

# GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

## EVALUATION OF NON-MOTORIZED USE: POST PATHWAY 2010

### (DORNAN'S TO SOUTH JENNY LAKE)



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#### ♦ INTRODUCTION

As stated in the September 2006 Transportation Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Grand Teton National Park (GRTE, 2006), “Bicycling has become an increasingly popular activity in [GRTE], despite the lack of designated bike lanes and bike paths. Evidence of the interest in bicycling occurs each spring, prior to opening the Teton Park Road to motor vehicles. After the road is cleared of snow by April 1, it remains closed to motor vehicles until May 1. During this time, it is available for non-motorized uses (e.g., bicycling, walking, wheelchairs, rollerblading). The popularity of these activities, especially with local residents, is evident on most days, and during nice weather when the Taggart Lake parking lot is often filled beyond capacity, with the overflow continuing down the road toward Beaver Creek.” Consequently, the plan recommends the adoption of separated shared-use pathways along several roadway corridors within the park. The purpose of these pathways is to enhance mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians in the park, while enhancing their safety by separating them from motorized traffic.

In 2009, 7.7 miles of shared-use pathways were completed paralleling Teton Park Road from South Jenny Lake Junction to Moose Junction, ending at Dornan’s. Shared-use pathways are a major infrastructure change in the park that could impact visitor travel patterns. As stated in the 2007 EIS/Record of Decision (ROD), pre- and post-pathway construction monitoring will collect data on pathway user distributions, volume, user types,

behaviors, satisfaction, and conflicts to determine the pathway’s effects on visitor use and experience. This project is consistent with the ROD requirements as it monitors pathway and Teton Park Roadway non-motorized traveler volumes and conducts surveys to learn about opinions on safety, accessibility and types of visitor use on the pathways. The information on the number of users, patterns of use, and different types of users (e.g., bicyclists, pedestrians, etc.) will be used to complement the wildlife monitoring and data collection program, and to inform planning and design of later phases of the pathway system (GRTE, 2007). The wildlife monitoring is being conducted under a separate effort.

The goal is to collect and evaluate shared-use pathways in GRTE to assess their effects on non-motorized use, and to assess non-motorized travelers’ perceptions. Data was collected in 2007. This project will collect data in 2010 and 2011 for a before–after comparison of non-motorized user volumes and attitudes between 2007 (pre-pathway) and 2010/2011 (post-pathway).

#### ♦ METHODS

The research team collected non-motorized traveler volume data at the South Jenny Lake Junction, Taggart Lake parking lot, and in the vicinity of Dornan’s and/or the Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center area near the south end of the pathway as shown in Figure 1.

Researchers recorded mode of travel (bicycle, inline skater, walker or jogger) and direction

of travel (northbound or southbound from point of origin). Researchers recorded non-motorized travelers both on the roadway and on the shared-use pathway. In addition to volume data, surveys were administered to non-motorized travelers. Data was collected August 20, 21 and 22 (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) for consistency with 2007 data. Data will also be collected in 2011 and combined with the 2010 data. Non-motorized traveler count data will be summarized by descriptive statistics. Count data from 2010/2011 will be compared to that collected during 2007. This before–after comparison will identify how non-motorized travel in the park changed following the construction of the first 7.7-mile-long section of pathways connecting Dornan’s to South Jenny Lake.



Figure 1. 2010 non-motorized traveler data collection sites

## ◆ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Four researchers collected bicycle and pedestrian volume data and administered surveys to non-motorized travelers in Grand Teton National Park on August 20, 21 and 22, 2010. Researchers plan to complete additional counts and surveys in July 2011. Study results from 2007, 2010 and 2011 will be compiled, analyzed and presented in a report that will be submitted to GRTE officials by December 2011. Analyses will include frequency tabulations, measures of central tendency, and comparisons between bicycle and foot travelers. A copy of the report will be sent to the NPS Social Science Division to be archived in the Social Science Studies Collection.

## ◆ LITERATURE CITED

- Grand Teton National Park Transportation Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, September 2006.
- Grand Teton National Park Transportation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Record of Decision, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, March 2007.