



"At the water's edge...just keep going"

American Packrafting Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Representative Cynthia Lummis Introduces Paddling Legislation

New Legislation to Require Study of River Paddling in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks

Wilson, WY – After a year-and-a-half collaboration between paddlers, the National Park Service, and the Wyoming Congressional Delegation, Representative Cynthia Lummis (WY) introduced legislation today that would lead to an analysis of river paddling in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks. The “Yellowstone and Grand Teton Paddling Act” may allow traditional human-powered river paddling in select parts of these national parks as it is allowed in portions of all other U.S. national parks that have river resources.

“We are grateful for the leadership Representative Lummis and her staff have shown on this issue,” said Thomas Turiano, Vice President of the American Packrafting Association. “We believe this bill reflects the broad interests in conservation and responsible recreation that we all share.”

Under the new bill, the NPS will spend three years in public scoping and analysis of paddling on the Parks’ rivers, after which they will issue new rules about when and where river paddling may occur. The NPS will retain all of the tools and powers in their mandate to carry out this task. The legislation prohibits the issuance of any new commercial paddling permits.

With Park resources and the concerns of all Park visitors in the front of their attention, paddlers plan to ask the NPS to analyze 480 miles (less than 5%) of Yellowstone and Grand Teton’s thousands of miles of rivers and creeks. Please see the web links below for a list and map of the specific rivers paddlers will ask the NPS to consider. The paddlers’ recommended study list excludes most of the Teton high country, Hayden Valley, Lamar Valley, Firehole River through the geyser basins, and Gibbon River.

As the study process moves forward, paddlers will advocate for “Leave No Trace” backcountry rules and appropriate restrictions depending on specific values of each river or stream. Paddlers are not requesting the construction of new roads, parking lots, launches, and facilities. They will ask the NPS to weigh the impacts of paddling alongside the impacts of other river corridor uses, and include paddling when considering a corridor’s overall use capacity. Paddlers will advocate for rivers as “blue trails” and suggest ways to utilize existing infrastructure, such as backcountry permits and fees, in their management plan.

“We have a passion for connecting people and wild places,” said Aaron Pruzan, Owner of Rendezvous River Sports in Jackson, Wyoming. “We have seen the power that river paddling has to create a force for conservation. The Yellowstone river-running ban was instituted over 60 years ago due to pressure on the fishery brought on by float fishing. The value of simply boating on these rivers deserves reconsideration. Both the riparian corridors and park visitors will benefit from this long overdue study,” Pruzan concluded.

The American Packrafting Association (APA) was formed in 2012 to promote packrafting safety and education. APA is actively engaged with land managers nationwide to preserve appropriate opportunities for packrafting on public lands, while striving to instill a conservation ethic in every backcountry user. APA currently represents 900 members across the nation and in 30 countries worldwide.

A map of rivers that paddlers will ask the Parks to analyze during the scoping process:

<http://tinyurl.com/kw6r4xt>

A list of rivers that paddlers will ask the Parks to analyze during the scoping process:

<http://tinyurl.com/kxudvk4>

For more information on the Yellowstone and Grand Teton Paddling Act, please contact:

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