

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

### 1. Name of Property

**historic name** South Kaibab Trail  
**other names/site number** Yaki Trail; Yaqui Trail

### 2. Location

**street & number** Grand Canyon National Park  
**city, town** Grand Canyon x \_\_\_\_\_ **vicinity**  
  
**state** Arizona      **code** AZ      **county** Coconino      **code** 005      **zip code** 86023

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	—	— sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	—	— objects
		<u>10</u>	<u>5</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Roads and Trails of Grand Canyon, Arizona

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination \_\_\_request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_ meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property \_ meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

\_ entered in the National Register  
\_ See continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_

\_ determined eligible for the National Register. \_ See continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_

\_ determined not eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_

\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**6. Functions or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation-Pedestrian related

Recreation and Culture-Outdoor Recreation  
Transportation-Pedestrian related

x See continuation sheet.

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## 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Excavated Earth and Stone Trail

Materials  
(enter categories from instructions)

foundations Earth  
walls Stone: Sandstone, Limestone  
roof n/a  
other drainage features: wood/log, stone; tread features: wood/log, stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### The South Kaibab Trail

The South Kaibab Trail is a man-made, semi-primitive path, 6.48 miles long, which descends 4,860 feet in elevation from a point approximately four miles east of Grand Canyon Village on the south rim of the Grand Canyon to the south end of the Kaibab Suspension Bridge, approximately 75 feet above the Colorado River. The trail may be located on the fifteen-minute USGS map entitled "Bright Angel, Arizona." The trail was named to commemorate the adjacent Kaibab National Forest.

The South Kaibab has been described as a "trail in a hurry to get to the river." This statement is by no means simply intriguing prose, though it may have been intended as such. The South Kaibab was surveyed, designed, and built by the National Park Service (NPS) to provide fast, efficient access to the Colorado River. To meet these criteria, much of the trail was excavated from the Canyon walls by laborers armed with dynamite, compressed air drills, and jackhammers. Efficiency, safety, and comfort for future travelers were prime considerations in the building of the South Kaibab Trail. The trail was designed to enhance the visitor's overall experience in the Grand Canyon, but was not designed to specifically add to or detract from that experience; it was and continues to be a strictly utilitarian access artery. Its early and continuing popularity as one of the most extensively used trails in Grand Canyon National Park attests to its successful fulfillment of these purposes.

By serving these utilitarian ends, the South Kaibab Trail achieved two very significant objectives at Grand Canyon National Park. First, it facilitated consolidation of the majority of backcountry tourism to one area, the Cross Canyon Corridor. As a result, more sensitive areas of the Canyon are spared comparably high visitation, ensuring more focused and effective NPS visitor management. By doing this, the park service was and is better able to perform the public service it was created to provide: to protect and preserve our unique natural resources for future generations. Second, the trail's completion represented the ascendance of public over private control at Grand Canyon, a crucial socioeconomic transition occurring not only locally but within the larger national historical scene. Both of these ends heralded the emergence of more environmentally conscious cultural values and practices.

Cutting down and across the steeply sloped or nearly vertical walls of the canyon in a northerly direction, the South Kaibab Trail passes through at least eight major geologic formations, terminating within the two - billion-year-old Vishnu schist that forms the inner gorge of Grand Canyon. The inhospitable terrain through which the South Kaibab was built was a significant factor in the construction of the trail. Designed specifically to provide the most expedient access to the Colorado River, much of the structure was blasted from the solid

x See continuation sheet.

rock walls of the Canyon, linking the rim to the river.

The trail traverses terrain otherwise inhospitable to pedestrian or stock use, yet was built with user safety and comfort in mind. Indeed, its route was chosen because all but one quarter mile of its tread surface receives sun year-round, thereby minimizing snow and ice buildup and maximizing use. However, this same sun, and the absence of water along the entire route, is what makes the trail a dangerous place on hot summer days.

Since its completion, the South Kaibab Trail has facilitated inner-canyon tourist use and enhanced inner-canyon tourist management and resource protection by the National Park Service. Despite numerous minor alterations over the years, the South Kaibab Trail retains integrity of location, setting, design, association, and feeling. The historical contexts of the South Kaibab Trail remains intact as well, as it continues to serve the function and purpose for which it was built.

The South Kaibab has been described as a trail "down which you could ride a motorcycle," a model of modern trail building. The design and attention to user comfort resulted in a trail uniformly four-feet wide, offers a generally smooth, hardpacked tread surface, and is characterized by stone retaining walls along its length. Although the South Kaibab lacks water and is overall consistently steeper than any other rim-to-river trail south of the river, it compensates for these drawbacks with its significantly reduced length and its maximum grade of 18 percent.

The trailhead is located on the west side of Yaki Point on the south rim. The trail first descends 1-1/2 miles to Cedar Ridge, in steep switchbacks drilled and blasted from vertical and near vertical cliffs of the Kaibab, Toroweap, and Coconino formations. Evidence of dynamite placement and extensive drilling remains along the trail. At Cedar Ridge an exhibit case was built by the CCC to protect some of the fern fossils uncovered during the trail's construction. The exhibit case has a low wall and two piers of roughly coursed rubble masonry. A small gable roof that was originally finished with brush wired to the decking, but is now covered with wood shingles, is supported by stone piers and round log brackets. Some of the shingles are missing. Two cases are housed in this structure. Between the roof pillars is an upright exhibit case framed in round logs. The larger exhibit case is a glazed window sheltering the fern fossils, which have been left in place. The case is partially covered by the roof, although the sun still shines on the case, causing condensation on the glass.

From Cedar Ridge the trail heads down through the Supai formation to O'Neill Butte. From there it moves down and across the east face of the Butte in a series of short, steep switchbacks to the Redwall formation. The trail then drops eastward down the Redwall in long graceful switchbacks to the Muav limestone and through the Bright Angel shale of the Tonto Plateau to The Tipoff. There the South Kaibab begins its descent into the inner gorge. At Panorama Point below The Tipoff (elevation 3600 feet) the Colorado River can be seen and heard another 1,200 feet below. The last leg of the descent begins through layers of the Precambrian Supergroup. It eventually pierces the jagged cliffs of the black Vishnu schist. In a breathtaking series of short, steep switchbacks, the trail then plunges to the south side of the Kaibab Suspension Bridge (commonly known as the Black Bridge), 75 feet above the Colorado River.<sup>1</sup> Atop a rock formation known as the Train Wreck are the remains of an extensive water catchment system. Given the lack of water in the area and apparent age of remains, this system probably dates to the years 1907-25. Additional research is needed, however, before the site's significance can be evaluated.

The South Kaibab Trail is one of four trails included in the Cross Canyon Corridor Trail System. As such, it is classified a Type A, Level I backcountry trail, which recognizes its high level of use with a correspondingly intensive maintenance program. Trails designated Level I are associated with trailside toilets, extensive

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<sup>1</sup>The Kaibab Suspension Bridge is considered part of the North Kaibab Trail and is listed as a contributing resource in the National Register nomination for that trail.

signage (mileage, cautionary, interpretive, directional, and resource protection), high ranger monitoring, and emergency phone service. Additionally, stock (primarily mule) use of the trail is permitted.<sup>2</sup>

Annual maintenance and rehabilitation to compensate for damage caused by heavy use and erosion has been performed on the trail since 1925 in order to keep it open year-round. Consequently, most trail features, such as tread surface, water breaks, drainage features, and walls have been replaced a number of times. Some materials and maintenance techniques have been modernized as well to ensure greater longevity. For example, smooth iron spikes (often original drill bits) holding waterbars in place have been replaced in many spots by spiral-ribbed lengths of steel rebar, and sections of trail washed away or gullied by heavy rains and inadequate drainage have been replaced and then protected from similar recurring damage by reworking old drainage paths or installation of new drainage channels. However, the basic trail structure, including location and route, has not been altered to any significant degree.

Note that the lower portion of the trail below The Tipoff had one or more earlier alignments. David Rust, who built the first tourism trail from the north rim down Bright Angel Creek and installed a cable car system across the river, also roughed out a trail from the cable to the Tipoff in 1907 or soon thereafter. This trail, called the Cable Trail, may have been an improvement to a still earlier trail claimed by the prospector Wash Henry ca. 1902. In 1922 the park service widened and improved the Cable Trail to facilitate access to the bridge that they had built across the river in 1921. Workmen constructing the South Kaibab in 1924-25 elected to bypass the older trail, however, choosing instead to carve easier grades through the Vishnu Schist with power tools (probably the first use of power tools on any of Grand Canyon's trails). Portions of the old Cable Trail, including some stacked-stone retaining walls, may still be seen from today's trail.

Yaki Point, near the trailhead, is the staging area for mule trains that use the South Kaibab Trail pack in supplies to Phantom Ranch and NPS facilities in the Inner Canyon. The buildings at Yaki Point were built by both Fred Harvey and the National Park Service in 1926-29. They are closely associated with the construction of, and operations along, the South Kaibab and are therefore included in this nomination.

#### **Fred Harvey Mule Barn - Building 1094**

This large stone barn was built in 1929 and has uncoursed rubble rock walls approximately ten feet high. It measures 32' x 86'<sup>3</sup> The barn has a gambrel roof which rises from the stone walls and is covered with leaf-shape asbestos shingles. The same shingles are used in the gable ends. There are small three-lite windows with their original metal sash on the east and west sides. On the north is a set of large wood doors with diagonal planking. The doors on the south are constructed the same way but they are covered with corrugated metal. The north and south ends also have hay loft doors in the gables. The barn is still used to house livestock. Until recently, there was a U-shaped shed (Building 1093) in the opposite corner of the rectangle created by the barn and adjacent corral. It was built the same year as the barn.

#### **Barn Cistern**

This structure has not been assigned a number, but its construction likely coincided with that of the barn. The cistern is a rectangular, stone-faced, concrete above-ground reservoir. It is approximately 8' x 22' x 6' high. It is no longer in use, but in good condition.

#### **Fred Harvey Residence - Building 1095**

This one-story, wood frame employee residence was built in 1926 a guide's house<sup>4</sup>. It is approximately 24 x 26

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<sup>2</sup>NPS, Backcountry Management Plan, September 1988, F-3-6 and D-2.

<sup>3</sup>Building Record, Albuquerque Division, A.T.&S.F. Railway, 197, courtesy Gordon Chappell.

<sup>4</sup>Op. Cit., Building Record, Chappell.

feet and contains five rooms. It has a concrete foundation and V-groove siding. The gable roof is covered with asbestos shingles. The front gable is clipped. There is a small shed-roofed porch with concrete steps and floor on the front (west). Windows are double hung aluminum sash except for the rear ell, which appears to be an addition. The building is still used as a residence and is in good condition.

#### **Shed - Building 1096**

This shed is located behind the Fred Harvey residence. It is of wood frame construction with weatherboard siding and sits on a stone foundation. It has a shed roof covered with asphalt roll roofing. The shed has a single door on the front (west). The building is in fair condition.

#### **Residence Cistern**

This structure is a round, stone and concrete cistern located on a slope behind the Fred Harvey residence. It is approximately 8' in diameter and 5.5' high. It is constructed of uncoursed rubble with concrete mortar and has a concrete cap. Though it appears to be unused, it is in good condition.

#### **Shed - Building 1097**

This small shed is located east of the Fred Harvey mule barn. It has a shed roof covered with asphalt roll roofing, board and batten siding, and a concrete slab floor. It sits on a concrete foundation. There is one small window, now boarded up, on the north side. There is a set of double doors on the front (west).

#### **NPS Residence - Building 84**

This is a small, one-story cabin built in 1927. It is a gable-roofed frame dwelling with two additions and has five rooms. Both additions have shed roofs; the older one appears to be a sleeping porch.<sup>5</sup> The cabin has horizontal lap siding with mitered corners, except on the new addition where the corners are butted. There is a wood porch with a small gable roof and a brick chimney. The residence was recently reroofed with wood shingles. The original windows have been replaced with aluminum 2/2 sash, but the rest of the building maintains its rustic character. The building is in fair condition.

#### **NPS Garage - Building 221**

The garage is located north of the residence and was built in 1929. It is a rectangular, two-room wood frame garage with a gable roof, substantial battered stone foundation and steps. It has lap siding with mitered corners. The main access has heavy double doors of diagonal planking with blacksmith-quality decorative hinges. There is a smaller, similar door in the front (east) window. There are two three-lite windows on the north sides. The building has many rustic details, typical park service buildings of the 1920s and 1930s. The building is in fair condition.

#### **NPS Mule Shed - Building 89**

This long, shed-roofed barn was built in 1929 and has a shed addition on the west side. It has horizontal lap siding with butted corners. Some of the siding has been repaired using unlapped 2 x 8s. The small shed section has log framing and a corrugated metal roof, and it may be the original core structure. The building is approximately 1,000 square feet<sup>6</sup> and sits on a rock perimeter foundation with newer concrete piers at the corners. The large shed has asphalt roll roofing and new sliding doors. There is one 6-lite window on the north end, but the hinged wood openings on the east side have

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<sup>5</sup>Building Record, Resource Management, Yaki Point residence, historical background, #84.

<sup>6</sup>Building Record, Resource Management, Yaki Point Barn, Historical background, #87.

been nailed shut. Mules have chewed on the original siding, and some of the sill boards are rotting. The building is in fair condition.

The barn is adjacent to a corral of metal fencing that has a shelter consisting of a corrugated metal roof supported by heavy timbers. The shelter is not believed to be original to the Yaki Point development and is therefore considered a noncontributing resource.

### **NPS Hay Barn**

The hay barn is a tall, rectangular structure with a shallow open gable roof, massive corner posts, and lap siding, except on the south side where is it exposed frame. There is a set of double garage doors on the front (north) side, which are vertical plank with an x-frame. The barn is situated on a graded flat, with a minor rock retaining wall above the mule shed. The building is in good condition but of recent construction, and therefore considered a noncontributing resource.

### **Stone Wall at NPS Mule Shed**

Parallel to and west of the mule shed, inside the mule pen, is a stone wall, 35' long and about 2' high. This wall, too, is of recent construction and is considered a noncontributing resource.

These buildings are all located southeast of the South Kaibab Trailhead within an approximate 15-acre area shaped like an inverted triangle. Resources included in this nomination are listed below.

### **Contributing Resources**

South Kaibab Trail  
Fossil Fern Exhibit (#220)  
Fred Harvey Mule Barn (#1094)  
Fred Harvey Residence (#1095)  
Shed (#1096)  
Shed (# 1097)  
NPS Residence (#84)  
NPS Garage (#221)  
Barn Cistern  
Residence Cistern

### **Noncontributing Resources**

NPS Mule Shed (#89)  
NPS Hay Barn  
Stone Wall  
Water Catchment System  
Corrals

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:  
 nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Conservation

1919-1925

1919-1924

Social History

1925-1940

1924-1925

Entertainment/Recreation

Commerce

Architecture

Engineering

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person(s)

Architect/Builder

National Park Service

**State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance.**

The South Kaibab Trail represents the final stages of transition in the historic ascendance of public over private interests at Grand Canyon. The trail's construction was instrumental in achieving ascendance over private interests. Built by the National Park Service (NPS) over a six-month period, from December 1924 to June 1925, the South Kaibab made possible active regulatory resource protection and preservation at Grand Canyon, heralding the shape and scope of future NPS viability in carrying out its mandate to protect and preserve those resources contained within the national parks "in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."<sup>7</sup>

The trail is significant under Criteria A, as it was instrumental in achieving and affirming the ascendance and vitality of protective resource management at Grand Canyon, an essential step toward safeguarding the larger public interest with regard to the county's natural resources. As such, construction of the South Kaibab was one positive step in helping to complete a critical shift in American values that occurred in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

The South Kaibab Trail is also significant under Criteria C. The trail represents a significant engineering accomplishment and illustrates the most advanced trail building techniques of the time. It was built for two specific reasons: first, to provide Grand Canyon National Park with a safe, efficient access route from the south rim of the Canyon to the Colorado River, and second, to consolidate inner-Canyon visitation and help make NPS administration more effective.

<sup>7</sup>August 25, 1916, "Act to Establish a National Park Service . . . .", 39 **state**, 535.

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#### Historic Context: The Ascendance of Public Over Private Interest At Grand Canyon, 1890-1940

Until the mid-nineteenth century Grand Canyon was, from a European-American perspective, typical of most natural resources in the United States public domain, that is, undeveloped, unexplored, and unregulated. After 1893 Grand Canyon was placed under nominal jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior's General Land Office and later, in 1905, the Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Aggressive management of Grand Canyon began in 1908 when the area was set aside by Presidential Order as a National Monument. Gifford Pinchot, who was the head of the Forest Service at that time, was instrumental in the development of the strong resource conservation ideals that have influenced the country's natural resource management to the present. Pinchot's conservation policies focused on efficient, maximized use, policies best implemented through regulated use by private enterprise. Grand Canyon was subject to and consequently directed by these pragmatic values. Unfortunately, maximum use often meant well-intentioned federal favoritism toward those whose resources could best fulfill USFS objectives.

At Grand Canyon, this favoritism focused on two large commercial entities, the Santa Fe Railway and the Fred Harvey Company. Together they enjoyed monopolistic economic sovereignty at Grand Canyon after 1905, in part because of their favored relationship with the USFS. Excluded were most of the numerous independent operators -- primarily pioneering prospectors and entrepreneurs who had come to the Canyon in the late 1880s and acquired property through homestead or mining claims. Not surprisingly, this situation fostered local resentment toward the federal government, as well as toward the Santa Fe and Fred Harvey.<sup>8</sup> This favoritism further exacerbated frustrations that had been escalating since the establishment in 1893 of the Grand Canyon Forest Reserve, which resulted in the removal of a substantial portion of Coconino County lands from local tax rolls. Consequently, when the National Park Service assumed administration of the Canyon in 1919 it entered a hostile environment. These animosities took on an entirely new flavor under NPS management, as administrators essentially closed the park to future development to all but a few commercial interests. This action confirmed local fears and solidified resentment toward the increasingly pervasive federal presence in northern Arizona and polarized citizenry against federal government. It represents a watershed in northern Arizona history, closing the door on traditionally unfettered free enterprise in favor of preservation for the larger public benefit. The South Kaibab Trail illustrates this transition, chronicling an essential chapter in Grand Canyon history as well as the history of the American West.

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<sup>8</sup>Douglas Strong, "Ralph H. Cameron and the Grand Canyon, pt. I," *Arizona and the West*, U of A Press, v. 20, 1978, 62; Ralph H. Cameron papers, Files 4 and 5, U of A Special Collections Library.

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The role of the South Kaibab Trail within this historic context comprises the following stages:

1919-1924	Development and initiation of the South Kaibab Project.
1924-1925	Trail construction.
1925-1940	Use/entrenchment and NPS predominance at Grand Canyon.

### Social History

Since its construction by Ralph H. Cameron and others in 1890, the Bright Angel Trail, descending nine miles from the south rim to the Colorado River, served Grand Canyon as one of the best and most convenient inner-canyon access routes. Its importance to inner-canyon travel was significantly bolstered in 1901 with the arrival of the Grand Canyon Railway. Since imposing a one dollar toll in 1903, Cameron had profited nicely from increased visitation to the budding Grand Canyon Village. Cameron's control of the Bright Angel and subsequent obsession with controlling inner-canyon access became a constant irritation to the federal government, the Santa Fe Railway, and the Fred Harvey Company, all of whom determined to loosen his vise-like influence. Management of the trail fell to Coconino County in 1906, yet Cameron's past associations as Coconino County Sheriff and member of the Coconino County Board of Supervisors prolonged his control. The years prior to the creation of Grand Canyon National Park saw Cameron, the USFS, and the Santa Fe in and out of court many times struggling for control of the Bright Angel Trail. This situation had not changed appreciably with the transfer of administrative authority at Grand Canyon to the NPS in 1919.

County ownership of the Bright Angel Trail, still the single best access route to the Colorado River, stymied the National Park Service in its efforts to efficiently manage the inner canyon. Furthermore, the county's ownership was specifically protected within the 1919 Act creating Grand Canyon National Park; therefore its transfer from the county to the National Park Service was in no way a simple matter. To acquire it, the park service would need to strike a very attractive bargain with Coconino County. Given the uneasy local relationship with the federal government in prior years, this promised to be a less than amicable exercise.

In the fall of 1919, in order to safeguard their interests and objectives at Grand Canyon, the park service surveyed a new trail to access the river at Bright Angel Creek. Construction estimates amounted to \$30,000, and several years later were adjusted upward to raised to \$40,000. These estimates were much less expensive than meeting the \$150,000 price set by Coconino County for the Bright Angel Trail.<sup>9</sup> Despite this "ace-in-the-hole," the NPS refrained from using it as a threat, preferring more subtle negotiations with the county. NPS administration understood long-festered local suspicions toward the federal presence in northern Arizona and similarly realized the benefits of pragmatic cooperation rather than inflexible idealism in establishing their influence. As Alfred Runte argues in support of these policies of "pragmatic alliance" -- Stephen Mather's brainchild -- "Until Americans at large accepted preservation for its own sake, economic

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<sup>9</sup>Grand Canyon Superintendent Peters to Stephen Mather, 9/28/20, RG 79, E7/CCF/G.C., Box 900-05, National Archives; and **Coconino Sun**, Nov. 7, 1919.

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persuasion was better insurance for the movement than unilateral appeals for a spiritual and emotional understanding of landscapes.<sup>10</sup> As such, the NPS bent over backward trying to please Coconino County during the five years of  
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negotiations over the Bright Angel Trail.

While many argue economic motivation for the park service's determination, this was not necessarily the case. The Bright Angel provided the most convenient access to the Santa Fe/Fred Harvey Phantom Ranch development, but the park service was as interested in access to gain management control as accommodating their economic partners. Under the forceful direction of Director Stephen T. Mather, the park service strove to eliminate private interests within all the national parks because they hindered effective management. Because of its proximity to the trailhead and the preponderance of development at Grand Canyon Village, NPS control of the Bright Angel Trail seemed imperative. In short, NPS attempts to fulfill their mandate to protect Grand Canyon hinged on the Bright Angel Trail, over which they had very little control. When negotiations with the county failed in early November 1924, park administrators had had enough of delays and chose to proceed with their own trail. Anything less would signal weakness and ineptitude to the enemies of federal control.

Work on the new trail, initially called the Yaki or Yaqui Trail, began in early December 1924. The 6-1/2-mile trail was hastily blasted and carved down the formidable chasm in a little more than six months. The project was dogged by severe weather problems, financial difficulties, and continual construction delays. Progress was slow due to countless miscalculations regarding rock formations, and the project rapidly exceeded its budget. In addition, the National Park Service had very little local support for its project. While most Canyon pioneers had by this time resigned themselves to the accelerating federal influence, the Santa Fe and Fred Harvey, ostensible economic partners, had a more difficult time accepting that authority and were initially not entirely in favor of the new trail. In fact, the resistance and ridicule proffered by concessioner employees spilled over into the local newspapers, creating the expectation that the project would fail. This placed even more pressure on Park Superintendent J.R. Eakin, who made it clear to NPS management that this project had to succeed at all costs.

After six emotionally as well as physically and fiscally grueling months, NPS work crews completed the South Kaibab Trail from rim to river. Total cost of the project at the time of its completion in June 1925 was nearly \$73,000 -- more than \$30,000 over original NPS estimates.<sup>11</sup> The trail was dedicated on June 15, 1925 and the first mule caravan traveled it from Phantom Ranch on June 26, 1925. Over the next few years opponents were won over to the advantages of the new trail, which tended to solidify park service control over the south rim. With minimal alteration The South Kaibab exists today much as it did then -- but now serves tens of thousands of Canyon visitors annually.

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<sup>10</sup>Runte, p. 83-91.

<sup>11</sup>Letter from Stephen T. Mather to Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Eakin, 9/5/25, RG 79, Box 58, 6/CF, Roads: Kaibab Trail, pt. 1, National Archives.

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### Architecture and Engineering

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The South Kaibab Trail provides the quickest access to the Colorado River of any south rim trail. It drops abruptly from the canyon rim 4,800 feet to the Colorado River in only six and one-half miles, as opposed to the nearly 8-mile length of the Bright Angel Trail. Additionally, it was designed for year-round use and to be the safest and most comfortable route to the river. As a result the trail did not follow, as do nearly all other trails at Grand Canyon, the path of least resistance. The only way to construct the trail as surveyed and designed was to blast the majority of it through the varied and often

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formidable rock formations. Dynamite produced greatly reduced grades (averaging 18 percent as compared to nearly 38 percent on parts of the old Bright Angel), a uniform four-foot width, consistent retaining wall construction, a smooth, hard-packed surface tread, convenient turnouts and rest areas. The trail was pushed through, often under trying winter weather conditions, by two crews of Mormon laborers, one working down from the top and the other up from the bottom. Part of the work of the lower crew included renovation of the old "Cable Trail" -- a two-mile section from the river up to the Tonto Plateau. A few sections of this older trail were incorporated into the new South Kaibab. Upon its completion in June, 1925, it stood unmatched as the safest, most expedient, and most convenient rim-to-river trail in the Canyon.

### Commerce/Entertainment and Recreation:

Despite its lack of water and shade--amenities in abundance on the Bright Angel Trail--the South Kaibab Trail, because of its shorter length, soon rivalled the Bright Angel as the most popular rim-to-river trail. This fact is supported by Fred Harvey's construction of a guide house and mule barn near the trailhead in 1926, followed by NPS construction of their own residence, mule barn several years later. Within those few years, the South Kaibab took on much of the inner-canyon corridor traffic. Because of its easy grades, stable tread, and panoramic views, it attracted new users reluctant to travel down the more difficult Bright Angel Trail. Simultaneously, it facilitated park service efforts to protect the canyon's natural and cultural resources by focusing focusing tourist traffic within the central corridor.

### Transportation

The South Kaibab Trail has always provided year-round rim-to-river access. Designed so that a maximum amount of trail surface receives exposure from the sun, keeping winter snow and ice buildup to a minimum, the trail is typically safe in all but the worst weather conditions. Trail users are able to visit the Colorado River and Phantom Ranch throughout the dead of winter, when snow remains thick at the south rim. Similarly, supplies can be packed in and out of Phantom Ranch, allowing this facility to operate year-round. Following completion of the North Kaibab Trail in 1928 and the Colorado River Trail in 1936, the South Kaibab also offered considerable corridor flexibility, including two alternatives between the river and south rim as well as a south side loop hike. This flexibility has come in handy over the years for scheduling mule trips, reducing congestion on any one trail, and allowing transcanyon travel when one or the other south side trail is under repair.

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### Conservation

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Completion of the South Kaibab Trail caused two significant changes at Grand Canyon, both essential to conservation. First, It helped consolidate and accommodate tourist activities within the central corridor, thereby protecting the majority of the inner Canyon from heavy visitor use. Second, consolidation allowed more efficient NPS visitor management, thereby enhancing visitor safety s' backcountry experiences while simultaneously maximizing NPS regulatory control over the region.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

See continuation sheet

preliminary determination of individual listing ( 36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Washington Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Specify Repository:

Grand Canyon National Park, AZ; Nationa Archives,

D.C.

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 78 acres

UTM References

A	<u>  /  </u> Zone	<u>  /////  </u> Easting	<u>  /////  </u> Northing	B	<u>  /  </u> Zone	<u>  /////  </u> Easting	<u>  /////  </u> Northing
C	<u>  /  </u> Zone	<u>  /////  </u> Easting	<u>  /////  </u> Northing	D	<u>  /  </u> Zone	<u>  /////  </u> Easting	<u>  /////  </u> Northing

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

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date October 25, 2019

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National Archives, National Park Service Records, RG 79, Grand Canyon Files, Roads, Files, Kaibab Trail File, Washington, D.C..

National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Historical Files, courtesy of Gordon Chappell, Regional Historian, National Park Service, San Francisco, CA.

Resource Management, Grand Canyon National Park, Building Histories, courtesy Doug Brown.

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### Secondary Sources:

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### Verbal Boundary Description, continued:

The boundary of the South Kaibab Trail is shown as the heavy, dark line on the accompanying USGS map entitled "Bright Angel, Arizona." The nominated property is a meandering trail approximately five feet wide and 6.48 miles long, beginning at the trailhead at Yaki Point (Point A), continuing past Cedar Ridge and the fern fossil exhibit (Point B) and ending at the southern end of the Kaibab Suspension Bridge over the Colorado River southeast of Phantom Ranch (Point C). Also included in the nomination are the buildings in the approximately triangular area bound on two sides by the road to Yaki Point and the road leading to the South Kaibab trailhead parking lot and on the third side by the rim of the Grand Canyon.

### Boundary Justification, continued:

The boundary includes the entire 6.48 meandering trail averaging a five-foot (sixty-inch) width, beginning from the trailhead near Yaki Point on the rim of the Canyon and ending at the south end of the Kaibab Suspension Bridge, where the North Kaibab Trail begins. It also includes the area on the South Rim in which the contributing buildings at Yaki Point are located.

GPS-generated UTM's for specific features were taken in October 1993 and are listed below:

- Fossil Fern Exhibit
- Fred Harvey Mule Barn
- Barn Cistern
- Fred Harvey Residence
- Shed (Building 1096)
- Residence Cistern
- Shed (Building 1097)
- NPS Residence
- NPS Garage
- NPS Mule Shed

### Photographs:

Photographs A-M were included in the original nomination prepared in 1991. The condition of the trail and associated structures have not significantly changed since the photographs were taken.

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This nomination is a revision of a form originally researched, written and prepared by Debra Sutphen, dated April 30, 1991. At the time, Ms. Sutphen was a Research Associate at the Center for Colorado Plateau Studies, Northern Arizona University. The related multiple property listing of Historic Roads and Trails of Grand Canyon, Arizona, was prepared by Mike Anderson, also research associate of the same organization. This nomination was revised by Jamie Donahoe of the Western Regional Office in February 2001, and again revised by Anderson (now GCNP Trails Historian) and Zeman, historical architect, in August 2002.