

Tassi Ranch Site Management Plan
Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument
National Park Service

DETERMINATION OF NO IMPAIRMENT

The NPS has discretion to allow impacts on Park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a Park (NPS 2006 sec. 1.4.3). However, the NPS cannot allow an adverse impact that will constitute impairment of the affected resources and values (NPS 2006 sec 1.4.3). An action constitutes an impairment when its impacts "harm the integrity of Park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise will be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values" (NPS 2006 sec 1.4.5). To determine impairment, the NPS must evaluate "the particular resources and values that will be affected; the severity, duration, and timing of the impact; the direct and indirect effects of the impact; and the cumulative effects of the impact in question and other impacts" (NPS 2006 sec 1.4.5).

This determination on impairment has been prepared for the Selected Alternative described in the Finding of No Significant Impact. An impairment determination is made for all resource impact topics analyzed for the Selected Alternative. An impairment determination is not made for visitor use and experience or navigation (the issue "Recreation" described in Chapter 3 and analyzed in Chapter 4 of the EA) because impairment findings relate back to park resources and values, and these impact areas are not generally considered to be park resources or values according to the Organic Act and cannot be impaired in the same way that an action can impair park resources and values.

Cultural Resources

The NPS Selected Alternative will not result in impairment of cultural resources including the cultural landscape and its contributing elements and the archeological resources within the Tassi Ranch Site Management Plan project area because the Selected Alternative includes design features to monitor for potential impairment. In addition, the alternative is based on the recommendations of the Tassi Ranch Cultural Landscape Report and The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. Any modifications to the cultural landscape in the Selected Alternative will not result in loss of National Register of Historic Places eligibility and the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office has concurred the project will have No Adverse Effect on either the cultural landscape or the archeological resources.

Soils

The minimal temporary short term impacts to soil compaction will not result in impairment because the development of ditches and recontouring the ranch yard and parking area are effectively bringing the soils, and the site, back toward either the historic state of the cultural

landscape or removing flood-deposited debris and soils. Anticipated growth of vegetation in all areas that may have impacted soils, except the parking area, would reduce the possibility of secondary impacts such as localized erosion.

Vegetation (including Wetland/Riparian Vegetation and Invasive Species)

The NPS Selected Alternative will not result in impairment of vegetation because the vegetation-related actions in the Selected Alternative are designed to bring the vegetation back to a state in keeping with the historical context of the cultural landscape. Invasive species would decrease and wetland/riparian species would be associated with a more stable water source in areas. Dead and dying specimens would be replaced with younger genetically similar stock, increasing the resiliency of the vegetation at the site to damage from events such as fire, flood or windstorms.

Visual Resources

Impairment to visual resources would not occur, the site would remain a Class 1 viewshed. This would be accomplished by careful placement of new elements to harmonize with the existing landscape, camouflaging elements with appropriate colors, and, in some cases, placement where they will not be readily noticeable to the public.

Wildlife (including Migratory Birds and Sensitive Species)

Wildlife may be temporarily impacted by construction, repair and maintenance due to noise and human presence. A small amount of habitat may be temporarily lost, however there will be no net loss of habitat for any species known to occur at the site. Impacts to amphibians, fishes and Grand Wash springsnail would be minimized during riparian area activities due to relocation and salvage (removal of living organisms to be replaced once activities have ceased) design features. Conservation measures in the Selected Alternative would minimize any impact to Mojave desert tortoise. As a result of the minimal impacts, there would be no impairment to wildlife or their habitat under the Selected Alternative.

CONCLUSION

The NPS has determined that the implementation of the Site Management Plan for Tassi Ranch will not constitute an impairment of the resources or values of Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. As described above, adverse impacts anticipated as a result of implementing the selected alternative on a resource or value whose conservation is necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in its establishing legislation, key to their natural or cultural integrity or to opportunities for enjoyment, or identified as significant in relevant NPS planning documents, will not constitute impairment. This conclusion is based on consideration of the monument's purpose and significance, a thorough analysis of the environmental impacts described in the EA, the comments provided by the public and others, and the professional judgment of the park manager guided by the direction of the NPS *Management Policies 2006*.