



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Park partners with Northern Arizona University

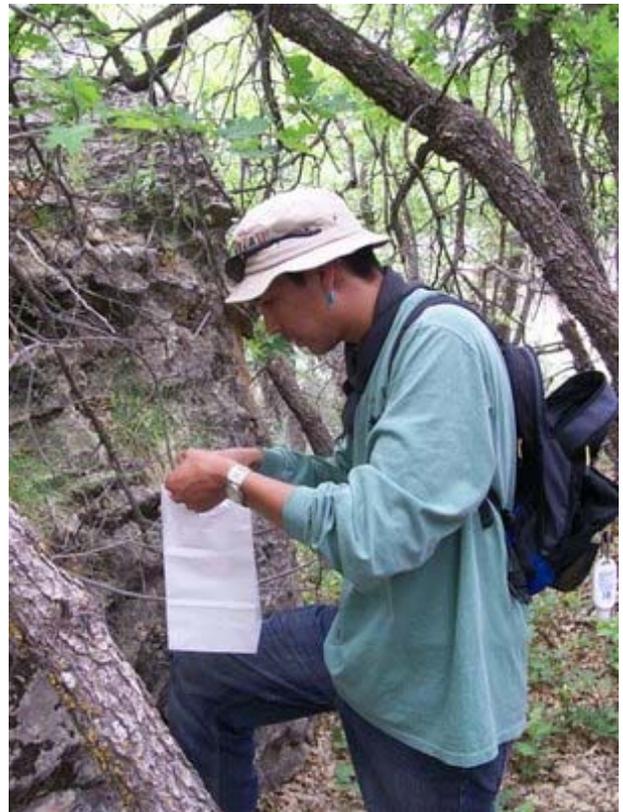
Grand Canyon, AZ. -- In 2008, the National Park Service (NPS) kicked off a partnership between Grand Canyon National Park and Northern Arizona University's Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMA) to work on a variety of projects including improvement of park sustainability practices and management of the park's natural and cultural resources.

Martha Hahn, Chief of Science and Resource Management at Grand Canyon National Park, explained, "The goal of this partnership is to bring together young scholars and scientific expertise from the university to help meet park management challenges. Northern Arizona University's EMA goal of advancing land stewardship in the Southwest perfectly meshes with NPS mandates; and this partnership is an effective way to meet park resource preservation needs in the 21st century." Other partners in the project include the Northern Arizona University Foundation and Grand Canyon Association (GCA), the park's cooperating association.

Northern Arizona University (NAU) students and faculty and EMA staff have been working on nine individual projects in 2008. Several projects evaluated sustainability issues such as the park's water and energy use; and two projects provided assistance to the park's native vegetation program. One student is also working with park archeologists to prepare a nomination of the site of a 1956 mid-air collision between United Airlines and TWA aircraft for listing as a national historic landmark.

Student interns work under the supervision of NAU faculty and EMA staff and in conjunction with resource specialists from Grand Canyon National Park to complete each project. The students gave project presentations to park management and GCA board members on October 31. Hahn added, “This partnership not only gives the students exciting learning opportunities and the chance to help meet park objectives, but it also enables us to complete some projects we would not otherwise be able to.”

NAU student Deon Ben, a Diné (Navajo) senior in Environmental Studies from Tohatchi, New Mexico, was the Native Seed Intern for the park’s vegetation program. He collected seeds from more than 50 species of plants found in Grand Canyon and learned about propagation of native plants from harvested seeds and restoration methods for rare plant species. Ben said, “I would like to thank each individual and organization that allowed me to experience this once in a life-time opportunity. I am truly grateful and ecstatic about the handful of knowledge I received throughout my internship. This experience truly will guide me through my future endeavors. *Ahe’hee.*” (Dearly Grateful in Navajo)



Deon Ben, NAU EMA park intern, collecting native seeds in Grand Canyon National Park (Photo courtesy of Deon Ben)

The Grand Canyon/EMA partnership will continue in 2009 and beyond. For additional information, please contact Martha Hahn, Grand Canyon National Park Chief of Science and Resource Management at 928-638-7759.

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