

COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN

ACADIA

National Park · Maine

Recommended:

Paul F. Haertel
Superintendent, Acadia National Park

April 12, 2000

Approved:

Marie Rust
Regional Director, New England Region

April 17, 2000

COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN

April 2000

ACADIA

National Park · Maine

U.S. Department of the Interior · National Park Service

An implementing document of the 1992 Acadia National Park general management plan.

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SUMMARY

The purpose of the Acadia National Park *Commercial Services Plan* is to define the basic management philosophy that will guide park management of commercial services and direct the actions that will be required to support that philosophy for the next five to ten years.

This plan addresses three major issues regarding commercial services in Acadia:

- **What types** of commercial services support the mission of the park;
- **What levels** of commercial use best protect park resources and allow visitors to have a quality experience in the park; and
- **How best to manage** commercial use of the park.

Carefully managed and operated commercial services can be appropriate and desirable to enhance resource protection and the range and quality of visitor experiences in Acadia National Park. The following plan for commercial services management at Acadia National Park has been crafted after carefully considering written public comments on the *Draft Commercial Services Plan and Environmental Assessment* (NPS 1998) as well as recommendations from the Acadia National Park Advisory Commission, reviewing the results of a recently completed survey of park visitors (Littlejohn 1998), and consulting with National Park Service staff. This *Commercial Services Plan* follows the direction provided by the National Park Service Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998, *National Park Service Management Policies* (NPS 1988), Other commercial uses authorized in the past by Incidental Business Permits will be allowed to continue under new authorizations renamed by recent legislation as Commercial Use Authorizations. These activities include motor coach tours, tours

and the park's *General Management Plan* (NPS 1992).

Commercial services that enhance visitor experiences and help protect park resources will be authorized within Acadia National Park. Commercial use of the park will be limited and more actively managed than in the past to meet park goals and provide an appropriate balance between commercial and non-commercial use.

Food and beverage service at the Jordan Pond House, carriage rides at Wildwood Stables, and locally-based bus tours will continue to be provided by concessioners at Acadia. Shops at Cadillac Mountain and Thunder Hole will be converted to information centers to orient visitors and encourage the stewardship of park resources.

Limited sales of educational items directly related to Acadia National Park, as well as items essential for the safety and comfort of visitors while in the park, will be provided as a service to visitors at these centers. A portion of the space at the Jordan Pond House shop will be reallocated to provide park information and interpretive exhibits, and concession sales will include items that are educational, essential for health and safety, or directly related to park themes. Park staff, in cooperation with the concessioner, will prepare and implement site-specific plans for Cadillac Summit and the Jordan Pond House areas to address crowding and congestion, and better meet park resource and visitor experience goals.

interpreting the park's natural and cultural heritage, technical rock climbing instruction, and other recreational tours featuring hiking, bicycling, camping, boating or a combination of activities. Step-on guides that board private vehicles, including motor coaches, to

SUMMARY

offer interpretation of park resources will be promoted to enhance visitor understanding and encourage stewardship of the park.

Commercial use of the park will be managed at levels that protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources and enhance visitor experiences. Commercial use of park facilities such as group camping sites may be restricted to protect opportunities for non-commercial uses. Decisions related to appropriate levels of use will be made based on quantitative carrying capacity studies, when available, as well as the professional judgement of NPS managers.

Commercial uses will be more actively managed in the future. Commercial use levels, effects on resources, and visitor satisfaction will be measured. Restrictions will continue to be added to contracts and authorizations and the number of

authorizations issued for any activity may be limited to protect park resources and ensure quality visitor experiences. Commercial users will be monitored by the NPS to ensure that businesses are authorized to operate in the park, contract or permit conditions are being followed, and information about park resources is accurate and professionally presented. To enhance the accuracy and quality of information provided to visitors, commercial operators will be provided training and materials by NPS staff. Commercial use fees or entrance fees paid by commercial users will recover the costs of administering and monitoring commercial use of the park, and, if possible, the NPS will make commercial use monitoring fees proportional to the amount each business uses the park. Additional NPS staff will be allocated to managing commercial uses of Acadia National Park to ensure park resources and quality visitor experiences are protected.

CONTENTS

Purpose of and Need for the Plan

Introduction	1
Types of Services	1
Levels of Commercial Use	2
Management of Commercial Activities	3
Park Setting	4
Background and Existing Conditions	4
Park Mission, Purpose, and Significance	4
History of Commercial Use in Acadia National Park	11
Guiding Laws and Policies	12
Commercial Services Authorization Instruments	13
Planning Direction	18

The Plan

Scope	21
Management Goals	21
Management Actions	23
Other Commercial Services	30
Educational Groups	30
Activities Not Covered by this Plan	30

Appendices

Appendix A: Commercial Services Evaluation	31
--	----

References	50
------------	----

Preparers	51
-----------	----

TABLES

Types of Commercial Authorizations	17
------------------------------------	----

MAPS

Region	6
Park Features	9

PURPOSE AND NEED

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this *Commercial Services Plan* is to establish the types and levels of commercial activities that will be authorized in Acadia National Park and guide effective and efficient management of those activities to meet park goals. This plan will provide a comprehensive guide for managing commercial services in Acadia National Park for the next 5-10 years and will address several decisions regarding commercial activities that were deferred when the *Acadia National Park General Management Plan* (NPS 1992) was written.

This plan does not address future commercial activities on the Schoodic Peninsula. The U.S. Navy facility there will be decommissioned and turned over to the NPS to manage in 2001, unless the Department of Defense identifies a continuing need for the site. A public planning effort is being initiated by the NPS to develop a long-term management plan for the Schoodic section of the park. Future commercial uses of the Schoodic Peninsula, including lands currently administered by the Department of Defense, will be addressed during this planning process. Until a management plan has been completed for this area, the NPS will manage the area consistent with the park's *General Management Plan*: that is, not actively promote nor add facilities or services. The 1992 *General Management Plan* called for a review of park concessions. Four current concession contracts and permits have expired and are operating under temporary extensions. The National Park Service must ensure that all future business activities, including concessions, meet

TYPES OF SERVICES

Commercial activities in the park that will be managed under this plan include park concessions, where activities or services usually originate in the park and operate under contract or permit, and a range of other activities that originate outside the park and operate under commercial use authorizations (CUA) issued by the National Park Service.

Federal law (the Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998) mandates that concession development and services: "1) are necessary and appropriate for public use and enjoyment of the unit of the National Park System in which they are located; and 2) are consistent to the highest practicable degree with the preservation and conservation of the resources and values of the unit."

Defining what is necessary and appropriate is left to the discretion of park managers (NPS 1988). Concession operations in the park immediately prior to the development of this plan included food and beverage service, shops, carriage rides, and locally-based bus tours. Only NPS-authorized concessioners were allowed to provide these services in the park.

federal, state, and local laws and regulations and operate in a manner that is consistent with the mission of Acadia National Park. All commercial activities operating in the park should provide safe, high quality visitor experiences while protecting important natural, cultural, and scenic resources.

Commercial use authorizations, formerly called incidental business permits, are issued for many other commercial activities that are deemed appropriate but are not considered necessary for visitors of Acadia National Park. Historically, these activities included motor coach tours, hiking tours, bicycle tours (not bike rentals), climbing tours and instruction, sea kayaking tours and instruction, canoeing tours and instruction, photography tours, natural history tours, and step-on guide services (guides that ride in privately owned vehicles and provide information about the park's natural and cultural history).

Many regional and national tour bus companies operate in the park on a regular or intermittent basis, especially during the fall. In 1996 the permitting procedures for commercial motor tour operators changed. Now all commercial motor tour operators must obtain a commercial use authorization for each park in which they operate. Some motor coach tour operators use the park without permits in violation of federal law. It is believed that other motor coach operators visit portions of the park without paying entrance fees, again, in violation of CUA requirements and Federal law.

Prior to the enactment of the Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998, NPS policy dictated that if an activity was deemed appropriate, the number of incidental business permits issued for that activity could not be limited. Under the new legislation, In 1999, 73 motor coach tour companies received permits to operate in the park. As the U.S. population ages, it is expected that the motor coach industry will grow as much as three-fold by 2010¹ and Acadia National

limits can now be placed on the number of commercial use authorizations issued for any commercial activity within a NPS-administered area. Other limits such as maximum group size, scheduling of activities, and restrictions on what areas within a park can be used commercially can be written into each CUA.

Managing commercial activities in the park is complex. A more thorough description of legal requirements and NPS methods of managing commercial activities is provided in the section entitled "Commercial Services Management."

LEVELS OF COMMERCIAL USE

Appropriate levels of commercial use are addressed in this plan. Visitation to the park has steadily increased over the last 20 years. There were 3.01 million visits in 1997, which was up from 2.4 million in 1990. Along with increased visitation there has been a dramatic increase in commercial activity in the park. Permits issued to businesses have increased 500% since 1990; there are now more than 45 commercial operators licensed to conduct activities such as walking and cycling tours, climbing, kayaking, and guided nature tours, or a combination of these activities. Several permits have been issued for individuals to serve as interpretive (step-on) guides in private vehicles, and it is believed that others provide this service in the park without permits.

Park will continue to be a popular destination for both motor coaches and cruise ships. Already Bar Harbor hosts up to

Newsletter dated Spring, 1999. Available from TIN, P.O Box 66682, Falmouth, ME 04105

¹Source: Tourism Industry Network

three cruise ships per day during summer and fall. Cruise ships routinely disembark passengers onto buses to tour the park, and these tours contribute to overcrowding at features along the Park Loop Road. These tours are accommodated by local bus touring companies who hold authorizations to operate in the park.

Increasing use levels, including more commercial use, may result in conflicts, crowding, and congestion. Increased numbers of visitors and longer stays, a portion of which are the result of commercial promotion and advertising, periodically strain facilities and result in insufficient parking, crowded conditions, and a lower quality visitor experience. Limited facilities such as group camping areas are used by large numbers of commercial groups. This use displaces non-commercial groups.

Increasing use levels also affect natural and cultural resources. Soil becomes eroded and compacted, and vegetation is trampled or killed in many popular areas frequented by commercial users. For example, despite the significance of Cadillac Mountain summit and the south shore of Jordan Pond, these areas are severely eroded, vegetation is trampled or lost altogether, and visitors complain of crowding and congestion, especially related to parking. Visitors wander about both areas in search of trails or other facilities, exacerbating resource damage. At Cadillac Mountain, service roads and other facilities are poorly landscaped and detract from the scenic beauty of the summit. Visitors do not understand the importance of staying on trails and inadvertently trample rare plants

and cause soil erosion. Cars parked outside designated areas near commercial facilities block scenic views and alter cultural landscapes.

Some commercial operators educate visitors about sensitive park resources, but sometimes educational efforts are nonexistent or inappropriate, and the commercial activities themselves can harm resources. The National Park Service wants to ensure that all visitors receive accurate information delivered in clear, effective ways to help make visits safe and enjoyable and help visitors learn how to enjoy the park in ways that best protect the values for which it was established.

MANAGEMENT OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Until about 1988 the relatively low level of commercial activity in the park was effectively managed with minimal staff and funding. However, recent demand for commercial use permits has resulted in reactive management. Some commercial operators bypass the permit process and operate illegally in the park. There has been little or no monitoring of the quality of services or adherence to permit conditions and no formal policy for review of the approximately 65 new applications each year. Staffing levels are inadequate to manage commercial activities. Acadia National Park managers are actively seeking to comply with NPS policy by ensuring that all commercial activities are conducted under the terms of a permit or concession contract and that the permitting process is efficient, fair, consistent, and easy to communicate to applicants.

INTRODUCTION

PARK SETTING

Acadia National Park is on the Maine coast in the northeastern United States, where the highest mountains on the east coast meet the Atlantic Ocean (see Vicinity Map). The National Park Service manages approximately 35,000 acres, most of which is on Mount Desert Island (approximately 50% of the island land mass). The National Park Service also manages a portion of Schoodic Peninsula on the mainland to the east of Mount Desert Island and Isle au Haut, an island 15 miles southwest of Mount Desert Island. In addition, the National Park Service manages part or all of 14 outlying coastal islands and several small freshwater islands. The National Park Service also holds 163 conservation easements on coastal islands in the Penobscot and Frenchman Bay areas.

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Information that has a direct effect on the management of commercial activities at Acadia National Park is presented below. Most of the information relates to laws, regulations, policies, or planning direction that must be followed when developing and implementing a comprehensive commercial services plan.

PARK MISSION, PURPOSE, AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Acadia National Park mission statement is based on park legislation and the 1992 *General Management Plan*. It was formally adopted in the 1997 *Strategic Management Plan*.

The National Park Service at Acadia National Park protects and conserves outstanding scenic, natural, and cultural resources for present and future generations. These resources include a glaciated coastal and island landscape, biological diversity, clean air and water, and a rich cultural heritage. Acadia National Park also offers opportunities for high-quality nonconsumptive recreation, education, and scientific research.

Acadia National Park has three main purposes. One is to protect and conserve the land and water resources, the scenery, the natural and historic objects, the wildlife, and the wild character associated with the lands within the legislated park boundary. Another is to promote and regulate the use of the park for the benefit and enjoyment of the public in such manner and by such means as will leave the park resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Finally, the National Park Service is directed to protect and preserve the scenic, ecological, historic, archeological, and cultural resources of the Acadian archipelago and to limit development of the islands and preserve their natural qualities and traditional resource-based land uses.

A rich combination of cultural and natural features and exceptional scientific, educational, and recreational opportunities contribute to the character and significance of Acadia National Park, the first national park east of the Mississippi and the only congressionally designated national park in New England.

PARK SETTING

When this area was set aside as a national monument by President Woodrow Wilson, he cited the historic interest associated with Champlain's 1604 landing on Mount Desert Island. He also cited the great scientific interest of the island's topography, geology, wildlife and vegetation. Acadia National Park does have a variety of significant resources, including its remarkable landscape, air and water quality, biological diversity, cultural heritage, historic properties, collections of artifacts, and outdoor educational and recreational opportunities.

Acadia's coastal and island landscape is unequalled along the Atlantic shore of the United States. Mountains, lakes, and wooded valleys add character to the land. Somes Sound, the inlet bisecting Mount Desert Island, is the only fjord on the east coast of the United States. The park's islands provide nesting sites and critical habitat for a great diversity of both animals and plants, including species of global, national, state, and local significance.

The cultural heritage of the park is equally significant and includes resources related to Native Americans, French and British settlers, and the wealthy Americans of the late 1800s and early 1900s who established summer colonies, founded the park, and contributed to the creation and development of the conservation movement. Over the years island residents have left a distinctive cultural polish on the landscape. The surviving historic structures and designed landscapes (such as those of the park's carriage road system and the Park Loop Road landscape) have become significant because of their history, durability, and uniqueness, and they commemorate the vision that guided those who designed and built them.

Acadia National Park also offers significant scientific research value. There is an extraordinary multi-disciplinary database at the park that can serve as the scientific foundation for ecosystem research and monitoring programs. The park provides a variety of opportunities to conduct research and to monitor resources. There is an extensive scientific bibliography dating back to the late 19th century, a rapidly expanding geographic information system, ongoing air, water, wildlife and vegetation monitoring, and a professional staff.

Acadia offers excellent opportunities for educating three million annual visitors about the park's significant and varied resources. Access to the array of sites with scenic, scientific, natural, and historic interest is provided by a network of carefully designed hiking trails, carriage roads, and scenic drives. Visitors participate in numerous recreational activities such as camping, hiking, horseback and carriage riding, bicycling, kayaking, canoeing, and sightseeing. People of all ages are attracted to a broad spectrum of interpretive activities, including guided walks, amphitheater presentations, environmental education programs, and outreach activities.

INSERT VICINITY (REGION) MAP
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PARK SETTING

INSERT PARK FEATURES MAP
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PARK SETTING

HISTORY OF COMMERCIAL SERVICES AT ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

There has long been a commercial presence in Acadia National Park. Before the park was established, the Green Mountain Hotel operated atop Green (now Cadillac) Mountain. From 1883 until 1890, visitors could ride a ferry across Eagle Lake, then board a cog rail train to ride to the summit. From 1932-1940 Acadia Corporation built and operated the Summit Tavern atop Cadillac Mountain; the tavern provided food, drinks and gifts. In 1940 the facility was taken over by the military until the end of World War II. In 1946 the National Park Service offered the concessioner, Acadia Corporation, the use of the former ranger stations at Cadillac Mountain and Thunder Hole to allow for continued operation of the Summit Tavern.

Tea and popovers have been served on the lawn overlooking Jordan Pond since before Acadia National Park was established. A farmhouse at that site provided food service since around 1870. In 1896, Thomas McIntire and his wife leased the farmhouse and began serving tea and popovers. John D. Rockefeller acquired the property in 1923 and donated it to the

National Park Service in 1940. The McIntires developed a reputation for fine food and genteel hospitality among the MDI summer colony until they retired in 1945, at which time the operation was turned over to the Acadia Corporation. Although the original Jordan Pond House burned in 1979, a more modern structure was built nearby and food and beverage service continued, with a wide variety of sales items offered in the gift shop.

Stables offering buckboard rides and rental horses operated near the Jordan Pond House. In 1948, Helen P. Dane offered the 87 acre farm, known as "Wildwoods" since the 1880s, to the National Park Service shortly after the death of her husband. The park stables, operated by the Acadia Corporation, were moved to the Dane Farm in the early 1960's. Since then, the stables have been operated by several different businesses.

Local operators have provided regularly scheduled and special bus tours of the park from Bar Harbor for a number of years.

Other commercial services have been offered in the park, including nature guides and climbing instruction.

GUIDING LAWS AND POLICIES

All activities at Acadia National Park are governed by the 1916 Organic Act that created the National Park Service and congressional and presidential authorizing actions taken specifically for the park. Laws specific to Acadia NP can be found in the *1992 General Management Plan*. In addition, there are several laws and policies that deal directly with commercial activities in parks.

By law, all commercial activities in national parks must be authorized by some kind of written authorization (36 CFR 5.3).

Regulations with specific instructions on concessions authorizations are located at 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), part 51.

The Omnibus Park Management Act of 1998 was passed by Congress and signed into law November 13, 1998. The National Park Service Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-391) is the short title for Section IV of the Omnibus Act and deals directly with NPS concessions. This legislation supersedes the Concessions Policy Act which guided Park Service management of concessions for the last 30 years. The new legislation incorporates much of the philosophy of the old law including "...development...shall be limited to those accommodations, facilities, and services that are necessary and appropriate for public use and enjoyment of the unit of the National Park System in which they are located and are consistent to the highest practicable degree with the preservation and conservation of the resources and values of the unit." (A unit The National Park Service is now writing regulations to implement the new law. This

refers to a park area administered by the NPS.) In addition, the secretary of the interior should "...exercise his authority in a manner consistent with a reasonable opportunity for the concessioner to realize a profit." Thus, only economically feasible concession operations should be introduced.

The new law also makes some significant changes. Under the previous Concessions Policy Act all existing concessioners had "preferential right of renewal". Under Section 403 of the new law, P.L. 105-391, only outfitter and guide services, and small business operations with anticipated gross receipts under \$500,000 will be given a right of preference in renewal of contracts. The term of new contracts will normally be 5 to 10 years, with 20 year contracts issued only in special financial situations with approval from the Director. Concession permits will be discontinued and a short form contract used in it's place. Possessory Interest has been renamed Leasehold Surrender Interest and redefined. Under the old law, all franchise fees paid by a concessioner were sent to the General Treasury. Under the new law, all franchise fees stay with the Park Service to be used for visitor service related or resource protection projects. The park retains 80% and 20% is used for projects throughout the NPS.

Another important provision of the new law is how Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) are managed. Under the new law, CUAs for any activity deemed appropriate may be operationally limited for resource protection and visitor experience improvement reasons.

process involves reviews by other government agencies and the public. New

regulations are scheduled to be published in April 2000. The new law contains provisions that allows the National Park Service to manage commercial services as defined in the Concessions Policy Act until the new regulations are written, reviewed, and approved. A one-time extension can be given to existing contracts and/or a three year sole source contract can be awarded, but no new contracts will be developed until the new regulations are effective.

The Cost Recovery Act (16 USC 3a) requires the National Park Service to recover the cost of providing various services to some business permittees. The cost is defined as the amount expended by the National Park Service in order to accommodate commercial use.

According to NPS *Management Policies*, most commercial activities in parks are issued authorizations. Commercial activities are conducted under safeguards that protect against unregulated and indiscriminate use and ensure that heavy visitation does not impair park values and resources. Concessions in park units should be viewed as an extension of park management; to be used, when necessary and appropriate, to achieve the objectives of the park unit. Historically, the concessions program has been based on considerations such as visitor needs, the agency's ability to satisfy those needs, the resource itself, and apparent carrying capacities. Changing conditions and increasing pressure to meet visitor needs requires a strategy that balances visitor needs with the purposes and values of individual parks.

The National Park Service guidelines that are applicable to commercial services include:

- NPS-48 *Concessions Guidelines*
- NPS-50 *Loss Control Management Program Guideline*
- NPS-53 *Special Park Use*
- NPS-83 *Public Health Management Guideline*

These guidelines, along with fundamental policies, standard contract language, and operating practices, are used in managing commercial activities throughout the national park system.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES AUTHORIZATION INSTRUMENTS

As stated in the previous section, the authorizing instruments established under the new law cannot be implemented until new regulations are written, reviewed, and approved. When that happens concession contracts, long and short form, and commercial use authorizations will replace concession permits and incidental business permits (IBPs).

During the interim, existing concession contracts and permits with an annual gross of \$100,000 or less have been extended for two years and those grossing in excess of \$100,000 have been extended for one year from December 31, 1999. The NPS Concessions Management Center recommends that no CUA be issued for more than one year, pending issuance of final rules.

PARK SETTING

The following sections describe the authorization instruments which will be available to the Park Service.

Concession Contracts — Concession contracts are legal agreements between the secretary of the interior (or authorized delegate) and a concessioner that requires the concessioner to provide certain visitor accommodations, facilities, or services. Concession contracts are used for large complex operations and are issued by competitive bid. The term for an existing contract issued under the new law can be for as long as 20 years; generally, however, the terms will be for 5 to 10 years.

Concession operations are authorized by the National Park Service. A prospectus is prepared and made available to potential bidders. The NPS will review proposals submitted in response to the prospectus, select the best offer and execute a final contract. These procedures are detailed in 36 CFR, §51.4.

Under the terms and conditions of a concession contract, the secretary has the authority to assign land and government facilities to the concessioner. The contract requires the concessioner to fulfill specific obligations as defined in the contract.

Concession contracts contain an operations plan, a maintenance plan, an environmental plan, and, in many instances, a building improvement plan. They require care of land and government facilities provided by the National Park Service to the concessioner. Compliance with these plans is mandatory. Financial functions associated with issuing and managing concession contracts include feasibility studies and ensuring a fair return to the government. General standards are set for calculation of

financial returns to the United States and to assure that revenue production is subordinate to resource protection and visitor services.

Under the new law several changes will occur to contracts. For concessions grossing over \$500,000, the preferential right of renewal may be phased out and the term of contracts will be 5 to 10 years (or up to 20 years if unusual financial circumstances exist, but only with approval from the director of the NPS). The park collecting fees from the contract will keep 80%. Possessory interest will be replaced with leasehold surrender interest, the details of which need definition. However, the intent of leasehold surrender interest is to eventually eliminate non-government ownership of facilities in parks. Most other elements of a concession contract will not change.

Concession Permits — Prior to the 1998 legislation, concession permits were used when the authorized concessions operations were not expected to gross more than \$100,000 annually. The term of the permit was for five years or less, and no possessory interest or preferential right to additional services was granted. The concessions permit, issued by competitive bid, was used for operations that were smaller and less complex than those permitted under concession contracts.

Concession permits authorized temporary construction and assigned government-owned facilities and land to a concessioner. The National Park Service collected fees from permit holders based on the probable value of the business opportunity. Permit holders did not have possessory interest or any other right of compensation.

Under the new law concession permits will be eliminated. A short form concession contract for businesses with an annual gross less than \$500,000 will be used. The intent to deal with small revenue operations in a more efficient manner will continue. Land and facility assignments, leasehold surrender interest, fee determination, and term lengths will apply as with contracts for larger concession operations.

Incidental Business Permits/Commercial Use Authorizations

Incidental business permits (IBPs) were used as a mechanism to authorize external businesses such as guide services, motor coach tours, and recreational tours to use the park. Services began and ended outside of the park. Incidental Business Permits were not used to authorize concessions. Business permit operators did not enjoy the same privileges, terms, and conditions as park concessioners. Incidental business permits did not grant exclusive authority to provide services. Activities did not have to be necessary and if deemed appropriate in the park, no limit was placed on the number of permits issued.

Monitoring of all commercial activities was essential to ensure that business operations were conducted in a safe, fair, and reputable manner consistent with the mission of the park. Monitoring was also essential to ensure compliance with conditions stated in the permit.

Under the new law IBPs will be replaced by Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs). The intent is still to provide a mechanism to authorize commercial uses of park resources that begin and end outside the park, or gross under \$25,000 per year. A

The National Park Service was authorized by the Cost Recovery Act to collect costs associated with incidental business permits. There were three elements to the determination of the dollar amount that could be charged: application, administrative, and monitoring costs. Application costs started with the request for the use of park resources and ended with mailing the application form. Administrative costs started when the completed application form was received and ended with the final signing of the permit. Monitoring costs started when the permittee arrived in the park to perform the permitted use and ended when the permitted use was over and the permittee left the area. Application and administrative costs could be determined using average costs derived from historic records, but monitoring costs had to reflect actual itemized costs.

The term of an incidental business permit could be for up to two years; one year was common. IBPs were issued noncompetitively. All business transactions, sales, and advertisements had to be conducted outside of the park. No facilities were authorized in the park in association with these business or operations. Operational terms and conditions were set as necessary to establish commercial use levels and to protect park resources. IBPs could not be issued for services permitted under concession authorizations when the concessioner was contractually granted the exclusive right to provide that service.

significant change under the new law will be that the number of CUAs authorized within the park may be limited. The number of commercial users will be determined based on protecting park resources and quality visitor experiences, as well as the

PARK SETTING

capacities of park facilities available to commercial users.

Other Authorizations

There are at least four other types of authorizations that could be considered as commercial but play a different role in park management. These authorizations include:

- Special use permits are issued for special gatherings or events. At times they are commercial in nature; for example, a special cultural event that lasts for one or a few days and includes the sale of ethnic foods or crafts (36 CFR 1.6 and NPS-53).
- Cooperating associations were authorized by Congress to support park interpretive and scientific activities through proceeds from sales of educational products and services.

Cooperating associations are governed by a service wide set of criteria and policies (NPS-32, soon to be Director's Order 32).

- Utility rights-of-way and easements are land assignments for use of public land. Special use permits are used to describe a discrete term of use. In some cases uses might be commercial in nature, such as public utilities. All rights-of-way and easements are reviewed to determine if they are appropriate and do not conflict with the park mission and resources (36 CFR, part 14 and NPS-53)
- Commercial filming permits are required for commercial film makers in a park. The permit stipulates where, when, and how the filming can be conducted (36 CFR 5.5 and NPS-53).

TABLE 1: TYPES OF COMMERCIAL AUTHORIZATIONS

DESCRIPTION OF ELEMENT	CONCESSIONS CONTRACT		CONCESSIONS PERMIT		INCIDENTAL BUSINESS PERMIT	COMMERCIAL USE AUTHORIZATIONS
	OLD	NEW	OLD	NEW		
Authority	79 Stat 969 16 USC 20	P.L. 105-391	79 Stat 969 16 USC 20	Short Form Concession Contract	39 Stat 535 16 USC 3a	16 USC 1 36 CFR 5.3 Omnibus Park Management Act
Term	Up to 30 years	5 to 10 years	Up to 5 years	5 to 10 years	1 or 2 years	1 or 2 years
Solicited proposals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes, when #s limited
Required services	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Authorizes services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Services allowed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Construction allowed	Yes	Yes	Temporary only	No	No	No
Compensation for investment	Yes ^a	Yes ^b	No (policy)	No	No	No
Right of preference in renewal^c	Yes	Yes (limited)	Yes	Yes (limited)	No	No
Preferential right^d	Yes (by contract)	No	No	No	No	No
Assigned, amended, or extended	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Assigned land or facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes, when #s limited
Fees	Franchise fee or Special Accounts	Franchise fee & Maintenance Reserve	Franchise fee	Franchise fee & Maintenance Reserve	Application, admin- istration, and monitoring fees	Application, administration, and monitoring fees
Financial reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (limited)	Yes (reasonable fees)

^a Possessory Interest
^b Leasehold Surrender Interest
^c Granted by law, not by contract or permit.
^d Applies to current/existing concessions contracts and may not apply to future/new concessions contracts.

PLANNING DIRECTION

The National Park Service planning process facilitates decisions through several levels of detail from conceptual direction to implementation actions. Planning documents for Acadia National Park are based on a clear statement of the park's legislated mission and on broad, parkwide mission goals that state the resource conditions and visitor experiences desired by the National Park Service.

The *General Management Plan* is the foundation planning document for Acadia National Park. It provides a general framework for decision making by setting basic philosophy and direction regarding resource management, kinds and levels of use, general types and levels of development, and boundary issues. The *General Management Plan* for Acadia National Park, which addresses all portions of the park except for those in the town of Isle au Haut, Maine, was approved in 1992.

The 1992 *Acadia National Park General Management Plan* gives some direction regarding the future of commercial uses and left other issues to be resolved later. Actions proposed included improving horse and carriage services at Wildwood Stables and improving efficiency at the Jordan Pond House restaurant. Actions deferred included evaluating the role of gift shops in the park. The issue of continued operation of the gift shops on Thunder Hole and Cadillac Mountain is addressed in this commercial services plan.

The 1995 *Statement for Management* includes the GMP direction for Mount Desert Island and Isle au Haut, thus

The stable operation will be improved to provide safe and sanitary facilities that support equestrian use of the carriage road system by concession patrons and by visitors who bring their own horses. A 1996 planning charette provided conceptual direction for Wildwood Stables. A plan for the Wildwoods area will be prepared to consider the charette recommendations in detail, offer alternatives for public review, and following public input, identify future management actions. New restrooms are being constructed at Wildwood Stables to replace temporary facilities. Other facilities, such as limited lodging for employees, additional stalls, and camping areas for equestrians and their horses may be provided in the more distant future. The National Park Service may provide some of the funding for these improvements through fees paid by concessioners or by special appropriation.

In 1990 a development concept plan was adopted for the Isle au Haut section of the park. This plan provided guidance for Isle au Haut, and was adopted in the 1992 *General Management Plan* for Acadia National Park. These past planning efforts have established a limit on the number of visitors to Isle au Haut and do not allow commercial operations in NPS administered sections of the island. The ferry that provides seasonal service to the park landing at Duck Harbor on Isle au Haut is currently operating without any written authorization from the NPS. Other private, commercial uses of the park may be occurring without NPS authorization. These issues will be addressed in this *Commercial Services Plan*.

providing a unified planning document for the entire park. Statements for management present the status of planning activities from

which park managers can determine the nature and extent of needed studies, plans, and designs in order to meet a park's stated objectives.

In response to the Government Performance Review Act, the 1997 Acadia National Park *Strategic Management Plan* addressed the important questions: "How are we doing?", "Are we headed in the right direction?", and "How can we reach our goals?"

Some specific Acadia National Park management prescriptions that affect commercial services include:

- provision of public transportation
- a park-wide visitor management strategy that includes resource protection and monitoring of visitor use
- reduction of conflicts between user groups
- improvement of visitor access
- improvement of orientation and information services
- evaluation and improvement of concession services

Implementation plans describe what actions are needed for achieving desired future conditions and how the activities will be conducted. This *Commercial Services Plan* is an example of an implementation plan. Another implementation plan relevant to commercial services management is the *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan* recently developed for Acadia National Park. The interpretive plan describes interpretive themes for the park.

Commercial services, like other activities in the park, should support the following themes identified in the *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan*:

- Acadia National Park invokes attitudes of reverence for the area and care for the stewardship of its resources.
- The wildlife and vegetation of Acadia National Park and surrounding waters comprise a rich mix of temperate, neotropical, and boreal species significant for their biodiversity.
- Acadia National Park preserves a variety of cultural resources that illustrate 6,000 years of human history.
- The landforms of Acadia National Park illustrate the dynamics of many geologic processes and provide many educational opportunities.
- Acadia National Park protects natural and cultural resources.
- Acadia National Park provides abundant opportunities for learning.

THE PLAN

THE PLAN

SCOPE

This plan provides goals and strategies for the protection of park resources and enhancement of visitor experiences through the management of all commercial enterprises operating in the park including concessions and those operating under commercial use authorizations.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

The following general goals for managing commercial activities at Acadia National Park are based on the NPS Organic Act, park authorizing legislation, the *General Management Plan*, and the park mission statement. Business enterprises operating in the park can assist the National Park Service in its mission by protecting park resources, providing visitors with high quality and safe park experiences, and educating the public about the values and purposes for which the park was established.

The goals that follow are specific to commercial activities at Acadia National Park and are listed according to issues identified throughout the planning process.

Types of Commercial Activities

- Only commercial activities deemed appropriate to the park's mission, as determined by a logical process based on NPS policy, laws and regulations, available information, public input, and professional management experience, will be allowed.

- Commercial activities in the park will provide goods and services that support and enhance public safety, enjoyment, and appreciation of the park.

Levels of Commercial Use

Commercial activity in Acadia National Park will be managed at levels that:

- prevent adverse effects on natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources
- facilitate high quality visitor experiences and reduce or prevent crowding, congestion, and conflicts between visitors
- complement and are subordinate to non-commercial uses
- can be supported using available NPS facilities such as parking areas, restrooms, campsites, buildings, and roads

Management of Commercial Activities

- Individuals or businesses that wish to engage in commercial activities in the park will have ready access to clear and concise instructions about how to apply for permits and will understand the criteria used to evaluate applications.
- Applications for commercial activities in the park will be reviewed in a fair, consistent, and timely manner using criteria that have been reviewed by the public.

THE PLAN

- All commercial activities in the park will operate under contracts or authorizations according to specific terms and conditions.
- The park will allocate sufficient staff and funding to manage commercial services in a legal, efficient, and cost-effective manner.
- Park facilities used commercially will be improved as directed by the *General Management Plan*, i.e. at the Jordan Pond House and Wildwood.
- Commercial activities will be managed to ensure the sustainability of park facilities and resources.

All applicable federal and state laws and NPS policies will be followed.

- Commercial activities will be managed to minimize adverse effects on park neighbors.
- Commercial activities in the park will be self-supporting in terms of the cost to the government to manage those activities.
- Commercial activities in the park should complement and encourage use of the new transportation system.

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Provide a High Quality Food and Beverage Service at the Jordan Pond House

The National Park Service recognizes the historical tradition of providing food and beverage service to visitors at the southern shore of Jordan Pond. The goal of this service will be to provide a limited number of visitors with a high quality dining experience. Lunch, afternoon tea and popovers, and dinner will be offered. Prices will be comparable with similar services in the private sector. The NPS will require the concessioner to manage the Jordan Pond House operation to minimize effects on natural, cultural and scenic resources surrounding the Jordan Pond House facilities; and reduce crowding, congestion, and conflicts among visitors at that site. In 1998, a NPS visitor survey found that 80% of visitors using the Jordan Pond House rated their experience good or very good (National Park Service 1998). Future concessioners will be expected to maintain or exceed this level of customer satisfaction. Monitoring customer satisfaction will be a cooperative effort between the NPS and the concessioner.

Provide Carriage Rides and Other Equestrian Services at Wildwood Stable

Carriage rides support the park mission because they provide an opportunity for visitors to experience the historic carriage roads by horse-drawn vehicles and learn about park history and resources. Some horse-drawn wagons are accessible and provide a unique opportunity for visitors. Commercial horseback rides will not be provided in the future. Horseback rides

with limited mobility. The goal of the Wildwood Stable concession operation will be to provide a high quality visitor experience in a safe, unhurried, uncrowded manner, and in such a way as to protect the natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources of the park. In order to achieve this goal, the number of visitors served by the Wildwood Stable concession will be limited. Visitors will be provided accurate information presented in a professional manner regarding the cultural and natural history of the carriage roads and Wildwood Stable area.

The NPS will make reasonable investments to assure carriage rides continue. Funds from concessioner fees and other sources will be used to rehabilitate the facilities. Future concessioners at Wildwood Stable will be required to maintain these rehabilitated structures and the grounds within their assigned area. If no concessioner successfully bids and completes the terms of their contract, carriage ride operations at Wildwood Stable may have to be discontinued.

The NPS recognizes the need for fire protection and protection of livestock after operating hours at Wildwood Stable. To accommodate this need, one NPS-designated space for a camper or small trailer to house concession employees will be allowed. Temporary structures such as house trailers, which detract from the historic scene, will not be allowed. Other concession employees will be housed in permanent structures, or off-site.

pose safety, liability, and management burdens on the NPS and concessioner and

THE PLAN

have not been provided in the park since the mid-1980's. The development of a shop selling horse supplies at Wildwood Stable is unnecessary and will not be allowed. Equestrians will continue to provide their own supplies and equipment.

Develop an Equestrian Use Plan for Acadia National Park

Wildwood Stable is the logical focal point for all equestrian use of the carriage roads—private as well as commercial. In developing this *Commercial Services Plan*, the NPS received many comments from local equestrians who suggested methods to improve services for people bringing horses for private use at Wildwood Stable. Because of the complexity of the issues raised by local equestrians, private use of Wildwood will be addressed as part of an equestrian use plan for Acadia National Park. Until the Equestrian Use Plan is developed, camping with horses and other operations will be allowed to continue under existing rules and regulations.

Convert Shops at Cadillac Mountain and Thunder Hole to Information Centers With Small Sales Areas to Serve Park Visitors

The shops at Cadillac Mountain and Thunder Hole will be converted into information centers to better orient visitors, enhance their understanding about Acadia National Park resources, and instill a sense of appreciation and stewardship of the park. These information centers will use existing structures, with modest rehabilitations, as needed. They will be small in scope, and will be landscaped appropriately to fit the natural setting.

These facilities will not be attractions in and of themselves. They will serve all visitors, particularly those arriving by bus. Here, visitors may talk to park rangers, although the information centers will primarily be staffed by concession employees.

The Cadillac Mountain and Thunder Hole information centers will also provide visitors with an opportunity to buy appropriate items to enhance their visit. Taking up less than one-half of the existing area in each facility, sales will be limited to educational materials that are directly related to park interpretive themes, essential items that can enhance the comfort and safety of visitors, and a limited number of convenience items to serve visitor needs while in the park, such as film, snacks and beverages.

Provide Park Information, As Well As Thematic Sales, at the Jordan Pond House

The shop at the Jordan Pond House will be reconfigured to provide orientation and accurate information to park visitors, as well as an opportunity to purchase items directly related to park themes. At least twenty percent of the existing sales space at the gift shop will be reallocated for visitor orientation and information and will be staffed by the concessioner. Sales items will include items such as those offered at Cadillac and Thunder Hole information centers and may also include items directly related to park interpretive themes for gifts. Arts and crafts related to Acadia's themes and made by Maine people, including items crafted by Native Americans from tribes in Maine, may also be offered for sale.

Develop and Implement Site Management Plans for the Cadillac Summit, Jordan Pond House, and Thunder Hole Areas

The areas surrounding commercial facilities at the southern end of Jordan Pond, the summit of Cadillac Mountain, and the Thunder Hole shoreline feature outstanding natural, cultural, and scenic resources and, because of their easy accessibility, provide an unique opportunity to introduce visitors to special habitats and views. Visitors to these areas should leave with an understanding of, and reverence for, these special places.

Park staff, in cooperation with concessioners using these areas, will prepare and implement site plans to reduce resource impacts and congestion, and better meet park resource and visitor experience goals.

Manage Isle au Haut Ferry Service

The passenger ferry service that operates from Stonington to Duck Harbor on Isle au Haut in spring, summer, and fall will be managed either as a concession operation or through a commercial use authorization.

Other commercial operations will continue to be excluded from the Isle au Haut section of Acadia National Park.

Use Concession-Operated Bus Tours to Minimize Traffic Congestion, Enhance Visitor Experiences, and Protect Park Resources

Concession-operated bus tours and other commercial operations will be managed in

Like other concession operations, bus tours are an extension of the NPS. Visitors using concession-operated bus tours may have higher expectations than those on other tours; they may expect and should receive a more thorough interpretation of park resources, and concessions operations should meet the highest standards of education, visitor protection, and public service.

In keeping with tradition, up to two concessioners will offer bus tours to provide an opportunity for visitors to experience the park in a safe and leisurely manner without the distractions of driving, while receiving a high quality interpretation and orientation of Acadia National Park focused on the park's mission and resources.

A long term goal will be to provide concession-operated bus tours only on clean, fuel-efficient vehicles that are of a size that is in scale with park roads. Because it would pose too great a financial burden on potential operators to require this immediately, concession-operated bus tours will be required to convert at least one-half of their fleet to smaller, clean fuel burning vehicles that are handicapped accessible by the year 2005. These vehicles will reduce air and noise pollution in the park, will be able to negotiate tight turns on the Cadillac Mountain Road, will take less parking space, and by discharging fewer visitors at a time, will reduce crowding and congestion of park facilities. The remainder of the bus fleet will be converted to smaller, clean fuel burning vehicles by 2010.

tandem with the Mount Desert Island transportation system to help meet park

goals. This may involve increasing concession-operated bus tour service to Cadillac Mountain and other sites along the Park Loop Road, spacing tours throughout the day, and eventually providing tour service to cruise ship passengers and visitors arriving by public transportation.

Manage Motor Coach Tours to Protect Visitor Safety and Park Resources

Motor coach tours provide access to Acadia National Park while reducing traffic congestion and other effects on park resources. Motor coach tours will be issued commercial use authorizations as long as companies can demonstrate that they meet safety, insurance, and other basic requirements, and pay required fees.

Motor coaches will be managed to protect park resources, minimize air pollution, alleviate traffic congestion, and prevent “waves” of visitors off loading buses from over-whelming park facilities. Bus idling regulations will be strictly enforced to reduce noise and air pollution.

Manage Motor Coach Tours and Other Bus Use to Prevent Crowding, Congestion, and Visitor Conflicts

Motor coach and bus tours are expected to increase substantially in the next five to ten years. Initially, the park will use passive methods of managing the levels of motor coach and other non-concession bus use by developing and enforcing bus parking carrying capacities for popular stops along the Park Loop Road, educating bus operators with regard to crowding and congestion problems, encouraging bus operators to voluntarily space tours to

minimize problems, and investigating alternative methods of managing buses spatially and temporally. If park goals cannot be met using passive management methods, a more active management system will be developed and implemented, which may involve a reservation system. Implementing a reservation or other management system will incorporate at least a two year lead time to allow the motor coach industry to adjust their operations. Costs associated with a reservation system will be paid for directly by motor coach operators using the park commercially; or, indirectly through entrance fees collected from motor coach users.

Issue Commercial Use Authorizations (formerly Incidental Business Permits) to Businesses That Directly Enhance Park Goals

Commercial activities that originate and terminate outside the park will be evaluated using the commercial services evaluation process outlined in Appendix A. Those activities that directly enhance park goals will be issued commercial use authorizations. Such activities have historically included technical rock climbing instruction, tours interpreting the park’s natural and cultural heritage, and tours featuring recreation such as bicycling, hiking, camping, and boating. These activities will continue to be allowed, although the number of operators authorized may be limited, and restrictions will be placed in all authorizations to protect park resources and quality visitor experiences.

The National Park Service may exclude commercial operations in particular areas of the park to protect park resources and/or ensure high quality visitor experiences. For example, commercial uses may be prohibited from portions of the park lying on the Schoodic Peninsula and the western side of Mount Desert Island in accordance with the *General Management Plan*, to preserve opportunities for low density recreation and solitude.

Enhance Educational Opportunities and the Quality of Interpretation on Commercial Tours

Through high quality interpretation, visitors using tour services at Acadia National Park will have an opportunity to leave the area with a better appreciation for the park's rich natural and cultural history.

The NPS will make available educational materials to park-authorized tour operators to enhance the accuracy of information provided to tour participants. All tours will inform visitors about resource issues, and visitors will have an understanding of appropriate behavior when outside their vehicles.

Encourage the Use of Step-on Guides

One National Park Service goal is to make available accurate, professionally delivered information to visitors. Step-on guides will be important partners in helping us achieve this goal. The NPS will promote the use of step-on guides by motor coach and non-commercial groups. Acadia National Park staff will continue to offer voluntary training to step-on guides, and will begin to monitor tours provided by NPS authorized

step-on guides. Monitoring and training costs will be paid by guides as part of the cost of doing business in the park. If the accuracy of information and/or quality of presentations by step-on guides does not meet NPS professional standards, a certification program will be implemented. To become certified, step-on guides would be required to demonstrate their knowledge of park-specific natural and cultural history, safety, and resource protection information, as well as deliver information in a professional manner. They would also be required to attend training as a condition of being permitted.

Ensure All Commercial Park Uses are Authorized

Park rangers will contact commercial operators encountered in the park to ensure that they are authorized by the NPS and are operating according to the terms and conditions of their contracts and authorizations. Businesses operating in the park without authorization may lose the privilege to operate within the park and may be subject to appropriate legal action.

Measure Commercial Use of Acadia National Park

Park staff will immediately review records provided by authorized commercial users to determine the numbers of visitors being served, and, where possible, the amount of commercial versus non-commercial use of park facilities such as group camping sites in park campgrounds. In the future, these figures will be tracked annually. All commercial users will be required to report use figures in annual reports to the park. Failure to provide accurate and timely use

THE PLAN

figures and other requested information will lead to the revocation of a business's ***Manage Levels of Commercial Use to Protect Resources and High-Quality Visitor Experiences***

Decisions related to the amount of commercial use allowed in Acadia National Park in the next five to ten years will be based the best available quantitative scientific information, and professional judgment of managers. Commercial uses will not be allowed to degrade resources and must be compatible with non-commercial use of the park. Concession operations and commercial operators holding CUAs will be scrutinized by park staff to assure that the numbers of visitors being served is compatible with park goals and objectives. The number of commercial use authorizations for a specific activity will be limited, and operational limitations such as group size and seasonal restrictions will be established through an analysis of each activity. New applications for CUAs for existing activities will be evaluated using written criteria and authorized only when use levels are anticipated to be compatible with NPS goals. Applications for new activities will be systematically evaluated. They generally will not be authorized. Exceptions might, however, be made where their clear benefits are demonstrated. Conditions will be included in permits to protect visitor safety and experiences, and natural and cultural resources. Concessioner use of park facilities will continue to be established by assignments in contracts. Cumulative effects of all commercial services will be considered, and commercial services will be analyzed yearly and appropriate adjustments made in subsequent contracts and authorizations.

commercial use authorization.

Provide Accurate Information to Improve Interpretation to Visitors Using Commercial Services

Concessioners and commercial operators will receive accurate and complete NPS information packets. They will be encouraged to provide such information professionally.

Manage Commercial Use of Park Facilities to Meet Park Goals

Park staff will manage facilities such as group camping sites, parking areas, climbing areas and roads so that commercial uses are in balance with and do not dominate non-commercial use of these areas.

Manage Commercial Uses In An Efficient and Timely Manner

The National Park Service at Acadia will strive to manage commercial uses in the park efficiently and will respond to requests for commercial use of the park in a timely manner. Management of commercial uses includes evaluating applications, issuing permits, recovering costs, monitoring activities, and ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations, as well as contracts and authorizations.

Allocate Sufficient NPS Staff to Manage Commercial Services to Protect Resources and Quality Visitor Experiences

Additional NPS staff will be hired to better monitor compliance with regulations, the amount and quality of commercial service in the park, provide enhanced information to commercial service providers, and manage ever increasing commercial use.

Recover NPS Costs for Administering and Monitoring Commercial Uses

Fees associated with each commercial use authorization will recover the cost of administering each application and monitoring those businesses. Motor coach operators are governed by separate NPS policies. NPS costs for managing motor coaches will be offset from entrance fees. The NPS will consider methods to recover costs proportional to each business's

commercial use of the park. Payment of all appropriate fees, including entrance fees, will be required for commercial operations within Acadia National Park.

Recover Costs of Improvements to Park Facilities Used By Concessions

Franchise and building use fees will contribute to the cost of improvements to Wildwood Stables and Jordan Pond House, as directed by the *General Management Plan*.

Updates to the Commercial Services Plan

Updates to the *Commercial Services Plan*, including changes to the evaluation criteria, will be made by the National Park Service as circumstances require.

OTHER COMMERCIAL SERVICES

EDUCATIONAL GROUPS

National Park Service regulations implementing new laws pertaining to commercial uses within the National Park System have not yet been promulgated at the time of writing this Acadia National Park Commercial Services Plan. Until regulations have been established, the following policies will be applied to educational groups visiting Acadia National Park.

Organizations offering classes to students enrolled in an accredited educational program will not be considered a commercial activity and therefore will not need a Commercial Use Authorization to operate in the park. These institutions will, however, be required to have a special use permit that authorizes their educational programs in the park. Organizations offering educational programs in the park that are not part of an accredited program will be considered a commercial activity and will be required to obtain a Commercial Use Authorization.

NOT COVERED BY THIS PLAN

The following commercial services or events will not be addressed in this plan.

Not-for-Profit Operations — Robert Abbe Museum of Stone Age Antiquities has complemented and supported the NPS mission at Acadia National Park since the museum's inception in 1927. The museum helps to manage and preserve cultural resources and helps to interpret the early history of Mount Desert Island and its environs. The Abbe Museum operates as an

independent trailside museum at Sieur de Monts Spring under the conditions of a deed transferring the property to the National Park Service and is allowed to operate a museum gift shop under that deed.

Cooperating Association — Eastern National supports national parks and other public trusts from Maine to the Caribbean through sales of educational literature and other items. Since 1960 Eastern National has operated at Acadia National Park through a cooperating association agreement with the National Park Service. NPS-approved publications, maps, videos, and theme-related merchandise are offered at seven sales outlets throughout the park.

Commercial Filming — There are 15-20 requests each year to conduct commercial filming in the park. These requests are reviewed and evaluated individually to determine appropriateness, and are managed according to NPS regulations and policy.

Special Use Permits — Special use permits have been issued at Acadia for fundraising events, educational activities, weddings, and other special events such as the American Driving Society's use of Wildwood Stables and the carriage roads.

Bio-Prospecting — The acquisition of biological material for genetic engineering by private scientific and/or commercial interests has become an issue in other areas administered by the National Park Service, but has not been of concern here. National Park Service policies will be followed if the need arises.

APPENDIX A: COMMERCIAL SERVICES EVALUATION

EVALUATION PROCESS

This section of the *Commercial Services Plan* identifies the four procedural steps that the National Park Service at Acadia National Park will use in thoroughly reviewing and analyzing prospective commercial activities and proposals. Requests will come from individuals and organizations who want an authorization to use the park in a commercial manner. These procedures are designed to provide a consistent and fair evaluation of all requests. Primary in this evaluation process is the focus on effects the proposed activities will have on park resources and non-commercial visitor activities.

The four steps in the evaluation process are:

Initial Screening — A cursory review by park managers will take place upon receipt of any proposed commercial use. This review will determine if the application is complete. A copy of the most recent *Commercial Services Plan*, an application form, and associated documents will be sent to the applicant if necessary.

Application Evaluation — After the application and permit documents and required application fees are returned, the multi-disciplinary evaluation process will begin. The application will be evaluated using a form similar to the sample presented in figure A-1. Following the sample form is a point-by-point explanatory breakdown of the various sections of the form so that the reader or evaluation panel can interpret its intent.

Decision — Upon evaluation of the completed application and supporting documents, a decision will be made as to whether or not to authorize the activity. The decision to approve or reject a proposal will be based on the evaluation process, and the final determination will be made by the park superintendent. If required, costs for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will be borne by the applicant.

Applicant Notification —

Commercial Use Authorizations:

An acceptance letter and completed commercial use authorization will be sent to successful applicants for signature along with a bill for any appropriate fees. The application process will be completed when the applicant returns the signed permit, shows proof of liability insurance, and pays the fees.

Applicants denied permits will receive written notification. Such responses will identify specific reasons for the denial.

Concessions Contracts:

Concession contracts will be issued for commercial activities that are determined to be necessary and appropriate. Concessioners serve as agents of the National Park Service. Concession contracts are only issued in accord with NPS regulations and policies, and they are subject to a competitive bidding process.

Timing — In order to meet insurance, annual reporting, and reapplication requirements, the following time lines are suggested:

APPENDIX A

New and Renewal Applications:

Application, insurance certificate meeting indemnification requirements, and payment of application and administration fee, if applicable, must reach park headquarters no later than 30 business days prior to the beginning of operations.

Required annual reports: Annual reports must be received at park headquarters no later than 60 days after the end of the calendar year in which commercial operations are conducted. Specifically, no later than March 1st.

**FIGURE A-1. SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM
COMMERCIAL SERVICES EVALUATION RATING FORM**

Type of Service _____

Name of Applicant _____ Date _____

CRITERIA	EVALUATION	COMMENTS
LEGAL / POLICY ISSUES		
Land use zoning		
Violation of law or policy		
Park mission		
Concession contract		
VISITOR USE / EXPERIENCE ISSUES		
Public safety		
Education		
Crowding / congestion / conflicts		
RESOURCE ISSUES		
Cultural resources		
Natural resources		
Aesthetic resources		
MANAGEMENT ISSUES		
Land requirements		
Staffing needs		
Management plans		
Support facilities / services		
OTHER ISSUES		
Effects on neighbors		
New activities		
Effects		

APPENDIX A

Recommendation		Additional Comments and Recommendations
Approved		
Disapproved		
Resubmit		
NEPA		
Other issues		

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All current and proposed commercial activities at Acadia National Park will be evaluated to determine if they are appropriate. Individual applications to provide commercial services will be evaluated to identify conditions or stipulations to be added to a contract or commercial use authorization. An evaluation form will be used to ensure a consistent review of all activities and applications. The criteria used in the evaluation will include legal, recreation, resource, management, and other components. These criteria will be derived from the preceding discussion of park purpose, significance, and desired future conditions. The evaluation will also be used to identify which type of authorization will be appropriate for new commercial use proposals.

Legal / Policy Mandates

Federal, state, and local laws, rules, codes, and regulations will be reviewed to determine if the activity will comply with law and NPS policies related to that activity. Any violation or conflict with a law or regulation will result in rejection of the proposal or application.

The regulations, guidelines, and laws used to evaluate new proposals for compliance with concessions policies will include but not be limited to:

- CFR 36 - §2.22, Property
- CFR 36 - §2.52, Sale or Distribution of Printed Material
- CFR 36 - §2.61, Residing on Federal Lands
- CFR 36 - Part 5, Commercial and Private Operations

CFR 36 - Part 51, Concessions Contracts and Permits

U.S. Public Health Service, FDA Food Code, 1993

NPS-48 *Concessions Guideline*

NPS-50 *Loss Control Management Program Guideline*

NPS-53 *Special Park Use*

SD-95-10 Commercial use authorization

Acadia *General Management Plan*

Acadia National Park *Compendium*

Various Acadia management plans

•Land Use Zoning

The *General Management Plan* divided the park into four land use zones. A description of each is in figure 2. Each of these zones has criteria and guidelines that define the land use activities allowed. These guidelines are used to determine if a proposed action is consistent with authorized uses in the zone, if it will be consistent with development constraints, and if it will complement the management strategy for the particular zone(s) involved. A map of management zoning within Acadia National Park is located on page 53 of the *General Management Plan*.

Rights-of-way and special use permits are all land assignments that authorize various uses of public land. It is NPS policy that rights-of-way across land administered by the National Park Service may be issued only pursuant to specific statutory authority and only if there is no practical alternative to such use. The proposed activity will be reviewed to ensure that it will not conflict with legislation or park values.

FIGURE A-2: LAND USE ZONES / SUBZONES AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES^b

ZONE/SUBZONE	MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
Natural zone	Manage land and water to conserve and protect natural resources and ecological processes and provide for their use and enjoyment by the public.
Natural environment subzone	Conserve natural resources and provide environmentally compatible interpretive and recreational activities in ways that do not adversely affect those resources and processes.
Protected natural area subzone	Perpetuate geological or ecological values with minimal or no human intrusion. This land and water were set aside for strict protection because of unusual fragility or ecological significance.
Cultural zone	Manage areas to preserve, protect, and interpret cultural resources and their settings and for their use and enjoyment by the public.
Preservation subzone	Preserve and interpret historic sites, structures, ethnographic resources, objects, and landscapes that are important because of their aesthetic value or their association with persons, events, or periods in human history and that merit full communication of these values to the public.
Preservation / adaptive use subzone	Use, with necessary modifications, historically significant structures for leases, public activities, or administrative activities and functions that perpetuate the characteristics that qualify these resources for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
Developed zone	Manage land to provide and maintain facilities for educational and interpretive services; for recreational opportunities, such as campgrounds; for other visitor services, such as restaurants; for administration and maintenance of park resources; and for vehicle circulation in the park.
Special use zone	This zone includes lands and waters inside the legislated boundary where uses are carried out by other government agencies or private interests. NPS administrative control over the use of land in this zone is either lacking or secondary to that of another party.
Roads and utilities subzone	This zone provides transportation and utility service to areas primarily outside the park.
Inholdings subzone	Private inholdings will be acquired as they become available.

^b A map delineating the location of these management zones can be found on page 53 in the park's *General Management Plan*.

•Park Mission

If a proposed activity is in conflict with the stated mission of the park as outlined in the *General Management Plan* and other documents it will not be authorized until changes are made to mitigate the conflict. The mission as stated in the 1997 *Strategic Management Plan* is:

The National Park Service at Acadia National Park protects and conserves outstanding scenic, natural, and cultural resources for present and future generations. These resources include a glaciated coastal and island landscape, biological diversity, clean air and water, and a rich cultural heritage. Acadia National Park also offers opportunities for high-quality nonconsumptive recreation, education, and scientific research.

•Concession Contracts

The evaluation will be used to identify proposals that may conflict with an authorized service already being provided by a concessioner under a concession contract.

Visitor Use / Experience

These criteria help with the measurement of impacts on the visitor experience and ensure compliance with NPS goals and objectives for suitable visitor activities.

•Public Safety

Promoting safety is a very high priority, and all proposals should incorporate safety measures to assure safe visitor experiences.

•Education

Education is a high priority. CUA proposals and concession bids should address the educational activities the operator is proposing to provide. Staff training, to

assure quality educational services, will be required.

•Crowding / Congestion / Conflict

Some locations and activities in Acadia are extremely popular. Some use is commercial, and it is probable that conflicts among users and localized crowding and congestion will occur. This detracts from visitor experiences and increase impacts on associated resources. When crowding, congestion, or conflicts occur, use limits will be established to protect both visitor experiences and park resources. Authorizations of new commercial activities may be denied to prevent crowding, congestion, and conflicts among visitors.

Resources

•Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are defined as the remains of past human activity (NPS-28). The presence of numerous cultural resources lends significance to Acadia National Park and its management for the public trust. There are cultural resources in all of the designated zones; therefore, all proposed commercial activities will be evaluated for potential impacts on these fragile, nonrenewable resources.

•Natural Resources

Current vegetation surveys will be consulted, or a survey will be conducted as part of any proposal review when needed. The information will assist in the determination of potential effects of the proposed activity on vegetation. Plant community characteristics will be reviewed to determine compatibility with the proposed use(s) and to ascertain the vegetation type, its health, and its potential to sustain use.

•Aesthetic Resources

Impacts on aesthetic resources can have a significant impact on the experiences of commercial clients and other visitors. Such resources include quiet, solitude, scenery, space, a sense of history, sounds of nature, and clear night skies. Commercial activity requests will be evaluated for impacts on aesthetic resources. If such impacts appear likely, the proposal will be adjusted to mitigate those impacts or not approved.

Management Issues

The NPS has responsibility for assuring commercial services are of high quality and appropriate to the park area. Because of this responsibility, commercial activities of all types require National Park Service oversight. Time and effort are required to issue various authorizations, monitor activities for compliance with permit restrictions, collect fees, assign and maintain support facilities, etc. These management activities require the attention and commitment of park staff; the expense of these activities will be borne by commercial operators.

•Land Requirements

Facilities, including all developments, are not dedicated by commercial use authorizations. They are, however, typically authorized for exclusive use by concession contracts and special use permits. If facilities are needed for the business to operate, a determination will be made about which type of concessions authorization will be applicable. Final approval will depend on an assessment of benefits to the park and appropriateness of the proposed activity.

•Staffing Needs

The process of monitoring individual commercial use authorizations and concession contracts will be examined to determine NPS staff requirements. The amount of staff time required is often dictated by the complexity of the operation.

To assess the amount of staff time for processing an application, the approval/rejection and evaluation process, and subsequent authorization and monitoring requirements, the following definitions of complexity will apply:

1. High — Successful monitoring of the activity will include administrative review annually, and compliance and onsite contact with the operation on a biweekly to monthly basis.
2. Medium — Successful monitoring will include administrative, compliance, and onsite contact on a monthly to quarterly basis.
3. Low — Successful monitoring will include administrative review annually, and compliance and onsite contact with the operation on a quarterly to annual basis.

•Management Plans

Land management plans will be reviewed to assist in the determination of whether an operation will be allowed in a particular area and under what conditions. Examples of such plans include the *General Management Plan*, development concept plans, the *Strategic Plan*, resource management plans, carrying capacity studies, and other plans or studies.

•Support Facilities / Services

Many commercial activities require support facilities and/or services, such as parking spaces, restrooms, changing rooms, and picnic areas, to be provided by the National Park Service. Such support activities have an impact on park budgets, staff, and facilities. When the demand for commercial services exceeds the supply of support facilities and services, the proposed commercial activity might be modified or denied.

Other Issues

Local situations and conditions that are not anticipated will be identified on a case-by-case basis. A brief definition of the situation will be written and attached to the evaluation form as necessary. Among issues to be considered:

•Effects on Neighbors

The National Park Service will accomplish its mission at Acadia partly through partnerships with neighboring communities, agencies, organizations, and individuals. Activities and proposals will be evaluated not only for their effects on the park but for effects on neighbors, especially when issues are the subject of cooperative arrangements.

•New Activities

Proposals for activities not currently available at Acadia could create new and different effects on resources and visitor experiences. New activities will be critically evaluated. New uses generally will not be permitted.

•Cumulative Effects

Activities and proposals will be evaluated to determine if they could contribute to adverse effects when added to other commercial services in the region.

**ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
COMMERCIAL SERVICES EVALUATION RATING FORM**

Type of Service TOURS / OUTFITTING: Climbing

Name of Applicant _____ Date _____

CRITERIA	EVALUATION	COMMENTS
LEGAL / POLICY ISSUES		
Land use zoning		Cliffs in natural zones-high level of natural resource protection mandated; climbing allowed with restrictions. No commercial activity at Isle au Haut or Schoodic.
Violation of law/policy		Must comply with climbing management plan.
Park mission		Consistent with traditional, nonconsumptive recreational use.
Concession contracts		No existing concessions contract.
VISITOR USE / EXPERIENCE ISSUES		
Public safety		Potential high-risk activity; ensure quality of leaders and proper safety equipment.
Education		Opportunity for enhanced education, re: resources, low impact techniques. Might require orientation/education of group leaders.
Crowding / congestion / conflicts		Group reservations at Otter cliffs in summer required; potential in other locations for crowding/congestion/conflicts with others to develop.
RESOURCE ISSUES		
Cultural resources		Restrictions based on climbing management plan; no climbing on structures.
Natural resources		Potential for social trails; potential impacts on threatened and endangered species, vegetation, integrity of rock, etc.; see climbing management plan.
Aesthetic resources		Group size limits; potential visual impacts, noise; fixed protection on certain cliffs with approval.
MANAGEMENT ISSUES		
Land requirements		None
Staffing needs		High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring \$ _____; administration \$ _____
Management plans		Must comply with climbing management plan, GMP, Isle au Haut DCP, statement for management, strategic plan, peregrine falcon / bald eagle plans.
Support facilities /		

services		Parking, restrooms, trails, fixed anchors on cliffs.
OTHER ISSUES		
Effects on neighbors		Negligible
New activities		No
Cumulative effects		Potential

Approved		
Disapproved		
Resubmit		
NEPA		
Other issues		

Superintendent _____ Date _____

**ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
COMMERCIAL SERVICES EVALUATION RATING FORM**

Type of Service HIKING TOURS/ BIKING TOURS*

Name of Applicant _____ Date _____

CRITERIA	EVALUATION	COMMENTS
LEGAL / POLICY ISSUES		
Land use zoning		No commercial tours on Isle au Haut, Schoodic, offshore islands or areas designated by the 1992 GMP for low-density recreation (including the west side of MDI).
Violation of law/policy		Must comply with CFR. Bicyclers must observe traffic regulations, not allowed on trails. No off-trail hiking.
Park mission		Consistent with traditional, nonconsumptive recreational use.
Concession contracts		No existing concessions contracts.
VISITOR USE / EXPERIENCE ISSUES		
Public safety		Most accidents in park involve hikers and bikers. Proposals should demonstrate actions to promote safety and prevent participants from becoming lost.
Education		Opportunity for enhanced education about resources, leave-no-trace. Might require education/orientation of group leaders.
Crowding / congestion / conflicts		Must comply with group size limits, hiking and biking etiquette. Possible restrictions on area of carriage road use based on carriage road management zones and destinations.
RESOURCE ISSUES		
Cultural resources		Proposal must demonstrate actions to protect roads, trails, and other cultural resources.
Natural resources		Potential impacts on rare species, special habitats. Proposals must demonstrate application of leave-no-trace principles. Increasing use may require closures, scheduling, and other management to protect natural resources.
Aesthetic resources		Group size limits; proposals should demonstrate actions to reduce noise, crowding. Activity may be regulated by NPS, especially scheduling and areas of use.
MANAGEMENT ISSUES		
Land requirements		None
Staffing needs		High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring \$ _____; administration \$ _____
Management plans		Must comply with GMP, strategic plan, statement for management, bald eagle / peregrine falcon management plans, resource management plan, transportation plan.
Support facilities/services		Camping space not ensured. Requires parking, restrooms, trails, roads, bike racks, information services, concessions, trash

		removal.
OTHER ISSUES		
Effects on neighbors		Possible effects on neighbors near trailheads (Giant Slide Trail). Proposal should address actions to reduce effects on local traffic.
New activities		No
Cumulative effects		Potential

*Bicycle tours include bicyclists who rent bikes and arrive in the park as a group or who are part of an organized group.

Recommendation		Additional Comments and Recommendations
Approved		
Disapproved		
Resubmit		
NEPA		
Other issues		

Superintendent _____ Date _____

**ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
Commercial Services Evaluation Rating Form**

Type of Service KAYAKING

Name of Applicant _____ Date _____

CRITERIA	EVALUATION	COMMENTS
LEGAL/POLICY ISSUES		
Land use zoning		No commercial tours on Isle au Haut. Restrictions may be required to protect low-density recreational opportunities, natural and cultural resources.
Violation of law/policy		Must comply with area closures, state and federal laws, regulations.
Park mission		Consistent
Concession contracts		No existing concessions contract.
VISITOR USE / EXPERIENCE ISSUES		
Public safety		Must comply with state and federal regulations and demonstrate actions to promote safety. Must maintain adequate leader / participant ratios to ensure safety.
Education		Opportunity for enhanced education about resources, leave-no-trace. Might require education/orientation of group leaders.
Crowding / congestion / conflicts		Potential negative effects at boat launches, parking areas, and islands. Group size limits and possible restrictions on island use.
RESOURCE ISSUES		
Cultural resources		Potential positive and negative effects on archeological resources, historic buildings. Mitigation should be addressed.
Natural resources		Potential impacts on rare species, special habitats. Proposals must demonstrate application of leave-no-trace principles. Increased use may require closures, scheduling, etc.
Aesthetic resources		Group size limits; proposals should demonstrate actions to reduce noise, crowding. Activity may be regulated by NPS, especially scheduling and areas of use.
MANAGEMENT ISSUES		
Land requirements		None
Staffing needs		High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring \$ _____; administration \$ _____
Management plans		Must comply with GMP, strategic plan, statement for management, bald eagle/peregrine falcon management plans, resource management plan.

Support facilities/services	Activity requires parking, restrooms, boat launches, trash removal.
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OTHER ISSUES		
Effects on neighbors		Potential impacts on conservation easement holders on Long island, other neighbors on islands, town landings, town parking.
New activities		No
Cumulative effects		Potential

Recommendation		Additional Comments and Recommendations
Approved		
Disapproved		
Resubmit		
NEPA		
Other issues		

Superintendent _____ Date _____

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
Commercial Services Evaluation Rating Form

Type of Service MOTORCOACH TOURS

Name of Applicant _____ Date _____

CRITERIA	EVALUATION	COMMENTS
LEGAL / POLICY ISSUES		
Land use zoning		Appropriate on most paved roads and Carroll Farm Road; prohibited on all other gravel roads and some entrance roads.
Violation of law/policy		Operators must meet Federal Highway Administration and Maine Motor Vehicle Administration requirements.
Park mission		Consistent with park mission.
Concession contracts		No existing concessions contract.
VISITOR USE / EXPERIENCE ISSUES		
Public safety		Proposal should demonstrate licensing and qualifications of drivers and show possession of safe equipment. Operators required to report all accidents. Concern for safe loading/unloading.
Education		Opportunity for enhanced education. Might require education / orientation of group leaders.
Crowding / congestion / conflicts		Potential, especially in autumn and summer. Use may be managed to reduce crowding, congestion, and conflicts with other visitors.
RESOURCE ISSUES		
Cultural resources		Drivers must observe bridge height restrictions. No stopping in front of carriage road gatehouses.
Natural resources		No idling of vehicles will be permitted. Vehicles must stay on paved surfaces. All trash must be carried out.
Aesthetic resources		Potential for noise, visual effects. Parking only in designated areas.
MANAGEMENT ISSUES		
Land requirements		None
Staffing needs		Fees waived per NPS policy
Management plans		Must comply with GMP, strategic plan, statement for management, bald eagle/peregrine falcon management plans, resource management plan, transportation plan.
Support facilities/services		Roads, parking, restrooms, concessions, visitor center, brochures,

		trash removal.
OTHER ISSUES		
Effects on neighbors		Potential effects on neighbors along park entrances. Entry at designated entrances only. Potential effects related to staging areas outside park.
New activities		No
Cumulative effects		Potential

Recommendation		Additional Comments and Recommendations
Approved		
Disapproved		
Resubmit		
NEPA		
Other issues		

Superintendent _____ Date _____

**ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
Commercial Services Evaluation Rating Form**

Type of Service NATURAL/CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDY; ART/PHOTOGRAPHY STUDY

Name of Applicant _____ Date _____

CRITERIA	EVALUATION	COMMENTS
LEGAL / POLICY ISSUES		
Land use zoning		Commercial activity on Isle au Haut prohibited. Appropriate in other areas.
Violation of law/policy		Operators must comply with state and federal laws and regulations, including CFR and traffic regulations.
Park mission		Consistent
Concession contracts		None
VISITOR USE / EXPERIENCE ISSUES		
Public safety		Proposal should demonstrate licensing and qualifications of drivers, safe vehicles and equipment, and measures to ensure safety of participants.
Education		Opportunity for enhanced education. Proposal should demonstrate leaders' knowledge, skills, and abilities of principles of Leave No Trace, park themes, resources.
Crowding / congestion / conflicts		Potential effects. Mitigation may be necessary to reduce crowding, congestion, and conflicts with other visitors.
RESOURCE ISSUES		
Cultural resources		Potential positive and negative impacts on cultural resources. Proposal should demonstrate actions to preserve and protect resources. No collecting.
Natural resources		Potential impacts on rare species and sensitive habitats. Closures may be applied to protect wetlands, summits, and other resources. No collecting or disturbing natural objects.
Aesthetic resources		Potential effects. Group size limits, time and area restrictions.
MANAGEMENT ISSUES		
Land requirements		None
Staffing needs		High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring \$ _____; administration \$ _____
Management plans		Must comply with GMP, strategic plan, statement for management, bald eagle/peregrine falcon management plans, resource management plan, transportation plan.
		Restrooms, parking, roads, trails, park liaison for

Support facilities/services		education/training, trash removal, brochures.
OTHER ISSUES		
Effects on neighbors		None anticipated.
New activities		No
Cumulative effects		Potential

Recommendation		Additional Comments and Recommendations
Approved		
Disapproved		
Resubmit		
NEPA		
Other issues		

Superintendent _____ Date _____

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PREPARERS

Name	Position	Contribution
Pauline Blanchard	Program Assistant Acadia National Park	Planning team member
Len Bobinchock	Deputy Superintendent Acadia National Park	Planning team member
David Buccello	Chief of Visitor Protection Acadia National Park	Planning team member
Judith Hazen Connery	Biologist Acadia National Park	Planning team member, writer/editor
Terry Goodrich	Planner Concessions Program	Planning facilitator, writer
Paul Haertel	Superintendent Acadia National Park	Planning team member
Michael Healy	Administrative Officer Concessions Program Manager Acadia National Park	Planning team member
Charles Jacobi	Natural Resource Specialist Acadia National Park	Planning team member
Bruce Jacobson	Former Chief of Planning Acadia National Park	Planning facilitator, editor
David Manski	Chief of Resource Management Acadia National Park	Planning team member
Jerry Swofford	Lead Concessions Specialist North Atlantic Region	Planning team member
Barclay Trimble	Accountant Concessions Program Center	Financial Analyst
Jim Vekasi	Chief of Maintenance Acadia National Park	Planning team member
Deb Wade	Chief of Interpretation Acadia National Park	Planning team member
Bruce Wadlington	Manager Concessions Program Center	Planning team member, technical advisor

APPENDIX A

Appendix A: Commercial Services Evaluation

APPENDIX A

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

Appendix A: Commercial Services Evaluation

APPENDIX A

United States Department of the Interior ● National Park Service