

The next meeting of the SPSG will be April 24 (1:30 - 6:30) and April 25 (8 - 4).

The meeting on the 24th will be informational and open to the public. The meeting will include the following topics:

- An examination of the costs of full forecasting as defined in the Record of Decision and the actual itemized costs of those elements of avalanche hazard mitigation exercised during the winter season of 2007-2008, including, but not limited to, the weather station, the groomer and the use of a howitzer and a helicopter. Presentations will be made on:
 - Actual costs for 2006-2007 winter season
 - Actual costs for 2007-2008 winter season
 - Estimated costs for a season of full forecasting
 - Estimated costs for additions to current (2007-2008) program
 - Estimated costs for other potential avalanche management programs
- A consideration of a potential community education and communications plan; and
- An exploration of potential reasonable limits upon YNP's provision of avalanche hazard mitigation.

The meeting on the 25th is not open to the public. The primary agenda for the 25th is to reach agreement on the key question of how to keep Sylvan Pass open for winter use.

The Group was asked to reserve May 21 as a date for a potential future meeting (if needed), to be held in Cody.

Meeting Report, March 11, 2008, Crowne Plaza, Billings, MT

The Group reviewed and confirmed their desire to be guided by the Ground Rules.

The Group generated ideas for the agenda and then spent their time discussing:

- Two reports prepared by the National Park Service:
 - "Yellowstone National Park 2007-2008 Winter Summary (draft, March 10, 2008)," and
 - "Current Status-Sylvan Operations Winter 2007-2008 (through March 9)"
- The mission of Yellowstone National Park, and
- Whether or not there were things they wanted to say to each other but had not yet done that.

They then turned their attention to the core purpose of the Group: What are reasonable avalanche and access mitigation safety measures and cost to determine how to provide continued snowmobile and snowcoach motorized oversnow access to YNP through East Gate via Sylvan Pass in the winter use seasons beyond 2007-08?

In three small heterogeneous groups (representing the diversity of governments on the Study Group), they answered the question.

After hearing the answers of all of the groups, the three small groups were then asked to answer the following four questions:

1. What do the answers of all three groups have in common?
2. What could everyone agree with, even if all the groups do not have it in common?
3. What, if anything, can you not accept in the answers of the groups?
4. What one thing do you care most about?

The full Group then collectively identified what their answers have in common, what they could agree with in the answers to the questions, what they could not agree with, and what they care most about.

This work guided the Group in determining the agenda for the next meeting.

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