



## RIVER AND WEIGHTED LOTTERY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

<b>I NEED A PERMIT:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
WHO CAN APPLY FOR A PERMIT? .....	3
HOW CAN I APPLY?.....	3
<b>Profiles: Creating, Viewing, and Changing</b> .....	3
How do I create a personal profile online? .....	3
What should I do if I have two profiles?.....	4
Why do you need to know the date of my last year commercial or private trip down the Colorado in order to create my profile?.....	4
I plan on going on a trip in a couple months. Should I list this as my last trip?.....	4
My answer to the last trip question is wrong, what should I do? .....	4
Do I have to apply every year to keep my points?.....	4
What would cause me to lose my lottery points?.....	4
I forgot my username and/or password, what should I do?.....	5
<b>Lottery Application Creation</b> .....	5
When can I apply through the weighted lottery? .....	5
What happens to my lottery points if I apply? .....	5
I believe my last trip date and / or points are not listed correctly. What should I do?.....	5
How much does it cost to apply in a lottery? .....	5
How do I pay?.....	6
What additional fees are lottery winners required to pay? .....	6
I transferred from the waitlist. Do I really have to pay? .....	6
Who must be listed on the lottery application?.....	6
Can I be listed on more than 1 application?.....	6
How would someone accept their co-applicant status on my application? .....	6
Why is it necessary for my co-applicants to login and agree to their listing on my application?.....	7
How many dates may be applied for when applying through the lottery? .....	7
The launch date I want to pick is not showing up. Help!.....	7
What dates were released through past lotteries, and how many people applied? .....	7
The new plan calls for 503 noncommercial launches per year. Why aren't more dates listed in the main lottery? .....	7
Why are there no "small" trips September through May?.....	8
How often will follow-up lotteries occur? .....	8
Exactly how does the weighted lottery work? .....	8
If someone's name appears on several applications, what will be the consequence? .....	8
If someone's payment doesn't go through, will they lose out through the lottery?.....	8
Will I be given the chance to accept or refuse a trip before the trip deposit fee is charged?.....	8
How are an application's total points in a lottery calculated?.....	9
Why doesn't the lottery system add extra standard points for PATLs on an application? .....	10
Is it better to submit separate applications or list everyone on one application?.....	10
How can I maximize my group's chance of getting a trip?.....	11
How many applications do you anticipate being submitted for the next main lottery?.....	11
If I want to maximize my chance in the lottery, are certain dates better choices than others?.....	11
If I went 3 years ago and apply with someone who hasn't gone as recently, will I reduce their total standard points to 3?.....	11
I transferred from the waitlist with bonus points. What if I never win?.....	11
Is a call-in system ever used to release launch dates?.....	12
<b>Claiming Cancellations</b> .....	12
What will happen with launch dates from unclaimed or cancelled trips? .....	12
Can I camp out at Lees Ferry with my boats and wait for a "no show"?.....	12
<b>I HAVE A PERMIT:</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>PRE-TRIP QUESTIONS</b> .....	12
<b>Participants</b> .....	12
Is there an age restriction for children on a private/noncommercial river trip?.....	12
Can I invite whoever I want on my trip?.....	12

Can I change my passenger list or gear after sending you my trip application?.....	13
Is it necessary for trip participants to log in and confirm their participation?.....	13
What river flow levels can I expect?.....	13
Where can I find information about closures and other restrictions?.....	13
<b>What If I Can't Make the Trip?</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Can I change, defer, or swap my launch date?.....	13
Who can I pass my trip to if I can't make it?.....	13
What if I did not include a co-applicant or PATL on my original lottery application?.....	14
<b>THE TRIP</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Launch Ramp</b> .....	<b>14</b>
How early/soon may I arrive at Lees Ferry prior to my launch?.....	14
How early may I rig my boats and equipment on the launch ramp?.....	14
How can I arrange time for a river trip orientation?.....	14
What do I do if I do not have a picture ID?.....	14
Who do I contact for more information?.....	14
<b>On the River</b> .....	<b>15</b>
What are the maximum allowable trip lengths from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek?.....	15
What are the maximum allowable trip lengths below Diamond Creek?.....	15
Do outboard motors need to be a 4-stroke motor?.....	15
Do rafts need navigation lights to travel at night?.....	15
Are the caves open for exploration?.....	15
<b>Lower Gorge and Takeout</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Are there many camps in the Lower Granite Gorge?.....	15
Can we hike in Spencer Canyon?.....	15
Is the Pearce Ferry take out area open?.....	15
How far is it from Pearce Ferry to South Cove?.....	16
Does my trip need a motor to get to South Cove?.....	16
How big is the take out area at South Cove?.....	16
What is the best time to take out?.....	16
Is there a lot of lake boat traffic?.....	16
<b>Emergency</b> .....	<b>16</b>
When is a ground to air radio needed?.....	16
Do you know what type of ground to air radio I should buy or rent for my trip?.....	16
Do cell phones work on the river?.....	16
Who does our family contact if there is an emergency (severe illness or death) while we are on our river trip?.....	17
<b>WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE FROM THE OLD WAITLIST SYSTEM?</b> .....	<b>17</b>
What happened to the people from the old waitlist system?.....	17
Explain this "added assurance." How will the NPS step forward to help?.....	17
Exactly how many launch dates will be used for this purpose?.....	19
Is it fair to take these trips away from the lottery and give it to these people?.....	20
I was on the waitlist a long time, applied, and did not win! How is this fair to me?.....	20
<b>TROUBLESHOOTING</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>PROFILES</b> .....	<b>21</b>
How do I change my personal information on the lottery website?.....	21
I've forgotten my password. Help!!?.....	21

# I Need A Permit:

## WHO CAN APPLY FOR A PERMIT?

Before applying for a noncommercial permit through the weighted lottery, it is important to realize these trips are not for everyone. Here are a few important requirements:

- The Colorado River through Grand Canyon is a highly technical river, not something for the inexperienced to try. At least one member of each trip must have the experience and skills required by the NPS.
- Noncommercial trips must be self-guided and may not hire guides.
- All noncommercial trip expenses must be shared among all participants on a full cost sharing basis.
- Once awarded through the weighted lottery, noncommercial trip launch dates may not be changed, deferred, or traded.
- Trips may be passed to qualified Potential Alternate Trip Leaders (PATLs). To be qualified, these PATLs must be listed on the original lottery application, confirm their co-applicant status online before the lottery drawing, and meet all other NPS requirements.
- The main applicant must be at least 18 years old when applying. While underage people may be listed as PATLs, only those listed as PATLs who will be at least 18 years old by the launch date are eligible to take over the trip should the leader not be able to make it.
- The lottery fee is \$25 and is charged one time for each year for which an applicant applies. For instance, an applicant who pays the \$25 lottery fee and applies in the 2012 main lottery (held in February 2011) can apply for free for all follow-up lotteries for 2012 launch dates. All lottery and permit fees are non-refundable.
- Those who win through the lottery are immediately charged a \$400 non-refundable deposit (\$200 for launches advertised through the lottery as small trips) and usually have 1 to 5 days to pay this deposit. The deposit will apply toward the final permit fees.
- Final permit fees of \$100 per person are due 90 days before launch.
- All individuals are prohibited from participating on more than one recreational river trip (commercial or non-commercial) per year through any part of the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the Colorado River.

## HOW CAN I APPLY?

For people who have never applied before, applying is a two-step process. The first step is free and involves creating a profile. The second step is to apply through the weighted lottery.

### *Profiles: Creating, Viewing, and Changing*

How do I create a personal profile online?

You can create, view, and change your profile (email address, email preferences, postal address, phone numbers, and password) online at <https://npspermits.us>. Please do not create more than one profile – you will reuse the same one year after year. Having more than one profile in the Lottery System will result in any trip won through the lottery being forfeited (this rule may be waived by the NPS

in cases where the individual 1) used only one of their profiles in the lottery and 2) used the profile with the least number of points.

What should I do if I have two profiles?

Having two profiles can result in the forfeiture of any trip you might win, so this needs to be rectified before you apply in any new lottery. Please send an email to [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) and point out the duplication. We will help by disabling one of your profiles, and ensuring you can compete fairly in future lotteries.

Why do you need to know the date of my last year commercial or private trip down the Colorado in order to create my profile?

In order to give everyone a fair chance to experience a raft trip down the Colorado, individuals are limited to one trip (commercial or private) down the Colorado per year. Moreover, the odds of winning the lottery are weighted, giving more points to those who have not been down the river recently. Note that we do check the accuracy of "last date down the Colorado" for all applicants listed on a permit application against our historical commercial and private records before issuing each permit; false statements of "last trip" date will result in cancellation of the permit.

I plan on going on a trip in a couple months. Should I list this as my last trip?

The last trip question is about past trips, not speculative about future trips that may or may not end up happening. Please do not record future trips until after you have participated on them.

My answer to the last trip question is wrong, what should I do?

If you need to record a more recent trip participation date, you can do this by logging into your profile at <https://npspermits.us>, looking in the Most Recent Grand Canyon River Trip section, and clicking on update. If the date you put into the system is incorrect and too recent, you will need NPS assistance if fixing this. Please send an email to [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov), telling us your name, that you want your last date corrected, and when you last participated on a trip (commercial or noncommercial) through the canyon.

Do I have to apply every year to keep my points?

You do not have to apply every year to keep your points. Please apply only in the lotteries in which you wish to participate. For instance, if you are not interested in going any time before 2015, you don't need to apply or even log back in before the 2015 lottery (held in February 2014). Your points will remain valid until you win a trip or participate on another trip (commercial or noncommercial). We do encourage you, however, to log back in from time to time just to make sure your information is accurate and current.

What would cause me to lose my lottery points?

There are two ways for you to lose your lottery points. First, your points will be reset to one if you are listed on a lottery application that wins (i.e. if you are listed on the application either as the main applicant or as a confirmed PATL). Second, your lottery points will be reset to one if you participate on a noncommercial trip or are a recreational passenger on a commercial river trip through any portion of

the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the Colorado River through Grand Canyon.

I forgot my username and/or password, what should I do?

Please click on the “forgot my username and/or password” link located by the login box at <https://npspermits.us> and a form will appear. If you need your username, please complete the top section only. If you need a new password, please complete the bottom section only, entering your username. An automated replay will be sent to your email address on file within about 10 minutes. If you do not hear back by then, please ask for help through an email to [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) or call us at 800-959-9164.

## ***Lottery Application Creation***

When can I apply through the weighted lottery?

Each year’s main lottery will be held in February of the previous year. For instance, for the first few weeks of February 2014 online applications were accepted for the 2015 main lottery.

Follow-up lotteries occur when launch dates are cancelled and re-released. If you wish to hear about these follow-up lotteries, please sign-up for our lottery notification RSS feed (<http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/upload/river.xml>), visit our Twitter page ([twitter.com/GCRiverPermits](https://twitter.com/GCRiverPermits)), and/or check the box(es) in your lottery website profile indicating you wish to receive notification emails. You can also visit <http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/cancelled-dates.htm> for updates regarding available dates and for information on what RSS feeds are and how to sign up for them. Generally follow-up lotteries open on a Tuesday and close on a Thursday at 12pm (noon) MST.

What happens to my lottery points if I apply?

Applying does not affect your lottery points, but winning does. Your lottery points will be reset to 1 if you are listed on a lottery application that wins (i.e. if you are listed on the application either as the main applicant or as a confirmed PATL). Your lottery points also will be reset to one if you participate on a noncommercial trip or are a recreational passenger on a commercial river trip through any portion of the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the Colorado River through Grand Canyon.

I believe my last trip date and / or points are not listed correctly. What should I do?

Monitoring your information is important. It is every users responsibility to ensure their information is correct before lottery fees are paid and a lottery is run. If you think you have noticed a problem, please send an email to [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) and relay what you believe is incorrect in your profile. Your profile will be reviewed and your email responded to, usually within a day.

How much does it cost to apply in a lottery?

Applying through the weighted lottery costs \$25 and covers the current lottery plus all follow-up lotteries for launch dates that occur within the same launch year. For example, if you paid \$25 for the 2013 main lottery (held in February

2012), you can apply for free for all follow-up lotteries for other launch dates occurring in 2013. (Note, the \$25 lottery fee is paid only by the main applicant; PATLs do not need to pay this fee.) Lottery winners are required to pay additional fees.

How do I pay?

When you log in to the system to view your application, you can modify the application, delete it, or pay for it. Near the top of your application, select the button that says “Pay now through pay.gov”. You can pay with a credit card, a debit card, or online check.

What additional fees are lottery winners required to pay?

After the lottery drawing date, winners have around 1 to 5 days to pay a non-refundable deposit (\$400 for standard size trips, \$200 for small sized trips). Failure to pay this deposit results in cancellation of the trip. This deposit will be applied toward the permit fee.

Final permit fees (currently \$100 per trip participant) minus the deposit amount are due 90 days before launch. Participants may be added to trips after this deadline for the normal fee plus an additional late fee (currently \$100 additional per participant). A trip participant is a person who participates on any portion of the trip.

I transferred from the waitlist. Do I really have to pay?

Everyone who applies in a lottery is required to pay the lottery fee. When you transferred from the waitlist, you were given the option to either get the money you paid in waitlist fees back or to get bonus points in the lottery. If you chose the bonus points, that is what you got for the money you originally paid to join the wait list. Note, those bonus points expire when you participate in another trip (commercial or noncommercial) or when you win a trip (as the main applicant or listed as a PATL) whether or not you actually go on the trip. If you chose the refund, a check was mailed to you.

Who must be listed on the lottery application?

You need to list yourself and anybody else who you would like to designate as co-applicants or potential alternate trip leaders (PATLs) for your trip. Each person listed on your application will be required to separately login to the system and confirm their status as co-applicants on your trip. They may not submit a separate application or be listed on anyone else’s application for that lottery.

Can I be listed on more than one application?

No. You may only be listed on one application within any specific lottery, either as the main applicant or as a PATL. Being listed as the main applicant or PATL on more than one lottery application within any individual lottery will result in any trip won through that lottery being forfeited.

How would someone accept their Potential Alternate Trip Leader (PATL) status on my application?

After the PATL creates their profile, they can login and see a screen much like what the primary applicant sees. They should view the trip details then click on

the button that says "Confirm Participation". They also have the right to click on "Reject Participation".

Why is it necessary for my PATL(s) to login and agree to their listing on my application?  
This requirement ensures the PATL(s) will be given the opportunity to understand the consequences of being listed on the application and can therefore maintain their rights. Once they consent online, they cannot be listed on any other application within that lottery. Further, if the application wins a trip through the lottery, the PATL's points will be reset to 1 even if they do not participate on the trip. Asking PATLs to log in and agree to their listing on an application allows us to ensure that PATLs are prepared to make this commitment.

How many dates may be applied for when applying through the lottery?  
Each lottery application can list 5 dates. By limiting each application to 5 dates, we are actually limiting the number of applications that will be competing with yours for the dates you choose. In this way you will have a better shot at the preferred dates you apply for. When a lottery application is picked, all 5 dates will be checked for availability, awarding the first one if possible before checking the second, etc.

The launch date I want to pick is not showing up. Help!  
There are three things to check. First, check the cancellation page at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/cancelled-dates.htm> to make sure that the launch date is really available (i.e. listed as an available date in a current, open lottery). Second, if there are currently two lotteries open, make sure you are creating an application for the correct lottery. Finally, once you have clicked on the calendar icon and opened the launch dates calendar, confirm you are viewing the correct trip size (standard or small) for the dates you want. If these suggestions do not help, please send an email to [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) requesting further assistance. This email address is watched closely in the hours before a lottery closes.

What dates were released through past lotteries, and how many people applied?  
Detailed statistics from past lotteries are available through the park's website at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/noncommercial-riv-docs.htm>. These statistics show exactly how many people listed each particular date, what their cumulative points were, and how many points the winner had for that particular date.

The new plan calls for 503 noncommercial launches per year. Why aren't more dates listed in the main lottery?  
The new noncommercial allocation does include 503 launches per year. However, some of these launches have been taken by people who had permits under the old system and were granted deferments. Some launches were claimed through stage 1 and 2 of the transition process for transitioning waitlist members off the waitlist and into the new lottery system (stage 1 and 2 each allowed for up to 240 launches per year to be pre-booked by waitlist members for the 2007 through 2011 calendar years). Finally, some dates were claimed through the adaptive management process by former waitlist members who had been at the top of the old waitlist, chose bonus points in the transition, and have remained unsuccessful.

Why are there no "small" trips September through May?

Since small groups can fit on standard sized trips, these groups are free to apply for small sized trips and for standard sized trips. By definition, small sized trips may not include more than 8 people at any time, and they occur only in the summer, the season when large size beach campsites are in high demand. Throughout the rest of the year, trip sizes are not restricted to the 8 person maximum because fewer trips are launching and there is less demand for the large size beach campsites.

How often do follow-up lotteries occur?

We use follow-up lotteries to re-release leftover and cancelled launch dates. These lotteries occur as needed. The process starts with emails being sent to those who indicated within their profiles that they wish to receive email notifications of upcoming lotteries. We also use an RSS feed and Twitter to notify those interested of upcoming and currently available noncommercial river launch dates. Follow-up lotteries typically open on a Tuesday and close on a Thursday. Anyone who has already paid the application fee for that launch year will not be charged again for any follow-up lotteries for the same launch year.

Exactly how does the weighted lottery work?

As you apply and submit your application, you will be able to see exactly how many points your application will get in the lottery. Having a chance in the lottery is somewhat like having a tiny copy of your application thrown into a hat. The computer will randomly pick from the hat, and that application will be considered in full before going on to the next drawing from the hat.

If someone's name appears on several applications, what will be the consequence?

People are not allowed to have more than one profile, and this profile can be attached to only one application for any given lottery. If someone finds a way around this restriction and one of their application wins, the trip may be forfeit. We say "may" only because if the person's inclusion on the application did not add points to the application, then it might make sense to just disqualify that person from the trip, not cancel the trip for the rest of the participants.

If someone's payment doesn't go through, will they lose out through the lottery?

If their payment (i.e. credit card, debit card, or online check) is denied, they cannot complete the application and therefore cannot apply. Included in the lottery application process is a payment section through pay.gov (online payment portal of the US Department of the Treasury). If you fail to pay your lottery fee, your lottery application process will never be completed. If your application is accepted, your payment method was proven to be good.

Will I be given the chance to accept or refuse a trip before the trip deposit fee is charged?

Through the lottery you are given the chance to apply or not apply for up to five trip launch dates. You should only apply for those trips you know you would accept.

While our intent was to obtain pre-authorization for the \$400 deposit from all lottery applicants then automatically process the payments from those who win, our payment site (pay.gov) cannot support that process. Consequently the



automatic portion of this process is reduced to the lottery site automatically sending out bills for payment to those who win. Winners will have approximately 1 to 5 days to pay their deposits online through their profiles. The original intent of making the deposit “automatic” was to help encourage groups not to subdivide and submit multiple applications in the lottery. We are brainstorming other ways to largely accomplish the same end.

How are an application’s total points in a lottery calculated?

**"Standard points"** are the basis for the system we've devised for weighting the permit lottery to give persons who have not been on the Colorado River recently a better chance of success than those who have been more recently. Calculating your standard points is easy: it's simply the number of years since you've been on a river trip (or won a lottery, whichever later), up to a maximum of five. So if it's been five or more years since you've been on a trip, or you've never been, then you have five standard points. Essentially this means you have five chances of winning (think of it as "five lottery tickets for your permit in the pot that we draw from"). On the other hand, if you were just down the river last year, you have just one point. If it's been three years since you last went on a noncommercial or commercial river trip through the canyon, you have three points. Keep in mind that this formula applies for *both private and commercial trips*. So if you took a commercial trip last year, you'll have one standard point when you apply for a private trip this year.

Of course, there may be multiple persons (the leader and PATLs) listed on a lottery application. So how do we calculate the total weighting points for a lottery application as a whole? Simple: if no person listed on the lottery application has "bonus points" (see below), then the total weighting points for a lottery application is just *the minimum of all standard points held by the leader and all confirmed PATLs*. So if the leader of a trip has five points, and there are two PATLs with three and four points respectively, the trip application will enter the lottery with three standard points, i.e., with three "tickets in the pot".

**"Bonus points" for persons transitioning from the old waiting list system.**

*(Note: the following **applies only** to persons who were current members of the waitlist in 2006 and elected to transition to the new lottery system with "bonus points". All others effectively have zero bonus points.)*

Persons transitioning from the old "waiting list" system were given one bonus point for every year they have been on the waiting list. In some cases bonus points are tripled (see [“What About People from the Old Waitlist System”](#)). These bonus points remain viable indefinitely, and can be used year after year to boost the odds of success in the permit lottery. Once the holder of bonus points is successful in the lottery (i.e., is a leader or confirmed PATL on a successful lottery application), their bonus points disappear and standard points are reset to one, and subsequent participation in permit lotteries is based on standard points only.

The total weighting points for a lottery application with multiple applicants (i.e. leader and one or more confirmed PATLs) are calculated by combining the standard points and bonus points of all listed applicants in a simple fashion.

Bonus points are particularly powerful because they are *cumulative across all applicants* on a permit and *act in addition to the regular standard points*. To illustrate this, consider the following scenario: Mike is creating a new permit application and plans to list Sue, John, and Betty as PATLs.

- Mike was on a commercial trip down the Colorado three years ago, so he has three standard points.
- Sue was on the waitlist and transitioned from that list with seven bonus points. Thus, she has five standard points and seven bonus points.
- John has never been down the Colorado, so he has five standard points.
- Betty has never been down the river either, and she transitioned from the waitlist with ten bonus, so she has five standard points and ten bonus points.

The number of points for the application is calculated as follows: First, take the minimum of all applicants' standard points as usual, then add on any bonus points that applicants have due to being on the waiting list. So, in the above case, take the minimum of standard points of all confirmed PATLs:  $\text{minimum}(3,5,5,5)=3$ . Then add all the bonus points held by all confirmed PATLs: 7 (from Sue) + 10 (from Betty). The total points for this application as a whole would therefore be 20. This means the application will essentially have 20 "tickets in the pot" for the lottery.

Why doesn't the lottery system add extra standard points for PATLs on an application?

The purpose of having a PATL is not to increase the chance of winning but instead to increase the chance of your trip actually going if you do win. While most applicants say they are sure they will go if they win, around one in 5 winners who pay their deposits end up cancelling or passing their trips to PATLs. Having a PATL will help your trip participants know that even if something makes you have to drop out, the trip will be able to continue with the PATL.

The standard points for an application are calculated as the minimum standard points of the main applicant and all confirmed PATLs listed on the application. So, even if an applicant lists 20 confirmed PATLs, the maximum standard points they can get on the application is 5. This serves to prevent gaming of the system where a person signs up a bus load of friends (who really have no interest in going) just to inflate their points, thereby making it imperative that others do the same just to compete on an even footing.

Is it better to submit separate applications or list everyone on one application?

It is worth keeping in mind that under the new system trips may not be deferred or swapped. They can, however, be passed to co-applicants from the original lottery application who qualify as Potential Alternate Trip Leaders (PATLs). So, it is very wise for every lottery application to include at least the main applicant and at least two others. For this reason groups should not subdivide and submit multiple applications unless they are willing to win two trips, not go together, and not go at the same time.

How can I maximize my group's chance of getting a trip?

Here are some suggestions to maximize your group's chance of success. First, welcome inclusion of those transferring from the waitlist with bonus points - their bonus points will help your application. Second, make sure any application you submit lists at least two confirmed PATLs (they don't have to be the most experienced). Third, if you choose to chance subdividing your group so multiple applications can be submitted, make sure everyone is willing to not go together should more than one of your applications win. Fourth, if you do subdivide, list those with 1 standard point as members of one lottery application and keep them separate, if possible, from the application you submit where all members have 5 standard points.

How many applications do you anticipate being submitted for the next main lottery?

In 2014 we had 4,212 applications competing for 460 launch opportunities. You can also review numbers from other past lotteries. That information can be obtained at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/noncommercial-riv-docs.htm>

Your total chance of winning in a lottery will depend both on your application's total points and on the points of all those who apply for the same dates as you. Overall, if 5,400 applications are submitted for a lottery with roughly 270 launch dates, this would represent an average chance of success of 1 in 20. In practice chances of winning are generally much less for popular dates and much higher for winter launch dates.

If I want to maximize my chance in the lottery, are certain dates better choices than others?

From working with the waitlist in the past, we have seen that May and June dates tend to have high demand. Winter dates tend to have very low demand. You may want to review our statistics pages to see exactly how many people applied for each date in the past. That information can be obtained at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/noncommercial-riv-docs.htm>.

If I went 3 years ago and apply with someone who hasn't gone as recently, will I reduce their total standard points to 3?

Yes, if you sign up with people who would otherwise get 5 standard points, together your application will only get 3 points in the lottery. The weighted lottery system is setup to favor giving control of trips into the hands of people who have not been lucky enough to go on the river as recently as others. You still have the right to include more experienced others later as participants, but to include them as potential alternate trip leaders will reduce the group's points in the lottery. Of course, if you get lucky enough, it will only take 1 point for you to win.

I transferred from the waitlist with bonus points. What if I never win?

The waitlist has ended, but our commitment to getting you on a trip has not ended. We have predicted that most waitlist members who transition to the lottery with bonus points will experience shorter wait times than they would have experienced. Yet, because this is a lottery, some might also experience longer wait times, and we don't want to see this happen. For this reason we are using "adaptive management" to limit any increased waits. Please see "[What about people from the old waitlist system](#)" for more information.

Is a call-in system ever used to release launch dates?

Typically all cancellations are released through the lottery website. If a launch date for the immediate future (i.e. next couple of months) remains unclaimed through one or more lotteries, the River Permits Office may decide to allow the next interested caller to claim the date through the River Permits Office phone line at 800-959-9164. When this occurs, the dates are only released to live callers – you cannot request a date via a voice mail message. As usual, applicants must comply with the one-trip-per-year rule and all other normal requirements.

In the past there have also been a couple of small time periods where the lottery programmers have requested the site not be used for additional lotteries. They needed this time to make important changes to the program, the hardware, and the website. To accommodate this type of request, the River Permits Office can temporarily revert to using a call-in system for releasing cancelled launch dates. This call-in system basically was the cancellation line system which had been used under the waitlist, with some necessary modifications. If needed, this system can be utilized in the future, and notifications will be sent to notify the public and explain the process.

### *Claiming Cancellations*

What will happen with launch dates from unclaimed or cancelled trips?

Follow-up lotteries are used to re-release cancelled and left-over launch dates. Typically the process starts with emails being sent to all people who indicated within their profiles that they wish to receive email notifications. While the time periods for individual lotteries may vary, people typically have around 5 days to apply online. Lotteries are usually run within one day of the lottery close date, and email notifications follow.

Can I camp out at Lees Ferry with my boats and wait for a "no show"?

No. Due to the cancellation policies, "no shows" are extremely rare. All dates will be awarded through the permit system in advance.

## **I HAVE A PERMIT:**

### **PRE-TRIP QUESTIONS**

#### *Participants*

Is there an age restriction for children on a private/noncommercial river trip?

While trip leaders must be at least 18 years of age, the National Park Service does not have an age restriction for other participants on private/noncommercial river trips. Please note that all trip members must have and wear a USCG approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for the size and weight of that river runner. Whitewater rafting PFD's for small children are available.

Can I invite whomever I want on my trip?

Within the maximum group size limits, you can invite anyone onto your trip who will not have been on any prior commercial or noncommercial trip through the

Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the river within the same calendar year. This can include people who were on the waitlist, people who were not on the waitlist, people who applied on other lottery applications, and people who are already planning to participate on other trips in other years.

Can I change my passenger list or gear after sending you my trip application?

Participant names may be changed before launch. Before going to Lees Ferry, ensure that each participant will have picture ID and the total number of participants (including the permittee) does not exceed 16 at any one time (8 for a small trip). The trip leader must be present the entire trip. You may change or add boats at Lees Ferry. Just be sure to show up with the required gear associated with the additions. Between 30 and 90 days before launch, the trip leader will be allowed to request that additional trip participants be added to the trip. For these late additions there will be the normal participant charge (currently \$100 each) plus an additional late fee (currently \$100 per added person). Trip participants may not be added within 2 weeks of launch.

Is it necessary for trip participants to log in and confirm their participation?

This is not a current requirement, but it is a future requirement that will be put into place when the lottery website has been fully developed. We are working to make this part of the process as simple as possible.

The point of doing this is twofold. First, this helps us ensure that individuals adhere to the one trip per year rule (individuals may participate on a maximum of one trip per year, whether it is on a commercial or a noncommercial trip). Second, it helps keep individuals in control of their own information in their lottery profiles. If a person is listed as a participant on your permit at the time your trip launches, then the system will record that participation as the person's "most recent trip down the river" and will adjust future lottery points accordingly. Asking trip participants to log in and confirm their participation allows us to ensure that participants are prepared to make this commitment.

What river flow levels can I expect?

You can find information about river flow levels at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/noncommercial-riv-docs.htm>

Where can I find information about closures and other restrictions?

Please take a look at the noncommercial regulations [http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/upload/Noncommercial\\_River\\_Trip\\_Regulations.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/upload/Noncommercial_River_Trip_Regulations.pdf) for a current list of closures and restrictions.

### ***What If I Can't Make the Trip?***

Can I change, defer, or swap my launch date?

Launch dates awarded through the lottery may not be changed, deferred, or swapped.

Who can I pass my trip to if I can't make it?

Permits may be transferred to any of the confirmed Potential Alternate Trip Leaders (PATLs) listed on the original lottery application provided the PATL has

not already participated on another trip that year. You must contact the River Permits Office for assistance.

What if I did not include a PATL on my original lottery application?

If the trip leader can't go and no confirmed alternate trip leaders are named on the original lottery application, the trip would have to cancel. It would then be re-released through a subsequent lottery.

## THE TRIP

### *Launch Ramp*

How early/soon may I arrive at Lees Ferry prior to my launch?

You may arrive up to one (1) day prior to your launch and utilize the noncommercial river campsite at Lees Ferry. If you arrive earlier you will have to use the Lees Ferry Campground located one mile from the launch ramp and you must pay the campground user fee.

How early may I rig my boats and equipment on the launch ramp?

The afternoon of the day before your launch, you may unload your boats and equipment on the launch ramp. Trips have usually launched by 1:00PM each day, but it could be later if the trip is delayed. **YOU MUST CHECK IN** with the Lees Ferry Ranger **before** unloading anything. If you are unable to locate the Lees Ferry Ranger, look for instructions on the bulletin board located on the downstream side of the launch ramp.

How can I arrange time for a river trip orientation?

All river trip orientations are given at 9:00AM the morning of their launch and all trip members will complete a river checkout and an orientation program with the Lees Ferry Ranger. You do not need to call ahead as all orientations are held at 9:00AM.

What do I do if I do not have a picture ID?

Participants without photo identification (i.e., driver's license, state issued identification, or passport) will NOT be allowed on the trip.

Who do I contact for more information?

The telephone system at the River Permits Office is automated and Toll Free. Messages may be left at the mailbox on option 5. All messages will be returned as soon as possible. The River Permits Office is staffed Monday through Friday, 8:00 am till 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm till 5:00 pm, except Holidays. 1-800-959-9164, (for outside the U.S. dial 928-638-7843) menu options: 1 = 1 to 2 day river trips, 2 = commercial river trips, 3 = info on the weighted lottery, 4 = cancellation information, 5 = all questions. Grand Canyon River Permits, 1824 S. Thompson St, Suite 201, Flagstaff, AZ, 86001, Fax (928) 638-7844. email: [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) website: [www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca)

## ***On the River***

What are the maximum allowable trip lengths from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek?

Non-motorized, non-commercial trips launching within the following time periods are allowed this number of days between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek:

16 days (15 nights) May through August

18 days (17 nights) Sept 1-15

21 days (20 nights) Sept 16 - Oct 31

25 days (24 nights) Nov 1 - Feb 29

21 days (20 nights) Mar 1 - April 30

Motorized, non-commercial trips launching in the motorized season (April 1 through September 15<sup>th</sup>) are allowed a maximum of 12 days (11 nights) between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek:

What are the maximum allowable trip lengths below Diamond Creek?

Noncommercial trips which launch in May through September and continue below Diamond Creek to take-out at South Cove are allowed 4 days (3 nights) to complete the Diamond Creek to South Cove section of the Colorado River.

Noncommercial trips which launch in October through April and continue below Diamond Creek to take-out at South Cove are allowed 6 days (5 nights) to complete the Diamond Creek to South Cove section of the Colorado River.

Do outboard motors need to be a 4-stroke motor?

Yes, a 4-stroke motor is much cleaner than a 2-stroke motor, which uses a fuel/oil mixture. A 4-stroke motor is required by park regulations.

Do rafts need navigation lights to travel at night?

A raft with a motor needs a red and green light displayed on the bow and a white 360-degree light from the stern (US Coast Guard Regulations). A raft without a motor needs to have a flashlight or lantern ready for display to avert a collision with another boat (US Coast Guard Regulations). All rafts traveling at night must have someone on watch to warn any oncoming boats to avoid a collision.

Are the caves open for exploration?

No, all caves are closed to visitation.

## ***Lower Gorge and Takeout***

Are there many camps in the Lower Granite Gorge?

There are about 10 camps in the gorge. Most camps are between river mile 225 and 245, with one at 248, 253, 259 and 273. The camps have heavy vegetation encroachment and beach erosion. During the summer finding a camp is much more difficult due to the number of trips.

Can we hike in Spencer Canyon?

No, the Hualapai Tribe has closed Spencer Canyon for hiking.

Is the Pearce Ferry take out area open?

Yes. A two-mile road extension and new takeout ramp were opened on 3/15/2009. This ramp is for take-out only; the launching of boats is prohibited, and the area is closed to swimming, fishing, camping, and shoreline fires. The ramp itself is

reserved for boats that are being loaded directly onto trailers – there is a raft de-rigging space upstream and downstream of the ramp, accessible by vehicle.

How far is it from Pearce Ferry to South Cove?

River trips have the option of taking out at South Cove. The distance from Pearce Ferry to South Cove is about 16 miles.

Does my trip need a motor to get to South Cove?

The river current presently ends in Iceberg Canyon about 3 miles from the South Cove take out. The lake frequently has wind 5-15 miles per hour from the south. This makes rowing a raft a bit more difficult since the direction of travel is to the south. A motor definitely makes travel across the lake much faster. Most trips use a 10-20 hp motor.

How big is the take out area at South Cove?

The raft take out area varies due to lake levels. The take out area is about 150 feet wide, and is in use by commercial and noncommercial trips on a daily basis during the summer.

What is the best time to take out?

Early in the morning is best.

Is there a lot of lake boat traffic?

The summer season is busy with multiple jet boat pick ups of commercial passengers, lake visitors with a variety of boats and Hualapai tour boats that operate between river miles 260 and 263.

## ***Emergency***

When is a ground to air radio needed?

Ground to air radios are used by river runners in the event of a needed rescue, accident or medical emergency requiring evacuation. The main emergency frequency is 121.5MHz. Signaling mirrors and 3' x 10' orange signal panels are required for all river trips, a ground to air radio is optional but recommended equipment. More information is listed in both the Commercial Operating Requirement or in the Noncommercial Regulations.

Do you know what type of ground to air radio I should buy or rent for my trip?

VHF radio/ground to air. Look in Regulations, Supplement E, for frequency numbers. You can rent radios from Canyon REO (928)774-3377 or Professional River Outfitters (928) 779-1512. Sporties Pilot Shop in Ohio sells communication and navigation transceivers that operate on frequencies 118.00 - 13.975. Ask about Brand sport 1300 or Bendix King programmable KX99 models. For information call customer service (513) 735-9000 or (800) 543-8633.

Do cell phones work on the river?

Cell phones generally DO NOT work at Lees Ferry and DO NOT work on your river trip. Before launching, there is a pay phone at Lees Ferry and at Marble Canyon. After launching, only Phantom Ranch has a pay phone.



Who does our family contact if there is an emergency (severe illness or death) while we are on our river trip?

Your family should contact Grand Canyon National Park Dispatch at (928) 638-7805.

## WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE FROM THE OLD WAITLIST SYSTEM?

What happened to the people from the old waitlist system?

While enacting the new system, we have tried to be fair to former waitlist members. Under the old system we released approximately 240 noncommercial trips per year, and around 50 of these were winter dates. People joined the waitlist to be in line to eventually get one of these dates. Before starting the transition process, we projected how long it would take for each of the 7,296 existing waitlist members to reach the top portion of the waitlist and schedule a launch under the old system (how this was done is explained below “How were wait times calculated for former waitlist members?”), and we notified each member of our findings. Next, we released 240 launch dates per year from 2007 through 2011 to waitlist members (notice, this is the same number of launch dates as previously released each year through the old system). Finally, for the remaining waitlist members, we gave each a choice, they could leave the waitlist and take a full refund of the waitlist fees they had paid us, or they could leave the waitlist and accept bonus points in the lottery with some added assurance. These bonus points are non-transferable and are very much designed to ensure most former waitlist members “win” through the lottery as soon or sooner than they would have under the old system. They expire as soon as the person participates on a river trip (commercial or noncommercial) or wins a trip through the lottery system, whichever comes first.

So, how have people from the old waitlist fared? In 2005 there were 7,296 people on the waitlist. Grand Canyon's lottery transition plan, participation on river trips, and wins through the lottery have already resulted in that number being significantly reduced. As of 2/4/2010 the total number of individuals who still qualify for this extra assistance had dropped in half to 3494 – these are the former waitlist members who did not choose to accept a refund and have not won or participated in any other trip since they were transitioned to the lottery system. That is pretty good, especially considering that these people have also been provided with a safety net (see “added assurance” below) if they are not able to win a launch by the time we predicted.

Explain this “added assurance.” How will the NPS step forward to help?

The "added assurance" is given solely to those individuals who transferred from the waitlist choosing bonus points (instead of a refund) and continue to have these bonus points. (Bonus points expire when the former waitlist member wins a trip through the lottery or participates on any part of a Grand Canyon Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek noncommercial or commercial river trip.) If any of these individuals do not win or participate on a trip (noncommercial or commercial) as soon or sooner than our prediction for them under the old waitlist system, we will step forward to help, giving the person a **one-time** option to choose either 1) to

have their bonus points tripled, or 2) to pre-schedule a trip ahead of the lottery by choosing from a limited number of launch dates.

We have already provided this extra assistance to former waitlist members who continued to have bonus points:

- The 239 remaining who had numbers between 05#00001 and 05#00705 were given extra assistance in early 2007.
  - 136 chose to pre-schedule
  - 101 chose to have their bonus points tripled
  - 2 chose refunds (the last year for this option)
- The 92 remaining who had numbers between 05#00706 and 05#00915 were given extra assistance by January 2008.
  - 38 chose to pre-schedule
  - 54 chose to have their bonus points tripled
- The 91 remaining who had numbers between 05#00916 and 05#01129 were given extra assistance by January 2009.
  - 38 chose to pre-schedule
  - 53 chose to have their bonus points tripled
- The 96 remaining who had numbers between 05#01130 and 05#01358 were given extra assistance by January 2010.
  - 38 chose to pre-schedule
  - 58 chose to have their bonus points tripled
- The 108 remaining who had numbers between 05#01359 and 05#01598 were given extra assistance by January 2011.
  - 50 chose to pre-schedule
  - 58 chose to have their bonus points tripled
- The 123 remaining who had numbers between 05#01599 and 05#01842 were given extra assistance by January 2012.
  - 42 chose to pre-schedule
  - 81 chose to have their bonus points tripled
- The 114 remaining who had numbers between 05#01843 and 05#02096 were given extra assistance by January 2013.
  - 30 chose to pre-schedule
  - 84 chose to have their bonus points tripled
- The 126 remaining who had numbers between 05#02097 and 05#02365 were given extra assistance by January 2014.
  - 40 chose to pre-schedule
  - 86 chose to have their bonus points tripled

The following chart shows the number of people that currently qualify for this assistance in future years. It should be noted that the total number of people who qualify for this help will decrease year after year as individuals participate on other trips and win trips through the lottery.

<b>If person's 2005 waitlist number was between</b>	<b>Year In Which They Will Be Given Assistance</b>	<b>Can Pre- Schedule Trips From:</b>	<b>Total Who Still Qualify for this Help</b>
05#00001-05#00705	2007	2008-2012	0 - Completed
05#00706-05#00915	2008	2009-2013	0 - Completed
05#00916-05#01129	2009	2010-2014	0 - Completed
05#01130-05#01358	2010	2011-2015	0 - Completed
05#01359-05#01598	2011	2012-2016	0 - Completed
05#01599-05#01842	2012	2013-2017	0 - Completed
05#01843-05#02096	2013	2014-2018	0 - Completed
05#02097-05#02365	2014	2015-2019	0 - Completed
05#02366-05#02648	2015	2016-2020	153
05#02649-05#02945	2016	2017-2021	145
05#02946-05#03253	2017	2018-2022	169
05#03254-05#03576	2018	2019-2023	165
05#03577-05#03909	2019	2020-2024	176
05#03910-05#04255	2020	2021-2025	162
05#04256-05#04618	2021	2022-2026	196
05#04619-05#04990	2022	2023-2027	194
05#04991-05#05377	2023	2024-2028	217
05#05378-05#05781	2024	2025-2029	208
05#05782-05#06206	2025	2026-2030	230
05#06207-05#06648	2026	2027-2031	248
05#06649-05#07104	2027	2028-2032	248
05#07105-05#07296	2028	2029-2033	108
			<b>2,619</b>

Exactly how many launch dates will be used for this purpose?

Many noncommercial launches in calendar year 2011 were previously booked through deferments, transition stage 1, and transition stage 2. Of the remaining launches listed on each year's calendar, the maximum cumulative pre-scheduling of launch dates used for the above pre-scheduling will include:

For 2011 (and previous years):

- 2 standard sized trips per week in January through March
- 1 standard and 1 small sized trip per week in April through August
- 2 standard sized trips per week in September through December.

From 2012 through 2030:

- 4 standard sized trips per week in January through March
- 2 standard and 2 small sized trip per week in April through August
- 4 standard sized trips per week in September through December.

Is it fair to take these trips away from the lottery and give it to these people?

We believe this is a fair and appropriate action. According to our predictions, the trip leaders who will benefit from these launch dates would have reached the top of the waitlist by the time we offer them this assistance. If the Colorado River Management Plan had not changed things for them, they would have had an exclusive opportunity to pre-schedule. Our “adaptive management” action is specifically intended to take care of these former waitlist members who could have won through the old system and haven’t been lucky enough to win a launch through the lottery system.

I was on the waitlist a long time, applied, and did not win! How is this fair to me?

The lottery system is based on random chance, and everyone cannot win. Out of the 2,304 applicants in the 2008 main lottery, 526 were from the former waitlist and had bonus points.

We know it can feel bad to know you have been waiting and now some others do not have to wait as long. While it doesn’t change the fact that you did not win, we would like to point out that the reason why only 213 trips were available in the 2008 main lottery (out of the new annual allocation of 503 trips) is that we already awarded 290 calendar year 2008 trips through the transition to people from the waitlist. In addition, 55 former waitlist folks also won trips through the lottery. This total of 345 exceeds the old noncommercial allocation of 240 launches per year that were given out through the waitlist, so waitlist folks have greatly benefited.

As we see it, the new system is greatly benefiting former waitlist members without requiring everyone else to have to wait 25 or more years. We think this is quite an accomplishment, and we are sorry you have not yet benefited. We hope you have better luck in the next lottery.

How were wait times calculated for former waitlist members?

Our estimates for wait times were based on how waitlist numbers progressed from calendar year 2004 to calendar year 2005. For instance, the calendar year 2004 waitlist member who was in the 4760 position progressed to the 4392 position in calendar year 2005, so from this we could predict that the person with waitlist number 05#04760 would progress to 06#04392. Using the same logic, we saw that the calendar year 2004 waitlist member who was in the 4392 position progressed to the 4038 position in calendar year 2005; from this we could predict that a person with waitlist number 06#04392 would progress to 07#04038. Our predictions for all future years were calculated in the same way, resulting in predictions for each waitlist member for all subsequent years. In the case cited above, the waitlist numbers were projected to continue as follows: 08#03702, 09#03378, 10#03064, 11#02762, 12#02474, 13#02198, 14#01942, 15#01692, 16#01451, 17#01215, 18#00995, 19#00785, 20#00577, 21#00373, 22#00199

# TROUBLESHOOTING

## *Profiles*

How do I change my personal information on the lottery website?

One of the nice things about the system is that you can login and change your personal information (address, email, email preferences, phone numbers, password) whenever you wish. Just login to the website at <https://npspermits.us> and click on “Edit Personal Information”.

Unfortunately, once you have created and saved your profile, there are three key bits of information that you cannot change. First, you cannot change your login name (this is a limitation of the lottery software). The other two bits of information can be changed with NPS helps: your legal name or your date of birth. To request changes to this information, please send us an email at [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) explaining exactly what you need changed and why, and we'll pass it on to someone who can make the change.

I've forgotten my password. Help!!?

You can have your password reset and sent to the email address you listed in your lottery profile by completing the form at:

<https://npspermits.us/grandcanyon/river/forgotLogin.cfm>. If your email address has changed, you will need to contact the River Permits Office and ask for assistance. Please send us an email to [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) or call 1-800-959-9164. We are happy to help.