

average daily use at each entrance. At some entrances where park managers believe additional use could be accommodated without unacceptable impacts to park resources or values, the daily limits allow for growth beyond the historic daily averages.

During the winter of 2003–2004, reservations for private, unguided snowmobile parties may be made by contacting Xanterra Parks and Resorts at 307–344–7311. Every snowmobile a group uses in Yellowstone would require a reservation; thus, a group of four people riding double on two snowmobiles would need two reservations each day they snowmobile in the park. Reservations for commercially guided trips may be made by contacting the guide. The NPS is currently soliciting bids for commercially guided snowmobile concessions. Once guides are selected we will post a list of authorized commercial guides on our Web site at <http://www.nps.gov/yell>.

Visitors who go in and out of the park in a single day will be counted against entrance limits only at the initial entrance gate. For instance, a group that enters Yellowstone through the North Entrance, exits the park that afternoon to have lunch in West Yellowstone and re-enters the park through the West Entrance would only count towards the daily limits at the North Entrance.

Visitors who enter the parks through one entrance, exit at another entrance in order to spend that night out of the park, and then re-enter on the following day will be counted towards the daily entry limits on the following day. Snowmobile parties' subsequent entries will count towards the entry limits at whatever entrance station they first entered at the start of their trip. In the March 2003 ROD, NPS did not require that these entries be counted. After further consideration, the NPS believes that counting these entries will simplify management of snowmobile entries and the reservation system, will be less confusing to the public, and will keep the daily level of snowmobile use within the scope of the SEIS analysis.

Non-commercial groups would be required to have obtained by an advance reservation a daily entry pass, for the first entrance they intend to use on the first day of their trip and subsequent entries would be counted against the entrance gate they initially entered the park through. Thus, a non-commercial group entering at the West Entrance and spending the night outside the park would count towards the daily entry limits at the West Entrance each day the snowmobile is in the park, regardless of

the entrance through which they actually re-enter.

Commercial groups would be counted each day towards their allocated number of daily entries at their base entrance as specified in their concessions contract. Thus, a commercial group entering at the West Entrance and spending the night outside the park would count against their allocation at their base entrance (West Entrance), not the entrance through which they actually enter on subsequent days.

Visitors by snowmobile spending the night in Yellowstone, such as at Old Faithful or Canyon Yurt Camp, would count towards the entry limit for each day they are in the park. These provisions could be modified through adaptive management.

Initially, snowmobiles rented at Old Faithful by an authorized concessioner will not count against daily entry limits. Currently, approximately 25 snowmobiles are available for rent at Old Faithful, and NPS controls the level of use through the concessions contract. Guiding requirements would apply to these snowmobile rentals. We do not intend for this snowmobile rental operation to substantially increase. This provision could be modified through adaptive management should monitoring detect unacceptable impacts to park resources and values.

NPS Park Passes and Fees

Because of past experiences with large groups on numerous snowmobiles, the NPS wishes to make clear the existing parameters on the use of NPS-issued Park Passes that permit entry into the park for free or at a reduced rate. Existing regulations regarding the various passes issued by the NPS specifically limit the number of people who may gain entrance to the park under a single passport or pass. The intent in the existing regulations is to admit, for free or at a reduced rate, only those persons occupying the same motor vehicle as the pass holder. Those regulations also specifically state that a second vehicle associated with this group but not occupied by the pass holder will be charged at the single-visit rate.

To carry that intent into winter use, the NPS wants to make clear that only the persons riding on the snowmobile with the passport or pass holder and their immediate family (spouse, parents, and children under the age of 21) may enter at the same fee rate as the passport or pass holder. No other associated persons or snowmobiles will be permitted entry at the reduced fee rate.

Lastly, the NPS is concerned about members of the public purchasing entrance reservations and reselling them for a personal profit since there will be a limited number of daily reservations available for non-commercial entrances. Therefore, the NPS is seeking comments on whether to prohibit the reselling of entrance reservations and by what means.

What Terms Do I Need To Know?

The NPS has added definitions for oversnow vehicle and designated oversnow route. Additionally, we have added definitions for commercial and non-commercial guides and have discussed those definitions at length earlier in this proposed rule. For snowmobiles, we are using the definition found at 36 CFR 1.4, as there is no need to alter that definition at this time. For the sake of clarity and ease, we are reiterating that definition again in this section. Earlier rulemakings specific to Yellowstone, Grand Teton and the Parkway referenced “unplowed roadways” and that terminology was changed to “designated oversnow routes” to more accurately portray the condition of the route being used for oversnow travel. Despite this terminology change, these routes will remain on roads or water surfaces used by motor vehicles and motorboats during other seasons. Previous rulemakings also referred only to snowmobiles or snowcoaches. Since there is a strong likelihood that new forms of machines will be developed that can travel on snow, a broader definition was developed to insure that such new technology remained subject to regulation. When a particular requirement or restriction only applies to a certain type of machine (for example: some concession restrictions only apply to snowcoaches) then the specific machine is stated and only applies to that type of vehicle, not all oversnow vehicles. However, oversnow vehicles that do not meet the strict definition of a snowcoach (*i.e.*, both weight and passenger capacity) would be subject to the same requirements as snowmobiles. The definitions listed under § 7.13(l)(1) will apply to all three parks. These definitions may be further clarified based on changes in technology.

Where Must I Operate My Snowmobile in the Park?

Specific routes are listed where snowmobiles may operate, but this proposed rule also provides latitude for the Superintendent to modify those routes available for use. When determining what routes are available