**Clyde Seely’s Presentation**

**3 Bear Lodge, West Yellowstone, SeeYellowstone.com, Yellowstone Tour & Travel**

Do you mind if I go back and give you a little history about myself and why I’m so passionately involved with this whole thing? I guess that’s because it’s my life. Let just tell you a little bit about myself. I, I grew up 70 miles south of here on a little farm near St. Anthony, Idaho, and we didn’t have a whole lot of money. Then my brother got engaged. He had worked here at Three Bear Lodge the previous summer and was supposed to go back and work, but he got engaged and needed the money to, you know, get prepared for that, but we didn’t make any money on the farm and so anyway, he and I worked out a deal. I said, alright, I’ll go to West Yellowstone and work for you and I’ll send you the paycheck. You stay at the farm and work for nothing, because that’s the way we did, you know, so that’s what happened. I came to work here as a laundry boy at 19 and fell in love with the place. I worked only one summer and then I was gone for a couple years to England and then came back and got married and finished school and began teaching school in Idaho on a provisional certificate, brought my wife up to meet the Wilsons, who own the place and they gave us a call shortly after and said, why don’t you come back and work for us? So we did and, so that was the beginning of a more personal hands-on relationship with Three Bear Lodge. One day we were planting a lawn out back and Frances the owner said, “You know, Clyde, one day when you own this place” … she went on, and I – what? I’m 19 years old. And she’s saying that? I thought, well, yeah, fat chance, but it happened. I think I lived the American dream. I came off the farm, no money, no way of earning any money, then she throws that out. Well, she must have been serious in the back of her mind somehow, we had a good relationship and hit it off right off. But anyway, years later then, we begun managing the place and then we leased it and then January 2, 1970 I was teaching school over here and I came home at noon and signed the papers to purchase Three Bear Lodge and put them in the mail on the way back to school and at 2 o’clock, they called and said the motel was on fire. And so I came running home, was just a block away, cutting through the back and sure enough, the whole back, the back of the hotel was burning. Well, I just signed the papers and put them in the mail and was just a kid and, didn’t know what to do. Fortunately the place was insured and, but never enough, you know? So a friend of mine came over to help and after all the fire engines, we didn’t have much of a fire engine at the time, it was a little fire department, volunteer. After we got it out and everybody’d gone home, my friend said, you know, “If we’re going to get this open by March” – because we had booked, we closed up in the wintertime, but – “if we’re going to open in March, we’ve got to get started rebuilding this” and so he and I…I quit teaching school in the middle of the season, the winter, and my wife, who was also a teacher, finished out the year for me, and we rebuilt in order to have it open for the March snowmobile races. And then, I got the idea of why not keep Three Bear open in the wintertime and I had a snowmobile and loved it and had been in the park many times on the snowmobile. Before they groomed, hardly anybody in there. I thought “what is this world missing out on, not to be able to see this magnificent place in the wintertime?” And so I decided to get a few snowmobiles and rent them in the wintertime, keep Three Bear Lodge open and expose Yellowstone to the rest of the world.

So (00:05:36) I hopped on a plane with a typewritten sheet of a suggested itinerary and a few pictures, flew back to Minneapolis, started cold calling on travel agencies and snowmobile clubs and showing my few pictures from my typed-out itinerary and said “you’ve gotta come and see this place. It is the most awesome, unbelievable experience that you’ll ever have in the wintertime”. Well, that’s all I had, was passion for the place, the few pictures and they came. They started to come. A couple of snowmobile clubs, back there, Lake Minnetonka’s Snowmobile Club was the first one out of Minneapolis. And then we started to get more and more and I got involved with taking Boy Scouts during the Christmas holidays into Yellowstone on snowmobiles. This developed over a period of time. Now if you don’t think that would be a challenge…and we got to the point where we were growing over this period of time. We got to the point where we’d take 1200 Boy Scouts into Yellowstone in the Christmas holidays (…) It was over about a 10, 15-day period of time. Those kids grew up and they still bring their families back to Yellowstone in the wintertime because of the awesome experience that they had and remembered as a boy. I think at that time we charged them $25. That included five meals, two night’s lodging and a snowmobile and a personal guide – me. So anyway previous to that time, West Yellowstone would just board up its windows in the wintertime, they’d bring in a lot of wood, firewood, get some good books and play games, poker and all kinds of other games and, uh, the bars were active and that’s about it.

But most of the motels were boarded up, so when I came Labor Day, we drained the water, put antifreeze in the toilets and all of that stuff and closed it up. We closed up on Labor Day and we opened up on Memorial Day. And it sat here, this facility. It was made out of cinderblock, when I got here it was cinderblock wall, no insulation, no insulation in the roof. It was not winterized at all, so when we started keeping it open in the wintertime, we had a project on our hands, first of all, to winterize it so that we could keep it open and keep it from freezing and so on, but eventually, people started to come and they told their friends and so we’d get full, couldn’t take anymore people, so I called next door, travelers, and said “Hey. Why don’t you stay open? ‘Cause I’ve got some people coming and I can’t take them. They’d like to come, but I just can’t” and so, he stayed open. And then another place stayed open and another place stayed open and pretty soon, the winter economy in West Yellowstone that had been zero became the, the, the reason why West Yellowstone became a viable nationwide recognized place, because the economy was…we were able to build facilities on revenue generated from a year-round operation instead of a four or five-month operation in the summer (00:10:32).

Consequently, we look around today and, it’s a beautiful place. We built the hotel, the Holiday Inn down the street 14 years ago. We were the first ones to build a big hotel and a convention facility, and then all these other hotels that you see around sprung up. One of the first, when we built the hotel, the Holiday Inn, which incidentally we sold that May 15th of this year, so just a little while ago, and that’s part of my life in there as well, but one of the first conventions, meetings that we had in that convention facility, was to get together, uh…and this was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, anyway, starting to get some controversy generating because of the snowmobile usage in the park. So we got together sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and I was asked to moderate it. The park service, the snowmobile manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce, the snowmobile operators in town, we got all those people together in one room and said “Okay, what do we have to do?” Park service people were there, and they said “this is getting out of hand. It’s growing to the point where something is going to have to be done” and so we started off, first of all, by then instigating … ethanol fuels in our snowmobiles. So we used 10% blend ethanol fuel, which cut the pollution down by 35% on the snowmobiles. So the concern was, from the park service, air pollution, eventually, and then animals, “you’re disturbing the animals”, … sound, … and just some people didn’t think that that was an appropriate place to have snowmobiles.

So anyway it became apparent that we were…there was a potential of overdoing where we should be as far as maintaining the integrity of the park. So I asked the park superintendent. He said “we will establish and I will be mandated to enforce the carrying capacity for winter and snowmobiles in Yellowstone” and I said “Then do it”, because we are…the snowmobiles are, the snowmobile access in the park (00:14:19) is becoming so popular that the whole town is growing into that and there’s going to be a building boom and there was, because everybody wanted to get on the gravy train. So this hotel would build on the strength of the year-round economy and another one was being built and so on and I said “If you’re going to do it, then do it NOW before people build facilities on a year-round basis and then not be able to operate them that way. It can be devastating”, but nothing ever happened…

(00:15:27) ...they were rough. The snowmobile emissions, we had to admit, were a problem, the snowmobile were two-stroke snowmobiles, they burned oil; and oil/gas mix. And so there was a pollution problem and then the perception of the public was, because of the media that would be brought in by the environmentalists groups, they would always focus on the west gate down here, where in the morning we would have, on some days we would have as high as 1300 snowmobiles go through the west gate. And at that time, they were two-stroke snowmobiles, so, the perception was that this is the way it is, throughout all Yellowstone. Well, they were lined up at the gate, trying to get,… waiting to pay their fee and get in and the haze, some of it was smoke, no question about it, it was exhaust fumes, and it was hazy with it, and so that got blown out of proportion. So then the rangers, started wearinge gas masks, that was an idea of some person. You can imagine the perception that now went out. "Here's the rangers, so bad that they had to wear gas masks". Which, incidentally we found, that the ones that they were using didn't really help. Didn't do anything. it was just a visual perception, but anyway. Now, this perception was, it's so bad in Yellowstone, that the rangers have to wear gas masks. Well, So... Arctic Cat, in the meantime, had been, and we knew, working on, and developing a four-stroke snowmobile. It got to the point where we had to go to, we went to them, and said "listen guys, if you’re going to do this you got to do it, you got to get it out. You've got to unveil this four stroke snowmobile, or it’s going to be too late. About thirteen years ago, … I’ve got the date here somewhere..

(00:18:32) So, we convinced them to do that. So they brought out four prototype four-stroke snowmobiles, and we kind of had the care in keeping of those. But we gave them to the park rangers. and they loved them. They … the engine, that is in this four stroke snowmobile, was just a little car engine. But it was clean, and quiet, and so on. And so the next year, we had fifty of them. We called them the Yellowstone Special,… that’s the brand that was put on them from Arctic Cat, at our request. The Yellow stone special, a four stroke snowmobile. It was clean and quiet. And so, now, we've taken away, one of the big concerns that the park had. So now this moving target focused on something else. But before I leave that. We'll just that,... four-stroke snowmobile came into being replaced with a two-stroke snowmobile; you cannot take a two-stroke snowmobile into the park now. And that’s wonderful. Arctic Cat was the first to come out with a four-stroke snowmobile and then the other manufactures began to follow suit until now all of the manufacturers produce four-stroke snowmobiles so that they can go into the park. They have to be park certified, they have to pass certain emissions and sound qualifications and so on. So in my estimation and those who have come and ridden, I just don't think there's a problem anymore, but , the target changed now from emissions since that wasn't a problem anymore, but they still continued to say that it was, but the emissions tests show that the emissions have never reached, even in those bad times, they never reached the levels that were above the limitations. So anyway, that problem was pretty much resolved. Now it became the animals. So they did animal studies, and they've studied buffalo and elk and deer and everything that they can study and you can find all these studies. They've discovered that the elk and the bison and so on are not bothered by a snowmobile going by than with a cross-country skier, because, I suppose, the animals are habituated to car traffic and to people and to see this unit, they see a unit, this thing that's moving down the road. Yeah it makes noise, but they're used to that.

Let me do a little side track. We were in South Africa several years ago and sitting in one of these Land Rovers, going through and finding all the animals. We came upon a leopard, just laying down there and he was ten feet from us. The guy in the Land Rover backed up, and I was in the back seat, and the leopard was right there, jut lying there, like we weren't even there. We pulled away and I stood up to turn around and take a picture and a guide climbed all over me, he said "You sit down!" because, the reason is, the animals are used to these vehicles, this unit, but they're not used to the flailing of arms and they're not used to people. They see that and that upsets them. (00:23:40) you know, then that can be a very dangerous situation. Well that's just a little analogy that I carry over to this, believing that a cross-country skier outdoing this...and they can go off the trails, increases the heart rate, and they've documented it, increases the heart rate of the elk and so on more than what a snowmobile does. The snowmobiles, they have found, just like ours, doesn't bother them. They stand there and wonder 'what are you doing here watching?' So anyway, the animal issue has been studied to death, it has been determined now that the snowmobiles are not a problem to the animals. The emissions has been proven - they're not a problem. We're so far under the emissions standards that it's unbelievable. That's not a problem, so now what can be the problem? The sound, they limited to, uh, 78 decibels, I think it is, got under that, that's not a problem, so now what can be the problem? Well, so now it's the frequency of sound. You ought to be able to go to Yellowstone in this pristine place and be able to see Old Faithful go off and go to these various geysers and see all of these wonderful things in total, in the solitude of silence. And you ought to be able to do that for 85% of the time. Certain periods of time, when you're supposed to be able to have, heard nothing. Well, and so the frequency of sound now, here comes snowmobiles and then a while later here comes another group of snowmobiles. Now, factored into this remember, are also snow coaches. We haven't talked about snow coaches yet, but we will. But the frequency of sound at Old Faithful geyser, they say is too much. That, when you're standing there watching Old Faithful go off or waiting on Old Faithful to go off, you can hear snowmobiles too often. Not that it's too loud, it's too often now. Well how do you get people into the park,...so they can enjoy it and not cause sound? So, I don't know, it's a problem. There are two things: there's a continual struggle. When the park was established in 1872 by our forefathers, one of the greatest things ever happened. It was determined that the park should be protected for the enjoyment and the pleasuring ground of the public, so those two elements seem to be continually - there's a struggle between maintaining a balance between those two things: protecting the park on the one hand and letting the public enjoy it. It' the people's park! So how do we coexist those two principles, make those two principles coexist.

(00:28:20) they don't. This is, yes. This is not an issue they say; this is not a summer issue. We are not dealing with summer. We're dealing with winter now. The concern is that we have, is that one day, one can bleed into the other so that it's just doable. Well, first of all, those groups on the other side saw that there was a vulnerable spot in Yellowstone with the snowmobiles and way back when, it was a vulnerable spot, so they got their foot in the door. We have been taking snowmobiles into the park for 40 years and then along, they came along and say it shouldn’t happen, let's get them out of there and because, you know, I said "We're overdoing it", I think they saw an opportunity to get the foot in the door and so the environmental groups who caused these environmental impact statements to be made, it's all about winter, but it's possible to bleed. You know, you get too carried away with the winter and shut it down too much in the winter, there's a logical follow-through to the summer, so that's not just about snowmobiles, there's a much broader, bigger issue at stake than just snowmobiles in Yellowstone. It' an access issue for the public. The people, the public, have the right to go in and see and enjoy and experience the first hand their park and if that is limited, then the people come out on the short end of the stick and so what would happen? There are, every once in a awhile we hear and I’ve participated in hearings where public transportation is talked about in park, "all these cars are there" why not limit the cars and put everybody else on buses? And so you have fewer vehicles that you have to worry about. It's all controlled. You can keep the people on the bus and you can let them off when you want to and you can tell them "Don't go over there" and "don't go over here" and "get back on the bus" and "we're going somewhere else" and that would be a tragic thing, because oh, it works very well in Zion National Park, it works very well as I understand it, but it won't work here, because we have five different entrances and people come in from all those entrances, how do you park your car in West Yellowstone I want to leave through Gardner on public transpiration? Well, I personally don't think that that will ever happen, that they won't require it, because it physically is impossible, it cannot happen. I would encourage to have localized optional in-park tours, step on/step off here, step on/step off there, I think that'd be a great idea for those that want to do it, but that won't be very many people. Where do you want to go from here? Questions? I've more things to go over with snow coaches and so on, but yes, go ahead.

(00:33:29) Oh there is no question about that. No question - oh, this issue of winter use has been studied and restudied probably more than any other thing that I can think of, so I think the park service would agree, but, they, … before the studies had happened, people came to some conclusions on their own that this has got to be bad in the wintertime, you know, this pristine place and oh that was an opportunity to get back, to get into this whole thing, but I'm not sure if I followed your total question...

(00:34:36) No. No. No. So let me spin off of that, don't let me get sidetracked. Let's go way back when snowmobiles were allowed in the park, we had permits to take people into the park and it was working great and wonderful for a long time. Then we had a park superintendent that transferred from another area and he said that his goal was to get snowmobiles out of Yellowstone. Now the previous superintendent had encouraged it and so this superintendent came on and said "I need to get them out of there". Then this was all related to timing I think, with the administration in Washington. … this was all under Clinton’s era and Al Gore and so on and there was a great movement for environmental protection of the park and so on. But, eventually that changed. The snowmobile were going out and then Bush got elected and we had a change in administration and the pendulum swings from one side to the other side. It was way over here at the end of the Clinton era and when the Bush administration came in, the pendulum started to come back. It took a little while before we saw much movement and swung over here and now we have another new administration and the pendulum is probably going to start swinging back. It's too early to tell what for sure the administration is going to have, what impact they will have and how involved they will get specifically on Yellowstone, but they probably will be eventually. Now, we, have been, and maybe I better come back to that, all the process that we've been through in Washington and been back there talking to all those people, the very high up people, and we can go into that, did you have a question?

(00:38:05) Before there were any controls as I said on Washington's birthday and on the big holiday periods of time, we'd have 1300 people, 1300 snowmobiles go through the park in any given day; that's too many. So the latest thing we've been operating on is 720 per throughout the park. That’s 400 through the West gate. Now, if you think about it, and then I think you read some of the things that I said in the hearings, that I was predicting would happen as a result of these great changes that were about to change place. The economic impact that it would have on West Yellowstone and on the Gateway Communities and in the whole travel corridors, as people are coming out from the Midwest and from Florida and California to come and see Yellowstone in the wintertime, who knows what the economic impact of that is, would be lost and now is lost because of the reducing of the numbers of people. Now, this is where the tricky balance comes in. We have to obtain a balance between those two goals, protect the park and public access and so that's the tricky thing and you ask a very pertinent question, the question that if the environmentalist groups and those of us that live in the real world could come to - and the park service - could come to some agreement on, then maybe this thing would, settle down and so what is that balance? Well, I'll tell you what I think the balance is. First of all, we have adjusted to the 720 snowmobiles through the park, park-wide, that's 400 through here. We have adjusted, because we have snowmobile concessions, contracts with the park. We have our facility that encompasses all of this, see that hotel right back through there? And the one next to it? And there's one over here? There are 10 of them that built after I talked to the superintendent that time and said "If you you're going to stop it, stop it, before this building boom continues to go", there are 10 lodging facilities in this town that close their doors in the wintertime now that were open prior to that time. We've adjusted somewhat, 50-60% of the revenue is gone. It's worse than that for some of the other people, but it's gone, so what we have to do is come up with a number. We've come up with, not, we didn't mark the 720, but through this EIS process and the collaborative process they went through, they arrived at a 720 number.

That's 400 snowmobiles through the West gate a day. If we could stay there, that is at least allowing public access into the park somewhat. So we've adjusted our thinking to saying well, okay, 720, okay, 400 through the West gate, not enough but it's okay. But that isn't where they want to stop. See, the environmentalist groups don't want any and they're not going to settle for any snowmobiles in the park, but they got to be careful; they have to be careful, because if they're not, they may get more than what they bargained for, because this 2007 rule that allowed 720 snowmobiles in the park, didn't fly. We've been operating that way for a while, but it didn't really fly on a long-term basis, because of Judge Sullivan in Washington and park service came out with a compromise and said "Okay, we'll drop it to 540" and Judge Sullivan in Washington said "No way", vacating the, I think it's the 2007 rule, which whether he knew it or not, did not, or precluded automatically any winter motorized use in the park in the wintertime. (00:44:04) There was no rule in place. There was no way to allow any motorized vehicles in the park. Now, the environmentalist groups say "No snowmobiles", but snow coaches are okay. Well, Judge Sullivan said evict - turned around the whole thing and vacated that whole rule, now nothing is allowed. You can't even take a snow coach in. So now what do we do, see?

The environmentalists put so much pressure and I don't know if the Judge knew what he was doing or not, but he vacated that whole thing and that totally keeps access for the public out of the park in the wintertime, unless you want to cross country ski 30 miles to get to Old Faithful and back and then not have a facility over there to stay in. In other words, it closes the park down. This is the kind of thing we've been going through for 13 years, so, how do they get around that? That isn't what the park wants. So, Judge Brimmer in Cheyenne, Wyoming, did not contradict Judge Sullivan, what we kind of have here is a battle of the dueling judges it seems to me. We've got a Judge in Washington that is pro, the environmentalist groups, they always go to. We've gone to Judge Brimmer who is local, this ought to be his jurisdictional area, so he, when we went and I testified in his court, he didn’t contradict Judge Sullivan, because you can't do that really, but what he said basically was, in my own words, "Park service, you figure it out. Go back to the 2004 rule until you can get something figured out that works". You know what the 2004 rule is? No controls at all. So now we're back to where we were when there was a real problem. If you just open the gates and everything, you know, and probably, you know, there's four-stroke snowmobiles and so on, but you couldn't even require that those happen. So one judge throws out all of the winter access, the other judge opens it wide open back to the way it used to be, and so what do we do?

In the meantime we try to figure out how to, whether to buy a million dollar's worth of snowmobiles or not for the next winter and right now? We don't know. So, what they're doing right now is, and I can tell you this, that there's some things I know that I shouldn't say, but I can tell you this, that, we had a meeting here with the superintendent, several, a month or so ago and since we, I think almost whatever they propose as long as it's got snowmobiles in it, the other side is going to sue. So she wanted to broker a meeting where the snowmobile manufactures, the environmentalist groups and the park service and some of the parties that were involved in these lawsuits, could sit down in one room and say all right, hammer it out, "what is it that you want? Environmental groups, what do you want? Snowmobile manufacturers, what do you want? Park service, what do you want?" They were going to do that. Well, I made my prediction to her that day. It'll never happen, because I've had dealings with those guys, they’re not going to settle for anything. So her comment was, "Well, I want them to say that. I want to just know where everybody is". Well, I don't know what happened, but it must not have gone well, because now there, … we're meeting with her, she's coming again this next week to meet with our Chamber and our people and we'll get an update, but it's my understanding that they are going to do another EA, environmental assessment. An environmental assessment as I understand it, is probably the most stringent thing that you can do, I mean it has to be, there's no room for judgment at all, it has to be right down according to Hoyle, but … so by doing an EA, they have to get the limits down so low that there can be no objections. Well, let's say we're here at 400, how would 20 snowmobiles a day through the West gates sound to you, environmentalist groups? Would that work? How would that sound to everybody else? Well, that's what we have to kind of figure out and they have to do a little balancing act, because with an environmentalist assessment, I understand that you can't contest, you can't go back and say wait a minute, this isn't right, the only way you can get a voice at the table is to sue. (00:50:31) UH, that's my understanding, you guys probably know, I'm maybe wrong. We get through (...) the environmental assessment, and then it goes automatically into another two or three-year environmental impact statement, which gets, starts all over this two or three-year process that we've been through several times anyway already, but at least maybe the end result is keep winter access.

So I don't know where we're going, we're back in the same boat that we were in 2003 or whenever it was when we had two million dollars worth of snowmobiles sitting in their places, this is our operation; we had 260 rented snowmobiles ready to go out the next day. The park was going to open on December 17th. The night of December 16th, we were having our Christmas party with our properties and we had 200 employees and their families there and for dinner and for our Christmas festivities and so on. I got a call that Judge Sullivan was basically closing the park. I think he would allow 278 snowmobiles to go in. Where that number came from, I don't know, but the next day, now the town was full, they're ready to go in, on the next day on snowmobiles and Judge Sullivan the night before it opens says that. Well, I couldn't break the spirit of the festivities and the thing, so we went through our whole thing, dinner and gifts and Santa Claus and the whole thing and I finally had to tell them what had really happened, that tomorrow we can't go in. So, we had people here, they had flown in from all over the country to go in on snowmobiles, the experience of a lifetime, and I still say it is, and they couldn't go. And so, then other years have come and gone and it's been almost the same kind of thing, where we're right down to the wire and still not knowing what the plan is and then, all of a sudden, we find out and we've already got the snowmobiles ordered on a guess, and so on. So now we're in the same boat. We've cut back considerably on the number of snowmobiles that we rent, we've cut way back, it has been cut way, the number of people that come, because of the number limitation and so on, so we're faced with this continuing thing. It's like you're shooting at a fur ball, it's a moving target. You know, we don't know where we're going. Interesting too, I think, you ask about where we're going, the administration and so on, I said well, you know, the pendulum swings. The pendulum's over here and when this previous superintendent was in, he was vowing to get snowmobiles out of the park and so, we, … I just thought this was interesting looking back, …, John Sackland is in charge of the park as far as public, - studies, and so on, his concern and he would be interviewed on television, and I would be, and others would be, and John Sackland and I were diametrically opposed to each other's views, because his views were it's too much, we've got to get it, you know, down down down and my views were, wait a minute, let's be realistic, what's it hurting? It isn't hurting. What's going to happen to the economy of the town? And so on, and then as the new administration came in we started through this process, it was interesting, because John Sackland and I were interviewed also on television and… on different occasions, but we said about the same thing. (00:55:41) The park service, now, I am certain, you know, to begin with we were a little bit skeptical of whether they really believe down here, but I really believe the park service, from Washington on down to local, want to see a balanced winter use between snowmobiles and snow coaches, because that is the best way. You have to have a balance or it won't work. And so I think that they're trying to do that, now, the problem is, and they will agree, the problem is how do we keep, how do we get the right number written into the record of decision so that it's a sustainable number for the communities? I've always said you can't, to them at that time, gateway communities are an integral part of the parks, wherever they are. They're partners with the park and I said "How can you expect to bankrupt us in the winter and expect us to be healthy, thriving partners with you in the summertime? You can't have it both ways. So, we've got to figure out a way where the right number of snowmobiles can happen so that,… let's talk about snow coaches here, so that people can get into the park. If it's a token amount, like 20, and this was seriously suggested one time by one of the, by the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, how many would you like? Well, how would 20 be? 20 would be good, she said. 20 people through the West gate! In the meantime you have all this grooming that goes on that, so on and so forth. 20 is okay. Well, we've got to get a number that works, so last year, because of what Judge Sullivan did, we wanted, the park was going after, trying to get 540 park wide. Sullivan wouldn’t go for that, so they threw it out and went back to the 2007 rule, which is, 720 and so let's bring that back down to West Yellowstone again … So here's a cap, we've had a cap of 400, used to have 16, 1300, now it' 400. You would think, wouldn't you, that if you have that many people coming into the park, if you can, you'd have, 400 people signed up, waiting in line, anxiously waiting their turn to go into Yellowstone so that we could fill 400 slots every day. We've never met it once. And why is that? Well, because of all the negative stuff that goes out, you know, all this negative stuff, plus the feeling, I mean as many times like Judge Sullivan said the night before we're supposed to open this closed and we've had that happen many times, when the word goes out that it's closed, because of the record decision to be done in time or whatever and it's hard to retract that.

Three things you can't retract, two things you can't, three, I forgot one of them. (?) And the spoken word. You can't retract spoken word. You'll get the image out there that Yellowstone is closed and so you can't get them back then. Then, oh well, yeah you can go, but there's only going to be 400 people that can go through there and I'll never get in that. I probably can't get in that, so I'm not even going to try, I'd better just plan on going somewhere else, because they're going to be lined up at that gate filling that 400 and I won't be able to get in, so I don't even try. Consequently, we've never reached the 400. (01:00:29) Not one day. And so the park service -, the environmentalists say the people will just rearrange their vacations. They can come on a different time. They can come in the middle of the week. They don't have to come on the weekend. Well who are they trying to kid? If you want to plan your vacation, you want to plan your vacation when you want to plan your vacation!

(01:01:02) That's the dilemma we've been living under for twelve years. It's...you ought to try it some time, it's not easy (laugh), it's a very uncertain thing and I, uh, you know, it is. I'll briefly sidetrack, that, though to answer your second question. Part of the reason for this is because we had a fire in February 15th of last year and so we had to eventually tear this down and so we're rebuilding it and when we're still wrangling with the insurance companies to say, you know, I'm probably going to be paying this for the rest of my life, and start all over again, but we're doing this because of, as a result of a fire. I would never do this, could never have thought, even dreamed of doing this without that because there's too many vacant rooms around town. We can't justify that and come back to your first question, what was that?

(01:02:23) So when this all came about and there was going to be a limit then the park service had to come up with a plan to do just that. And so those people that already had guiding permits in the park were given preferential treatment when they were to prepare a perspective to become a tenure licensed snowmobile concession. So there were eight of us that had those guiding permits in the past. We've had ours; we've been officially guiding snowmobiles in the park for 20 or 30 years. So those people had preferential treatment to filling these perspectives out. Well they had to figure out how they were going to allocate 400 peoples, so they said all right, there are eight...we'll have eight permits and divide that into 400, that's 50. That means each one of these guys that win this prospectus, this permit, it's a concession permit, will be able to have, take 50 snowmobiles in the park, including the guides. You have to have, you know, a guide for every ten people and that was kind of an unfair thing, because we had 260 snowmobiles, uh, and we have two operations though, we have two permits, so we could take a hundred, but some of our competitors, our partners so to speak, because we're all friendly, hadn't had anywhere near that much. They were hardly getting into the snowmobile business; maybe take ten in a day. But all of a sudden the playing field is leveled, so the little guy got as many permits as the guys that had more and so that leveled off that's the way it was done. Price Waterhouse did an extensive study to determine how many snowmobiles you had to have in order to maintain a viable operation and so on, so we went through a lengthy process but that was the way it was done. Then we had to go through the long tedious process of filling out prospectus. Here's mine. This cost us six or eight months of intensive work and well over $5,000 to complete and we had to go through, answer all kinds of things it's unbelievable. This prospectus is almost as complicated as the ones for the big concessionaires in the park. Well, we did that. We went through it and then it was overturned. The contracts that were awarded as a result of this prospectus became null and void because of the actions that were taken by the lawsuits and Judge Sullivan and so on, they threw them all out. We went through all that exercise for nothing and then we've been operating on a temporary permit, year by year permit, until we can get this whole thing resolved so the last few years since that time we've been operating on a year by year basis and I'm just going to look and see here if I can see the date… um, that we did all this. September 5th, 2003 is when this was signed and submitted. So since 2003, five years ago, we've been operating on an annual renewal. You can't build a lot of certainty on a one-year operating permit. Their goal was to issue ten-year permits with these, so we'd have ten years that we would know that we could plan on the number of snowmobiles into the park. We also applied for and received, was granted, a concessions contract for snow coaches, which we have one of those. We can take 6 snow coaches into the park and we do have a ten year permit for that, because that was the snow coaches was not challenged by the other, but along comes Judge Sullivan and vacates this record of decision and the rule that doesn't allow any, doesn’t allow snowmobiles and snow coaches in, and that could go out the window. We have a ten year contract. What does that mean if Judge Sullivan says 'whoops', there's going to be no access, no motorized access in the park? (01:08:14) What good's that ten year contract to us? And so, it's an interesting world in which we have been living. I put all, I brought this stuff. These are things that I have either written, letters or impact statements or environmental assessments, … trips to Washington D.C.,...

(01:09:02) ...or phone, so I wouldn't worry about it. We've been, you know, featured all the way through. West Yellowstone and Yellowstone, this whole winter issue is received worldwide recognition and it's all here. Now I'm a boy that grew up on a farm, came up, didn't know anything about business, got involved with Three Bear Lodge, decided to keep it open in the wintertime so that I could show the people who own this park what they own in the wintertime. That's all I knew. I didn't know how to do all of this stuff, but we had to and so all these years later, those are the fruits of my efforts and we still don't know today. I still don't know how many people are going to be able to; we're going to be able to take into the park. We've got the snowmobiles out there waiting for them, but how many people? How many are we going to have to park or sell? All of them? No. We don't know. So it's an interesting situation, yes.

(01:11:52) Boy, you said that so well and you represent a large group of people out there that are influenced by people who create crisis in order to create their own paycheck and that's what it's about. The environmental groups, and I used to have their financial information, how much each one, the Wilderness Society, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the National Park, , NPCA, all those, how much budget they have to work with each year. It's unbelievable. 20 million dollars each or something like that. You know what we had? A little group of snowmobile operators got together and funded what we thought...funded our effort to counterbalance, counteract millions of dollars in publicity and memberships out there and we had us. We hired a lobbyist who became a good friend of ours and we went back to Washington and got in all the right places and the snowmobiles manufacturers were an integral part of this, and the International Snowmobile Counsel was a part of it, there, and I always count this like four legs of a table and if you pull any one of those legs of the table out from under, it's going to fall and if you took the snowmobile manufacturers out of it, if Arctic Cat would have never built the first sport snowmobile, we would not be here today talking about snowmobiles in the park. It would have fallen. If the International Snowmobile Counsel and Blue Ribbon Coalition kind of together would not have been there, we wouldn't be here talking about the park today. And I don't say this, I don't want to elevate this anymore than what it is, but I really believe that if our little group had not formed and funded our effort back there in Washington and gone back and met with the very top people in the Department of Interior, if our little group hadn't have done that, we wouldn't be here today talking about snowmobiles in the park. And so, you know, you like to think that you, when you live your life, that you've made a difference, that you can make a difference and I can tell you that if it wasn't for this effort, one of those legs would have been gone and the public would never know that. They'd never know about Clyde and they'd never know about this little group of snowmobile operators. They probably wouldn't know much about West Yellowstone nor care, because the park is being saved. I may never get there, but somebody else might and so we want to save it at all costs and so that's, but you see, you get them, you get people here and they get a different perspective. Now I don't know how much time you've got, I could tell you I could go on forever, but I can tell you a story that kind of brings this up exactly.

Don Berry. Anybody heard of Don Berry? He's the assistant secretary to the Secretary of the Interior, and he came out and across the street to the Greater Yellowstone Coalition meeting, stood, and said, "We're going to get snowmobiles" these are my words "We're going to get snowmobiles out of the park. You can count on it" and so I, there's a series of events that Don Berry and I had encounters and I called him over the next day and asked him to come over and meet with our little group and explain our situation and then later when we had the four-stroke snowmobile out here and unveiled it, he came and we took him across the street, right over there, and I said "Don, let's do a little experimenting". We had a two stroke snowmobile sitting there and a four stroke snowmobile sitting there and I said "Now, we'll start this two stroke snowmobile up and you and I, let's just you and I walk until we can't hear that snowmobile anymore". So we walked and we walked and we walked and we walked way down and we didn't look back. We walked and I said "Now you tell me when you can't hear it" so he said "okay, I can't hear it anymore". (01:18:19) We looked back and then we counted our steps and then we went back and we started with the four stroke snowmobile and started that one up. I said "okay, Don, when you can't hear it, you tell me" So we walked, we walked, he said "I can't hear it anymore" and we looked around and it's a world of a difference you see, and it began to dawn on him though that little demonstration that sound is becoming a moot point and so then we met with him in our little meeting and he related somewhat to us personally, because he and I related on his experience in his youth and kin line and, so anyway, he said "I feel for you, but we've got to get snowmobiles out of the park". So then we went back to Washington on a number of occasions and happened to be there … in fact before that. I got a call, he says "This is Don Berry" and he said "I wanted you to know that I'm resigning my position as assistant secretary of the Interior and you're the first person I've called. I wanted you to know that" and he said "before I leave and will leave, I have already left some things in this document that will allow snowmobiles in the park" and then he left. Well, he didn't leave. We happened to be in Washington. I got a call saying that it was his retirement party and so we went to the Secretary of the Interior's office, I don't know if any of you've been there, it's a big, lavish office and this spread, all this foodstuff was spread all over the place and all the dignitaries were there and all of his old cronies and they did a roast to him and it was just a grand ole time and I was standing going "what am I doing in this crowd? Why was I invited to be here?" and I stepped out of the room to go make, I got a call from somebody else, some senator I don't know, wanting to know what was going on and so anyway all of a sudden somebody come running and said "Clyde, he's talking about you!" And so I went back and they told me what they had said and Don Berry said, he was thanking everybody for coming, but he says "you know, the person that means the most of all to be here tonight is Clyde Seely. We have been on opposite sides, but I respect him" and, so then later I went in after I got off my phone call, went in and at the end of the night I shook his hand and I wished him well and so on and he said "I said some nice things about you" and we had even though diametrically opposed to each other position, we had this bond that...you see, he had this bond too by being here and seeing it and, however, later I got a call, this was a year or two later I got a call from Don Berry. He said "I'm going to come out. I want to come out and, visit with you". So he did...and...I won't, I guess, because this is being recorded I won't say exactly what was said, …, but the implication was that if, I'd get off my kick, that we could make it big time with snow coaches, because...I said "sorry, don't you know as long as I live I will never just for safe keeping snowmobiles in the park. Now I know where you're coming from, but you need to know where I'm coming from. Neither one of us are probably ever going to give, so we might have to just leave it at that. But I'm not going to take any of these other outs. Then, one other telephone conversation with him later, … I said "come one, Don, there's got to be a balance". Well he resigned being assistant secretary of the Interior to go to the, one of the main directors of the Wilderness Society and so he was in that position this last time I talked to him. I said "Come on, Don, let's reason this out. There's got to be a balance. There's got to be a way" and he says "I can't do it. We've got to get snowmobiles out of the park". So that's where we still stand. Yes.

(01:25:02) He was never here in the wintertime. Of course we offered him. We've taken, … we've taken the Governor of Montana two years ago, Max Bacchus our senator, Danny Reever, Conrad Burns, other senators from back there, very influential people into the park to experience it. And you know, they all come back and say just what you did, basically. I never knew. What an experience. Last winter I took Max Bacchus, our senator from Montana that is becoming a very influential person in the legislature. I took him through and he said "This Park is vastly underutilized in the winter", … he could not see (?) and the snowmobiles, we were walking around? In the park and snowmobiles were going down the street and I says "listen to those" and he said "listen to what, I can't hear anything?" as we saw the snowmobiles going down. So that’s just kind of the way it is. The environmentalists, there are many people that are employed by those people. I know some of them. My livelihood is here. I built it. I make it. I do it and the results of my efforts, not at the expense of everybody else, to help other people enjoy life. There are those who I think because of their employment as I mentioned earlier, generate a crisis in order to generate a paycheck, so they have to - Don Berry, there's no way he can come over and say "okay, let's have snowmobiles-" he works with one of the head people in the Wilderness Society, the head of the NPCA. He and I have been on the phone many times and, there's no way. That's what I told Suzanne Lewis, "there's no way you can do it. You're not going to allow anything; you're not going to settle for anything. You’ll just keep suing". They've got money to sue, so...Now, I haven't talked about snow coaches and I'll do that, because, quickly, you're probably getting tired of it all so...

(01:29:07) (Laugh) are you kidding?

(01:29:16) No. The closest thing to any compensation that I've ever had is when I referred back to if I had just switched sides. … so the snow coaches. I,… we normally talk about snowmobiles because that's what seems to be threatened, but I've said all along from day one, the preferred alternative, through several of these environmental impact statements has been or one of the preferred ones has been snow coach only. So snowmobiles go away and we fill in with all snow coaches. We take all the same number of people into the park on snow coaches and everybody's happy. They still get access. It'll only take, what is it, 180 snow coaches in West Yellowstone to supply what we used to take in on snowmobiles or was it 84, I can't remember. Anyway, I'm also a snow coach operator. If, and I said it in the beginning, that every place I've ever gone to any hearing or any meeting, the snow coach only alternative will fail dismally and the people will suffer or several reasons. One, the infrastructure needed. If all of a sudden, you had to put, bring in 84 snow coaches, somebody's got to build facilities to house those, expensive garages and so on, because they have to be kept inside and so on. Land is at a premium, how do you even get that much? Is it going to be a public thing or a governmentally operated thing where they're going to come in and build a big facility, so, yeah...the logistics of that doesn't work. The way it is, you know, we all have individual garages and shops and so on and our own people and we take care of the snowmobiles and so on, and we have our snowmobile and our snow coach shop and mechanics and guides and so on for that, but, empathize with me for a minute. We used to have snowmobiles that would go into the park and they'd break down. Over at Canyon, for instance, that's only 50 miles away and you have a snowmobile that breaks down. Geez, what a horrible thing. So, what we do is we hook another snowmobile on behind and one of our mechanics zips that snowmobile on in, exchanges while they go see the canyon, and they ride down on another snowmobile and don't hardly know the difference. And he brings another broken down snowmobile out and fixes it.

Several years ago, we lost a transmission in a snow coach near Canyon. What do you do? It sat there until the roads cleaned bare enough so we could go in and get it. Last winter we had a similar situation at Old Faithful. The snow coach, I can't remember now, it had so many problems, lost something. Anyway, it sat there at Old Faithful until the roads were plowed and we could go in and take it off the tracks, one of these big 20-passenger vans, take it off the tracks, put in wheels, get it loaded up, haul it out here and so on. How many times in the middle of the night have we had snow coaches break down? Well when you have a snow coach break down, you're affecting from 10 to 20 people at least our capacity and so what do you do with them? You can't just you know, so we do our best. But many times, we're in the park at 12 o'clock at night changing tracks or pulling something out or something. We'd already taken other snow coaches in to get the people out, so anyway...I don't think that we have the capability of providing transportation on snow coaches to the same amount of people. Now, first of all, however, I must qualify there is nowhere near the popularity of the snowmobile and snow coach is not comparable. The snow coach has not been nearly as popular as the snowmobile by far, because the snowmobile has been the vehicle of choice to see the park in the wintertime and we provide snow coaches because there's a niche market for that. There are people that don't want to have the wind beat on their cheeks and they don't want to put on all the clothing and go in on the snowmobile and do their own thing, drive their own snowmobile. They just want to go in a climate-controlled thing and see the scenery go by and have narration and that's wonderful and it's great, it's a great experience, but it depends on what you want. There are those people that want a snow coach. There are those people that want a snowmobile. And why should we deprive one group of their wish chosen mode of transportation at the expense of another, when especially the other, the snow coach alternative alone will not work? It just won't and so then we - all these numbers we're talking about that keep going down and down and down? Part of that is because they don’t' want to go on snow coaches, part of it is the uncertainty, part of it all the things that we've talked about, but and so then we keep lowering these limits and it's like filling the last whole in a sponge. If you have the 400 limit to go through this gate, how can you get the last drop of water in that sponge? You just can't. In other words, we can't always have the guide go in with the maximum amount of people. We have guides go in with two people. You can't cram 10 people in if you got 12...anyway. It just doesn't work. And then we all have our operation within our operation, that guy is compounded many times when you take in the overall operations from the other place. So consequently no matter what the limit is, we'll never reach it. It can never be reached. So if it's 400, we'll never reach it. If it's 300, we'll never reach it. If it's 50, we probably will never reach it, because you can't fill the last slot and make it all work logistically with different personalities and diff …-, in order to provide the best experience possible, we try and tailor-make our groups and our guides and all that stuff and then you tie that in, with, like I said vacation times and weekends and versus not weekends and so. Any other questions?.

(09:37:27) Well, they just did a study again this spring, sound tests on snow coaches, and my understanding is that the snow coaches failed miserably. You got to, you listen to a snow coach go by and you listen to a snowmobile go by and there is no comparison. We have two diesel snow coaches and they make noise and all the tracks and the, you know, it makes, all makes noise and you rev those things up and you're pushing those motors to the nth degree, because they're not made to be snow coaches, they're made to be vehicles, automobiles, summer-type, pavement-type transport, so we're pushing those.

(01:38:56) You, you are exactly right. You’re exactly right.

(01:39:07) Discussion, but that's off-limits. We're not talking about summer; we're only talking about winter.

(01:39:23) Now you can talk to the park service about that, but the summer isn't an issue. The environmental groups are brought center stage and to the forefront of snowmobile issue. That's in the wintertime and the snowmobile, you know, they said, well it pollutes the snow. You know, it gets oil in the snow. In the spring, the snow melts and it runs into the river, the snow now is polluting the river. They've done testing on all of that and it's a bunch of malarkey, but they get a good, a lot of good mileage out of it to begin with, because all this stuff goes out, these employees get all this out there and people swallow it hook, line and sinker and geez, must be something to that. Well, I finally found out there isn't anything to that. Snowmobiles and snow coaches in the wintertime in Yellowstone by far, in my estimation, are less invasive and do less damage to the park than the summer. But we've got to be careful, because if we push too far, and they get too much of what they want, then I can see them bleeding into the summer and the summer's next. So the motorcycles are next. And so the motor homes are next, and so the number of people and automobiles are next and so government, you know, has to enforce these things and so on. Question? Am I done?

End

(01:42:23) It's just too bad, you know. It's really too bad, but I just don't know how to do it, but it's really too bad that we can't get the exposure to, as you say, get people here so they can actually see it, you know, they think they're so far-removed and they are far-removed, but in theory, it's a good thing, which of course that makes sense! We ought to just get them out of there...