

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Briefing Paper

Prepared for: Director

Submitted: July 15, 1997

States: Western

Title: Western Visibility and Air Partnership

Issue: Colorado Plateau/Grand Canyon Visibility and Air Quality

Background:

- o The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) required the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission (GCVTC). The Commission's charge was to assess regional haze affecting the Grand Canyon and 15 other parks and wilderness areas on the Colorado Plateau and make recommendations to EPA by November 1995 as to what measures are needed to remedy existing impairment and to prevent future impairment of visibility in these specially protected Class I areas. (Nine of the Class I areas are under NPS management; the remainder are under USFS management.) On June 10, 1996, the Commission fulfilled that charge, and submitted a report to EPA, covering a wide variety of pollution sources and measures to address them. One of the major recommendations concerns prescribed fire on Federal lands. A Federal Land Manager (FLM) *ad hoc* group has been formed to address this issue. Under the CAAA, EPA has until December 1997 (18 months from date of receipt of GCVTC report) to review it and promulgate regional haze regulations, including criteria for measuring "reasonable progress" toward the national visibility of no manmade impairment in Class I areas.
- o The GCVTC was led by Commissioners who are the Governors, or their designees, from the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming, three tribal nations (the Hopi Tribe, Pueblo of Acoma, Navajo, and Hualapai Tribe) with *ex officio* membership by the EPA, Bureau of Land Management, NPS, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Early on in the process, the States determined that the *ex officio* members were nonvoting. The Commissioners met approximately once a year, and helped direct the process through the Operations Committee. The GCVTC carried out its work through a committee and subcommittee structure, on a consensus basis. The Operations Committee, comprised of one representative for each Commissioner. Committee representatives included a mix of state, tribal, and federal government (including the Department of Energy); industry; environmental; academic; and private business interests, represented predominantly by utilities and smelter industries. Assisted by a program manager employed by the Western Governors' Association (WGA), the Operations Committee reviewed and approved work products, resolved conflicts, and provided direction to the other committees: Technical Committee, Alternatives Assessment Committee (AAC), Communications Committee, and the Public Advisory Committee (PAC).
- o By Commission motion approved unanimously on June 10, the Operations Committee met last summer and fall to propose the structure and functions of entities to succeed the Commission and track progress in furthering the Commissions' recommendations. The proposed structure would include as

members all GCVTC State Governors or designees -- plus Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Texas -- as well as up to 12 tribal leaders, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the EPA Administrator, or their respective designees. Each member would have one vote. Designees of the proposed membership have met this year to develop a charter and bylaws for the group. The proposed name of the organization is the Western Regional Air Partnership (WRAP), and its purpose (as stated in the draft charter) is "to promote and monitor the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission and, with the concurrence of its members, engage in other common regional air quality issues."

Status:

- o WGA has circulated a mail ballot to the proposed members asking them to vote for or against for the charter and bylaws as drafted by the designees. All votes are due in by August 15.

Position of Interested Parties:

- o In general, EPA, States, tribes, conservation groups, public, Congress, other agencies support FLM membership and voting in WRAP.
- o At times, industry and some States oppose FLM membership and voting in WRAP.

Department/Bureau Perspective:

- o Following the lead of the Secretary's designee to the WRAP, the Service will participate as actively as other priorities and limitations in staff resources allow, to help ensure successful implementation of the GCVTC recommendations.

Funding Requirements:

- o In-kind services with existing funds; additional funding provided by NPS and other federal agencies may be desirable to help ensure credible products and outcomes. Maintaining funding for travel related to meetings is a concern.

Contact:

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