



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK
P.O. BOX 129
GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA 86023-0129



IN REPLY REFER TO:

D18 (GRCA 8217)

MAY 21 2009

Subject: Public Scoping for Stock Use and Mule Operations Environmental Assessment

Dear Interested Party:

The National Park Service (NPS) is now accepting comments on mule operations and stock use in Grand Canyon National Park, as the agency begins to develop an Environmental Assessment (EA). The presence and use of mules in and around the canyon is a longstanding tradition and one that the park would like to continue. We are also interested in continuing to provide opportunities for stock use in a manner that is sustainable. As part of this planning effort, the NPS would like to address the following management objective identified in the park's 1995 General Management Plan: "Where livestock and visitors share the same trails and areas, minimize conflicts and resource impacts, and enhance safety."

The planning process will consider the following:

- Commercial and private stock use (horses, mules and burros) throughout the park;
- Appropriate levels of stock use on park trails;
- Appropriate locations for stock use in the park, which may include:
 - keeping commercial stock use on the North Kaibab Trail down to Supai Tunnel;
 - moving stock use to one of the South Rim corridor trails (Bright Angel or South Kaibab);
 - keeping stock use on the Uncle Jim Trail, Whitmore Trail and select corridor trails;
 - initiation of a new concession operated day ride on the South Rim;
- The need for new stock facilities or modification to existing facilities on the North and South Rim, including compliance with laws and regulations for mule health and safety

The NPS encourages public participation through the National Environmental Policy Act (commonly known as NEPA) process, during which the public has two opportunities to formally comment on the project – once during initial project scoping and again following release of the EA. The NPS is currently in the scoping phase of this project and invites the public to submit their comments in a variety of ways.



We will be hosting three open house meetings in June 2009, where Grand Canyon National Park staff will be available to answer questions and take comments on stock use in the park.

Open House Meeting Schedule:

June 2, 4-7 P.M. (Arizona Time) – Flagstaff Public Library, 300 W. Aspen Avenue
Flagstaff, Arizona

June 3, 4-6 P.M. (Arizona Time) – Community Building, Room B, South Rim
Village, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

June 4, 4-7 P.M. (Utah Time) – Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument
Kanab Visitor Center, 745 East Highway 89,
Kanab, Utah

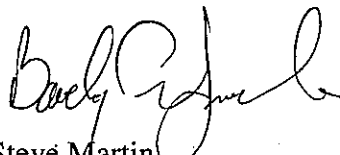
If you wish to submit written comments during the scoping period we encourage you to do so online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca>. Comments may also be mailed to the Superintendent at the address below. This public scoping period will be open for 30 days, ending June 22, 2009.

Superintendent
Grand Canyon National Park
Attn: Mule Operations and Stock Use EA
P.O. Box 129 (1 Village Loop for express mail)
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Before including your address, telephone number, e-mail address or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. We will make all submissions from organizations, businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

We appreciate your input on this planning effort. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Stanton, Project Planning Lead, at 928-774-9612.

Sincerely,


for Steve Martin
Superintendent