

## **BCHA's Advisor for Wilderness & Recreation has included talking points:**

Please consider the following talking points to include in your letter. It's important to add your own personal story among these talking points:

- Thank you for this opportunity to provide public comment on the EA for Yellowstone National Park's "Parkwide Commercial Stock Outfitter Concessions Contracts."
- I am a stock owner or user. I look forward to the day I can explore front- and back-country areas of the Park in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.
- The use of livestock has played an important role in the American culture. There is a long tradition of using pack and saddle stock not only in Yellowstone National Park but all over the West, and I wish to see this tradition carried on into the future.
- Seeing the Park on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For the vast majority of visitors, that opportunity is provided to them through the services of commercial guides.
- Many visitors are unable to hike the trails due to disabilities, many lack outdoor experience and have concerns for their safety, and many visitors are unwilling to venture out on their own.
- I appreciate the services offered by commercial stock outfitters in Yellowstone and other national parks and particularly support outfitters who make every effort to "Tread Lightly."
- The variety and availability of stock outfitters encourages Park visitors to get out of their cars and get close to nature.
- An EA focused solely on commercial stock outfitter contracts does not seem to be the appropriate process by which to consider limits to day stock use. Rather, the public and the environmental review process would be better served were the Park to look broadly at all trail-based visitation/activities in a comprehensive recreation management plan.
- The EA must avoid the false choice sometimes employed by other agencies that hiker-stock conflicts are best be addressed by either placing limits on stock use or prohibiting stock use on shared trails/camping areas.
- In areas of known or documented resource conflicts or damage, the EA should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, and/or seasonal limitations on use (in cases of wildlife nesting, fawning, calving, etc., areas).
- The EA needs to cite current scientific peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made available for public review, particularly if science is used to justify proposed limits to day use, open meadow grazing or overnight camping.
- Science applied in the EA must be able to discern between the effects of stock use by private individuals/parties versus the effects of commercial stock outfitters.
- The EA should recognize that mobility-impaired visitors have few options to access front country and backcountry areas of the Park other than via outfitted stock rides.
- Any proposed limits on stock use should be viewed in the context of the Americans with Disabilities Act, including zoning-type restrictions that could preclude outfitters—and thereby mobility-impaired visitors—from visiting popular or preferable destinations within the Park or on adjacent national forests.

- Limitations proposed for stock use should not be justified as necessary to promote the enjoyment of “solitude” by other visitors or for purposes intended to enhance the recreational opportunities/experiences for other users who prefer not to share trails with stock and stock users. Again, such decisions are better served and analyzed via a comprehensive recreation or similar type plan that addresses the cumulative impact of all such visitor uses.