

Welcome!

Grand Canyon National Park Bison Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement

Public Scoping Webinar

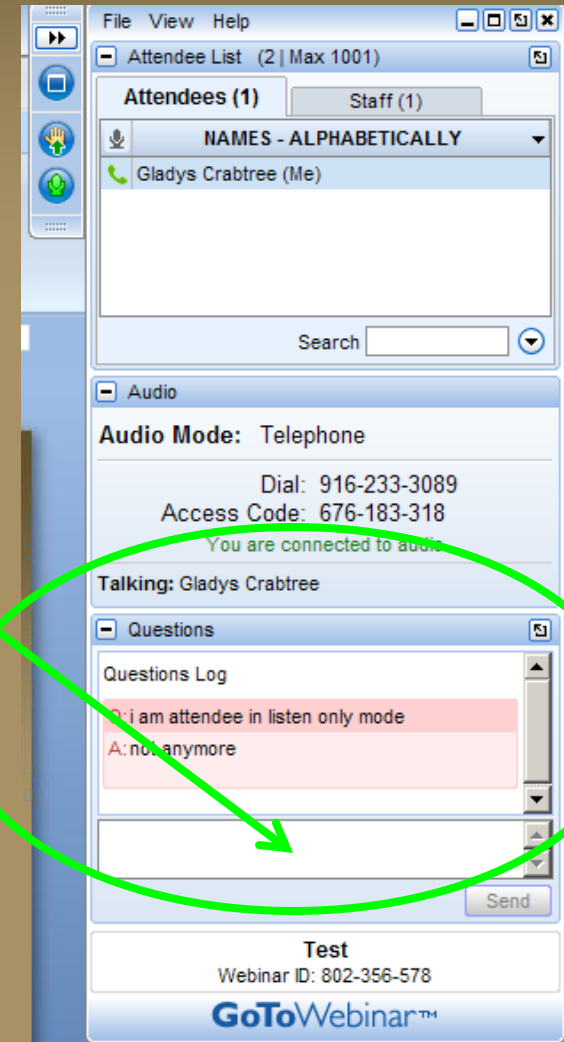


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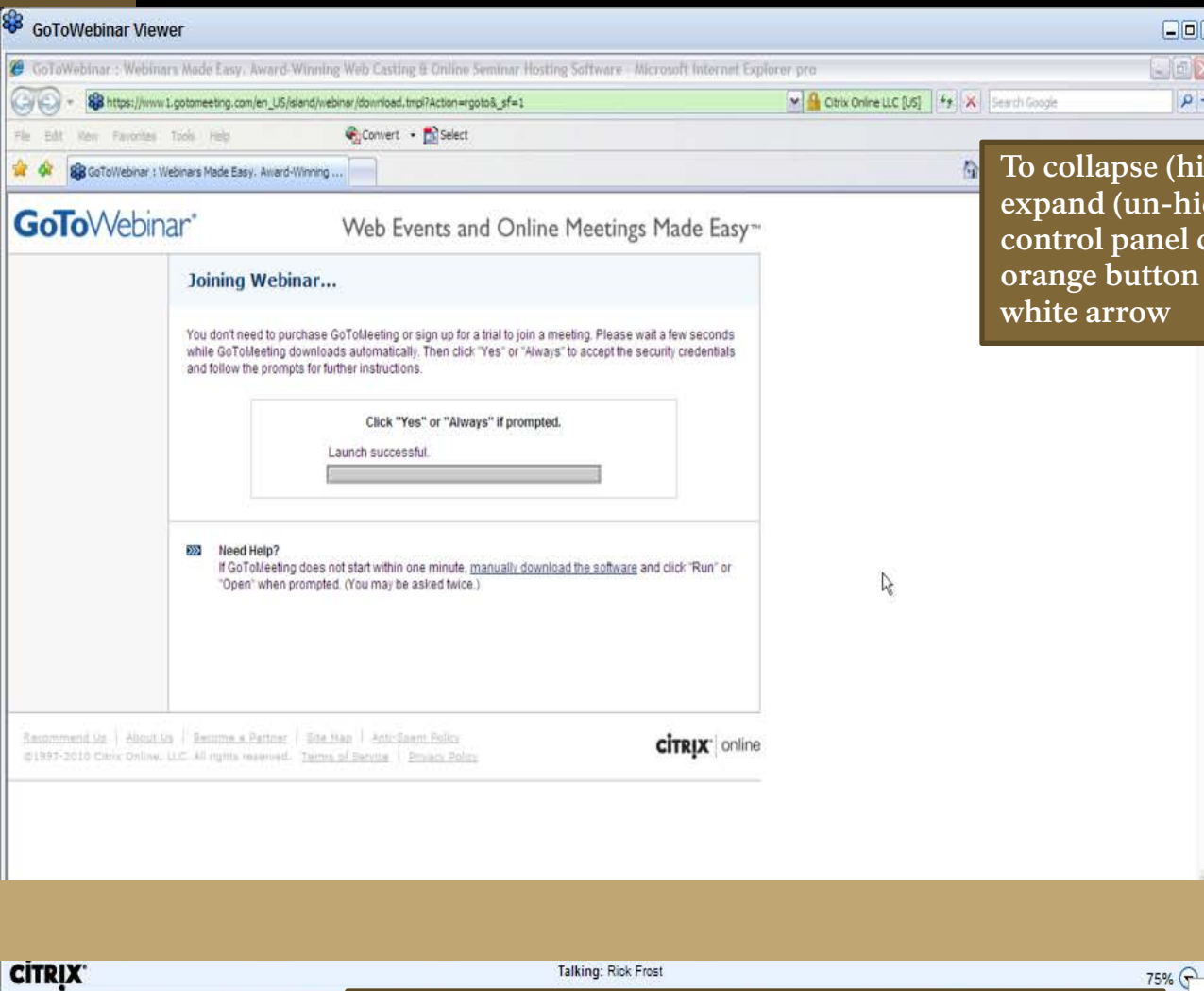
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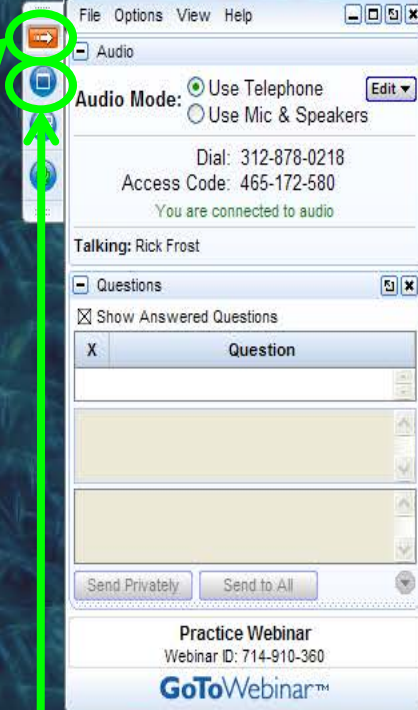
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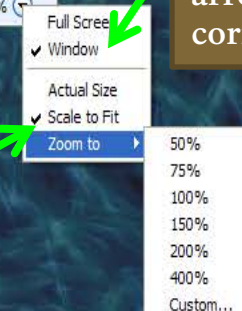


To collapse (hide) or expand (un-hide) the control panel click on this orange button with the white arrow



To change the viewer from Full Screen mode to Window mode or vice versa click on this button OR select your choice in the drop down box from the arrow in the viewer right hand corner

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Opening Remarks



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Overview of this Presentation

- Background: Bison on the Kaibab Plateau
- Description of Issues
- Bison management plan and Environmental Impact Statement
- The planning process and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)



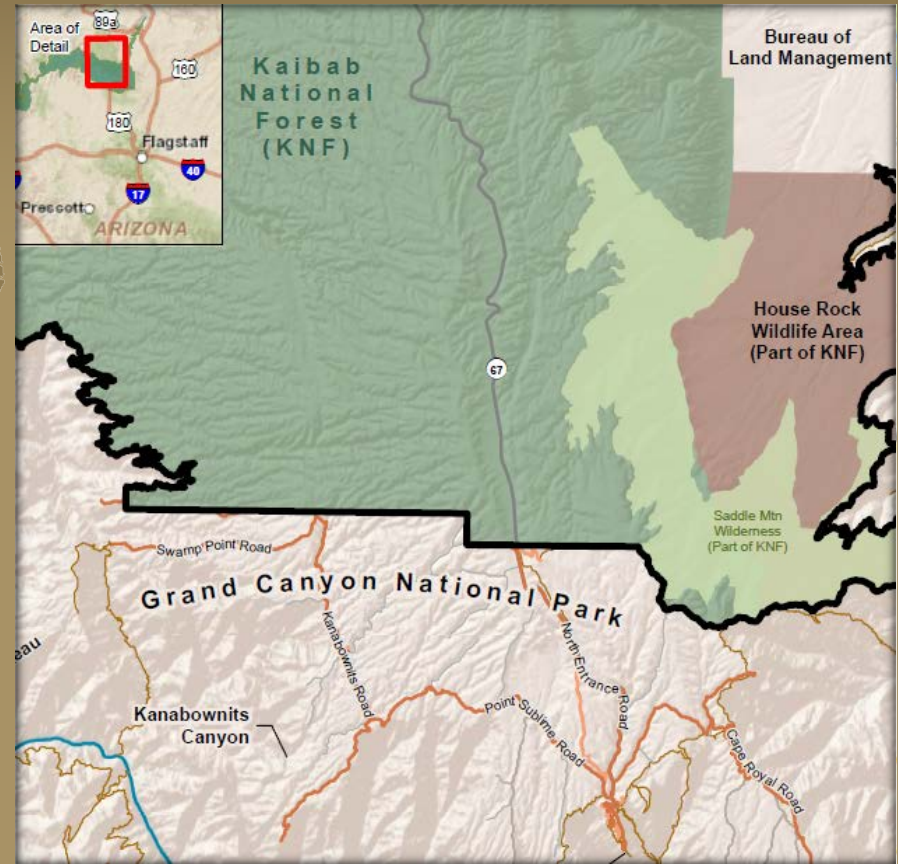
Bison on the Kaibab Plateau

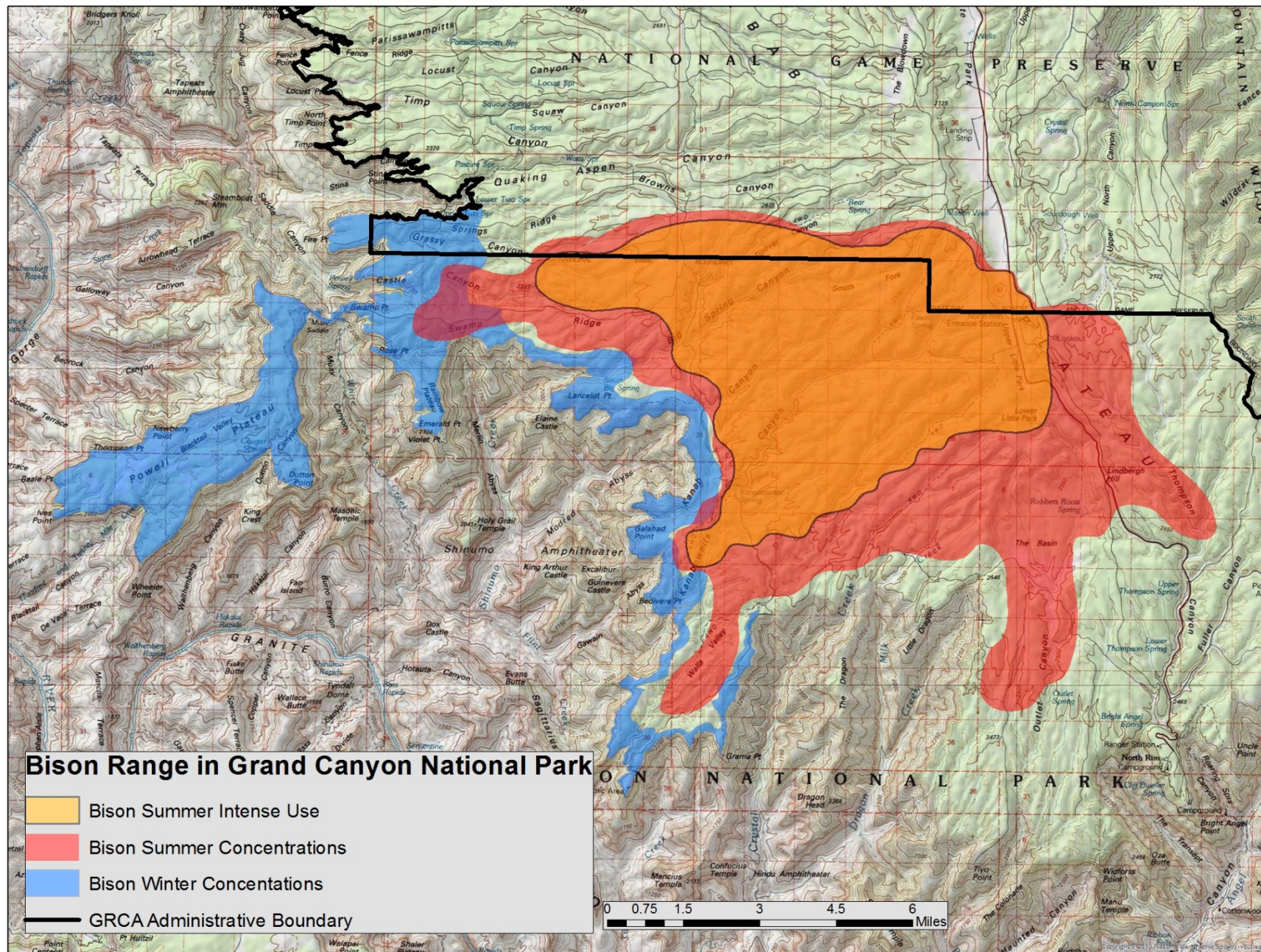
- The current bison herd was brought to Arizona in 1906 by Charles "Buffalo" Jones
- The state of Arizona has managed bison in the House Rock Wildlife Area on the Kaibab National Forest since 1950
- By the late 1990s, the herd was spending more time off the House Rock Wildlife Area and moving further into Grand Canyon National Park



Bison on the Kaibab Plateau

- Public hunt pressure, drought, wildfire, and reduced forage quality in House Rock Valley may have contributed to bison migration onto the park
- Bison are spending a substantial amount of their time in the park





Bison on the Kaibab Plateau

- In 2013 the herd numbers were estimated at over 300 head
- Arizona Game and Fish Department estimates that over the last 3 years, the herd is reproducing at a rate of 30 to 50% each year



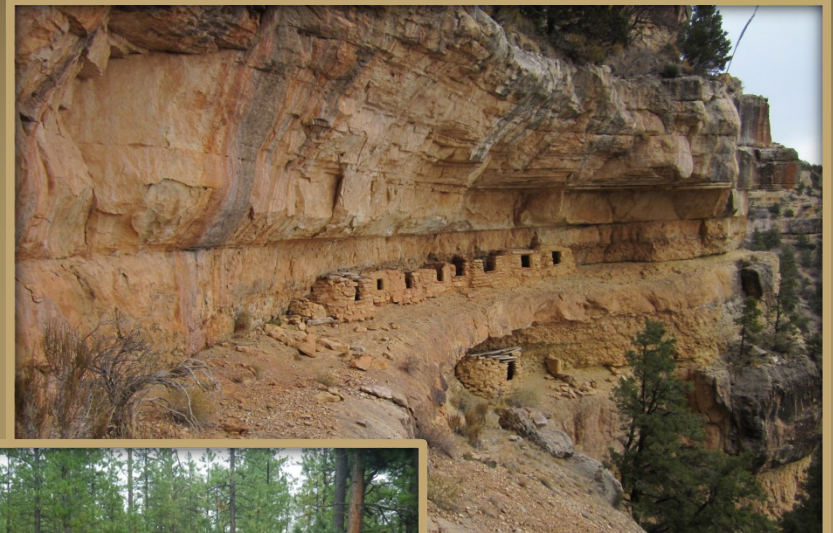
Is There a Problem?

- The NPS strives to **“ensure that park resources and values are passed on to future generations in a condition that is as good, or better than, the conditions that exist today.”**
- In particular, the Service will **“strive to restore the integrity of park resources that have been damaged or compromised in the past.”**
- There is concern that the growing bison herd size and their year-round presence in the park is **impacting natural and cultural park resources.**



What are the Resources NPS is Trying to Protect?

- Archeological and Ethnographic Resources
- Habitat for other wildlife, including the federally threatened Mexican spotted owl
- Unique plant communities
- Water Resources



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What are the Issues Related to Cultural Resources?

- Trampling, leaning on, wallowing, and other behaviors can disturb or damage:
 - Collapsed and stable habitation structures
 - Artifact scatters
 - Historic features



What are the Issues Related to Natural Resources?

- Concentrated use and heavy grazing by bison causes:
 - Compaction of soils in seeps and springs
 - Loss of vegetative cover and diversity
 - Hydrological function and water quality



Planning Efforts—Looking Forward

- NPS is preparing a bison management plan to find solutions to these issues
- Currently, three agencies have been invited as official cooperators on the plan/EIS
- Ultimately NPS management actions will provide the basis for our participation in a inter-agency bison management strategy
- Planning efforts require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act



What is the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) ?

- Requires federal agencies to:
 - Analyze the environmental impacts of federal actions
 - Engage the public in the decision-making process
- Best described as an environmental planning process
- Requires an environmental impact statement for actions that could significantly affect the quality of the human environment



Actions Requiring NEPA Review

- Any federal action or federal decision being considered that would, if implemented, have an impact on the human environment
- Projects, plans, grants, official policy, permits may trigger the need for NEPA review



The Human Environment

“...shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment.”



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Key Elements of the NEPA Planning Process

- Articulate the **purpose of and need** for taking action
- Consider **reasonable alternatives**, including a "no action" alternative
- Analyze **impacts** using reliable scientific data
- Respond to **substantive comments** received on the Draft EIS and make necessary changes for the Final EIS



Public Scoping

- The beginning of the NEPA process
- An opportunity for the public to provide early ideas about:
 - the purpose and need for the plan
 - issues and impact topics that should be addressed
 - alternatives that should be evaluated
 - sources of information that should be considered
- Public scoping began April 4, 2014 and runs through **June 6, 2014**
- You can provide comments at any time during this period



Purpose of Taking Action

- **Purpose** is a broad statement of goals that NPS intends to fulfill by taking action
- The purpose of this plan/EIS is to **develop a long-term, coordinated approach to manage the current and future impacts of bison on Grand Canyon National Park natural and cultural resources** while supporting USFS and AGFD goals for management of a free-ranging bison population on the Kaibab National Forest



Need for Action

- **Need** is the answer to the question “Why is action being taken at this time?”
- A plan is needed because the current bison movements, distribution, and abundance in and near the park **limit the ability of the National Park Service to conserve the natural and cultural resources on the North Rim of the park;** and the AGFD and USFS to meet their current management goals for a huntable, free-ranging bison herd on the Kaibab National Forest



Alternatives

- Alternatives represent different options for addressing the purpose and need for taking action
- **A range of reasonable alternatives must be developed**
 - This does not mean identifying every possible option, but rather, capturing the full spectrum of options
- Includes analysis of a no-action alternative



Reasonable Alternatives

- Economically feasible
- Technically feasible
- Display common sense
- Address the purpose and need for taking action
- Not necessarily the cheapest or easiest solution



Action Alternatives

- To be developed...
- Analysis and additional public input will help determine strategies which may be considered individually or as components of alternatives in the draft plan/EIS



Tools Under Consideration

- Managing access to water sources that attract bison
- Triggering bison movement and migration or capturing and relocating bison through:
 - baiting
 - soft handling/herding techniques
 - hazing
- Managing bison abundance using authorized methods such as direct reduction



Schedule

April 2014	Notice of Intent to Prepare Bison Management Plan/EIS; Public Scoping Period Begins April 4, 2014
April-May 2014	Public Scoping Meetings (week of April 28, 2014) and Webinars (week of May 5, 2014)
June 2014	Public Scoping Period Concludes June 6, 2014, NPS Reviews Public Scoping Comments and Gathers Data
2014-2015	Develop Alternatives, Analyze Impacts, and Write the Draft Plan/EIS
Summer 2015	Draft Plan/EIS available for Public Review and Comment (60 days)/Public Meetings on Draft Plan/EIS
2015-2016	NPS Prepares Final Plan/EIS and Makes Decision
Fall 2016	Issue Integrated Interagency Bison Management Plan



How can YOU be involved?

- Join our mailing list
- Follow the project online (website below)
- Send Comments by June 6, 2014
 - Electronically to:
 - http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca_bison_eis
 - Select "Document List" on the left
 - Mail to:
Superintendent
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023
 - Hand deliver to:
Park Headquarters
1 Village Loop Rd
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023



Thank you!

We will now do our best to answer your questions on the plan and the EIS process.

Your phones will continue to be muted.



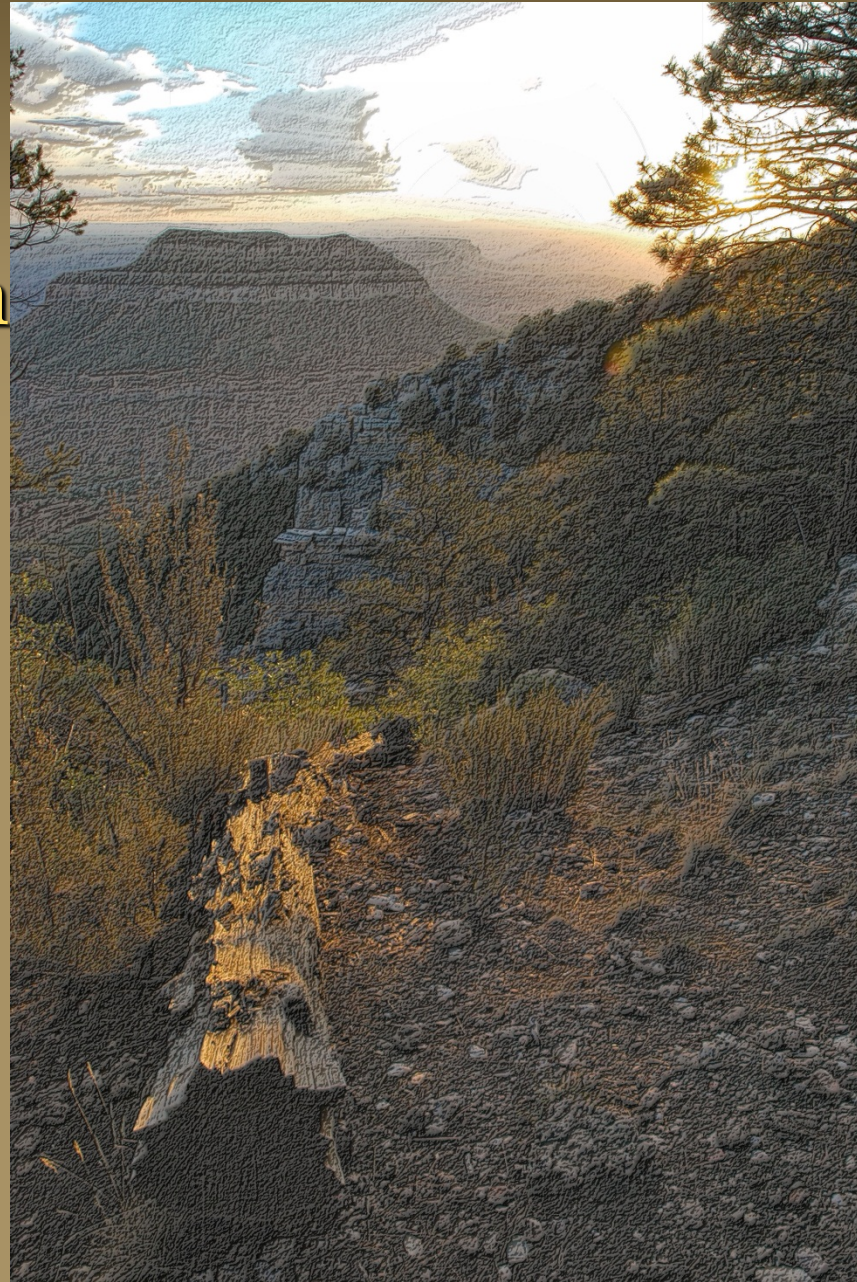
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Public Scoping

Bison Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement

Grand Canyon National Park

April 4 – June 6, 2014

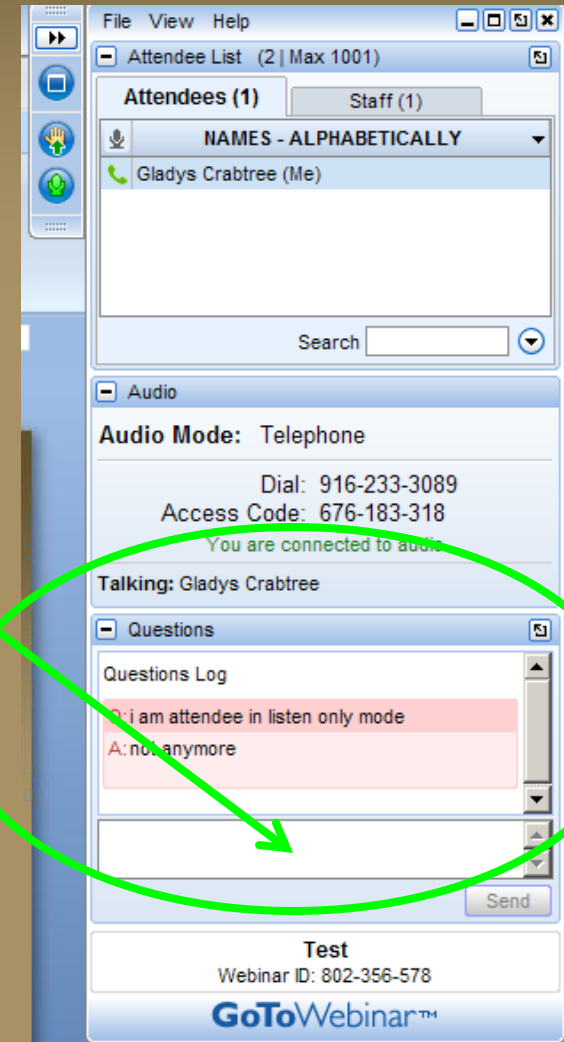


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For more information, please visit:

- NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment Web Site (PEPC):
 - http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca_bison_eis
 - Select "Document List" on the left



How to Submit Comments:

■ Enter Electronic Comments at

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■ Mail comments to:

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**Please submit your
comments by June 6,
2014**

