**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

# DRAFT ENVRIORNMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
# FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN
# GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK
# COCONINO COUNTY, ARIZONA

**Abstract** This Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Assessment of Effect for the Fire Management Plan describes and analyzes alternatives for the management of fire activities and responses in Grand Canyon National Park. For the purpose of this analysis, the Fire Management Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Assessment of Effect (FMP DEIS/AEF) compares the No Action Alternative, which represents Grand Canyon's existing fire management program, to four action alternatives. Each action alternative is a separate proposal for managing hazardous fuels and restoring fire to park ecosystems. Action alternatives differ in combination and implementation of strategies used to accomplish the plan's goals and objectives.

**Alternative 1 (No Action)** continues the existing Fire Management Program including fire suppression, fire use, prescribed fire, and limited manual fuel-reduction treatments in three existing Fire Management Units (FMU).

**Alternative 2, Mixed Fire Treatment Program (Preferred Alternative),** resembles the No Action Alternative but uses newly defined Fire Management Units and includes suppression, wildland fire-use, and prescribed fires and non-fire treatments with additional options of mechanical and manual hazard-fuel treatment techniques. The focus of Alternative 2 is on restoring and maintaining park ecosystems with prescribed and wildland fire-use fire and reducing hazard fuels in Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas using prescribed fire and non-fire treatments.

**Alternative 3, Non-Fire Treatment Emphasis,** combines suppression, wildland fire-use, and prescribed fires, and mechanical and manual hazard-fuel reduction techniques. The focus of Alternative 3 is on fuel-reduction projects in the WUI to reduce wildfire hazards to park communities and values at risk. Prescribed fire would focus on the WUI, and fire use would occur when fire management staff can manage a fire without reducing WUI operations.

**Alternative 4, Prescribed Fire Emphasis,** combines suppression, wildland-fire use, and prescribed fires, and mechanical and manual hazard-fuel reduction techniques. The focus of Alternative 4 is restoring park ecosystems with prescribed fire to desired conditions prior to managing fire in those areas with wildland fire use. Wildland fire use would only occur in areas that meet desired-condition criteria. Non-fire treatments and prescribed fire would occur in WUI.

**Alternative 5, Fire Use Emphasis,** combines suppression, wildland fire-use, and prescribed fires, and mechanical and manual hazard-fuel reduction techniques. The focus of Alternative 5 is on restoring park ecosystems and maintaining historic fire regimes through wildland fire-use management. WUI and values at risk protection occur through prescribed fire and non-fire treatments.

In addition to the summary above, elements common to all Action Alternatives (2-5) include

- Grand Canyon National Park is divided into eight new Fire Management Units
- WUI treatment areas and priorities do not change, but implementation pace varies by alternative
- Wildland fire-use fire would not be used as a management tool in the two WUI FMU
- Highway 64 and Highway 67 are not classified in either WUI FMU but these roads and their corridors are primary public escape routes and would be included as areas where mechanical/ manual thinning is

proposed. For project planning and funding purposes, work associated with these road corridors (300 feet from road centerline) would be designated WUI projects
- It is anticipated that up to 80% of proposed thinning projects would be completed under contracted services (using local or regional resources)
- Mechanical treatments are proposed for the Primary WUI FMU only
- Increased allowance of moderate/high and high burn severity in the mixed-conifer vegetation type compared to the No Action Alternative

Potential environmental consequences of each alternative are evaluated for a range of impact topics including: Vegetation, Special Status Plant Species, Exotic Plants, Wildlife, Special Status Wildlife Species, Cultural Resources, Air Quality, Soils and Watersheds, Soundscapes, Wilderness Character, Visitor Experience, Socioeconomics, and Park Management and Operations.

If you wish to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, you may submit comments on the Planning Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at www.park planning.nps.gov/grca; select Fire Management Plan. It is preferred that comments be submitted on the website above, but comments may also be mailed to: Superintendent, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023, Attn: Office of Planning and Compliance.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be aware that your entire comment—including personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

For further information concerning this document, contact Chris Marks, Deputy Fire Management Officer, at 928-606-1050 or email christopher_marks@nps.gov.