



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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## Grand Canyon News Release

Release date: Immediate

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### **National Park Service Invites Public Participation Regarding Preparation of an Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect for Actions to Convert Radio Communications at Grand Canyon National Park**

**Grand Canyon, Ariz.** – Grand Canyon Superintendent Joseph Alston today announced the National Park Service's (NPS) intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect (EA/AEF) for actions to convert all radio communications at Grand Canyon National Park from wideband/analog to narrowband/digital technology. The purpose of this action is to comply with regulations requiring all federal agencies to adopt narrowband/digital technology by 2008.

The EA/AEF will address environmental and related impacts that may result from actions to be proposed and alternatives to be developed. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, calls on federal agencies to consider environmental issues as part of their decision making process. NEPA encourages federal agencies to involve interested parties through a process referred to as scoping. Scoping allows interested parties an opportunity to make suggestions early in the planning process.

As part of this process, a 30-day scoping comment period will commence on September 18, 2006. The NPS is asking for comments on the scope of the project, including issues and potential alternatives that the park should consider regarding this proposal.

The park's radio system is a critical component necessary for managing and protecting park resources, in providing for public and employee health and safety, and in accomplishing all park management activities. Transition to narrowband/digital technology is intended to create more radio spectrum available to federal users to ensure that public safety communications will meet emerging national privacy and security requirements.

Four primary sites have been identified to accomplish most of the needed communications improvements. Three of the primary sites are on the park's South Rim (Grand Canyon Village

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Emergency Services Building, Hopi Point Fire Tower, and Desert View Ranger Station) and one is on the North Rim (CC Hill near the North Kaibab Trailhead). There is an additional optional primary site (Paria) under consideration in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area on top of the Vermillion Cliffs near Lees Ferry.

The proposal also includes three secondary sites to provide additional important radio coverage to areas of the 1.2 million-acre park that the primary sites cannot reach. These include one secondary site in the park (Mt. Emma west of Tuweep), one in Kaibab National Forest north of the park (VT Ridge), and one in Coconino National Forest south of the park (O'Leary Peak Fire Tower). There is an additional optional secondary site under consideration at Kanabownits Fire Tower in the park on the North Rim, if needed for adequate radio coverage.

Comments will be due by October 21, 2006 and will be accepted:

- ✓ Online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca> (the preferred method)
- ✓ Via email to: [rick\\_ernenwein@nps.gov](mailto:rick_ernenwein@nps.gov) (please note there is an underscore between rick and ernenwein)
- ✓ or by sending comments to:  
Superintendent  
Grand Canyon National Park  
Attn: Office of Planning and Compliance (Radio Conversion)  
P.O. Box 129  
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Additional information on this project, including a map of the proposed sites and site specific information, can be found at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca> or by calling Rick Ernenwein, Project Planning Leader at (928) 779-6279.

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