



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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National Park Service seeking comments on mule operations and stock use in Grand Canyon National Park

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – The National Park Service (NPS) is now accepting comments on mule operations and stock use in Grand Canyon National Park as the agency begins to develop an environmental assessment. The presence and use of mules in and around the canyon is a longstanding tradition and one that the park would like to continue. The NPS is also interested in continuing to provide opportunities for stock use in a manner that is sustainable. This planning effort will address the following management objective identified in the park's 1995 General Management Plan: "Where livestock and visitors share the same trails and areas, minimize conflicts and resource impacts, and enhance safety."

The planning process will consider the following:

- Commercial and private stock use (including horses, mules, and burros) throughout the park.
- Appropriate levels of stock use on park trails.
- Appropriate locations for stock use in the park, which may include:
 - keeping commercial stock use on the North Kaibab Trail down to Supai Tunnel
 - moving stock use to one of the South Rim corridor trails (Bright Angel or South Kaibab)
 - keeping stock use on the Uncle Jim Trail, Whitmore Trail, and select corridor trails
 - initiation of a new concession operated day ride on the South Rim

- The need for new stock facilities or modification to existing facilities on the North and South Rim including compliance with laws and regulations for mule health and safety.

The NPS encourages public participation through the National Environmental Policy Act (commonly known as NEPA) process during which the public has two opportunities to formally comment on the project – once during initial project scoping and again following release of the EA which is expected in fall 2009. The NPS is currently in the scoping phase of this project and invites the public to submit their comments in a variety of ways. Comments will be accepted for 30 days.

Three open house meetings are scheduled in June 2009 where Grand Canyon National Park staff will be available to answer questions and take comments on stock use in the park. Meeting dates and locations are as follows:

June 2, 4-7 PM (Arizona Time) – Flagstaff Public Library, 300 W Aspen Avenue
Flagstaff, Arizona

June 3, 4-6 PM (Arizona Time) – Community Building, Room B, South Rim Village
Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

June 4, 4-7 PM (Utah Time) – Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument
Kanab Visitor's Center, 745 East Highway 89
Kanab, Utah

Written comments may be submitted at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca> or mailed to: Steve Martin, Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, Attn: Mule Operations and Stock Use EA, P.O. Box 129 (1 Village Loop for express mail), Grand Canyon, AZ 86023 by June 22, 2009. The park expects to prepare an EA this summer, with a decision document for this project anticipated in December, 2009. Additional information about this project can be found at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca> or by contacting Rachel Stanton, Project Planning Lead, at (928) 774-9612.

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