

ARIZONA Planning Bulletin



Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan Revision
Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument Management Plan
Vermilion Cliffs National Monument Management Plan

Bureau of Land Management & National Park Service
Arizona Strip

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Thanks for your comments!

During the scoping process this summer, 2,219 letters, emails, or faxed messages were received from the public pertaining to the Arizona Strip land-use planning effort.

This planning effort will develop three separate land management plans – one for the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, one for the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, and one for the 1.7 million acres of BLM-managed land between the two monuments.

The “scoping” phase of the planning effort, which formally ended July 31, 2002, is a public process designed to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the plans. The first Arizona Strip planning bulletin, issued last May, asked four questions to determine the main issues individuals, interest groups and agencies are concerned about on the Arizona Strip. Ten public scoping meetings were held in communities on and near the Arizona Strip. Information was posted on the BLM website asking for comments.

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All comments received by Aug. 30, 2002 were reviewed, analyzed and summarized for the scoping report, which is available on-line at www.az.blm.gov/asfo/index.htm. This resulted in 12,800 individual comments about specific categories.

The main theme of the comments was to leave the Arizona Strip just as it is. That means different things to different people, depending on their values and viewpoints. For some people this means continuing to access and use the Arizona Strip just as they have in the past. For others it means protecting or restoring the Strip’s natural and cultural resources by limiting access and minimizing “human influences” from public use and land management.

More opportunities to comment

Inside this bulletin are the draft purpose, significance and mission statements for Grand Canyon-Parashant and Vermilion Cliffs national monuments, as well as the planning criteria that will be used to develop the management plans. Please read these items and send comments and ideas to the Arizona Strip.

Future comment opportunities

Inside this bulletin is also more information about the alternative development process and when there will be an opportunity to comment on specific alternatives.

Scoping meetings well-attended

Ten public scoping meetings were held throughout the affected region this summer. These informal open houses provided the public an opportunity to receive information on the Arizona Strip planning effort, to ask questions, and to provide input.

Public Scoping Meetings, Summer 2002

Date	Location	Attendance
May 28	Beaver Dam, AZ	17
May 29	St. George, UT	47
May 30	Colorado City, AZ	27
May 31	Fredonia, AZ	23
June 3	Page, AZ	25
June 4	Flagstaff, AZ	176
June 5	Phoenix, AZ	37
June 6	Kingman, AZ	33
June 10	Salt Lake City, UT	20
June 12	Las Vegas, NV	39
TOTAL		444

Issues and concerns

A *planning issue* is a matter of wide public concern about resource management problems that prevent BLM and NPS from fulfilling their missions. *Management concerns* are topics or points of dispute that involve a resource management activity or land use. Although concerns and issues sometimes overlap, a management concern is generally more important to a few individuals, and a planning issue has a more widespread point-of-conflict. The 12,800 individual comments received covered nearly every aspect of land management on the Arizona Strip. Below are some of the primary issues the public listed:

Transportation/Access – More than 2,000 comments were received about this issue – more than any other issue. Comments varied from off-highway vehicle (OHV) and four-wheel drive enthusiasts, who wanted to keep as many roads open as possible, to wilderness proponents who favored closing a number of roads. Baseline route inventories have been completed for the

planning effort in both monuments. It is not likely that the resources to complete the route inventories for the public domain land between the two monuments will be available. The draft Plan/EIS will detail a proposed transportation system with maps for the monuments.

Wilderness – More than 1,800 comments about wilderness were received. Wilderness is thought by some groups and individuals as the best way to protect resources, particularly those identified in the proclamations for both monuments. Other people expressed concern about creating additional wilderness study areas on the Strip.

Management and Protection of Resources – The manner in which to protect and/or manage the natural and cultural resources of the Arizona Strip varies according to individual or group. Included under this issue are monument, biological, archaeological, historical, and Arizona Strip resources in general. More than 1,700 people commented on this.

Livestock Grazing – About 300 comments were received about grazing. These ranged from supporting all cattle grazing on the Strip to ending all grazing in the monuments. Others advocated ending grazing in ecologically sensitive areas.

Recreation – About 250 people commented about recreation. People stated they use the isolated Arizona Strip to get away from people and cities, explore, sightsee, hike, backpack, birdwatch, ride ATV's or mountain bikes, and hunt. Recreation demand on the Strip is likely to grow as population in southern Nevada, southern Utah and northern Arizona increases.

Restoration – Restoration of degraded ecosystems is an important management concern. Disruption of the natural fire regime has caused degradation of ecosystems within the Arizona Strip. Grasslands are being overrun by shrubs; shrublands by pinyon and junipers. Dense pinyon/juniper and ponderosa pine woodlands have the potential to carry catastrophic fire. Riparian areas have also changed due, in part, to invasive, non-native woody plant species.

Comments needed

The purpose, significance and mission statements have been developed for each monument to clarify the intent of the monument proclamations. These three key elements will shape the development of the draft management plan. Right now they are in draft form. Public comments are needed before the key elements are finalized (see below).

Purpose statements clarify why the monument was set aside as a unit for special management. **Significance statements** address what makes the areas unique. **Mission statements** reflect ideal conditions managers should strive to attain.

Grand Canyon-Parashant

PURPOSE – To retain, for scientific inquiry, long-term preservation, and public use and enjoyment for present and future generations, well-preserved examples of scientific and historic objects of interest and to protect those objects from unauthorized location or settlement and from unauthorized appropriation, injury, destruction, or removal of any features. Those objects include:

- The exposed Paleozoic and Mesozoic sedimentary strata on the boundary between two major geologic provinces, the Basin and Range and the Colorado Plateau;
- The potential for an abundant fossil record;
- The ecological diversity resulting from the junction of two physiographic ecoregions: the Mojave Desert and Colorado Plateau; and three floristic provinces: the Mojave, Great Basin, and Colorado Plateau, including a diversity of wildlife;
- The undisturbed archaeological evidence, displaying the long and rich human history spanning more than 11,000 years;
- Areas of importance to existing Indian tribes;
- The colorful and engaging scenery, natural splendor and a setting that provides for rugged recreation opportunities;

- The historic resources, including evidence of early European exploration, Mormon settlements, historic ranches, sawmills, and old mining sites.

SIGNIFICANCE – The un-observed sedimentary rock layers from two geologic eras and two physiographic provinces offer a clear view to the geologic history of the Colorado Plateau. The area is an important watershed for the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon, and its array of large faults and examples of volcanism provide important components into the overall context of the Grand Canyon.

The Monument possesses irreplaceable archeological resources of Archaic, Ancestral Puebloan and Southern Paiute origin. These resources are significant because of their connection with contemporary tribal peoples, their good condition, and their location adjacent to the Grand Canyon – a place sacred to past and present peoples.

Historic resources, such as ranch structures and corrals, fences, water tanks, ruins of sawmills, old mining sites, and historic routes, exist in nearly their original context, relatively undisturbed by vandalism. Descendants of original Arizona Strip settlers still operate many of the existing ranches. These historic places provide a unique opportunity for public interpretation and education about the historical and social significance of these early lifestyles.

The merging of the Mojave Desert and the Colorado Plateau physiographic eco-regions – stark, arid deserts at 600 feet to the higher elevation plateaus, tributaries, and rims of the Grand Canyon at 8,000 feet – results in a small geographic area rich with ecological diversity. This diversity, which includes a wide array of wildlife species, provides a laboratory where important information about ecological restoration can be discovered.

The ponderosa pine ecosystem at Mt. Trumbull is a biological resource of scientific interest. Research at this location can provide information on pre-historic disturbance regimes – especially fire, forest structure changes, the long-term dynamics and persistence of this ecological system, and changes in climate through dendrochronology.

The Monument is one of the larger un-fragmented, isolated areas of land in the contiguous United States. The vastness of the area supports large-scale ecological processes. These processes, combined

with low levels of resource conflicts, provide an unprecedented opportunity for ecological research.

MISSION – Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument is a model of land management that conserves the natural, scientific and historic resources and includes ecological restoration, rugged recreation, and ranching, while honoring the history and living traditions of the people who came before us—“The Place Where the West Stays Wild.”

MISSION STATEMENTS

1. Natural and cultural resources and associated values of Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context. The protection of cultural, social, biological and physical resources for which the monument was created receives the highest priority in planning and management.
2. Management decisions about resources and visitors are based on scientific information. The monument is a model of scientifically based ecological restoration, research, and investigative studies that guide the restoration of healthy native ecosystems, natural fire regimes, and cultural landscapes
3. Natural and social settings are managed to preserve the remote and unspoiled landscape character while providing opportunities for visitors to experience adventure, beautiful vistas, and a sense of discovery through a variety of appropriate and sustainable backcountry activities. The public receives the information they need to have a safe and enjoyable experience.
4. New planning direction (developed through a collaborative process) and an accumulation of valid existing decisions provide clear direction for the management of the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument.
5. The infrastructure footprint is the minimum necessary and is of consistent quality to provide for visual enjoyment, public safety, and protection of Monument values.
6. Sustained, traditional ranching operations and associated interpretive activities showcase the Monument's historical lifestyles, and enhance visitor experience.

7. Conservation and restoration of habitats that support sustainable populations of a full range of native species, including predators, are emphasized. Recovery and protection of special status species are a primary focus.

8. A variety of backcountry driving experiences are provided to key destinations and features via a system of designated roads while protecting natural and cultural resource values.

9. The preservation of natural quiet is emphasized in key recreational destination points and other concentrated use areas possessing this value.

10. The public understands and appreciates the purposes and significance of the Monument and its resources for this and future generations.

11. The Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service at Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument use contemporary management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.

12. The Monument serves as a model of efficient interagency coordination, incorporating the strengths of each agency. The Monument increases its managerial resources through initiatives and support from other agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Joint management challenge

The Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument includes lands managed by both the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service.

Since both agencies cooperatively manage this monument, the planning effort shows elements of BLM planning, such as the planning criteria, and elements of NPS planning, such as the purpose, mission and significant statements. The goal is to seamlessly manage this monument so that a visitor should experience what seems a single unit, not land managed by two different agencies.

This is a unique approach to land management, and it will be a challenge given the different enabling legislation of the two agencies – the Federal Land Policy and Management Act for the BLM and the Organic Act for the NPS.

Vermilion Cliffs

PURPOSE – The monument was set aside to retain, for scientific inquiry, long-term preservation and public use and enjoyment for present and future generations, well-preserved examples of scientific and historic objects of interest and to protect those objects from location or settlement and from unauthorized appropriation, injury, destruction or removal of any features. Those objects of interest include:

- Sandstone slick rock, rolling plateaus and brilliant cliffs with arches, amphitheaters and massive walls.
- Archaeological evidence displaying a long and rich human history spanning more than 12,000 years.
- Historic resources, including evidence of early European exploration, ranches, homesteads, mines and roads.
- Remote and unspoiled landscape with limited travel corridors.
- Cold desert flora and warm desert grassland.
- Wildlife including California condors, bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, mountain lions, raptors and fish.

SIGNIFICANCE – The geologic structure, stratigraphy and erosional processes within the monument have combined to create unique landforms of incredible shape, color and beauty, which draw visitors from around the world.

How to comment on the Monuments' proposed Purpose, Significance and Mission statements, and Planning Criteria:

- Email them to:
Arizona_Strip@blm.gov
- Mail them to:
Planning Comments
345 E. Riverside Dr.
St. George, UT 84790

The monument contains irreplaceable archaeological resources of Archaic and Ancestral Puebloan origin. These resources are significant because of their abundance, good condition and scientific potential.

Historic resources, such as ranch structures and corrals, fences, water tanks, mines, and historic routes, exist in nearly their original context. They provide a unique opportunity for public interpretation and education of the historical and social significance of these early lifestyles.

The monument is remote and unfragmented. It supports ecological processes that provide opportunities to study functioning physical and natural systems.

The monument contains a sense of solitude through natural settings that provide for rugged recreation opportunities.

MISSION – Natural and cultural resources of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument are protected and managed within their broader ecological and social contexts.

Management decisions about resources and visitors are based on scientific information and monitoring.

Natural and social settings are managed to preserve the remote and unspoiled character of the landscape while providing opportunities for visitors to experience adventure, beautiful vistas, and a sense of discovery through a variety of appropriate and sustainable backcountry activities.

The public receives the information they need to have a safe and enjoyable experience.

New planning direction developed through the collaborative process and valid existing decisions provide clear direction for management.

The traditional ranching operations and associated activities showcase the monument's historical lifestyles and enhance visitor experience.

Management of habitats that support sustainable levels of a full range of native species is emphasized. Recovery and protection of special status species are a primary focus.

The public understands and appreciates the purposes and significance of the monument.

Planning Criteria

BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all plans. Planning criteria ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analysis are avoided. Planning criteria are based on applicable law, agency guidance, public comment, and coordination with other Federal, state and local governments, and Native American Indian tribes. The planning criteria used in developing the plans for Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, and the Arizona Strip Resource Management plan are as follows:

The plans will be completed in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The GCPNM plan will also be completed in compliance with the Lake Mead Enabling Legislation and with the National Park Service Organic Act requirements and NPS policies. The Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, and other federal law and executive orders and management policy requirements will also be met.

The two national monument plans will be consistent with their respective proclamations, meeting their purpose, preserving their significance and complementing their mission.

The plan data and maps will present information in three geographic areas: Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, and the remaining BLM administered lands on the Arizona Strip.

Valid existing management decisions from previous plans, if appropriate, may be carried forward into this plan or subsequent activity and/or implementation plans. Decisions from the following plans will be considered: Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan (1992) as amended, Mojave Desert Plan Amendment (1998), Lake Mead National Recreation Area General Management Plan (1986), Lake Mead National Recreation Area Resource Management Plan (1999), Lake Mead Burro Management Plan (1995), Lake Management Plan (2002), Parashant (1997) and Mt. Trumbull (1995) Resource Conservation Area Plans, Paria Canyon-Vermilion

Cooperating agencies assist planning

The planning effort has several cooperating agency partners: Mohave, Coconino, Washington, and Kane counties, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Kaibab Paiute and Hopi tribes, and the Federal Highway Administration.

Other cooperating agencies may join the planning effort. With the cooperators' assistance, counties, communities, tribes, and other agencies will be involved in planning more than ever before.

Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan (1986), Paiute and Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness Management Plan (1990), Mt. Trumbull and Mt. Logan Wilderness Management Plan (1990), Grand Wash Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan (1990), Cottonwood Point Wilderness Management Plan (1991), Habitat Management Plans and the Arizona Strip Bighorn Sheep Management Plan.

The state's responsibilities and authorities regarding wildlife management, including fishing and hunting, with the Monument(s) are unaffected by the Proclamation or this planning effort.

The management plan will be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource related plans, policies and programs of other Federal agencies, State and local governments and Indian tribes, so long as their plans, policies and programs are consistent with the purposes, policies and programs of Federal laws and regulations.

Terms and Conditions and reasonable and prudent alternatives from all applicable Final Biological Opinions will be implemented. Conservation measures will be included.

Cooperating Agency status will be encouraged for affected Federal, State and local governments and Indian tribes. The environmental analysis input and proposals of Cooperating Agencies will be used to the maximum extent possible consistent with BLM and NPS responsibilities (43 CFR 1501.6 (a) (2).

An adaptive management approach will be followed to achieve desired outcomes. Monitoring outlined in the plan will be used to determine if desired

outcomes are being achieved. If not, actions and/or allowable uses will be modified to meet objectives. The plan will emphasize ecological restoration and preservation of cultural resources. It will identify opportunities and priorities for research and monitoring related to the key resource values of the two national monuments.

The statewide land health standards, established by the Arizona Resource Advisory Council and approved by the Secretary of Interior, will be used to evaluate all surface disturbing activities on BLM administered lands and on Lake Mead National Recreation Area lands where BLM administers grazing privileges. For NPS lands on the GCPNM, policies and procedures by which the NPS carries out its responsibilities under NEPA will be followed (DO-12 and DO-55), including identification of thresholds and impairment.

The plan will identify what BLM lands, if any, will be designated as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), to be managed under the Interim Management Policy, BLM Handbook 8550-1. Wilderness inventory will precede any lands being proposed for designation as WSAs. Inventory guidelines found in BLM Wilderness Inventory Handbook 6310-1 will be used. Inventory areas will be evaluated through the land use planning process to analyze the quality of the area's wilderness characteristics, the ability to manage the areas as a WSA, and the extent to which other resource values and uses of the area would be forgone or adversely affected as well as the benefits that may accrue to other multiple resource values by WSA designation. Inventory areas studied under the authority of Section 202 of the FLPMA, and not designated as WSAs, will be managed as determined in the plan. For lands within the GCPNM, the 1979 Lake Mead National Recreation Area wilderness proposal will be brought forward as the decision of record. Minor, non-controversial changes may be made if necessary for resource protection concerns. NPS Reference Manual # 41 will be followed for guidance on wilderness preservation and management on NPS land within the monument.

Route inventories will be completed for both monuments and will be used as baseline data for transportation and access planning. All lands within the monuments will be designated "limited" or "closed." Decisions concerning specific routes in "limited" areas will result in authorized transportation systems for the monuments. Arizona Strip lands outside the two monuments will be designated as "open," "limited" or "closed." As the

availability of route inventory data allows, decisions concerning specific routes in "limited" areas will be made in the land use plan, deferring decisions about specific routes to implementation plans for those areas with insufficient inventory. An authorized road system for NPS lands in GCPNM was designated in 1986 and will not be readdressed in this plan, except for minor adjustments as needed for resource protection.

The plan will directly involve Native American Indian tribal governments by providing strategies for the protection of recognized sacred and traditional uses and sites.

The lifestyles of area residents, including the activities of grazing and hunting, will be recognized in the plan. Much of the Strip's historic value is connected with ranching operations, both past and present. Vintage ranching structures and facilities hold great historical and social significance and will be incorporated into the plan.

The plan will not address monument or statutory wilderness boundary adjustments. The planning effort will coordinate the resolution of land-use-scale management issues for both the Utah and Arizona BLM portions of the Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness and Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs Wilderness. Additionally, management direction for the Kanab Creek Wilderness (jointly managed by BLM and the Forest Service) will complement the current wilderness planning effort initiated by the Forest Service.

New visitor facilities will be located outside the monument and generally within existing communities.

The plans will set forth a framework for managing recreational and commercial activities in order to maintain existing natural landscapes and to provide for the enjoyment and safety of the visiting public.

The plan will use the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management to ensure appropriate grazing practices are followed to protect monument values, watershed integrity, and habitats for plant and wildlife species on both BLM and NPS lands.

The plan will consider public input, interests, and attitudes, past and present uses of public land and adjacent land, public benefits of providing goods and services, environmental impacts, social and economic values, public safety, and ecosystem restoration.

What's next?

Comments are welcome on the plans at any time. Comments on the material in this bulletin are needed. The next official public comment period will be sometime next spring when management alternatives are being drafted. There will be public meetings on these alternatives in St. George, Mesquite, Fredonia and Flagstaff in the spring of 2003.

Upcoming planning bulletins will also have information about the draft alternatives and the public meetings.

Public review and comment on the draft plan/Environmental Impact Statement will occur sometime in early 2004. This draft document will analyze various alternatives and identify the preferred alternative.

The target completion date for a final plan is the summer of 2005.

Staying involved...

Important! To remain on the Arizona Strip planning mailing list, please fax or mail the enclosed card to the Arizona Strip.

You can also e-mail us at
Arizona_Strip@blm.gov

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