

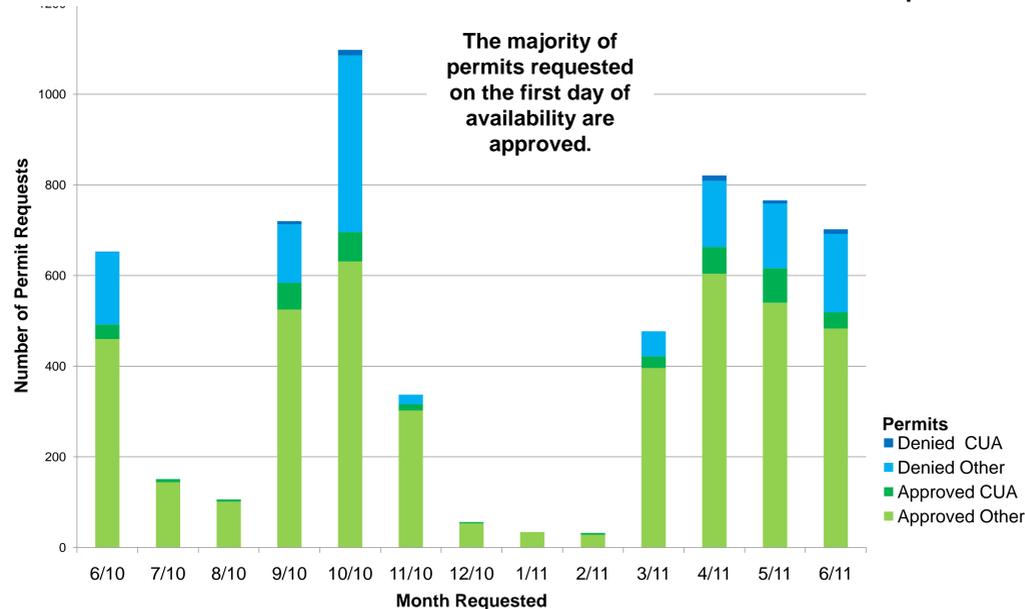


Recreational Permitting

Overnight Permit System

- Anyone who stays overnight in backcountry must obtain a backcountry permit through the Backcountry Information Center
- Permits may be obtained via fax or mail up to four months in advance of the month the trip begins. The park continues to work toward an online permitting system
- Permits may be obtained in person up to three months in advance of the month the trip begins
- The majority of permits are issued in advance. Permits for popular destinations and times of year are usually taken by people that apply for permits the first day of availability (see graph below). Approval likelihood is greatly reduced for permit requests made after this day.

Success Rates for Public and Commercial Permit Requests



Permit Demand

When October 2010 permits became available on June 1, 2010, the Backcountry Information Center received 1,138 permit requests; 86% of those requests included corridor campsites in their first choice, and 37% included Cottonwood Campground in their first choice.

	Other*	CUA**	GCFI***	Total User Nights
Corridor	47,330 (91%)	4,178 (8%)	487 (1%)	51,995
Non-Corridor	34,544 (92%)	2,480 (7%)	369 (1%)	37,393
				89,348

*Other: General public and organized noncommercial groups
**Commercial Use Authorization
***Grand Canyon Field Institute

Grand Canyon Field Institute

In 1993 the NPS encouraged Grand Canyon Association (GCA) to initiate a program of multi-day, in-depth, experience-based learning opportunities for visitors that would complement the park's own educational programming. The result is the Grand Canyon Field Institute (GCFI). The NPS annually reviews GCFI's schedule of courses and content, publishes GCFI's courses in the NPS Trip Planner, and pre-schedules approximately 30 GCFI trips in advance of the standard permitting timeframe.

Commercial Use

- Overnight backcountry guiding is presently authorized through Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs)
- CUAs give permittees a temporary, non-exclusive opportunity to conduct business in the park
- CUAs do not get priority for backcountry permits, but have the same opportunity to obtain backcountry permits as other visitors
- CUAs used 4% of total backcountry permits used by the public in 2010 (CUAs used 482 backcountry permits)
- Currently 27 backpacking companies are eligible for CUAs. A moratorium exists for new backpacking CUAs until decisions are made through this public planning process
- The NPS also issues CUAs for day hiking, jeep tours, and bike tours. Phantom Ranch Lodge is authorized by the NPS under the Xanterra concessions contract

Identified Concerns

- Permit system
- Campsite impacts
- Permit distribution between user groups

What are your permit and commercial use concerns and solutions?



Recreational Use

Recreational Use Facts

- The NPS tracks recreational overnight backcountry use in three ways, 1) number of permits or groups per use area, 2) number of users per use area, and 3) number of user-nights per use area (one person spending one night in the backcountry)
- In certain use areas with resource concerns or heavy use, campsites are designated and at-large camping is not permitted
- There are presently no day-use limits on backcountry trails
- Overnight group size: Small (1-6) and Large (7-11). Organized groups may only obtain one permit per use area

A Glimpse at Grand Canyon Backcountry Use 2010

- 11,746 backcountry permits
- 37,732 people participated on overnight backcountry trips

Recent Backcountry Research

Visitor Studies

The following studies were completed by the University of Illinois to update past research and provide new information about visitor demographics, knowledge, and preferences.

- *Mule Rider and Phantom Ranch Visitor Study*
- *Backcountry Day Hikers at Grand Canyon National Park*
- *When a Landscape is Bigger than Itself: A Stakeholder Analysis of Grand Canyon's Backcountry*
- *Overnight Backcountry Visitors at Grand Canyon National Park*

Campsite Research

Northern Arizona University researchers completed a Rapid Site Inventory of backcountry campsites. Researchers collected information about backcountry campsite numbers, distribution, and associated impacts of existing sites.



Backcountry Use 2010

