

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ISSUES

**GREAT
BASIN
NATIONAL
PARK**
NEVADA

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GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK
Baker, Nevada

INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service held a series of public involvement workshops in late July 1987 to gather information concerning the public's needs, desires, and expectations regarding the future of Great Basin National Park in Nevada. The five workshops were attended by a total of 93 people. Meetings were held at approximately 7:00 p.m. July 27 in Baker, Nevada, with 47 participants; July 28 in Ely, Nevada, with 16 participants; July 29 in Reno, Nevada, with 15 participants; July 30 in Las Vegas, Nevada, with 7 participants; and July 31 in Salt Lake City, Utah, with 8 participants.

The issues, problems, and concerns presented by the public in these workshops constitute an initial step in the preparation of a general management plan/environmental assessment for Great Basin National Park. The general management plan sets forth the basic management philosophy for a park and provides the strategies for addressing issues and achieving identified management objectives over a 5- to 10-year period. Two types of strategies are presented in the general management plan--those required to properly manage the park's resources, and those required to provide for appropriate visitor use and interpretation of the resources. Based on these strategies, programs, actions, and support facilities necessary for efficient park operation and visitor use are identified.

This public involvement issues document provides the public with comments made at all the workshops. The information contained here was taken directly from the comments made by individuals and groups at the workshops. Each person was asked to write his or her principal issue, problem, or concern regarding the park's future on a 3" x 5" index card. These comments provided the basis for workshop discussion groups led and recorded by members of the public. The information developed by one discussion group was summarized and shared generally with all participants on a large flip chart located at the front of the room. It was understood that a vote was not being taken as to how many present agreed or disagreed with a statement or idea; rather, ideas were being collected, with one person's idea being as valid as another's.

Individual comments are presented by issue and are not in any particular order of priority. Similar comments were consolidated. All comments are retained in National Park Service files. The "Overview" section which immediately follows summarizes the main ideas presented in the public involvement workshops. These public comments will be considered in the next step of the planning process--the preparation of an alternatives pamphlet to be made available for public review during the spring/summer of 1988.

OVERVIEW

FISHING AND FISH STOCKING

Many people expressed a concern that fishing and fish stocking should continue in the park. However, a few participants felt that fish stocking was inappropriate, if it were to compete with the establishment of native species.

RANCHING AND GRAZING

Most all regional and local participants wanted grazing to continue and were concerned that the NPS will attempt to eliminate grazing through overregulation. Several participants felt that grazing was inappropriate in a national park. Most everyone agreed that some corrective measures are needed to minimize park visitor/livestock conflicts and to keep livestock out of the developed campgrounds.

MINING

The opinions expressed about mining in the park focused on the extremes--those who wanted to see mining continued and those who wanted to see it prohibited.

WATER RIGHTS

Those individuals who have existing water rights were adamant about their desire to maintain them.

WILDERNESS

Discussions both pro and con were made regarding wilderness designation within the park.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Many local and regional participants were concerned that the legislated closure of the park to hunting will cause the deer population to increase, creating problems of overgrazing and competition with livestock both within the park boundary and on ranches immediately adjacent to the park.

Even though hunting is prohibited by the establishing legislation, some people suggested that hunting should be allowed in the park and used as a management tool to control deer herds. Others felt that hunting is not an appropriate activity within the park.

Most everyone agreed that threatened and endangered species should be preserved and protected, but there was no consensus on whether grazing conflicts with this preservation goal.

IMPACT OF PARK ON BAKER, NEVADA

A paramount concern expressed by local residents was that tourism will greatly increase the need for support services such as water, waste treatment, waste disposal, and housing in nearby towns. Many residents were concerned as to how local towns and communities would be affected by tourism and where they could get assistance to plan and implement actions to meet future demands.

Many residents from Baker expressed their interest in using a parcel of federal property in Baker (lands withdrawn by the U.S. Forest Service) for community purposes.

Several local participants wanted to see improvements in services, including search and rescue, law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency medical services.

Most local participants wanted to be allowed to collect firewood within the park boundary.

Both local and regional participants wanted the NPS to hire more local employees and award more contracts to local and regional firms.

Many local and regional people wanted the NPS to undertake an economic study to determine how the new park will impact local and regional communities.

PARK DEVELOPMENT

Most everyone agreed that development should be balanced carefully with need; no one wants to see the park overdeveloped. Following a very intense discussion, there was no clear consensus on whether all NPS development should be retained within the park or partially relocated outside the park boundary. Some expressed the need for a new visitor center with expanded concession facilities. Many participants felt that the park needed more campgrounds and that the existing campgrounds needed improvements such as potable water. There were also those who felt that any additional campground development should include full service campgrounds regardless of whether they are placed inside or outside the park boundary. There were also those that wanted the existing campgrounds to remain "just are they are now."

The issue of road access was discussed frequently, with some participants wanting improved road access to open more of the park to people. Some local residents wanted to continue to have four-wheel-drive vehicle access to backcountry roads in the park. Others wanted existing roads closed to restrict use to only specific areas of the park.

VISITOR USE AND INTERPRETATION

Most everyone agreed that interpretation should be expanded to include a broader range of theme topics represented by Great Basin National Park.

Many participants expressed concern that the NPS must develop more effective management strategies to solve problems associated with the cave tour situation. (More people arrive on holiday weekends than can be accommodated on cave tours). The same participants felt that visitors should not be denied the opportunity to experience Lehman Caves.

Several participants expressed the need to reduce visitation pressure to the cave and existing visitor center area by encouraging visitors to use other areas of the new park.

Most everyone favored the idea of offering off-season and winter recreation activities to attract tourists to the park on a year-round basis. Several favored cross-country skiing and the use of snowmobiles as long as they are properly regulated.

Many participants discussed the need to improve (prearrival) information so visitors would be better able to plan their trips to the park.

There were both pro and con statements made regarding all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use within the park. Several participants wanted to see regulated four-wheel-drive use in the park. Other participants requested that hang gliding be allowed.

Most everyone agreed that the trails and trailheads in the park need to be improved and expanded to provide a variety of experiences for the various publics that visit the park.

Bus concessions to Wheeler Peak, four-wheel-drive tours to Mt. Washington, campground concessions (inside and outside the park), and horseback concessions were all mentioned as ways to improve visitor services.

Most everyone agreed that representative portions of the park should be accessible to the handicapped.

PARK EXPANSION

The opinions on park expansion ranged from those who wanted no further expansion to those who preferred a massive expansion to take in all theme representation of the Great Basin, including basin lands at lower elevations. Some participants also voiced concern that they did not want to see the Forest Service land surrounding the park turned over to the NPS.

COMMUNICATIONS

A paramount concern was the limited public notice given the five public meetings. The participants indicated that the NPS had not adequately "gotten the word out." Most local and regional participants wanted to see more communication between locals and park management. The same concern was expressed that better communication be developed between the park, state, and county government.

Some members of the public wanted to see an advisory commission established. This commission would participate with the NPS, state, and county in both the management and planning of this new park.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Most everyone expressed a concern for the identification, preservation, and interpretation of cultural resources.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

If an issue that concerns you is not reflected in either the overview or the following tabulation of summary comments, please contact us; we welcome any additional thoughts you may have. We are continuing to collect information that will aid us in developing alternatives. We know there are many others who did not participate in the public meetings. Our mailing list will allow us to reach a few more people. If you have friends or know of organizations that you feel would like to provide comments and be on our mailing list, please have them contact the following person:

Mr. Ray Murray
National Park Service
Western Regional Office
450 Golden Gate Avenue, P.O. Box 36063
San Francisco, California 94102
Telephone (415) 556-6481

COMMENTS MADE BY THE PUBLIC

FISHING AND FISH STOCKING

Many participants expressed a strong desire to have fish stocking continue in the park.

Fishing is allowed in the park, and 30 to 40 percent of long distance travelers to the park want it.

People want something to do in the park, so fishing should continue.

Fishing should continue in the park.

The park should issue a position paper on fishing and do what is necessary to maintain fishing in the park as a quality experience.

One of the purposes of a national park is to protect natural systems, and people must accept that fish stocking is not natural.

Both put-and-take and the natural reproduction of fish should be considered in the park plan.

Fish stocking is necessary to maintain fish populations and should continue in the future.

The NPS should continue to restock fish in the lakes, streams, and ponds within the park.

The fish stocking program should continue as in the past.

Fish stocking could occur in the lower portion of streams outside the park with fish barriers placed at the park boundary.

There must be a balance between what BLM does and what NPS does regarding the reintroduction of native cutthroat trout.

Fishing in the Wheeler Peak area should continue; stocking is needed to replenish fish population.

The park should stock the streams, but put restrictions on taking cutthroat trout.

Fish stocking should be continued in Lehman, Baker, and Snake creeks at Great Basin.

Baker and Johnson lakes should continue to be stocked with fish on a three-year cycle.

The state of Nevada wants to eliminate fish stocking in the park because of cost.

The NPS should reintroduce the cutthroat trout, but the NPS or the state cannot afford it (\$1 million)--state could collect fees for stocking.

Fishermen don't care what they catch just as long as they catch something.

Fish stocking could be provided in some areas of the park and not in others.

There should be no catch and release of fish in the park.

RANCHING AND GRAZING

Ranching and grazing activities should be allowed to continue in and around the park.

Ranchers fear that the conflict of cattle with park visitors will result in reduced grazing in the park.

There is concern that grazing will be regulated out of the park, and that the legislation allowing grazing will be changed in the future.

Local owners should be able to continue ranching without loss of water and grazing rights.

Ranching operations should continue as economically viable.

Water rights and waterways should be maintained.

The deer and predator population must be controlled.

The grazing allotments and AUMs must be kept as is.

A grazing management plan is needed to ensure an appropriate balance of use, particularly in the Snake Creek and Strawberry allotments.

Grazing has gone on in the park and vicinity for 100 years, and the range is in better than fair condition; grazing should continue.

Grazing is a long-time natural part of the park ecosystem.

Grazing is an economic benefit to the community, and a healthy range can be maintained if it is grazed properly.

Grazing will be compatible with park use, and it will help clean up downed brush and grass, thus reducing the fire hazard.

There may be a grazing/recreation conflict in the park.

Grazing of cattle properly can avoid a people/cattle conflict, but the "bottom line" on grazing will be what happens to that relationship.

Camping areas should be fenced to keep cows out, grazing could occur after peak visitor season, or cows could be taken higher on the mountain.

Fencing campgrounds to exclude cattle would not be aesthetic.

No fences should be built as we've got along without them for decades, and they are expensive.

Some riparian areas may need to be protected from grazing.

Grazing should be interpreted as part of the cultural history of Great Basin.

Grazing within limits will allow the resource to sustain itself, but grazing should be phased out over a 20-year period.

Native animals also have rights to grazing the grass in the park.

Cattle should not be blamed when overgrazing occurs that may be due to overpopulation of deer herds.

Sheep and goat grazing is far more destructive than cattle grazing.

Domestic livestock will transmit disease to native wildlife populations.

WILDERNESS

Great Basin National Park should be a "wilderness park" with designated wilderness areas in it.

The majority of the park backcountry should be managed as de facto wilderness.

Wheeler Peak is too highly developed to qualify as wilderness.

Development proposals should not restrict or eliminate wilderness.

Buffer zones around wilderness areas are a good idea.

A backcountry management plan is needed for the park.

There should be at least 5 square miles in the park with no development at all.

"Wilderness" has the potential to educate people.

Wilderness designation would limit the number of people coming to the park.

There should be no wilderness area in the park.

I do not want wilderness.

"I Hate Wilderness."

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

A resource protection plan is needed for vegetation and wildlife in the park.

There should be cooperative federal, state, and local management of the deer problem, with selective hunting to control overpopulation.

NPS policies prohibit the hunting of furbearers and big game animals. The park should have a controlled harvest of these animals.

NPS policy has eliminated deer hunting in the park, and the deer population will impact the surrounding valleys.

The mule deer population is overrunning lower areas around the park during the winter months--park should manage the problem. Deer are eating all the gardens in the town of Garrison. The wildlife will drive out the farmers.

The deer population in the park should be regulated so that the cattle forage is not reduced.

Cattle may get the blame for overgrazing in the park, when in fact deer may be the problem.

Overpopulated deer herds in park should be controlled by hunting.

If all the U.S. Forest Service buffer land were turned over to the National Park Service, there would be a lot of disappointed hunters, and the deer herd would increase even more due to the lack of hunting.

Two creeks on the west slope that extend into the park contain cutthroat trout; designation of the streams and an educational program may help, and the community should be involved in the process.

The Bonneville cutthroat trout should be restocked where possible. This is a good idea in theory, but may not be possible because fishermen throw other types of fish back into streams that interbreed and "dilute" cutthroat trout. People coming to the park expect to see something special like the cutthroat trout.

The NPS could reintroduce Bonneville cutthroat trout to park streams.

The Baker community is concerned about the fish kill in Lehman and Baker creeks that would take place if replanting of native cutthroat trout occurs. The introduction of cutthroat trout requires the elimination of nonnative species.

The NPS should maintain fish populations through the put-and-take method.

Reintroductions of wildlife should be allowed, only if the species was there before.

Bighorn sheep have been reintroduced by the Nevada Division of Wildlife, and the peregrine falcon should be reintroduced.

One-half of the bighorn sheep range is not in the park, but it should be.

Bighorn sheep and domestic sheep cannot share the same habitat because domestic sheep carry diseases that kill the bighorn.

No reintroduction of bears should be considered in the plan.

Some participants felt that elk should be reintroduced.

IMPACT OF PARK ON BAKER, NEVADA

Nevada's main industry is tourism, and the town of Baker wants to host park visitors.

The influence of the park should not ruin Baker.

The quality of life in Baker is spectacular--let's keep it that way!

New employees in the park will help Baker, Nevada, economically, but they will have an impact on the town's infrastructure, such as roads, water, sewer, commercial facilities (RV parks and souvenir stands), recreational fishing, garbage collection, and emergency services--ambulance, air rescue, police, fire, medical, medicare, etc.

The park should help fund community improvements in Baker needed to serve park visitors.

The economic impact of the park on the community should be studied, including what impact the park will have on the local school system, with its facilities, teachers, and classrooms.

Many in the Baker community want more social integration between the park people and the townspeople. A visitor center/contact station in Baker might help unite the town and park people socially.

The NPS should have the responsibility for mitigating impacts on the water and sewer system in Baker, Nevada, which occur as a result of increased visitation to the park.

The White Pine County Commission would like to work with the NPS to develop any potential funding for an adequate water and sewer system in Baker to accommodate increased tourist traffic to the park.

There should be no new sewer and water system in Baker, Nevada, because of the estimated cost--\$500,000.

Baker, Nevada, needs a new water and sewer system to accommodate park visitors. The community needs NPS help in developing this system; NPS facilities should be tied to this new system.

The state of Nevada has community development block grant money to assist Baker with a water and sewer system study.

A bond issue can help Baker, Nevada, if enough people move into town to help pay for a sewer and water system.

Impact money is needed from U.S. Government for sewer and water system for Baker, Nevada.

An improved town dump is needed in Baker, Nevada, to serve increased park visitation.

White Pine County would like a cooperative agreement with the NPS to upgrade the Baker dump and to develop the Baker airstrip.

Fees should not be charged for local citizens to enter the park.

If the park acquires additional land, local citizens should be compensated for the taking of private property, including tax revenues.

The park needs a "good neighbor" policy with the surrounding communities.

CAMPGROUNDS

Additional campgrounds providing trailer, tent, and motor home sites are needed in the park, such as near Lexington Arch and along Snake Creek, Baker Creek, Lehman Creek, and Strawberry Creek.

Improvements are needed in existing campgrounds in the park, including the Baker Creek campground.

People should be informed when campgrounds in the park are full.

A number of campgrounds should be provided for overflow use.

There should be campgrounds both inside and outside the park.

RV services (hookups, camping, Laundromats, etc.) should be provided in the community of Baker rather than in the park.

Free enterprise is the best way to go to provide RV and KOA camps in Baker for park visitors.

An RV camp should be outside the park, but tent sites are needed inside the park.

Developed as well as undeveloped campsites in the park should be designated or signed.

Senior citizens need to stay at lower elevations, so the NPS needs to develop campgrounds there.

A study of the "carrying capacity" of the park campgrounds is called for to decide how many are needed.

The "design loading" for the park campgrounds should be for the average summer weekend.

The impact of camping on the park should be monitored on a continuing basis.

Camping should not be increased because the park is too small anyway.

The NPS should improve all existing water systems to the campgrounds, with the Baker Creek campground being the highest priority.

The campground water systems need water chlorinators to improve visitor health and safety.

The NPS should fence off campgrounds to exclude livestock from visitor use areas and to prevent conflict.

Cattle can be used to clean up fallen vegetation in campgrounds in the spring.

The volunteer program should be used to provide campground hosts in the park to explain "the ways of the wild."

The park needs an emergency telephone in each campground.

Suitable campsites at high elevation are needed for backcountry hikers.

Backcountry camping could be part of a concession tour.

High elevation camping should not occur above timberline.

There should be limited camping in bristlecone pine groves.

Existing campgrounds should be left as they are.

Local citizens are concerned about increased visitor use and park development, such as the increased camping in Snake Creek, which will limit their traditional camping use of the area.

ROAD DEVELOPMENT

The existing roads in the park need upgrading in the future.

The park needs more roads and more campgrounds.

Access roads to the park should be improved to serve a wider variety of people, including fishermen and hunters.

The NPS should improve access roads in all areas of the park with the priorities being in the following order: (1) Lexington Arch, (2) Snake Creek, (3) Baker Creek with parking in the campground areas, and (4) guardrails on the access road to the Wheeler Peak campground.

Wheeler Peak road could be connected with Strawberry Creek road, providing a new north/south entrance road to the park.

More turnouts are needed on the road to Wheeler Peak.

There should be road access to all canyons to allow visitors to get closer to the mountains.

The road to the top of Mt. Washington should be more accessible.

The road to Lexington Arch should be improved to facilitate tourist access; a new route may be necessary.

Snake, Baker, and Lexington canyon roads could be paved and still leave a large "wilderness" national park.

Big Wash road should be upgraded at the beginning and then turned into a trail at the end.

Pole Creek road should be eliminated, and Snake Creek Canyon road should not be paved.

The NPS should construct an east-west access road in the park that passes directly through the high country to improve access, increase visitor use, and improve opportunities to see the park area.

The road to Johnson Lake should be closed and a well-designed trail installed instead.

The road to Johnson Lake should be closed at the creek with a gate.

The road to Johnson Lake should be closed at Shoshone.

The road to Johnson Lake should be rehabilitated into a hiking/riding trail.

To protect the bristlecone pines in the remote southwest corner of the park, a gate should be installed across the road on the west side of the range in Pole Canyon.

The road to Wheeler Peak should be plowed in winter.

The road to Wheeler Peak should be kept open in the wintertime for cross-country skiing, but since this would be expensive, snowcats could transport skiers.

Road improvement and maintenance is needed to provide easy access to existing grazing allotments in the park.

Traveling houses (trailers) should not be allowed because they congest park roads and create visual impacts.

If the NPS builds too many roads in the park, it will allow too many people in the park.

The NPS must consider "edge effect" where development occurs. Installing a road in "virgin" terrain will bring in wild plant species that will become established along the road, and this process will change the environment of the area.

Animals also change their movement patterns due to the development of roads in a park.

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

Most of the trails in the park desperately need improvement and maintenance, particularly the trails on the southeast side, which are overgrown and difficult to identify.

Bicycles may be an answer to transportation problems in the park.

The lower section of the park around the visitor center is automobile oriented, not pedestrian oriented, so perhaps a separate bicycle path could help here.

New trails should be developed in the park that consider access to all the park's attractions for the young, elderly, and horseback riders. Included could be trails through each of the two bristlecone pine stands, a glacier trail, a trail along Strawberry Creek, a trail running north and south along the top of the mountains and around the lakes, a loop trail around the park, and others.

Existing park trails in need of improvement are the following: Johnson Lake to Baker Lake, Snake Creek to Baker Creek, Snake Creek through Big Wash to Lexington Arch and Wheeler Peak above Stella Lake.

Good trails are needed to Mt. Washington and Mt. Lincoln--there is a great potential for creative trail development.

The Highland trail should be reconstructed and/or maintained because it's hard to find and use.

Better trailhead facilities are needed on Snake Creek at the end of the road.

The trail to Lexington Arch is in bad shape and needs improvement.

Existing trails follow old roads that are not designed for walking.

Equestrian problems on trails need to be addressed.

Impacts on the alpine tundra can be avoided through trail management.

PARK BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

Desert basins should be included in "Great Basin" to go with the designated mountain park.

The park needs a massive boundary expansion to take in other Great Basin themes--might have to include additional lands to provide for theme completion.

The park is too small--need 122,000 acres, particularly if development is needed.

Massive expansion of the park boundaries is not politically viable, but a day may come when additional lands could be attached to complete the Great Basin park theme.

Baker citizens have heard a rumor of park expansion, including a 10-mile buffer zone around the park; the NPS wants more and more land. The citizens need to protect themselves against further land purchase.

Having a park buffer zone is an expansionist philosophy.

The NPS might as well take all the former USFS lands because what is left cannot be managed efficiently.

The park could absorb the remainder of Humboldt National Forest; this would add considerably to the national park.

Minor boundary adjustments are needed in places within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the boundary--Strawberry Creek should be returned to the Forest Service and not be developed.

Major expansion of park boundary should not occur in the future.

Park should not expand beyond its existing boundaries.

There should be no expansion of park onto private lands.

Citizens are in favor of good boundary markers.

CAVE USE

Tourists are upset because they cannot get into Lehman Caves on holiday weekends during peak travel season. The park needs a reservation system and more tours.

A reservation system should be implemented that would allow long distance travelers to call ahead for reservations, with the understanding that the visitor would be at Lehman Caves at least one hour before the desired tour time.

The NPS should experiment with various strategies to eliminate the problem of visitors being told that the cave tours are sold out.

A ticketron system would provide an opportunity for people to make reservations at Lehman Caves.

The NPS should shorten cave tours to one hour during peak use periods or have night tours in order to accommodate more visitors.

The NPS should find a way to reopen the Talus Room in Lehman Caves.

There are physical limits on how many people can go through Lehman Caves, so alternative activities, such as a new museum, are needed.

There are 70 caves within about 25 miles of the park. The NPS should investigate and identify other cave systems in the immediate area that might be developed to provide tours on a regular basis or provide for overflow. The NPS should open up other caves to spread out visitor use. This would create a need for more staff.

Exploration of wild caves in the park should continue.

The caves in the park are very delicate and need protection.

Cave exploration should be allowed on a permit basis to protect the delicate caves.

A gate system to block cave entrances has been tried in the past, but it is not an effective protection method.

If cave tours are filled up during the peak season and holidays, some type of reservation system needs to be developed for long distance travelers.

DEVELOPMENT VS. NONDEVELOPMENT

The park must be concerned about the balance between preserving the natural values and providing for visitor use.

The park should be left in a natural condition with no new roads.

There should be less access to the park, not more.

There needs to be "something" on the west side of park.

The money available should be reallocated to have the prime emphasis on resource management rather than on law enforcement, in order to better preserve this park for future generations.

Great Basin National Park should not be developed because of its small size. Besides, development ruins parks.

Local citizens are concerned about increased visitor use and park development, such as the increased camping in Snake Creek, which will limit their traditional camping use of the area.

Some people in the community of Baker feel that the park should not be developed.

Development should avoid sensitive riparian areas of the park.

Photography and sketching is a way of experiencing the park without impacting it greatly.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The threatened and endangered species within the park must be identified, protected, and preserved.

Great Basin is a classic example of island biogeography, and each high point and each low point is going to be unique or special.

The park contains some of the highest peaks in Nevada and has many threatened and endangered endemic species.

Because of the lack of data concerning threatened and endangered plant species within the park, a moratorium on all grazing should be established until the rare species are identified.

Grazing should not have a moratorium just because of the rare plant species. The NPS should adhere to legislation and maintain grazing. The rare plants have made it through grazing for the past 100 years and will continue to do so.

The Mt. Washington bristlecone pine grove is among the best in the world, and the NPS should preserve this sensitive area.

WATER RIGHTS

Water is extremely critical in the park area, and the water rights as determined by the state of Nevada should be observed within park

property. Only minor springs are not already appropriated. Most uses occur outside the park, and diversions occur within the park. There is no problem if existing water rights are honored by the NPS.

Grazing and water rights should continue in the park, including Baker, Lehman, and Strawberry creeks.

Water should continue to move out of the park. The NPS should not block water rights owners from making improvements within the park to ensure that water reaches lower elevations.

Baker Creek dried up at the narrows in 1962, and the drought caused problems for all.

The park holds the water rights to Cave Spring, and this is far above the needs for current visitor use levels. Holding tanks could be developed to hold the overflow, and the water could be held for the town of Baker, Nevada, which would save the taxpayer money. Water not used by park is currently placed back in drainage.

Water is critical to the survival and life-style of the citizens of Baker. They cannot raise crops without irrigation. The NPS should not give away water rights. Water quality is also important.

MINING

Mining resources are important and should be allowed to continue in the park--allow mining, but not ore processing

The park boundary was gerrymandered around existing patented mines.

The importance of mining in the history of the Great Basin should be addressed.

The Forest Service has numerous mining proposals occurring in the area.

There are tremendous mining resources in the park; mining activities on a claim in Pole Canyon (west) may start up again.

Mining adjacent to the park can occur, and the park should have no jurisdiction over areas outside the park boundary.

The NPS should buy patented mining claims in the "Keyhole" to protect the bristlecone pines.

HUNTING

Why is fishing but not hunting allowed in the park? This is an inconsistent approach.

A culling process should be developed to control overpopulation of the deer herd; allowing hunting or having an adoption program might be effective.

Bighorn sheep were put here as a hunting resource; hunting them should be continued in the park.

There should be no hunting in the park.

FOREST SERVICE PROPERTY IN BAKER, NEVADA

The White Pine County Commission asks the NPS to transfer ownership and to develop the USFS facility in Baker for uses benefiting the community.

BLM lands currently held by the Forest Service should be returned to BLM.

Forest Service spaces and a lot in Baker should be used for town purposes. The town wants a town hall, a fire maintenance shed, and a senior citizens hall. This is really a ready-made solution to the town problems in the short-term.

Baker needs the former USFS facilities for town use.

The Forest Service property should go to the town of Baker rather than to the NPS; it includes 10 acres developed and 70 acres undeveloped.

WINTER USE IN PARK

The tourist season should be extended by offering winter recreation activities in the park, such as snowshoeing, sledding, downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, and mountaineering.

The road to Wheeler Peak should be plowed to allow winter access by automobiles.

The road to upper Wheeler Peak campground should be kept open in winter for cross-country skiing.

Snowmobiles could use the existing road system to reach Wheeler Peak during the winter; also, commercial snowmobile trips for groups may be feasible.

Snowmobiles should be permitted only on unplowed roads, not on hiking trails.

There may be a ski/snowmobile conflict in winter use areas in the park.

Snowshoeing to the bristlecone pines during the winter should be allowed.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources in the park are not well known, according to the state historic preservation officer; a cultural resource site inventory is needed in and around the park.

Cultural resources need to be addressed, including archeology and ethnohistory and the direct and indirect impacts on cultural resources, particularly outside the park boundary.

The NPS should look into the possibility of restoring a portion of the Osceola Ditch.

Cultural resources removed from the park should be brought back--i.e., the Harrington Collection (petroglyphs) currently in the Southwest Museum in Pasadena.

Petroglyph and pictograph sites and caves and are all considered cultural resources.

Prehistoric use at higher altitudes should be included in the cultural resource study.

If areas near cultural resource sites are developed, those sites may be vandalized.

More information is needed on the rock art trail, Osceola Ditch, and Johnson Lake.

NPS SUPPORT FACILITIES

Food and room services should be provided outside the park in the surrounding rural communities--no new development in the park.

The NPS should move out of the park and build new facilities in Baker, Nevada.

The park should develop its support facilities outside the park.

The NPS could lease housing, maintenance, and visitor center facilities outside the park boundary.

Housing for NPS and concession employees should be built in Baker with private money. Facilities could be built by private developers and leased back to the government.

Putting park administration and housing in Baker would help pay for needed water and sewer system in Baker, and would provide for social/cultural integration of the two communities. The Lehman Caves site has only limited space for expansion, so the town of Baker is a better location.

The administration building could be moved from its current location near Lehman Caves to a location within Baker to reduce congestion.

The visitor center is inadequate for both administration and interpretive programs in the park; it could be located outside the park in Baker, Nevada.

The NPS might want to have facilities in town, but the park boundary should not be expanded to town.

The park should not have development in Baker; it should be a self-contained unit. The development of park headquarters in Baker would destroy the small town atmosphere.

ACCESS FOR THE HANDICAPPED AND ELDERLY

There should be barrier-free access to facilities for the handicapped and the elderly.

The park should be made more accessible to the handicapped; an interpretive trail should be developed for them that could include all five life zones in the park.

Trails should be designed for handicap access as well as for children and older people.

Special activities should be considered for senior citizens.

PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

The park needs a citizens advisory committee composed of local, regional, and state representatives to address ongoing problems and concerns.

A commission should be developed through the state planning clearinghouse to pull together an interagency team for the park.

Someone needs to meet with the governor of Nevada, identify the players, and set some agenda for discussing park issues and problems. A state tourism committee already exists.

A coordinating committee is needed with the NPS, the town of Baker, and White Pine County.

Ranchers and conservationists should unite to form a coalition to deal with the park.

VISITOR SERVICES

Provisions must be made to accommodate many types of people in order to allow them to have a good park experience.

The cave and visitor center are extremely congested during much of the tourist season. The NPS should look at strategies to spread people out.

The present facilities should not be removed.

The NPS should expand the existing visitor center to accommodate any long-term increase in visitation, including expanded concession facilities, interpretive services, display areas, and parking facilities.

A park lodge should be placed somewhere in the park with a view of Wheeler Peak, perhaps on Buck Mountain.

Perhaps a shuttle bus service could be provided from campsites outside the park to tour inside the park.

VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

The park should have a visitor information telephone system (a recording giving times and events, etc.).

If cave tours are filled up during the peak season and holidays, some type of reservation system needs to be developed for long distance travelers.

The park may need radio broadcasts to warn visitors that the Lehman Caves tour is filled.

Videotaped information on Great Basin should be produced and distributed to regional and local television stations as well as hotels and motels. Visitors should be able to learn something about the park and plan their stay accordingly.

The park needs an exhibit area for displaying a raised relief topographic map of the whole area. This could be located in a town park in Baker, Nevada.

ATVS AND TRAIL BIKES

Motorized trail bikes and ATVs should be discussed.

Existing trails should be developed for ATVs and trail bikes too.

The NPS will have to hire more rangers to patrol in order to control ATVs.

ATVs, mountain bikes, and horseback riders are destructive to the environment, and overuse may lead to overcrowding.

ATV use is not currently occurring in the park, and these vehicles should not be allowed in the park.

ATV use gives the park a bad image; it is a specialized vehicle that should be confined to the road.

Signing is needed on trails to indicate that trail bikes are not allowed.

Mountain bikes should not be allowed at high elevations or on pedestrian trails in the park.

FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE TRAILS

Access to the park by four-wheel-drive vehicles should be studied and addressed.

The south fork of Big Wash Creek could sustain a four-wheel-drive trail.

Big Wash road (washed out) could be a four-wheel-drive access to the park.

There should be no steep road up Big Wash; make it a foot trail.

The west side of the park could be made into a four-wheel-drive area.

There should be no steep roads through the tundra, and the existing roads should be turned into trails.

CONCESSION OPERATIONS

Perhaps a shuttle bus service to the upper Wheeler Peak area could relieve traffic pressure around the visitor center during peak visitation periods.

The park could have a shuttle bus service offered by a concession operator similar to the one at Mt. Whitney.

Reservations for tour buses and groups should be allowed in the park.

Bristlecone pine tours to Mt. Washington could be provided using large four-wheel-drive vehicles.

More concession services are needed outside the park for community development.

Horseback trips into the park could be a concession operation.

A horse concession operation could occur from Strawberry Creek from the east side of Wheeler Peak to Mt. Washington.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

A cooperative federal, state, and town search-and-rescue plan and policy is needed for the park.

White Pine County would like a mutual aid agreement with the NPS for all areas of emergency services, including fire protection, law enforcement, search and rescue, and emergency medical assistance.

A cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the Forest Service is needed to provide for fire management.

The park and the community need mutual aid agreements for emergency services, such as fire and search-and-rescue operations.

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation needs to be expanded to cover the lower desert environment because the park is more than a mountain.

There needs to be another interpretive focus for the visitors besides Lehman Caves.

Native Americans should be involved in the interpretation and planning of the park, as they were part of the area's history.

Local school programs should be expanded to have NPS ranger outreach programs.

Interpretive trails should emphasize education and biology.

Interpretation should be expanded to involve local residents and their way of life.

Rotating exhibits would encourage repeat visitation.

"TOTAL" GREAT BASIN INTERPRETATION

Interpretation must address the "totality" of the Great Basin environment.

Interagency team should study total Great Basin park interpretation on other federally owned lands.

There needs to be a single interpretive theme for publicly owned lands of NPS, BLM, USFS, and state and local community parks in the Great Basin. A good interpretive brochure could unite all elements into a single Great Basin theme. Money to interpret Great Basin theme is available from the state.

Great Basin theme should be addressed throughout the park so that visitation is spread out.

The political process of establishing Great Basin National Park was too swift and cut off the inclusion of a "totally" representative park.

PARK ECOSYSTEM

The GMP should include the extent to which man must intervene in the park's ecosystem to maintain a balance including, but not limited to, hunting to ensure that the deer population doesn't harm the flora; controlled burns; and firewood gathering.

The GMP should include another five years (minimum) for an extended study of just what kind of ecosystem is within the boundary of the national park.

The ecosystem outside the park boundary must be looked at in order to achieve "a totality"--planning needs to go beyond the park boundary.

Several life zones are represented within the park boundary.

The knowledge and expertise of fifth-generation locals should be used in your research on the park's ecosystem.

CARRYING CAPACITY OF PARK

The park needs to establish carrying capacities for the various types of use--front country/backcountry.

There should be a balance between preservation and use in the park with the "bottom line" being some carrying capacity for all activities occurring in the park.

RESEARCH

Research in general is needed in the park as well as any help in funding or in carrying out the work by other agencies and universities.

Scientific studies need to be done in the park. University of Utah students who have done classroom work related to the Great Basin could help.

Once research is completed, its acceptance is needed by park administrators.

Research on Great Basin National Park will give the park credibility, and Nevada will no longer be viewed as the nation's dumping ground.

The Snake Range stands at the conjunction of two major biotic influences--Lahontan and Bonneville--so researchers should be aware of these two biotic provinces. As an example, two new species of fish have been discovered--one is the Snake Valley dace in the Snake Valley; the other is a chub in Spring Valley.

HANG GLIDING

Hang gliding should be continued in the park, as flying nonmotorized aircraft would not have a major impact on the park.

Prime areas to launch hang gliders in the park are Mt. Washington, the paved road to Wheeler Peak, and the TV repeater station. All landings occur outside the park boundaries.

The visual intrusion of hang gliding is minimal in Great Basin National Park.

Liability becomes an issue if hang gliding is allowed in the park.

DEADWOOD POLICY

Deadwood cannot be taken from the park, but it should be cleaned up because it is a fire hazard.

The park must address the problem of dead or downed wood--wood gathering should not be allowed in the park. You should bring your own wood, or wood sales could be a concessioner operation.

NPS EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The White Pine County Commission wants the NPS to establish an ongoing policy of local hire/local contracting for the park on a permanent basis, particularly in clerical and maintenance jobs.

The NPS should improve communications by hiring fewer seasonals from outside the area and by having more meetings with local communities.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is important to wise management of the park.

There needs to be more communication and cooperation between the park, state, county, and town.

NPS management should communicate with local citizens.

More frequent public comment is needed to speed up the planning process--you may need a meeting just on fish stocking only.

There are individuals at these meetings who are interested in the NPS scoping process and in being kept informed.

The local government town board and the county commissioners should be involved with the NPS as plans develop.

The press notice for these scoping meetings was not well distributed.

These meetings are not really public involvement because the press release was not effective--maybe need to reschedule meetings with paid advertisements in the newspapers the day before the meeting.

ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF PARK

There needs to be a balance between the economic potential and the mission of the park.

The park's economic impact on the area must be studied.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Three years to complete the GMP is not enough time to thoroughly research all the different aspects of the new park.

There should be a moratorium on new development until the GMP is approved.

The GMP should be as lax as possible.

The GMP should have an appendix and a glossary.

The NPS should use local long-term knowledge of park area to aid the GMP planning effort.

OTHER

The park should be an outstanding representative of the values of the Great Basin to citizens of the world and the United States.

All America needs to know about and share the experience of Great Basin National Park.

The park is a unique experience, it is a wonderful area to be in, and there are many opportunities. Nevada has a park that offers something other than gambling and prostitution.

Parks are for everyone, but parks are created for different purposes.

National park status usually means less freedom of access and more control of people.

The park should be managed as naturally as possible.

A national park is not for "macho" recreational purposes.

Great Basin is a national park so don't restrict use and enjoyment of the area by designating it as wilderness.

The major resource in the park is the people.

Local citizens would like to see the mountain stay the way it is--status quo.

Private citizens should be allowed to collect pine nuts for family use but not for commercial use.

The sewer lagoons for the park were built right above the town of Baker without the town's input. Although the lagoons are self-contained, there could be an adverse effect on the groundwater if punctures occur in the lagoon lining.

There should be no limitations on development outside the park boundary, such as the visual impact issue that shut down a mine or smelter near Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah.

The impacts of military overflights on the park need discussion, and an accoustical data base must be established.

Sonic booms caused by low flying military jets are increasing in the area, and this bothers wildlife populations as well as people.

If cattle can eat wildflowers in the park, people should be able to pick the flowers.

