

Fishing Bridge



PUBLIC RESPONSE NEWSLETTER

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK APRIL 1986

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this second newsletter is to provide an update on the status of the Fishing Bridge environmental impact statement (EIS). In the first newsletter, released in early May 1985, the scoping process was explained (obtaining public assistance in determining what should be addressed in the plan) and some background information, issues, conceptual alternatives, and a preliminary list of environmental impacts were presented that could result from implementation of these alternatives. We also asked for a response to the planning items. Based on comments received, additional site analysis, and gathering of more information, the planning team has been able to better define the alternatives for the Fishing Bridge EIS. This newsletter summarizes additional background information and presents revised alternatives along with the site-selection criteria. Your assistance would be most appreciated by commenting on the alternatives and making further suggestions on the attached response form.

BACKGROUND

The intent of the EIS is to present and analyze several alternative strategies for implementing the Fishing Bridge portion of the 1974 *Master Plan*. The *Master Plan* recognizes the superb ecological environment that exists around the Fishing Bridge development and proposes restoration of this area and/or reduction of human impact on the surrounding habitat and wildlife.

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Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was held from 1979-1981 regarding the relationship of the Endangered Species Act to the Grant Village development. The "no jeopardy" biological opinion given by the Fish and Wildlife Service on the Grant Village Development Concept Plan (DCP) considered the Park Service's long-range proposal to remove facilities from Fishing Bridge as stated in the 1974 *Master Plan*. Because the EIS reconsiders the *Master Plan* proposal and because of the strong tie between Fishing Bridge and Grant Village, the National Park Service has reinitiated consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Fish and Wildlife Service will be involved in the process until completion of the plan and will give a biological opinion based on the draft environmental impact statement.

The park mailed 1,200 copies of a public response newsletter to individuals, special interest groups, and government agencies at the beginning of the planning process for the project. Approximately 300 response forms were returned to the park. Sixty-five percent of the respondents expressed support for removing or relocating all Fishing Bridge facilities, whereas 22 percent favored retaining all accommodations on the site. Three percent favored removing certain structures or implementing additional management actions to reduce human/bear conflicts. Ten percent of the people addressed other park topics or had no comment.

In June 1985, the National Park Service contracted the University of Wyoming, Institute for Policy Research to conduct a socioeconomic study. The university was to analyze the effects of an in-park relocation of Fishing Bridge facilities on the gateway communities and on the tax revenues of Park and Teton counties. Approximately 400 visitor surveys were conducted at Fishing Bridge campground and several other park campgrounds in August and September of 1985 to determine visitor characteristics, preferences, travel patterns, and spending modes. This information was tabulated, analyzed, and incorporated into a report presented to the Park Service in March. Pertinent data from the report will be used in preparation of the the Fishing Bridge EIS.

Over the past several months, biologists and computer analysts from the National Park Service, Forest Service, and Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team have developed a computerized cumulative effects analysis to assess the effects of management decisions on the welfare of grizzly bears. Geographic (mapped) information is used in the cumulative effects analysis so that the results are site-specific. The major maps used are vegetation, human activities, and locations of protein rich areas (i.e., fish spawning streams, concentrations of wintering elk and other large animals, and concentrations of carrion). Use of this process will allow evaluation of the current habitat value of Fishing Bridge as well as the habitat value of park areas that are being considered in the EIS for relocation of Fishing Bridge facilities. This cumulative effects model will assist the Park Service in performing a thorough analysis of all alternatives.

SITE-SELECTION CRITERIA

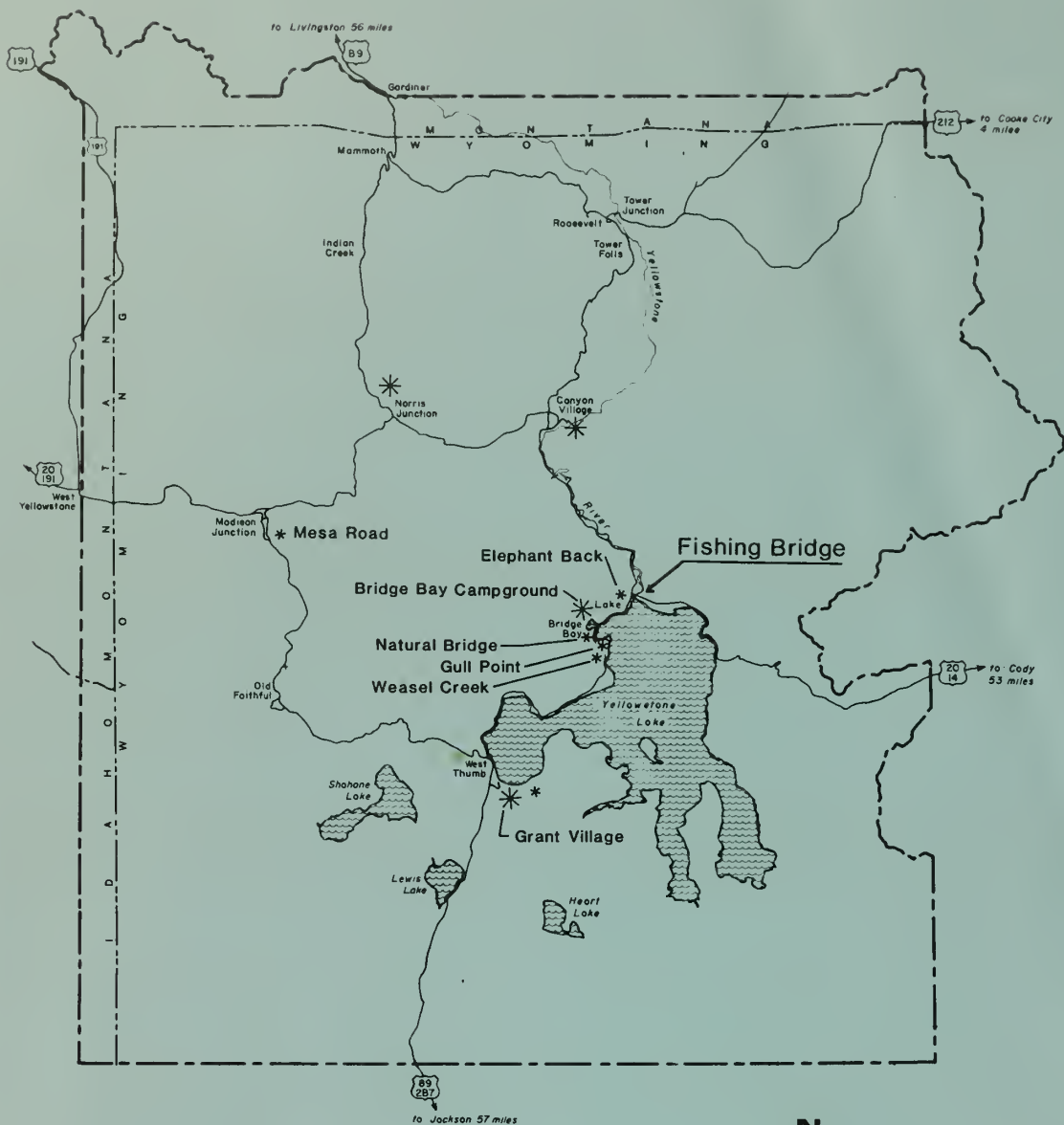
Based on issues presented in the first public response newsletter, the following site-selection criteria were developed to analyze potential relocation sites:

- effects on grizzly bear habitats and travel patterns
- site conditions (i.e., slope, soils, drainage, and vegetation)
- visitor amenities, such as access to Yellowstone Lake, other park features, and existing developed areas for visitor services
- cost to provide utility systems
- economic effects on the park's gateway communities because of possible alteration of traffic patterns to and from the park
- presence of archeological sites

ALTERNATIVES

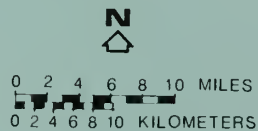
The alternatives being considered are as follows (see attached Campsite Relocation Alternatives map):

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- ☐ **No-Action Alternative** — All facilities at Fishing Bridge would be retained. These facilities include a 308-site campground, 358-site RV park, general store, photo shop, gas station, auto repair shop, employee housing, picnic area, visitor center, and amphitheater. Management actions to reduce human/bear conflicts would continue.
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- ☐ **Alternative A** — The RV park and campground would be relocated to the Gull Point/ Weasel Creek area, and other facilities, except the visitor center, would be removed. A new general store, gas station, auto repair shop, and employee housing would be constructed in the Lake/Bridge Bay area.
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- ☐ **Alternative B** — The RV park would be relocated to the Grant Village area, and the campsites would be dispersed to Elephant Back, Bridge Bay campground, and Natural Bridge sites in the Lake/Bridge Bay area. The general store, gas station, auto repair shop, employee housing, and visitor center would remain at Fishing Bridge.
-
- ☐ **Alternative C** — The RV park would be relocated to the Weasel Creek area, and the campsites would be distributed throughout the park, including the Mesa Road area south of Madison, and the Norris, Grant Village, Bridge Bay, and Canyon campgrounds. A new general store, gas station, auto repair shop, and employee housing would be constructed in the Lake/Bridge Bay area. The visitor center would remain as an interpretive facility at Fishing Bridge.
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- ☐ **Alternative D** — Most facilities at Fishing Bridge would be retained, and a fence would be constructed around the RV park and campground to reduce bear/human conflicts. The campground would be redesigned to improve the aesthetics and to provide adequate parking and campsite spaces. The campground redesign would provide approximately 150 campsites. The remaining 158 campsites would be dispersed throughout the park (at existing campgrounds). The general store, photo shop, gas station, auto repair shop, employee housing, picnic area, and visitor center would also remain at Fishing Bridge and be upgraded as funding is made available. Increased management actions would be implemented to reduce human/bear conflicts.



legend

- park boundary
- road
- * existing campground-
- * potential expansion
- * potential new campgrounds



CAMPSITE RELOCATION ALTERNATIVES YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

United States Department of the Interior - National Park Service

RESPONSE FORM

Your comments are important to us. Please indicate what modifications to the alternatives you wish to make. We also invite any new options that you think should be considered in the environmental impact statement. All comments are due to the superintendent of Yellowstone National Park by May 2, 1986. Response to this newsletter will let us know that you wish to remain on the mailing list for future planning and public input materials. This sheet has the superintendent's address and postage-paid franking on the back; after making your comments, please fold the sheet and mail. (If you need more space, please attach additional sheets.)

Recommended modifications to the alternatives and why:

[illegible]

Recommended additional alternatives and why:

[illegible]

Other comments:

[illegible]

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FUTURE PLANNING SCHEDULE

Completion of University of Wyoming Socioeconomic Survey Report	March 1986
Completion of Cumulative Effects Analysis	June 1986
Prepare and distribute draft EIS to the public	October 1986
Public comments on the draft EIS received and analyzed	January 1987
Prepare and distribute final EIS to the public	May 1987
Public review and preparation of the Record of Decision	June 1987

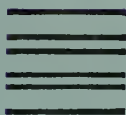
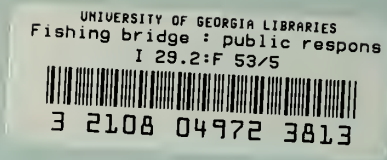
As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, and parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U. S. administration.

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