

Transportation Challenges & Opportunities in the National Park Service

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Greater Yellowstone Area
Transportation Needs Assessment
Workshop
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Cody, WY



Intermountain Region Trends and Need for Collaborative Planning

IMR Visitation:

- 2017 stats:
 - Recreation visits: 57,454,921
 - Non-recreation visits: 10,332,670
- 46% increase in the last 5 years

2017 IMR Park Superintendent Survey:

- 40% concerned about visitor experience
- 50% experiencing traffic congestion

Macro Trends:

- Balancing asset needs with other needs
- Evolving population demographics
- Modernized experiences
- Risks to park resources are diverse
- Emphasis on partnerships



WHAT ARE YOUR JURISDICTION'S OVERARCHING NEEDS FOR A FULLY FUNCTIONING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM?

NPS National Long Range Transportation Plan Vision:

- Mission focused transportation system that is safe and seamless
- Enabling high-quality access to essential park unit experiences
- Effectively plans and manages the transportation system to accommodate changing environmental, social and financial conditions.

WHAT ARE YOUR JURISDICTION'S OVERARCHING NEEDS FOR A FULLY FUNCTIONING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM?

YELL and GRTE Transportation Goals:

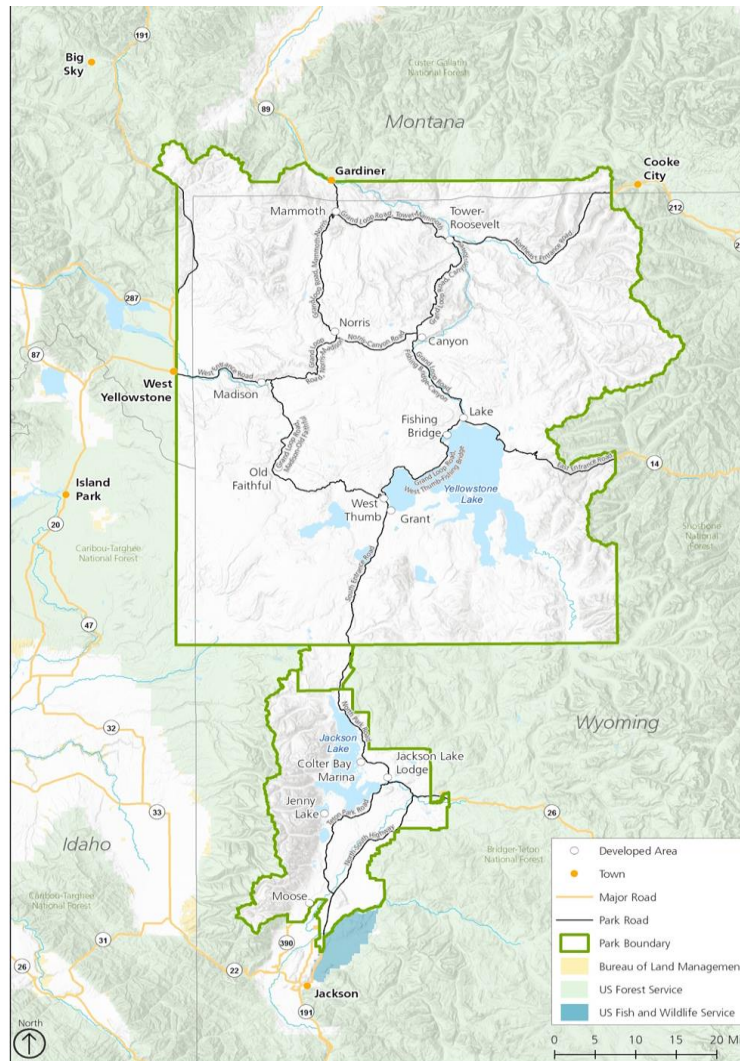
- YELL and GRTE are focal points for visitation in the GYA (i.e. most non-local visitors visit the parks at some point during their trip).
- Transportation system is defined broadly (≠ transit system)
- Matching the capacity of the transportation system to the desired level of service on roadways and the capacity of the destinations that are served (trailheads, visitor use areas, etc.)
 - (e.g. Moose Wilson Corridor vs. Jenny Lake)

HOW QUICKLY MUST YOUR JURISDICTIONS' NEEDS BE MET?

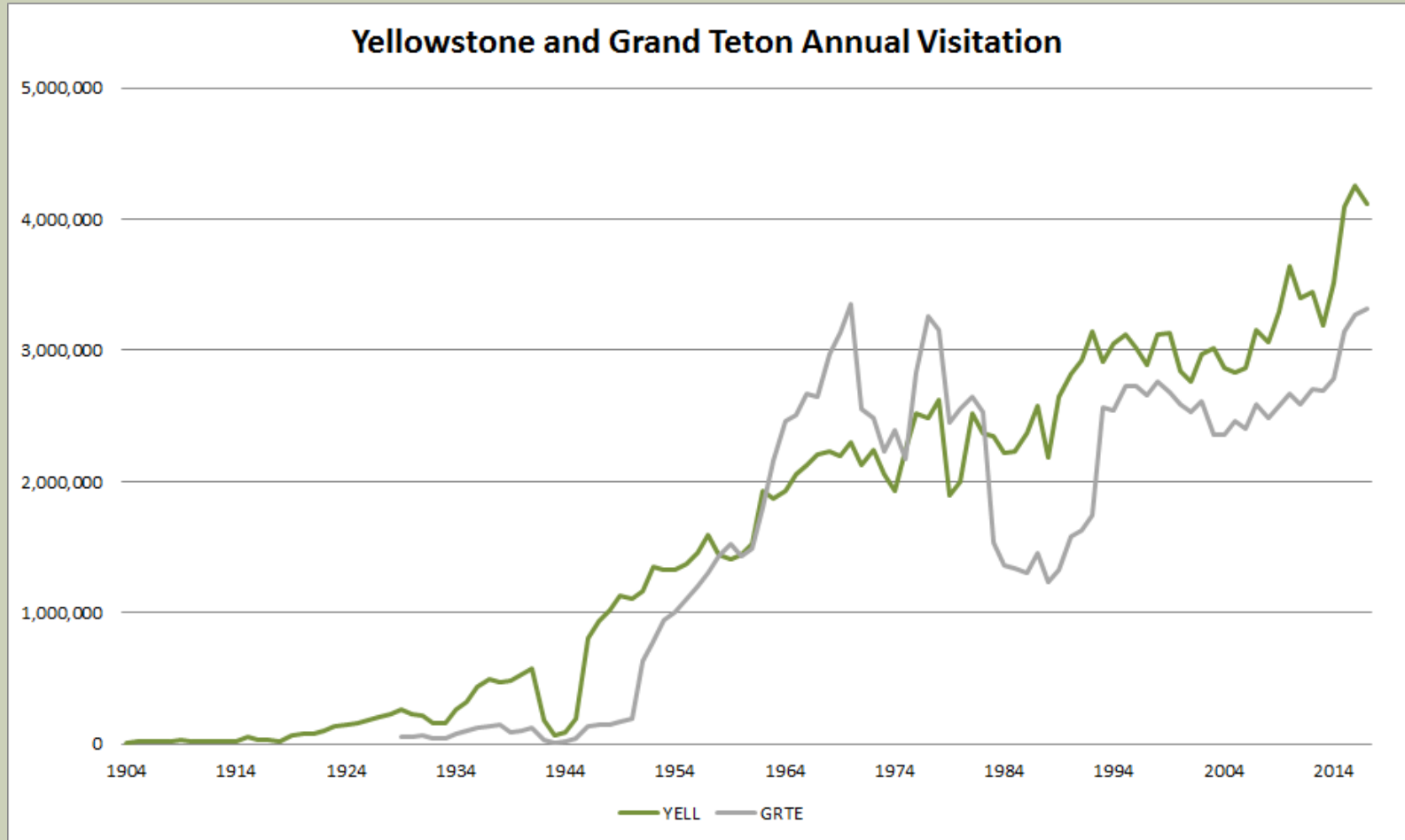
- What is the urgency of addressing increasing visitation to and changing use patterns in national parks?
 - We expect increasing trend in visitation to continue
 - Need to address system as a whole (beyond transportation system)
 - Necessary to consider unintended consequences and ripple effects on the park and the region

- Parks will continue to address transportation systems on an ongoing basis in order to meet park goals and objectives for resource condition and visitor experience

WHAT IS THE SIZE AND CONDITION OF YOUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM WITHIN IN OR ADJACENT TO THE GYA?

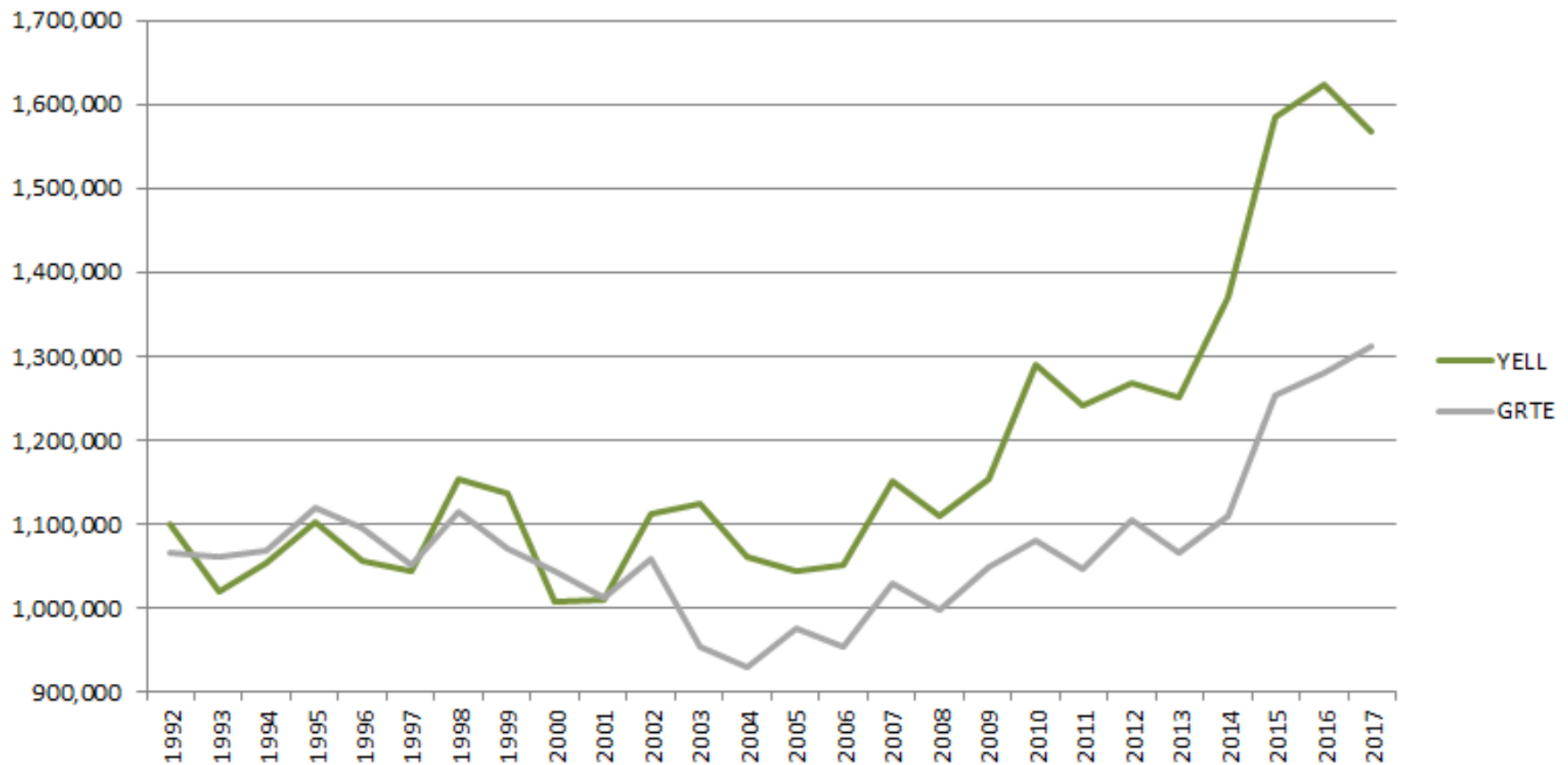


WHAT IS SPECIFICALLY DRIVING THE NEED TO ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE GYA?



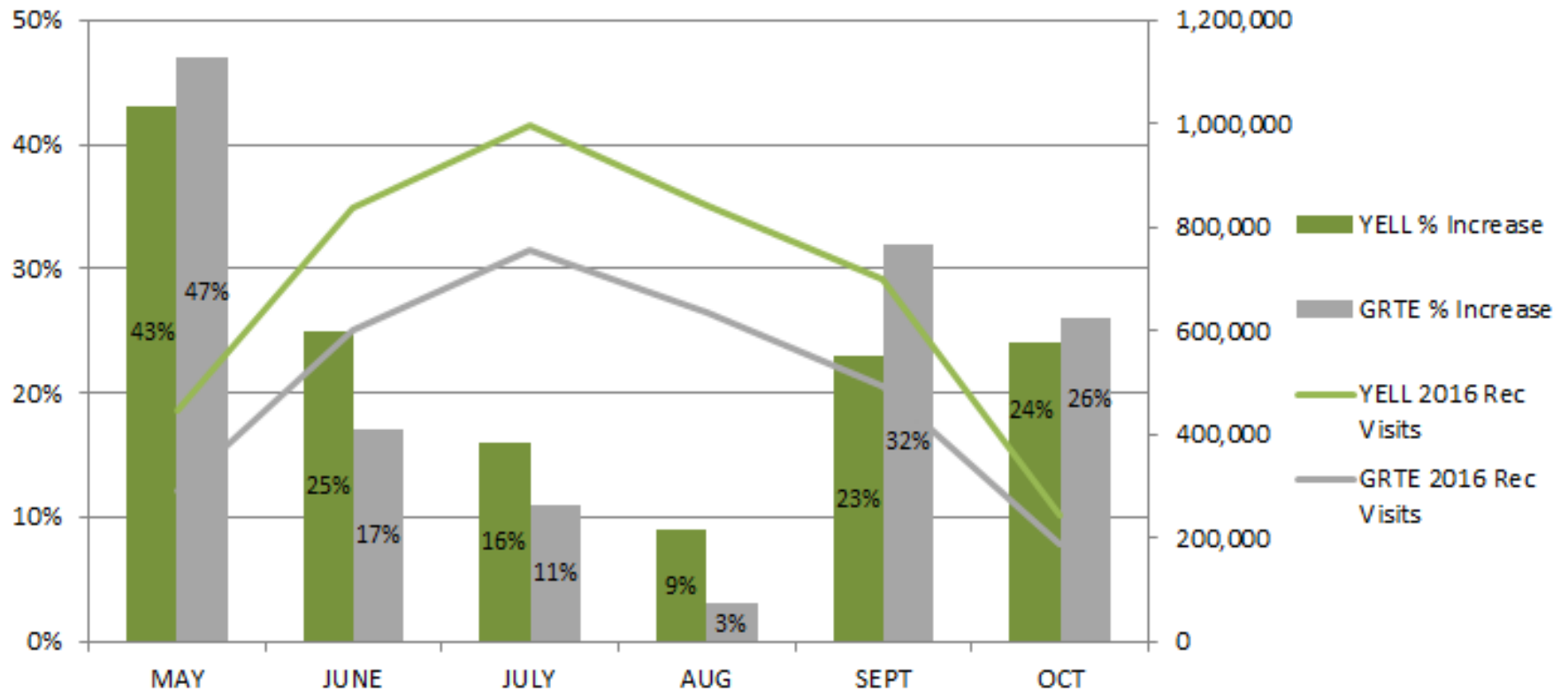
WHAT IS SPECIFICALLY DRIVING THE NEED TO ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE GYA?

YELL & GRTE Traffic Counts



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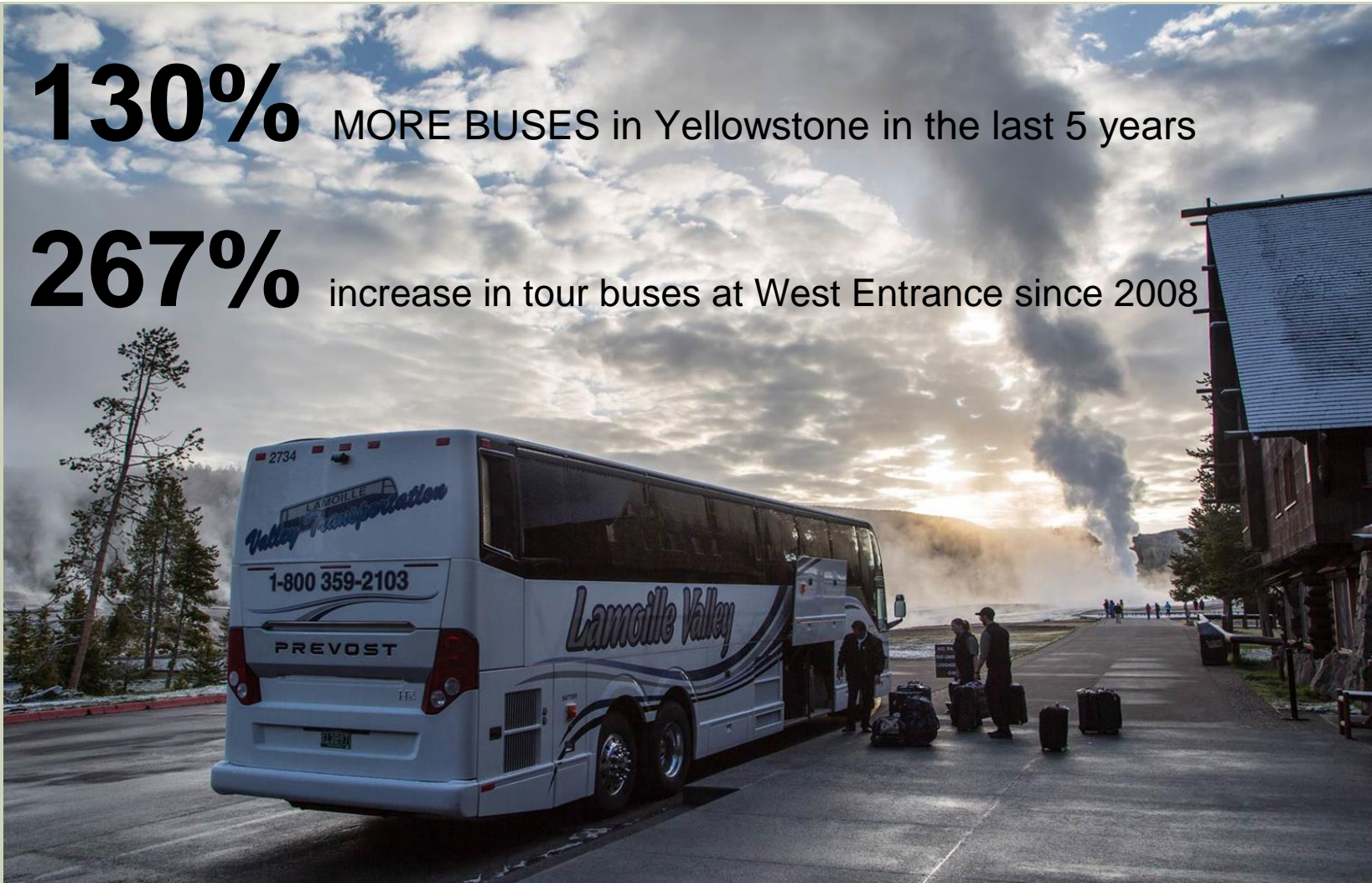
Yellowstone and Grand Teton Seasonal Visitation Increases (% change 2014-2016) and Recreation Visits



WHAT IS SPECIFICALLY DRIVING THE NEED TO ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE GYA?

130% MORE BUSES in Yellowstone in the last 5 years

267% increase in tour buses at West Entrance since 2008

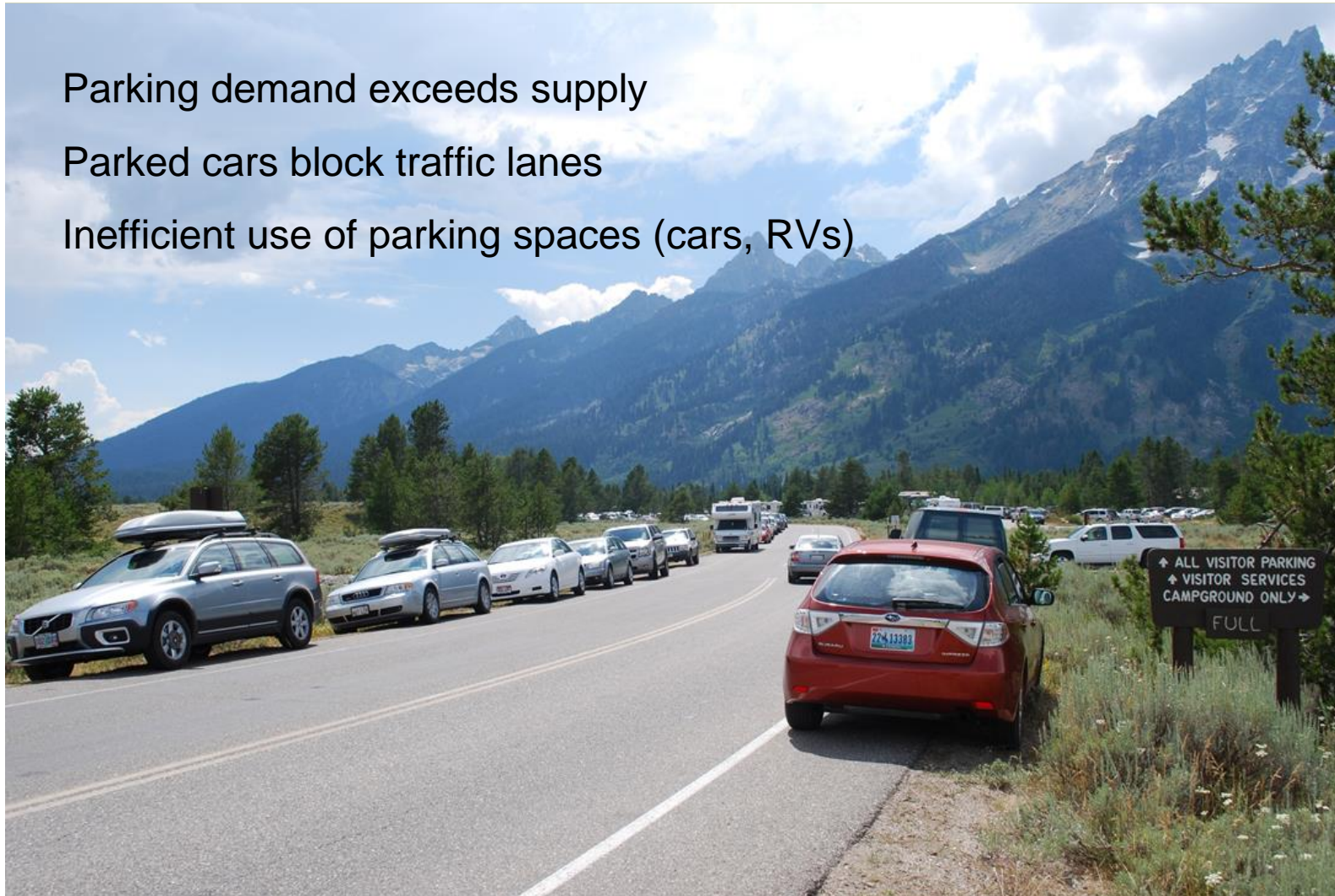


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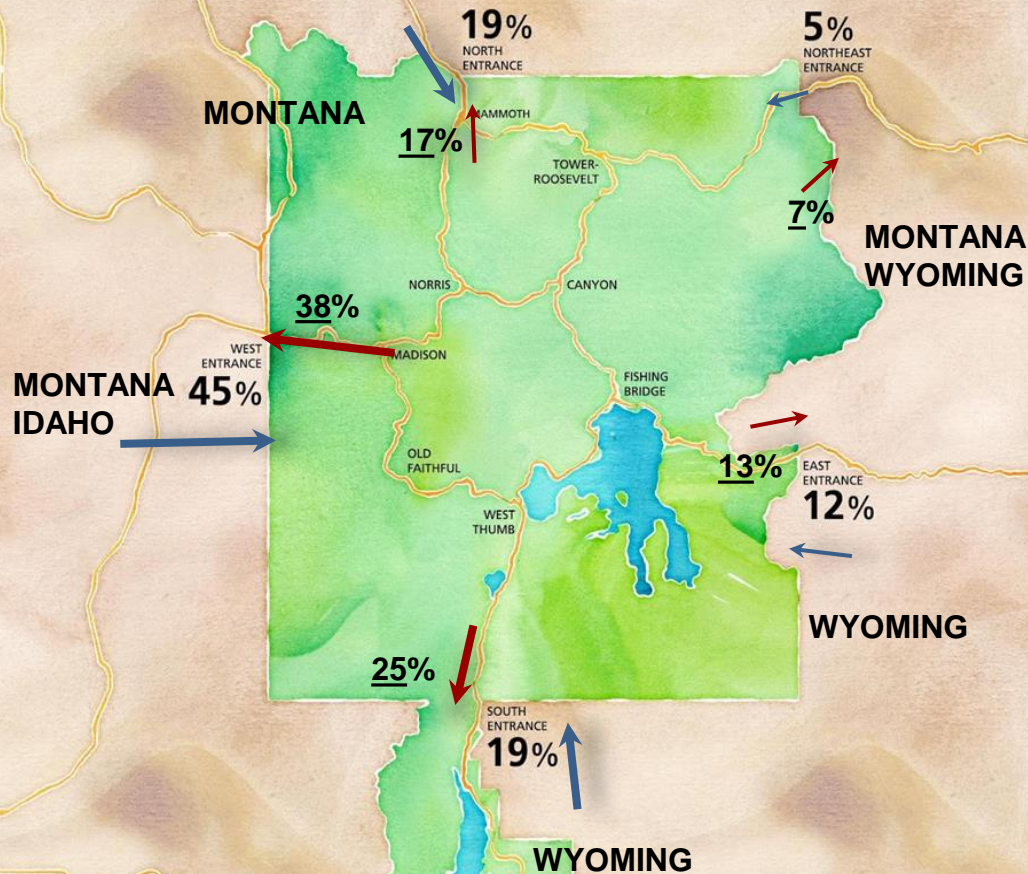
Parking demand exceeds supply

Parked cars block traffic lanes

Inefficient use of parking spaces (cars, RVs)



WHAT IS SPECIFICALLY DRIVING THE NEED TO ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE GYA?



HOW DOES YOUR JURISDICTION SUPPORT OUTDOOR RECREATION, TOURISM OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

96% visit YELL to view SCENERY



HOW DOES YOUR JURISDICTION SUPPORT OUTDOOR RECREATION, TOURISM OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

83% visit YELL to see WILDLIFE



\$10.1 million
estimated
contribution of bear
viewing to local
economy (2014)

\$35.5 million
annual visitor
spending in the 3
state area attributable
to wolf watching (2005)

HOW DOES YOUR JURISDICTION SUPPORT OUTDOOR RECREATION, TOURISM OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

78% Visit YELL to view GEYSERS & HOT SPRINGS



HOW DOES YOUR JURISDICTION SUPPORT OUTDOOR RECREATION, TOURISM OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

72% visit to experience WILD



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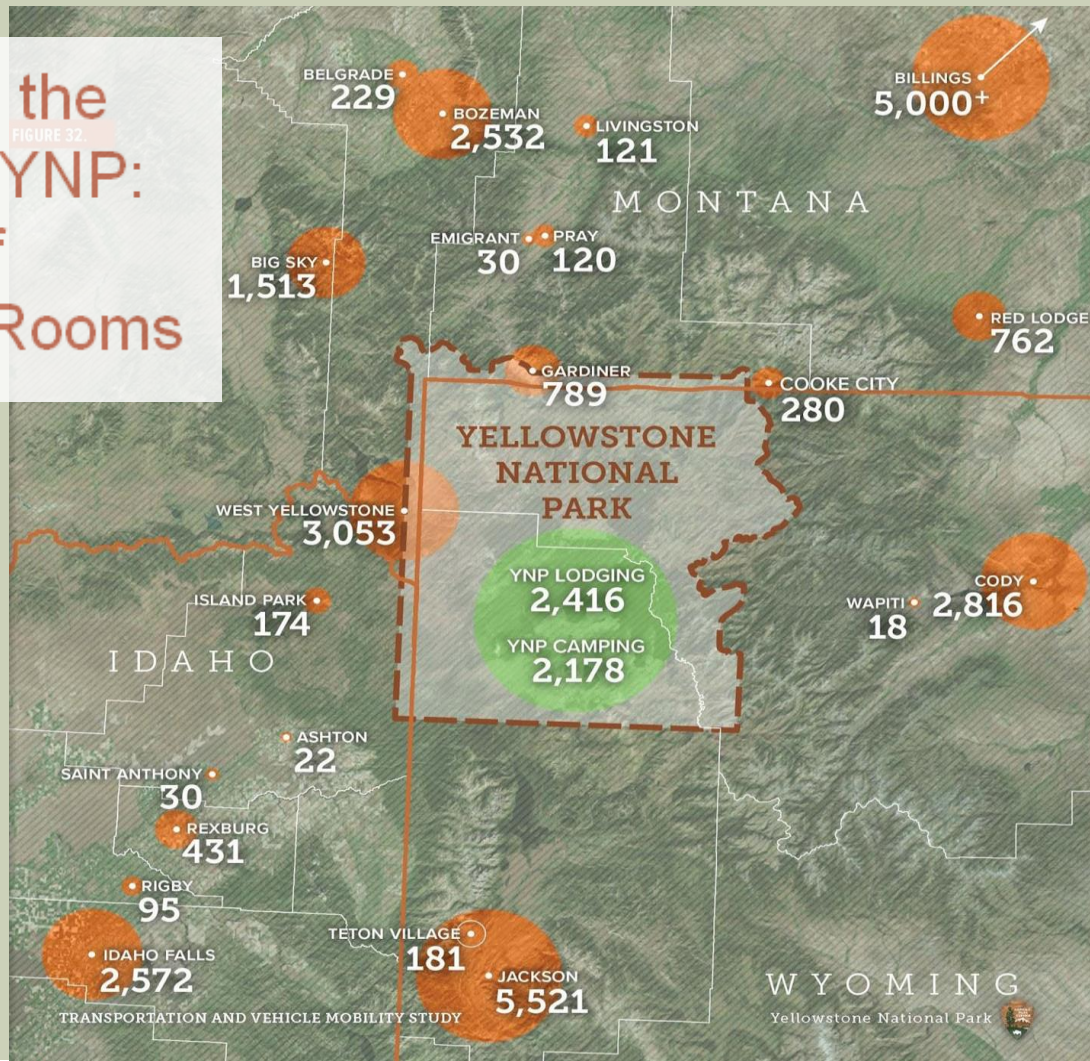
52% visit YELL to hear NATURAL SOUNDS



HOW DOES YOUR JURISDICTION SUPPORT OUTDOOR RECREATION, TOURISM OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Lodging in the Vicinity of YNP: Number of Available Rooms

FIGURE 32



2016

WYOMING
Yellowstone National Park

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW WELL ARE YOUR JURISDICTION'S
NEEDS BEING MET FOR THE GYA?



Grand Teton NP: August 21, 2017

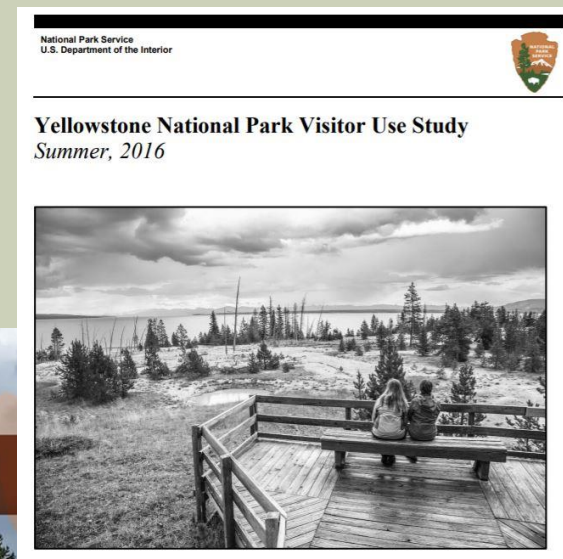
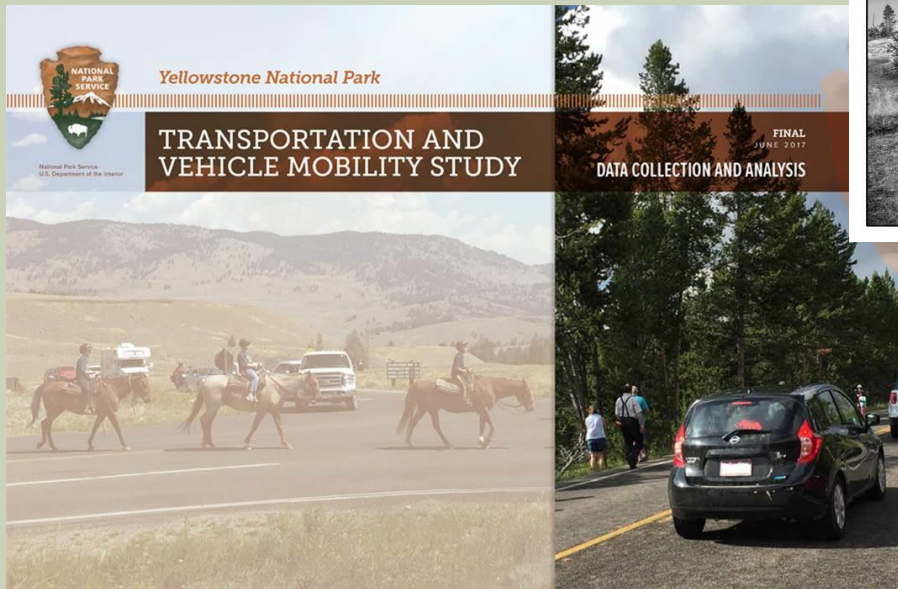
SHARE *ONE* CURRENT PROJECT, *ONE* INITIATIVE, AND/OR *ONE* DATA COLLECTION EFFORT OCCURRING WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE GYA.

□ Grand Teton

- Moose/Wilson Corridor effectively accomplished the following:
 - **Build the Foundation.** Established the corridor's purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values and reaffirmed these objectives with the public before preliminary alternatives were developed.
 - **Visitor Use Management Direction.** Defined the corridor's desired conditions to be achieved or maintained and how these conditions will be tracked over time.
 - **Civic Engagement.** Coordinated with Teton County, Town of Jackson, and other stakeholders throughout the process
 - **Visitor Capacity as a Tool.** Set a corridor visitor capacity to maintain and achieve the corridor's desired conditions.
 - **Transportation is Part of Visitor Use Management.** Implement road improvements, bicycle and pedestrian safety enhancements, and future transit opportunities as part of the comprehensive management plan.
- The park has constructed 17 miles of multi-use pathways connecting to the Teton County pathway system
- Gros Ventre Junction roundabout construction increases capacity and safety

SHARE *ONE* CURRENT PROJECT, *ONE* INITIATIVE, AND/OR *ONE* DATA COLLECTION EFFORT OCCURRING WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE GYA.

2018 explore how different visitor segments experience and move through the park **in real time** and how their experience varies **across the season**



2019 evaluate visitors' relative acceptance of visitor experience and management scenario tradeoffs

THREE GREATEST CONCERNS FOR A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT SERVES THE GYA?

GRTE:

- That the purpose of the transportation system(s) is not to simply to meet visitation demand, but to allow appropriate use of the park without adversely affecting park resources.
 - *Caution:* A high capacity transportation system serving a low capacity destination will likely result in degradation of visitor experience and resource condition.

- That transportation is one of many management actions outlined in the visitor use management plan. Transportation is not a stand-alone cure or fix to address visitor-related congestion and crowding.

THREE GREATEST CONCERNS FOR A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT SERVES THE GYA?

YELL:

- Congestion and Capacity:
 - What tools are available to address these and what are the consequences across park and region?

- That the transportation system of the future is something we can sustain

- How do we coordinate our activities among all of our agencies, jurisdictions, and with public and private entities?

GREATEST OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTNERING TO IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION IN AND AROUND THE GYA?

- NPS staff work collaboratively and seamlessly with local jurisdictions on an almost daily basis
- Seek ways for already existing transportation systems to be extended into the parks
- NPS needs help and input from regional partners to find solutions
- How can we:
 - Share data?
 - Understand intended and unintended consequences region-wide?
 - Leverage funding?