



## Frequently Asked Questions

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### Desert View Inter-tribal Cultural Heritage Site Plan/Environmental Assessment

#### 1. Where and what is Desert View?

Located at the southeast edge of Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP), Desert View is a developed area that functions as the east entrance to the park and provides many visitors with their first introduction and orientation to some of the park's most significant resources - including the Desert View Watchtower (a National Historic Landmark) and its surrounding historic district, as well as spectacular views of the Painted Desert and the Little Colorado River Gorge.

#### 2. Why is action needed at Desert View?

Action is needed at this time to a) embrace a unique opportunity to engage with associated tribes, b) address visitor orientation issues at Desert View related to only partial implementation of a 2002 plan, and c) proactively respond to increasing visitation at the site.

#### 3. What is Grand Canyon National Park proposing to do at Desert View?

In an effort to increase opportunities for first-voice tribal interpretation, improve visitor orientation, and enhance visitor experience, the NPS is proposing to transform Desert View from a scenic overlook and visitor services area into an Inter-tribal Cultural Heritage Site.

The NPS is proposing to expand opportunities for cultural and educational programs and demonstrations, special events and exhibits, and personal interactions with tribal representatives and artisans. In support of these programs, the NPS is proposing some modifications to infrastructure onsite and some potential new construction within the existing developed footprint at Desert View, such as:

- Restripe the existing parking lots to move personal vehicles to the western lot and large vehicles to the back of the eastern parking lot.
- Reconfigure traffic flow and turn lanes to create a "T" intersection near the main parking areas, allowing entry into both the east and west parking lots.
- Construct a new intersection between the east parking lot and the gas station.
- Distribute picnic areas between and around the edges of the both parking lots.
- Convert existing road between the east and west parking lots into a visitor use area, with an entry/identity sign for Desert View (accessible to pedestrians), new comfort station(s), and a small site-orientation plaza.
- Relocate the former visitor center to the NPS housing and office area at Desert View and convert into housing or for administrative use.
- Remove and restore the central paved trail and associated shade structures.
- Install two threshold markers along the eastern and western paved trails to more personally welcome visitors to the Inter-tribal Cultural Heritage Site.
- Incorporate some ramada-like shade structures along the western paved trail.
- Replace existing picnic benches throughout the site with stone benches of a similar material and color as existing stonework to harmonize with the built environment.

- Formalize the short historic trail to the east along the rim, as well as existing social trails to the west through signage and some improvements to the tread.
- Improve the existing amphitheater with a graded and hardened surface, more formalized “stage”, and stone benches.
- Make the footpath to the Watchtower ABA accessible.
- Develop an outdoor cultural demonstration space and/or performance area south and west of the Watchtower and another space adjacent to the Old Bookstore (immediately south of the Trading Post).
- Rehabilitate the Old Bookstore to provide both a public space for cultural demonstrations, exhibits, and/or tribal tourism information, as well as a private space for use as a break room and rest area for staff and guests. Rehabilitate the fire cache building as a support space for staff and demonstrators.
- Improve/upgrade utility infrastructure as needed to support facility improvements and increases in visitation.
- Pursue construction of additional housing within the existing developed footprint at Desert View through hardening and widening of existing RV pads and the possible construction of a new 8-plex apartment building.
- Continue to work closely with associated tribes and other partners to outline the programming needs of, design (interior and exterior), and develop a business plan for a Cultural Heritage Center building that would feature associated tribes of the Grand Canyon through exhibit and demonstration space, as well as a desk for sharing tourism information on neighboring tribal lands. Based on the programming needs and business plan (which will inform the ultimate size and configuration of the building), this Cultural Heritage Center building could be located in one of two broad areas of Desert View: near the parking lots or near (or in) the Trading Post and Old Bookstore.

#### **4. What other alternatives is the NPS considering?**

The environmental assessment that the National Park Service has put together evaluates two alternatives: a no-action alternative and an action alternative. The no action alternative assumes that existing conditions would continue into the future, and the action alternative is described in question #3 above.

#### **5. What is an Inter-tribal Cultural Heritage Site?**

The Desert View Inter-tribal Cultural Heritage Site would host programs and facilities that celebrate all of the distinct and diverse cultures of the American Indian tribes that maintain historical, cultural, and spiritual ties to Grand Canyon. Unique to this site, however, is the presence of first-voice interpretation, where NPS staff works to support tribal members who come to Desert View and share their cultural knowledge, heritage and history, and sense of place directly with the visiting public through personal, *first-person*, interactions.

Future programming would expand to support a broader range of the types of cultural demonstrations currently offered. Exhibit space would also be added, and tribes would have more formal opportunities to share tourism information about neighboring tribal lands with visitors to Desert View.

#### **6. How would the NPS pay for these proposed infrastructure improvements?**

GCNP’s philanthropic partner, Grand Canyon Association (GCA), has launched the Grand Vision fundraising campaign to help support GCNP through the park’s 2019 Centennial. GCA has set a \$4 million fundraising goal through private giving and grants for a Desert View Inter-tribal Heritage Site. Through other NPS funding programs, GCNP also has the opportunity to leverage that fundraising effort and apply for special appropriated funding which would partially match the private funds raised, for a total of \$6 million to support this project.

#### **7. When would construction start and how long will it take to complete?**

The National Park Service estimates that onsite construction, including utility improvements, could occur over the course of three to five years, with projects focused on individual elements of the preferred alternative

rather than conducting all construction as one large project. However, the development of the Cultural Heritage Center could be extended beyond this five year timeline depending on how the site evolves, how long it takes to identify programming needs, and the location pursued in the future.

If approved, construction could begin as early as fall of 2019. Potential work items included in this initial phase of construction include: the east and west unpaved rim trails, amphitheater, ABA compliant path improvements, outdoor demonstration areas near the Old Bookstore and Watchtower, and water and sewer line improvements within the visitor use area (in preparation for new restrooms). Once funding is available for the next phase of construction, construction would begin on the other 75% of the work items, including: parking lot improvements, new restrooms, entry sign, orientation plaza, relocation of the former visitor center, rehabilitation of the Old Bookstore (building #41), and landscape restoration where paving and structures have been removed. Depending on when funding is received, this construction could be completed in late 2020 or in 2021 but may extend into the following years.

#### **8. How would construction impact my visit to Desert View?**

Desert View would remain open to the public throughout implementation of this alternative, with some potential closures of trails and buildings undergoing construction. For example, specific parking lots, buildings, trails, the amphitheater, and other areas may be closed to the public during construction on that feature, but at no time will the entire visitor services area be closed to the public. The National Park Service would avoid closures as much as possible, but necessary closures could extend from a few hours or days (i.e., for the installation of the signage) to weeks and/or months (i.e. for the construction of the outdoor demonstration area near the Old Bookstore or construction of a Cultural Heritage Center).

#### **9. How is this plan related to the current Cultural Demonstrator program at Desert View?**

GCNP and representatives from the 11 associated tribes began to develop a vision for Desert View in 2015 that would establish inter-tribal programming and a designated place for first-voice cultural interpretation. Based on this vision, GCNP and partnering tribes and associations developed a cultural demonstration program at the Watchtower in 2014 and implemented an Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps internship program in 2015, where tribal youth provide a first-person perspective of their cultures to visitors. Although these programs have been successful beyond expectation, full implementation of this vision requires site modifications to enhance these programs and transform the area into an Inter-tribal Cultural Heritage Site.

#### **10. What tribes are associated with Grand Canyon National Park?**

There are 11 traditionally associated tribes:

- Havasupai Tribe of the Havasupai Reservation (Havasupai Tribe)
- Hopi Tribe of Arizona (Hopi Tribe)
- Hualapai Indian Tribe of the Hualapai Indian Reservation (Hualapai Tribe)
- Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians of the Kaibab Indian Reservation (Kaibab Paiute Tribe)
- Las Vegas Tribe of Paiute Indians of the Las Vegas Indian Colony (Las Vegas Paiute Tribe)
- Moapa Band of Paiute Indians of the Moapa River Indian Reservation (Moapa Paiute Tribe)
- Navajo Nation
- Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah—includes Cedar Band of Paiutes, Kanosh Band of Paiutes, Koosharem Band of Paiutes, Indian Peaks Band of Paiutes, and Shivwits Band of Paiutes (Paiute Indian Tribe)
- San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe of Arizona (San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe)
- Yavapai-Apache Nation of the Camp Verde Indian Reservation (Yavapai-Apache Nation)
- Zuni Tribe of the Zuni Reservation (Zuni Tribe)

#### **11. What relationship does the NPS have with associated tribes?**

In accordance with the Presidential Memorandum of April 29, 1994, and Executive Order 13175 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments), the Service will maintain a government-to-government relationship with federally recognized tribal governments. This means that GCNP officials will

work directly with appropriate tribal government officials whenever plans or activities may directly or indirectly affect tribal interests, practices, and/or traditional use areas such as sacred sites.

In 2013, after decades of successful partnerships and trust-building through government-to-government consultation, the Tribal Program at GCNP began taking steps to establish an Inter-tribal Working Group (ITWG). The ITWG serves as an informal working group consisting of park staff, partners, and representatives from GCNP's eleven traditionally associated tribes. The purpose of the ITWG is to provide a venue where NPS staff work collaboratively with tribal representatives, *supplementing the formal Government to Government consultation format*, to create and sustain programs that celebrate the diversity of the region while mutually benefitting the park's visitors and the associated tribes.

## **12. What is an environmental assessment?**

The NPS has drafted an environmental assessment (EA), in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, to develop and evaluate alternatives that address the purpose and need for action at Desert View (see responses to answers #2 and #3 above). An EA guides decision makers as they seek to create policy or take action that balances human need with environmental stewardship.

## **13. How and when can the public comment on the plan?**

The public review period will begin October 25, 2018, and remain open for 30 days. Comments may be submitted by mail, online, or in person at a scheduled public meeting. The preferred method for submitting comments is through the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) database at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/DesertViewICHS>. Click on "Documents Open for Review" on the left panel of the webpage.

Mail-in comments can be sent to: Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, Attn: Desert View EA, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023.

Comments may also be submitted at public meetings scheduled in November 2018. Meetings will take place at Grand Canyon's South Rim, in Flagstaff, AZ, and via a webinar. Meeting dates and locations are posted at the website <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/DesertViewICHS> under "Meeting Notices" on the left panel of the webpage.

## **14. How will my comments affect the Plan / EA?**

Following the public review period, the NPS will consider all feedback and make a final decision as to which alternative, or variation of an alternative, will be implemented. This final decision document, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), will be reviewed by the Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park and, if appropriate, approved by the Regional Director of the NPS Intermountain Region.