

## **Biodiversity Assessment: SNOWMOBILES in YELLOWSTONE**

### **Background Info**

Snowmobiles are gasoline-powered vehicles designed to drive on snow-covered roads and trails. You can get to places a lot faster in a snowmobile than by snowshoe or cross-country skiing.

Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming is the largest national park in the United States, at over 2 million acres! In winter, it is very snowy and most park roads are covered in snow and not plowed for cars or trucks. Most winter visitors currently prefer to travel by snowmobile.

**PROS:** Snowmobiles have been used in Yellowstone since 1963 and have become a popular tradition for many park visitors, providing a way to see the beauty of the park in winter. They are also a source of income for many businesses near the park that rent the snowmobiles to visitors. Park rangers also use the snowmobiles to do their work in the park.

**CONS:** Recent studies have shown the snowmobiles are threatening the park's resources. First, they contribute to air pollution in the park because of their high emissions from the engines. Second, they are very noisy (think of a large lawnmower) and upset the peace and quiet that park visitors enjoy. Third, they move people into more areas of the park, which means less areas of the park are left untouched by humans.

