Randy Roberson, R-O-B-E-R-S-O-N. I am in agreement with what Clyde and Glen and Bill had to say here today. I'm in the snowmobile, snow coach, bus tour and lodging business here in West Yellowstone. I grew up here. And I just want to comment that, you know, Yellowstone wasn't locked up during the evolution of EPA compliant automobiles, and we're on the threshold of having EPA compliant snowmobiles. So let's don't lock them out right now. Being in all four of those businesses, I'll tell you if I thought it was such a great economic idea for me to ban snowmobiles, I wouldn't be so opposed against it.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you.

Ms. BAYLEY. My name is Shirley Bayley, B-A-Y-L-E-Y. I've never done this before. I'm a cross country skier, a snowshoer, a supporter of Free Heel and Wheel store, but I also really do like to be tolerant and look at the broad picture and try to figure out how we can do this for everybody. You know, economically and environmentally. I would like to challenge the man who had the moment of silence. I would like to say, okay, I'll get on a snowmobile and see what it's like, but I would also like to challenge snowmobilers to get off the snowmobile, turn off the engine and experience the silence of the park and the world. Silence is just something that's beyond economics and environment. It is a gift to all of us, that I would like not to lose for anybody. Thank you.

Chairman MANZULLO. And the lady here will be the last person to testify.

Ms. ZYMONAS. I wrote my thoughts down. My name is Joanie Zymonas, Z-Y-M-O-N-A-S, and I feel so strongly about protecting Yellowstone National Park that I stand here before you to volunteer my time and help anyone who chooses to make a positive change by helping phasing out snowmobiles in the park. I would gladly share my knowledge of installing computer accounting software or bookkeeping, office management. I also am a trained jeweler, so I can share that skill with anyone who would like to learn.

I commend anyone out there only to stand out and make a change. There are other ways out in the world to make a living.

I find it very disturbing that the children of this community requested restrictions on snowmobile use because the noise impacted them during the school day and the adults of this community voted it down. I think all community members should be heard. There is at the chamber of commerce in Bozeman and I'm sure they would provide that service for anyone here. It's called SCORE. Service Corps of Retired Executives. They give free information for anybody who wants to become an entrepreneur and open up their own business. I spoke with some of them and they give free information. They're there to help.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you. Congressman Rehberg, want to give a closing statement?

Mr. REHBERG. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I want to once again thank you for making your time available to come out and listen to the residents of the State of Montana and our guests from our surrounding States. I want to thank the panelists for bringing their testimony forward and understand that it would be carried forward not only in the United States Congress but to the national park services as they attempt to make their various recommendations.

It's a testament to the people of the Montana that as we listen to the one minute comments, that it was almost pro and then con and pro and con, but done in a very civil way. And that's the way Montana is.

Chairman MANZULLO. I think you should all give yourself a big hand for that.

[Applause.]

Mr. REHBERG. The emotionalism that is usually surrounding a national issue such as land usage can oftentimes cloud our ultimate decision making process. But those of us that take public administration seriously always want to have an opportunity to hear from you. We represent you in the United States Congress. And sometimes that's hard because in some issues, it's split 50/50 or 70/30, and it's hard to make those decisions, but we try to make the right decision. We can't do that without your input. That was what this hearing today was an opportunity to do.

Again, I thank Chairman Manzullo. I have a placard on the back table back there. It's a comment card. It's got my toll free number, got my Web page, got my email address. I continually look for ways to open up the dialogue to include the people that I represent in Congress. If I can serve as any intermediary between the Federal Government, sometimes doesn't sound like it's listening to you or doesn't seem to care, we hope to fill that role. If you'll pick up one of those cards, fill out the comment card if you have additional information, if you just like to get on our list. My gentleman back there, Tom, is holding it up. You can see it's a yellow card. It's for comments. I hope that you will take the time to do that. I thank you for taking your time out of busy days. I know we've only got 24 hours in a day. It's important enough for you to be here. I thank you again, Don, for taking time out of your schedule to be in Montana.

Chairman MANZULLO. Thank you very much. First of all, I want to thank the witnesses that have testified. You're all local business

people. You don't come from national organizations with a national agenda but you're testifying from the heart as to how these proposed regulations will impact you and the community. We could listen to the professionals from the big organizations in Washington. But when we come out here to a field hearing, the very purpose of that is to hear the hearts and attentions of the people who are dramatically impacted by it.

I want to commend the five panelists here and everybody else in the room, especially those who also got up and made the statements. I also want to thank the Park Service for being here, listening, taking lots of notes, making sure that this undoubtedly will be part of the comment period because that's the reason for this hearing.

The name of the hearing is Protecting Small Businesses and National Parks: The Goals Are Not Mutually Exclusive. I think it's important that that is the perspective from which I come as chairman of the Small Business Committee. As I've listened to the testimony here, it's obvious there is room to meet the interests of everybody. The new four cycle engines, our new generation, it's not the two cycle, noisy, polluting machines of the past.

But also is the opportunity to take what is a very difficult situation and to turn that around for good for entire community. I've never fly fished before. I'll be back. I've never been on a mountain before bike before. I'll be back. In fact, I was telling Denny on the way down here, I've got to find a reason to come back in the summertime. And he suggested another reason for a hearing. And we can find good reasons to do that. The quality of the testimony and the demeanor of the people here, I believe, is exemplary of the process that's going on.

The part of Illinois that I represent contains a 13,000 acre facility formerly known as the Savannah Army depot. During World War One it was an ordnance center, where ordnance was fired to test the quality of the range, et cetera. Several years ago, 400 jobs were lost from that area as a result of the latest round of closing down military bases. In the midst of trying to piece together a recovery plan, we ran into an incredible log jam with, not the Park Service but the Fish and Wildlife Service, the local redevelopment agency, the State and Federal EPA and the Department of Army.

I saw all this—I don't want to use the word contention, but lack of coordination going on, because everybody was trying to get their interests involved. In fact this area right on the Mississippi. It has part of the glacial prairie in it. Very few areas in the world that have glacial prairie area. It's also a nesting ground for bald eagles. You wouldn't think you'd have these things in northern Illinois. And right next to it is the largest mallard duck breeding facility in the world in a little town called Hanover, Illinois.

So our area, even though it's heavily industrialized, also is very sensitive ecologically. We have 12 super fund sites in our congressional district. We always have to look at balance. How do we balance the needs of nature with the needs of man. How do we balance keeping people in the business at the same time making sure at that time goal and the mission of the national parks system is maintained. One of the ways that we could that is through hear-

ings and public forum like this. People come together, they put the input.

As I listened to the testimony of all the witnesses, it occurs to me that there is a way that the National Park Service can come up with a plan to satisfy everybody's interests. Maybe not to the extent that they would want, but to satisfy and still keep the park system as pristine as all of us want it to be.

When I was in China two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to speak at Fudan University. This is a group of about 250 students that are studying the American government. And I'm invited to go back in November and teach the basis of constitutional law and what gives rise to the freedom in this country. At the end of that incredible two hour forum, a young man stood up, speaking English in a very nervous tone. It was a second language. He said you know, Congressman, maybe one of the reasons that the Chinese do not understand the Americans is the fact that in our country, we don't have the freedom of expression that you have. And the place was very silent. And on the way out, the Chinese interpreter said Congressman, five years ago, nobody could make that statement without being ushered off. She said, now people can make these statements.

What these 250 young Chinese are doing is they're studying the genius of the American system. I wish they could have been here today. This is the town hall meeting, this is the type of meeting that exemplifies the beauty of the First Amendment and the need for everybody to have a part in making America the great Nation that it is.

Again, thank you for coming. We appreciate the opportunity to be here and I will be on a snowmobile or snow coach within one hour. Thanks again. This meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:25 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

DONALD A. MANZULLO, ILLINOIS
CHAIRMAN

NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ, NEW YORK

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
107th Congress
Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515–6315

Statement of Donald A. Manzullo
Chairman
Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
West Yellowstone, MT
January 26, 2002

Why did the Chairman of the Committee on Small Business travel from Washington, DC to West Yellowstone, MT to convene a field hearing on snowmobile access to America's national parks, and in particular, Yellowstone National Park? The reason is simple – recreational use of snowmobiles has a significant economic impact on small businesses and small rural communities dependent on winter tourism, including West Yellowstone, MT. Moreover, the production and use of snowmobiles contributes over $7 billion to the American economy and creates roughly 75,000 jobs, most of which are located in small businesses.

When the National Park Service issued its final rule phasing out snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park, it determined that the final rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. A drive through West Yellowstone< MT quickly will demonstrate the fallacy of that conclusion. Almost all of the businesses in West Yellowstone are small and, in the winter, depend heavily on income from snowmobilers. In turn, the community of West Yellowstone, MT relies on those businesses and the tax revenue from tourists to provide public resources. I would certainly hope that Director Mainella will not be as

cavalier as her predecessor in dismissing the economic concerns of the small businesses and rural communities that rely on snowmobile tourism.

Today's hearing is designed to demonstrate that protecting the beauty of Yellowstone National Park need not come at the expense of America's small business and rural communities. If Director Mainella and her staff would keep an open mind on the subject, I am sure that the public comments on the supplemental environmental impact statement and proposed rule implementing changes to winter use in the parks will reveal a number of alternatives, some of which I raised in comments filed with Director Mainella's predecessor, that can accomplish both objectives.

At today's hearing will we hear from Director Mainella about the decisionmaking process that Park Service will utilize in developing a sound rule that protects people and the environment. In addition, we will hear from people who live near the Park about the impact that snowmobiling has on their businesses and communities. I look forward to their testimony for ideas that they may have on ways to accomplish preservation of the Park and preservation of the rural economic base.

I would now yield for an opening statement to my good friend from Montana, Mr. Rehberg for his opening statement.

STATEMENT OF FRAN P. MAINELLA, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS, CONCERNING LIMITATIONS ON SNOWMOBILE ACCESS IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK AND THE IMPACTS ON SMALL BUSINESSES.

JANUARY 26, 2002

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am pleased to be here today to speak to you about the status of Winter Use Plans for Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, and the National Park Service's continuing partnership with our stakeholders in the Greater Yellowstone Area. As demonstrated by my previous experience as State Parks Director in Florida, I am committed to working with communities and factoring in their concerns when making determinations about park management. I appreciate the economic impacts that our decisions may have on communities, and at the same time, I recognize that we have a statutory mandate to conserve park resources and values while providing for their enjoyment by the people of the United States.

The world's first national park—Yellowstone—was established in 1872, at which time Congress set aside more than one million acres as a "public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." Forty four years later, in 1916, Congress enacted the Organic Act which created the National Park Service and directed the Service to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for enjoyment of future generations."

The National Park Service has managed winter use in Yellowstone, Grand Teton and the Parkway for several decades. However, with the number of winter visits to the three parks growing each year, managing winter use has become increasingly controversial. Now more than ever, winter activities have become both an integral part of the visitor experience and an important component of the region's tourism industry. Land managers, constituencies, and users of public lands disagree about the appropriateness of certain uses, how often uses are allowed, and the impact of those uses.

In an effort to respond to these changes, a Winter Use Plan for the parks was completed in 1990, and in 1994 the NPS and U.S. Forest Service began work on a coordinated interagency report on Winter Visitor Use Management, entitled *Winter Visitor Use Management: a Multi-agency Assessment.* The final document, approved for publication in 1999, considered and incorporated many comments from the general public, interest groups, and local and state governments surrounding public lands in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

In May of 1997, the Fund for Animals and several other parties filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia alleging failures by the NPS to comply with the Organic Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and other federal laws and regulations in connection with winter use in the three national parks. The NPS subsequently settled the suit, in part, by an agreement to prepare a comprehensive environmental impact statement (EIS) addressing a full range of alternatives for all types of winter use in the parks.

A draft EIS was released on August 15, 1999 and the final document was completed on October 10, 2000. The Record of Decision was signed on November 22, 2000, calling for the elimination of the recreational use of snowmobiles in Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and the Parkway by the winter of 2003/2004, while continuing to provide access via an NPS-managed, mass-transit snowcoach system. In the FY 2001 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill, Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law language that explicitly prohibited the use of any funds until July 31, 2001 to promulgate or enforce a final rule to reduce the level of snowmobile use for the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 winter seasons. To be consistent with this provision, the final rule implementing the Record of Decision, which was published in the federal register on January 22, 2001, phased in the restrictions on snowmobile use with no reductions from current use until the 2002/2003 winter season.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Advocacy expressed concerns about the rulemaking process in a letter to Secretary Norton on April 16, 2001, and recommended that the NPS re-open the rulemaking. The SBA asserted that the NPS did not adequately address the issue of economic impact on small entities, did not sufficiently investigate if snowmobiles were having any adverse effects on the parks and surrounding communities, and had not adequately considered alternatives during the rulemaking process.

In December 2000, a lawsuit brought by the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association, the State of Wyoming, the Wyoming State Snowmobile Association, the Blue Ribbon Coalition, Incorporated, and other parties asked for the Record of Decision to be set aside. Like the 1997 lawsuit brought by the Fund for Animals, this litigation alleges violations

of the Organic Act, NEPA, and the ESA. Additional issues addressed in the lawsuit were concerns that the NPS did not adequately consider new snowmobile technologies, did not give due consideration to all alternatives, and did not give the public enough opportunity to participate.

On June 29, 2001, the parties reached a settlement agreement. In the settlement, the NPS agreed to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and incorporate any significant new or additional information or data with respect to a winter use plan in the three parks. The settlement agreement provides NPS with an important opportunity to consider new information, including data on new snowmobile technologies and economic impacts to local communities. Working with the cooperating agencies, including the State of Wyoming, the U.S. Forest Service, the States of Montana and Idaho, Fremont County in Idaho, Gallatin and Park Counties in Montana, and Park and Teton Counties in Wyoming, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in preparing the SEIS, will result in a better informed decision. NPS also will benefit from the cooperating agencies' environmental analyses and proposals, which will be used to the maximum extent possible in accordance with the settlement agreement.

We are quickly moving ahead with development of the SEIS. The alternatives considered in the SEIS include retaining the use of snowmobiles in the parks, deferring implementation of the existing decision, and implementing the existing decision as scheduled. We expect to release the document on the Internet in February, and a printed copy will be available this spring, which is when a 60-day public comment period will begin. A proposed rule also will be released for public comment this spring.

It has been my pleasure to have recently met with a number of local business owners and other stakeholders from the Greater Yellowstone Area. We are keenly aware of the potential for economic impacts in the communities surrounding the parks, and appreciate that any impacts could be highly significant to the snowmobile rental businesses and other small businesses in West Yellowstone and the other gateway communities. Secretary Norton and I fully understand that decisions we make have real economic consequences for people in this community and others in the Greater Yellowstone Area. Additional economic analyses will be conducted during the SEIS process.

I believe that the process we are now engaged in, the development of a supplemental EIS for winter use in Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and the Parkway, will guarantee that local communities, business owners, and others will have additional opportunities for meaningful input. I expect this process to be a model for the Secretary's four C's—consultation, cooperation, and communication, all in the name of conservation. Secretary Norton and I firmly believe that greater local input, new technology information, scientific data, economic analysis, and wider public involvement can only lead to better, more informed decisions.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I would be glad to answer any questions that you or other members of the committee may have.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF ROBERT L. WALKER TO THE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SUBMITTED JANUARY 24, 2002

Thank you for inviting me to testify at the hearing of the Committee on Small Business of the United States House of Representatives regarding the limitations on snowmobile access in Yellowstone National Park and its impact on small business. My name is Robert L. Walker and I am the C.E.O. and majority owner of International Leisure Hosts, Ltd., ("ILHL"), a public corporation with approximately 600 stockholders.

ILHL owns and operates Flagg Ranch Resort, ("Flagg Ranch"), located two miles from the south entrance to Yellowstone National Park in the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway. Flagg Ranch is operated under National Park Service ("NPS") Concession Contract CC-JODR002-90, (the "Contract"), which began in 1989 and expires at the end of 2009. Flagg Ranch Resort offers both snowcoach tours and snowmobile rentals into Yellowstone National Park ("YNP") as well as snowmobile rentals into Grand Teton National Park ("GTNP"). In addition, during the winter we offer cabin rentals as well as food and beverage sales, grocery and gasoline sales and merchandise sales from our gift shop. Flagg Ranch is also the staging point for the following: (1) Amfac snowcoaches transporting people into the Old Faithful, (2) the ten snowmobile concessionaires from Jackson who offer guided snowmobile tours of Yellowstone, and (3) individuals going into the Park with their own snowmobiles

Our Contract authorizes us to conduct winter operations at Flagg Ranch, including snowmobile rentals (guided and unguided) as well as snowcoach tours.

The phase out and elimination of snowmobiling will have disastrous financial effects on the operation at Flagg Ranch and will force us to close down during the winter season. In addition, we feel that a snowcoach only alternative for seeing the Parks in the winter is not a viable alternative, either financially or operationally.

ELIMINATION OF SNOWMOBILING.

1. **Financial Effects**. The limitation and eventual elimination of our contractual authorization to rent snowmobiles will result in a substantial financial loss to Flagg Ranch and will force us to close down during the winter season. We have estimated that this will cause a reduction in our gross revenues of 25%, a reduction in our gross income of 30%, and a reduction in our total net income of 50%.

   Based on the last two years averages, we will lose the following:

   $1,430,000 in gross revenue per year
   $1,165,000 in gross income per year
   $260,000 in net income per year.

Over the remaining life of the Contract this will amount to the following total losses:

$10,010,000 in gross revenue
$ 8,155,000 in gross income
$ 1,820,000 in net income

In addition, during the winter season Flagg Ranch has historically employed about 50 people at a total payroll of about $225,000 per season. **This employment will also be eliminated.** Without a winter season it will make it much more difficult to hire and retain certain key personnel for the summer season because we will not be able to offer them year-round employment.

2. **Interim Limits**. The one year interim period to phase out snowmobiles in the present NPS Record of Decision ("ROD"), and in one or more of the alternatives of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement ("SEIS"), presently going through the administrative process will cause serious or disastrous financial problems for any business that depends on snowmobile rental for a significant part of their income. This includes Flagg Ranch Resort.

   The limitation from the YNP south entrance for the interim period is 90 guided snowmobiles per day during the 2002-2003 season. Currently, concessioners are permitted approximately 500 guided and unguided snowmobiles per day, which includes 85 for Flagg Ranch, but does not include the number of personal snowmobiles entering the south entrance which presently has no limitation. A reasonable estimate for personal snowmobiles on the busiest day of the season would be 200, bringing the total of concessioner and personal snowmobiles to 700 per day. If the interim period maximum of 90 snowmobiles per day is divided among the concessioners and personal snowmobilers proportionally, Flagg Ranch would be authorized only 10 snowmobiles per day. **Since 90% of Flagg Ranch's revenue is from snowmobile rentals, Flagg Ranch will be forced to close during the interim phase-in period if an allocation system is used.**

   If a majority of the interim period daily maximum of 90 is allocated to Flagg Ranch, which is highly unlikely, it will still be a problem since allowing only guided snowmobile tours is in conflict with our Contract which allows us to rent unguided snowmobile rentals.

3. **Breach of Contract**. The limitation and eventual elimination of snowmobile access to Yellowstone and Grand Teton Parks is likely to constitute a breach or constructive termination of our concession contract and we will be entitled to recover damages. **FLAGG RANCH NEGOTIATED AND ENTERED INTO THE CURRENT CONCESSION CONTRACT IN GOOD FAITH WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT**. Terms of this contract require us to pay an ongoing fee and also required us to completely rebuild or move our facilities, lodge, cabins, support structures, etc., from a location next to the Snake River to a new location located a quarter mile to the North. We have completed over 95% of this requirement at a cost of approximately $9 million dollars. We expended these funds based

on the future receipt of both summer and winter revenues over the entire twenty year length of the contract to recover this investment. The elimination of a major portion of our revenue for seven or more of those twenty years is an obvious and blatant breach of contract.

4. **Termination of Plowing from Colter Bay to Flagg Ranch**. Although under the current ROD the termination of plowing the road from Colter Bay to Flagg Ranch is contingent on the expiration of our Contract, comments made by Park Service personnel in the past have led us to believe that it is the Park's preference to negotiate with Flagg to terminate plowing the road as soon as possible. It also appeared that the Park Service believes that Flagg Ranch could become a destination resort if the road is not plowed. As we have stated on numerous occasions this currently is not feasible. ***Flagg Ranch cannot be a destination resort without a plowed road from Colter Bay***. Discontinuing the plowing of the road from Colter Bay to Flagg Ranch will NOT make us a destination resort but instead will force us to close in the winter. The new Flagg Ranch facilities were designed with the primary source of heating being propane delivered by truck and our gas station tanks were sized to require filling from fuel trucks in both the summer and winter. The present gasoline tanks only provide enough storage for about three weeks in the winter. Propane deliveries are required weekly in the winter for the lodge, cabin and support facilities. Adding additional underground gas and propane tanks and/or converting all gas heating to electric heating will be cost prohibitive.

   The NPS contends and I quote, "this decision was based on the adverse affects that use of the road by automobiles has on wildlife in Grand Teton and the Parkway". In my five years of traveling the road from Moran Junction to Flagg Ranch, a distance of 25 miles, I have never seen a Moose, Deer or Elk in the winter between Colter Bay and Flagg Ranch, the 17 miles of road that will not be plowed, but have seen many Moose and Elk from the road between Moran Junction and Colter Bay , the road that will be plowed. I seriously doubt if there is any creditable data relative to the adverse affects on the wildlife that justify not plowing the road from Colter Bay to Flagg Ranch.

5. **Current ROD allows snowmobiling from Flagg Ranch**. In the implementation portion of the ROD on page 2 it states, "***If it can be demonstrated sufficiently for NPS to determine that an implemented action has affected or would substantially affect a concession operation prior to the expiration of its contract, the action will be implemented only through negotiation or when a new contract is awarded***." It appears to us that the implementation section referenced above is in direct conflict with other actions required in the ROD, as they relate to Flagg Ranch. It is our interpretation of the ROD that we will be allowed to continue renting snowmobiles until the end of our current contract.

6. **Snowcoach Only Alternative.** One of our main concerns with the snowcoach only alternative to winter operations is that, absent some type of guarantee from the Park Service that our visitation levels will remain the same or increase, we have no idea what the level of business will be for snowcoaches only.

There is significant information available that indicates the visitations to YNP will decrease dramatically if the only available way to see the Parks is by snowcoaches. The best data comes from the actual visitations by snowcoach vs snowmobile. Even though a snowcoach seat is priced about 30% less than a snowmobile, only 15% of our total Park visitation is by snowcoach, with the balance being by snowmobile. The visitations from persons owning their own snowmobiles will definitely decrease with the snowcoach only alternative

We have determined that to maintain our revenue levels, assuming winter visitation numbers will remain constant, we will have to charge $200 per snowcoach seat, a 100% increase over out current snowcoach price. If our visitation numbers decrease, the per seat charge would have to increase proportionately to keep our revenue levels at their current amounts. We have taken a survey during each of the past two winter seasons and in both cases less than 30% of the snowmobile customers indicate that they would come to Flagg Ranch to ride a snowcoach if snowmobiling was unavailable. If our customer levels decreased that significantly, our price per seat would be totally unreasonable.

The only way to eliminate this unacceptable financial risk would be a longer phase-in period, at least 6 to 7 years, decreasing snowmobiles each year and adding snowcoaches . We need time to test the market to see if there would be an adequate return on investment. Unfortunately, with a phase in period of only one year using the NPS's 50% levels, we do not have adequate time to assess the demand for snowcoaches nor to assess the number of snowcoaches we would need and the corresponding necessary capital investment. **The risk would be unreasonable and we are forced to conclude that not opening during the winter would be the prudent course of action.** If Flagg Ranch is not open during the winter, the use of Flagg Ranch as a staging area, with its restrooms, gasoline station, and dining facilities, would disappear, creating a problem for the other snowcoach concessioners.

In addition to the above issues, a problem that has received no consideration if snowmobiles are banned and one that is important if the National Park Service wants to provide guests an enjoyable and positive experience, is **there are no over the snow passenger vehicles available to meet the needs of scenic touring and none are being designed and tested that would be cost effective.** With the number of snowcoaches that would be required to meet the demand, the present vehicles are marginal at best and will not provide the large number of visitors with the positive experience they deserve. With a concentrated effort and funding to design and develop the correct over-the-snow vehicle, it will be at least 3 to 5 years before such a vehicle is available. Guests to our national parks deserve better than what is available today.

A design that provides comfortable seating, large heated view windows, or defogging air conditioning to keep the windows clear and with safe and easy ingress and egress is needed in order to make snowcoaches a viable scenic mode of transportation in the Parks. This would allow visitors to enjoy the beauty of the Parks and operate reliably and safely in all snow conditions and weather.

The financial feasibility of a new design is going to be a serious consideration. The Tucker Snow Cat company in Oregon has manufactured a passenger version which is built to transport personnel for oil exploration at the Alaskan North Slope. Last year they modified this version and demonstrated it in Yellowstone. This vehicle has a top speed of 25 mph. A top speed of 45 mph is necessary which requires an engine/transmission redesign plus a suspension redesign to provide a comfortable ride. The company estimates the cost for a suitable version with a capability for 14 passengers would be about $150,000 each. This vehicle, if redesigned, would be cost prohibitive for 14 passengers and could only be used in the winter.

When considering the large investment that concessioners will have to make to purchase the snowcoaches, it again shows the unreasonable financial risk of the snowcoach only option. Current conversion vans (15 passenger factory vans with added four-wheel drive capability) which marginally meet the needs cost about $75,000 each and vehicles designed for safety, comfort and scenic touring will cost approximately $150,000 each. This equates to a total capital investment required of $30 million dollars for suitable snowcoaches or $19 million dollars for the less suitable van conversions, assuming the total number of Park visitors by snowcoach will remain the same as the number visiting the Park by snowmobile today. For Flagg Ranch to continue operating the full resort in the winter and provide the financing for the snowcoaches needed, it will require charging over $200 per seat per day using the converted vans and $400 per seat for a snowcoach designed for safety, comfort and scenic touring. I doubt if a visitor would pay $200 per person to visit the Park and am certain they will not pay $400 per seat.

The question of demand and availability of an acceptable, affordable snowcoach will leave Flagg Ranch with no alterative but to close for the winter seasons if the snowcoach only option is the only option available.

7. **State of Wyoming and Cooperating Agencies (Adjoining Counties) Alternative**. The Supplemental Economic Impact Statement will include the "State of Wyoming and Cooperating Agencies Alternative" allowing for the continued use of snowmobiles in YNP and GTNP (Parks) with limitations. This alternative provides for the controls that will protect the Parks and allow those who want to see the Parks in the winter the freedom to do so. This alternative also will provide the necessary revenue from snowmobile rentals for those of us open in the winter to financially continue winter operations. This alternative is the compromise that allows winter access to the Parks, allows a visitor his or her choice of transportation, and at the same time, provides the necessary controls to protect the Parks for the future.

Although not supported by the NPS, the State of Wyoming and Cooperating Agencies Alternative is the correct solution to limiting access to the Parks in the winter.

8. **Communications with the National Park Service**. Over the last year, Flagg Ranch has corresponded several times with the National Park Service over the contractual issues we feel are involved with the current ROD. It has been our contention that a breach of contract has already occurred and we have accordingly documented in our correspondence that we feel that we have been damaged and have a claim against the Park Service. We have also requested that the Park Service acknowledge that, because the implementation portion of the ROD will substantially effect our operation, the prohibition against snowmobile use in the Park will not apply to Flagg Ranch until after the expiration of our existing contract, or, that the Park Service desires to enter into negotiations with us, as required by the ROD. In both instances, we have been informed that our claims are premature and we should wait until the outcome of the SEIS.

I hope that the above information is of use to the Committee and it would be my pleasure to provide any additional information that will help find an acceptable solution to this critical problem for all of us in and around the Parks that get our livelihood from the winter operations in the Parks.

As required by Rule XI clause 2(g)(4) of the Rules of the House, I hereby attest that neither I, nor any entity I represent, have received any federal grant, contract or subcontract in the current or preceding two years.

Respectfully submitted this 24th day of January, 2002.

Robert L. Walker
C.E.O. of Flagg Ranch Resort

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Hearing of the Committee on Small Business
of the United States House of Representatives
West Yellowstone Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort
West Yellowstone, Montana
January 26, 2002

Mr. Chairman, my name is Clyde Seely. I am honored and pleased to come before you today. I have been in the snowmobile rental business in West Yellowstone for 31 years and have been in the snowcoach business for about 8 years. I believe I have lived the American dream. I first came to West Yellowstone in 1958 as a laundry boy and have devoted my adult life helping to develop this community and our affiliated businesses that I have listed on the cover page. I am proud of our little town. We have worked hard to be a good partner with Yellowstone by providing community services both to thousands of visitors and park staff. We have been severely impacted with the September 11 attack on our country. We will survive that. We cannot survive the economic fall out of the impending snowmobile ban. Let us not create an economic ground zero in West Yellowstone. Ironically this is at the very time when Secretary Norton and Director Mainella are promoting visiting our national parks. They have said the Parks belong to the people and can be used for renewal and healing of the soul. Let's not shut the people out.

I currently employ over 220 people, many with families. Our payroll is in excess of $2.5 million dollars. The money these employees make turns over many times within our community. A ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone will cause great economic harm to those who work and live in our community.

At Three Bear Lodge 52 % of our total annual revenue comes from three winter months. We believe that a ban on snowmobiles would cut our winter revenue by 60-70 percent. We currently operate 260 rental snowmobiles. We also operate a fleet of snowcoaches. While we market equally to snowcoach and snowmobile clientele, only about 5% of our customers use the snowcoach vs. 95% who use the snowmobile. Mr. Chairman and Congressman Rehberg, with your permission I would like to show a few slides that graphically point out the effects of relying too heavily on the snowcoach to replace the snowmobile. (Yellowstone Visitors slide West Entrance) This slide shows the comparison of snowmobile and snowcoach visitors through the West Gate for 5 different years. The blue indicates snowmobile, the red snowcoach visitors.

As you can see, **West Yellowstone would be financially devastated** if the snowmobile ban goes into effect. **West Yellowstone would be financially devastated if a cap of 330 snowmobiles** per day is imposed through the West Gate, especially with the closing date for snowmobiles being the Friday after President's Holiday, as has been proposed. The next few slides show the effect of such a 330 snowmobile day cap.
This is mild however, compared to the effects of the total ban.
(snowmobile slides 1-4)

Let us quickly scan through 4 years. The graphs represent the daily numbers of snowmobiles that passed through the West Gate. The black box with the elongated X shows what the effects would have been for the past few years if only 330 snowmobiles would have been allowed in the West Entrance and closed after president's holiday as has now been proposed. All lines outside the box represent actual snowmobile users that would have been excluded from the Park.
This would equate to an economic loss of (Economic loss slide) between $7 and $8 million during each of the years between 1996 to 2001.

While we do not have a problem with making reasonable cutbacks on numbers of snowmobiles, we know that cutting back numbers of visitors will not only deny their rights to enjoy the Park but also our economic well-being. We have been told that new concept snowcoaches would be in place to fill the void left by the snowmobile ban. We, along with the public have been led down the primrose path right into a box canyon. New "concept snow coaches" have not been developed. With the snowmobile ban or drastically reduced numbers in place, what will the public use for transportation into Yellowstone? The current makeshift snowcoaches that we use today will fail dismally in satisfying public needs. There are many reasons for that. I would be glad to expound upon that if you like.

While new snowcoach technology has not arrived, new snowmobile technology is quantum leaps ahead. The new 4-stroke snowmobile was mass-produced this year. We hope you will accept our offer to ride one so you can see for yourself how clean and quiet they are.

As I have indicated, one of the fallacies with the snowmobile ban is the false assumption that new "concept snowcoaches" would be on the snow to effectively replace the snowmobile. Nothing could be farther from the truth. New concept snowcoaches have not been built. They have not been funded. It will be years before snowcoaches can be developed and the necessary marketing completed. **The proposed one or two-year transition period is not enough to accomplish anything but the financial devastation of West Yellowstone.**
Our community will not be pacified and lulled into a false sense of security that all will be okay. **This proposed ban is not okay: it will be financially devastating to our community.**

My final plea is that we all work together to protect the park, to protect the public's choice of access and to protect the economic well being of one of Yellowstone's most dedicated partners, West Yellowstone. Together we can make it all happen. Together we can do what is right.

Thank you so much for caring enough to come out here. Thank for providing this forum for listening to our concerns.

Clyde G. Seely

Attachments:

1) Letter addressed to Winter Use Plan, Superintendent's Office dated August 12, 2001 regarding reference to petition "A call for a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park" referred to in the Subcommittee Hearing chaired by Congressman Manzullo July 13, 2000.
2) Copies of the wording of both petitions referred too.

West Yellowstone (West Gate to Yellowstone Park)
Graphs and Charts of snowmobile entries

2000-01, 1999-2000, 1998-1999, 1995-1996

GRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE FOLLOWING:

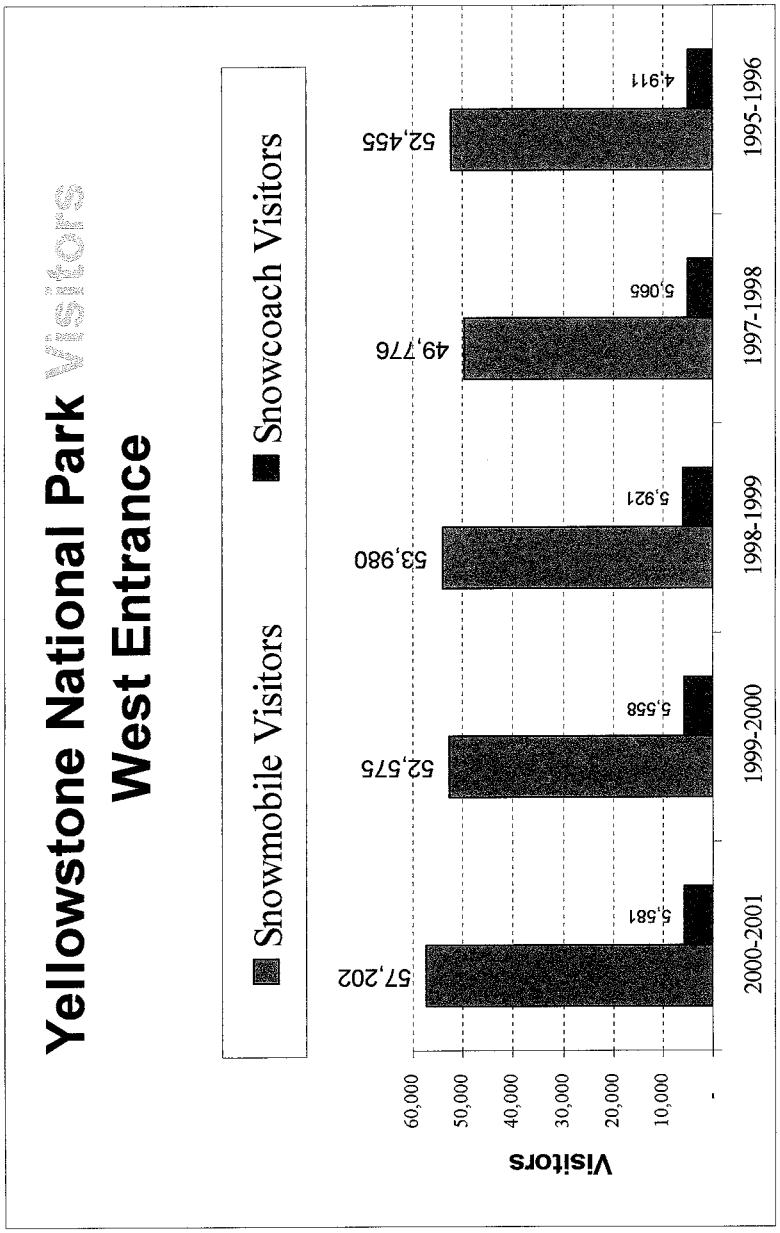
1. The days the Park was open to snowmobiles
2. The numbers of snowmobiles that passed through the West Gate
3. The potential cap of 330 snowmobiles per day (guided only and closed the Friday after President's Holiday). The box with the elongated X indicates the numbers of snowmobiles that would be allowed with this NPS alternative.

NUMBERS CHART

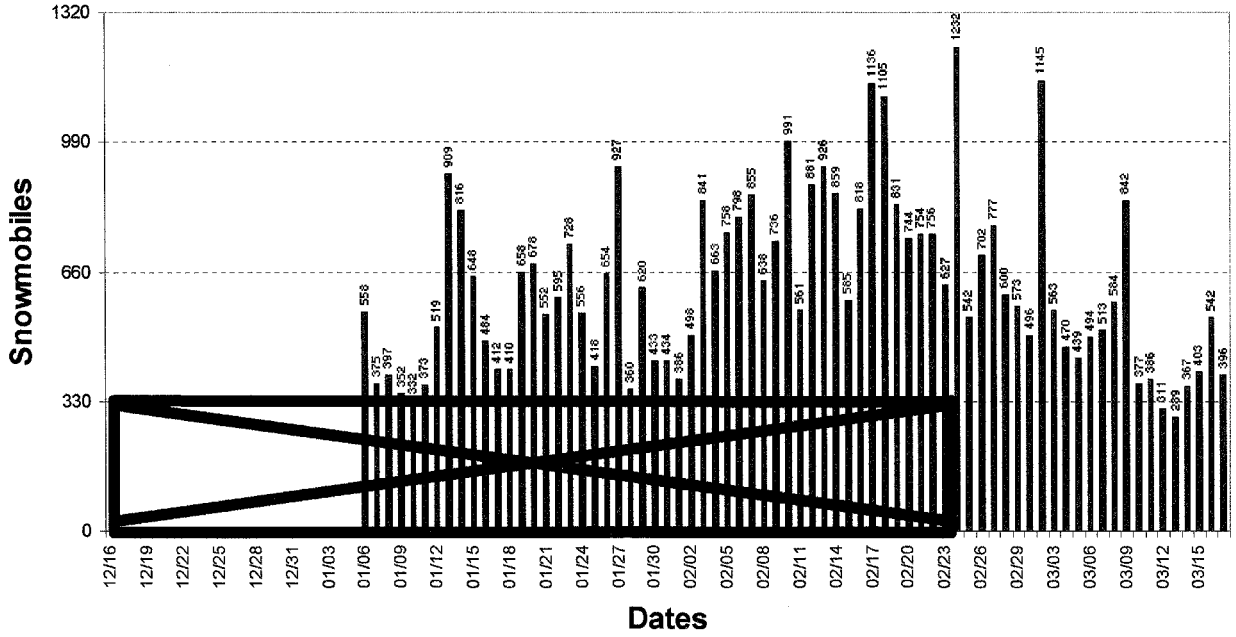
The numbers chart indicates the economic impact that a cap of 330 snowmobiles respectively would have had on the community of West Yellowstone for the above years. The following are illustrated:

A) Total revenue produced for the respective years
B) The capped allowance (in elongated X box) of 330 snowmobiles permitted only prior to the Friday after President' Day
C) The Revenue that would be lost by implementing the cap of 330 mentioned above

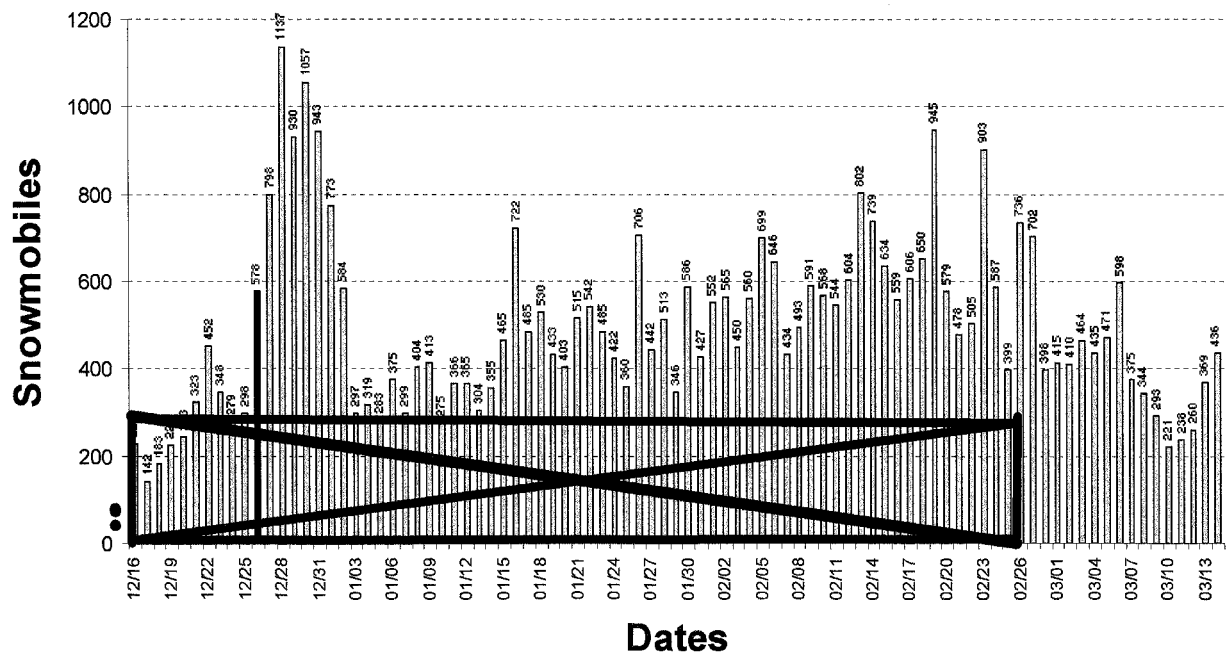
Clyde Seely **Bill Howell**

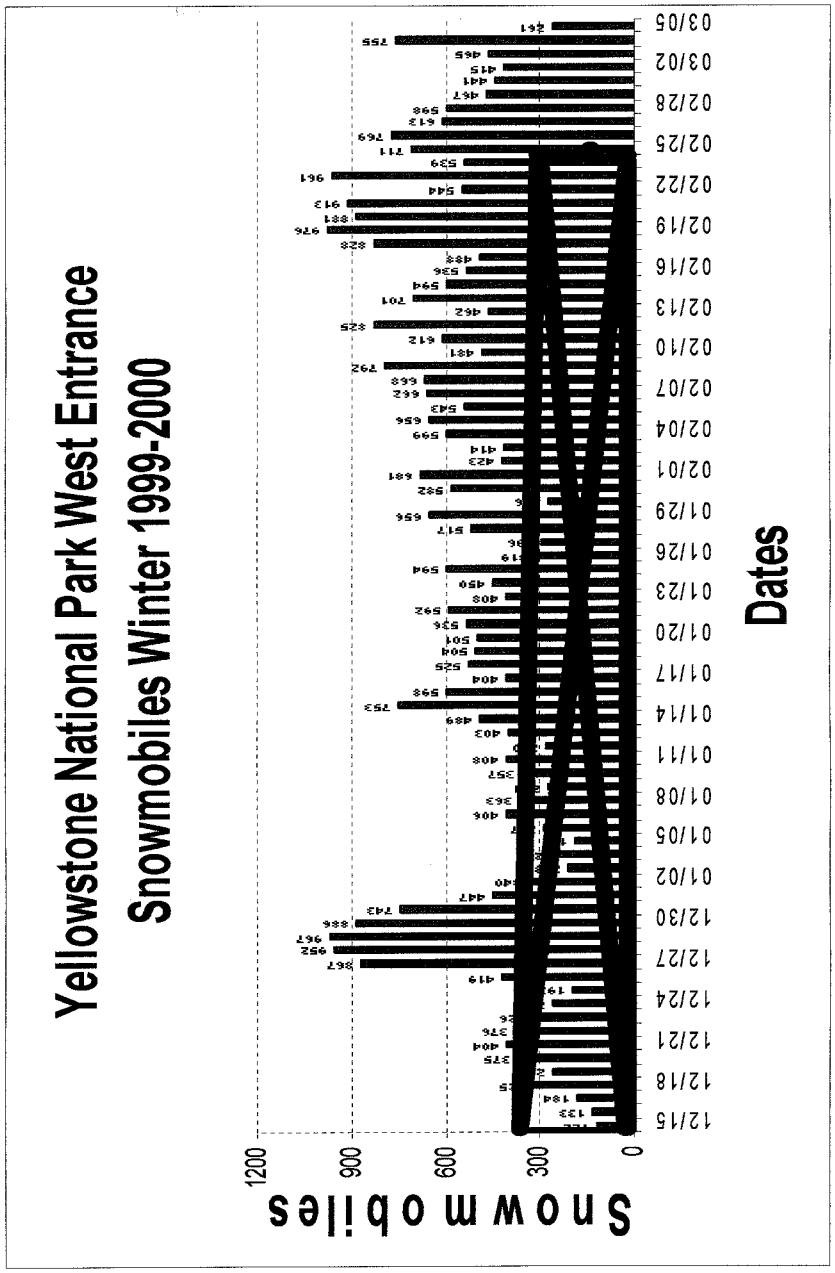

Yellowstone National Park Visitors
West Entrance
Snowmobile Visitors
Snowcoach Visitors
Visitors
60,000
50,000
40,000
30,000
20,000
10,000
-
57,202
5,581
52,575
5,558
53,980
5,921
49,776
5,065
52,455
4,911
2000-2001
1999-2000
1998-1999
1997-1998
1995-1996

Yellowstone National Park West Entrance
Snowmobiles Winter 1995-96



Yellowstone National Park West Entrance
Snowmobile Winter 1998-99




Yellowstone National Park West Entrance
Snowmobiles Winter 1999-2000
Snowmobiles
1200
900
600
300
0
Dates
12/15
12/18
12/21
12/24
12/27
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01/02
01/05
01/08
01/11
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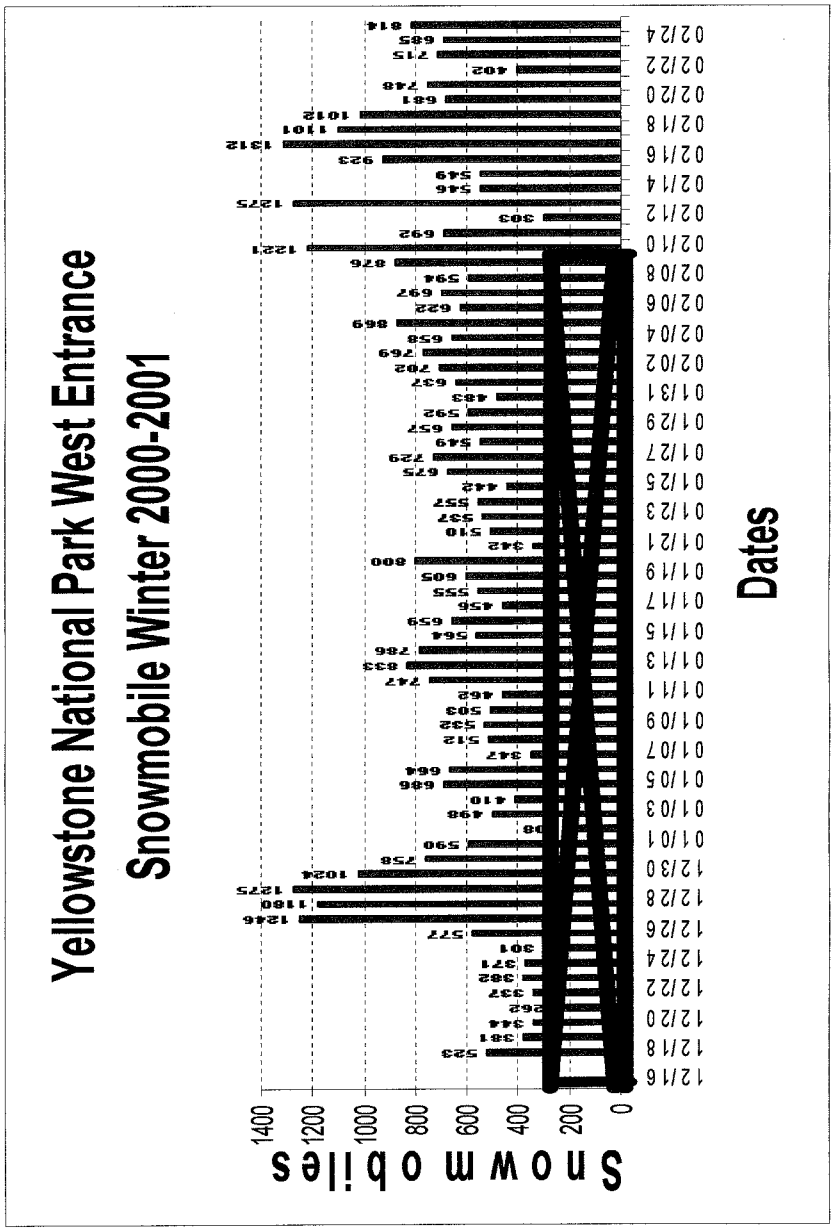
Yellowstone National Park West Entrance
Snowmobile Winter 2000-2001
Snowmobiles
Dates
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1400
12/16
12/18
12/20
12/22
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1024
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512
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833
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675
729
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463
637
702
769
658
869
622
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876
1221
692
303
1275
546
549
923
1312
1101
1012
681
748
402
715
685
814

Economic Loss to West Yellowstone

Loss realized from 330 cap and closure Friday after Presidents Weekend

	330 Cap (closed Friday after President's Weekend)			
Winter Season	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1995-1996
Total Actual Revenue	$14,966,746	$13,266,140	$13,754,664	$13,307,450
Capped Revenue Proposal	$7,136,410	$7,010,078	$6,385,639	$4,685,472
Lost revenue to West Yellowstone	($7,830,336)	($6,256,063)	($7,369,026)	($8,621,978)

Potential Cap through West Gate of 330, 500, & 700

Including loss from closure after President's Weekend Proposal

	330 Cap				500 Cap				700 Cap			
	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1995-1996	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1995-1996	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1995-1996
A) TOTAL REVENUE PRODUCED												
Snowmobiles	45,854	42,296	44,213	44,988	45,854	42,296	44,213	44,988	45,854	42,296	44,213	44,988
People	58,693	52,024	53,940	52,186	58,693	52,024	53,940	52,186	58,693	52,024	53,940	52,186
TOTAL REVENUE	$14,966,746	$13,266,140	$13,754,664	$13,307,450	$14,966,746	$13,266,140	$13,754,664	$13,307,450	$14,966,746	$13,266,140	$13,754,664	$13,307,450
B) CAPPED ALLOWANCE (in X box) = NPS proposed alternative (closed Friday after President's Weekend)												
Snowmobiles	21,864	22,350	20,526	15,840	31,231	30,017	27,419	24,664	38,154	34,556	31,045	28,149
People	27,986	27,491	25,042	18,374	39,976	36,921	33,451	28,610	48,837	42,504	37,875	32,653
Dollars	$7,136,410	$7,010,078	$6,385,639	$4,685,472	$12,551,641	$10,838,489	$9,658,100	$8,326,474	$12,453,466	$10,838,489	$9,658,100	$8,326,474
C) REVENUE LOST by NPS proposed alternative (closed Friday after President's Weekend)												
Snowmobiles	23,990	19,946	23,687	29,148	14,623	12,279	16,794	20,324	7,700	7,740	13,168	16,839
People	30,707	24,534	28,898	33,812	18,717	15,103	20,489	23,576	9,856	9,520	16,065	19,533
TOTAL REVENUE LOST	($7,830,336)	($6,256,063)	($7,369,026)	($8,621,978)	($4,772,947)	($3,851,308)	($5,224,613)	($6,011,839)	($2,513,280)	($2,427,651)	($4,096,565)	($4,980,976)
	*	**		***								

* Park closed 3 weeks early. Based on 1998-99, the potentional loss would have been an additional $2,247,302

** Park closed 1 week early. Based on 1998-99, the potentional loss would have been an additional $982,979

*** Lost 3 weeks due to late Park opening. Based on 1998-99, the potentional loss would have been an additional $3,385,224

Clyde G. Seely
Box 1590
West Yellowstone, Mt. 59758

Hearing of the Committee on Small Business
Of the United States House of Representatives
West Yellowstone, Montana
January 26, 2002

Attachments to testimony of Clyde Seely:

1) Letter addressed to Winter Use Plan, Superintendent's Office dated August 12, 2001 regarding reference to "A call for a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park" referred to in the Subcommittee Hearing chaired by Congressman Manzullo July 13, 2000.

2) Copies of the wording of both petitions referred too.

Clyde Seely
Box 1590, West Yellowstone, mt. 58758

Winter Use Plan
Superintendent's Office
Grand Teton National Park
PO Drawer 170
Moose, Wy. 83012

August 12, 2001

To Superintendent's Office:

I would like to submit for your review documents that will set the record straight as to the feelings of the citizenry and business owners in West Yellowstone regarding the banning of snowmobiles.

1) I am enclosing a copy of a petition entitled **"A call for a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park".** We assumed the 150 signers agreed with what the petition said. However, this petition was construed by some saying these people want snowmobiles banned. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition misrepresented this petition in their Summer 2000 Report Vol.. 17 #2 Page 22. "Its message is simple...A phase out of snowmobiling in Yellowstone will not harm the local economy." Kevin Collins, National Parks Conservation Association, stated in a House Subcommittee Hearing chaired by Congressman Manzullo July 13, 2000 the following in reference to the above mentioned petition. "Over 150 business owners (we counted 8) and residents in West Yellowstone signed a petition in support of the phase out and asking for support during the economic transition." There were **8 businesses** out of their **150 respondents**. In fact, Stephen Saunder's office at the Assistant Secretaries Office, stated to some of us, "apparently there is a lot of support for banning snowmobiles among your local people". This is not true. We are enclosing the wording of the above petition for your review. **You will notice it does not say anything about banning snowmobiles.**

2) In an effort to set the record straight we circulated a petition among our businesses and residents so you can have a better indicator what the feeling really is in West Yellowstone. We are enclosing a copy of the petition we circulated entitled **"A Plea For Responsible and Well thought out Solutions to Protect Yellowstone and Deep Vibrant Communities".** This petition clearly states our belief that the Park needs to be protected. It further states that the snowmobile should remain a transportation option in the Park and that banning snowmobiles will have a negative financial impact on our employees, businesses, the school and town services. The results of the s petition supporting continued use of snowmobiles in Yellowstone , leave little question how the vast majority of the businesses and people feel about this issue. There were **198 businesses** that signed the petition in addition to **447 individuals and employees** for a total of **645 respondents.** We are enclosing a copy of the petition for your review. In the interest of saving bulk we will not send all the pages of signatures unless you wish us to. We have the signatures of both petitions of file.

We hope this information will be considered as important input from our community regarding the necessity of keeping snowmobiles as an acceptable mode of transportation in Yellowstone.

Sincerely,

Clyde G. Seely

A Plea For Responsible and Well Thought out Solutions
To Protect Yellowstone and Keep Vibrant Communities

To: Department of Interior, Senators, Congresspersons, County Commissioners

We the undersigned residents and business owners of **West Yellowstone** wish to convey our feelings regarding the the proposed "all snowcoach" alternative in the Yellowstone Winter Use, EIS with the end result being a ban on snowmobiles from Yellowstone and the Grand Teton National Parks.

- We believe the Park must be protected and kept healthy for not only this, but future generations. There is a middle ground whereby, protection of the Park, access by the public and prospering gateway communities can coexist.
- We believe the Gateway Communities are providing an essential service in protecting the Parks by providing ancillary services outside the park, thereby avoiding concentration of people within the boundaries of the Park.
- We support increased snowcoach opportunities, and believe the snowmobile must remain in the mix in order to fulfill public expectations, access and a financial vibrancy of the community.
- We recognize some change is necessary. We encourage being proactive in continuing to help the Park by using gasohol, pre-sold park passes, new snowmobile and snowcoach technology and increased educational opportunities.
- We believe snowmobiles and old snowcoaches should be and can be cleaner and quieter.
- We believe the banning of snowmobiles will have a negative financial impact on employees, businesses, the school and town services.
- We believe the Park and the Gateway Communities should work together through adaptive management.

Please consider the above beliefs from the following residents and business people who feel so much is at stake with this decision. Please help us to keep our town a vibrant and healthy community and at the same time protect the Park.

	NAME	ADDRESS OR BUSINESS
B	Shane Roos	ABC Snowmobile
B	Liz Roos	Yellowstone Juice Co
B	Bob Peppler	ABC Jet Ski Rentals

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
[illegible]	[illegible] Rd Cameron Mt 59720
Dan Alder	HC66 Box 676 Island Park, ID 83429
[illegible]	PO Box 873 W Ystone MT 59758
Patrick E. Mahoney	P.O. Box 1287 West Yellowstone, MT 59758

Testimony for hearing of the Committee on Small Business of U.S. House of Representatives
Hearing held on January 26, 2002 in West Yellowstone
Testimony of Melissa Buller small business owner in West Yellowstone, Montana

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Melissa Buller. I am co-owner of a bicycle and cross-country ski shop in West Yellowstone, Montana. Our store, Freeheel and Wheel has been in business for over five years. We rent and sell bicycles and cross country skis. We specialize in customer service, which involves educating visitors on the endless non-motorized activities available in our area. These activities include biking, hiking, backpacking, trail-running, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, and cross country skiing. Thanks to tremendous local support and a growing base of regional customers we have been able to sustain our business in the "snowmobile capital of the world."

I believe a change regarding snowmobiling in Yellowstone National Park must occur. In our business we interact daily with people who are interested in exploring Yellowstone in a non-motorized fashion. Currently the level of usage by inefficient snowmobiles has turned Yellowstone into a snowmobile park. The roads are utilized by hundreds of machines daily, thousands on holidays. These machines typically are loud in passing and leave an oily residue on rutted trails. These conditions do not provide a quality experience for all visitors, nor are they inviting for potential visitors. Often tourists visiting in November to ski will say they will not visit West Yellowstone or the park after Christmas because of high numbers of snowmobiles. They feel that the noise and air pollution are intolerable when trying to enjoy the area on skis. Snow-coach travelers endure extremely bumpy roads and despite incredible grooming efforts the park cannot keep the trails smooth with large numbers of snowmobiles.

I am not in favor of a snowmobile ban in Yellowstone. Visiting the park on a snowmobile is a tradition for many people. I do not feel this right needs to be taken away. I feel that a limited number of clean machines in Yellowstone would allow for independent travel along with increased snow-coach and non-motorized use. Diversifying the parks winter access will attract a broader market. This broader market could potentially increase visitation with less environmental impact.

My decision to open a business in West Yellowstone was not strictly a business decision. Many who live in this area do so because of the recreational opportunities available right out our back door. There are locals and visitors who feel that as skiers we are shut out of Yellowstone and other public lands in the winter because of the large numbers of snowmobilers. Certainly many trails could be used by skiers, however with snowmobiles traveling at high speeds it is simply not safe. The park service could consider opening Yellowstone to skiers and snowshoers perhaps even one day a month. People dream of skate skiing to Old Faithful on a clear day. During periods of low snow , like December and March, the park could be open for skiers and snowshoers only. There is often not enough snow for over-snow vehicles yet there are still ample opportunities to enjoy the park on skis. An overwhelming response to such an

opportunity could prove that people will chose to see Yellowstone on their own power. This could lengthen busy seasons in the park and gateway communities with little or no impact on wildlife or resources. The park service could also consider shuttle services in order to provide a more economical alternative for skiers in Yellowstone. Skiers also enjoy traveling independently. Presently going to Old Faithful to ski for the day on your own is not an option, unless you spend $80-$100 to rent a snowmobile. There are also wonderful guided snow-coach ski tours, yet not all visitors need or can afford a guided trip.

The park service does not have the responsibility to maintain the economic vitality of those businesses who chose to utilize its resources. The park service must protect the resources and provide access is such a way that is not mutually exclusive or detrimental to the environment. The park service should also consider the overwhelming public support for reducing the air and noise pollution in Yellowstone. The sooner a decision is made we can move forward. West Yellowstone has survived many economic setbacks including wildfires, government furloughs, and weather. The changes that will occur in Yellowstone will be healthier for the park and for West Yellowstone. The community can thrive as the"winter recreation capital of the world." Thank you for your consideration.

Melissa Buller
P.O. Box 634
West Yellowstone MT 59758
406-646-7744
freeheel@wyellowstone.com

Attachments
Testimony of Jackie Mathews Before the House Committee on Small Business
West Yellowstone, Montana, January 26, 2002

1. Cover letter from West Yellowstone Citizens for a Healthy Park describing local support for snowmobile phase out and protection of Yellowstone National Park.

2. Thirty-three personal letters from West Yellowstone business owners and citizens in support of Yellowstone Park snowmobile phase out and diversification of local economy.

3. Cover letter and signed petition "*A Call for a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park*".

4. Statements from local business owners in West Yellowstone in support of snowmobile phase out.

5. Excerpts from citizen comments in support of protection of Yellowstone National Park.

6. News article: *West Yellowstone residents show support for sled ban*. Casper Star-Tribune.

7. News article on marketing innovation in winter tourism in Yellowstone National Park: *Emphasizing Yellowstone Park's other attributes*. Billings Gazette.

8. Letter of Business Owner Scott Carsley to Chairman Manzullo dated July 2000 outlining economic opportunities of snowmobile phase out and requesting assistance of House Small Business Subcommittee.

9. Letter of Town Councilman Doug Edgerton dated May 2000 requesting involvement in House Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands hearing and outlining economic opportunities of snowmobile phase out.

10. Testimony of Town Councilman Doug Edgerton dated July 2000 to the House Small Business Subcommittee on Tax, Finance and Exports requesting participation, outlining economic opportunities of snowmobile phase out, and requesting assistance of House Small Business Subcommittee.

11. Letter of Town Councilman Gibson Bailey dated January 2002 to House Small Business Committee requesting participation and outlining economic opportunities of snowmobile phase out.

12. Economic information outlining the potential for the local economy to adjust, diversify and thrive with snowmobile phase out.

13. Graph A. Winter visitors through West Gate of Yellowstone National Park and Resort Tax Revenue in West Yellowstone.

14. Graph B. Resort tax collections for the Town of West Yellowstone 1996-2001.

June 25, 2000

Jackie Mathews
President, West Yellowstone Citizens for a Healthy Park
315 Canyon St.
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

Dear Representative Hill,

I and my fellow West Yellowstone residents Doug Edgerton, Town Councilman and Scott Carsley, appreciated the opportunity to meet with your staff late in April. We remain concerned, however, by your lack of attention to our comments on Yellowstone winter use. As we stated in our meeting, we believe strongly that the removal of snowmobiles and implementation of a system of snowcoaches will best protect the park and insure continued winter visitation, which our town needs for its economic well-being. We fully oppose any action by Congress to undermine the public process underway for Yellowstone National Park.

We are joined in this belief and commitment to preserving both Yellowstone and our community by the more than 150 West Yellowstone residents--nearly a third of the town's voting population--who signed the enclosed petition as well as the 32 residents whose letters are attached.
We are extremely disappointed in the Montana delegation for ignoring our requests for leadership to:

1) Protect Yellowstone National Park and thereby ensure that visitors continue to visit West Yellowstone and support the local economy;
2) Support the community of West Yellowstone as it adjusts, diversifies and rises to meet any challenges created by changes in park management.

The more than 150 residents of West Yellowstone who signed the enclosed petition specifically asked for your leadership on the above issues. As president of the organization West Yellowstone Citizens for a Healthy Park, I believe I speak for all of those residents when I ask you now: *To insure that Congress not block Yellowstone's attempt to protect the park and implement a mass transit snowcoach system. We need Congressional support for preservation of our national parks—not Congressional roadblocks.*

This is not the time for foot dragging. We who witness Yellowstone each winter know all too well that there is a better way for the parks and our town. As has become abundantly clear in the past nine months, snowmobile use in Yellowstone flies in the face of law, science and public opinion. It is time for a change. A public transit system of snowcoaches can work and we'd appreciate your support to make sure that it does work.

Finally, we are disappointed by the uncritical ear which you 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, from which I've excerpted:

"*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).

Please join us in our endeavor to protect Yellowstone Park and to insure a successful economic transition to a winter economy based on snowcoach access to the park. Please call me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Jackie Mathews
West Yellowstone, MT
(406) 646-7642

Please find enclosed letters from the following West Yellowstone residents in support of removing snowmobiles from Yellowstone National Park.

1. Patrick McKenna
2. Dan Hull, Madison River Outfitters
3. Melissa Sample
4. Louise Cochrane, Cochrane Accounting
5. Elizabeth Scott
6. Paul Studebaker
7. Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Hitchcock Jr.
8. Vincent Young
9. Wesley D. and Janet D. Nelson
10. Chris A. Harris
11. Gilbert Nicklas
12. Carl W. and Rosalynn Philippi
13. Scott Carsley, Alpen Guides
14. William J. and Peggy J. Moore
15. Brett Fitzgerald
16. Kelli Sanders, Freeheel and Wheel, Inc.
17. Melissa Buller, Freeheel and Wheel, Inc.
18. Christine Quinn
19. Reid Sanders
20. Shauna L. Laszlo
21. Carol Barney
22. Glenn M. Bell
23. Steve Hoovler
24. Arnold Siegler
25. Calvin and Janice Dunbar, Food Roundup Supermarket
26. Larry and Charlotte Miller, Sleepy Hollow Inn
27. Walker and Bonnie Cross, Desert Inn and Cross Winds Inn
28. Craig Menzel, Menzel's Curios, Inc
29. Scott Clewell, The Bookworm
30. Paul Shea
31. Bruce Coan
32. Harry Mayo, South Fork Realty

425 Sylvan Circle
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
January 25, 2002

Dear Mr. Rehberg,

In 1872, The Yellowstone National Park was founded with great wisdom and vision. That vision and wisdom grow more significant with every passing day, as the whole world knows this special place. That vision preserved a place for all to experience, unchanged, the wonders of nature. Those unchanged places give all a chance to enjoy beauty and solitude. More than ever The Yellowstone National Park has become a place for people to renew and refresh their spirits. This renewal is so important, especially in times like these.

The management of The Yellowstone National Park must assure the perpetuity of this incredible place. In 1872, it was inconceivable that, annually, 1.2 million visitors would pass through a single entrance to the Park. How many will pass through in the year 2072? What impact will they have and what will be their conveyance? With time and "technology", the visitation becomes ever more destructive and aggressive. It could be otherwise.

Lamentably, those who profit most financially from The Yellowstone National Park give little or nothing back to it and are the its greatest abusers and greatest critics of its management. Hiram Chittenden wrote in 1892 that "those living closest to The Yellowstone National Park should be its greatest stewards but are, in fact, its worst predators. Fortunately for politicians, this local hostility is exhibited by an infinitesimally small group."

The management of The Yellowstone National Park must be apolitical with the Park's well being at the core. The world will groan if it discovers that The Yellowstone National Park is managed for the profit of some adjacent business or as payback of some political favor. Please follow the guidance of those with the health of The Yellowstone National Park as their goal and not those with the health of their bottom line as their goal. Our nation and the entire world will thank you.

Sincerely,

Bruce and Charlotte Coan
West Yellowstone, MT

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.

8 June 2000
Honorable Craig Thomas
U.S. Congress
Re: Snowmobiling in Yellowstone National Park

Dear Sir,

I have been a resident of W. Yellowstone Montana for four years and have been visiting this area for 20 years prior to that.

I am opposed to snowmobiling in Yellowstone National Park due to the pollution that is caused.

This issue is not about access, but rather about air quality which directly calls into question what kind of park we leave our grand children

Sincerely;
Mr. Chris A. Harris
Box 162
W. Yellowstone MT.

To The Honorable James Hansen,

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

June 10, 2000

To: The Honorable James Hansen
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

MADISON RIVER
OUTFITTERS
INC.
P.O. BOX 398 • WEST YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA 59758
(406) 646-9644 • FAX (406) 646-9630

June 9th, 2000

Hon. James Hansen,

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 7, 2000

Melissa Sample
P.O. Box 2102
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

The Honorable Senator Hansen:

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

Louise Cochrane, CPA
P.O. Box 1313
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
406-646-0050

June 5, 2000

The Honorable Senator Hansen:

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

ELIZABETH B. SCOTT
POST BOX 683
WEST YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA 59758

June 9, 2000

The Honorable James Hansen

Dear Sir:

I am writing to you today to let you know that I am in full support of the banning of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park. I am a year round resident of West Yellowstone, Montana.

It is my belief that the usage of snowmobiles in the park is a real threat to the wildlife and contradicts the pristine value of such a historical landmark. I am sick of the air and noise pollution they create. I cannot tolerate the harassment of wildlife by the disrespectful tourist during a crucial survival time in these animals' lives. Yellowstone Park needs to be protected!!

I implore you to support the banning of snowmobiles in Yellowstone Park, Please!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth B. Scott

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

Walker and Bonnie Cross owners of the Desert Inn and Cross Winds in West Yellowstone, the Executive Inn in Jackson Wyoming, the Best Western Motel in Pinedale Wyoming and the Best Western in Rexburg Idaho:

"I want to work with the park" "The future is snowcoaches"

South Fork Realty Inc.
Harry Mayo · Broker/Owner

Honorable Craig Thomas
Chairman: Subcommittee on
National Parks, Historic
Preservation, and Recreation, and
members of the Subcommittee.

Sirs,

I am writing to express my support for Yellowstone National Park's proposal to prohibit the recreational use of snowmobiles in the Park.

I have lived in West Yellowstone since 1975 and have seen firsthand the dramatic increase in recreational snowmobile usage in the Park over the years. In my mind there is little doubt that the Park experience has been degraded, for snowmobilers and non-snowmobilers alike, by this virtually unrestricted growth and the resultant noise and emissions pollution it has created.

Yellowstone National Park is a priceless and irreplaceable treasure, the first priority of those charged with its care should be to ensure that it will be passed down to future generations in a condition which is as unblemished by human impact as is possible while still allowing public use. Anything less would be a disgrace and unworthy of this priceless gift.

Respectfully submitted,

H C Mayo

Harold C Mayo

P.O. Box 590 · 515 U.S.Hwy 20 · West Yellowstone, MT. 59758 · 406·646·7868

BLUE RIBBON FLIES

BOX 1037 • WEST YELLOWSTONE, MT 59758 • (406) 646-9365

Honorable James V. Hansen, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
And Public Lands

21 May 2000

We are the luckiest people in the world. We get to live and work in Yellowstone, but our quality of life and livelihood are threatened. 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 come back during the winter season.

Yellowstone Park owes no one a living. The few businesses that use snowmobiling as a part of their conglomerate will survive when the antiquated-highly pollutant causing machines are eliminated.

We support the Park Service's decision promoting snow coach use, and banning snowmobiles during the winter season. And, we look forward to working with all local business to promote a cleaner, stronger, more diversified winter economy for all businesses and citizens.

Thanking you in advance for considering our comments, we remain:

Respectfully, Jackie & Craig Mathews

Craig and Jackie Mathews

To: The Honorable James Hansen
From: Glenn M. Bell
Date: June 8, 2000
Subject: Snowmobiles In Yellowstone National Park

As a property owner and landlord in the West Yellowstone area since 1994, I feel that my position concerning the ongoing controversy over snowmobiling in Yellowstone National Park should be noted.

Snowmobiles in Yellowstone Park greatly reduce what could be a great winter experience in our country's first National Park. The situation has become so out of hand that I rarely travel in Yellowstone during the winter. The noise, smoke, and bumpy ride in the Park has reached a point where it is hard for me to believe I am actually experiencing Yellowstone.

The local snowmobile industry claims that this is the only business that keeps our town open in the winter. I believe this is true only if the rental operators are allowed to remain the dominant players during the winter season. Furthermore, I believe that if the present situation remains unchecked our town will continue to lose other potential opportunities for healthy growth and prosperity like many other winter resort towns in the West.

Snowmobiles have their place and that place should not be Yellowstone National Park.

Sincerely,

Glenn M. Bell
West Yellowstone

June 6, 2000

Hon. Craig Thomas,

Dear Sir I am writing this letter as a resident and homeowner in West Yellowstone Montana.

I implore you to do the right thing for Yellowstone Natl. Park and close it to winter snowmachine use. Why? Because the level of use is out of hand and the negative impacts that go with it. Historically this activity is relatively recent and no public comment or analysis was done originally. If one could have looked into the future it never would have been allowed in the first place, since it violates numerous laws and common sense. Our national parks aren't race tracks. They are for all the public to enjoy in a quiet, peaceful, natural way without impacting the resource to this degree.

I'm an environmentalist, right? Well lets see: I raced 2 stroke motorcycles for 10 years and was offered a professional sponsorship. I worked in the woods for 20 years and spent 10 of those years cutting down old growth redwood. I guided snowmobilers commercially for 10 years and was offered a sponsorship to race them cross-country. I currently own 2 snowmachines and ride 4000 mi. a year.

A small number of wealthy business owners are pushing keeping the park open. I know them, and don't kid yourself

This issue is all about money not the public having acess to the park. The public needs appropriate acess that preserves the values of Yellowstone for future generations.

Yours, Sincerely,

Patrick McKenna
Box 210
West Yellowstone,
Montana, 59758

6/9/00

Senator Craig Thomas

I am writing to express my opposition to snowmobiling in Yellowstone National Park.

I feel the issue is not one of access, but one of pollution control, and the upholding of laws that were created to preserve and protect our national parks.

Steve Hoover
Box 1828
W. 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 Sk. Adv.
Box 1451 W. 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 longterm benefit to the Park will outweigh any shortterm 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 S Buller

MELISSA BULLER
co/owner Freewheel & Wheel, Inc.

June, 04, 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 ~~a~~ more diverse community will bring back more money and tounsts then before. We as business owners and community member 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 Freeheel & Wheel. Inc.
P.O. Box 634
West Yellowstone MT. 59758

June 3, 2000

To The Honorable Craig Thomas:

Our family has been enjoying Yellowstone National Park for many years and we hope our grandchildren will be able to enjoy the Park for many more years.

Snowmobile traffic has increased over the years and little has been done with the snowmobiles to decrease their emissions and loud engine noise. This obviously has an adverse effect on the atmosphere and the wildlife. The litter of broken bottles, plastic snowmobile parts and other items can be seen not only in the Park but also in the adjoining forest areas.

We would appreciate your support of the Presidential Acclamation to eliminate snowmobile use in the National Parks.

Sincerely,

Mr. & Mrs. R.W. Hitchcock Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Hitchcock Jr.
P.O. Box 201
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

West Yellowstone
June 5, 2000

Dear Mr. Thomas

During the 1970's, I guided snowmobiles in Yellowstone Park as well as outside the Park.

In the Park we guided very lightly using only roads. The machine was transportation a way to see the wonders of Yellowstone.

Outside the Park we took groups to areas where they go to enjoy a snowmobile for its own sake, a machine for fun and thrills.

The Park is for viewing and enjoying as a pristine area. I suggest it is not an area for thrill-seeking vehicles of any type. ATV's motorcycles on dirt, jet boats, none of this is meant for the Park.

Snowmobiles have become a problem in Yellowstone Park. It is time for change. A new way to experience the Park in winter must be found.

Very truly yours,
Vincent C. Young

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

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.

Bruce J. Coan, M.D.

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

Jackie Mathews

From: Larry Miller <sleepyhollow@wyellowstone.com>
To: bri@gomontana.com
Subject: snowmobiles
Date: Tuesday, April 18, 2000 7:31 AM

We have owned and operated a motel in West Yellowstone since 1983. During the winters we have watched a steady increase of snowmobile use followed by just as steady a decline in living conditions. By the early 1990's our "Big Sky Country" had to be viewed through a blue haze of exhaust fumes, and a quiet day in the Park was impossible with the constant drone of engines in the background.

We were fortunate because we could identify what was wrong. We could close down our home and our business and leave for the winter. That is what we have done since 1995.

The animals who call Yellowstone home are not so lucky. They are still there every winter coping with incredibly harsh conditions as well as the snowmobiles. It is time to close the Park to snowmobile traffic and return this special area to a more natural environment.

Sincerely,

Larry and Charlotte Miller
Sleepy Hollow
124 Electric Street West
Yellowstone, MT 59758

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

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 Bajas; 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,

Dear Craig Thomas & James Hansen; 6/9/00

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 without 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,

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 1801
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

April 25, 2000

The signatories to the petition ("A Call for a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park") we bring to you today represent a broad cross section of West Yellowstone residents and businesses who support Yellowstone National Park's proposal (revised Alternative G) to eliminate snowmobiles. We feel strongly that this change will help diversify our winter economy and insure a sound future for West Yellowstone: a healthy park equals a healthy local economy.

By restricting winter access to snowcoaches, chronic air and noise pollution in the park will be largely eliminated. The community will be able to market itself not only to snowmobilers but to all other winter tourists, creating a much larger tourist base. If limited snowmobiles (four-stroke or two-stroke) are allowed to damage the health and reputation of the park, not only will our winter economy suffer, but so will the wildlife. We know that snowcoaches have the potential to carry far more visitors per day into Yellowstone National Park than can ever be responsibly accommodated with snowmobiles. Every ten snowmobiles could equal one snowcoach, thereby reducing total vehicle numbers in the park while maintaining visitor numbers. This is a "win-win" situation for West Yellowstone and the wildlife in the park.

Vocal snowmobile interests represent a small minority of the West Yellowstone community. Their doom and gloom predictions concerning prohibition of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park echo similar sentiments that followed Yellowstone fires of 1988. Such dire predictions were proven false in 1988. Today, these predictions are only smoke and mirrors to protect the monopoly a small group of businesses have on our winter economy.

It is important to understand that Yellowstone National Park is by no means the only, or even the best, snowmobiling venue in the region. There are over 300 miles of snowmobile trails outside of Yellowstone that provide a far superior snowmobiling experience. Most true "snowmobilers" come here for these trails, maybe visiting the park for one day of their vacation. And most prospective winter visitors are simply tourists looking for the unique experience of visiting Yellowstone National Park in the winter. They will come regardless of the mode of park transportation. It is simply not true that the survival of West Yellowstone depends on snowmobile access to the park. Our economy is not nearly so fragile as that.

We therefore ask that you join the West Yellowstone community in supporting the National Park Service as it seeks to preserve the pristine integrity of this nation's first national park. Yellowstone is a unique treasure, not an amusement park. The long term economic viability of West Yellowstone is dependent upon the preservation of Yellowstone Park.

Thank you and please contact us if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Scott Carsley
Owner, Yellowstone Alpen Guides, Co. and Gray Line of Yellowstone
P.O. Box 518
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
(406) 646-9591
Scott@yellowstoneguides.com

Doug Edgerton
Former Mayor of West Yellowstone
Member of West Yellowstone City Council
President, Yellowstone Track System, Inc
P.O. Box 29
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
(406)646-7603

Jackie Mathews
Owner, Blue Ribbon Flies, Inc.
P.O. Box 1037
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
(406) 646-9365
brf@gomontana.com

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
Bill Bennett	Box 1078 W.Y. MT 59758
Robin Machi (Bodywise Massage)	Box 1078 WY, MT 5975
[illegible]	O. Box 1336 WY MT 59758
[illegible]	[illegible] West Yellowstone MT [illegible]

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A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park

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Harry + Terri Taylor	236 Mt. Hebgen Horse Butte, W. Yellowstone
Barbara Bartlay	PO Box 2265 W. Yellowstone
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[illegible]	PO Box 706 W. Yell. MT 59758
Robin Meier	P.O. Box 1381 W.Y. MT. 59758
Alma Finley	P.O. Box 1557 WYS MT 59758
Rachel Simons	821 East Alder, Missoula, MT 59802
Brett Fitzgerald	PO Box 1801 West Yellowstone, MT 59758
David Werner	Box 343 West Yellowstone
Sue Werner	Box 343 West Yellowstone

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Name	Address
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[illegible]	PO Box 506 W. Yellowstone
Christine Quinn	PO Box 1028 W. Yellowstone
[illegible]	PO Box 811 WEST YELLOWSTONE

A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park

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[illegible]	Box 46	WY	MT 59758
[illegible]	P.O. Box 268	WY	MT 59758
barbara abramo	po box 1089	W.Y.	MT 59758-1089
Lucy Newman	P.O. Box 1737	WY	MT 59758
CRAIG MENZEL	PO BOX 27	WY	MT 59758
Patrick Matheny PATRICK MATHENY	PO BOX 1287	W. YELLOWSTONE,	MT 59758
DOLCE FEITES	P.O. BOX 1013	W Yellowstone	M
[illegible] Gerding	Box 1911H	W. Yellowstone	MT
[illegible]	Box 683	W. Yellowstone	
[illegible]	Box 681	"	"
Dan Bister	Box 496	W. Yellowstone	59

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Name	Address		
Matt B[illegible]	P.O. Box 661	West Yellowstone	MT. 59758
Susan Carlson	PO Box 10	W.Y.	MT. 59758
STEVEN HOLLAND	Box 311,	W.Y.,	MT. 59758
Pat Carlson	Box 93,	W.Y.	MT 59758

A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park

Name	Address
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Tom Richards	P.O. Box 4604 Jackson, WY 83001
Erin Todd	P.O. Box 1055 W. Yell 59758
Kelly Needs	P.O. Box 161 W Yell MT 59758
Dan Brister	14365 Hebgen Lake Rd 59758
Paul Schutt	P.O. Box 38 Keystone, CO 80435
Linda Schutt	310 S. Racine CHICAGO, ILL. 60607

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Don Alder	HC66 Box 676 Island Park, ID 83429
Elizabeth Kearney	PO Box 883 W Ystone MT 59758
Patrick E. Maheny	PATRICK E. MAHENY P.O. BOX 1287 WEST YELLOWSTONE, MT 59758

A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park

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Scott & Jean Clewell	Box 583, West Yl St, MT 59
Bookworm LLC.	14 Canyon St., W. Yl St., MT. 5
Corinne & Burns Fagerburg	P.O. Box 93 W. Yellowstone, 59
Lindsay P. Freeman	P.O. Box 395 W. Yellowstone, MT 59
Ann L Heckt	P.O. Box 931 W. Yellowstone, MT 5975
Helen Anne Atwell	POB 1141 WY MT 59758
Kiki Smith	Box 1533 W.Y. MT 59758
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Jeffrey L. Healy	PO Box 164 West Yellowstone, MT
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David B. [illegible]	P.O. Box 998 West Yellowstone MT.

A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park

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Melissa Sample	PO Box 2102 WY, MT 59758
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Tim Holstein	PO Box 1477 WYS, MT 59758
Sylvia Davis	PO Box 1292 WYS MT 59758
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A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park

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Debbie Flemings	Box 284	W. Yellowstone MT
Kole Smith	Box 365	W Y MT
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[illegible]	Box 1296	W Yellowstone, MT
Douglas S Edgerton	615 OBSIDIAN	W. Yellowstone MT
Constance A. Cusick	P.O. Box 217	W. Yellowstone MT
Peggy A. Fry	P.O. Box 1185	W. Yellowstone MT
Kurt Westbergen	P.O. Box 1185	W. Yellowstone MT
Carol Burney	PO Box 104	W.Y MT
Maureen Edgerton	PO Box 29	W. Yellowstone, MT
Bill Howard	P.O. Box 336	W. Yellowstone, MT
Linda Berry	PO Box 1143	W. Yellowstone, MT
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A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park

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Rick Welle	PO Box 811 W.Y. MT 59758
Greg Awe	PO Box 55 W.Y. MT. 59758
HARV BRINSON, Sr.	Harv Brinson Sr. Inc. W.Y. Montana
Joe Moore	P.O. Box 2153 W.Y. MT 59758
Brian Worley	P.O. BOX 2153 W.Y. MT 59758
DAN GORDON	P.O. BOX 2153 W.Y. MT 59758

A Call For a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Park

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Wayne Graham	Box 148 W. Yellowstone MT
Arlene Horst	Box 1981 W. Yellowstone, MT
Claire Shipman	Box 162 W. Yellowstone
Norma Pedersen	Po Box 796 WY 59758

STATEMENTS FROM LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS IN WEST YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA REGARDING SNOWMOBILING IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

"We support Yellowstone National Park's proposal to eliminate snowmobiles. We feel this change will help diversify our winter economy and insure a sound future for West Yellowstone: a healthy park equals a healthy local economy. By restricting winter access to snowcoaches, chronic air and noise pollution in the park will be largely eliminated. The community will be able to market itself not only to snowmobilers, but to all other winter tourists, creating a much larger tourist base.

Vocal snowmobile interests represent a small minority of the West Yellowstone community. Most prospective winter visitors are simply tourists looking for the unique experience of visiting Yellowstone National Park in the winter. They will come regardless of the mode of park transportation. It is simply not true that the survival of West Yellowstone depends on snowmobile access to the park. Our economy is not nearly so fragile as that.

Yellowstone is a unique treasure, not an amusement park. The long term economic viability of West Yellowstone is dependent upon the preservation of Yellowstone Park."

Jackie and Craig Mathews, Owners, Blue Ribbon Flies Jackie & Craig Mathews

****

" 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. Tourists would readily accept the snowcoach as the alternative were snowmobiles not an option. Remember, prior to the advent of the snowmobiles, some thirty odd years ago, the snowcoach was in use and popular as the sole method of over-the snow travel into Yellowstone National Park. It would be again. A great way to see the winter wonderland. "

Janice and Calvin Dunbar, Co-Owners, Food Roundup Supermarket since 1961 Janice & Calvin

****

"We have owned and operated a motel in West Yellowstone since 1983. During the winters we have watched a steady increase of snowmobile use followed by just as steady a decline in living conditions. By the early 1990s our "Big Sky Country" had to be viewed through a blue haze of exhaust fumes, and a quiet day in the Park was impossible with the constant drone of engines in the background.

We were fortunate because we could identify what was wrong. We could close down our home and our business and leave for the winter. That is what we have done since 1995.

The animals who call Yellowstone home are not so lucky. They are still there every winter coping with incredibly harsh conditions as well as the snowmobiles. It is time to close the Park to snowmobile traffic and return this special area to a more natural environment."

Larry and Charlotte Miller, Owners, Sleepy Hollow Inn Larry & Charlotte Miller
****

"The future is snowcoaches."

Walker and Bonnie Cross, Owners, Desert Inn and Cross Winds Inn
****

" I operate a business located one and one-half blocks west of the entrance to Yellowstone Park. My maternal grandfather was one of the first landowners in West Yellowstone, settling here in 1908. My father, Herman Menzel, opened the door 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 work 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 [to Yellowstone Park] 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 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.

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."

Craig Menzel, Owner, Menzel's Curios
****

" 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 4:00 PM. 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 its white steaming plume. The sound of its 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. And there were many more thermal wonders, each with their own individual and unique shout, 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. I served as Chief of Police for a few years. 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 SnowLodge. 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 too off on my old route. Old Faithful still faithfully thundered skyward. Castle still spouted. Biscuit Basin with all its many splendid thermal wonders still splashed gaily as they did some twenty years ago.

But it was different. It was very different. My wife put if most bluntly, " You can't hear a damn thing except for the road 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."

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 supposed to sound and feel." I smiled and simply said, "Yes, this is how it's supposed to be."

Scott S. Clewell, Owner, Bookworm; Former Chief of Police

****

Dear Park Service...

Letters from Across the Nation Urge Yellowstone's Caretakers to Phase Out Snowmobiles

Eagle, Idaho
Snowmobiles have a place in this country, areas that have been set aside for them. The quiet majestic park of Yellowstone isn't one of them. I want to thank the Park Service and all the people who want to keep the natural quiet and beauty of Yellowstone in the winter.

Cleveland, Ohio
We need places in this country where we can get a break from noise, stress and air pollution. Thank you for upholding laws passed to keep Yellowstone such a place for our kids and grandkids. We are losing so many of our valuable resources. I am 60 and I plan on visiting Yellowstone next year for the FIRST time ever. I love the quiet and beauty of nature, listening to the breeze in the trees, and being in the animal's home. Thank you again for taking the steps necessary to keep Yellowstone beautiful – and I'll see you next year!

Austin, Texas
Amen!!! I am an old lady and probably will never see Yellowstone again, but I would like to see future generations feel the awe that I felt the first time I visited that beautiful place. I think snowmobiles and jet skis are a menace to mankind all over the country. I hope that your plan works.

Bozeman, Montana
Thank you for your tremendous effort to bring about a snowmobile-free environment in our extraordinary parks. Please take this as a vote from our entire family on behalf of your decision. We thank you, and applaud you.

Chicago, Illinois
Thank you for taking steps to restore clean air and quiet and reduce stress to wildlife in Yellowstone National Park. I remember what it was like when I went there for the first time in 1956; I was 19 years old then. It was so serene, pure, clear—the best that Mother Nature could offer us. Thanks for making it possible for future generations to get a glimpse at what a Garden of Eden this land of ours used to be!

Nitro, West Virginia
I fully support your plan to phase out snowmobiles in The Great Yellowstone. The quicker the better. It is my personal feeling all snowmobiles, as well as other "off the road" vehicles be prohibited from running and racing indiscriminately throughout our national parks.

Indian Rocks Beach, Florida
The Park is special to me. My parents and grandparents were homesteaders in Absorkee, Montana. I was born there in 1919 on November 3rd when it was 23 degrees below. We made many trips to the park and took our children and relatives to marvel at the wonders. Learned to camp, fish and just enjoy beauty. Every year, we do see changes. Crowds and expensive accommodations. Please don't add noise and pollution.

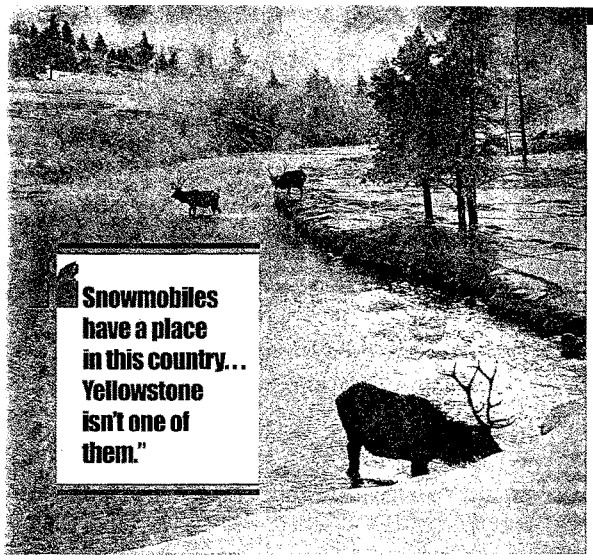
Oceanside, California
Please continue to save Yellowstone for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren as a place of peace and quiet... one of the few left in our country. All the cities are overgrown with people, noise and pollution. We need places we can go to meditate and be grateful for the natural arenas our grandparents told us about. Thank you.

Alexandria, Virginia
Way to go, Park Service! We were pleased to hear of your decision to phase out use of personal pollution machines (snowmobiles) in Yellowstone. The sooner, the better. Our grandkids also think it's a good move. Thank you.

North Fort Myers, Florida
Hurrah for the decision of the Park Service to ban the use of snowmobiles in Yellowstone. There should be places where one can get away from snowmobiles, dirt bikes and other vehicles that are used in our National Parks. I fully agree with this decision.

Manhattan, Kansas
As one who thoroughly enjoyed the experience of visiting Yellowstone during the winter, I want to add my voice to those in favor of restricting snowmobiles within the park. There were many snowmobilers during my time there, a few years ago, and though I could understand their pleasure in the activity, I regretted the noise, pollution and disruption of the animal population as a result of their presence. For the future of that wonderful park, the people who enjoy visiting it, and the animals whose rightful home it is, I request that snowmobiling be discontinued at Yellowstone.

Albertville, Alabama
I am so proud of your decision about getting rid of the snowmobiles in Yellowstone Park. Keep up the good work.



Burke, Virginia
Yes, I fully agree with your plan to phase out the use of snowmobiles in Yellowstone Park. I have visited the Park twice, once in 1951 and again this year, and wish to see the pristine, natural beauty of the Park maintained as nearly in its original state as possible. Your efforts in that direction are greatly appreciated.

Marietta, Georgia
Good for the Park Service! I had no luck with the senator and congressman I contacted regarding this problem. One replied that if he voted against snowmobiles what would be next? What comes next is that he doesn't get my vote when he runs for reelection. I applaud your plan to make Yellowstone a better environment for both animals and people.

Laguna Woods, California
We applaud your decision in phasing out snowmobiles and substituting snowcoaches. We must do everything in our power to protect the Park. Having several grandchildren ranging in age from 18 to 2 years, we want them to enjoy the natural sites such as Yellowstone.

St. Petersburg, Florida
I am writing my own personal letter to you folks on behalf of Yellowstone, for I have been there a number of times, starting back in the '50s when there was not all that noise pollution. So, you can count my vote for your park doing away with snowmobiles in the winter.

Rohnert Park, California
Friends at the National Park Service, you will indeed be doing a service to your fellow countrymen if you substitute snowcoaches for snowmobiles within Yellowstone Park. It is an action which will not only improve our environment, but allow our grandchildren to enjoy this national treasure without unwarranted disturbance.

Morongo Valley, California
I lived in Wyoming for 35 years, and Yellowstone is still my favorite place on earth. I think it is wonderful that thought and effort are being given to correcting a potentially irreparable damage to the park by phasing out snowmobiles. Thank you.

San Antonio, Texas
We have visited the park twice in the winter. The first time we found it to be a beautiful experience. The second time was after the influx of snowmobiles started and there was no question that our visit was nowhere near as delightful because of their noise.

Sarasota, Florida
I haven't visited there [Yellowstone] since the summer before I started high school (1940), but can imagine how everything has changed for the worse with the introduction of snowmobiles. I do hope that people will appreciate the concessions you are making by letting them use the park in the winter, but even this may not be enough to keep our precious wildlife safe. Keep fighting for Yellowstone and all our wonderful parks and I will keep supporting you!

Surprise, Arizona
We have not had the opportunity to visit the park during the winter months. Having come from an area where snowmobiles are used quite frequently in the winter months, I can only agree with you that they should be banned from the park, proper, and substitute transportation should be implemented. I cannot imagine how the serenity of the park could be experienced with a plethora of snowmobiles violating the quiet. ◆

Winter Use

Casper Star-Tribune

6-6-00

West Yellowstone residents show support for sled ban

WEST YELLOWSTONE, Mont. (AP) – A number of local people are taking a contrary stand, signing a petition supporting the proposed ban on snowmobiles in national parks. They saying a healthy park means a healthy economy.

Business and civic leaders in West Yellowstone have harshly criticized the National Park Service for the proposed nationwide ban, warning it spells economic disaster for them and the city.

But nearly 15 percent of the community disagrees. More than 140 people signed the petition during April, when many residents were on vacation between the winter and summer seasons.

"Changes in Yellowstone's winter use must occur in order to keep the park healthy," the petition says. "Reports of air and noise pollution hurt the reputation of West Yellowstone and the park, which hurts marketing efforts and tourism potential."

The National Park Service announced this spring that its preferred winter use plan includes a ban on recreational snowmobiling in the park and limited vehicle traffic between West Yellowstone and Old Faithful. A final decision is expected this fall.

> Business and civic leaders in West Yellowstone have harshly criticized the National Park Service for the proposed nationwide ban, warning it spells economic disaster for them and the city.

"The park doesn't owe us anything, and we owe the park a lot," Walker Cross, longtime owner of the Desert Inn, said.

Some businesses, including his, will lose customers with a ban, he said, "but I can survive. The bottom line is, if you're in business here, you should have realized we're going to have some changes. Business attitudes are going to have to change here, too."

Pro-snowmobile activist Viki Eggers, former director of the Chamber of Commerce, said ban supporters underestimate the importance of snowmobiling to the local economy, and predicts 80 percent of the West Yellowstone economy will fail under a ban.

A generation ago, she said, only a handful of businesses stayed open year-round while today 80 percent do. If most are again forced to close for winter, Eggers said property values will plunge, the tax base will erode, school attendance will decline and many other parts of the economy will wither.

But Cross argued that while a snowmobiling ban in the park would hurt some businesses, it would not necessarily close down the winter economy.

"I think there's a whole new market out there if it's approached right," he said.

There is a nationwide trend toward mass transit in the national parks, Cross said, and there would remain thousands of acres of public land and hundreds of miles of trails for snowmobilers outside the park.

The Billings Gazette
8-10-00

Emphasizing Yellowstone Park's other attributes

■ Lodging company begins educating public

By BRETT FRENCH
Gazette Outdoor Writer

The company that runs Yellowstone National Park's lodging facilities is wasting no time in telling potential winter visitors that there's a lot more to do in the park in winter than snowmobile.

The future of winter use in the nation's first national park won't be known until Sept. 30. That's when the National Park Service will release it's long-awaited and much-debated winter use plan, but it will be two years before any restrictions would be implemented.

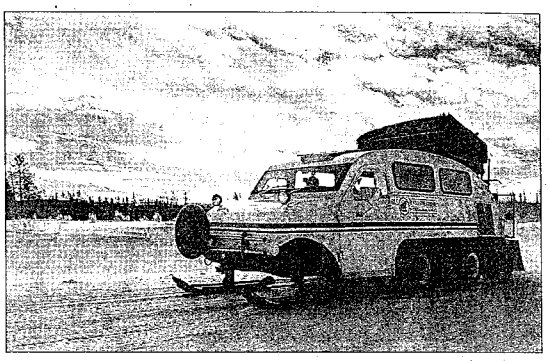
With the possibility of snowmobile use being banned or restricted under the new winter use plan, Amfac Parks & Resorts has issued a press release emphasizing that Yellowstone's accessibility to winter visitors includes snowcoach rides, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

> **By putting these releases out, we're just trying to educate people.**
>
> — **Kristi Leavitt,** Amfac Parks & Resorts

Amfac's release says in part, "Contrary to recent news which leads the public to believe that winter activities in Yellowstone National Park revolve around snowmobiles, this great American summer destination offers a wide variety of things to do when it puts on a winter coat."

Kristi Leavitt, marketing communications manager for Amfac, said, "By putting these releases out, we're just trying to educate people. We're trying to get the word out that there are other great things to do."

With the possibility of a snowmobile ban looming, Amfac is offering two new package options in cooperation with the Yellowstone Association Institute that de-emphasize motoring through the park. One, called the Winter Wolf Discovery, matches a small group with a naturalist for tours in the Lamar Valley to learn more about wolves. Another, dubbed Secret Snowscapes, takes cross-country skiers to different areas of the park via snowcoach where they'll ski with a naturalist to learn more about Yellowstone.



Gazette file photo

With the looming possibility of snowmobile travel being restricted in Yellowstone National Park in the future, the park's lodging concessionaire is educating visitors that there's more to the park in winter than snowmobiling.

"It seems like when people are traveling in winter they are looking for niche tours," Leavitt explained. "They're looking for something more in-depth."

Amfac's not the only group getting a jump on educating the park's winter visitors. The West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce has cranked out posters, buttons and is planning to send out press releases to inform the public that Yellowstone is open to snowmobiles this winter, said the chamber's Marysue Costello. In addition, she said local snowmobile shops are notifying past customers and word was spread at the International Snowmobile Industry Association's annual gathering. In addition, the Three Bears Lodge in West proclaims on its sign that "Yes, Yellowstone is open this winter."

Lindy Barry, of Yellowstone Alpen Guides in West Yellowstone, says her company is predicting a surge in bookings before the park implements its new winter use plan. "We're thinking we'll be pretty busy," she said.

Yellowstone Alpen Guides offers snowcoach rides into the park in addition to guided cross-country ski trips.

The winter use planning process was initiated as part of the Park Service's 1997 settlement with the Fund For Animals. The group called for a ban on snowmobile use in the park, saying the machines' impacts on the environment and wildlife were detrimental.

Snowmobile user groups retaliated, saying there is no specific proof that snowmobiles are harmful to the park environment or animals. The groups called for reasonable restrictions rather than an outright ban.

Yellowstone in winter has become almost synonymous with snowmobiles.

In the 1999-2000 winter season, 76,571 visitors entered the park on snowmobiles out of a total of 130,564 visitors. That was comparable to the previous season, despite the fact the park closed its West Entrance a week early because of deteriorating snow conditions.

The Park Service will publish its winter use plan on the Internet at **www.nps.gov/yell** in several formats.

Brett French can be reached at 657-1387, or at french@billingsgazette.com.

May 22, 2000

Douglas Edgerton
Councilman, Town of West Yellowstone

Honorable James V. Hansen, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
And Public Lands

Dear Sir,

First of all I would like to say it is unfortunate that I was not allowed to address the Subcommittee personally. The representatives from our community that were called only present one side and lead me to believe you predispose an outcome.

The community of West Yellowstone is **NOT** united behind the snowmobile operators on the issue of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park. This group is doing as much as possible to protect their own interests and do not represent the best interests of the whole community.

The phase down of snowmobiles and the change to snowcoaches provides the greatest opportunity for a sustainable and growing economy in West Yellowstone. 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.

Snowcoaches will carry more visitors with less impact. Snowcoaches present opportunity for growth in visitation and a growing and expanding local economy. Snowmobiles offer only limits, controversy, and the further consolidation of the economy in the hands of a few.

If access **really** is an issue, snowmobiles are owned by less than 1% of Americans and less than 3% of Montanans. Snowcoaches will be more affordable and will carry more visitors, thus giving **greater** access to all Americans not just one special interest group.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Douglas Edgerton
Councilman, Town of West Yellowstone

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

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,

Douglas Edgerton
Councilman, Town of West Yellowstone
P.O. Box 29
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
(406) 646-7603

ALPEN GUIDES

Scott Carsley

YELLOWSTONE ALPEN GUIDES CO.
P.O. Box 518
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
(406) 646-9591 • Fax (406) 646-9594
www.yellowstoneguides.com

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.

FROM : Yellowstone Alpen Guides FAX NO. : 406 646 9594 JUL. 11 2000 03:28PM P1

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

JUL. 11 2000 03:23PM P2 FAX NO. : 406 646 9594 M : Yellowstone Alpen Guides

FROM : HORSESHOE PHONE NO. : Jan. 24 2002 05:25PM P1

January 23, 2002

The Honorable Dennis Rehberg
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rehberg,

I am writing to request the opportunity to testify at the Committee on Small Business hearing this Saturday in West Yellowstone. The future of Yellowstone National Park and the local economy of West Yellowstone are important issues. As a lifelong resident of West Yellowstone, business owner, and member of West Yellowstone's Town Council, I believe that I could add important perspective and information to the hearing. The current make-up of witnesses appears unbalanced and does not fairly represent our town. I ran for Town Council on a platform of protecting Yellowstone National Park and creating a more diverse economy for West Yellowstone. My constituents and I believe that West Yellowstone can succeed only by protecting Yellowstone National Park. The challenge ahead of us is essentially a marketing challenge: up until now, the town has been dominated by snowmobiles, an entity very hard to coexist with. Other potential Yellowstone visitors have not been catered to and many choose not to visit because of the overwhelming presence of snowmobile noise and pollution in town. We have a great opportunity to create a new economic future for West Yellowstone that is balanced. Yellowstone National Park is the ultimate tourist draw. We will never suffer for lack of visitors. We will suffer, however, if we fail to move forward in creating a future with a balanced, diversified economy that makes protection of Yellowstone National Park a priority. Fourteen years ago, the Park Service asked for assistance in adopting some regulations to control the numbers of snowmobiles that enter the west entrance, we ignored their request to be a good neighbor. The meeting failed to move forward and resulted in a 50% increase in snowmobile rental operations the following year. The power struggle between Yellowstone National Park and the business community in West Yellowstone has delivered us to an era that divides the people who live here. The health of Yellowstone and the surrounding area will directly influence our ability to be an economic success.

I look forward to hearing a response to my request to testify in my capacity as an elected official and business owner in West Yellowstone. I can be reached at (406)580-0394 or (406)646-7582.

Sincerely,

Gibson Bailey

ECONOMICS

Is snowmobile use in Yellowstone a driver for the economy of West Yellowstone?
The relationship is not as strong as the snowmobile industry claims. Visitor spending in West Yellowstone during the winter season have increased each year since 1993 while the numbers of visitors to Yellowstone National Park through the west entrance have declined slightly during the same period. Graph A (attached) illustrates this point. According to the Final EIS, the average West Yellowstone visitor eager to snowmobile spends just one day in the park and far more time on the hundreds of miles of snowmobile trails outside Yellowstone. (FEIS p. 402)

Has the Park Service implemented public transportation in other national parks and, if so, how were gateway economies affected?
Seventy-four National Parks have successfully implemented some form of mass-transit program. According to NPS staff in Denali, Zion and Acadia National Parks, one impact of these programs is that visitors spend more time shopping and dining in gateway communities than they did in the past as they wait for scheduled bus service.

How have past changes within Yellowstone National Park affected the economy of West Yellowstone?

- ***Fires of 1988***: Many predicted disastrous economic consequences for gateway communities following the wildfires of 1988 and park visitation declined approximately 15 percent that year. By 1989, thanks to a creative, collaborative and well-funded advertising campaign, visitation had recovered to pre-fire levels and expenditures increased 6.3 percent. By 1990, expenditures had increased 13.1 percent over previous years (city of West Yellowstone, resort tax payments). A local paper reported, *"Nearly all agree...that the summer of 1990 was about the busiest ever for Wyoming's tourism industry...especially in the northwest (Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks) numbers were way up for almost every segment of the tourism sector."* (Billings Gazette, 10/21/90)
- ***Snowmachine World Expo***: Each year West Yellowstone hosts the Snowmachine World Expo late in the winter season. Three years ago Park managers announced the need for an early end to the winter season, meaning that Expo visitors could no longer access the Park. A number of local businesses expressed concern that the early closure would reduce attendance at the Expo, and hurt the local economy. In fact, attendance at the Expo has increased each year since. Closing the Park's winter season appeared to have no impact or the number of visitors or on local businesses.

ECONOMICS (continued)

- ***Early End to Park Snowmobiling in 2001***: At the end of the 2000-01 winter season, an early thaw forced the Park Service to close the park to snowmobile use. Visitors were still able to ride into the park on busses and transfer to snowcoaches. Park managers reported that the demand for bus seats exceeded the supply. Rather than cancelling their vacation plans, Park visitors overwhelmed the available bus service in order to see Yellowstone. And the early closure of the Park to snowmobiles did not harm the local economy. In fact, visitor spending in West Yellowstone during March 2001 increased 63% over spending in March 2000. This point is shown in graph B (attached)

What have West Yellowstone business owners said about making a transition to a different form of winter access into the Park?

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:

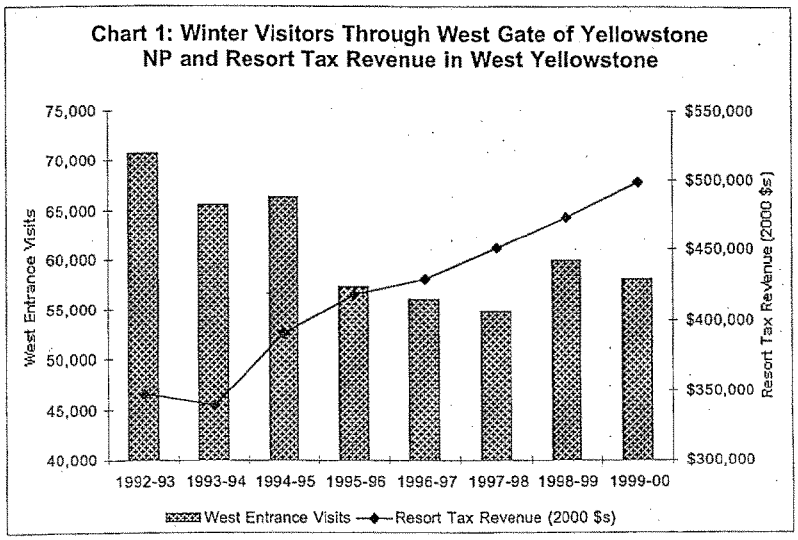
- Protect Yellowstone and thereby ensure that visitors continue to visit West Yellowstone and support the local economy'
- Support the community of West Yellowstone as it adjusts, diversifies and rises to meet the challenges created by changes in park management.

Gibson Bailey, newly elected member of the West Yellowstone Town Council, wrote: *"We have a great opportunity to create a new economic future for West Yellowstone that is balanced. Yellowstone National Park is the ultimate tourist draw. We will never suffer for lack of visitors. We will suffer, however, if we fail to move forward in creating a future with a balanced, diversified economy that makes protection of Yellowstone National Park a priority."*

Jackie Matthews, business owner in West Yellowstone and president of West Yellowstone Citizens for a Healthy Park, stated that: *"...phasing out snowmobiles from Yellowstone National Park will not only be good for the park's environment but will also be good business for West Yellowstone."* For two years, she and others have asked the Small Business Committee to help the town transition to snowcoach access into the Park. Specifically, they requested the following help:

- Funding for media and public education campaign to promote winter snowcoach tourism in Yellowstone, similar to the successful campaign following the fires of 1988;
- Low-interest loans for snowcoach acquisition and other business infrastructure;
- Cooperation among economic development agencies to promote transition to a sustainable future; and
- Job training and business development programs.

Graph A



Source: National Parks Service, Office of Public Use Statistics; City of West Yellowstone

December 1 - March 31

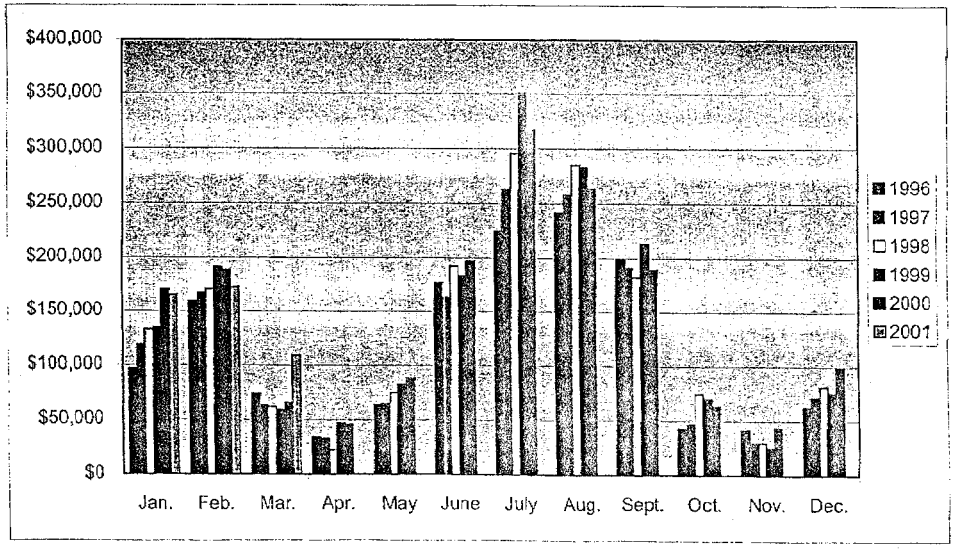
Dollars adjusted for inflation

Graph B

Resort Tax Collections for the Town of West Yellowstone
1996-2001

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	TOTAL
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
1997	$118,590	$166,432	$63,259	$32,921	$64,850	$162,871	$262,780	$257,903	$190,992	$46,826	$29,708	$71,446	$1,468,577
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	$1,605,259
1999	$134,178	$190,969	$59,079	$47,110	$82,514	$183,288	$350,818	$282,909	$213,510	$70,431	$24,573	$75,499	$1,716,877
2000	$169,921	$188,099	$65,585	$45,837	$88,031	$196,811	$316,947	$263,705	$189,002	$63,354	$43,394	$98,911	$1,729,588
2001	$164,874	$172,164	$109,001										

Figures reflect the month the tax was collected for, not the month it was remitted to the Town.



Testimony before the Committee on Small Businesses
West Yellowstone, MT
January 26, 2002

By Glen H. Loomis

It is a pleasure to be able to visit with you about Yellowstone National Park. My father went through Yellowstone in 1914 in a wagon. They spent almost 30 days sightseeing. My great-aunt kept a diary. They saw a lot of bears but only one bison. His last trip in the winter was on a snow coach from West Yellowstone to Old Faithful when he was 85. I have been in Yellowstone every year for the past 56 years.

We must protect the resources of Yellowstone, but we also need to make it accessible to the people. The total winter visitation from the West Gate has decreased since 1992 and yet, there is presently a lot of finger pointing about noise, pollution and animal impacts. Recent technological changes have made 4-stroke snowmobiles available. We rent both Arctic Cat and Polaris 4-stroke snowmobiles. They are quiet and do not pollute. The pilot project instituted by the Park Service this year is to be applauded. The additional Rangers available to help with the animal jams and the additional grooming between Madison and the West Gate has made significant, positive improvements.

The town of West Yellowstone exists as a result of a partnership that spans almost 100 years. We provide the support facilities for Yellowstone Park–the beds, restaurants, gift shops, bathrooms, etc. so that people can enjoy Yellowstone without the development being in the Park itself. This partnership has worked well over many decades. In the past, there was an eagerness to work together to mitigate impacts of necessary changes. Yes, there needs to be some adjustments with respect to winter use–but to just up and ban snowmobiles without a proven alternative for winter access does not pass the test of reasonableness.

Most small businesses must make monthly payments. We now have heavy summer traffic and a lesser bump in the winter with an extreme down time in April and November. The attached chart–Chart #1–shows the town's resort tax collections which clearly shows the impacts of the seasonality of the business community. It is clear that any significant changes in visitation puts almost all the small businesses at risk. My family is in the motel, snowmobile rental and snow coach business. Just the recent events of September 11 have had a major impact on our cash flow for this winter. Any additional changes and uncertainty will have a devastating impact. Many people think Yellowstone is already closed in the winter. The publicity Yellowstone gets is wonderful, but we are suffering from the result of much false and misleading publicity. Most people just read the headlines in the newspaper. Much of the existing mind-set has come as the result of false statements such as,"one snowmobile pollutes as much as one million cars" or,"the air quality is as bad as the air quality in the Los Angeles Basin." Such statements were eventually clarified, but the intended result was accomplished–that of convincing the public that snowmobiling is bad. There needs to be a positive marketing campaign about the wonders of Yellowstone in the winter to offset the false impressions that exist.

In summary, it is clear to me that changes are needed, but the test of reasonableness needs to apply. We have to protect the Park's resources. Snowmobiling on the same roads that cars travel in the summer does not impact the land, the air, or the water if we use the presently available technology. The economic consequences of the Park's decisions on the gateway communities can not be ignored and dismissed as not important. It is true that the Park does not exist for the

gateway communities, but the gateway communities do exist for the Park and provide the necessary support so the development doesn't have to exist in Yellowstone Park. The existing ban on snowmobiling would essentially bankrupt my business and the Town of West Yellowstone. Even if historical winter visitors would ride the snow coaches, the phase-in down time would result in the inability of too many businesses not being able to make their monthly payments.

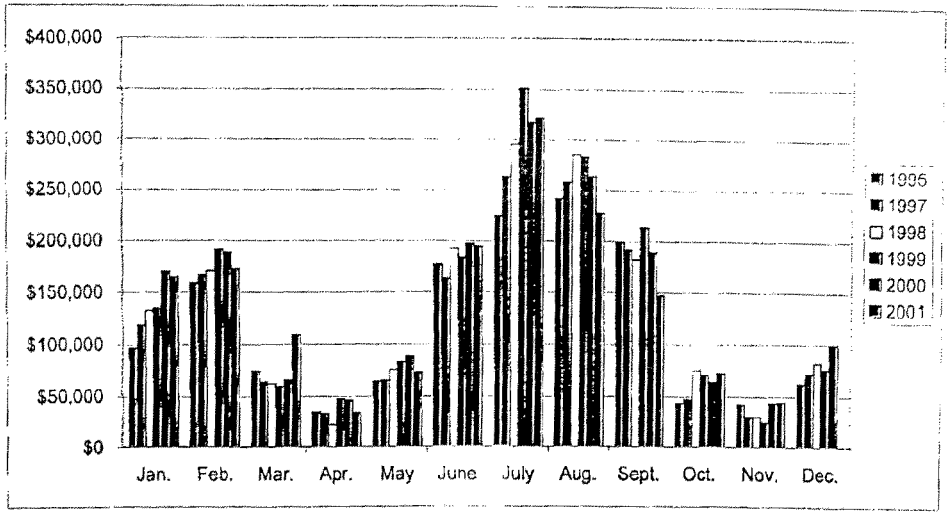
Animal impacts can be easily mitigated with additional Ranger patrols. This has already been demonstrated this winter.

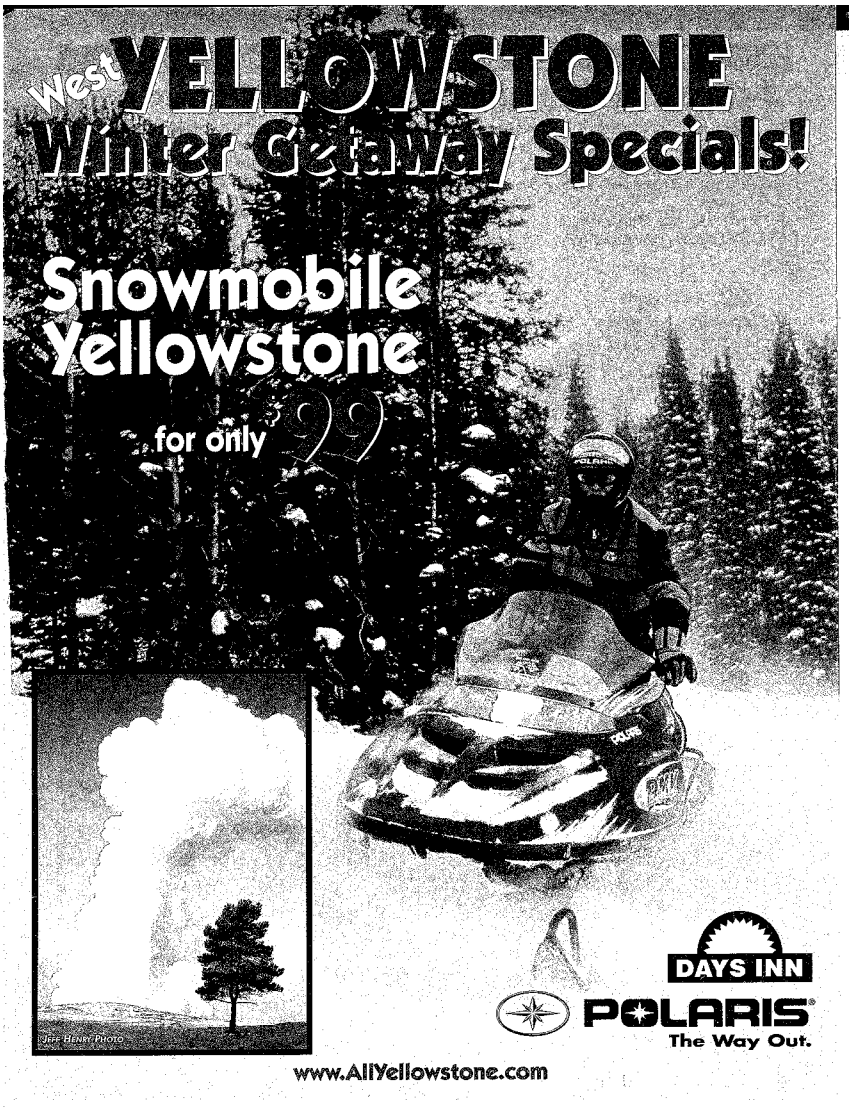
Finally, the major concern that I have is to assure access summer and winter to my grandchildren and my grandchildren's children in an environmentally friendly atmosphere. I am tired of certain groups crying,"The sky is falling;" and our government rushing to eliminate access to our public lands to appease the criers of doom.

Resort Tax Collections for the Town of West Yellowstone
1996-2001

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	TOTAL
1996	$96,354	$158,722	$73,821	$34,040	$53,799	$176,304	$224,551	$241,489	$198,720	$42,541	$41,621	$62,112	**$1,416,270**
1997	$118,590	$166,432	$63,259	$32,921	$64,850	$162,871	$262,780	$257,903	$190,992	$46,825	$29,798	$71,446	**$1,468,577**
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	**$1,605,259**
1999	$134,178	$190,969	$59,079	$47,110	$82,514	$183,288	$350,818	$282,909	$213,510	$70,431	$24,573	$75,499	**$1,716,877**
2000	$169,921	$188,090	$65,585	$45,837	$88,031	$106,811	$316,847	$263,705	$180,002	$60,354	$43,394	$98,911	$1,729,588
2001	$164,874	$172,164	$109,001	$33,242	$72,549	$194,863	$321,416	$227,649	$146,911	$72,160	$44,362		**$1,559,211**

Figures indicate the month the tax was collected for, not the month it was remitted to the Town.




West YELLOWSTONE
Winter Getaway Specials!
Snowmobile Yellowstone
for only 99
Jeff Henry Photo
DAYS INN
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The Way Out.
www.AllYellowstone.com

EXCITING NEWS: New Cleaner & Quieter Snowmobiles Featured for 2001-02 season

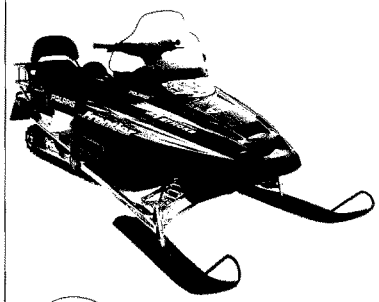
4-stroke sleds available for use in Yellowstone

Meet Polaris' new "green machine." This new environment-friendly snowmobile will make its debut in Yellowstone National Park this winter.

Expect to see more of these 4-stroke sleds in the world's oldest national park in the future. The new snowmobile, called the "Frontier," is a double-ride sled that has a liquid-cooled, 4-stroke twin cylinder engine. The engine is quiet, efficient and clean.

Arctic Cat also has a 4-stroke sled. The Yellowstone Special is also available for rent at Travelers Service Center.

Ask the folks at Travelers Service Center and Polaris West for more information about the Polaris Frontier and the Arctic Cat Yellowstone Special. These sleds can be rented during your Winter getaway here.



POLARIS®
The Way Out.

Polaris Frontier features:

- **Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke twin cylinder engine is quiet, efficient and clean**
- **Provides great throttle response and quick starts, regardless of altitude and temperature**
- **Low center of gravity and excellent cold weather starting**
- **Electric start, reverse & block heater standard**
- **Premium EDGE Independent Front Suspension with Controlled Roll Center (CRC) design for improved handling & ride**
- **EDGE 136 Touring rear suspension with almost 12" of rear travel provides comfortable ride**
- **Comfortable 2-up seat with adjustable backrest standard**

New! Nights Away offered in select Fun Packages

When Selecting a Fun Package (see facing page), Choose To Spend A Night Away At:

- **The Divide Wilderness Ranch**
  (Add $95 per person, includes Meals)
- **Pahaska Tepee Resort**
  (Add $45 per person, double occupancy)
- **Flagg Ranch Resort**
  (Add $55 per person, double occupancy)

Get away from the busy streets of West Yellowstone for a night's stay at the Divide Wilderness Ranch in beautiful Centennial Valley. Only 43 miles from West Yellowstone, the Divide Wilderness Ranch treats guests to breathtaking views and abundant wildlife.

After a day on the trail, enjoy a hardy family-style meal, followed by a delicious dessert served at our mountain ski chalet overlooking the valley. At night, enjoy a spacious lodge, take a dip in the heated pool or hot tub, or just retire for the night in your cozy room. In the morning, enjoy a family-style breakfast in the cookhouse and all the coffee and hot chocolate you crave.

Snowmobile FUN Packages Include:

On top right of the facing page, you'll see a wide variety of FUN packages we offer in an effort to provide you with a Winter Getaway you'll never forget!

All Snowmobile FUN Packages are based on package sleds, which are Polaris Super Sports for single ride packages, or Polaris Trail Touring sleds for double-ride packages.

Upgrade sleds are available. The additional cost of the sled is based on the difference in the daily rental rate.

For an additional $10 a day, those touring Yellowstone Park can choose to upgrade to one of the quieter, cleaner 4-stroke sleds.

All prices include free gas and oil, available each day between 4-6 p.m. for consecutive day rentals at Travelers Service Center location only.

Clothing is provided for all Snowmobile Packages, including boots, suits, helmets with face shield, and gloves.

All FUN Packages are subject to off-peak or pre-season discounts. Please direct specific questions or concerns to a salesperson, who will be happy to explain options that offer considerable savings.

Guided trips are offered at a cost of $175/day per party.

(Limit of 10 people per guided party.)

The Snowmobile Trails Start here

Sign up for a FUN Package – It will be like no winter getaway you've ever experienced!

ECONO Package (Subject to Availability)	FUN I Package	FUN II Package	FUN III Package	FUN IV Package	FUN V Package	FUN VI Package
◆ 1 day snowmobiling ◆ 1 night lodging ◆ Snowmobile Clothing ◆ Park Pass	◆ 1 day snowmobiling ◆ 2 nights lodging ◆ 1 Prime Rib Dinner ◆ Snowmobile Clothing ◆ Park Pass	◆ 2 days snowmobiling ◆ 3 nights lodging ◆ 1 Prime Rib Dinner ◆ Snowmobile Clothing ◆ Park Pass	◆ 3 days snowmobiling ◆ 4 nights lodging ◆ 1 Prime Rib Dinner ◆ 1 Breakfast Buffet ◆ Snowmobile Clothing ◆ Park Pass	◆ 4 days snowmobiling ◆ 5 nights lodging ◆ 1 Prime Rib Dinner ◆ 1 Breakfast Buffet ◆ Snowmobile Clothing ◆ Park Pass	◆ 5 days snowmobiling ◆ 6 nights lodging ◆ 1 Prime Rib Dinner ◆ 1 Breakfast Buffet ◆ Snowmobile Clothing ◆ Park Pass	◆ 6 days snowmobiling ◆ 7 nights lodging ◆ 1 Prime Rib Dinner ◆ 1 Breakfast Buffet ◆ Snowmobile Clothing ◆ Park Pass
PRICES ARE "PER PERSON"	PRICES ARE "PER PERSON"	PRICES ARE "PER PERSON"	PRICES ARE "PER PERSON"	PRICES ARE "PER PERSON"	PRICES ARE "PER PERSON"	PRICES ARE "PER PERSON"
Single Rider Price:	**Single Rider Price:**	**Single Rider Price:**	**Single Rider Price:**	**Single Rider Price:**	**Single Rider Price:**	**Single Rider Price:**
2 people, 2 beds: $149 ea.	2 people, 2 beds: $214 ea.	2 people, 2 beds: $357 ea.	2 people, 2 beds: $493 ea.	2 people, 2 beds: $637 ea.	2 people, 2 beds: $764 ea.	2 people, 2 beds: $899 ea.
3 people, 2 beds: $141 ea.	3 people, 2 beds: $194 ea.	3 people, 2 beds: $319 ea.	3 people, 2 beds: $448 ea.	3 people, 2 beds: $574 ea.	3 people, 2 beds: $689 ea.	3 people, 2 beds: $813 ea.
4 people, 2 beds: $134 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $185 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $310 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $430 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $559 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $670 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $791 ea.
Double Rider Price:	**Double Rider Price:**	**Double Rider Price:**	**Double Rider Price:**	**Double Rider Price:**	**Double Rider Price:**	**Double Rider Price:**
2 people, 1 bed: $114 ea.	2 people, 1 bed: $174 ea.	2 people, 1 bed: $280 ea.	2 people, 1 bed: $382 ea.	2 people, 1 bed: $478 ea.	2 people, 1 bed: $572 ea.	2 people, 1 bed: $671 ea.
4 people, 2 beds: $99 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $140 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $229 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $317 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $399 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $483 ea.	4 people, 2 beds: $562 ea.
For Days Inn lodging, add $5 per person	For Days Inn lodging, add $10 per person	For Days Inn lodging, add $15 per person	For Days Inn lodging, add $20 per person	For Days Inn lodging, add $25 per person	For Days Inn lodging, add $30 per person	For Days Inn lodging, add $35 per person

- Sled substitutes might be necessary
- No refunds on unused portions of packages
- ECONO Package not available on Saturdays or Holidays
- Night Away options available (See info. on left facing page)
- An energy surcharge may be applied to above rates

POLARIS® The Way Out.

Daily Snowmobile Rental Rates

For 2001-02 Season

POLARIS • ARCTIC CAT

2002 Models!

MACHINE TYPE	$/Day	Damage Waiver ($/Day/Deduct)
Polaris Super Sport 550cc	$99	$10/300
Arctic Cat Yellowstone Special 4-stroke R/ES	$109	$12/400
Polaris Classic 550cc R/ES	$109	$12/400
Polaris Frontier 4-stroke R/ES/Dbl	$129	$12/400
Arctic Cat 600ZL	$119	$12/400
Polaris 550 Trail Touring R/ES/Dbl	$119	$12/400
Polaris 600 XC Special	$119	$12/400
Polaris 550 Trail RMK	$129	$12/400
Polaris 500 Classic Touring R/ES/Dbl	$134	$12/400
Polaris 600 RMK	$144	$13/400
Arctic Cat 600 Mountain Cat	$144	$13/400
Polaris 700 RMK	$154	$14/500
Polaris 800 RMK	$164	$14/500

DAILY RENTALS INCLUDE:
FREE tank of gas each day from 4-6 p.m. for consecutive day rentals.

All snowmobiles feature heated handle bars, independent suspension and tall windshields.

R=Reverse; ES=Electric Start; Dbl=Double Ride

Single day rentals from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. only

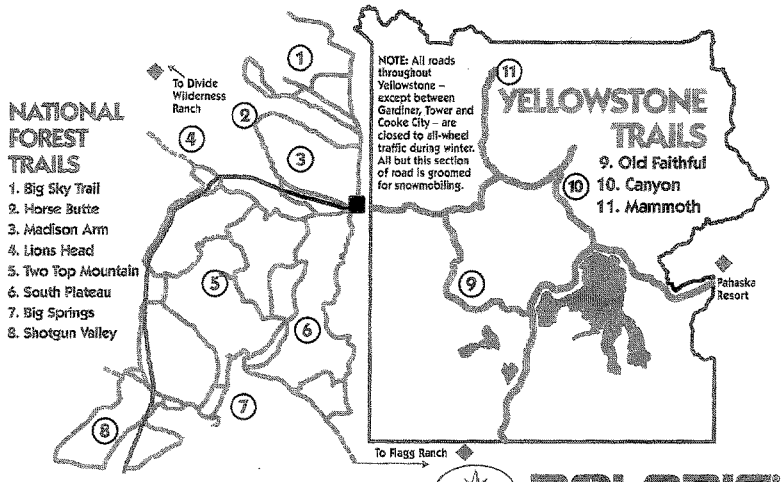
(An energy surcharge may be applied to above rates)

Call today and book your Winter Getaway!

POLARIS® The Way Out.

Days Inn: 1-800-548-9551 • Email: daysinnmgr@wyellowstone.com
Travelers Lodge: 1-800-831-5741 • Email: travelerslodge@wyellowstone.com

Popular Snowmobile Trails in the Yellowstone Area



◆ Diamonds indicate locations of Night Away options

POLARIS® The Way Out.

SnoVan Adventure Packages

Take a Tour to Old Faithful & Yellowstone's Grand Canyon in a heated SnoVan

Old Faithful Package

- Tour to Old Faithful
- 2 nights lodging
- 1 Prime rib dinner
- Box Lunch
- Park fee

PRICES ARE "PER PERSON"

Prices:

2 persons, 1 bed: $185 ea.
4 persons, 2 beds: $155 ea.

Canyon Package

- Tour to Yellowstone's Grand Canyon
- 2 nights lodging
- 1 Prime rib dinner
- Box Lunch
- Park fee

PRICES ARE "PER PERSON"

Prices:

2 persons, 1 bed: $195 ea.
4 persons, 2 beds: $165 ea.

Daily Sno-Van Rides Only

OLD FAITHFUL – $79 • CANYON – $89
GROUPS – $695
(Includes Park Fee)

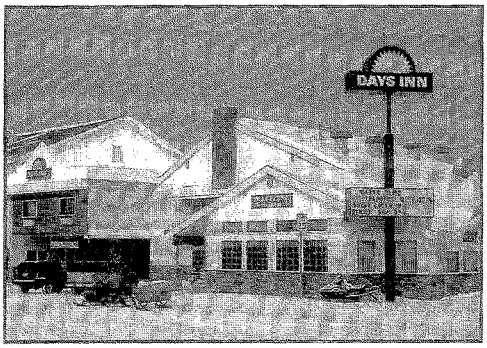
(Energy surcharge may be applied to above rates)

Take a snowcoach tour to Yellowstone's most popular attractions, Old Faithful and Yellowstone's Grand Canyon. Book a trip with Sno-Vans of Yellowstone today.

Call 1-800-548-9551 or 1-800-831-5741 to book a SnoVan Adventure Package!

Or, go to www.AllYellowstone.com

Comfortable Lodging & Great Eats



Look for the beautiful new Days Inn building, located at 301 Madison, conveniently located across the street from Travelers Service Center and All Yellowstone Motor Sports.

- **Large pool, with Water Slide (the only one in town!)**
- **2 Hot Tubs**
- **Deluxe Suites with In-Room Jacuzzis Available**
- **Trappers Family Restaurant, right off the Lobby**
- **Across the Street from All Yellowstone Motor Sports & Travelers Snowmobile Center**
- **Ample Parking**

Kids and adults alike will love the pool and the tall and twisting slide at Days Inn!

DAYS INN

of West Yellowstone

ON THE CORNER OF ELECTRIC & MADISON STREETS

West Yellowstone, MT 59758

1-800-548-9551

(406) 646-7656

Email: daysinnmgr@wyellowstone.com

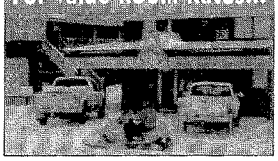
TRAPPERS FAMILY RESTAURANT

Located in Days Inn, the Trappers Family Restaurant offers great eats for snowmobilers looking to fuel up both before hitting the trails and after a long day spent on the snow.

Home of the Express Breakfast Buffet!

Enjoy delicious food in a spacious atmosphere at Trappers Family Restaurant, located in the Days Inn of West Yellowstone.

For Value Room Rates...



TRAVELERS LODGE

44 rooms • Phones • Movie Channel • Cable TV • Hot Tub & Sauna
Family Room with Kitchen • Conference Room • Laundry Room

225 Yellowstone Ave.

West Yellowstone, MT 59758

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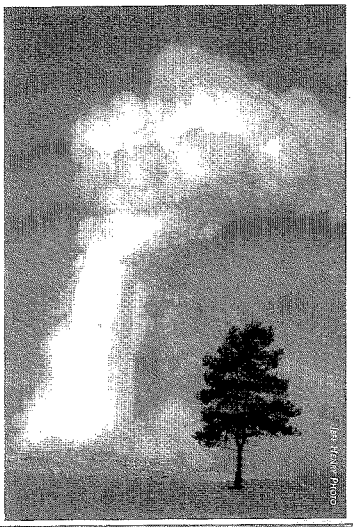
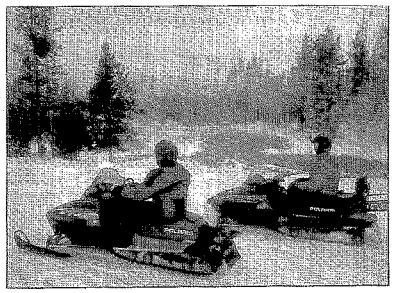
Email: travelerslodge@wyellowstone.com

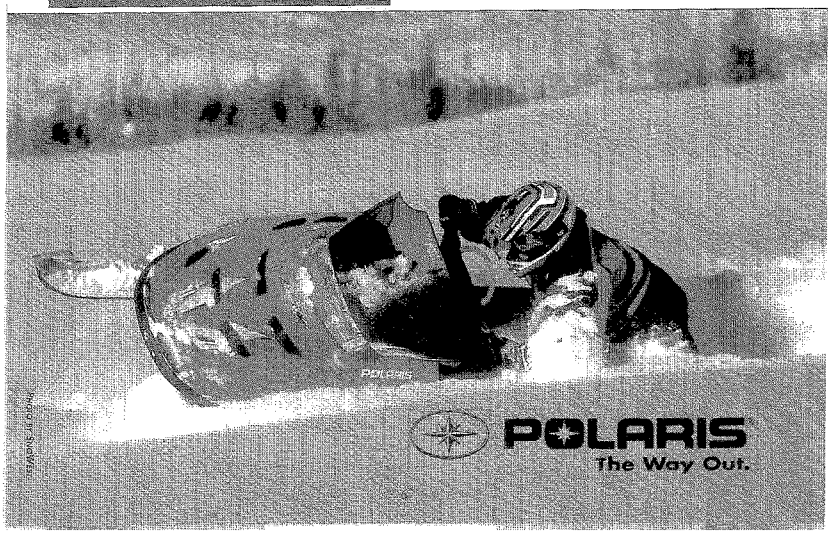


Jim Yellow Photo



Sign up for a Winter Getaway adventure with us, and you'll enjoy views of Old Faithful, the world's most famous geyser (at left), wildlife, and other amazing sights in Yellowstone Park while on a clean, quiet, 4-stroke snowmobile.

And, outside of Yellowstone, right from the edge of town, enjoy mountain powder and hundreds of miles of groomed snowmobile trails in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming that will take you through outstanding scenery.



TRAVELERS SERVICE CENTER

The Travelers Service Center is a 10,000-square-foot facility that is home to All Yellowstone Motor Sports with 200 new, top-of-the-line Polaris and Arctic Cat snowmobiles to rent.

Buy your snowmobile gasoline, souvenirs, snecks and other essentials for the trail, and browse the Polaris West dealership.

It's all conveniently located right across the street from the Days Inn and the Trappers Family Restaurant!

Yellowstone Park and hundreds of miles of scenic snowmobile trails in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming all start right here!

WE OFFER 24-HOUR FUELING SERVICE 7 DAYS A WEEK FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE!

POLARIS® The Way Out. **Located at the Corner of Madison & Electric Steets**

Polaris West

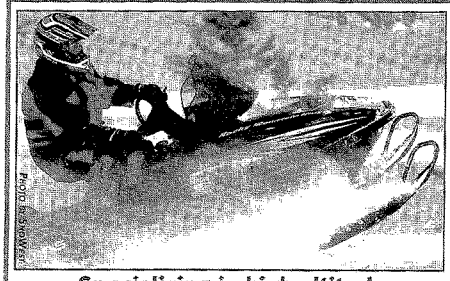


Photo By SnoWest

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Specializing in high altitude set-ups and tuning

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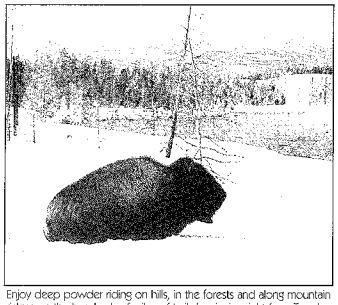
Open 7 days a week during Winter season

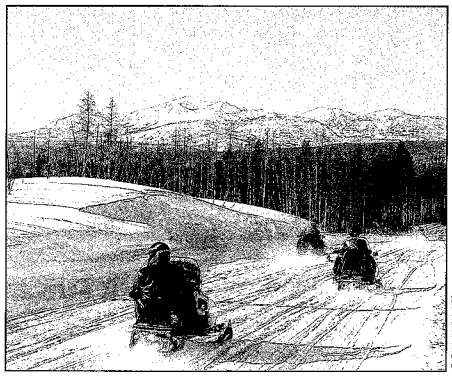
Over 100 years of combined experience!

Our service policy is to keep you on the snow. We have rental sleds available while your sled is being serviced

POLARIS® The Way Out.

The trailhead starts at the West Gate to Beautiful Yellowstone!





Enjoy deep powder riding on hills, in the forests and along mountain ridges on the hundreds of miles of trails beginning right from Travelers Service Center. A winter trip here wouldn't be complete without touring Yellowstone Park, where you can expect to see lots of wildlife, including bison such as this one, and enjoy riding on scenic groomed trails such as the one in the photo at right.

JEFF HEWER PHOTO

OUR MISSION STATEMENT: THE LOOMIS FAMILY IS IN THE BUSINESS OF PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICES & COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN ALL ACTIVITIES. OUR PRIMARY FOCUS IS ON TOURISM & RECREATION. WE PLEDGE TO PROVIDE A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR EMPLOYEES AND TO TREAT OUR CUSTOMERS AS WE WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED.

PHOTO BY SNOWEST

POLARIS®
The Way Out.

West Yellowstone's hundreds of miles of trails, outstanding scenery, great snow and proximity to Yellowstone Park make it the premier place to spend your winter vacation.

Call All Yellowstone Motor Sports & SnoVan Tours, at Travelers Service Center today!

Call 1-800-548-9551 (Days Inn) or 1-800-831-5741
Or, go to www.AllYellowstone.com

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Congress of the United States

Committee on Education
and the Workforce

Committee on the Budget

Committee on Resources

Member
Congressional Arts Caucus
Congressional Working Group on Children
Congressional Fire Services Caucus
Sustainable Development Caucus
Internet Caucus
Law Enforcement Caucus

Testimony of Congressman Rush D. Holt (NJ – 12)
House Committee on Small Business Field Hearing
"Protecting Small Business and National Parks: The Goals Are Not Mutually Exclusive?"
Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort, West Yellowstone, MT
January 26, 2002

I would like to begin by thanking the Chairman and the Ranking Member for taking the time today to hold these hearings. This is a serious matter, and I believe that the impact that snowmobiling has on the economy around Yellowstone National Park is an issue that should be addressed because a great deal of misinformation has been spread on this topic. As is the case in so many other instances, our environmental goals and the economic success of individual communities can be achieved simultaneously.

I was very pleased that last year the National Park Service implemented a rule phasing out snowmobile use in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Our Parks are a national treasure to be enjoyed by all, and they are simply incompatible with snowmobile use. This rule has the support of the American public. Out of 8,438 people responding to the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, approximately 82 percent favored the original rule phasing out snowmobiles. I have been very active in attempts to insure that this rule will remain in place, and that snowmobile use will be phased out in Yellowstone and Grand Teton.

Snowmobile use in Yellowstone constitutes a serious health risk. Due to snowmobile exhaust at Yellowstone's west entrance, park rangers and fee collectors suffer from symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. According to National Park Service records, in December 2000, a dozen Park employees filed medical complaints citing sore throats, headaches, lethargy, eye irritation and tightness in the lungs. Their supervisor requested more staff at the west entrance, not because of a need for additional personnel to cover the work there, but so the supervisor could begin rotating employees more frequently out of the "fume cloud" for the sake of their health. According to the National Park Service Air Resources Division, automobiles outnumber snowmobiles 16 to 1 during the course of a year in Yellowstone, yet snowmobiles produce up to 68 percent of its carbon monoxide pollution and up to 90 percent of the Park's annual hydrocarbon emissions.

Yellowstone National Park is one of the last places in the lower-48 states to see wildlife, such as wolves and grizzly bears, in their natural habitat. Winter in Yellowstone is harsh, with temperatures of 40 degrees below zero and snow depths of 5 feet or more. Food is scarce and animals, including bison and elk, must work hard to make it through the 5

months of unforgiving weather. Bison and elk tend to congregate in the river valleys where most of the snowmobile traffic occurs. The noise, traffic and disturbance of snowmobiles cause these animals to waste the precious energy they need to survive. Regardless of new snowmobile technology, these wildlife harassment issues will continue if any snowmobile use occurs in the park units.

I'm pleased that the committee has chosen to come together to discuss the economic impact of snowmobile use in the park. The winter economy of the Greater Yellowstone Area is under five percent of the overall economic picture for the region. There are over 3 million visitors to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks every year. Estimates state that the Greater Yellowstone Area has a total economic output of $5.7 billion. Winter visitors to Yellowstone National Park account for between 4 and 5 percent of the total number of visitors to the Park. The estimated output and employment impacts of the phase-out represent 0.3 percent of the total economic output in the Greater Yellowstone Area and a 0.5 percent reduction in employment in this economy. The final EIS reports that even these low estimates overstate the true impacts of the rule:

> These estimates likely overstate the impacts on West Yellowstone. The impact projections assume that the change in the West Yellowstone winter economy is proportional to change in park visitation. There is considerable evidence that historical declines in winter park visitation through the West Entrance have not resulted in proportional declines in the local economy. ... This non-proportional relationship between park visitation and the local economy is probably due to extensive winter recreational opportunities near West Yellowstone, including 400 miles of snowmobile trails outside YNP. The average visitor to West Yellowstone spends only one day of a multi-day trip snowmobiling in the park. (Final EIS at page 402)

Even if the Park Service units affected by the rule lost visitors due to the transition from snowmobiles to snow coaches, there is evidence the Park Service has illustrated that there is no relationship between visitation numbers and loss to the local economies. In addition, the Park Service acknowledged the amount of snowmobile use that occurs outside of the park units stating that the average Parks visitor spends only one day of a multi-day snowmobiling visit on the Parks' 250 miles of snowmobile trails.

By reviewing the overall economic picture for the Greater Yellowstone Area, the Park Service assumption in the previous EIS is on target. The economy of West Yellowstone will not likely see major declines, and if the local economy continues dependence on recreational snowmobile use, there are areas outside of the park units that visitors are already using and will likely continue to use.

This year was a good example of the economic realties of the phase-out of snowmobiles. At the end of the 2000-2001 winter season many of the snowmobile and snowcoach routes were in such poor condition they were impassable. With the routes closed and plowed, those who suggest dire economic consequences would have the public believe that visitors packed their bags and headed home. Visitors who planned on seeing the Park

by snowmobile filled buses when this mass-transit was the only option for viewing the Park. Rather than abandon visiting the Park with a temporary ban on snowmobiles and snowcoaches, visitors overwhelmed the available bus service. Those who predicted people would not visit the Park because of changes in available transportation underestimated the powerful draw of the Park's natural amenities.

Last year I visited Yellowstone and spoke with a number of business owners and residents from West Yellowstone who support the phase out of snowmobiles and efforts to protect the national parks. They are ready to take the steps necessary to make sure that jobs remain in West Yellowstone and that the community continues as a premier tourist destination.

Again, I would like to thank the Chairman for holding this hearing to highlight this important issue. I also want to voice my support for the existing rule that would protect Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. This rule was issued after years of study, and there is no new evidence out there to suggest that these conclusions were incorrect.

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20416

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY

April 16, 2001

The Honorable Gale A. Norton
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: The National Park Service's final rule phasing out snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park, the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Parkway, and with some exceptions, in Grand Teton National Park, 66 Fed. Reg. 7259

Dear Secretary Norton:

The Office of Advocacy of the U.S. Small Business Administration is submitting comments on the above captioned rule. We are concerned that the U.S. Department of Interior's National Park Service (NPS) has not fully complied with its obligations under the controlling executive orders, regulations, and statutes, including the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA).[1] We also question whether the NPS has given adequate consideration to the alternatives, such as phasing out the noisiest and dirtiest snowmobiles which may enable the NPS to fulfill its statutory obligations while minimizing burdens on small businesses. We recommend that NPS re-open the rulemaking based on the following concerns.

Background

On January 22, 2001, the NPS published a final rule in the *Federal Register* phasing out snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park, the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Parkway, and with some exceptions, in Grand Teton National Park. 66 Fed. Reg. 7259. Only snow coaches (minivans on tracks) would be allowed. Pursuant to the Andrew Card Memorandum dated January 20, 2001, the NPS extended the effective date of the rule, which is now April 22, 2001. (Please refer to Advocacy's request for action, page 9, for a more general discussion as to the effective date of the rule).

Advocacy previously filed a comment letter concerning the draft proposed snowmobile rule on December 7, 2000. At that time, Advocacy reserved the right to supplement its comments if necessary following a review of the supporting economic impact analyses.

[1] Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. § 601, as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Act, Pub. L. No. 104-121, 110 Stat. 866 (1996).

FEDERAL RECYCLING PROGRAM PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Advocacy has now had an opportunity to review the requisite documents and files this letter in supplementation to its December 2000 comments.

Discussion

Advocacy supports NPS's policy goal to limit air and sound pollution from snowmobiles, and to minimize conflicts associated with them. It is the implementation of the goal that is problematic in Advocacy's opinion. NPS's economic analysis suggests that banning snowmobiles will have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. There are nearly 70 small businesses that depend on snowmobile rental revenue. One owner testified at a congressional hearing that his firm's annual revenue could decline by a third if snowmobiles are banned.[2] On the other hand, it is not clear what is lost in terms of environmental benefits if the NPS bans just the dirtiest and noisiest snowmobiles. Moreover, the NPS would avoid the potential problems caused by snow coaches (see section 3 below for detail) if only certain types of snowmobiles are banned.

Further, the rule will shift 100 percent of the burden for addressing problems caused by snowmobiles to small entities when the NPS is in large part, responsible for the problems. NPS admits that for thirty years, it failed to comply with its legal obligation to monitor and control snowmobile use in the nation's parks.[3] As a result, the snowmobile industry has been allowed to grow and flourish around parks where snowmobile use has become an integral part of visitor's winter access to the parks. Now the NPS claims that it must immediately enforce the very laws that it overlooked for so many years and proposes to ban snowmobiles because it is easier to prevent riders from harassing wildlife, etc., than it is to monitor and police them. However, administrative convenience is not sufficient to justify diminishing visitors' right to enjoy the parks or the impact on small entities. It is simply not fair for the burden to fall solely on the shoulders of small business.

The industry has already taken reasonable steps toward addressing problems caused by snowmobiles. Virtually all of the local small businesses use cleaner gas and oil in their snowmobiles to reduce air pollution. There are 50 of the cleaner, quieter snowmobiles already in use in Yellowstone today, and two of the four major snowmobile producers announced their intentions to market more next season.

Finally, based on its review of the laws, regulations, and economic analyses relied on by the NPS, Advocacy has concluded that NPS has not fully complied with laws governing such action. NPS appears to have exceeded its authority. We do not believe that NPS has statutory authority to ban snowmobiles whenever and wherever it wishes, but even if it did, NPS has in this instance failed to meet the burden placed on it by the applicable statutes in order to justify taking such an action. Further, no credible factual basis exists

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[2]Seely, Clyde G. "Testimony for the Subcommittee on Tax, Finance, and Exports," presented before the Subcommittee on Tax, Finance, and Exports of the Committee on Small Business, US House of Representatives, July 13, 2000. He testified that winter revenue constitutes 50% of annual revenue and that winter revenue would decline by 60-70%, which could represent 33% of annual revenue (0.5 x 0.66 = 0.33).

[3] 66 Fed. Reg. 7260 (January 22, 2001).

for the NPS's certification that the rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, as required by section 605 of the RFA. The NPS may have also violated the Administrative Procedure Act, National Environmental Protection Act, and the Rehabilitation Act. These issues are addressed in greater detail below.

1. No credible factual basis exists for the NPS's RFA certification.

The NPS certified under the RFA that the proposed and final rules will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The agency head may certify in lieu of preparing regulatory flexibility analysis, but there must be a factual basis for the certification (see RFA § 605).

We question the factual basis for the certification in the final rule. In the preamble, NPS certifies the final rule but, in NPS's economic analysis, concludes "the rule will potentially have a significant economic impact on numerous small entities."[4] Either the NPS must provide a factual basis for certification (which it has not done as evidenced by its own contradictory statements) or else the agency must prepare a final regulatory flexibility analysis. NPS cannot have it both ways.

NPS's economic analysis does not provide a factual basis for certification. On the contrary, it suggests that the small entities will incur a disproportionate impact under the final rule. While small businesses produce 60 percent of the revenue generated by local rental firms they incur 90 percent of the cost.[5] The rule could also adversely affect competition. The profit margin of the smallest business will decline by 78 percent, versus 2 percent for the largest business.[6] To stay in business, a firm must earn a normal rate of return in the long run – a difficult task with a 78-percent loss. Also, larger firms tend to be in a better position to self-finance capital costs or provide collateral to obtain

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[4] In the publication entitled, Proposed Restrictions on Snowmobile Riding in the Greater Yellowstone Area, economic impact and benefit-cost analysis, p. 5-4, the NPS states: "This screening analysis suggest that the rule will potentially have a significant economic impact on numerous small entities involved in the snowmobile rental business, in addition to possible impacts on other local small businesses."

[5] Id. NPS estimates that there are 69 rental firms in communities surrounding affected national parks which meet SBA's definition of small business (<$5 million in annual receipts) and 5 which don't. Seventy of these rent snowmobiles and total lost revenue is estimated to be $3.9 million. Thus, the cost per firm is $56,000 ($3.9 million/70). Thus, small businesses incur approximately 90 percent of compliance costs (69 x 56,000/74 x 56,000). NPS also provides the firm distribution by revenue: 31 have less than $500,000, 17 with $0.5-1 million, 14 with $1-2.5 million, 7 with $2.5-5 million, 4 with $5-10 million, and 1 with $10-20 million. Assuming each firm produces the maximum per category (e.g., 31 produce $500,000, 17 with $1 million, etc.), we find that small businesses produce 60% of revenue generated by the local rental firms: ([31 x $500,000+...+ 7 x $5million]/[31 x $500,000+...+1 x $20million]).

[6] Id., § 5, NPS reports that, in greater Yellowstone, of the snowmobile, ski, and snowmobile rental firms, it found 31 that have less than $500,000 in annual revenue and 1 that has $10-$20 million. The NPS also reports that the upper quartile profit-to-revenue ratio for the recreation industry (SIC 7999) is 14.2%. If we assume, conservatively, that the 31 small firms rent snowmobiles and each produces $500,000 in annual sales, the per-firm profits would be $71,000 (0.142 x $500,000). Using the same logic, the profit of the large firm would be $2.8 million (0.142*$20 million). The NPS estimates that the cost per firm would be $56,000 annually. Then, respectively, cost per profit-dollar would be 78% (56,000/71,000) and 2% (56,000/2.8 million).

loans. It is not clear how an agency could be aware of this evidence and still claim to have a credible factual basis for certification.

2. NPS appears to have exceeded its legal authority

The NPS primarily relies on the NPS Organic Act, the Clean Air Act, Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 and 36 CFR 1 § 2.18 for its authority to ban snowmobiles. Advocacy believes that the NPS has exceeded the scope of the aforementioned legal authority. While the laws and regulations clearly require that the NPS protect park resources, they also direct the agency to *balance* these concerns with the enjoyment of the parks by visitors.[7] The NPS states in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that it must eliminate snowmobiles from the parks so that future generations can enjoy *undiminished* park resources. This statement is inconsistent with the NPS's duty to balance park resources with the public's right to enjoy the parks. It is wholly unrealistic to expect that park resources can remain undiminished for future generations while allowing present visitors freedom to enjoy the parks.

Statistics show that the use of snowmobiles is one of the most popular activities in the parks during the winter months.[8] It is not clear how the NPS could on the one hand deny park visitors from participating in such a popular activity, and on the other claim to have balanced competing interests. It is apparent that the ban favors the interests of other types of visitors to the park over people who use snowmobiles.

A. <u>NPS cannot ban snowmobiles everywhere</u>

Under a plain reading, Executive Order (E.O.) 11644 contemplates an ongoing presence of snowmobiles in the parks in designated areas, not a prohibition of snowmobiles on an indefinite basis.[9] Section 3 was promulgated to provide designated areas for the use of off-road vehicles in an effort to "minimize" (not "eliminate") damage to the environment, wildlife and conflicts with other recreational uses of the public lands.

E.O. 11989, which clarifies NPS's authority under E.O. 11644, does not amend section 3.[10] Indeed, section 2(b) indicates that "each agency head is authorized to adopt the policy that portions of the public lands within his jurisdiction shall be closed to use by

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[7] NPS Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 1, §1.

[8] 65 Fed. Reg. 79024 (December 18, 2000).

[9] See E.O. 11644 section 1: "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 so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands."

[10] See E.O. 11644, section 2a: "*Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 3 of this Order*, 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, *until such time as he determines that such adverse effects have been eliminated and that measures have been implemented to prevent future recurrence*." [emphasis added]

off-road vehicles *except* those areas or trails which are suitable and specifically designated as open to such use pursuant to Section 3 of this Order." [emphasis added].

Case law appears to support this view.[11] The executive orders that govern snowmobile use on public lands restricts the NPS's discretion to act. The NPS's actions must be consistent with the values and provisions of the executive orders and the underlying statutes with respect to the snowmobile rule, they are not.[12] Certainly the executive orders referred to herein do not provide for an indefinite ban of snowmobiles.

B. NPS cannot ban snowmobiles indefinitely

Even if NPS can ban snowmobiles everywhere in national parks, Executive Order 11989, section 2, allows the agency head to close areas of the park to snowmobiles when there is evidence of adverse effects to the environment only "until such time as he determines that such adverse effects have been eliminated and that measures have been implemented to prevent future recurrence." This provision clearly does not provide for a snowmobile ban into perpetuity. Indeed, it places an affirmative duty on the NPS to study the effects of snowmobiles in the future.

A report from the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) concluded that the four U.S. land management agencies have failed to compile information on the effects, if any, that snowmobiles are having on the parks' resources and environment.[13] It is not clear how NPS can determine when any adverse effects have been eliminated if it does not monitor environmental impacts of snowmobiles in the future. Currently, a monitoring system does not appear to be in place and the NPS does not expressly provide for one in this rule. The rule does not address whether the NPS plans to monitor the effects of snowmobiles in the future.

C. NPS has not met its burden to ban snowmobiles

Even if the NPS could ban snowmobiles wherever and whenever for any period of time, it is not clear whether the NPS has met its burden to do so under the applicable executive orders. Executive Order 11989, section 2, requires that NPS demonstrate "considerable" harm to park resources. But, as the GAO correctly points out in its report, NPS could not have shown this unless it has monitored the effects of snowmobiles on the environment, which it has not.

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[11] Conservation Law Foundation of New England, Inc. v. Secretary of the Interior, 864 F.2d 954, 959 (1st Cir. 1989).

[12] Advocacy already addressed whether NPS complied with the applicable executive orders (see above). As for the statutes, the National Environmental Policy Act 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq. (1989) is the basis for the executive orders. It, too, requires a balancing of interests. 42 U.S.C. § 4321(1989).

[13] United States General Accounting Office, Report to Congressional Requesters, Federal Lands: Agencies Need to Assess the Impact of Personal Watercraft and Snowmobile Use, (GAO/RCEC-00-243), Sept. 2000.

The FEIS states "the need to develop a plan through an EIS is indicated by the difference between overall desired condition and conditions that presently exist."[14] The FEIS does not discuss what mechanisms are in place to monitor the parks' environmental status in an effort to determine whether any adverse effects caused by snowmobiles have been eliminated and that measures have been implemented to prevent future recurrence as is contemplated by E.O. 11989. As such, the agency head cannot comply with E. O. 11989 because he or she will not be in a position to determine when any adverse conditions have ceased to exist.

Advocacy is concerned that the National Park Service has promulgated a rule that in effect prohibits the use of snowmobiles in the affected parks without having sufficiently investigated what, if any, adverse effects the snowmobiles are having on the parks and surrounding communities. In essence the NPS relies on the FEIS and the Winter 1998-1999 Visitor Survey Yellowstone N.P., Grand Teton; N.P., and the Greater Yellowstone Area, as its justification for this rule. While the FEIS includes information from other studies, it concludes that: "Because a plan of this type is general in nature, an analysis of environmental impacts need only be conducted at a general level. The type and amount of data relating to possible impacts is presented at the general level and is not exhaustively detailed and 'site-specific.'"[15] Advocacy questions the wisdom of implementing a draconian rule without specific information of what the environmental impacts will be. This concern is buttressed by the GAO report identified above. It also appears to be in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)[16] which requires, *inter alia*, that the agency have detailed information on environmental impacts before making a such a decision. Everyone has a right to enjoy the national park system. The NPS should not be allowed to circumvent its rules and other laws and regulations without adequately assessing what affect snowmobiles (including those in use now and the newer, cleaner and quieter models scheduled to be on the market within the next year) are having on the environment.

D. NPS's action may violate the NEPA and CEQ regulations.

NEPA is the "basic national charter for protection of the environment."[17] NEPA requires that all Federal agencies prepare a detailed statement regarding all major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment...[18] The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), an agency within the Executive Office of the President, has promulgated regulations implementing and explaining the requirements of NEPA. CEQ regulations require that "the EIS include a discussion of alternatives, including the proposed action...thus sharply defining the issues and providing a clear basis for choice among the options by the decision-maker and the public."[19] CEQ regulations also require Federal agencies to make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and

[14] FEIS, page v.
[15] FEIS, p. IV.
[16] 42 U.S.C. §4321, *et seq.* (1989).
[17] 40 C.F.R. § 1500.1(c).
[18] 42 U.S.C. § 4332 (2)(C).
[19] 40 C.F.R. §§ 1502.10(e), 1502.14.

implementing their NEPA procedures. The agency shall "[p]rovide public notice of...the availability of environmental documents so as to inform those persons and agencies who may be interested or affected."[20] A review of the chronology surrounding the public dissemination of the DEIS and the FEIS raises questions about whether the NPS complied with the provisions of NEPA and CEQ regulations.

On or about July 30, 1999, the NPS released to the public the DEIS for the affected parks which contained seven alternatives. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative B) emphasized that air quality and oversnow motor vehicle sound would be addressed and that an advisory committee that would make recommendations on the phasing and implementation of sound and emission standards over the next ten years. By the winter of 2008-2009 strict emission and sound requirements would be required by all oversnow vehicles entering the parks. None of the alternatives sought an outright ban on snowmobiles. However, during the first few months of 2000, the NPS abruptly supplemented the DEIS by revising Alternative G and indentifying it as the preferred alternative.[21] The revised Alternative G included an outright ban on recreational snowmobile use in the parks as well as other restrictive provisions. It appears that there was no prior public notice of the change, nor was there a new opportunity for public comment. CEQ regulations require that NEPA procedures must insure that environmental information is available before decisions are made and before actions are taken.[22]

To add insult to injury, on October 31, 2000, the NPS published in the *Federal Register* the availability of the FEIS and gave the public until October 31, 2000, (**the same day that the notice was published**) to file comments. As in the case of the DEIS, the FEIS identified Alternative G as the preferred alternative. However, Alternative G was even more restrictive that it was in the DEIS. For example, it eliminated the possibility of continued snowmobile use with technological improvements expected to occur in the future.

The aforementioned facts appear to violate NEPA provisions and CEQ regulations. Further, NPS's actions are illustrative of the fact that the NPS has lost sight of its responsibility to balance the environmental protection of the parks with the public's right to enjoy the parks in this instance.

E. NPS's action may violate the Rehabilitation Act

Based on a review of the rule, NPS does not specifically address how the snow coaches are to be adapted to facilitate use by persons with handicaps. Advocacy is concerned therefore that the rule may violate the Rehabilitation Act.[23] It is clear that many handicapped individuals do, based upon their handicap, use snowmobiles to enjoy winter

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[20] Id. § 1506.6(b).
[21] Alternative G in the original DEIS sought to emphasize clean quiet oversnow access to the parks using technologies available today.
[22] 40 C.F.R. § 1505.1.
[23] 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

access to the parks. Advocacy believes that the NPS should compromise by allowing continued use of snowmobiles in the parks under certain circumstances. However, if the NPS chooses to require the use of snow coaches in lieu of snowmobiles, the agency should be required to provide for modification to the snow coaches to accommodate persons with special needs. To the extent that the NPS has failed to consider this potential problem, it will also have a corresponding affect on the overall cost of the rule.

3. NPS has not adequately considered the alternatives

E.O. 12866, § 1 requires the agency to select the alternative that maximizes net benefits unless the applicable statute requires otherwise. We are not aware of any such statutory prohibition under laws relied on by the NPS in promulgating this rule.

There is a reasonable alternative that Advocacy could support. The NPS could ban the dirtiest and noisiest snowmobiles rather than substituting snow coaches for snowmobiles. Under this alternative, NPS would achieve two thirds of the air pollution reduction at just a third of the cost (see appendix tables 1-5 for calculations), and the alternative would be cost effective for HC+NOx when compared with recent EPA mobile source programs (see tables 6 and 7). NPS could also achieve 67 percent more noise pollution reduction (table 8). A snow coach is not quiet; one is equivalent to eight quiet snowmobiles.[24]

In addition, NPS would avoid all of the other problems caused by snow coaches. Under our alternative, there could be:

- Less congestion. To meet the average daily demand with snow coaches, NPS would have to admit one every 5 minutes, creating a caravan. What happens when one must stop 5 or more minutes, which we are told occurs frequently?

- Fewer stranded visitors. For example, NPS projects that 80 snow coaches would be needed to meet the average daily demand for trips from Yellowstone's West Entrance to Old Faithful (NPS, 2000, [FEIS], Table 143), but it would be difficult given the logistical constraints, to accommodate more than 36 coaches per day.[25] If the assumptions are correct, demand would exceed supply by 44 snow coaches *on the typical day*, which could prevent as many as 660 visitors (44 x 15/coach) from visiting the most popular destination in Yellowstone, unless of course they decide to ski across country or walk instead. What about children? The disabled?

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[24]Each existing snow coach is assumed to emit 69 dBA and each quiet snowmobile, 60 dBA. Each time the number of identical noise sources doubles, sound pressure level rises by 3 dBA. If instead, we use NPS's assumptions for its sound-level analyses – each coach emits 75 dBA and each quiet snowmobile, 60 dBA (see NPS, 2000, FEIS, Table 65), 1 coach would be equivalent to 32 snowmobiles in terms of sound.

[25]Advocacy assumes that NPS will not allow snow coaches in the park after dark. If that is the case, the earliest the park could open is 7 a.m. and the latest, 5:30 p.m. According to Clyde Seely, a typical trip by coach from West Entrance to Old Faithful lasts 7½ hours roundtrip (including 1½ hours for lunch). Thus, the last coach would have to leave for Old Faithful by 10 a.m. (to be back by 5:30 p.m.). If a coach leaves West Entrance every 5 minutes starting at 7 a.m., no more than 36 coaches could enter the park and return by 5:30 p.m. (there are 180 minutes between 7 and 10 a.m. and 180 minutes/5 minutes/coach=36).

- Fewer displaced visitors. Fifty percent of snowmobile riders would visit greater Yellowstone less frequently if snowmobiles were banned,[26] whereas 20 percent would if cleaner, quieter snowmobiles and snow coaches were allowed.[27] Snow coaches cannot reach all of the same locations that snowmobiles can. There is less freedom when riding with others.

The NPS may still have enforceability concerns. The NPS would probably have to hire additional park rangers to monitor and police irresponsible users. Fortunately, statistics show there are few persons that abuse the system. Less than 1/2 percent of snowmobile visits result in citations, accidents or incidents (see table 9), and many of these are honest mistakes. Second, NPS could use the revenue it expects to lose under a snowmobile ban to increase enforcement. If a typical full-time-equivalent earns $50,000 per season, NPS could hire 7 FTEs,[28] and it would still cost less than a ban. Advocacy is not suggesting to NPS how to allocate its budget. Advocacy is simply highlighting enforceability concerns the NPS may have and intimating that reasonable alternatives exist to an outright ban of snowmobiles.

The NPS does have a legal obligation to balance conflicting interests, and quieter, cleaner snowmobiles have several advantages that snow coaches do not. In light of the forgoing, it is difficult to believe that NPS gave the alternative of banning only the noisiest, dirtiest, snowmobiles adequate consideration. It appears to be the superior alternative.

Requested Action

Based on the foregoing comments and analysis, Advocacy recommends that the NPS re-open the rulemaking. If after review, NPS decides to change the rule, good rulemaking policy dictates that the NPS issue an interim final rule with a 30-day comment. However, the NPS may wish to re-propose the rule in order to maximize public input and to ensure its obligations under the APA have been satisfied.

Per the Andrew Card memorandum, the effective date of the rule is April 22, 2001. The NPS should extend the rule's effective date if it is going to review the rule. Without a delay in the effective date, affected small entities may start investing (to comply with the rule) or decide to leave the market. If that happens, and NPS later decides to change the rule, those investments may be stranded, a situation we would like to avoid. In any case, NPS should review the rule and allow sufficient time to consider public comments, to preserve its options until final decisions have been made.

If you have any questions, please contact my staff, either Linwood Rayford at (202) 401-6880 or Austin Perez at (202) 205-6936.

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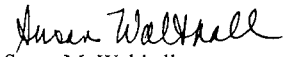
[26]NPS, 2000, FEIS, Table 133.
[27]Duffield and Neher, 2000, Table 4.35.
[28]Duffield and Neher (2000) find that 33 percent of park visitors would no longer visit either Yellowstone or the surrounding areas if snowmobiles were banned. On average, nearly 80,000 snowmobile passengers enter Yellowstone each season (NPS, 2000, FEIS, Table 42) and the entrance fee is $15/snowmobile. Thus seasonal revenue could decline by $360,000 (24,000x$15/snowmobile), and 360,000/50,000/FTE~7FTEs.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Walthall
Acting Chief Counsel for Advocacy

Linwood L. Rayford, III
Assistant Chief Counsel for Advocacy

Austin Perez
Assistant Advocate

Cc: Mr. David Smith
Mr. David Bernhardt

Appendix and Table of Calculations

13-Mar-01

Table 1:
Judgements

Horsepower-hours/Snowmobile-Day (hp-h/d)[1]	64
Price/Snowcoach-Day[2]	$90
Price/Snowmobile-Day for a 2-Stroke[2]	$119
Price/Snowmobile-Day for a 4-Stroke[3]	$129
Rate of Substitution (r) (ΔSnowmobiles/ΔSnowcoaches)[4]	7
Miles/Snowcoach-Day (mi/d)[5]	100
Short Tons/Gram (tons/g)	1E-06
Grams/Pound (g/lb.)	454
Pounds/Short Ton (lbs./ton)	2000

[1]Source: DOI Nat'l Park Service (NPS), "Air Quality Concerns", February 2000, p. B-1.

[2]Proposed Restrictions on Snowmobile Riding in the Greater Yellowstone Area, economic impact and benefit-cost analysis, p. 3-15 for coaches and p. 3-17 for snowmobiles.

[3]Communication with Clyde Seely, West Yellowstone Businessman, 2/2001.

[4]NPS, 2000, FEIS Vol. 1, Tables 75 and 143. "ΔSnowmobiles" represents the difference between NPS's estimates of the total number of snowmobiles under alternative A (Table 75) vs. alternative G (Table 143). "ΔSnowcoaches" represents that difference between snowcoaches. This ratio estimate is conservative since it doesn't account for the expected net increase in ridership among existing snowcoach passengers (see Duffield and Neher, "Winter 1998-99 Visitor Survey", 5/2000.)

[5]Source: NPS, "Air Quality Concerns", February 2000, tables 5-7 of appendix A.

Table 2: Emission Factors

Pollutant	2-stroke engines (g/hp-h)	4-stroke engines (g/hp-h)	snowcoaches (g/mi)
HC+NOx	132	5	21
CO	350	195	166
Total	482	200	188

Source: NPS, "Air Quality Concerns," February 2000. Factors for 2-strokes represent the arithmetic mean of observations 6, 7, and 10 from Table 1 (those fueled with gasohol); for 4-strokes, 14 and 15. See Tables 5-7 of Appendix A of the report for snowcoach factors.

Table 3: Emissions/Vehicle-Day

A	B	C	D
Pollutant	2-stroke engines (t/d)	4-stroke engines (t/d)	snowcoaches (t/d)
HC+NOx	9E-03	4E-04	3E-04
CO	2E-02	1E-02	3E-03
Total	3E-02	1E-02	3E-03

Source: Derived from Table 2 using judgements presented in Table 1.

Table 4: Emissions Reduction/Substitution (to 4-stroke or snowcoach)

A	B	C	D
Pollutant	4-stroke engines (t/d)	Snowcoaches (t/d)	% of total (B/Cx100%)
HC+NOx	9E-03	9E-03	99%
CO	1E-02	2E-02	50%
Total	2E-02	3E-02	64%

Source: Derived from Table 3, by subtracting each column (B and C) from A.

Table 5: Cost/Vehicle Day*

A	B	C	D
Pollutant	4-stroke engines	snowcoaches	% of total (B/Cx100%)
HC+NOx	$7	$19	34%
CO	$3	$10	34%
Total	$10	$29	34%

*Apportioned 1/3 of total costs to NOx, 1/3 to HC, and 1/3 to CO.

Table 6: Per-Vehicle Average Cost

A	B	C	D
Pollutant	4-stroke engines ($/ton)	snowcoaches ($/ton)	Difference (C/B)
HC+NOx	$748	$2,157	2.9
CO	$302	$434	1.4
Total	$503	$933	1.9

Table 7: Cost Effectiveness of Recent EPA Mobile Source Programs (in $1999)*

EPA Program	Pollutants	Average Cost ($/ton)
Marine CI Engines	HC+NOx	$100
2004 Highway Heavy-Duty Diesel	NMHC+NOx	$313
Nonroad Diesel Tier 2/3	NMHC+NOx	$550
Marine SI Engines	HC+NOx	$1,509
2007 Highway Heavy-Duty Diesel	NMHC+NOx	$1,663
Tier 2 vehicle/gasoline sulfur	NMHC+NOx	$1,800
National Low Emission Vehicles	NMHC+NOx	$1,930
Average		$1,123

*includes post-1996 final rules from EPA, 2000, Diesel Rule RIA, Tables VI.F-3 and F-5. "NMHC"=nonmethane hydrocarbons.

Table 8: Reduction in Average Sound Level (in dB) (Relative to Baseline)

A	B	C	D
Range of Reductions	Alternative		%Difference (B/Cx100%)
	Ban Noisest	Ban All	
Upper-bound	13.0	8.0	163%
Lower-bound	12.0	7.0	171%
Average	12.5	7.5	167%

NPS, 2000, FEIS Vol 1, pp. 349 and 426.

Table 9: Frequency of Citations and Case Incidents

A	B	C	D	E
Type	# for 5 seasons*	#/Season (B/5)	Snowmobiles Visits/Season**	% of total (C/Dx100%)
Citations	1,156	231	79,733	0.3%
Incidents	319	64	79,733	0.1%
Accidents	201	40	79,733	0.1%
Total	1,676	335	79,733	0.4%

*Ibid., pp. 130-134.

**Ibid., Table 42.

Scott Carsley

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January 26, 2002

Dear Chairman Manzullo and members of the Committee:

I am sorry I did not have the opportunity to address the Committee personally. I believe at a hearing such as this, it is important to have a balanced representation from our community and from business owners operating in Yellowstone National Park, in order for members of the Committee to have an accurate representation of the issues.

I am owner of Yellowstone Alpen Guides. We began operating snowcoach tours in Yellowstone in 1984 and for the past 17 years have built a successful business operating snowcoach tours in winter and specialty guided tours in the summer. As a resident of West Yellowstone for 25 years, I realize that my livelihood, the livelihood of my 15 employees and that of our entire gateway community is clearly directly dependent upon Yellowstone National Park. I believe our entire region and its future is dependent on three things:

-a healthy natural environment

-a healthy economic environment

-a healthy social environment.

It is the shaping of this future that brings us together today.

One hundred thirty years ago, members of Congress had the courage and foresight to create the world's first National Park. Their action preserved and protected not only the greatest geothermal area in the world but also an incredibly diverse ecosystem of sufficient size to maintain its original biological diversity. These qualities are unique to Yellowstone National Park, and since its inception have attracted visitors from around the world. As a tour operator, I know visitor polls show almost exclusively that people come

to Yellowstone for two major reasons. One is to see the incredible concentration of geysers and their related hydrothermal displays. The other is wildlife-watching. Yellowstone's huge concentration of diverse wildlife, living in their natural habitats often earns it the moniker "The Serengeti of North America".

As a business owner, I naturally favor a strong economic environment as well. It is often thought that our communities must choose between economic and environmental health. On the contrary, I view environmental quality as key to the Greater Yellowstone Area's economic prosperity, and natural resource conservation as essential to building regional wealth and economic diversity.

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The preservation of our natural and economic environments will logically lead to a healthy social environment as well. This has to be a nice place to live to attract businesses and families to our region, with the social amenities and infrastructures such as schools, law enforcement and medical facilities. In this global economy with modern telecommunications, businesses and people are now choosing where they live rather than being held to an area by a job. The more prosperous our region, the more social amenities abound.

Decisions affecting our area should be based on these three concerns. West Yellowstone's winter economy, unfortunately, is not very diverse. Approximately 89% of visitors passing through the West Entrance ride snowmobiles. This is because snowmobiles are great fun to ride, have been massively marketed and tend to exclude other groups by their noise, exhaust and the trail conditions they create. As a snowcoach operator I daily encounter the overwhelming influence which snowmobiles have on our town, our visitors and our Park. Please refer to the enclosed photograph of one of the seven major local snowmobile rental agencies. Imagine the effects of this pollution on my passengers and our National Park. Also refer to my enclosed letter to you dated July 2000 for the effects snowmobiles have on the road conditions in Yellowstone. Snowmobiles, while being an integral part of our local economy, are at the same time keeping other segments of our population away and are preventing our economy from growing and prospering.

September 11th was devastating to our country. Locally our tourism based economy faltered and many local businesses spoke of bankruptcy. It was in this environment that a local ballot initiative creating a nighttime curfew on snowmobiles failed to pass by only 6 votes, and a local businessman was elected to our city council based on a platform against snowmobiles. The local voters spoke out against snowmobiles at a time of economic hardship. I can only imagine the results of the election if the September tragedy had not occurred. You may hear from a few vocal snowmobile operators on how devastating the removal of snowmobiling from Yellowstone will be to our community. However, the results of our local election last November speak for themselves. Townspeople are tired of the "two-stroke cartel" and the influence they exert on our community. Many farsighted local business owners and residents see our town's potential for growth stymied because of the local snowmobile industry.

First and foremost, our future depends on a protected and preserved Yellowstone National Park. We stand at a crossroads where hard decisions must be made, compromise must be found. You must insure to the world and to the local region that our area can be preserved and can prosper at the same time. Curtailing snowmobiling inb

4

Yellowstone will have a tremendous long-range benefit to the local economy. Imagine the opportunity that awaits our town. We have the chance to offer tourists both a pristine visit to Yellowstone and tremendous snowmobiling outside Yellowstone. It could be the best of both worlds offering diversity to a wide range of visitors seeking a wide range of experiences. This will not only protect our first National Park, it will ensure our economic future and preserve our social environment.

Respectfully,

Scott D. Carsley

Scott Carsley

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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

FROM : Yellowstone Alpen Guides FAX NO. : 406 646 5594 JUL. 11 2006 09:23PM P2

JAN.25.2002 7:35PM NO.385 P.2/3

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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

January 26, 2002

Congressman Donald Manzullo
Chairman
House Small Business Committee
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I would like to submit this testimony to be included in the record of the hearing you are holding today on proposals to regulate snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park. This is an issue that is very important to my state. I would like to thank both you and Congressman Rehberg for your efforts in organizing this hearing and gathering all of the witnesses together to testify today in Montana.

I have always believed that our national parks are magnificent national treasures worthy of protection. They provide vital wildlife habitat and abundant opportunities for recreation. National Parks are also important, vitally important, to surrounding communities. That is particularly true for the communities sitting on the edge of our Nation's first National Park -- Yellowstone. Yellowstone is the engine for local economies, including West Yellowstone where the Committee is holding its hearing today.

Because Yellowstone is so important for so many reasons, proposals to regulate snowmobile use in Yellowstone Park have been highly controversial, to put it lightly. I've met with folks on all sides of this issue, and I think that most people agree that the noise, air pollution and wildlife impacts caused by current snowmobile usage are unacceptable, and have to be addressed.

Having said that, I have always thought a ban goes too far. I believe that we can protect the park and its wildlife without banning snowmobiles. I understand the Park Service is now looking at a variety of alternatives to meet these goals, including limiting the number of snowmobiles allowed in the park and requiring clean and quiet machines. The bottom line is that we should attempt to reach some sort of compromise instead of resorting to a full ban.

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The long-term health of the Park and the long-term economic health of the surrounding communities go hand in hand. For that reason alone, I am hopeful that we can achieve a balanced solution that will protect local economies and what is beautiful and wild about Yellowstone National Park.

Thank-you again, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Rehberg, for holding this hearing today.

Sincerely,

Max Baucus

Jan 22nd, 2002

Peter Grant

Dear Chrm. Manzullo,

My wife, Rhonda, and I have just returned to Denver from a three day winter excursion to Bozeman + Yellowstone Nat'l. Park. We + six other friends entered the Park thru West Yellowstone by snow-coach + all were enthusiastic about the prospect of sampling the Park's winter atmosphere + game watching + snowshoeing.

As we passed thru the West entry kiosks, we were appalled at the steady stream (as if we were on a major urban highway) of noisy, polluting snowmobiles grinding past us.

We have been to Yellowstone N. Pk. several times before + enjoyed →

its diverse offerings. However this time, we and our friends thought our tour was significantly damaged, or certainly diminished, by the onslaught of snowmobiles and their noisy impact on the winter atmosphere of this beautiful park.

We agree that snowmobiles have a place in winter recreation + farm/ranch work, but we would ask if some scheduling system couldn't be implemented (also in to camp site permitting) to slow, not prohibit, the use of snowmobiles in the Park. Would not such a system be more tolerant of animals + birds in the Park at winter time?

We thank you + your Committee associates for considering our thoughts and suggestions.

Sincerely

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545 Race Street
Denver, Colorado 80206

Bozeman Daily Chronicle
Bozeman, Montana
SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 2002

Congressman stands up for snowmobilers

NPS wrong to downplay impact of machines, head of congressional committee says in West

By SCOTT McMILLION
Chronicle Staff Writer

WEST YELLOWSTONE — Snowmobiling is a $7 billion annual business and the National Park Service was wrong to downplay the importance of all that money changing hands, a congressional committee chairman said here Saturday.

Rep. Donald Manzullo, R-Ill and chairman of the House Committee on Small Business, said he is hoping for a better attitude from the Park Service, now that Fran Mainella, a Bush appointee, is the chief.

"I would certainly hope that Director Mainella will not be as cavalier as her predecessor in dismissing the economic concerns of the small businesses and and rural communities that rely on snowmobile tourism," Manzullo told Mainella and at least 200 other people Saturday morning.

Mainella was there conducting her first tour of Yellowstone National Park as director of the Park Service and said she would spend the snowy afternoon snowmobiling and riding in a snowcoach.

The crowd had gathered for a field hearing of the Small Business Committee in a motel ballroom. The topic was the future of snowmobiling in Yellowstone, a field where the committee has little direct jurisdiction.

But Manzullo said he worries that if the Park Service decides to ban snowmobiles the ripples could spread far, even to his own industrial district in Rockford, Ill., where small factories make parts for many types of machines, including snowmobiles.

"I'm concerned about an overactive government or a government that has lost its focus," he told the crowd.

Rep. Denny Rehberg, R-Mont., was the only other member of the committee to attend the hearing, which came as

(More on **Snowmobiles**, page A12)

Snowmobiles/from page A1

the Park Service is putting the final touches on a new plan that outlines possible winter management schemes for Yellowstone, Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller Memorial Parkway.

Last year, the Park Service under the Clinton administration finalized plans to ban all recreational snowmobiling from Yellowstone after a three-year phaseout and replace the noisy sleds with multi-passenger snowcoaches. The Bush administration quickly put that plan on hold and ordered the new study, which the Park Service is preparing.

Although environmentalists point out there were 22 public hearings and over 70,000 individual comments during the creation of the phaseout plan, many in the snowmobiling industry say their voices were ignored by the Clinton administration.

Rehberg said after the 2.5-hour hearing that one reason for holding it was to make sure everybody's voice is heard this time and that the Park Service is listening.

He disagreed with the proposed ban as soon as it arose and "I haven't changed my mind," he said.

The current and incoming superintendents of Yellowstone and Grand Teton were in the crowd, as was Karen Wade, the Park Service regional director in Denver and the woman who will decide the fate of snowmobiling in November.

Rehberg said he doubts the Park Service will stick with the ban, but if it does, Congress could take action to keep the sleds in the park, under some conditions.

"I've got an advocate in the chairman (Manzullo) to introduce legislation" if it comes to that, Rehberg said in an interview.

As of now, the Park Service is considering four different plans. Two would ban snowmobiles in the park, one would limit snowmobiles entering the west gate to 500 per day and one would limit entries there to 330 per day.

Clyde Seeley rents both snowmobiles and snowcoaches and owns motels and restaurants here. He employs 225 people, with a $2.5 million payroll and said the ban would cause "economic devastation" in this community. So would limiting sleds to 320 per day, he said.

Only 5 percent of his customers choose snowcoaches despite active marketing, he said. And even if they wanted coaches, the ones now on the market are uncomfortable and have safety problems.

"We've been led down a primrose path, right into a box canyon," he said of the proposed ban.

However, Jackie Matthews, who runs a fly fishing shop here and is a board member of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, had a different view.

"We will not fall into economic ruin," she told the committee.

After the Yellowstone fires of 1988, people feared similar ruin and that never came, she pointed out.

With proper marketing, advertising and public education, the community will do just fine without snowmobiles in the park, she said.

"The people will come," she said. "We just need to be ready for them."

However, Seeley noted that no new snow coaches have been developed and while government money to develop them had been promised, it did not arrive.

Snowmobile technology, on the other hand, is moving forward quickly.

Both Polaris and Arctic Cat are producing cleaner, quieter sleds, noted Glen Loomis, who rents those sleds to tourists. Yamaha is advertising one to be available in the fall.

"Things have changed," he told the committee. "There is clean, quiet snowmobile technology."

Manzullo set aside some time for members of the public to speak for one minute apiece. About half of the roughly 30 speakers wanted a ban, or at least some limits, on snowmobiles. The others stressed the economic importance of snowmobiling and its appeal to tourists.

Manzullo said at the end of the meeting that he has training in environmental law, but his main focus remains on the impact to small business, whether it is lodging, advertising, clothing or long-distance communication, all of which could be affected by a ban.

"This decision by the National Park Service will reverberate across the entire country," he said.

Nobody will get everything they want in future winter plans, he said, but the Park Service can come up with something that satisfies most interests.

"The National Park Service can come up with a way to satisfy everybody's wants," he said.

Mainella assured him she will pay close attention to economic issues as well as environmental concerns.

"I fully understand that decisions we make have real economic consequences for people in this community and others in the greater Yellowstone area," she said.

Scott McMillion is at scottm@gomontana.com.