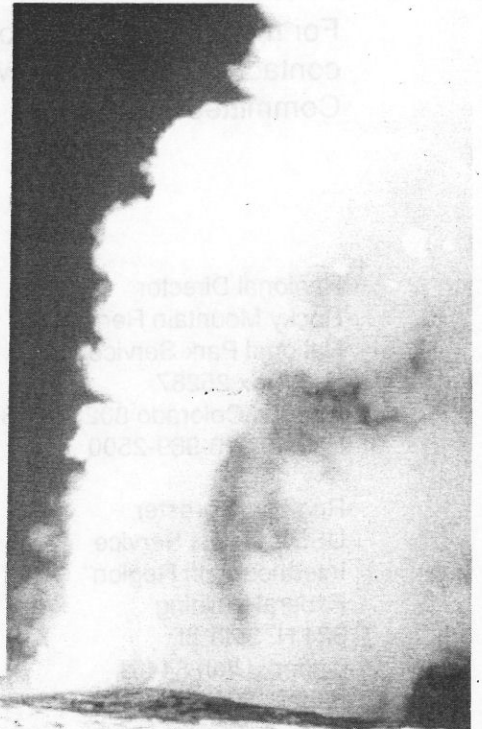


FOR MORE INFORMATION



***A Framework for Coordination
of National Parks and National Forests
in the Greater Yellowstone Area***

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the management of the Greater Yellowstone Area, please contact any of the following members of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee:

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A Framework for Coordination
of National Parks and National Forests
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Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture



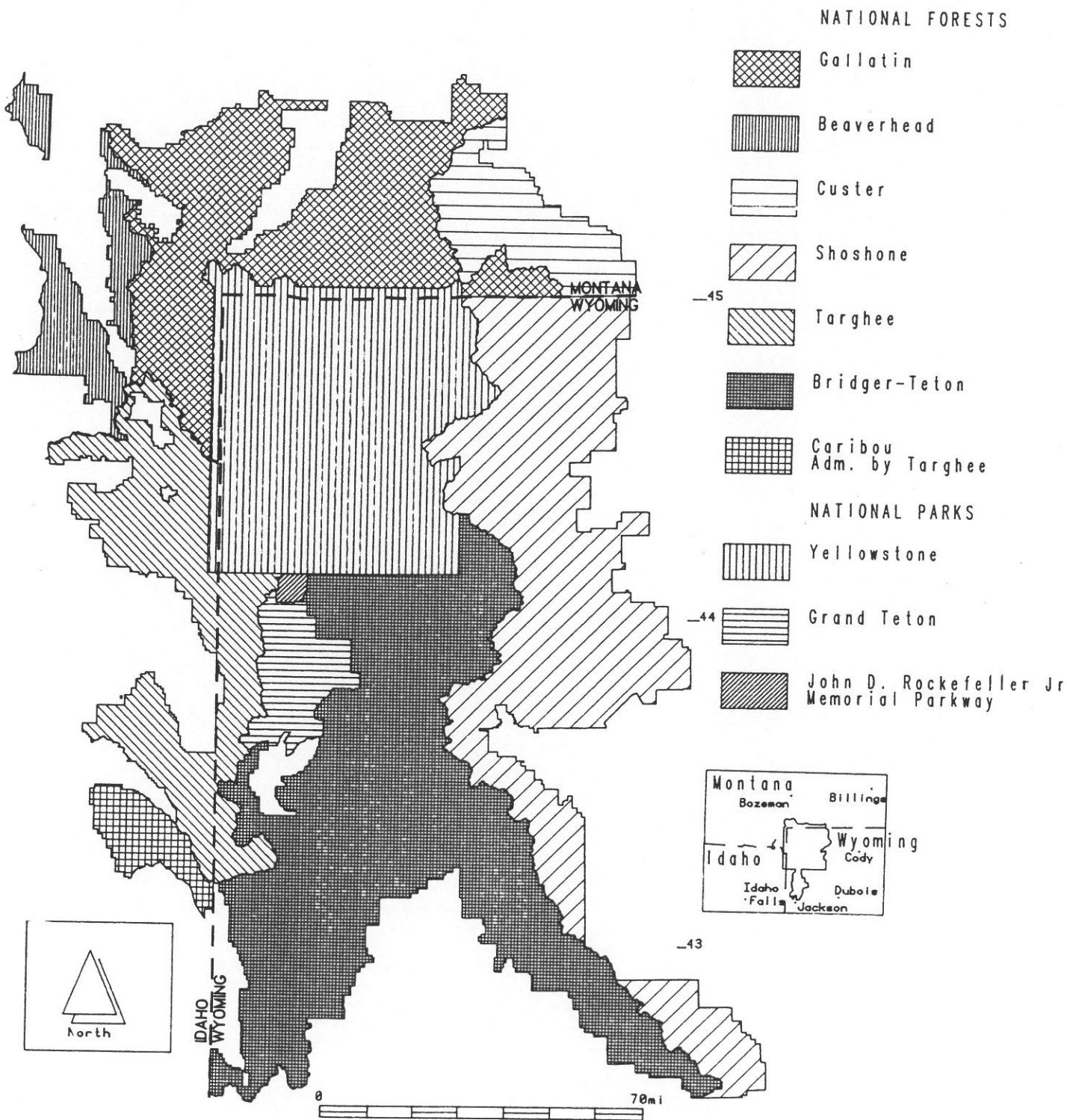
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MISSION

Promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations..., which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. (NPS Organic Act, 16 USC 1)

USDA FOREST SERVICE MISSION

1. **LEADERSHIP IN FORESTRY.** The Forest Service provides overall leadership in forest and forest-range conservation, development, and use.
2. **NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION.** The Forest Service administers and manages the National Forest System lands in accordance with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of June 12, 1960; the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of August 17, 1974; the National Forest Management Act of October 22, 1976, and numerous other acts.
3. **COOPERATIVE FORESTRY.** The Forest Service carries out cooperative forestry programs for public benefit through programs initiated by State, County and other Federal agencies in accordance with the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of July 1, 1978 and numerous other acts.
4. **FOREST RESEARCH.** The Forest Service conducts research on problems involving protection, development, management, renewal and continuous use of all resources, products, values and services of forest lands in accordance with the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of June 30, 1978 and numerous other acts.
5. **INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY.** The Forest Service helps formulate U.S. policy pertaining to global forestry and natural resource issues, as well as providing technical and scientific assistance.



National Forests & Parks in the Greater Yellowstone Area

Map compilation by the U.S. Bureau of Mines
Geographic Information System

INTRODUCTION

In pursuit of their respective agency mandates, the Forest Service and the National Park Service have agreed to develop a Framework for Coordination of National Parks and National Forests in the Greater Yellowstone Area. Special concern will be directed toward managing and protecting the ecological and geological processes and features that cross jurisdictional boundaries. This concern will be sensitive to the needs of the people who live in or visit the area.

The Greater Yellowstone Area

The Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) includes Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and portions of six surrounding national forests. The contiguous portions of these forests and parks encompass roughly 11.7 million acres. The national forests include 9.1 million acres on the Beaverhead, Custer, Gallatin, Shoshone, Bridger-Teton and Targhee National Forests. Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway account for 2.6 million acres (see map). While there are other State, Federal, private, and Indian lands in the GYA, this document applies only to lands managed by the Forest Service and Park Service.

The Greater Yellowstone Area is recognized worldwide for its natural treasures which include world renowned geothermal, wildlife, and scenic values. It is also an area people call home. They are dependent upon the land for timber harvesting, livestock grazing, mining, oil and gas development and outfitting.

Coordinated Management In The GYA

In the early 1960's, the National Park Service and the Forest Service recognized the need to coordinate their management activities in the parks and forests of the GYA. The Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC) was formed to help coordinate these activities (GYCC members are listed on the inside cover page of this document).

This document, "A Framework for Coordination of National Parks and National Forests in the Greater Yellowstone Area," is part of an ongoing coordination process. It is a statement of principles and guidelines to coordinate management of the national forests and parks in the GYA.

Separate Missions Now and In the Future

The legally mandated missions of the Forest Service and Park Service are different, but complementary. The National Park Service, an agency of the Department of the Interior, is responsible for preserving and interpreting units of the National Park System lands according to its management policies. The Forest Service, an agency of the Department of Agriculture, is responsible for managing National Forest System lands according to the principles of multiple use and forest plans, providing the Nation with a wide variety of natural resource-related goods and services, including hard rock minerals, oil and gas, wilderness, watershed protection, livestock grazing, timber, fish and wildlife conservation and recreation.

This document reinforces the separate missions of the Forest Service and Park Service. It recognizes that a balance can be struck between preservation and multiple use, and that resource protection and resource use are not inherently mutually exclusive. This document describes principles and guidelines to help ensure that all activities in both parks and forests occur in environmentally sensitive ways. Both agencies depend upon healthy ecosystems to fulfill their missions. This document recognizes that the ecosystems can be maintained through actions based on planning, research, education, and cooperation. Those four activities are also the most constructive avenues for reducing conflicts in the GYA.

The Vision presented here is based on reasonable expectations for protection and use. The principles and guidelines that follow describe how those expectations can be fulfilled.

Why A Vision?

People have lived in the GYA for a long time. Much of the ecosystem remains intact, and a productive local economy has developed. This illustrates that multiple use and preservation can co-exist. It also reflects the recognition people in and out of the region have given this area.

Resources in the GYA are finite and competition for their uses is growing. Federal land managers face a number of complex issues which have transboundary dimensions. Among these are issues pertaining to roads and trails; implementation of endangered species programs; management of scenic resources; development and coordination of scientific research and data; wildlife population management; and protection of geothermal resources. As pressures on the area's resources increase, the corresponding need to develop an interagency framework for coordination has grown.

Questions have emerged regarding whether the Park Service and Forest Service adequately coordinate management efforts. A central concern is that lack of coordination between parks and forests and between individual forests may result in decisions which fail to examine the cumulative effects of various activities in the GYA. There is a need to understand how management decisions may produce broader ecological, human, and other impacts which cross administrative boundaries.

On a national level, concerns have been expressed through congressional hearings, most notably through a joint hearing held in October 1985 by the House Interior Subcommittees on Public Lands, and National Parks and Recreation. Concerns voiced at the hearing included: the question of an adequate data base or inventory of resources and activities in the GYA; the need to improve coordination within and between agencies; the most significant effects of development activities result from road building; the possible need to adjust administrative boundaries; and problems in grizzly bear management.

A subsequent report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) stated that:

"Much can and should be initiated by the agencies themselves. It is hoped that....suggestions can help all interested parties better understand the issues involved, and, that future Congresses will not hesitate to take whatever further action -- by way of oversight or legislation -- that may be required to insure that proper management policies, coordination and cooperation is achieved to protect the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem."

The congressional hearings, CRS report, and growing public interest provided impetus for increased coordination of GYA management. In 1987 the GYCC published "The Greater Yellowstone Area, an Aggregation of National Park and National Forest Management Plans." Commonly called the "Aggregation Report," it was compiled from management plans of the six forests and two parks in the GYA. It presented a snapshot of existing resources and uses and projected those 10 to 15 years into the future. The Aggregation demonstrates a need for improved coordination between the parks and forests, and between individual forests. It also shows where basic resource information can be improved.

The Forest Service and Park Service are acting to remedy deficiencies in coordinated management highlighted by the CRS report, the Aggregation, and public comment. By developing this document, resolution of many of the issues can be achieved through interagency agreements, similar to those existing agreements concerning noxious weeds and fire management. In some cases, the final results will be amendments of Forest Service regional level documents, forest plans, and modifications of Park Service planning documents.

THE VISION

Here is a snapshot of how the agencies believe forests and parks in the GYA should look 50 years from now:

Air and water are clean. Clear skies allow for magnificent views and streams continue to support healthy fisheries. Soils are productive and sedimentation does not threaten streams.

Geothermal areas are protected. Development projects on adjacent national forests do not threaten geothermal features. Extensive research of geothermal systems has provided more information on how the features work and how they can be protected.

The diversity of plant and animal species and the diversity of human uses and needs are protected. Threatened and endangered species have recovered. Habitats have been managed to minimize fragmentation. A large portion of current unroaded areas remains. Where possible, roadless areas are interconnected to provide sufficient habitat and movement corridors for wildlife. The net miles of open roads is virtually the same.

National parks continue to be the cornerstone for attracting tourists to the tri-state area of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. The national forests provide for a broader spectrum of recreational opportunities.

The GYA serves many people and uses. Goods and services from the national forests add to the economic health of regional communities.

Grazing and livestock use continues. Lifestyles found in the West are preserved and open spaces are maintained.

Timber harvesting continues to be used to maintain healthy stands of trees and to accomplish other resource needs. Some of the mineral resources on National Forest System lands are of national significance. Activities associated with mineral resources are sensitive to the surrounding landscape and special care is provided to protect the geothermal resources. Associated facilities blend with their surroundings, and have been reclaimed and restored when no longer needed.

Natural processes alone change the landscape over time in the wilderness areas and parks of the GYA. Management activities help minimize visual impacts on the portion of the national forests open to the full range of multiple uses. Major travel routes within the parks and forests are two-lane highways managed in ways which provide interpretation of natural history, multiple use, and scenic vistas, and yield opportunities for viewing wildlife.

Information bases have been developed for all major resources. Economic information on subjects including ranching, mineral resources, timber and recreation uses has also been developed and is available to decision makers. This information is shared between agencies and is generally available to the public.

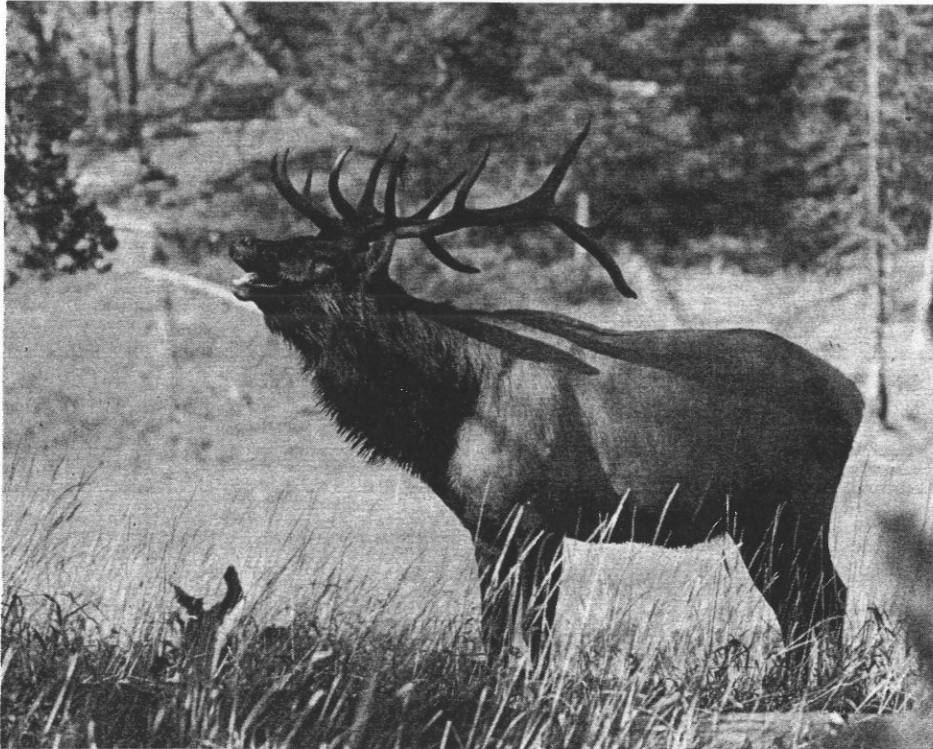
PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

The following principles and guidelines will help shape the future for parks and forests of the Greater Yellowstone Area in the next decade.

PRINCIPLE: MAINTAIN FUNCTIONAL ECOSYSTEMS

Protect and Perpetuate Fish and Wildlife Resources

1. Recognize States' responsibilities to manage wildlife and fish outside Yellowstone National Park. Participate in setting wildlife objectives in cooperation with States and the public. Maintain or re-establish historic migration routes. Support continued protection of important wintering areas.
2. Encourage management for native fish in waters where viable populations exist. Manage to restore native fish to their historic waters, especially in national parks. Recognize the presence of non-native but highly popular sport fish in waters outside national parks as providing quality fisheries of social and economic value. Encourage management of all sport fish species under the wild trout concept, minimizing the need for stocking.
3. Conduct research on ecological communities and interrelationships of flora and fauna and abiotic factors to better understand, anticipate, and mitigate potential adverse impacts of natural resource management decisions. Develop information management systems and data bases which are useful in measuring ecosystem dynamics, and analyze cumulative effects of agency activities, to assist natural resource management decision making.



Elk in the Greater Yellowstone Area

Maintain or Improve Air, Water, and Soils in Parks and Forests of the GYA.

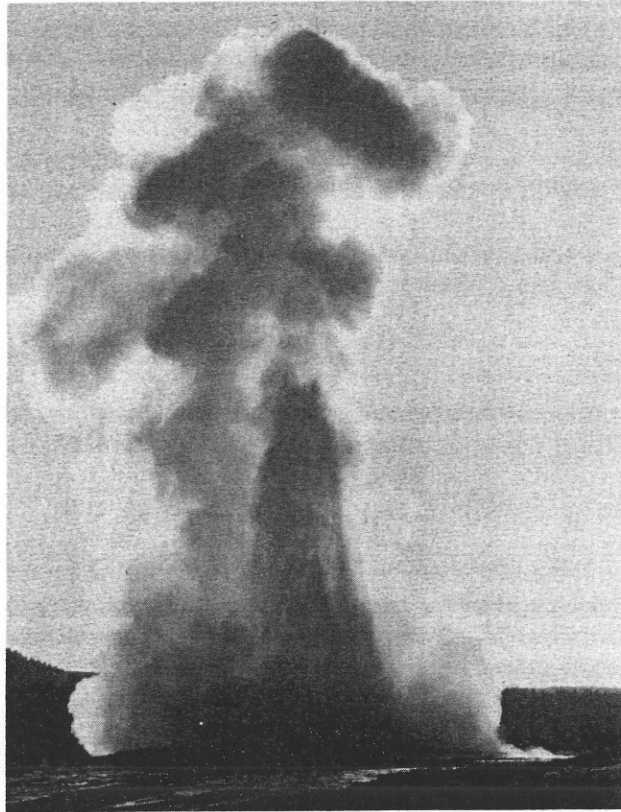
1. Work with the States to ensure that best available control technology and cumulative effects analysis are applied to all sources within or affecting the parks and forests of the Greater Yellowstone Area. Work with the States to develop standards which insure protection and improvement of existing visibility throughout the GYA. Reassess fire management plans to incorporate these standards.
2. Congressionally designated wilderness comprises 32% or 3.8 million acres of park and forest lands in the GYA. Of that 3.8 million acres of wilderness, 1.7 million acres are designated Class I airsheds; the rest are Class II. Recognizing that the States have the lead for air quality and that the Federal land manager is required to assume an aggressive role in protecting air quality, the Park Service and Forest Service will work within the States' framework to protect air quality in park and wilderness areas.
3. Emphasize coordination between State and Federal air quality agencies and Federal land managers to ensure consistency among agencies in air quality regulations and permit requirements.
4. Coordinate with States and other Federal agencies to develop and implement strategies to minimize water quality degradation and protect beneficial uses of water.

Protect Wilderness Values

1. The agencies will coordinate management planning for National Forest wilderness and National Park backcountry areas utilizing similar approaches.

Ensure the Integrity of Geothermal Systems in Parks and Forests of the GYA

1. The Forest Service and the National Park Service will emphasize, promote and support research in parks and forests of the GYA to identify sensitive individual geothermal features, systems, and their components and the relationship of these geothermal features and systems to surrounding lands and hydrogeologic regimes. This research must proceed to answer questions about where risks will occur. Ensure that drilling activities taken prior to the research do not inadvertently damage geothermal features.
2. When park resources may be affected, the Forest Service and National Park Service will work together to develop guidelines to address exploration, leasing and development of geothermal resources and oil and gas resources for those areas. Both agencies will retain their separate decision making responsibilities. These guidelines will address inconsistencies in the way oil and gas and geothermal leasing, exploration, and development are treated near sensitive geothermal areas. They will also address alternative courses of action when monitoring or research indicate increasing or decreasing risks to geothermal resources. In cases where science and technology cannot ensure protection of geothermal resources, these activities will not be approved.



Old Faithful

3. The National Park Service will work as appropriate with the Forest Service, and State and local governments to review potential impacts to geothermal features from developments proposed on adjacent lands, including applications for drilling wells, tapping springs, and other related actions.

Examine the Distribution and Abundance of Plant and Animal Species and the Processes that Maintain Them

1. Support research and monitoring programs to examine plant and animal diversity and species' distribution on park and forest lands in the GYA. Special research and monitoring emphasis will be placed on riparian areas, old-growth forests, aspen and whitebark pine to determine patterns of biological diversity and measure impacts of natural events and human actions.

2. Ensure that control of noxious weeds continues to be of special concern. An existing agreement among park and forest managers, BLM State Directors, and the Governors of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho will facilitate an effective multi-agency program.



Aspen in the Greater Yellowstone Area

Coordinate Road Management

1. Evaluate existing roads and reclaim unnecessary roads. Balance new construction and road closures over time in such a way that the net amount of miles of open roads on the national forests is virtually the same. There will be no net increase in roads in national parks.
2. The Forest Service and Park Service will implement existing forest and park management plans that propose that large portions of the roadless and undeveloped areas outside of wilderness remain roadless.

Manage the Historic, Cultural and Archeological Resources to Enhance Their Value to Visitors and for Their Scientific Value

1. Aggregate cultural resource information between parks and forests in the GYA.
2. Special emphasis will be given to the history and interpretation of Native American uses and activities in the national parks and forests in the GYA.

PRINCIPLE: ENCOURAGE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE ECONOMICALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE

Provide Economic Opportunities for Grazing of Domestic Livestock While Improving Range Conditions.

1. The Forest Service will work with State wildlife management agencies and livestock permittees to define big game/livestock inter-relationships and appropriate forage use levels on National Forest System lands.



Range Improvement in the Greater Yellowstone Area

Provide Opportunities for Minerals, Oil and Gas, and Sand, Rock, and Gravel Development.

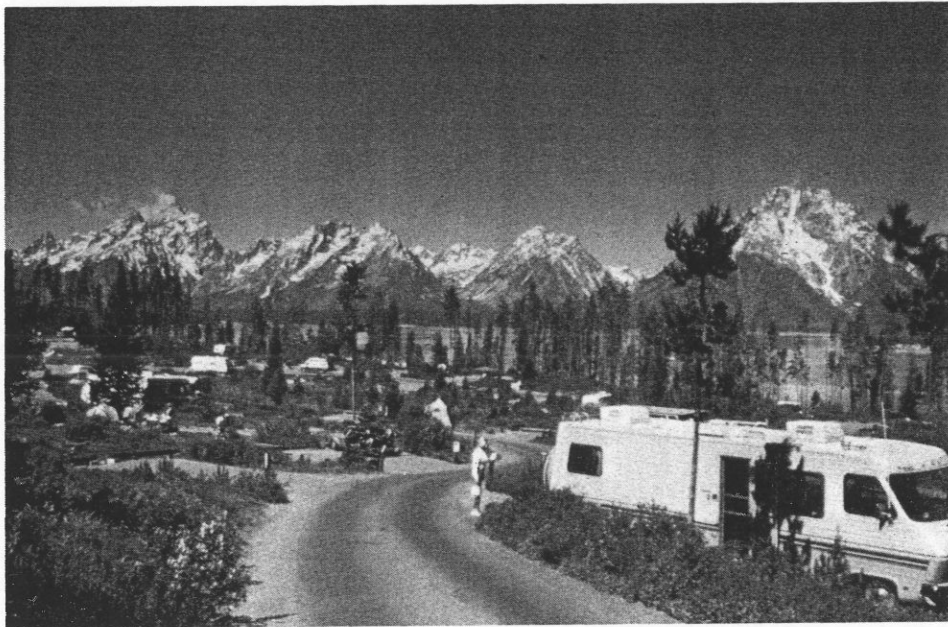
1. Although park lands are closed to mineral entry, the Forest Service will seek opportunities to use information and expertise from the U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Mines, and other agencies in developing inventories of minerals and abandoned mine sites.
2. Inventory existing sand, rock, and gravel operations on forest and park lands in the GYA, and develop a rock resource management approach for both active and abandoned operations. This approach should include limiting sand, rock and gravel extraction in parks and reclaiming abandoned pits on both forests and parks. The agencies will look for opportunities to acquire sand, rock, and gravel from sources outside the parks.

3. The Forest Service will coordinate with the Park Service on cumulative analyses of oil and gas and geothermal leasing and development proposals on national forests where park resources and values may be affected. Develop mitigation measures to offset potentially adverse impacts. Ensure mitigation measures are consistently applied among forests in the GYA.

Provide Opportunities for a Variety of Recreation and Tourism Experiences

1. Provide a variety of recreational opportunities, both motorized and nonmotorized. Appropriate recreational activities will depend on the character of the resource and the needs of visitors.

2. The Forest Service and Park Service will work with outfitters, guest ranches, concessionaires, and others who offer recreation services in the GYA to help provide for the current and changing needs of recreationists. In wilderness areas and parks, emphasis will be placed on low-impact use. The existing GYA outfitter policy will continue to coordinate services offered to the public.



Camping in the Greater Yellowstone Area

3. Highway travel corridors in parks and forests are an integral part of the visitor experience in the GYA. Cooperate with the States to retain travel corridors in their natural appearance.

4. Ensure visual quality objectives are coordinated between units and achieved.
5. Ecological and economic impacts of recreational activities will be evaluated.

Provide Opportunities for a Timber Industry

1. Continue to provide for the integrity of the ecosystem by managing the timber resource on the national forests to achieve land management objectives.
2. Upon request, the Forest Service will provide technical assistance in wood utilization and value added products.
3. Fuelwood, posts, poles and other miscellaneous wood products will continue to be available for personal and commercial use.



Selective Roadside Timber Harvest

PRINCIPLE: IMPROVE COORDINATION

1. Meet annually to evaluate priorities, and monitor and adjust the guidelines of this document as needed.

2. Develop and use common management area prescriptions for national forests in the GYA.
3. Forests and parks will use the GYA Interagency Fire Management Planning and Coordination Guide to implement fire suppression and prescribed fire programs.
4. Emphasize resource management planning that encourages an interagency effort which includes appropriate Federal and State agencies, local communities, and private and public organizations.
5. Upon request, the Forest Service will assist rural communities to identify opportunities that will promote economic improvement, diversification, and revitalization.
6. Improve understanding of ecosystem and economic dynamics by pursuing cooperative research in the GYA, involving the Park Service, Forest Service, and other appropriate entities. Develop GYA data management systems which incorporate inventories of natural resources, management actions, and public uses. These will be adapted to model various ecological and economic systems within the GYA, and the cumulative effects of management actions.
7. Foster and support expanded research programs related to ecosystem questions pertaining to forests and parks. Agencies will cooperate in data collection and analysis using "state of the art" technology, research methods, and information.
8. Intensify interpretative programs with greater emphasis on ecosystems and multiple use. In partnership with State and local agencies, develop information centers on the edge of the GYA along each major travel route. The information centers will be jointly sponsored and managed.
9. Develop agreements with other Federal, State and local agencies to address specific research issues, share information and expertise, resolve problems, and coordinate programs to meet management needs.
10. Coordinate and improve signing throughout forests and parks of the GYA.
11. Emphasize and integrate environmental education programs.
12. Improve coordination of GYA cooperative/interpretive associations.