

Sustainable Low Water Access Plan and
Environmental Assessment
Public Scoping Comment Summary Report

**National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Lake Mead National Recreation Area**

March 2023

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC SCOPING.....	3
COMMENT ANALYSIS	4
DEFINITION OF TERMS	4
CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.....	5
COMMENT SUMMARIES.....	9
PROMPTING QUESTIONS AND COMMENT SUMMARY STRUCTURE.....	9
LAUNCH RAMPS AND MARINAS.....	9
VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE	11
SOCIOECONOMICS	13
FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	15
NATURAL RESOURCES	16
COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION.....	17
PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS.....	17
NEW MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS	21
OUT OF SCOPE TOPICS	22

Overview of Public Scoping

The National Park Service (NPS) initiated the Sustainable Low Water Access Plan and environmental assessment (EA) for Lake Mead National Recreation Area (the park) in Fall 2022 to provide strategic direction for the future of motorized boat launching and related commercial services, facilities, and infrastructure needs at five key locations: Hemenway Harbor, Echo Bay, Callville Bay, Temple Bar, and South Cove. Previous planning did not anticipate the unprecedented rapid water level decline, and as such, a new plan/EA is needed to continue providing safe and sustainable access to the lake. The Sustainable Low Water Access Plan/EA for the park is critical to protect key resources, values, visitor experiences and provide safe and responsible access to the lake.

The plan/EA is needed to:

- fill an urgent and high-priority need to make critical decisions to inform boating needs;
- provide updated direction for natural and cultural resource programs;
- identify opportunities for nonmotorized, water-based access; and
- evaluate potential site closures and consolidation of concession operations.

As part of the planning effort, NPS initiated public scoping to seek feedback from the public during the NEPA initiation phase of the project. As part of public scoping, the park developed a public webpage to share progress on the plan and seek feedback through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) at

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=111766>.

The park released a newsletter in November 2022 providing background on the plan, its purpose, and a summary of management concepts. The newsletter was published on the PEPC website at: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?documentID=124787>. The newsletter solicited comments and participation from the public pertaining to the plan.

With the release of the newsletter, NPS held a public comment period that began on November 14, 2022. The comment period was originally scheduled to end on December 23, 2022, but was extended to January 22, 2023, following requests from the public. NPS held four public meetings during this period. Three meetings were hosted in person, and one was held virtually. Dates, locations, and times of the public meetings are provided below:

- Meadview, Arizona
 - Meadview Civic Association Building, 247 East Meadview Boulevard
 - Tuesday, December 6
 - 5:00 pm–7:00 pm MST
- Boulder City, Nevada
 - Bureau of Reclamation Conference and Training Center, 500 Date Street, Building 100
 - Wednesday, December 7
 - 12:00 pm–2:00 pm PDT
- Kingman, Arizona
 - Kingman Office of Tourism, 120 West Andy Devine Avenue

- Thursday, December 8
- 5:00 pm–7:00 pm MST
- Virtual Meeting
 - Wednesday, December 14
 - 4:00 pm–6:00 pm PDT

All comments received (entered into PEPC by the public, emails sent to park staff, and written comments mailed to the park headquarters) were considered and included in the overall project record and are summarized here. A total of 1,049 pieces of correspondence were received during the public comment period.

This Public Scoping Comment Summary Report summarizes the concerns expressed during the public comment period. The report first discusses comments related to general topics of interest, then addresses comments related to the proposed management concepts presented in the newsletter. Common topics included visitor experience, socioeconomic, and the management of marinas and associated concessions, launch ramps, and landing sites.

Comment Analysis

Definition of Terms

Correspondence: A correspondence is the entire document received from a commenter and includes letters, emails, comments entered directly into the PEPC database, and any other written comments provided either at the public meetings or in person at the park.

Comment: A comment is a portion of text within a correspondence that addresses a single subject such as “Natural Resources.” The comment could also question the accuracy of the information provided in the newsletter, question the adequacy of any background information, or present issues other than those presented in the newsletter.

Code: A code is a grouping centered on a common subject, such as “Natural Resources.” Codes are developed during the public comment process and are used to track major subjects found in the newsletter. In cases where no comments are received on an issue, the code is not identified or discussed in this report.

Comment Summary: A grouping that is centered on a common subject. Comment summaries combine similar comments.

Substantive Comments: A substantive comment is one that:

- Questions, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information in the NEPA document
- Questions, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of the environmental analysis
- Presents reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the NEPA document
- Causes changes or revisions in the proposal

Correspondence Received

The following tables were produced by the NPS PEPC database and provide information about the numbers and types of correspondences received, organized by code and by various demographics. Table 1 through Table 4 present data on the number of correspondences received by correspondence type, organization type, state, and country.

Table 5 details the number of comments identified by code. Each correspondence was reviewed, and individual comments identified, with the possibility that each correspondence could have multiple comments. A total of 3,482 individual comments were derived from the 1,049 correspondences received. Of the 1,049 correspondences, 1,004 were unique correspondence and 45 were form letters with 282 total signatures.

TABLE 1. CORRESPONDENCE DISTRIBUTION BY CORRESPONDENCE TYPE

Correspondence Type	Correspondences
Web Form	1,028
Email	14
Letter	4
Other	3

TABLE 2. CORRESPONDENCE DISTRIBUTION BY ORGANIZATION TYPE

Organization Type	Correspondences
Unaffiliated Individual	981
Business	46
Recreational Groups	9
Town or City Government	3
University/Professional Society	3
State Government	2
Churches, Religious Groups	1
Civic Groups	1
Conservation/Preservation	1
Federal Government	1
Non-Governmental	1

TABLE 3. CORRESPONDENCE DISTRIBUTION BY STATE

State	Correspondences
Nevada	735
California	162
Arizona	69
Utah	17
Unidentified	9
Idaho	9
Washington	8
Montana	5
Texas	5
New Mexico	4
Ohio	4
Florida	3
Missouri	3
Colorado	2
Tennessee	2
Pennsylvania	2
Illinois	2
Oregon	1
New York	1
Michigan	1
Nebraska	1
Washington DC	1
Kansas	1
Virginia	1
Indiana	1

TABLE 4. CORRESPONDENCE DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTRY

Country	Correspondences
USA	1,047
Canada	1
United Kingdom	1

TABLE 5. COMMENT DISTRIBUTION BY CODE

Code	Comments	Percentage
Launch Ramp and Marinas	1164	33.4%
Visitor Use and Experience – Motorized Boating	421	12.1%
Out of Scope – Issues and Concerns Related to Lowering Lake Levels	373	10.7%
Socioeconomics	288	8.3%
Management Concept 1 (Current Management) - Support	183	5.3%
Concession and Commercial Services	174	5.0%
Visitor Use and Experience – Other Issues	142	4.1%
Out of Scope – All Other Issues	127	3.6%
Public Involvement	54	1.6%
Visitor Use and Experience – Nonmotorized Boating	53	1.5%
Facilities and Infrastructure	50	1.4%
Management Concept 3 – Oppose	48	1.4%
General or Parkwide Suggestions	45	1.3%
Consultation and Coordination	44	1.3%
Miscellaneous Comments	43	1.2%
New Management Concepts	42	1.2%
Natural Resources	33	0.9%
Abandoned Facilities	31	0.9%
Management Concept 1 (Current Management)	29	0.8%
References, Edits, Additional Information, Data	28	0.8%
Scope of Analysis	26	0.7%
Management Concept 2 – Oppose	21	0.6%
Purpose and Need	19	0.5%
Potable Water	14	0.4%
Management Concept 2 - Support	11	0.3%
Management Concept 3	8	0.2%
Management Concept 2	7	0.2%
Management Concept 1 (Current Management) - Oppose	3	0.1%

Code	Comments	Percentage
Cultural Resources	1	<0.1%
TOTAL	3482	100%

Comment Summaries

Prompting Questions and Comment Summary Structure

Five questions were posed to commenters to receive targeted feedback on the Sustainable Low Water Access Plan/EA. Comments received from these prompts were considered and are summarized below.

1. *Given the current water levels and future projections, what experiences in Lake Mead National Recreation Area are most important to you? What kind of experiences do you want future visitors to have when they come to the park?*
2. *Given your response to Question #1 regarding important experiences for you and future visitors, what barriers might get in the way of enjoying or visiting Lake Mead National Recreation Area? What barriers might prevent you from achieving your desired experiences?*
3. *Please provide input on the preliminary management concepts. What do you recommend the planning team consider to address barriers and/or key issues, given the rapid decline in water levels?*
4. *What actions is the park currently taking to manage these issues that you'd like to see continue?*
5. *Other thoughts you'd like to share with the project team?*

Launch Ramps and Marinas

Water Access

Commenters asserted that there is insufficient motorized boating water access in the park due to lowering water levels and constant work on launch ramps. Many commenters noted their lack of interest in returning to the park due to these issues because launch ramps are important to their experience in the park. Commenters pointed out particular areas and marinas that are important to their motorized boating experience, such as Las Vegas Bay Marina, Lake Mead Marina, and Callville Bay. Several commenters said that the closure of Temple Bar would be detrimental to their motorboating experience on Lake Mead.

Commenters requested more access points and launch ramps and suggested the park follow the examples set by Lake Powell, Lake Havasu, and Lake Mohave for well-built launch ramps that can accommodate rising and lowering waters.

Commenters had suggestions for how the park could maintain access for motorized boating. Commenters suggested adding signs that say “launch at your own risk” so that people can still launch their motorized boats when the water is low; commenters noted that they would still go out on the lake without launch ramps. One commenter requested that the park still allow boat, houseboat, and jet ski rentals if people are not allowed to launch their own boats.

Several commenters suggested expanding public/private sector partnerships to help maintain and solve issues of water access at the marinas. One commenter urged collaboration between NPS and concessioners to keep the lake open and enhance public perception. Commenters

further suggested that the park give concessioners more ability to manage the ramp areas and marinas, because concessioners have the ability to respond quickly to the falling lake levels to move those services. Commenters suggested the park turn over the responsibility of the launch ramps to private entities because they can provide better funding, development, and maintenance than the park service. Other commenters requested the park continue to maintain the launch ramps themselves because Lake Mead is a National Recreation Area and public land.

Locations for New Launch Ramps

While commenters appreciated the maintained access at Hemenway Harbor, they requested additional motorized boating access to Lake Mead, particularly at Temple Bar and Callville Bay. Additional locations where commenters requested launch ramps included Echo Bay and South Cove. Additionally, commenters suggested new locations for launch ramps, including the following:

- Beach on southeast side of the dam, with access by the first exit after the dam.
- Off the beach on the east point of the Echo Bay boat ramp.

Many commenters felt the park should continue to improve and maintain Hemenway Harbor above all other locations.

Commenters recommended the park use topographic maps to determine feasible locations for new ramps to allow further access as the water level lessens. One commenter suggested the park conduct a geological evaluation for new ramps. Another commenter suggested a comprehensive plan.

Portable Launch Ramps

Commenters questioned why the park was not considering portable launch ramps as replacements for all existing concrete launch ramps. The commenters further questioned if concessioners maintaining portable launch ramp would pay for the removal of the existing concrete launch ramp. Commenters stated their desire for at least a portable launch ramp at Temple Bar, which would allow them to continue enjoying motorized boating in the area. One commenter requested a description of the portable launch ramp considered under the Callville Bay and Temple Bar Management Concepts.

Marina Concerns and Suggestions

Commenters provided several suggestions to keep marinas open in the park, including the following:

- Turn over control of the marinas to private entities.
- Relocate marinas to new locations.
- Consider alternative marina options, such as boats on buoys.

- Add temporary marina slip spaces in more active seasons and use the revenue to fund the park.

Commenters expressed concern that closing the marinas would impact fishing, camping, and other visitor experiences since the marinas provide food, fuel, restrooms, water, and lodging. Detriments to houseboat owners were also discussed, and commenters were concerned that houseboat experience would suffer if marinas were closed. Some commenters said that people would stop visiting the park entirely if launch ramps and marinas were closed, but others said that people would still come to enjoy other opportunities at the park. One commenter requested the park consider the addition of more marine storage because the current wait list is unacceptable. The commenter suggested that a portion of the fees for the expanded marine storage could help pay for ramp improvements.

One commenter requested the park purchase the private marinas in the area because they are not maintained and the revenue from the slip rentals could assist with park funding. One commenter suggested that marina guests might be interested in “providing labor, materials and heavy equipment to give hosts a hand in balancing the access to marinas and guests.”

Visitor Use and Experience

Significance of Motorized Boating

Commenters shared the value of motorized boating as an important part of their experience at Lake Mead. Commenters asked the park to keep the lake open to motorized boating and shared that it is their favorite activity at the park. Commenters noted that motorized boating is the only way they can access certain parts of the lake, and many said that the ability to jet ski, water ski, wake surf, and fish was important to their visitor experience. Many commenters asserted that the purpose of the park is to allow water-based recreation, and several commenters said that they would not come to Lake Mead without motorized boating. Some commenters said that nonmotorized boat access was also important but noted that motorized boating provides access to other parts of the lake, especially for those who cannot use a nonmotorized boat because of age or ability. Commenters urged the park to produce a long-term plan to keep providing access for motorized boats on the lake. Several commenters felt that the park underestimates the importance of motorized boating to visitors.

Long Wait Times to Launch and Retrieve Boats

Commenters noted that long wait times to launch their boat detracted from their experience at the lake and expressed frustration with having to pay to enter the park only to wait in lines to launch their boats. To combat wait times, commenters suggested limiting the number of people accessing the lake per day; limiting launch access through reservations or a lottery system; public outreach or advertising for less populated launch ramps or marinas; providing a courtesy dock for visitors with smaller vessels, inexperienced boaters, or boaters who may take longer to get in and out of the water; implementing rule sets and ranger supervision at launch ramps during

high-volume seasons; the use of cameras and signs to communicate the long wait times; and providing a pay-to-launch valet or tractor service to hasten launch times.

Balancing Nonmotorized and Motorized Boating

Commenters were against transitioning all visitor use to nonmotorized use only; however, commenters expressed the importance of nonmotorized boating to their experience in the park. Some commenters expressed support for both types of boating on the lake, while other commenters said they would not use the lake at all if nonmotorized boats were the only vessels allowed on the lake. One commenter said that all forms of boating should be allowed, so long as they do not impact water levels in Lake Mead. Another commenter noted that nonmotorized boats are more affordable and should be allowed on Lake Mead along with motorized boats. One commenter said they support restrictions on motorized boats since nonmotorized vessels have lower environmental impacts. A commenter suggested temporarily restricting residential motorized watercraft and endorsing nonmotorized vessels instead.

Commenters expressed a desire to continue using nonmotorized boats on the lake, including kayaking, canoes, paddleboards, and row boats. They noted the importance of nonmotorized boating to their experience in the park. Commenters expressed concern about how closing launch ramps (or the lake more generally) would impact their experiences on nonmotorized boats.

Commenters supported continued access for sailboats. One commenter requested that the park continue to allow keel sailboats that use auxiliary motors when not under sail on the lake. One commenter expressed concern about low water elevations limiting access for sailboats at Lake Mead Marina if the marina is not moved to deep enough water. Another commenter was concerned about what to do with their sailboat if the lake were closed to boating. Commenters asked for marinas to stay open so that they can keep sailboats in their slips.

Launching and Shoreline Access for Nonmotorized Vessels

Commenters asked for more shoreline access to safely launch nonmotorized watercraft such as kayaks and paddleboards. Some commenters added that a formal launch ramp would not be needed for these types of vessels, but a designated area with signage, an access road, and parking could help nonmotorized boat users access the lake. Other commenters suggested keeping a beach open to launch stand-up paddleboards. One commenter suggested the area between Callville Bay and Hemenway Harbor as a launching zone, while another noted that water access is so limited on the Echo Bay side that they cannot launch their paddleboards. Commenters expressed concern about NPS eliminating access at Temple Bar and asked for a safe place to launch kayaks and paddleboards. A commenter pointed out that a lake with just nonmotorized boats still needs facilities and launching infrastructure.

Accessibility Issues

Commenters had concerns about safety and accessibility in the park, particularly for older visitors and visitors with disabilities. The commenters noted that closing marinas, lacking trailer villages with full hook-up recreational vehicles (RVs), and restricting use to hiking, other shoreline activities, and nonmotorized boating would be ableist, ageist, and difficult for families with young children. Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility was a concern, particularly from parking lots to boat ramps and dock access. Commenters requested that launch ramps be accessible enough to not require special vehicles. Furthermore, commenters said that older visitors and visitors with disabilities could be prevented from fully enjoying the park if only nonmotorized boats were permitted. Commenters requested the park consider the needs of older visitors and visitors with disabilities when deciding on alternatives for the plan.

Importance of Commercial Services

Commenters noted that the presence of concessions and associated services is a key component of their experiences, and that these services (i.e., potable water, fuel services, pump out services, watersport rentals, boat slips) are needed to experience the park. One commenter noted that RV camping cannot happen without electricity, potable water, sanitary hookups, and trash disposal. Commenters noted that even if there needs to be adjustments made to concession operations to respond to lower lake levels, these operations should continue. Commenters suggested that the loss of these services would effectively close the park. Another commenter suggested conducting a study of how many people enter the area of each marina to assist with this future planning. Other commenters urged the park to keep marina services. Several commenters requested the park modify concessions and associated services to adjust to the future water levels. Commenters suggested additional concession services they would like to see at the launch ramps and marinas, including additional boat storage, a paddle board resort, shade stations, picnic areas, vendor carts, and food trucks.

Socioeconomics

Economic Importance of Water-Based Recreation

Commenters wrote about the economic importance of the water-based recreation industry in the Lake Mead area and expressed concerns about the economic impacts of marina and launch ramp closures. Commenters noted the economic benefits that the boating community brings to the region. Commenters also noted that the closure of marinas and launch ramps would be devastating for workers in the area. Commenters stated that there would be impacts to businesses and the public throughout the region if the lake were closed to boating. Many commenters said that the motorized boating and water-based recreation industry is a way of life for families, small businesses, and other vendors. Decreased value of boats was a concern, as well as impacts to the marine repair and sales sector. Commenters specifically noted impacts to neighboring Tribal Nations, Boulder City, and Henderson if the lake were closed to boating. Commenters also brought up the loss of fish license and boat registration revenue.

Impacts to Tourism

Commenters noted the importance of tourism to the area's economy. Commenters cited the tourism revenue generated from houseboat rentals, restaurants, and tours, and expressed concern about what would happen if that income stream ceased to exist. Small business closures were another common concern if tourists no longer visited due to the closure of the lake. Commenters brought up the amount of money that tourism brings to the economy and asked the park to prioritize access to the lake in order to maintain tourism in the area and thereby allow the area to remain economically stable. One commenter stated that beach access was not enough to guarantee tourist visits.

Economic and Personal Financial Hardships

Commenters asked the park to consider personal financial hardships, including job losses, which could result from some of the proposed actions. Commenters expressed concern about the loss of jobs and decrease in revenue for businesses directly tied to Lake Mead and about more widespread economic effects in the region resulting from fewer visitors. Restaurant, cafe, boat repair shop, boat sales and accessories facilities, hotel, RV park, bicycle store, hiking tour, tour coach operator, and NPS employment losses were all areas of concern. More data on employment and potential job losses was requested by some commenters.

Several commenters shared the personal financial hardships they feared they would face if the lake closed. Commenters spoke of having to sell their boats, houseboats, and homes and needing to move away from the area. Other commenters were concerned about their property values falling as a result of the actions. Several commenters brought up being on fixed incomes and using retirement savings to live in the region and said that the changes could be devastating. Some commenters said that they had only moved to the area for lake access and said that they would move if they were no longer able to access the lake, thereby putting financial strain on their families.

Commenters had concerns about the economic impacts of moving boats as a result of the potential plan and questioned how private boats and trailers would be handled when commercial services are discontinued. Commenters voiced concern for their ability to remove private boats from the lake if the park closed marinas or launch ramps, and requested that the park provide boat removal at a reasonable expense if boating were no longer allowed on the lake.

Trailer and RV Villages

Commenters expressed concern about impacts to RV and trailer villages from the action. Many explained that they had made significant financial investments in mobile homes at the park and had made retirement plans based on the ability to access Lake Mead, and further noted that relocations may be financially devastating. Several commenters brought up the family traditions and sense of community that would be lost if trailer villages were closed. Commenters also pointed out that the RV and trailer villages bring in a lot of revenue to the area. Commenters

asked for compensation for taking property in trailer villages or a decrease in trailer costs if lake access were not provided. Commenters asked for permission to rent out their trailers. Echo Bay Trailer Village, Temple Bar Marina Trailer Village, and the trailer village near Callville were specifically named as areas commenters wanted the park to keep open and provided with services.

Regional and Gateway Communities

Commenters were concerned about economic impacts to gateway communities and other areas around Lake Mead. Commenters specifically named Boulder City, Meadview, Kingman, Mohave County, Clark County, Las Vegas, Henderson, Overton, Moapa Valley, and Logandale as communities that would have adverse economic impacts from the proposed changes. Commenters said that the entire states of Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and California could experience economic ripple effects from potential closures at Lake Mead. Several small business owners stated that they are already experiencing economic impacts and are concerned that they will have to close. Small business closures, impacts to the marine and boating industry in the area, restaurants, and hotels were areas of particular concern. Loss of sales tax revenue was another concern. One commenter noted that every community around Lake Mead, regardless of size, deserves the right to the same amount of lake access.

Facilities and Infrastructure

Impacts of Abandoned Facilities

Commenters requested the park consider the potential impacts to park resources from abandoned boats and trailers if the park discontinues commercial services or closes facilities, and further questioned if the park had a contingency plan for abandoned boats and trailers. Commenters were concerned that abandoned boats could damage waterways, abandoned trailers could attract squatters, and abandoned infrastructure would become an eyesore due to dilapidation and vandalism. One commenter specifically noted the Echo Bay motel and the courtesy docks at Temple Bar and South Cove as examples of what would occur to future abandoned structures. Commenters requested a cost comparison between facility upkeep compared to the cost of either restarting recreation in an area when water levels return to nominal levels or demolishing vacant facilities. One commenter suggested the park create a strategic plan with the marinas to determine future actions related to boat removal and abandoned facilities if a marina should close.

Maintenance and Improvement Requests and Suggestions

Commenters stated the importance of park infrastructure to visitor use and experience and requested investments in infrastructure and continued maintenance of roads, bathrooms, garbage collection, and boat launch repairs/expansions. Other commenters asked the park to maintain electric, sewer, water, and gas services. Commenters expressed the desire to see infrastructure in specific areas of the park maintained, including at Callville Bay and Hemingway

Harbor. Additionally, commenters requested improvements to access roads to launch areas and improved parking areas, such as improving the striping at the parking lot at Callville Bay, an asphalt road and parking at Lake Mead Marina, moving parking lots as ramp locations move, and general paving/maintenance of access roads. However, some commenters requested closing infrastructure and facilities to address the unsustainable practice of keeping the reservoir filled. Commenters wanted future users to be able to experience the park in the same way they have and argued that neglecting infrastructure would limit that possibility.

Natural Resources

Water Quality

Commenters expressed concern about water quality and water pollution. Commenters urged the park to prioritize water quality and prevent pollution from gasoline and sewage. Some commenters suggested that the park should limit gas-powered vessels on the lake to avoid water pollution. One commenter was concerned about water pollution from boat engines idling while waiting to be loaded and unloaded. One commenter said that limiting access to the water would prevent boat owners from maintaining their boats, which could lead to fluid leakage and environmental concerns.

Prioritization of Natural Resource Protection

Commenters urged the park to prioritize natural resource protection, such as wildlife protection and conservation. Several commenters expressed that experiencing Lake Mead's natural resources was a key part of their visitor experience and the reason for their visiting the area and requested that future visitors be able to experience the park's natural resources and beauty. Commenters specifically called out birding opportunities, night sky viewing, natural sounds, and the diverse animal and plant life as resources important to them.

Commenters requested the park restrict or ban recreational activities to preserve the natural environment. Several commenters requested water activities, particularly motorized boating, to be restricted to protect the environment and allow it to regenerate. One commenter asked for boat size restrictions.

One commenter suggested that the Sustainable Low Water Access Plan would concentrate visitors in fewer areas, harming the environment. A commenter said that light pollution was already impacting their night sky viewing experience. One commenter argued that boating on Lake Mead gives visitors an appreciation for the lake and its environment, and lets people witness the water crisis firsthand. One commenter noted that their wildlife encounters within the park would not have occurred without access to motorized boating. One commenter requested the park consider impacts to aquatic animals, while several commenters urged the park to remove trash and debris as the water recedes to protect wildlife. Conversely, one commenter said that bird refuges and fish habitat should not be the park's first priority.

Endangered Species

Commenters questioned NPS's plan to restore and protect the endangered three-corner milkvetch as lake levels change. The same commenter also asked what reports and studies NPS used to support the statement that "increased visitor use in the park is resulting in impacts on natural resources, specifically on terrestrial and aquatic vegetation, wildlife, and Federally listed species" in the newsletter.

Coordination and Consultation

Requests for Consultation

The BlueRibbon Coalition requested more information and to be considered an "interested public" for the project. The Real Change PAC asserted that the park is in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and asked to arrange a meeting with NPS.

Preliminary Management Concepts

The Preliminary Management Concepts can be reviewed in the newsletter provided on the PEPC website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?documentID=124787>.

Management Concept 1 - Priority Areas

Commenters requested the park prioritize certain areas. Requests for prioritization included the following:

- Prioritize Hemenway Harbor and Callville Bay, and then Temple Bar.
- Investments in launch ramps and facilities should come first.
- Focus on areas with higher levels of use and invest in the facilities there first.
- Maintain services and access at Hemenway Harbor and Callville Bay first because they are closer to Las Vegas.
- Maintain Temple Bar Marina because it is a center for lake access and has fuel.
- Prioritize boat access and improvements.

Management Concept 1 - Changes and Additions

Commenters stated that Management Concept 1 was the only concept that would allow them to enjoy the lake, citing the access to boat ramps and motorized boating that the concept provides. Commenters provided suggestions for changes or additions to the plan, included the following:

- Add a launch ramp at Callville Bay and South Cove.

- Put in more effort to increase boater access and extend launch ramps.
- Listen to concessioners and business owners to help guide Concept 1 and keep concessions as they are currently.
- Relocate the current Hemenway Harbor ramp closer to Boulder Wall to the south and potentially add two ramps at that location if water levels rise to ease traffic and as consolation for Boulder Harbor and Las Vegas Bay.
- Build a dock and boat ramp at Hemenway Harbor and Callville Bay.

Commenters wanted the park to keep their current plan to avoid impacts to tourism and the local economy. A commenter was in favor of Management Concept 1 to avoid the costs associated with closing infrastructure.

Commenters had questions about the rationale behind Management Concept 1. One commenter asked why there would be no boat launch at South Cove when water elevation drops below 1,035 feet and asked for NPS to explain their reasoning. Another commenter asked how Callville Bay could continue to house a marina if the launch ramp, potable water, concessions, and facilities maintenance are not guaranteed.

Management Concept 1 - 2019 Environmental Assessment

One commenter questioned what actions were implemented since the 2019 EA. Commenters noted that 1,044 feet is not considered extremely low water levels because it is well above the 950 feet water level noted in the 2019 EA.

Management Concept 2 - Changes and Additions

Commenters suggested that Management Concept 2 was not a viable alternative because it removes concessions that boaters rely on, lessens access to the lake, and would shut down Temple Bar Marina, which would create a dilapidated area similar to Echo Bay. One commenter suggested that Management Concept 2 should only be considered when water levels are under 950 feet.

Commenters suggested revisions or additions to Management Concept 2, including:

- the reduction of services and expenses at Temple Bar Marina while allowing the marina, concessions, restaurant, trailer village and fuel support to continue;
- access additions for kayakers and jet skiers at Echo Bay;
- primitive camp sites at Echo Bay; and
- portable launch ramps to expand recreational opportunities.

Management Concept 2 & 3 - Temple Bar

Commenters expressed concern about the economic impacts of closing down Temple Bar Marina and the associated concessions. Commenters were concerned that the area would

become a “ghost town” and stressed the impacts to workers and their families if the area were closed. Investments that lessees made in boats and houseboats at Temple Bar was another concern raised by commenters.

Additionally, commenters emphasized the importance and need for commercial services at Temple Bar. Commenters noted Temple Bar’s remote location as justification for maintaining fuel services, food, sewage and pump out, and shelter at the marina. One commenter explained that Temple Bar Marina is the only place for fuel in that part of the lake and argued that not having fuel in the area could have safety ramifications. One commenter said that closing Temple Bar Marina would be unsafe for motorboaters because it would require that boaters make “two large basin crossings” and put “boaters in harm’s way.” One commenter said that removing access for motorized boats at Temple Bar would keep them from camping because they would not have enough fuel to reach the campground. Additionally, commenters pointedly noted Temple Bar’s key role for supporting emergency services and response in the park. Commenters expressed concern that emergency services would be too far away without Temple Bar Marina in operation. Commenters also noted that concessioner staff promote visitor safety and were concerned about safety in their absence. Additionally, commenters suggested the loss of services in this area would be discrimination against Arizona and its taxpayers. Commenters noted that the Trailer Village supports Temple Bar, and this relationship should be continued; commenters requested this contract be renewed and in longer than one-year increments. Lastly, one commenter noted that none of the Temple Bar concepts stipulate that the park would consider or evaluate the return of commercial services when water levels return to above 1,065 feet.

Commenters noted the discussion of commercial services and visitor use in the newsletter was misleading because it does not acknowledge that visitors’ numbers have been impacted by launch ramp closures at Callville Bay, Echo Bay, and Temple Bar; the commenter requested NPS acknowledge the negative impact to those locations.

One commenter questioned why the operation of the well at Temple Bar was dependent on funding and how much it would cost to drill a new well. Regarding the lack of potable water under Management Concept 3 for Temple Bar, the commenter questioned:

- how recreational activities would be feasible without a source of potable water;
- how visitor safety would be impacted; and
- how the Temple Bar Ranger Station would be protected from fire emergencies.

Management Concepts 2 & 3 - Access to Lake Mead and Associated Services

Commenters expressed concern that the plan would impede their ability to access and enjoy the lake. Commenters urged the park to keep services open in order to maintain their current experience in the park. Services that were specifically called out by commenters included marina and docking access, parking areas, nonmotorized and motorized boat launches, fueling facilities, restaurants, concessions, storage, supplies, and marina stores. Many commenters shared the activities at Lake Mead that are the most important to them other than motorized boating. Activities cited as important to visitor experience included fishing, tours, stand-up paddleboarding and kayaking, and access to piers.

Management Concepts 2 & 3 - Impact of Closures on Visitor Experience

Commenters expressed their concern that closing marinas, concession services, and other amenities would impede their ability to enjoy Lake Mead. Commenters expressed concern that closing the marinas would impact fishing, camping, and other visitor experiences since the marinas provide food, fuel, restrooms, water, and lodging. Some commenters said that people would stop visiting the area entirely if launch ramps and marinas were closed, but others said that people would still come to enjoy other opportunities at the park. One commenter said that the lake would be too hot for people to visit without access to the water. Commenters noted that the services in the park help improve their visitor experience and urged the park to keep all services open. One commenter said that closing Temple Bar would result in longer travel times for many visitors. Overall, commenters expressed concern about how closures, reduced services, and more limited amenities might impact their experience in the park.

Management Concepts 2 & 3 - Visitor Safety

Commenters shared their concern that closing marinas would lead to unsafe conditions, noting that they are access points for emergency personnel and provide fuel. Commenters asked for safer and more accessible access to the beach, and one commenter asked for rocks to be removed from the beach to improve visitor safety and access to the water. One commenter expressed concern that closing Lake Mead to motorized boating would increase traffic and decrease safety in other NPS areas, including Lake Mohave and Lake Powell. Commenters also expressed concerns about rocks and other hazards emerging as water levels drop and suggested marking them. Commenters also asked the park to implement low or no wake zones for safety. Furthermore, commenters noted that prioritizing nonmotorized boating could have safety implications. Commenters pointed out that nonmotorized boats can be dangerous in certain areas of the lake, such as on the Arizona side. Others noted that nonmotorized boaters might need to be rescued more frequently in high wind conditions, severe weather, or when the boaters are too fatigued. One commenter requested the park ban motorized boats for safer paddleboarding. Lastly, one commenter requested more sources of potable water around the park due to safety concerns.

Management Concept 2&3 – Desired Conditions

Commenters noted items were missing from the desired conditions in the newsletter. One commenter noted that the list of recreational opportunities in desired conditions does not include motorized boats, but the management action list contained items related to motorized boating. Another commenter asked why the desired conditions in the newsletter did not include motorized water-based recreation experiences and said that the desired conditions excluded a large portion of visitors to Lake Mead. One commenter asked why the desired conditions for facilities and infrastructure at Hemenway Harbor were not included as desired conditions for Callville Bay and Temple Bar, as the commenter felt that there is no difference between these sites. The commenters requested the park revise the management action list for consistency.

Management Concept 3 - Questions and Clarifications

Commenters expressed confusion over some of the park's proposed management concepts for motorized boating. Some commenters questioned the connection of motorized boating to the lake's water levels. One commenter asked if eliminating motorized boating in all locations except Hemenway Harbor would be consistent with the park's enabling legislation, resource protection, and the Arizona economy.

Management Concept 3 - Impacts on Marinas

Commenters were concerned about the impacts of Management Concept 3 on marinas. One commenter singled out the Temple Bar Marina as an example and was concerned about the loss of amenities and potential for vandalism if the marina shuts down. Another commenter said that Concept 3's closure of the marina at Hemenway would be devastating to boaters and tourists. A commenter said that closing the marinas as proposed in Management Concept 3 ignores the needs of the public.

Management Concept 3 - Lake Access and Potable Water Concerns

Commenters stated that Management Concept 3 would lead to loss of access to the lake and would not serve the public's needs and desires. One commenter suggested allowing concessioners to assist in building and maintaining ramps. One commenter was concerned about the loss of lake access and the economic ramifications of Management Concept 3 in Nevada. Commenters stated that Management Concept 3 was too extreme and urged the park to instead take more gradual measures. One commenter said that having no potable water at Temple Bar under Management Concept 3 would be unfair to Arizona taxpayers because there would not be potable water on the Arizona side of the lake.

Management Concept 3 - Requests for Park Closure Based on Water Levels

Commenters were in favor of Management Concept 3, particularly that the park should close lake access to the general public until water levels rise. One commenter specifically requested park management stop on-lake activities for a period of three to five years, with assessments of the water level and health of the lake, and resume on-lake activities only when the lake's water level has improved.

New Management Concepts

Expanded Lake Access and Recreation

Commenters requested a new alternative that expands lake access and recreation for visitors. This alternative would include providing more launch ramps and services, offering more affordable boat rental services, and increasing funding for lake access. Commenters were not

convinced the current management concepts fully explored a range of alternatives as required by NEPA due to their lack of increasing lake access.

Launch Ramp Suggestions and Improvements for Varying Water Levels

Commenters provided suggestions to improve access to the lake, including the creation of:

- new launch ramps at lower water levels;
- primitive, dirt, gravel, shore, or “at your own risk” launch sites;
- concrete launch ramps (similar to those at Havasu);
- more boat docks or floating docks with rental slips to lessen pressure on launch ramps;
- boat ramps for watercraft of all sizes, such as a ramp with increased length to accommodate sailing vessel launches;
- widened launch ramps; and
- more marinas.

Additionally, commenters suggested the use of:

- pipe mat or mobi-mat;
- floating or mobile launch ramps, such as off a barge;
- launch ramps that can extend with rising and lowering waters;
- launch ramps that can be deployed and removed like puzzle pieces;
- steeper launch ramp grades to improve access as water levels decline;
- a lift on a dock to raise vessels so trailers would not need to go as far into the lake; or
- explosives to make ramps that can traverse cliffs.

Commenters requested that the park consider how it would provide lake access for varying water levels up until the lake is no longer navigable, rather than basing it on a particular water level that is still accessible.

Out of Scope Topics

Commenters provided input on other topics related to the park that were considered out of scope for the actions under this plan/EA.

Commenters offered suggestions for improvements to the park’s visitor use through improvements to the camping areas, improvements to health and safety, creation of new day areas, installation of more signage throughout the park, and cleaning up old or dilapidated buildings and marinas in the park. Some commenters suggested the park reduce or restrict the use of motorized boats on the lake, while other commenters were concerned that restricting motorized boats on the lake would negatively impact the local boating and fishing industry. Commenters suggested raising fees to enhance the park’s revenue, while other commenters noted increased fees would detract from visitor experience.

Regarding NEPA and the public involvement process, commenters were dissatisfied and requested more public meetings, an extension to the comment period, expansion of their modes of outreach, and collaboration with the federal government, state governments, and other associated governmental agencies. Commenters recommended NPS create an Environmental Impact Statement in place of an EA and requested faster federal response to the issues at Lake Mead.