

Moose-Wilson plans outlined, comment invited

By Mike Koshmrl Jackson Hole Daily | Posted: Monday, August 18, 2014 4:30 am

Grand Teton National Park officials have unveiled four alternatives for the future of the much-debated Moose-Wilson Road.

Released Friday, the draft plans that are up for public comment range from leaving the road as it is to prohibiting vehicles two days a week.

Grand Teton spokeswoman Jackie Skaggs said the plans are being referred to as works in progress, and that they are still taking shape.

“These are preliminary alternatives,” Skaggs said, “and we fully expect these preliminary alternatives will evolve over the course of the planning effort. They will be refined as we get public comments.”

All the plans are designed to deal with increasing use of the road, and to balance opposing views of its future: Some people prefer it as the bucolic back road it was for much of its life and want to limit use; others want to improve the road to meet user demand.

One option, Alternative B, “emphasizes the corridor as a visitor destination,” according to a Teton park document. Under the plan, two northern portions of the Moose-Wilson Road would be realigned, and a graveled southern stretch would be paved. To handle increasing traffic and congestion, through traffic in either direction would be restricted “during certain peak periods.”

Alternative C aims for a “balance of preservation and public use.” Under the proposal almost all of Moose-Wilson Road would be open only to cyclists and pedestrians for two days a week. While vehicles would be allowed on the road the other five days of the week there would be limits on vehicle numbers “during certain peak periods.”

Alternative D, the final option that would result in change, emphasizes linking Moose-Wilson Road to the rest of the park and to the “region’s larger recreational network.”

Two northern sections of the road would be realigned, and hourly vehicle limits would be set. The park would also establish a reservation system to manage the number of vehicles. The alternative also includes a separated multiuse pathway the length of the Moose-Wilson Road.

Skaggs said Grand Teton managers are favoring none of the four options at this stage in the process. Plans for the Moose-Wilson Road are being developed through an environmental impact statement; the Park Service is spending about \$1.9 million on the study.

Comments on the Moose-Wilson Road preliminary alternatives are being accepted through Sept. 15. Instructions for commenting are available online at ParkPlanning.nps.gov/MooseWilson.

Teton park has also organized an open house focused on the plans from 4 to 7 p.m. Aug. 28 at Teton County Library.