



# The Canyon CONSTITUENT

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC IN THE MANAGEMENT OF GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK SPRING 1997

## COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT PLANNING EFFORT BEGINS

by Dave Haskell, Science Center Director  
Grand Canyon National Park

**T**he National Park Service (NPS) is beginning the revision of the Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP) for the section of Colorado River within Grand Canyon National Park. The superintendent and staff of Grand Canyon National Park are committed to assuring that all interested persons and organizations are effectively engaged in the planning process. All suggestions will be given full and equitable consideration, including American Indian Tribes and other groups historically affiliated with the Grand Canyon. The NPS is open to suggestions for innovative methods to facilitate public participation in this very important decision-making process.

It is anticipated that the entire planning process will take approximately two years. Management objectives and guiding principles have been prepared to guide the process and to define the broad parameters that will be considered in the plan revision. They are based on the body of laws, regulations and NPS policies that relate to the management of Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP) and the national park system, and are consistent with the park's recently completed General Management Plan.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS**  
Public involvement in the planning process is essential to the successful development of a comprehensive plan that will insure resource protection while maximizing the benefits to society that this magnificent river can provide.

Park staff is committed to working with the public during each step of the process. Public workshops will be held in Phoenix, Salt Lake City, and Portland during September 1997. We anticipate these two-day workshops will be held on Friday and Saturday. The first day will be devoted to identifying issues regarding the public-use management of the Colorado River through Grand Canyon. The second day will focus on identifying potential solutions to these issues. These workshops will be professionally facilitated, yet as informal as possible. We will assure that opposing views are debated in a constructive and forthright manner. Also during September we will be soliciting input from those who cannot attend the workshops.

Following the initial information gathering on issues and solutions, NPS staff will compile and analyze the information provided. A summary of this information will be made available to the public. During the time between the summary of the workshop information and the release of the draft plan in 1999, we will continue public involvement in the planning process.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR THE COLORADO RIVER IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Objectives relating to the management of the Colorado River were established by the 1995 Grand Canyon National Park General Management Plan:

- To the maximum extent possible, restore altered ecosystems to their natural conditions.
- Manage visitor use, development, and support services to protect the park's resources and values.
- Protect the park's natural quiet and solitude, and mitigate or eliminate the effects of activities causing excessive or unnecessary noise in, over, or adjacent to the park.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



Dave Haskell

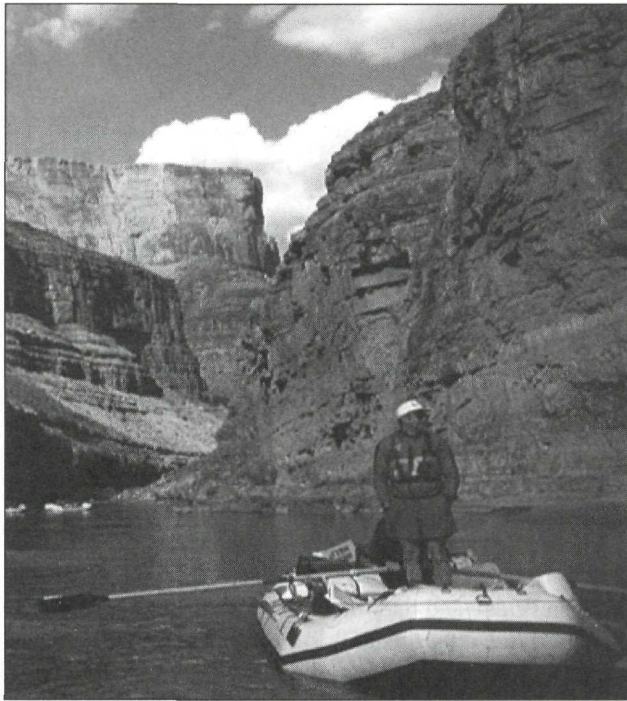
*THE CANYON CONSTITUENT is a periodical publication prepared and distributed by Grand Canyon National Park to provide information related to park resource stewardship and the protection and enhancement of visitor experiences.*

*The National Park Service (NPS) is increasingly aware of the need to engage the public in the management and protection of the national park system. Resource-related issues at the Grand Canyon are becoming increasingly more challenging to resolve. Conflicts between various public and commercial users, and increasing impacts to sensitive resources, further the need for communication between the NPS and the public. Future management decisions will affect the availability and quality of resource-related experiences and the condition of natural and cultural resources. We feel it is essential that all citizens who are interested in the future of this park be provided with accurate information regarding key issues in a cost-effective and timely fashion. This publication is intended to serve that purpose.*

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- Manage areas meeting the criteria for Wilderness designation as Wilderness. Actively pursue the designation of these lands as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- Manage the Colorado River corridor through Grand Canyon National Park to protect and preserve the resource in a wild and primitive condition. Actively pursue the designation of eligible sections of the Colorado River and its tributaries as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.
- Provide a variety of primitive recreational activities consistent with Wilderness and NPS policies on accessibility. In deciding which opportunities would be provided in the park's undeveloped areas, consider both the recreational opportunities available in park developed areas, and recreational opportunities outside the park.
- Upon request, work cooperatively to assist local American Indians in planning, developing, and managing lands adjoining the park in a mutually compatible manner.
- Provide a Wilderness river experience on the Colorado River (this objective will not effect decisions regarding the use of motorboats on the river).

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

##### FOR THE COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. The CRMP is intended to be a comprehensive plan that will include both resource management and recreation/experience management actions and considerations.
2. The type and amount of river recreation use will be regulated to assure that the degree and type is sustainable, and that resource impacts are within acceptable limits for long-term resource protection.
3. The recreation/experience opportunity spectrum considered for this section of the Colorado River will be based, in part, on the range of recreation needs expressed by the public and the total spectrum of opportunities available within the Colorado River system.
4. Until the Grand Canyon National Park Wilderness Recommendation is acted upon by Congress, this section of the Colorado River will be managed as

- potential Wilderness as defined by the Wilderness Act, *NPS Management Policies* and the Grand Canyon National Park Wilderness Recommendation as updated in 1993. (The potential Wilderness designation allows for the continuance of non-conforming uses pending their resolution sometime in the future.)
5. Although it is not the intention of the NPS to eliminate the use of outboard motors on river rafts within the time covered by this plan, the NPS will seek to reduce, to the extent possible, sources of noise that detract from the Canyon's natural quiet and solitude.
  6. Public access to river recreation opportunities (use allocation and permitting processes) will be evaluated based on current and projected future conditions and needs. The most innovative and equitable approach to allocate public use which also meets resource protection objectives will be adopted.
  7. Methods used to manage and distribute use along the river corridor will be based primarily on achieving resource protection and Wilderness management objectives.
  8. The spectrum of "necessary and appropriate" types of concession-outfitted river trips and services will be evaluated and defined. Any needed changes to existing concession operations will be incorporated into the next concessioner contract revisions (2001).
  9. As defined by NPS policy, concession river outfitters operating with GCNP will be assured the opportunity to make a reasonable profit.
  10. Regulations protecting resources, values, and experiences shall apply equally to all river users.

The existing Colorado River Management Plan, approved in 1989, did not include the lower gorge between Diamond Creek and Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NRA); this CRMP revision will. Further, the Lake Management Plan currently being developed by the National Park Service for Lake Mead NRA is being coordinated with Grand Canyon's CRMP to insure compatibility of uses near the boundary of the two NPS units.

#### REGIONAL RIVER MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The public demand for river recreation opportunities has expanded dramatically, both in magnitude and variety, over the past two decades. In order to protect river resources and best meet these demands, river managers must seek to understand the full spectrum of river resources and recreation attributes found in the region. Achieving sustainable river management practices on various segments of the Colorado River will require a coordinated regional management approach. A key underlying principle to this approach is that "the resource defines the use." Different rivers and geomorphically specific sections of large rivers contain resource attributes that lend themselves best to specific types of uses. Such attributes might include: river section length between access points, degree of remoteness, difficulty of passage (rapids, portages, flow variation), quality of angling, natural beauty, value and sensitivity of resources, availability of camping locations, etc. Under situations of heavy demand it is necessary to define the best use of a particular river section and manage primarily for that use. Given an adequate variety of river resources within the region most public needs can be met

on at least one river or river section within the region.

This management approach not only seeks to define the use or uses that are most compatible with the protection of geographically specific river resources but it also usually allows for more intensive use while avoiding conflicts between different incompatible uses. This is not to imply that more than one use cannot be accommodated on a given river section. Even uses that are viewed as incompatible can sometimes be accommodated when separated temporally or spatially. However, incorporating a regional approach to resource and recreational use planning allows for a greater variety of acceptable options and therefore a greater probability that all public needs can be adequately met.

During the course of planning for the future use of the Colorado River within Grand Canyon National Park, the NPS will evaluate and consider the range of resources and opportunities within the Colorado River system, including the mainstem Colorado, Green, Yampa, and San Juan Rivers and their major tributaries.

#### TIMELINE FOR THE COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS

- May 1997 Distribution of goals and guiding principles (this document).
- Sept. 1997 Public workshops are held in Phoenix, Portland, and Salt Lake City to define issues and gather information regarding potential solutions. NPS also receives written comments on issues and potential solutions from those not attending workshops.
- Jan. 1998 Summary of issues and suggested solutions prepared and distributed. Public continues to be engaged in the decision-making process as the draft plan is formulated.
- Jan. 1999 Draft plan and environmental assessment released to public for review and comment.
- April 1999 Public involvement workshops held to discuss draft plan.
- Jan. 2000 Release of final draft plan and environmental assessment. Public notification regarding the location of workshops will occur at least 30 days prior to the meetings.

#### THE FINAL PLAN

Very shortly we will be presented with an opportunity to work together to assure that the extraordinary human experiences provided by traveling the Colorado River through Grand Canyon are perpetuated unblemished into the future. We have no illusions that this will be an easy process. We are confident, however, that the thousands of people dedicated to the protection of these river resources and experiences will find a way to work through their differences for the common good. We have never met a more caring and energetic group of people than those that share our sense of stewardship for this incredible place. The challenge belongs to us all: you, as stewards of this land, and NPS staff as people entrusted to manage the river on your behalf. We look forward to your participation in this mutual effort. †

For additional information write:

Grand Canyon National Park Science Center, Grand Canyon National Park, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023, Attn: Linda Jalbert

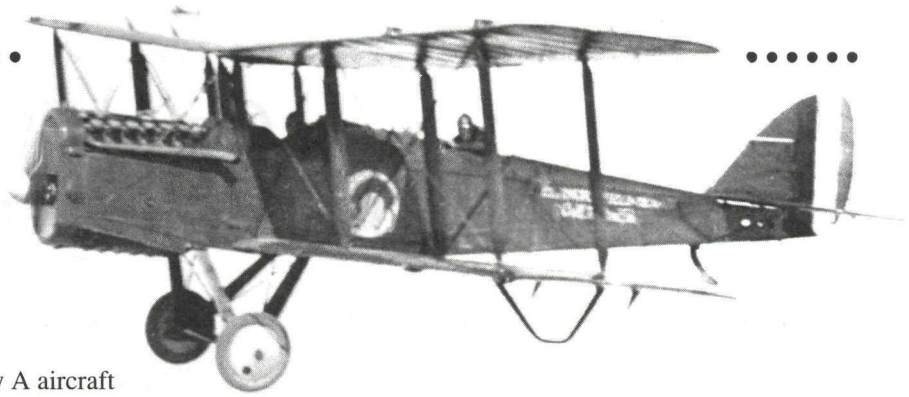
Or call:

Dr. Ken Weber, Recreation/Social Science Program Manager (520) 638-7753; Linda Jalbert, CRMP Team Leader (520) 638-7909



# UPDATE ON THE OVERFLIGHTS ISSUE

by Dr. Ken Weber, Social Scientist, Grand Canyon National Park



Efforts continue to achieve substantial **restoration of natural quiet** at Grand Canyon National Park. On December 31, 1996, the proposed rule, under consideration and comment for much of 1996, was issued as a **Final Rule**. The Final Rule, which became effective May 1, 1997, has five major elements:

1. It modified lateral dimensions of the Grand Canyon National Park Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA). The new SFRA is approximately 2.8% larger and now includes virtually all of the park.
2. It enlarged flight-free zones from approximately 45% to 82% of the SFRA. The increase to the flight-free zones results in a corresponding decrease in the area under the flight corridors.

Achieving our goal of natural quiet and solitude, so important to Grand Canyon visitors, will require a publicly supported, long-term effort.

3. It established seasonal curfews in the Dragon and Zuni Point Corridors. Under these curfews, air-tour operations are prohibited between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. during the summer, and between 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. in the winter. The Dragon Corridor runs north-northeast and south-southwest from approximately Mimbreno Point on the South Rim to the North Rim Entrance Station. The Zuni Point Corridor extends north from near Zuni Point to a point near Gunther Castle.
4. It established a cap on the number of air-tour aircraft at their current levels.
5. It established reporting requirements for the operators including the number of operations, routes, and equipment type flown.

With the announcement of the Final Rule came notice of a request for comments on air-tour routes, and a proposed rule on noise limitations in the vicinity of Grand Canyon National Park. The public comment period for the proposed routes closed January 30, 1997. The final route structures should be announced by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in late spring. The proposed rule on noise limitations seeks to provide incentive for the use of quieter aircraft, to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on the park, and to lift the cap on the number of quietest aircraft imposed as a part of the Final Rule. This **proposed rule on noise limitations** has six elements:

1. It classifies the air-tour fleet into categories A, B, and C (most noisy to least noisy) based on "noise efficiency" (noise per passenger).
2. It proposes to establish a new flight corridor in the Toroweap/Shinumo Flight-Free Zone for Category C (least noisy) aircraft. This proposed flight corridor is on the south side of the Colorado River; the corridor would cross the flight-free zone in the National Canyon area and would enter and exit the flight-free zone north of Supai Village.

3. It proposes a phaseout of Category A aircraft by the end of 2000.
4. It proposes a scheduled phaseout of Category B aircraft by the end of 2008.
5. It would require entrants to the local air-tour industry to use only Category C equipment.
6. It proposes to lift immediately the cap on the number of Category C aircraft that could be operated in the SFRA.

The public comment period on this proposed rule closed March 31, 1997.

Shortly after the announcement of the Final Rule both industry and environmental interests filed suits in the Washington, D.C. Court of Appeals. The industry's suit

primarily challenges the FAA's authority to issue such regulations, while the environmentalists' suit asserts that the Final Rule does not provide the noise reductions mandated under Public Law 100-91.

On February 21, 1997, the secretaries of Transportation and Interior announced a "phased implementation" plan for the provisions of the Final Rule. Beginning May 1, three of the five elements of the Final Rule will be implemented. These three are the seasonal curfews, the cap on the number of air-tour aircraft, and the operator-reporting requirements. Implementation of the new flight-free zones, flight corridors, and modified routes has been postponed until January 1998. According to the press release issued by the FAA, this phased implementation

offers certain advantages, "In addition to gaining time to explore extensive public comments, postponing implementation of the new airspace and routes will allow air tour flight crews to be trained and certified for the new operations during winter, a period of lower activity in the canyon." ▲

## — URGENT —

### PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Another Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) has just been announced. This notice proposes:

1. A new flight corridor available only to Category C aircraft (least noisy) that would transect the northern portion of the expanded Bright Angel Flight-free Zone.
2. A new flight corridor through the Toroweap/Shinumo Flight-free Zone passing over the National Canyon, Supai Village, and Havatagavitch Canyon areas.

Comments on this NPRM must be received by the FAA no later than **May 25, 1997**. Please contact Dr. Ken Weber at (520) 638-7753 or at e-mail [GRCA\\_SOCIOLOGIST@NPS.GOV](mailto:GRCA_SOCIOLOGIST@NPS.GOV) for information on how to comment on this latest NPRM.

Above: In 1919 the first airplane flew over Grand Canyon. NPS photo

## WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

by Linda Jalbert, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Grand Canyon National Park Science Center

The Wilderness Management Plan for Grand Canyon National Park is currently being developed. The Plan's primary purposes are to: 1) provide guidance and describe strategies for meeting Wilderness management legislative and policy mandates while providing recreational opportunities for a broad range of visitor experiences and settings, and 2) provide for Wilderness management continuity throughout park administration and staff changes.

The scope of the Wilderness Management Plan is resource management and protection of areas recommended for Wilderness designation, with a primary focus on visitor-use management. The Plan does not specifically address visitor-use management of the cross-canyon corridor or the Colorado River.

Approximately 94% (1,139,077 acres) of Grand Canyon National Park is proposed for Wilderness designation. *NPS Management Policies* requires that:

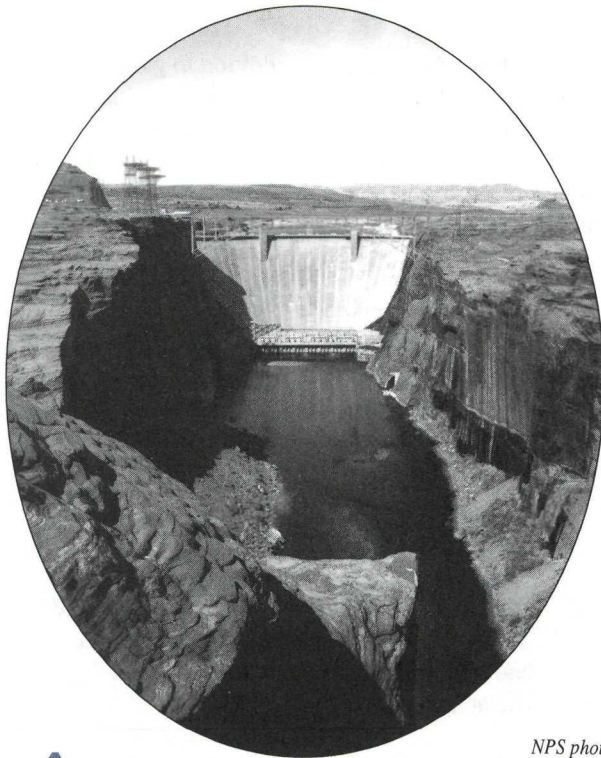
*The Park Service will take no action that would diminish the wilderness suitability of an area recommended for wilderness study or for wilderness designation until the legislative process has been completed. Until that process has been completed, management decisions pertaining to recommended wilderness and wilderness study areas will be made in expectation of eventual wilderness designation [Chapter 6:3].*

The park's General Management Plan (GMP) provides the overall objectives for park management. It sets forth the basic management philosophy and provides the strategies for resolving issues. The GMP, in accordance with the  
(CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE)



# GLEN CANYON DAM ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

by Dave Haskell, Science Center Director, Grand Canyon National Park



NPS photo  
by Greg Probst

A great deal of progress has been made this year implementing the new Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (AMP), one of the key actions required by the 1992 Grand Canyon Protection Act. This program is the responsibility of the newly chartered Adaptive Management Working Group (AMWG), a Federal advisory committee made up of representatives of Federal, State and Tribal agencies, water and power regulatory organizations, and non-government environmental organizations that have a responsibility for, or interest in, the management of resources and values asso-

ciated with the Colorado River through Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Grand Canyon National Park.

Another new Department of the Interior organization was formed this year as part of the Adaptive Management Program—the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC), located in Flagstaff, Arizona. This is the science organization that will conduct the monitoring and research programs needed to monitor the effects of the new flow rates and to support the Adaptive Management Program. The first chief of this new organization is Dr. L. David Garrett.

New dam-operating criteria were recently approved by the Secretary of the Interior. This was the last step in the process to assure that river flow rates are regulated to maximize benefits not only to water and power users but also for the protection of natural and cultural resources in the river corridor and to improve conditions for recreational use. Minimum flows are now set at 8,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) in the daytime and 5,000 cfs at night, with a maximum daily fluctuation of 5,000 cfs. Maximum flows of 25,000 cfs may not be exceeded except to carry out periodic habitat improvement/beach building flows or to avoid a dam emergency. These habitat improvement flows, normally reaching 45,000 cfs, will usually be conducted in the spring of those years when Lake Powell water levels are elevated, and high spring runoff is expected.

1997 thus far has been a high water year. Releases from the dam in excess of 25,000 cfs were required during February and March to accommodate expected high spring runoff entering Lake Powell. Above average river flows are expected to continue through the summer.

The first habitat improvement/beach building flow was conducted in 1996. This 45,000-cfs flow proved to be a great success. Sand deposits on many beaches were improved, as was native fish habitat. It is hoped that the

high flow rates this spring will not erode the beach sand deposits created last year.

The formation of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program received strong public support. It is a government program that is working well, and is already achieving substantial positive results. Through participation in this program, Grand Canyon National Park staff and partners will assure that natural and cultural resources, spiritual values, and outstanding recreational and educational opportunities are effectively managed and protected. Since adaptive management is a new concept and is largely in the experimental phase, we will make it a high priority to keep you informed on its progress. ▲

*WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT UPDATE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)* requirements of *NPS Management Policies*, states that all proposed Wilderness be managed as Wilderness, and anticipates the final resolution of Wilderness issues and the preparation of a Wilderness management plan as future actions. Consistent with this policy the agency articulated its framework for strategic planning and established a series of mission goals to define the agency's desired future in the 1996 National Park Service Strategic Plan. The Plan emphasized that "the National Park Service must maintain wilderness attributes, such as opportunities for solitude, presence of natural quiet, and a night-sky unaffected by light or air pollution in designated or proposed wilderness."

The Wilderness Management Plan will replace the 1988 Backcountry Management Plan as the principal strategic plan for recreational-use management and resource protection in the park's backcountry Wilderness areas. The Plan specifically addresses issues and provides guidelines for:

- implementing an effective system for permitting and allocating overnight use;
- establishing a coordinated educational program to provide users with information for planning and executing a safe, enjoyable and low-impact trip;
- monitoring and maintaining the integrity of natural, cultural, and experiential resource conditions;
- managing within the context of the ecoregion by providing information on recreational opportunities on neighboring lands; and
- conducting administrative management practices in accordance with wilderness law and policy.

Grand Canyon National Park began review of the 1988 Backcountry Plan and development of the Wilderness Management Plan with public scoping in 1995. Public comment will be accepted on the draft plan and environmental assessment when released in summer 1997. A final plan is expected by the end of the year. For more information on the Plan contact: Linda Jalbert, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Grand Canyon National Park Science Center, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023. ▲

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THE CANYON CONSTITUENT  
is published by  
Grand Canyon National Park  
in cooperation with  
Grand Canyon Association.

Project Manager  
Dave Haskell

Edited by  
Greer Cheshier

Design/Production by  
Kim Buchheit  
and L. Greer Price

Printing by  
Classic Prescott Printing

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