

Developing Rationales for the GMP Management Concepts

A GMP concept can sometimes be supported and better understood by developing a rationale that explains why the concept was developed and what its major areas of emphasis will be.

When building your rationale, try to answer the following questions:

- Why was this concept developed?
- What is unique about this concept that allows it to address the GMP issues?
- How does this concept respond to what we heard from the public, and what park staff knows about existing conditions in the parks?

Examples from Saguaro National Park - Draft GMP/EIS (August 2006)

ALTERNATIVE 2 CONCEPT

In alternative 2 the emphasis would be on protecting the park's ecological processes and biological diversity by connecting wildlife and plant habitats. Management efforts would focus on creating connections between isolated wildlife habitats and corridors. Park managers would make choices and take actions that would best achieve ecological/biological diversity. Visitation would be managed and redirected, when necessary, to protect sensitive resources and minimize impacts on resources. Basic facilities for visitor safety and services would be provided inside the park. Appropriate access would be provided for visitors to enjoy the park and learn about the Sonoran Desert and associated habitat.

RATIONALE

This alternative concept was developed because the biological diversity and ecological processes of the park – remarkable due to the range of elevation and mix of riparian and desert habitats – are in danger from habitat fragmentation. In addition, the public expressed concern that overuse of the park and increasing urbanization would threaten the park's qualities of solitude, quiet, and naturalness. This alternative would help mitigate the effects of habitat fragmentation while adaptively managing for recreational opportunities consistent with conserving natural resources and protecting wilderness areas.

ALTERNATIVE 3 CONCEPT

In alternative 3 the emphasis would be on providing a wider range of opportunities for visitors that is compatible with the preservation of park resources and its wilderness characteristics. Natural resources would be protected by relocating visitor activities now occurring in sensitive areas to areas that could withstand higher levels of visitation. Management efforts would focus on developing additional opportunities for visitors to enjoy and learn about the park. Visitors would have a variety of activities in easily reached areas of the park. Primitive visitor experiences would be available in the wilderness areas. Facilities would be expanded to provide additional support for visitor activities.

RATIONALE

This alternative concept was developed because the public wanted the park to expand programs and opportunities for a growing diverse population to experience and learn about the giant cactus and associated plants, animals, and landforms of the Sonoran Desert. In addition, the public expressed an interest in the park providing more diverse recreational opportunities, including trails for specific user groups. The public also felt that the park should plan for increased demands resulting from urban growth surrounding the park.