

Below are two proposals (**NPS Proposal** and **Subcommittee Proposal**) brought forth by the GYE Conservation Strategy (CS) Habitat Subcommittee in response to direction from the YES subcommittee to work on possible modifications to the 2007 CS that would allow modifications to the 1998 developed sites baseline. Pros and Cons of each are as follows:

NPS Proposal

Pros –

- Would provide some immediate additional flexibility to the NPS for additional development
- USFWS doesn't feel it would trigger additional public comment

Cons –

- Specific to NPS; wouldn't provide any assistance/relief to USFS or BLM
- No limits on the number, size, location, or type or exceptions (i.e., the amount of additional development)
- Does not differentiate between major and minor developed sites (i.e., applies to any developed site)
- Mitigation is vague - needs to be much more specific. I would guess that a permanent loss of habitat would require a permanent mitigation to offset that loss, and demonstration that it is truly mitigation for the loss.
- Wouldn't allow for an increase the number of visitor overnight use sites and/or increased overnight visitor presence at existing sites
- Because of bullets 2, 3 and 4 above, would create less certainty and therefore more of a litigation risk
- Currently not supported by other agencies (some)

Subcommittee Proposal

Pros –

- Could apply to all federal lands in the PCA, not just NPS lands
- Would establish a process and strict timeline by which to finalize modifications to the CS to address deviations from the 1998 baseline – by not later than the end of CY 2018.
- Would define and map major vs. minor developed sites, and would allow some increase to major developed sites (currently these are all just points vs. a mapped footprint)
- Doesn't preclude additional development in major developed sites that could result in an increase in overnight capacity (i.e., could allow increase in overnight capacity/pillow count)

Cons –

- Would not be available until the end of 2018
- Requires "trust" by all agencies, especially NPS, that an amicable and acceptable solution will be developed

- As presently written, isn't clear how much of an increase to existing footprints might be allowed – recommend a cap (i.e., not more than 10% increase to existing footprint) be included in this proposal
- Because of the lack of a cap, and potential for increase in pillow count, would create less certainty and therefore more of a litigation risk
- Currently not supported by the NPS

NPS Proposal

Habitat Standards inside Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller Memorial Parkway

Since 1998, visitor use to National Parklands has increased significantly, necessitating the need for additional infrastructure to responsibly accommodate current, and likely future, increases in visitor use. The objectives of the habitat standards are to reduce displacement of bears and to reduce human-caused mortality. YNP and GTNP/JODR have adequately addressed both of those issues through the implementation of the Bear Management Area program in 1982 (YNP 1983) and the Superintendent's Compendium (GTNP/JODR 2016), which restricts or closes public use of seasonally important habitat in the park. From 2002 to 2014, human-caused mortality was extremely low within YNP (mean = 1.1 per year) and GTNP/JODR (mean = 0.5 per year). During the same period in YNP and GTNP/JODR, 7 and 5 mortalities, respectively, occurred from vehicle strikes along roads and 4 and 1 human-caused mortalities, respectively, were associated with human developments in YNP and GTNP/JODR, respectively. Major developed sites, such as Old Faithful, Mammoth, and Flagg Ranch, do not represent preferred habitat for bears, and therefore a slight increase to the footprint or capacity of developed may have minimal to no impact on the GYE grizzly bear population. Associated modifications to the level of secure habitat and motorized access route density would also have minimal to no impact on the GYE grizzly bear population. The level of secure habitat for those BMUs that are contained within National Parklands is significantly greater than those outside of National Park units (*see* Figure 2 and Appendix E). As such, it is acceptable to consider slight changes to the 1998 baseline within National Parklands to accommodate increased infrastructure needs while minimizing impacts to higher priority habitats.

Application Rules within National Parklands

The number and capacity of developed sites within National Parklands will be maintained at or below the 1998 level with the following exceptions:

- Any proposed increase, expansion, or change in use of developed sites from the 1998 baseline in National Parklands will be analyzed through the NEPA process, and potential detrimental and positive impacts documented through biological evaluation or assessment by the action agency.
- Any construction of new sites that biological evaluation indicates will have detrimental impacts to grizzly bears, will be mitigated for within that BMU to offset any detrimental impacts caused by the increase in the number of developed sites and/or capacity for human use, habitat loss, and increased access to surrounding habitats. Examples of mitigation within that BMU may include: increased information and education; increased conflict prevention resources (e.g., improved sanitation); or increased law enforcement and patrols.
- Changes to existing developed sites or new sites are acceptable as long as these changes or new developments: 1) do not increase the number of visitor overnight use sites and/or result in increased overnight visitor presence at existing sites; 2) are for visitor safety or environmental protection such as toilets, parking areas, or interpretive displays; and 3) that appropriate sanitation and human-bear conflict minimization efforts are associated with any such changes or enhancements.

Commented [KM1]: Wouldn't the proposed environmental camp violate this requirement?

Literature Cited

Yellowstone National Park. 1983. Record of Decision on Final Environmental Impact Statement (FES 83-6) for Grizzly Bear Management Program. Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA. 217 pp.

Grand Teton National Park and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. 2016. Superintendent's Compendium. Moose, Wyoming, USA. 38 pp.

Subcommittee Proposal

Since 1998, visitor use in Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, and

surrounding public lands has increased significantly, necessitating the need for additional infrastructure to responsibly accommodate the current, and likely future, increase in visitor use. Major developed sites, such as Old Faithful, Mammoth, and Canyon Village, do not represent habitat selected for by bears, and therefore a slight increase to the footprint or capacity may have minimal to no impact on the GYE grizzly bear population. As such, it is acceptable to consider in the future a slight increase to the footprint or capacity of major developed sites to accommodate increased infrastructure needs while minimizing impacts to higher priority habitats. Additionally, the current method of tracking and monitoring developed sites has been identified as in need of improvement. For example, developed sites are currently tracked as point features with no measurable footprint. Potential changes to the 1998 baseline that will accommodate needed additional infrastructure and modifications to developed site standards will be complete by the end of calendar year 2018. Any resulting modifications will minimize deviations to the 1998 baseline, be released for public comment, and be approved by the YGCC.

Completion of 1998 baseline revisions to be complete by end of the calendar year 2018

January 2017	Establish the planning group to review and propose revisions to the 1998 baseline. Participants should include representatives from the National Park Service (Kerry Gunther), Forest Service (Dan Tyers and Lisa Landenburger), Fish and Wildlife Service (Jennifer Fortin-Noreus), Bureau of Land Management, and the states of Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana.
Spring/Summer 2017	Workshops to discuss the issues: Definition of major versus minor developed site? How will the footprint of developed sites be measured? What level of change is acceptable? (i.e., buffer around developed site) How will mitigation be defined? (i.e., increased law enforcement, habitat quality of area impacted, etc.)
Fall 2017	Agencies gather necessary data for footprint of developed sites
Winter 2017	All data to Lisa Landenburger for development of new database
Spring 2018	Production of draft 1998 revisions for public comment
July 2018	30 day public comment period
August-October 2018	Summarize and respond to public comments
November 2018	Final version to YGCC for approval

