

From: [Mike Murray](#)
To: [Ona Ferguson](#)
Cc: [Cyndy Holda](#); [Paul Stevens](#)
Subject: Re: Vehicle characteristics subcommittee
Date: 11/05/2008 03:09 PM

Ona,

Try this version:

Vehicle Characteristics and Operations Subcommittee,

We've gotten some feedback from NPS on the newest iteration of the document. There don't seem to be any concerns about most of the document, which is good. NPS does have several comments/concerns about the self-contained vehicle camping topic, which are as follows:

1. Demand vs. Funding constraints: Historically, the demand for off-season camping has not supported operating the NPS campgrounds beyond the current dates. No matter how "self-contained" the vehicles might be, there are inherent costs (patrol, trash removal, etc.) with operating a self-contained area. Campground facilities, including dump stations, are not winterized and would have to be upgraded. NPS cannot commit to keeping 3 campgrounds (or even one) open for self-contained units in the off-season, unless the operation is "cost neutral."

2. Competition with local businesses: NPS does not want to compete with local commercial campgrounds for off-season customers, which is a concern already expressed by some business owners. This concern must be addressed.

3. Fairness issue: If NPS opens park campgrounds to provide a low-amenity off-season camping opportunity for self-contained vehicles, then tent campers, who are not necessarily well represented by stakeholders on the committee, will likely request the same opportunity, which leads back to Item # 1 concerns about operating costs.

If the subcommittee feels strongly that one or more self-contained camping areas is worth pursuing further, NPS suggests that the subcommittee work toward resolving the concerns above. Perhaps, start with the business representatives on the committee checking with the local campground operators to determine their level of support or opposition to this proposal. If there is significant opposition, then perhaps a win-win solution would be for the committee to work with the campground operators to ensure there are reasonably priced off-season rates for self-contained vehicles (i.e., for RV's that do not need hook-ups). If there is strong support by local businesses for the idea, then focus on resolving items # 1 and 3. If the subcommittee as a whole is ambivalent about the issue, perhaps a way to address the interest would be to make a "recommendation" that NPS address the issue of off-season camping opportunities in its upcoming General Management Plan (GMP).

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What would you all like to do given this feedback? We could proceed to distribute the document, noting NPS concerns in the distribution email or the document itself. A few of you could talk with Scott or Judy to get their input in the next day or two then you could let us know what you hear from them. Or there are certainly other ways to proceed - we could have another subcommittee call, say on Monday. Your preferences?

I will be out of the office for the next two days teaching a course, but will be checking email and phone messages.

Best,

Ona

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To "Mike_Murray@nps.gov"
<Mike_Murray@nps.gov>, Cyndy Holda
<Cyndy_Holda@nps.gov>

11/05/2008 01:54 PM

cc

Subject Vehicle characteristics subcommittee

Mike,

Please review the message to the subcommittee I've drafted to capture your feedback, and let me know if it is will work.

Best,

Ona

Vehicle Characteristics and Operations Subcommittee,

We've gotten some feedback from NPS on the newest iteration of the document. There don't seem to be any concerns about most of the document, which is great.

NPS does have three concerns about the self-contained vehicle camping topic,

but doesn't want to hinder your progress towards sharing your work with the Committee. The main concerns are: (a) funding questions regarding staffing and support for even minimal facilities or operations, and the possibility that there won't be much demand, (b) fairness concern for those in tents, and (c) not wanting to compete with local businesses. They suggest that we consult with Judy Swartwood (the Committee's CH Business Allies rep) or Scott Leggat (Chamber of Commerce) to discuss item (c). They wonder if it might be possible to come up with a workable solution where the campgrounds could offer a low-cost, low-season option for self-contained vehicles perhaps, thereby relieving demands on NPS and supporting the local economy. Also, they noted that national seashores that allow self-contained vehicle camping have very strict regulatory structures for ORV management, so something for self-contained vehicles on CAHA would need a strong regulatory context and would, ideally, be less complex and more workable than the regs at some of the other seashores.

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