



Backcountry Management Plan

Purpose and Need

Purpose

To establish a management framework that allows the public to experience Grand Canyon's unique backcountry and wilderness areas while protecting resources and values. The plan will provide direction for management of over 1.1 million acres (or 96% of the park) of primitive, undeveloped park areas, most of which are proposed for wilderness designation.

Need

To address backcountry issues and opportunities in the context of Grand Canyon's enabling legislation, the Wilderness Act, NPS Management Policies, the park's 1995 General Management Plan, and update the 1988 Backcountry Management Plan. Since 1988, amount and types of backcountry use have changed, impacts to resources and visitor experiences have occurred, and interim policies have been developed as needed.

Goals

- Protect and preserve the park's natural and cultural resources and values, and the integrity of wilderness character for present and future generations
- Provide a framework and programmatic guidance for consistent decision making in managing backcountry and proposed wilderness
- Provide a variety of visitor opportunities and experiences for public enjoyment, in a manner consistent with park purposes
- Provide for public understanding and support of preserving the fundamental resources and values for which Grand Canyon National Park was established

Objectives

- Define desired resource and social conditions in backcountry areas, consistent with park purposes
- Identify types and levels of uses that will and will not be allowed in backcountry and provide reasonable opportunities for access
- Develop tools to improve backcountry user group interactions including river, hiker, stock, motorized and non-motorized users
- Provide public information to promote wilderness ethics and reduce behaviors harmful to natural and cultural resources and backcountry experiences
- Define the role of appropriate commercial services and non-commercial activities in backcountry and wilderness areas
- Ensure administrative use, park infrastructure, and research activities are consistent with NPS policies regarding wilderness management and park purposes
- Provide opportunities for traditional access by Traditionally Associated American Indian tribal members
- Monitor visitor use and park resources to preserve and maintain a wilderness experience or, where an area is not proposed for wilderness, a primitive experience

Projects Beyond the Scope of the Backcountry Management Plan

- Cave management
- Wilderness recommendation
- Wild and scenic rivers
- Colorado River Management Plan
- Mule Operations and Stock Use Plan
- Fire Management Plan
- Aircraft overflights

