

Organized Group Use along Hole-in-the-Rock Road

Programmatic Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-0300-2010-0008 EA



NPS

BLM

The monument has a long and dignified human history: it is a place where one can see how nature shapes human endeavors in the American West... Early Mormon pioneers left many historic objects... and built and traversed the renowned Hole-in-the-Rock Trail as part of their epic colonization efforts (GSENM Proclamation).

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM), and the National Park Service (NPS), Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA), have jointly prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) to disclose and analyze the environmental consequences of Organized Group Use along Hole-in-the-Rock Road. The EA has been prepared to analyze the effects of authorizing organized group activities that exceed existing group size limits along the Hole-in-the-Rock (HITR) Road corridor. Site specific analysis of day-use sites such as Dance Hall Rock and Hole-In-The-Rock, as well as proposed camping locations, has also been completed. The EA is now available for public review and comment.

Purpose

The purpose of this analysis is to provide greater opportunities for organized group activities along the Hole-in-the-Rock corridor, while protecting the environment and preventing expansion of existing disturbed areas. BLM and NPS foresee a continuing desire for groups that exceed current management prescriptions to travel along HITR Road and visit its associated historic sites for the heritage, recreational, and educational values they provide. This EA provides analysis for alternative group numbers beyond existing management prescriptions.

Existing BLM & NPS Management Direction

The GSENM Management Plan (MMP) prescribes group size limits of 25 in the GSENM Passage Zone along the HITR Road. However, the MMP goes on to state that *“permits for groups over 25 people will be considered in the Passage and Outback Zones... Appropriate NEPA analysis will be prepared on areas where permits could be authorized.”*

Hole-in-the-Rock Road is within the GLCA Development Zone and adjacent areas are in the Natural Zone. Existing GLCA environmental analysis only considers groups up to 100 people in the Development Zone and 60 people in the Natural Zone.

Location

The HITR Road, a State Scenic Backway, is located in Garfield and Kane Counties, Utah, on lands managed by BLM and NPS. The gravel and dirt road is 57 miles long and terminates at Hole-in-the-Rock. It is accessed via Utah State Route (SR) 12 (an All-American Road) five miles east of the town of Escalante, Utah. From its intersection with SR 12, the first 45 miles of the road are within GSENM and the last 12 miles traverse GLCA lands.

For Further Information

Contact Jabe Beal, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner at (435) 826-5601, or see the GSENM website:
http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/grand_staircase-escalante.html.

*Historic Hole-in-the-Rock Trek Marker,
installed by Escalante Chapter
of the Sons of the Utah Pioneers.*



Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument



You Are Invited

to the

Hole-in-the-Rock Road - Organized Group Use EA Public Review Open House

Escalante Interagency Visitor Center

June 1, 2011

4 - 7 pm



How to Provide Comments

The Programmatic EA for **Organized Group Use along Hole-in-the-Rock Road** can be downloaded from the Utah BLM Environmental Notification Bulletin Board website: <https://www.blm.gov/ut/enbb/index.php>. Hardcopies are also available at all GSENM offices and visitor centers and the GLCA Headquarters.

Please submit comments via mail or email to the following address:

Bureau of Land Management
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
Attn: Jabe Beal, Outdoor Recreation Planner
755 West Main Street / PO Box 225
Escalante, UT 84726

Email: utgsecmt@blm.gov

Please include "Hole-in-the-Rock Group Use" in the subject line.

Written comments will be accepted through close of business - June 17, 2011.

Comments, including names, e-mail addresses, and street addresses of respondents will be available for public review at the GSENM Escalante Interagency Visitor Center during regular business hours. Comments and related personally identifying information will be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and comments may be published as part of the EA and other related documents. Individuals may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name, street address, or email address from public review and disclosure under the FOIA, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety. The BLM will not accept anonymous comments.