

DATES: There will be a 30-day public review period for comments on this document. Comments must be received on or before December 26, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The Draft Site Report is included in the supplementary information section of this notice. Copies are also available by writing to Suzanne Lewis, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190-0168; by telephoning 307-344-2002; by sending an e-mail message to yell_world_heritage@nps.gov; or by picking up a copy in person at the park's headquarters in Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, 82190. The document is also posted on the park's Web site at <http://www.nps.gov/yell/publications/worldheritage/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Suzanne Lewis, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190-0168, or by calling 307-344-2002.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. The World Heritage Committee Decision

In 1995, the World Heritage Committee, with the agreement of the United States, placed Yellowstone National Park, a designated World Heritage site, on its List of World Heritage in Danger in response to specific threats it identified to the outstanding universal value of the park. At its 27th Session in July 2003, the Committee decided to remove the park from the Danger List. The decision (27 COM 7A.12) is conveyed below:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Notes* the detailed report by the State Party provided on April 17, 2003;
2. *Urges* the State Party to continue to report on Yellowstone's snowmobile phase-out and other efforts to ensure that winter travel facilities respect the protection of the Park, its visitors, and its wildlife;
3. *Recommends* that the State Party continue its efforts in ensuring the McLaren Mine tailings are not contaminating the property;
4. *Recognizes* the progress made in addressing all the key issues that led to Danger Listing of the property in 1995 and considers that the reasons for retaining the property on this List no longer exist;
5. *Congratulates* the State Party for the considerable efforts and suggests to use this as a model case for promoting success stories of the World Heritage Convention and for international co-operation with other States Parties facing similar problems in World Heritage properties;
6. *Decides* to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.
7. *Invites* the State Party:

(a) to continue its commitment to address the issues that have concerned the Committee in the past;

(b) to provide to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2004, existing recovery plans setting out targets and indicators for the 6 remaining long-term management issues (mining activities outside the park, threats to bison, threats to cutthroat trout, water quality issues, road impacts, visitor use impacts);

(c) to continue to report to the Committee on the condition of the original threats and the progress made towards resolving these issues until such time that the Committee decides that the reports are no longer needed. These reports shall include public input, including—but not limited to—independent experts, NGOs, and other key stakeholders.

B. The NPS's Draft Site Report

In accordance with the Committee's request included in its decision to remove the park from the Danger List, the NPS has prepared a Site Report to continue to provide information to the World Heritage Committee on the original threats and the progress made towards resolving these issues. The Site Report provides a synopsis of the current status of the six specific threats outlined in 7(b) of the Committee's decision. The full text of the draft Site Report is as follows.

Yellowstone National Park Site Progress Report to the World Heritage Committee, October 2003

Introduction

The World Heritage Committee (WHC) named Yellowstone National Park as a World Heritage Site in Danger on December 5, 1995. In its report, the committee cited specific threats and dangers that were already affecting, were beginning to affect, or had potential to seriously derogate the outstanding universal value for which Yellowstone National Park was established as the nation's first national park. At the Paris meeting in June 2003, the WHC recognized that significant progress at Yellowstone had been made to effectively address the issues that caused the park to be listed, and removed the park from the list.

In removing the park from the list of troubled sites, the WHC recognized this progress, but also acknowledged that more work needed to be done on each of these issues. They also acknowledged the park's problems were complex and had developed over a long period of time, and they were not going to be resolved easily or quickly.

This report is an additional status report on the progress Yellowstone National Park has made on the 1995 threats and dangers topics listed by the World Heritage Committee.

Mining Activities

Threat in 1995: The New World Mine was a major Crown Butte Mines, Inc. proposal to reopen an older mining area on patented and U.S. Forest Service lands to new gold and silver harvest. The site was adjacent to the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness area (Gallatin National Forest) and Yellowstone National

Park and was perceived to be a major threat to the resources of both areas.

Outcome: The U.S. Government and Crown Butte Mines, Inc. signed an agreement in 1996 to refrain from mining these lands, and the Congress appropriated \$65 million for the acquisition of lands and interests, including cleanup of toxic overburden and tailings left over from a century of previous mining activity.

Status: The new mining proposal was shelved and most of the property was transferred to public domain. Cleanup of toxic materials from past mining started in 2000 and is expected to take seven years, but post-project maintenance will be funded in perpetuity. The McLaren tailings were left out of the clean up agreement and while the tailings (which are outside Yellowstone) have stabilized and water quality inside the park has improved, the park continues to work with its state and federal neighbors to have the tailings removed and the site restored.

Threats to Bison

Threat in 1995: Some of Yellowstone's bison are infected with *Brucella abortus*, the agent that causes the disease Brucellosis, and bison occasionally roam outside park boundaries. These bison may potentially transmit brucella to livestock grazing outside the park, which could, in turn, jeopardize the "Brucellosis Free" status of bordering states. Accordingly, the states view the presence of brucella in park wildlife as a significant economic threat to the livestock industry. Sometimes when animals migrate out of the park they are lethally removed, especially when wildlife population numbers are high and the winters are severe.

Outcome: In 2000, Yellowstone National Park, State of Montana, U.S. Forest Service, and USDA Plant and Animal Health Inspection Service cosigned a joint bison management plan that agreed to maintain wildlife populations and manage the risk of transmission from bison to cattle within the State of Montana. It is a long-term plan that should manage risks currently, and set the stage for future discussions about eradication of the disease. It is also an incremental plan that becomes more wildlife-friendly and lowers transmission risk to cattle with each incremental success.

Status: This carefully crafted consensus-based plan has been serially and successfully implemented for three years, and while not universally supported, many believe it addresses the major issues regarding the risk of brucellosis transmission from wildlife to livestock. While those actions are being implemented, discussions and research are currently underway to consider ways to eventually eliminate brucellosis from wildlife in the Greater Yellowstone Area while maintaining wild and free-ranging wildlife herds. For example, planning for bison vaccination and the development of a remote delivery system is underway, and the agencies are actively discussing a quarantine system external to the park to make bison available for other suitable western areas, and to help reduce bison deaths at the boundary.

Threats to Cutthroat Trout

Threats in 1995: In 1994, voracious, predatory, non-native lake trout and exotic