Yellowstone National Park News Release

Yellowstone Winter Season Begins Saturday

Yellowstone National Park will open to the public for the winter season as scheduled on December 15.

Beginning at 7:00 a.m. Saturday morning, visitors will be able to travel to the park’s interior roads on commercially guided snowmobiles or snowcoaches from the North, West and South Entrances. Travel through the park’s East Entrance over Sylvan Pass is scheduled to begin December 22.

The road from the park’s North Entrance at Gardiner, Montana through Mammoth Hot Springs and on to Cooke City, Montana, outside the park’s Northeast Entrance is open to wheeled vehicle travel all year.

At Old Faithful, the Geyser Grill, the Bear Den Gift Shop, and the Old Faithful Visitor Education Center open for the season on December 15. The Old Faithful Snow Lodge and Cabins and the Obsidian Dining Room open on December 18.

The Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, dining room and gift shop will open for the season on December 20. The Yellowstone General Store, the medical clinic, campground, post office and the Albright Visitor Center at Mammoth Hot Springs are open all year, as are the 24-hour gasoline pumps at Mammoth Hot Springs and Tower Junction.

All communities around and on the way to Yellowstone are open year-round, with local businesses offering a wide range of winter recreation opportunities. Extensive information and assistance for planning a visit to Yellowstone during the winter is on the park’s Web site at http://www.nps.gov/yell.

Park staff members will continue to closely monitor road conditions and weather forecasts that can have an impact on roadways and guided oversnow travel operations. Weather during the winter season is extremely unpredictable in Yellowstone and road closures or delays can occur with little or no warning. Visitors are reminded to come prepared by carrying personal emergency survival equipment in their vehicles and dressing appropriately for outside activities in extremely cold weather.

All the administrative steps have been completed in order for the 2012-2013 winter season to open as scheduled on Saturday. Winter Use in Yellowstone this season is being managed under an operating plan much in the same manner as has been permitted the last three winters. Under the rule, up to 318 commercially guided, Best Available Technology (BAT) snowmobiles and up to 78 commercially guided snowcoaches will be allowed into the park each day.

In early 2013, the National Park Service intends to issue a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and a proposed rule to guide long-term winter use in Yellowstone, which will take effect in time for the 2013-2014 winter season.

- www.nps.gov/yell -

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