



**Back Country Horsemen of America**  
**Working to keep trails open on public lands.**

**Back Country Horsemen of America EBlast**  
**January 7, 2014**

**Action Alert:**

**Deadline for Comments: January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (midnight Mnt time zone)**

Parkwide Commercial Stock Outfitter Concessions Contracts-Yellowstone National Park

Dear BCHA members,

You'll recall we issued an EBlast to BCHA members last April encouraging you to submit comments on Yellowstone National Park's environmental review of its commercial saddle and pack stock outfitters and guides. We knew there is no shortage of love and admiration among BCHA members for exploring the Nation's—and the World's—first National Park by horseback. And submit comments you did!

BCHA members submitted the majority (54%) of 156 public comment letters received by the Park from individual citizens. According to the Park's Environmental Assessment (EA, dated Nov. 2013), "The predominant comment themes were the significant role of stock use in visitor enjoyment and accessibility, stock use as a traditional part of the park's history, and opposition to restrictions or limits on day rides or backcountry use" (EA, p. 10). In other words, they heard you loud and clear!

The public is encouraged to submit comments by January 10, 2014, via the Park website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=46159> Use the "Open for Comment" link along the left margin, or go directly to:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=111&projectID=46159&documentID=56167>

Those receiving this EBlast but without access to the Park website, you can submit letters to:

**Yellowstone's Compliance Office**  
**Attention: Commercial Stock Outfitter Concession Contracts EA**  
**P.O. Box 168**

**Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190**

Please post-mark your letters by January 10.

You can make your comments short and sweet, if you choose. At a time when we're witnessing some of our iconic National Parks proposing unsupported restrictions on commercial and private

saddle and pack stock use, we must take this opportunity to praise Yellowstone's Superintendent and staff for recognizing that..."stock historically facilitated access to Yellowstone's remote backcountry" (EA, p. 4) and "commercial stock outfitters provide a service many visitors use while visiting the park and one that is often recognized as part of the Yellowstone experience" (EA, p. 71).

BCHA's Advisor for Wilderness & Recreation has included the following talking points, some of which you should consider adding to your personal letter to Yellowstone National Park:

It's important to add your own personal story among these talking points:

- Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the Yellowstone National Park's EA for "Commercial Stock Outfitter Concessions Contracts."
- I understand the purpose and need of the Park's proposal "is to allow for and provide opportunities for visitors to experience the backcountry of Yellowstone National Park by guided saddle and pack stock trips and to protect the natural and cultural resources of the park" (EA, p. 8).
- I appreciate the services offered by commercial stock outfitters in Yellowstone and other national parks and support outfitters who make every effort to "Tread Lightly."
- Thank you for recognizing that commercial stock outfitters "provide a service...that is often recognized as part of the Yellowstone experience," and that "without the services of commercial stock outfitters some visitors...not physically capable of hiking into the backcountry would not have the opportunity to have this backcountry experience" (EA, p. 71).
- I support the concepts contained in Alternatives B and C of the EA, and understand that the Park Service does not intend to eliminate or otherwise unduly restrict recreational stock use within Yellowstone's backcountry (i.e., Alternative A, the "No Action Alternative").
- Both Alternatives B and C continue commercial stock outfitter use at current levels, yet differ primarily in that the NPS would issue 10-year commercial saddle and pack contracts (under Alternative B) or choose to retain flexibility in the terms and conditions of the contracts based on the results of resource monitoring data and adaptive management decisions (Alternative C).
- As a private user of recreational saddle and pack stock, I recognize the importance of minimizing resource damage on our public lands and support the agency's need to apply peer-reviewed science in the monitoring of resource trends and conditions.
- Thank you for recognizing previous public comments submitted by members of Back Country Horsemen of America regarding "the significant role of stock use in visitor enjoyment and accessibility, stock use as a traditional part of the park's history, and (our) opposition to restrictions or limits on day rides or backcountry use" (EA, p. 10).
- I feel the EA has fairly and adequately addressed these concerns.
- I look forward to my next visit to Yellowstone National Park.

BCHA members, you have proven that citizens indeed have a voice in agency decisions that affect our National Parks and public lands. Moreover, the excellent relations and respect shared among Yellowstone Park staff and BCH chapters and officers in Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and elsewhere offer strong testimony to the notion that we can work proactively and in partnership with agencies to accomplish BCHA's mission, which includes:

1. To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness; and
2. To work to insure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.

Forgot to renew your membership? Donate to BCHA [now!](#)

This e-blast is not meant to take the place of our hard copy newsletter but to inform and communicate on issues in a timelier manner. This does not take away from the roll of your National Directors on issues of a more BCHA nature that are the responsibility of your elected National Directors. Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to members and non-members who might not have email.

Don't forget to **Like** us on Facebook.com at: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/bcha.org>. We have had to date 1,677 likes on our Facebook page. It is a good place to post your chapter, affiliates and at-large members to post updates and information on accomplishments and upcoming events and work days.

***About Back Country Horsemen of America***

***BCHA is a non-profit corporation made up of state organizations, affiliates, and at large members. Their efforts have brought about positive changes in regards to the use of horses and stock in the wilderness and public lands.***

***If you want to know more about Back Country Horsemen of America or become a member, visit our website: [www.backcountryhorse.com](http://www.backcountryhorse.com), call 888-893-5161, or write PO Box 1367, Graham, WA 98338-1367. The future of horse use on public lands is in our hands!***

