

United States Senate

October 09, 2019

Cameron Sholly
Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park
National Park Service
PO Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

Jeff Mow
Superintendent of Glacier National Park
National Park Service
PO Box 128
West Glacier, MT 59936

Dear Mr. Sholly and Mr. Mow,

I want to thank you for your continued hard work of operating and maintaining some of Montana's most treasured places. As you may know, tourism is one of Montana's leading economic drivers, which is why I am committed to increasing visitation to all of Montana's national parks, battlefields, historic sites and more. As two of Montana's most frequently visited attractions, your leadership can be a vital instrument in working to increase visitation at other Park Service units in Montana.

As you may be aware, I recently hosted an official U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources field hearing at the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site. As Chairman of the National Parks Subcommittee, I held this hearing to examine the opportunities of expanding visitation at lesser-known National Park System units. Over 5.5 million people visited national parks in Montana last year. Of that, 70% of visitors went to Yellowstone and 57% of visitors went to Glacier. Those guests spent approximately \$633 million in local gateway regions, supporting over 9,500 jobs. As we continue to see record-breaking visitation numbers, encouraging visitation to smaller parks in Montana is imperative to both reduce stress on larger parks and promote healthy gateway economies in other regions.

One of the suggestions discussed at the hearing was for less-visited parks to partner with Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks to promote visitation. Others suggested increasing coordination among Montana's park units to accommodate tour groups, particularly those interested in making multiple stops or expanding their current itineraries.

While these are not comprehensive solutions, I am interested in working with you to further explore these opportunities. As the Superintendents of the most visited parks in the Intermountain Region (now Regions 6, 7, and 8), I am interested in learning more about your annual leadership conferences, and any role the discussion of promoting lesser-visited parks may play in those meetings. Do you and your staffs, or the regional office, have any type of working group that regularly monitors visitation and its impact on gateway communities? If so, is there a role for the promotion of lesser-visited parks in this type of group? Further, where do you see opportunities to grow partnerships and coordination with other National Park Service units?

Answers to these questions and any other information you may find pertinent will be helpful as I continue to work to expand visitation to all of Montana's and the Nation's parks.

I appreciate all you currently do to bring joy to the millions of visitors to Montana's national parks each year, and look forward to continuing to work with you on this important task of promoting visitation to smaller, lesser-known parks in Montana. I thank you for your attention to this important matter and I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator

Cc: Chip Jenkins, Acting Regional Director