

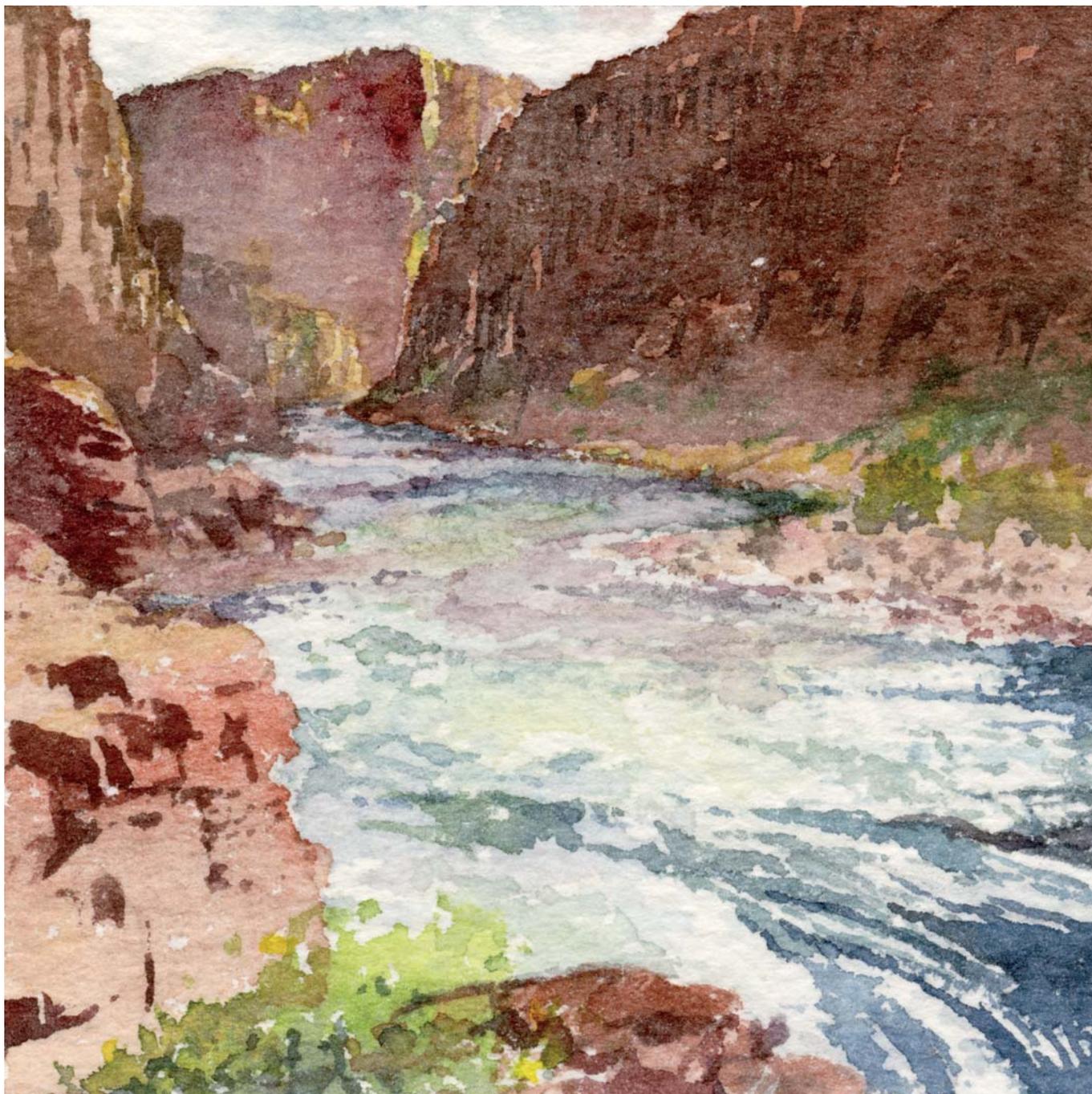


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# **Final Environmental Impact Statement**

## **Colorado River Management Plan**

### **Volume One**



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National Park Service  
U. S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park  
Arizona



**November 2005**

***Final Environmental Impact Statement***

***Colorado River Management Plan***

***Grand Canyon National Park***

***Volume I***



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**  
**COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK**

Coconino County, Arizona

Abstract: This *Final Environmental Impact Statement/Colorado River Management Plan* describes and analyzes alternatives for the management of recreational use of the Colorado River in Grand Canyon National Park. For purposes of this plan, the Colorado River has been divided into two geographic sections, with a specific set of alternatives for each section. For the upper section from Lees Ferry (River Mile [RM] 0) to Diamond Creek (RM 226), the plan considers eight alternatives, including a no-action alternative (Alternative A) and a preferred alternative (*Modified* Alternative H). For the Lower Gorge section from Diamond Creek (RM 226) to Lake Mead (RM 277), the plan considers five alternatives, including a no-action alternative (Alternative 1), a National Park Service preferred alternative (*Modified* Alternative 4), and a Hualapai Tribe proposed alternative (Alternative 5). The park shares a common boundary with the Hualapai Tribe along 108 miles of the Colorado River, and the Hualapai Tribe is a cooperating agency in the preparation of the *Environmental Impact Statement*.

For the Lees Ferry alternatives, the alternatives represent different mixes and limits of group size, trip length, launches per day, user-days, seasonal variations, motorized and nonmotorized use, commercial and noncommercial use, and other factors. Major issues addressed in the alternatives include the appropriate level of visitor use consistent with natural and cultural resource protection and visitor experience goals; allocation of use between commercial and noncommercial groups; the noncommercial permit system; the level of motorized and nonmotorized boat use; the range of services provided to the public; the use of helicopters to transport river passengers to and from the river; and appropriate levels and types of upstream travel from Lake Mead. The National Park Service's preferred alternative (*Modified* Alternative H) provides for a mix of motorized and nonmotorized use, *at least six-months of* nonmotorized use season, more evenly distributed launch patterns, and changes permit systems *and allocation*.

For the Lower Gorge section of the river, major differences in alternatives include limits on commercial launches from Diamond Creek, pontoon boat operations in the Quartermaster area, and facilities and upriver travel from Lake Mead. The National Park Service's preferred alternative (*Modified* Alternative 4) is the same as the Hualapai Tribe's proposed alternative (Alternative 5) except for lower *levels of pontoon boat use compared to levels proposed by the Hualapai Tribe*, and allowing upriver travel to Separation Canyon. Alternative 5 would have much higher than current levels of pontoon boat operations, and it would restrict upriver travel to below RM 273 *and eliminate jet boat pick ups*. Both alternatives would reduce current commercial group sizes, *limit trip lengths for all users*, and allow more overnight use in the Diamond Creek to Quartermaster section.

The potential environmental consequences of each alternative are evaluated, including impacts on natural resources, cultural resources, visitor experience, socioeconomic resources, park operations, adjacent lands, and *wilderness character*.

*A 30-day no-action period will follow publication of a Notice of Availability of this Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the Federal Register. Unlike other federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service (NPS) does not have a public comment period or a formal appeals process for federal actions described in a Final EIS. The NPS accepts public comments during the public comment period for the Draft EIS, and addresses them in the Final EIS. Following the 30-day no-action period, a Record of Decision (ROD) will be prepared that documents the NPS decision and rationale for that decision. The ROD will be released to the public and a summary published in the Federal Register.*

For further information concerning this document, contact Rick Ernenwein, Planning Team Leader, Grand Canyon National Park, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023-0129, or call 928-779-6279.

## **Guide to This *Final* Environmental Impact Statement**

This *Final Environmental Impact Statement* is in **three** volumes.

### **Volume I:**

- Chapter 1. Purpose of and Need for Action
- Chapter 2. Alternatives, Including the Preferred Alternatives
- Chapter 3. Affected Environment
- ***Index***

### **Volume II:**

- Chapter 4. Environmental Consequences
- Chapter 5. Consultation and Coordination
- Selected Bibliography
- ***List of Abbreviations/Acronyms***
- Index

### **Volume III:**

- ***Comments and Responses on Draft Environmental Impact Statement***
- ***Index***

Appendixes for this *Final Environmental Impact Statement* are provided ***on compact disk in a sleeve at the end of Volume II***. The electronic files ***of the entire document*** are available from the park's Colorado River Management Plan Internet website at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/crmp>.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

### COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN

### GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

The Colorado River in Grand Canyon provides a unique combination of thrilling whitewater adventure and magnificent vistas of a remarkable geologic landscape, including remote and intimate side canyons. The 277-mile long river corridor also is home to unique and abundant natural and cultural resources, including diverse wildlife, threatened and endangered species, hundreds of archeological sites, caves, and natural soundscapes. For these reasons, a river trip through the Grand Canyon is one of the most sought after backcountry experiences in the country, and nearly 22,000 visitors run the river annually.

#### **PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE ACTION**

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The park's 1995 *General Management Plan* set as an objective the management of "the Colorado River corridor through Grand Canyon National Park to protect and preserve the resource in a wild and primitive condition" (NPS 1995a). The *General Management Plan* also stated, "The park's 1989 *Colorado River Management Plan* will be revised as needed to conform with the direction given in the management objectives of the *General Management Plan*. The use of motorboats will be addressed in the revised plan, along with other river management issues identified through the scoping process" (NPS 1995a).

A revised *Colorado River Management Plan* is needed to address both long-standing and recent issues concerning resource protection, visitor experience, and public services along the river; to consider the impacts of NPS river management on federally recognized American Indian tribes whose reservations adjoin Grand Canyon National Park; and to fulfill the requirements of a 2002 agreement that settled a lawsuit about the river management plan.

The Colorado River corridor in Grand Canyon National Park will be managed to provide a wilderness-type river experience in which visitors can intimately relate to the majesty of the Grand Canyon and its natural and cultural resources. ***Visitors traveling through the canyon on the Colorado River will have the opportunity for a variety of personal outdoor experiences, ranging from solitary to social, with little influence from the modern world.*** The Colorado River corridor will be protected and preserved in a wild and primitive condition.

The Hualapai Indian Reservation and Grand Canyon National Park share a 108-mile-long boundary along the Colorado River in western Grand Canyon. The Hualapai Tribe's vision for the Colorado River corridor is to protect the resources of the tribe and to provide for the development of economic opportunities for existing and future members of the tribe. The tribe has limited economic resource potential and looks to the Colorado River corridor as a source of growth for tribal economic development and employment.

***The Navajo Nation and Grand Canyon National Park share a boundary along approximately 62 miles of the Colorado River through the Marble Canyon section of the eastern Grand Canyon. Coordination with the Navajo Nation is necessary for appropriate management of resources and visitor use in this area. Additionally, the Havasupai Indian Reservation borders Grand Canyon National Park along the plateau uplands west of Pasture Wash and in Havasu***

***Canyon. Coordination with the Havasupai Tribe is necessary to address management of resources and visitor use concerns along the shared NPS/tribal boundary. Numerous other federally recognized Indian tribes attach religious or cultural significance to Grand Canyon National Park. Coordination with these tribes is necessary to address management of resources and visitor use concerns for areas of traditional importance to these tribal governments.***

The United States has a trust responsibility to protect tribal lands and waters. The plan considers and analyzes the social and economic impacts of the various alternatives on the Hualapai Indian Tribe and its trust resources. ***To address management issues along the common boundary and impacts from river-related visitor use on tribal lands, the Hualapai Tribe was a cooperating agency with the National Park Service for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.*** As a cooperating agency, the Hualapai Tribe established its purpose for the plan as fulfilling the tribe's need to preserve and protect tribal traditions, culture, sovereignty, and resources for future generations and to cooperate on a government-to-government basis with local, state, and federal governments.

## **SCOPE OF THE PLAN**

***As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Final Environmental Impact Statement*** evaluates a full range of ***reasonable*** alternatives for the identified issues as well as comprehensively evaluates impacts to natural and cultural resources from visitor uses on the Colorado River.

The *Colorado River Management Plan* is primarily a visitor use management plan, which specifies actions to preserve park resources and the visitor experience, while enhancing recreational opportunities. Although this plan is intended to cover at least the next 10 years, some of the plan's goals, objectives, and desired conditions may require a longer period to achieve.

Where the Hualapai Reservation and Grand Canyon National Park share boundaries, the *Colorado River Management Plan* describes management zones that reflect the variety and intensity of visitor activities, particularly in the river segments downstream of Diamond Creek. The plan addresses cooperative management issues with neighboring units of the national park system, tribal governments, and other agencies with jurisdiction or interests affected by, or that may themselves affect, management of the Colorado River corridor in the park. In addition, the plan considers the input of other stakeholders, as expressed in the scoping, ***public comment***, and stakeholder participation process.

Glen Canyon Dam operations, allocation of administrative use, wild and scenic river designation, formal wilderness designation, backcountry operations, and commercial overflights are outside the scope of this document.

## **MAJOR ISSUES AND AREAS OF CONTROVERSY**

Major issues identified during public and internal scoping and tribal consultation include the following:

- Appropriate level of visitor use consistent with natural and cultural resource protection, visitor experience goals, and ***wilderness character***

- Allocation of use between commercial and noncommercial groups
- Noncommercial permit system
- Appropriate levels of motorized and nonmotorized boat use
- Determination of the range of public services
- Levels of helicopter use to transport river passengers to and from the river
- Appropriate levels and types of upriver travel from Lake Mead
- Quality of river trips including crowding, trip length, group size, and scheduling issues
- Administrative use

The range of comments from public and internal scoping and tribal consultation indicated that each of these issues carried some level of controversy. However, comments seemed to be most divided on the issues of motorized versus nonmotorized use, allocations between commercial and noncommercial users, and the appropriateness of helicopter exchanges.

### **COMMERCIAL RIVER SERVICES**

*The Colorado River Management Plan addresses issues related to commercial activities on the river. Description and analysis of potential impacts on the affected environment resulting from commercial operations are found throughout the Final EIS. Determination of the types and levels of commercial services necessary and appropriate for the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park were determined through this analysis.*

*New contracts will be issued for commercial operations upon the completion of the Colorado River Management Plan. These contracts will be issued in accordance with the National Park Service Concessions Management and Improvement Act of 1998 (16 USC 5951) and implementing regulations at 36 CFR 51. Concession contracts and operating plans will reflect management decisions reached in the Record of Decision for the Colorado River Management Plan and will seek to provide quality visitor experiences consistent with the preservation of the park's natural and cultural resources.*

### **ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

For the purposes of this plan, the Colorado River has been divided into two geographic sections that recognize the different management zones on the river, with a specific set of alternatives for each section. The NPS preferred alternative combines Lees Ferry **Modified** Alternative H with Lower Gorge **Modified** Alternative 4.

- **Lees Ferry Alternatives** —Eight alternatives have been developed for the section of river from Lees Ferry (River Mile [RM] 0) to Diamond Creek (RM 226). The alternatives include a no-action alternative (Alternative A) plus Alternatives B through H. **Modified** Alternative H is the preferred alternative.
- **Lower Gorge Alternatives** —Five alternatives have been developed for the section of river from Diamond Creek (RM 226) to Lake Mead (RM 277). The alternatives include a no-action alternative (Alternative 1) plus Alternatives 2 through 5. **Modified** Alternative 4 is the **NPS** preferred alternative.

## CARRYING CAPACITY AND KEY CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPING THE LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES

The number of launches per day at Lees Ferry varies widely under current conditions, and during the peak season up to nine trips per day can launch. To reduce crowding and bottlenecks from this level of daily launches, a launch-based system would be instituted to distribute launches more evenly. All action alternatives would reduce the maximum number of trips launching per day from nine to between four and six during the summer peak season. To further mitigate crowding, reductions in maximum trip lengths and group sizes, as well as distribution of launches into non-peak seasons, were analyzed. The action alternatives would reduce the maximum group size from 43 (passengers and crew) to 24–40.

The planning process for the *Colorado River Management Plan* analyzes visitor carrying capacity, visitor experience, and potential visitor use impacts on the resource. The primary factors that determine carrying capacity on the Colorado River from Lees Ferry to Lake Mead are:

- Number, size, distribution, and expected lifespan of camping beaches
- Number, types, and condition of natural and cultural resources
- Contacts per day (on-river attraction site encounters), campsite competition, number of trips at one time (TAOT), number of people at one time (PAOT), group size, trip length, and launch patterns

The first two factors describe the physical environment and serve as the foundation for determining appropriate levels of overall use. The third factor describes variables that characterize the visitor experience. The planning team concluded that no single standard could be used to calculate carrying capacity for recreational use in the river corridor. Rather, it is necessary to consider the interaction of all the factors, including user-days, the number of trips and people in the canyon at one time, and the amount of user discretionary time, and how they affect resources and visitor experience.

### LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES (RIVER MILES 0 TO 226)

Key features of Alternatives A through H for the section of river from Lees Ferry (RM 0) to Diamond Creek (RM 226) are below.

#### ***Alternative A: No Action (Current Management)***

Alternative A is the no-action alternative for the Colorado River section between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek. The number of launches per day at Lees Ferry varies widely under current conditions, and up to nine trips per day can launch during spikes in the peak season. This alternative allows for nine months of mixed use (both motorized and nonmotorized trip types) and three months of nonmotorized use. There *would continue to be* no limits on *passenger* exchanges at Whitmore, *which currently average 6,630 out and 3,635 passengers in per year, with nearly all passengers accessing the exchange point via helicopter.* The total number of commercial and noncommercial passengers averages 22,461.

## SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES —LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

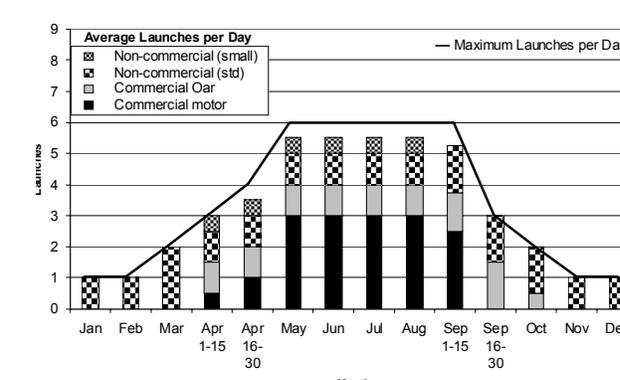
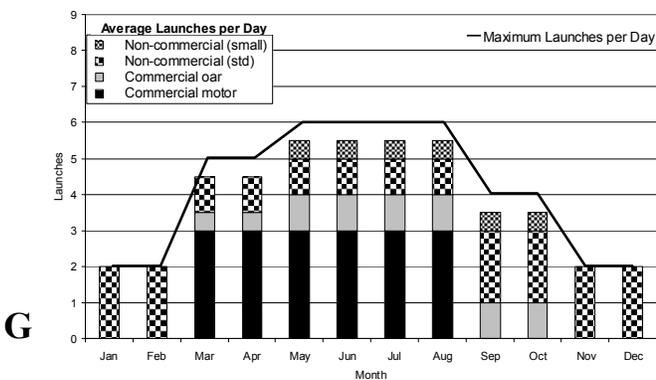
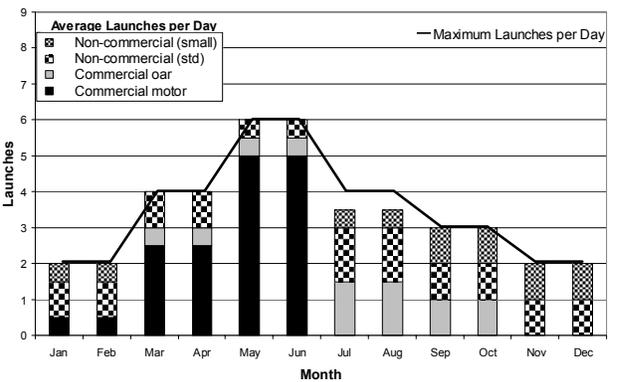
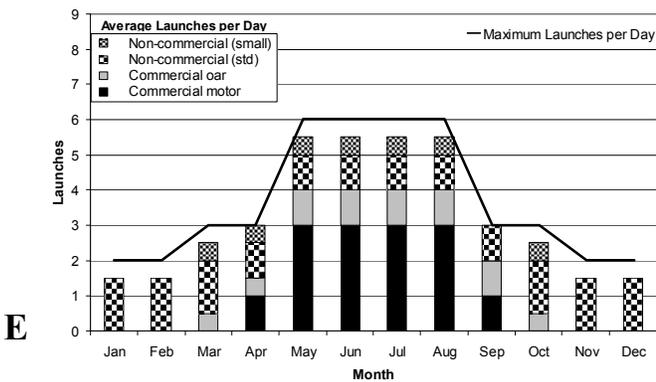
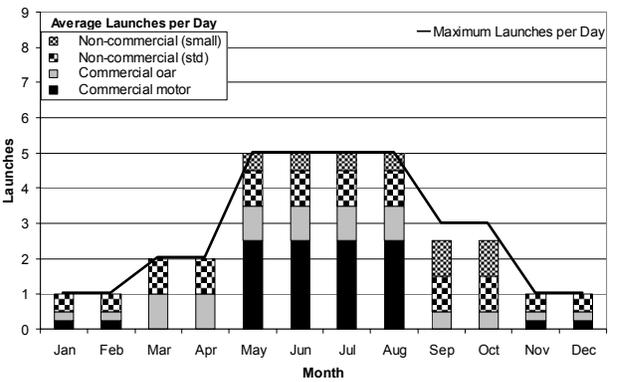
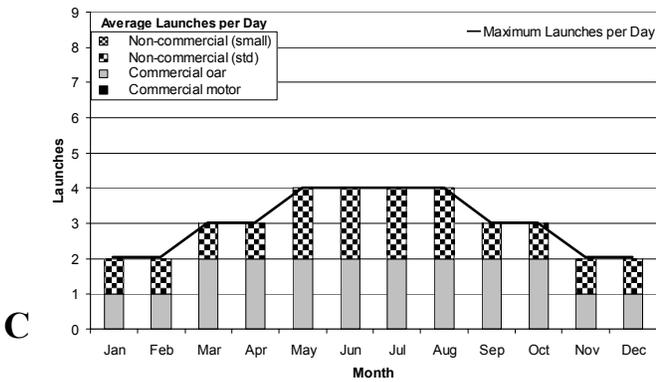
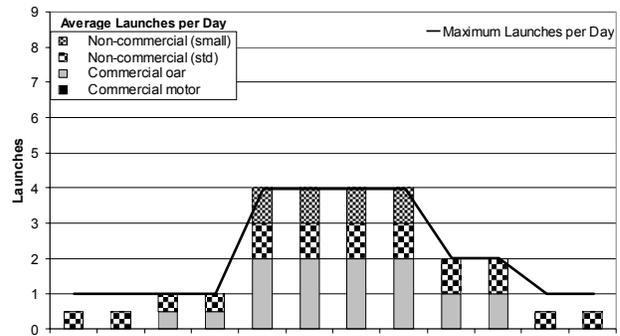
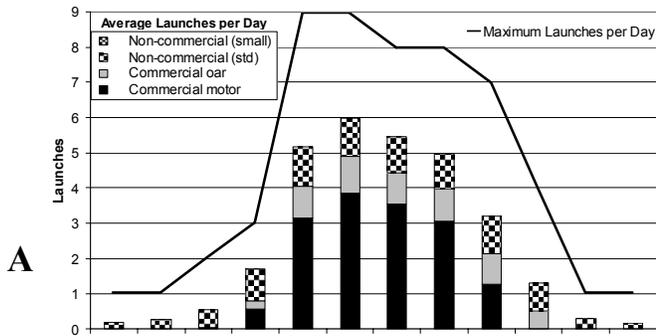
	Alternatives							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<b>Number of Motor/No-Motor Months</b>	9/3	0/12	0/12	8/4	6/6	6/6	8/4	<b>5.5/6/5</b>
<b>Months with No Motors</b>	Sept 15–Dec 15	All	All	Mar, Apr, Sept, Oct	Oct–Mar	Jul–Dec	Sept–Dec	<b>Sept 16–March 31</b>
<b>Maximum Number of Launches per Day</b>								
Summer	9	4	4	5	6	6	6	6
Shoulder	7	2	3	3	3	4	5	<b>4 (April 16-30), 6 (Sept 1-15), 3 (Remainder)</b>
Winter	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1
<b>Maximum Group Size (including guides)</b>								
Commercial Motor	43	N/A	N/A	25	30	30	40	<b>32 (May-Aug)/24 (Remainder)</b>
Commercial Oar	39	25	30	25	25	30	30	<b>32 (May-Aug)/24 (Remainder)</b>
Noncommercial Standard	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Noncommercial Small	N/A	8	N/A	8	8	8	8	8
<b>Maximum Trip Length to Diamond Creek (in number of days)</b>								
<b>Summer (May–August)</b>								
Commercial Motor	18	N/A	N/A	10	8	10	8	10
Commercial Oar	18	16	16	16	14	16	14	16
Noncommercial Motor	18	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	16	16	16	14	<b>12</b>
<b>Noncommercial Oar</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Shoulder Seasons (March–April/September–October)</b>								
Commercial Motor	18	N/A	N/A	10	8	10	8	<b>12</b>
Commercial Oar	21	18	18	18	16	18	16	18
Noncommercial Motor	21	N/A	N/A	18	18	18	16	<b>12</b>
<b>Noncommercial Oar</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18 (Sept 1-15), 21 (Remainder)</b>
<b>Winter (November–February)</b>								
Commercial Motor	30	N/A	N/A	18	N/A	18	N/A	N/A
Commercial Oar	30	N/A	21	21	N/A	21	N/A	N/A
Noncommercial Motor	30	N/A	N/A	18	N/A	18	18	N/A
Noncommercial Oar	30	18	21	30	21	21	21	25
<b>Whitmore Exchanges (months allowed)</b>								
Helicopter Exchanges**	All	None	None	None	Apr–Sept	Jan–Jun	Jan–Aug	<b>April–Sept</b>
Hiking Exchanges**	All	None	All	All	All	All	All	<b>April–Sept</b>
<b>Estimated Total User-Days</b>								
Commercial	113,083	97,694	166,814	137,368	115,500	128,689	115,500	115,500
Noncommercial	58,048	74,523	115,783	85,946	121,683	106,457	134,410	<b>113,486</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>171,131</b>	<b>172,218</b>	<b>282,598</b>	<b>223,314</b>	<b>237,183</b>	<b>235,146</b>	<b>249,910</b>	<b>228,986</b>
<b>Estimated Total Yearly Passengers</b>								
Commercial	18,891	7,914	17,686	14,979	16,120	18,671	19,688	<b>17,606</b>
Noncommercial	3,571	4,980	7,543	5,449	7,693	6,745	8,992	<b>7,051</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,461</b>	<b>12,894</b>	<b>25,228</b>	<b>20,427</b>	<b>23,812</b>	<b>25,415</b>	<b>28,680</b>	<b>24,657</b>
<b>Opportunity for Winter Commercial Trips?</b>	Motor or oar	No	Oar	Motor or oar	No	Motor or oar	No	<b>No</b>
<b>UDT (total yearly hours)</b>	355,081	576,754	752,496	710,079	569,603	518,889	421,073	<b>567,238</b>
<b>Estimated Maximum Trips at One Time</b>	70	60*	60*	58	60*	54	53	60*
<b>Estimated Maximum Passengers at One Time</b>	1,095	877	900	890	972	972	<b>895</b>	<b>985</b>

\* NPS would monitor and adaptively manage to ensure that actual TAOT remain at 60 or lower.

\*\*In cooperation with the Hualapai Tribe.

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

### Lees Ferry Alternatives



### **Alternative B**

Alternative B is a no-motor alternative characterized by the lowest group sizes, the least number of maximum daily launches, and substantially lower numbers of *estimated* yearly passengers (12,894). There would be a limited increase in winter recreational use. ***There would be no passenger exchanges at Whitmore.***

### **Alternative C**

Alternative C is a no-motor alternative characterized by smaller group sizes and fewer maximum daily launches (except in winter), and an increase in the number of *estimated* yearly passengers (25,228). A substantial increase in shoulder and winter season use would be allowed. ***The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round (up to 2,500 out and 2,500 in), but it is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that helicopter access would not be allowed under this alternative, but hiking exchanges would be allowed all year.***

### **Alternative D**

Alternative D is a mixed-motor/no-motor alternative. Shoulder months (March-April and September-October) would be set aside for nonmotorized use, with the remaining months for mixed use. This alternative is characterized by the lowest allowable group sizes; fewer maximum daily launches, and reduced *estimated* yearly passenger totals (20,427). ***The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round (up to 2,500 out and 2,500 in), but it is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that there would be no helicopter access for passenger exchanges at Whitmore. Hiking exchanges would be allowed all year.***

### **Alternative E**

Alternative E is a mixed motor/no-motor alternative. A six-month mixed-use season would be allowed from April to September, with the remaining six months for nonmotorized use. This alternative is characterized by smaller group sizes and fewer launches per day (except in the winter season), and an increase in *estimated* yearly passenger totals (23,812). ***The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round (up to 2,500 out and 2,500 in), but it is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that helicopter access would occur only during the mixed-use season (April through September). Hiking exchanges would be allowed all year, but it is assumed that none would occur.***

### **Alternative F**

Alternative F is a mixed motor/no-motor alternative that would split the year in half, with mixed use allowed from January through June, and nonmotorized use from July through December. It is characterized by smaller group sizes and fewer launches per day (except in the winter season), and an increase in *estimated* yearly passenger totals (25,415). ***The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round (up to 6,600 out and 3,400 in), but it is assumed that the***

*NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that helicopter access would occur only during the mixed-use season (January through June). Hiking exchanges would be allowed all year, but it is assumed that none would occur.*

### **Alternative G**

Alternative G is a mixed motor/no-motor alternative, with eight months mixed use and four months (September through December) nonmotorized use. It is characterized by slightly smaller maximum group sizes, the highest level of allowable daily launches of all of the action alternatives, and the highest number of *estimated* yearly passengers (28,680). *The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round (up to 7,200 out and 3,700 in), but it is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that helicopter access would occur only during the mixed-use season (January through August). Hiking exchanges would be allowed all year, but it is assumed that none would occur.*

### **Modified Alternative H (NPS Preferred Alternative)**

*Modified Alternative H is the NPS preferred alternative for the section of river between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek. It is a mixed motor/no-motor alternative with 5.5 months of mixed use occurring from April 1 through September 15, and 6.5 months of nonmotorized use from September 16 through March 31. It is characterized by smaller group sizes and fewer daily allowable launches except during the winter months. This alternative would allow for a moderate increase in estimated yearly passenger totals (24,657). The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore (up to 5,715 out and 4,035 in at current exchange levels) to accommodate trips launching during the mixed-use period (April 1 through September 15), and in the nonmotorized season only for those trips launching during the mixed-use period. Time-of-day restrictions would apply for exchanges.*

## **LOWER GORGE ALTERNATIVES (RIVER MILES 226 TO 277)**

Recreational use patterns change in this section of the river as a result of differing land management practices and road and boat access to the river by way of Hualapai tribal lands and Lake Mead. Management zones in this section of the river allow for increased densities and types of use. Key features of the Lower Gorge alternatives are summarized as follows:

### **Alternative 1: No Action (Existing Condition)**

Alternative 1 is the no-action alternative *for the Lower Gorge*. Current management is largely unregulated and is characterized by Hualapai River Runner (HRR) day trips, occasional HRR overnight trips, *trips from Lees Ferry continuing below Diamond Creek*, noncommercial trips launching at Diamond Creek, *upriver travel for commercial pickups and towouts*, and pontoon boat excursions in the Quartermaster area (RM 262). Passengers for the pontoon boat excursions and the HRR trips enter and exit the river corridor by means of helicopters *on sovereign Hualapai tribal land* in the Quartermaster area. *The National Park Service does not regulate helicopter operations on tribal land.*

## SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES —LOWER GORGE

	Alternatives				
	1	2	3	Modified 4	5
<b>Diamond Creek Launches (maximum group size, including guides)</b>					
Noncommercial	Maximum of two launches per day (16 people each)	Same as alternative 1.	Same as alternative 1.	Same as alternative 1.	Same as alternative 1.
Hualapai River Runner (HRR) Day Trips	Average of one launch per day (up to 100 people)	Peak season: two launches per day (30 people). Non-peak season: one launch per day (30 people)	Peak season: three launches per day (30 people). Non-peak season: two launches per day (30 people)	Peak season: variable (40 people), not to exceed 96 passengers/day. Non-peak season: two launches per day (35 people)	Same as Modified Alternative 4.
HRR Overnight Trips	Average of one trip per week (34 people).	One trip per day (30 people).	Two trips per day (30 people).	Peak season: three trips per day (20 people). Non-peak season: one trip per day (20 people).	Same as Modified Alternative 4.
<b>Campsites</b>					
Available Campsites	15	15+1	15+2	15+3	15+3
Modification of New Campsites*	N/A	Low	Medium	Low	Low
<b>Quartermaster Area Dock</b>					
Type of Dock	Two small floating docks (deteriorated).	None.	One small floating dock at RM 262.5.**	<b>One floating dock, sized to safely accommodate HRR and pontoon use.**</b>	One large floating dock at RM 263.**
<b>Pontoon Operations</b>					
Maximum Daily Passengers†	Peak season: 188 Non-peak season: <b>130</b>	0	400	<b>480 (600 based on favorable performance reviews and resource monitoring data.)</b>	960
<b>Upriver Travel from Lake Mead</b>					
Allowable Destination	Unlimited below Separation Canyon.	Below RM 262.	Below Separation Canyon.	Below Separation Canyon ( <b>RM240</b> ).	Below RM 273.
Allowable Use	Unrestricted commercial pick-ups, tow-outs, and noncommercial jetboats.	Commercial pick-ups: peak season —two per day; non-peak season — none. Tow-outs allowed below RM 262.	Four commercial pick-ups per day, year-round.‡ Two jetboat tours per day in the peak season. Tow-outs allowed below Separation Canyon.	Commercial pick-ups: peak season — four per day; non-peak season —one per day. <b>No jetboat tours.</b>  Tow-outs below <b>Separation Canyon RM 240.</b>	Jetboat pickups and tow-outs below RM 273.

\* Low —vegetation removal only; medium —vegetation removal and limited supply storage.

\*\* Assumes removal of existing docks, and installation of a single dock at RM 262.5, contingent on full environmental compliance.

† Passenger access occurs via helicopter.

‡ Commercial pickups would be allowed to shuttle kayak trips up to RM 273.

**Alternative 2**

Alternative 2 is characterized by implementation of daily passenger limits launching from Diamond Creek and by the elimination of pontoon boat operations and associated facilities in the Quartermaster area. This alternative would provide for smaller group sizes, trip length limits, and a decrease in the number of people launching per day. Upriver trip takeouts would be allowed based on *downriver* continuation trip needs.

**Alternative 3**

Alternative 3 is characterized by daily passenger limits for HRR and pontoon boat operations. Peak daily use for HRR day trips would be reduced, while HRR overnight trips would go from an average of three trips per month to two trips per day year-round. The number of pontoon boat passengers would be capped at 400 per day. Takeouts for upriver trips would be allowed based on takeout needs for continuation trips. An additional commercial use, jetboat tours, would be allowed, with a maximum of two tours per day. A floating, formal dock would be provided at RM 262.5, contingent on environmental compliance and the removal of the informal docks at RM 262 and 263.

**Modified Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative)**

*Modified* Alternative 4 is *the NPS preferred alternative for the Lower Gorge. It is* characterized by use limits and a redistribution of HRR operations. This alternative represents a consensus between Grand Canyon National Park and the Hualapai Tribe on levels of HRR use and other uses originating at Diamond Creek. However, *Modified* Alternative 4 represents the National Park Service's preference for lower levels of pontoon boat use compared to *levels proposed by the Hualapai Tribe*. Peak daily use for HRR trips would be comparable to current conditions, *with smaller maximum group sizes*, while HRR overnight trips would go from an average of three per month to up to three per day. The number of pontoon boat passengers would be capped at 480 per day, *but could increase to 600 per day based on favorable performance reviews and resource monitoring data*. A floating, formal dock would be provided at RM 262.5, contingent on environmental compliance and the removal of the informal docks at RM 262 and 263. *Upriver towouts and pickups would be limited to four per day during the peak season below Separation Canyon (RM 240). No jetboat tours would be allowed.*

**Alternative 5 (Hualapai Tribe Proposed Action)**

Alternative 5 is *the Hualapai Tribe's proposed action for the Lower Gorge. It is* characterized by use limits and a redistribution of HRR operations. This alternative represents a consensus between Grand Canyon National Park and the Hualapai Tribe on levels of HRR use and other uses originating at Diamond Creek. This alternative, however, represents the Hualapai Tribe's proposed higher levels of pontoon boat use in the Quartermaster area compared to *the NPS preferred alternative*. Peak daily use for HRR trips would be comparable to current conditions, *with smaller maximum group sizes*, while HRR overnight trips would go from an average of three per month to up to three per day. The number of pontoon boat passengers would be capped at 960 per day. A floating, formal dock would be provided at RM 262.5, contingent on environmental compliance and the removal of the informal docks at RM 262 and 263. *All* upriver boat use, *with the exception of pontoon boat traffic*, would be restricted to below *the NPS/Hualapai boundary* at RM 273.

## MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

*After the Record of Decision (ROD) has been signed, the National Park Service will develop a detailed plan for monitoring and implementation of the Colorado River Management Plan as described in the ROD. To fund monitoring and implementation, the NPS will be considering all possible funding sources, including fee demonstration funds, franchise fees, special park use permits, and funds through special regulations. Any combination of funding mechanisms may be used. It is the intention of Grand Canyon National Park to pursue long-term permanent solutions to guarantee funds for monitoring, mitigation, and other implementation needs for the life of the plan. As part of the monitoring and implementation plan, the existing limits of acceptable change indicators and standards from the 1989 CRMP will be updated and implemented, as appropriate. If resource conditions (e.g., disappearing beaches) change sufficiently to adversely affect resources or visitor experiences, or if mitigation measures cannot be adequately funded or implemented or are unsuccessful, park managers will use an adaptive management approach to review and revise visitor use prescriptions in this river management plan.*

## OTHER ELEMENTS CONSIDERED IN THE PLAN

The following elements are common to all of the alternatives.

**Allocation System.** Three approaches to distributing trips in Grand Canyon were evaluated: (1) a “split” allocation system where commercial and noncommercial users compete for permits in separate pools with different distribution mechanisms, (2) a “common pool” system where all users compete for permits in the same pool and in the same way, and (3) an “adjustable split” allocation system that combines features of both.

Objectives for selecting an approach to allocation of use include (1) address user perception of allocation inequity, (2) maintain or improve quality of commercial services offered to river users, (3) *minimize* costs to river users while adequately funding river operations, *and* (4) *minimize complexity for people seeking river trip opportunities.*

The National Park Service’s preferred option is the *No Action/ Split Allocation System*, which *continues to allocate use between the commercial and noncommercial sectors. The ratio of commercial to noncommercial use is reflected in the preferred alternative, a ratio that would remain the same for the life of the plan and provide the greatest planning stability for river users and park managers.*

**Initiatives Related to Culturally Affiliated Indian Tribes.** *In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the CRMP, the NPS proposed implementing three initiatives related to culturally affiliated American Indian tribes and enhanced interpretation of the Grand Canyon from a Native American perspective. After receiving public comment on these initiatives and further considering them, the NPS has decided to proceed as follows:*

1. *The NPS proposed offering a new, full-river concession contract, carved out of the current commercial allocation, to be awarded competitively under existing authorities, including, if appropriate, 36 CFR subsection 51.17(b)(2). The new contract would comprise 2,500 user-days (six launches) during the spring and summer. The public did not support this initiative and the NPS has reconsidered the benefits of offering a new*

*concession contract. Instead, in accordance with 36 CFR subsection 51.17(b)(2), the NPS will include in the prospectus for the commercial river-running concession contracts a secondary selection factor calling for the interpretation of the Grand Canyon from the perspective of American Indian tribes that have historical ties to the canyon and are culturally affiliated with it, especially if such interpretation is provided by a member of a culturally affiliated tribe employed by the offerer.*

- 2. The NPS proposed recommending to the Department of the Interior that it support the Hualapai Tribe's efforts to obtain special legislation authorizing a noncompetitive full-river concession contract for the Tribe or a tribally owned enterprise, if the tribe's legislative proposal is consistent with the management objectives of the Lees Ferry and Lower Gorge alternatives selected as the final management plan and the record of decision for this environmental impact statement. The NPS has initiated the requisite discussions with departmental officials concerning the Tribe's efforts. At an appropriate time and in response to a request from Congress, the department will determine its official position with respect to any such legislative proposal.*
- 3. The NPS proposed assisting any federally recognized American Indian tribe that has historical ties to the canyon and is culturally affiliated with it in gaining the expertise and skills necessary to compete for procurement contracts to provide services and logistical support for administrative trips, including research trips. At the request of any tribe meeting those criteria, the NPS will provide such assistance.*

#### **KEY CHANGES TO OPERATING REQUIREMENTS**

- *Recreational passengers, whether commercial or noncommercial, will be limited to one river trip per year from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek.*
- *To improve safety, commercial passengers must be accompanied by a NPS-approved guide on all trip-related hikes, including hiking exchanges into and out of the canyon.*
- *Commercial guides will be included in the commercial group size limits.*
- *Visitation at the mouth of Tapeats and Kanab Creeks will be restricted to day-use only.*
- *To protect humpback chub, visitation at the southern half of the Little Colorado River will be restricted seasonally (March 1 to November 30).*

**Noncommercial Permit System.** The noncommercial permit system *is independent of the CRMP alternatives.* The preferred option is a “*hybrid*” weighted lottery. *Each year a lottery would be used to award the following year's noncommercial launches. Chances in the lottery would vary depending on whether or not applicants had been on a Grand Canyon river trip within the past four years.*

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

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The environmental consequences for the alternatives are summarized for natural and cultural resources, visitor experience, socioeconomic resources, park operations, adjacent lands, and *wilderness character*. This summary includes an impact rating, potential for mitigation, and how well the alternative meets the management objectives outlined in this plan.

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## LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES

### **Alternative A (Existing Conditions)**

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be adverse, localized **to regional**, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and **negligible** to major. Except for air quality, terrestrial wildlife, and **special status** species, current conditions do not meet management objectives for natural resources due to spikes in use, large group sizes, and lack funds for active site management.
- For all **cultural resources**, impacts would be adverse, localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and minor to major. Management objectives would not be met due to spikes in visitation, large group sizes, and lack of active site management.
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, **seasonal to year-round**, short- to long-term, and negligible to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, **seasonal to year-round**, and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) except for reducing impacts from crowding during the summer months.
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be both direct and indirect and negligible. Management objectives would be met.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, short-term, and negligible, **to** long-term and moderate. Management objectives would not be met due to inadequate fiscal and human resources.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts would be adverse, localized, seasonal, short-term, and moderate. Management objectives would be met except for the effects **to put-in and takeout locations** from spikes in use and group size.
- **For wilderness character, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short-to long-term, seasonal to year round, minor to major effects. Management objectives would not be met, except when implementing minimum requirement protocols.**

### **Alternative B**

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be adverse, localized **and regional** short- to long-term, seasonal to year round, and negligible to major, **except for air quality where impacts would be negligible and beneficial.** Management objectives would be met or exceeded (with reasonable mitigations) with the elimination of **motors and** spikes in use and reduction in group sizes and trip lengths.
- For all **cultural resources**, impacts would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and negligible to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) with the elimination of spikes in visitation and reduction in group sizes.
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, **seasonal to year-round**, short- to long-term, negligible to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, **seasonal to year-round**, short- to long-term, and moderate to major. Management objectives would be met except that the elimination of motorized use would reduce the diversity of trip types.

- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be adverse, long-term, and moderate for commercial *operators*, and ***adverse, long-term and major for*** the Bar 10 Ranch. Adverse, long-term, and minor impacts are projected for Hualapai tribal enterprises, with negligible effects to the regional economy. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation to commercial operations) except for the Bar 10 Ranch facility.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, short-term and minor, ***to*** long-term and moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) through reductions in levels of use.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts would be beneficial, localized, short- to long-term, year-round, and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met through elimination of spikes in use and reductions in group size.
- ***For wilderness character, impacts would be beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round negligible to moderate effects. Management objectives would be met.***

### **Alternative C**

- For all **natural resources**, ***the range of*** impacts would ***be adverse, localized and regional short to long-term, seasonal to year round, and negligible to major, except for air quality where impacts would be negligible and beneficial.*** Management objectives would not be met for soils, vegetation, terrestrial wildlife, aquatic resources, and ***special status*** species. Other natural resource management objectives would be met ***or exceeded*** with reasonable mitigation.
- For all **cultural resources**, impacts would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and moderate to major. Management objectives would not be met due to increases in use, especially during off-season months. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) regarding preserving traditional access for American Indians.
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, ***seasonal to year-round***, and negligible to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, ***seasonal to year-round***, short- to long-term, and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) except that the elimination of motorized use would reduce the diversity of trip types.
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be beneficial, long-term, and major for commercial *operators*; adverse, long-term, and major for Bar 10 Ranch; and negligible for Hualapai tribal enterprises and the regional economy. Management objectives would be met, ***with the exception of impacts to the Bar 10 Ranch facility.***
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, short-term and major, ***to*** long-term and moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) through reductions in group size and spreading use throughout the year.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts ***would be adverse negligible to minor and beneficial minor to moderate, localized, year-round, and short to long term.*** Management objectives evaluations would be ***met.***

- *For wilderness character, impacts would be beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round negligible to moderate effects. Management objectives would be met.*

#### **Alternative D**

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be *adverse, localized and regional short to long-term, seasonal to year round, and negligible to major, except for air quality where impacts would be negligible and beneficial.* Management objectives would be met *(with reasonable mitigations) with the elimination of spikes in use and reduction in group sizes and trip lengths.*
- For all **cultural resources**, impacts *would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and moderate to major. Management objectives would not be met due to increases in use, especially during off-season months. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) regarding preserving traditional access for American Indians.*
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, *seasonal to year-round*, short- to long-term, and negligible to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, *seasonal to year-round*, short- to long-term, and minor to major. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigations) except for the elimination of Whitmore helicopter exchange opportunities, which would reduce the diversity of trip types.
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be beneficial, long-term, and major for commercial *operators*; adverse, long-term, and major for Bar 10 Ranch; adverse, long-term, and minor for Hualapai tribal enterprises; and negligible for the regional economy. Except for impacts to the Bar 10 Ranch operation, management objectives would be met.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, short-*term moderate* to long-term minor. Management objectives would be met.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts would be adverse *negligible to* minor to beneficial *minor to* moderate, *short- to* long-term, *and* localized. Management objectives would be *met*.
- *For wilderness character, impacts would be beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round negligible to moderate effects. Management objectives would be met, but to a lesser degree due to limited nonmotorized periods.*

#### **Alternative E**

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be *adverse, localized to regional, short to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and negligible to major. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigations) with the elimination of spikes in use and reduction in group sizes and trip lengths.*
- For all **cultural resources**, impacts would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met *(with reasonable mitigation) with the elimination of spikes in visitation and reduction in group sizes.*

- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be *adverse, localized to regional, seasonal to year round short to long-term, and negligible to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short to long-term, seasonal to year-round and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) except for reducing impacts from crowding during the summer months.*
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be beneficial, long-term, and minor for commercial *operators*; adverse, long-term, and major for Bar 10 ranch; and negligible for Hualapai tribal enterprises and the regional economy. *Except for impacts to the Bar 10 Ranch operation, management objectives would be met.*
- For **park management and operations**, impacts *be adverse, localized and regional, short-term moderate to long-term minor. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigations).*
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts would be localized, short- to long-term, year-round, and minor adverse to minor beneficial. Management objectives would be met *through elimination of spikes in use and reductions in group size.*
- *For wilderness character, impacts would be beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round negligible to moderate effects. Management objectives would be met, but to a lesser degree due to limited nonmotorized periods.*

#### **Alternative F**

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be *adverse, localized to regional, short to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and negligible to major.* Management objectives would not be met for soils, natural soundscape, vegetation, terrestrial wildlife, aquatic resources, or special status species. Management objectives for other natural resources would be met (with reasonable mitigation).
- For all **cultural resources**, impacts would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and minor to major. Management objectives would be met *(with reasonable mitigation).*
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and negligible to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and minor. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation), *except for reducing impacts from crowding during May and June.*
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be direct, beneficial, long-term, and moderate for commercial *operators*; impacts would be *adverse, long-term, and minor* for Bar 10 Ranch; *long-term and negligible for* Hualapai tribal enterprises, and the regional economy. Management objects would be *exceeded.*
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, and short-term major to long-term moderate. Management objectives would not be met due to the substantial shift in use patterns and increased use in the spring months.

- For **adjacent lands**, impacts would be adverse, localized, short-term, seasonal, and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size.
- *For wilderness character, impacts would be beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round minor to major effects. Management objectives are met, but only for a portion of the year due to limited nonmotorized opportunities.*

### Alternative G

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be *adverse, localized to regional, short to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and negligible to major*. Management objectives would not be met *for soils, natural soundscape, vegetation, terrestrial wildlife, aquatic resources, or special status species. Management objectives for other natural resources would be met (with reasonable mitigations).*
- For all **cultural resources**, impacts *adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and minor to major. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation).*
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be *adverse, localized to regional, short to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and negligible to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and minor*. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation), *except for reducing impacts from crowding during the non-summer months.*
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be beneficial, long-term, and minor for commercial *operators*, Bar 10 Ranch, and Hualapai tribal enterprises *impacts would be negligible for the regional economy*. Management objectives would be met.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, and short-term major, *to* long-term major. Management objectives would not be met due to large group sizes and increased year-round use.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts and management objectives evaluations would be the same as described for Alternative F.
- *For wilderness character, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round minor to major effects. Management objectives would not be met for most of the year, except for implementing the minimum requirement protocols.*

### Modified Alternative H (NPS Preferred)

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be *adverse, localized to regional, short to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and negligible to major*. Management objectives would be met.
- For all **cultural resources**, impacts would be *adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) with the elimination of spikes in visitation and reduction in group sizes.*

- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and negligible to moderate for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation).
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be beneficial, long-term, and minor for commercial *operators*; *adverse*, long-term, and *minor* for Bar 10 Ranch; negligible for Hualapai tribal enterprises and the regional economy. Management objectives would be met.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, short- to long-term, and moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation).
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met.
- *For wilderness character, impacts would be, beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round negligible to moderate effects. Management objectives would be met, especially during non-peak, nonmotorized periods.*

## LOWER GORGE ALTERNATIVES

### Alternative 1

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and negligible to major. Except for air quality, management objectives would not be met due to unregulated use, unlimited trip lengths, and large group sizes.
- For **cultural resources**, impacts would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and minor to major. Management objectives would not be met due to unregulated use and unlimited trip lengths.
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, and negligible to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, and negligible to moderate. Management objectives would not be met except in providing a diverse range of opportunities.
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be negligible, localized, and long-term. Management objectives would be met.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, and short-term negligible *to* long-term major. Management objectives would not be met due to inadequate fiscal and human resources.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts would be negligible. Management objectives would be met.

- *For wilderness character, impacts would be, adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round, minor to major effects. Management objectives are not being met.*

### Alternative 2

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to* year-round, and *negligible* to major. Except for natural soundscape in the Quartermaster area, management objectives would be met.
- For **cultural resources**, impacts would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and negligible to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) due to implementation of regulated use and reduction in trip length.
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, and negligible to moderate for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, and negligible to major. Management objectives would be met.
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be beneficial, localized, long-term, and major on Hualapai tribal enterprises; *negligible on the regional economy*. Management objectives would be met despite the elimination of pontoon boat use.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, regional, short-term, and major on park *patrols*; beneficial, localized and regional, long-term, and moderate relative to visitor safety and resource management. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing use levels and eliminating pontoon boat use.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts *would be negligible. Management objectives would be met.*
- *For wilderness character, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round, minor to major effects in Zone 2 and in Zone 3. Management objectives would be met, but to a lesser degree in Zone 2, but would not be met in Zone 3.*

### Alternative 3

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to* year-round, and *negligible* to major. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) except for terrestrial wildlife, special status species, and natural soundscapes due to increased overnight and pontoon boat use.
- For **cultural resources**, impacts *would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and negligible to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) due to implementation of regulated use and reduction in trip length.*
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and negligible to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and minor to moderate. Management objectives would be met

except for wilderness river objectives because of helicopter tours associated with pontoon boat use.

- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be *beneficial, localized, long-term, and major on Hualapai tribal enterprises; negligible on the regional economy*. Management objectives would be met.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, short- to long-term, and major. Management objectives would not be met due to the pontoon boat use and increased daily launches.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts *would be negligible. Management objectives would be met*.
- *For wilderness character, impacts would be, adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round, minor to major effects in Zone 2 and moderate to major effects in Zone 3. Management objectives would not be met, although implementation of minimum requirement protocols would help meet one objective.*

#### **Modified Alternative 4 (NPS Preferred Alternative)**

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of* impacts would be *adverse, localized to regional, short to long term, seasonal to year-round, and negligible to major*. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) except for terrestrial wildlife, and *special status* species, and natural soundscapes due to increased overnight and pontoon boat use.
- For **cultural resources**, impacts *would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and negligible to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) due to implementation of regulated use and reduction in trip length*.
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and minor to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and minor to major. Management objectives would be met except for wilderness river objectives because of helicopter tours *associated with* pontoon boat use.
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be *beneficial, localized, long-term, and major on Hualapai tribal enterprises; negligible on the regional economy*. Management objectives would be *met*.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be adverse, localized and regional, short- *to long-term* and *moderate to major*. Impacts would be beneficial, localized, long-term, and moderate relative to visitor safety and resource management. Management objectives would be met *only for one objective (in Zone 2)*.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts *would be negligible. Management objectives would be met*.
- *For wilderness character, impacts would be, adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round, minor to major impacts on wilderness character in Zone 2 and moderate to major in Zone 3. Management objectives would not be met, although implementation of minimum requirement protocols would help meet one objective in Zone 2.*

**Alternative 5 (Hualapai Proposed Action)**

- For all **natural resources**, *the range of impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short to long term, seasonal to year-round, and negligible to major*. Management objectives would not be met except for water and air quality, and caves and paleontological resources (with reasonable mitigations).
- For **cultural resources**, impacts *would be adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, and negligible to moderate. Management objectives would be met (with reasonable mitigation) due to implementation of regulated use and reduction in trip length*.
- For **visitor use and experience**, impacts would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and minor to major for some users, while impacts for other users would be beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, *seasonal to year-round*, and minor to major. Management objectives would not be met except in providing a diverse range of opportunities.
- For **socioeconomic resources**, impacts would be *beneficial, localized, long-term, and major on Hualapai tribal enterprises; negligible on the regional economy*. Management objectives would be met.
- For **park management and operations**, impacts would be *adverse, localized and regional, short- to long-term and moderate to major*. Management objectives would be met *only for one objective (in Zone 2)*.
- For **adjacent lands**, impacts *would be negligible. Management objectives would be met*.
- For **wilderness character**, impacts *would be adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year round, minor to major impacts on wilderness character in Zone 2 and moderate to major in Zone 3. Management objectives would not be met, although implementation of minimum requirement protocols would help meet one objective in Zone 2*.



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# **CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION**

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Colorado River in the Grand Canyon provides a unique combination of thrilling whitewater adventure and magnificent vistas of a remarkable geologic landscape, including remote and intimate side canyons. The river corridor is a band of desert and riparian habitats a mile beneath the rim's coniferous forests. The plants and animals that inhabit the inner canyon are beautifully adapted to the rigors of their harsh, variable environment. The river corridor also holds hundreds of archeological sites that serve as evidence to a long history of human occupation. For these reasons, a river trip through the Grand Canyon is one of the most sought after backcountry experiences in the country, and nearly 22,000 visitors run the river annually.

Use on the Colorado River has increased exponentially since the Glen Canyon Dam was constructed in 1963, which resulted in a steady flow of water in the river and made river running feasible on a year-round basis. In 1967, 2,100 recreationists ran the river through Grand Canyon National Park; by 1972 that number had risen nearly eightfold to 16,500, exceeding total use during the 100-year period from 1870 through 1969. This sudden increase in use caused noticeable changes to the vulnerable inner canyon ecosystem and adverse effects on cultural resources. It has also caused dramatic changes in visitor experiences, especially during the peak season when the river may be crowded and groups compete for access to campsites and attraction sites. The result is an entirely different experience than the solitary experiences that early users enjoyed. To help ensure the preservation of natural and cultural resources, as well as the special nature of the visitor experience, a *Colorado River Management Plan* was approved in 1980 and revised in 1981 and 1989 (*NPS 1980a and b; NPS 1981; NPS 1989*). River use is currently being managed under the 1989 management plan. However, problems identified in earlier plans remain and new problems have arisen.

Grand Canyon National Park and the Hualapai Tribe share a boundary within the Grand Canyon and along the Colorado River for approximately 108 miles. Many river runners end trips at Diamond Creek, while others begin trips there requiring the use of roads across Hualapai tribal lands for access. Other visitors access the reservation at helipads at Whitmore and Quartermaster on Hualapai land. ***To help address management issues along the common boundary and mitigate impacts caused by river-related visitor uses on tribal land, the Hualapai Tribe requested and was granted cooperating agency status on the Environmental Impact Statement for the CRMP.***

***The Navajo Nation and Grand Canyon National Park share a boundary along approximately 62 miles of the Colorado River through the Marble Canyon section of the eastern Grand Canyon. Coordination with Navajo Nation is necessary for appropriate management of resources and visitor use in this area. Additionally, the Havasupai Indian Reservation borders Grand Canyon National Park along the plateau uplands west of Pasture Wash and in Havasu Canyon. Coordination with the Havasupai Tribe is necessary to address management of resources and visitor use concerns along the shared NPS/tribal boundary. Numerous other federally recognized Indian tribes attach religious or cultural significance to Grand Canyon National Park.***

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE ACTION

The park's 1995 *General Management Plan* set as an objective the management of "the Colorado River corridor through Grand Canyon National Park to protect and preserve the resource in a wild and primitive condition" (NPS 1995b:7). The *General Management Plan* also stated, "The Park's 1989 *Colorado River Management Plan* will be revised as needed to conform with the direction given in the management objectives of the *General Management Plan*. The use of motorboats will be addressed in the revised plan along with other river management issues identified through the scoping process" (NPS 1995b:57).

The purpose of the action is (1) to evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives and strategies to develop an improved framework for managing visitor use of the Colorado River corridor for at least the next 10 years, and (2) to adopt a revised *Colorado River Management Plan* that ensures compliance with federal laws, regulations, policies, previous planning decisions, the park's vision, and other mandates for the management of recreational use on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park.

For the Hualapai Tribe, the purpose of the plan is to preserve and protect tribal traditions, culture, sovereignty, and resources for future generations and to cooperate on a government-to-government basis with local, state, and federal governments. The tribe is also a party to intergovernmental agreements with the NPS with respect to regulatory controls on adjoining federal and tribal lands.

## 1.3 NEED FOR THE ACTION

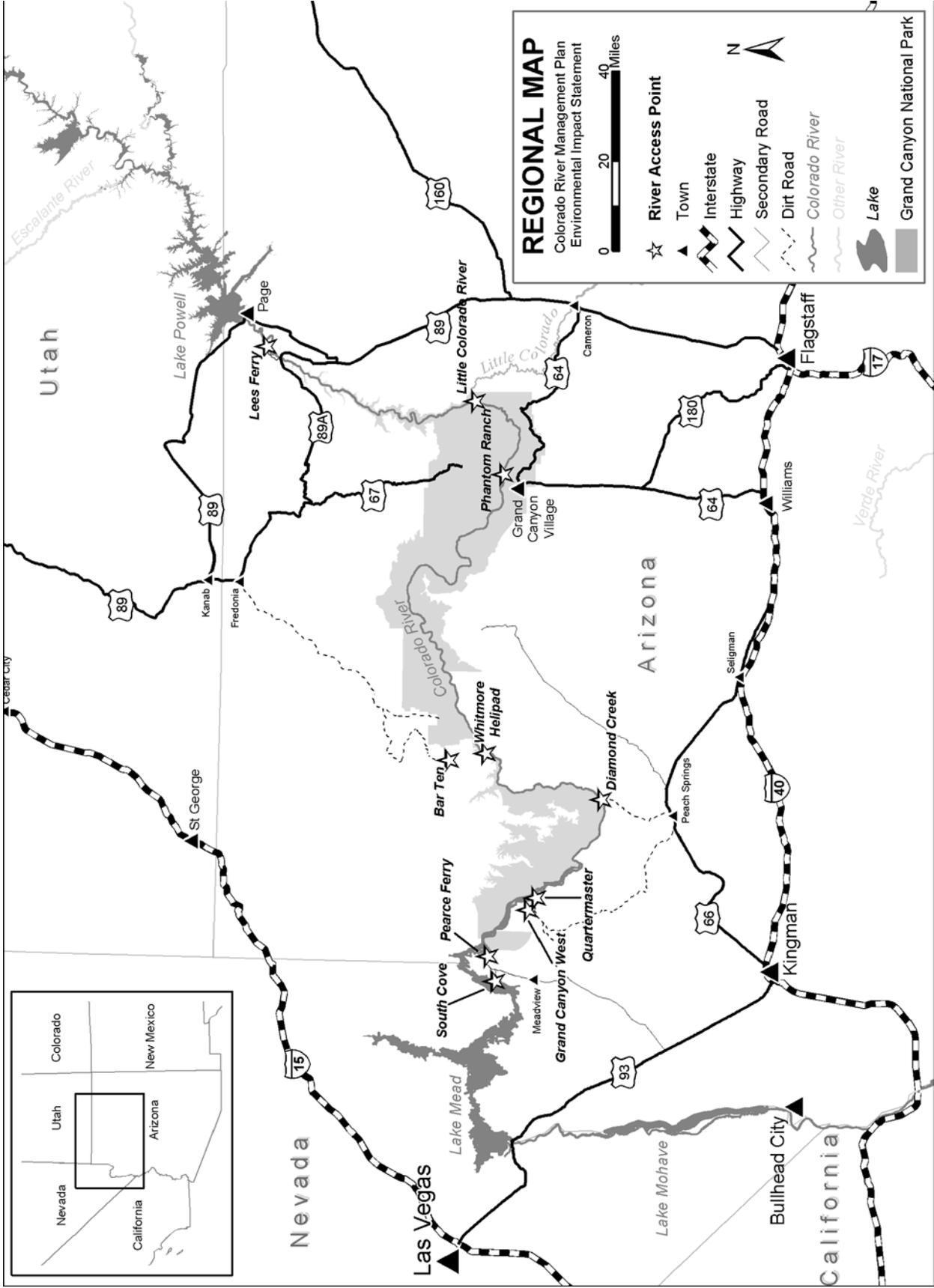
A revised *Colorado River Management Plan* is needed to address both long-standing and recent issues concerning resource protection, visitor experience, and public services along the river; to consider the impacts of the NPS's river management on federally recognized American Indian tribes whose reservations adjoin Grand Canyon National Park; and to fulfill the requirements of a 2002 agreement that settled a lawsuit about the river management plan.

### 1.3.1 PUBLIC ISSUES AND CONCERNS

---

Public issues and concerns regarding resource protection, visitor experience, and public services were raised during the 2002 public and internal scoping process. These include:

- Appropriate levels of visitor use consistent with natural and cultural resource protection, visitor experience goals, and *wilderness character*
- Allocation of use between commercial and noncommercial groups
- Noncommercial permit system
- Appropriate levels of motorized and nonmotorized boat use
- Determination of the range of public services
- Levels of helicopter use to transport river passengers to and from the river
- Appropriate levels and types of upstream travel from Lake Mead
- Quality of river trips including crowding, trip length, group size, and scheduling issues
- Administrative use



### 1.3.2 IMPACTS ON THE HUALAPAI TRIBE

The plan considers and analyzes the social and economic impacts of the various alternatives on the Hualapai Indian Tribe and its trust resources. The Hualapai Indian Reservation and Grand Canyon National Park share a 108-mile-long boundary along the Colorado River in western Grand Canyon. Many park visitors cross the reservation on an unpaved road to access the river at Diamond Creek; other park visitors use helipads located on reservation lands in or near the canyon. The United States has a trust responsibility to protect tribal lands and waters. Furthermore, the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe have entered into an agreement to cooperate and collaborate with each other to resolve issues of common concern in an “Area of Cooperation,” which the agreement defines as the area from high water mark to high water mark from about RM 165 (*upstream of* National Canyon) to Lake Mead National Recreation Area. The tribe has acted as a cooperating agency in the preparation of *the Environmental Impact Statement for this plan*.

### 1.3.3 PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS & THE 2000 LAWSUIT

In 1980 over 90% of Grand Canyon National Park was recommended for designation as wilderness and the Colorado River corridor was recommended as potential wilderness pending the removal of motorboats as a use that is incompatible with wilderness values (*NPS 1980c*). The *Wilderness Recommendation* was revised in 1993 (*NPS 1993b*). NPS policy requires that a management plan be developed for backcountry areas that are recommended as wilderness or as potential wilderness but that have not been designated by Congress. In June 1998 the park released a *Draft Wilderness Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (NPS 1998c)*.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles for revising the *Colorado River Management Plan* were initially developed in 1997 and subsequently updated in 2002. These principles, which were presented to the public at the scoping meetings during summer and fall 2002, relate to the purpose of and need for this planning process:

1. The revised *Colorado River Management Plan* will address resource management and visitor experience along the Colorado River corridor in Grand Canyon National Park within the framework of current NPS laws and directives.
2. Until the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress act on the Grand Canyon *Wilderness Recommendation*, this section of the Colorado River will be managed as potential wilderness according to NPS *Management Policies* and the Grand Canyon *Wilderness Recommendation*, as updated in 1993.
3. Grand Canyon National Park managers will include and consult with Native American tribes in the planning process.
4. River use will be regulated to ensure that the level and types of use are sustainable and that resource impacts are within acceptable limits for long-term resource preservation.
5. Methods to manage and distribute use along the river will promote meeting objectives for resource protection and visitor experience.
6. The use allocation and permitting processes will be assessed with regard to their usefulness in meeting current and desired future conditions.
7. The allocation and specification of future river-outfitter contracts and noncommercial river use permits will be the primary tool for achieving the spectrum of desired visitor experience opportunities, consistent with the protection of park resources and values.
8. Grand Canyon National Park managers will seek to reduce noise that detracts from Grand Canyon’s natural quiet, the park’s natural soundscape.
9. Grand Canyon National Park managers will seek to minimize the impacts of administrative use.

In the summer of 1997 park staff initiated a review of the 1989 *Colorado River Management Plan* with the intent of revising the plan in accordance with the *General Management Plan*. Upon release of the *Draft Wilderness Management Plan* in June 1998, the public questioned how that plan related to the *Wilderness Recommendation* and to the ongoing revision of the *Colorado River Management Plan*. As a result, park staff considered developing a combined plan for the backcountry and river resources of the park's proposed and potential wilderness areas.

In February 2000 the NPS halted the process of revising the river management plan and ceased efforts to develop a combined plan for backcountry management and the Colorado River. The decision was based on the difficulty of resolving several issues prior to further action on the park's *Wilderness Recommendation*, and the lack of fiscal and human resources to complete a comprehensive planning effort.

In July 2000 a lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona (*GCPBA et al. v. Alston et al.*) to compel the park to resume the process of reviewing and revising the 1989 *Colorado River Management Plan*. The settlement agreement for the lawsuit, reached in January 2002, required the park to re-initiate the Colorado River planning process and to address specific issues, including allocation of use between commercial and noncommercial users, and the appropriate level of motorized rafting use. Under the settlement agreement, a final environmental impact statement for a revised *Colorado River Management Plan* must be issued by November 30, 2004. ***The complexity of the issues prevented the NPS from meeting this deadline and the Final Environmental Impact Statement will be available in December 2005.*** Work will then begin to revise the *Backcountry Management Plan*.

## 1.4 DIRECTION FOR THIS PLAN

### 1.4.1 NPS LEGISLATIVE AND MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS

---

The NPS Organic Act of 1916 directs the Department of the Interior and the NPS to manage units of the national park system “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (16 U.S.C. 1). Congress reiterated this mandate in the Redwood National Park Expansion Act of 1978, which states that the NPS must conduct its actions in a manner that will ensure no “derogation of the values and purposes for which these various areas have been established, except as may have been or shall be directly and specifically directed by Congress” (16 U.S.C. 1a-1).

Within these mandates, the Organic Act and its amendments afford the park service latitude to make resource decisions that balance visitor recreation and resource preservation. By these acts, Congress “empowered [the NPS] with the authority to determine what uses of park resources are proper and what proportion of the parks resources are available for each use” (*Bicycle Trails Council of Marin v. Babbitt*, 82 F.3d 1445, 1453 [9th Cir. 1996]).

Courts have consistently interpreted the Organic Act and its amendments to elevate resource conservation above visitor recreation. For example:

*Michigan United Conservation Clubs v. Lujan*, 949 F.2d 202, 206 (6th Cir. 1991) states, “Congress placed specific emphasis on conservation.”

The *National Rifle Association of America v. Potter*, 628 F. Supp. 903, 909 (D.D.C. 1986) states, “In the Organic Act Congress speaks of but a single purpose, namely, conservation.”

In its *Management Policies 2001*, the NPS recognizes that resource conservation takes precedence over visitor recreation. Section 1.4.3 states, “when there is a conflict between conserving resources and values and providing for enjoyment of them, conservation is to be predominant” (NPS 2000a). Because conservation is predominant, the park service seeks to avoid or to minimize adverse impacts on park resources and values. In addition, Section 1.4.3 also recognizes that the NPS has discretion to allow negative impacts when necessary. However, the NPS cannot allow an adverse impact that constitutes resource impairment (NPS 2000a).

The Organic Act prohibits actions that permanently impair park resources unless a law directly and specifically allows for such actions (16 U.S.C. 1a-1). As stated in the *Management Policies*, an action constitutes an impairment when its impacts “harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values” (NPS 2000a, sec. 1.4.5). To determine impairment, the NPS must evaluate “the particular resources and values that would be affected; the severity, duration, and timing of the impact in question and other impacts.”

Park units vary based on their enabling legislation, missions, and natural and cultural resources. Therefore, the recreational activities appropriate for each unit and for areas within each unit vary. An action appropriate in one unit could impair resources in another unit. Thus, in Chapter 4 the context, duration, timing, and intensity of impacts related to river recreational use on the Colorado River are analyzed, as well as the potential for resource impairment.

In addition to the NPS *Management Policies 2001*, which set the framework and provide policy direction for decision making in the administration of the national park system and NPS programs, Director’s Orders may prescribe supplemental operating policies, specific instructions, requirements, or standards applicable to NPS functions, programs, and activities. They may also delegate authority and assign responsibility. This environmental impact statement conforms with the guidelines presented in *Director’s Order 12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-making* and its implementing handbook (NPS 2001a).

The laws, regulations, and orders affecting the management of Grand Canyon National Park and its resources are listed in Appendix A.

## **1.4.2 HUALAPAI CONSTITUTION AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

---

The Hualapai Indian Reservation, which was established on January 4, 1883 by President Chester Arthur, was created for the sole benefit of the Hualapai Tribe and its people. The tribe is governed by a constitution revised October 22, 1955 and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on January 16, 1956. The Hualapai Constitution authorizes the tribal council to make and enforce laws within the exterior boundaries of the reservation for the benefit of tribal members. The Tribal Law and Order Code of December 6, 1975 and the Hualapai Environmental Review

Code of August 4, 1997 are the laws generally enforced on the reservation. These laws require all nontribal members to have permits for visiting the reservation.

In 2000 Grand Canyon National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and the Hualapai Tribe initiated consultation to address management issues on the Colorado River. Grand Canyon National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and the Hualapai Tribe executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in October 2000. The MOU defines an “Area of Cooperation” as that portion of the Colorado River extending from approximately RM 165 (*upstream of* National Canyon) to RM 277 (the Grand Canyon National Park/Lake Mead National Recreation Area boundary). The agreement provides a process for mutually developing operational and management protocols for this Area of Cooperation. This process includes quarterly meetings of the Core Team, which is made up of the superintendents and the deputy superintendents of Grand Canyon National Park and Lake Mead National Recreation Area, as well as the chair and the vice chair of the tribe. Core Team participants seek to cooperatively develop protocols and regulations for the use of the lower Grand Canyon from National Canyon to Lake Mead. *The MOU for the Area of Cooperation is in effect, although Core Team meetings were suspended in October 2004.*

When the park resumed the river management planning process in accordance with the 2002 settlement agreement, the tribe requested and was granted cooperating agency status for the preparation of the environmental impact statement. In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) “Regulations for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act” (40 CFR 1501.6), lead agencies “use the environmental analysis and proposals of cooperating agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise, to the maximum extent possible.” The Hualapai Tribe provided essential data on the affected environment, assisted in the development of alternatives and mitigation measures, *and reviewed numerous drafts of the Environmental Impact Statement.*

### **1.4.3 PARK ESTABLISHMENT, MANAGEMENT, PURPOSE, AND SIGNIFICANCE**

---

National park system units are established by Congress to fulfill specific purposes, based on the unit’s unique and significant resources. A park’s purpose, as established by Congress, is the foundation on which later management decisions are based to conserve resources while providing for the enjoyment of future generations. This mission is further discussed and clarified in *Management Policies 2001* (NPS 2000a).

On January 11, 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt signed Presidential Proclamation 794 reserving land in the Grand Canyon of Arizona as the Grand Canyon National Monument. The proclamation stated that the Grand Canyon of Arizona “is an object of unusual scientific interest, being the greatest eroded canyon in the United States, and it appears that the public interest would be promoted by reserving it as a National Monument.”

On February 26, 1919, Congress set apart Grand Canyon National Park “as a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people” (Grand Canyon National Park Establishment Act, 40 Stat. 1175). Over the years the park has been enlarged and its boundaries revised, most recently on January 3, 1975, when Congress recognized “that the entire Grand Canyon, from the mouth of

the Paria River to the Grand Wash Cliffs, including tributary side canyons and surrounding plateaus, is a natural feature of national and international significance” (Grand Canyon National Park Enlargement Act, Public Law 93-620). Congress also recognized the need for “further protection and interpretation of the Grand Canyon in accordance with its true significance.”

The National Park Service Organic Act sets the fundamental mission of the NPS, which can be stated as follows:

The NPS preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The park service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

The park’s enabling legislation states:

The secretary shall administer, protect, and develop the Grand Canyon National Park in accordance with the provision of the [Organic Act] . . . and with any other statutory authority available to him for the conservation and management of natural resources (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.).

The significance of Grand Canyon National Park and its broad mission goals are derived from its enabling legislation and stated in the 1995 *General Management Plan* (see the text box).

#### Purpose and Significance of Grand Canyon National Park

The **purpose** of Grand Canyon National Park is based on the park’s enabling legislation and the legislation governing the NPS, and it is restated in the 1995 *General Management Plan* (NPS 1995a:1). As a place of national and global importance, Grand Canyon National Park is to be managed to:

- Preserve and protect its natural and cultural resources and ecological processes, as well as its scenic, aesthetic, and scientific values
- Provide opportunities for visitors to experience and understand the environmental interrelationships, resources, and values of the Grand Canyon without impairing the resources

The national and international **significance** of Grand Canyon National Park is for the following reasons (NPS 1995a):

- As a world heritage site, the Grand Canyon is recognized as a place of universal value, containing superlative natural and cultural features that should be preserved as part of the heritage of all people
- The park serves as an ecological refuge, with relatively undisturbed remnants of dwindling ecosystems (such as boreal forest and desert riparian communities), and numerous rare, endemic, or specially protected (threatened/endangered) plant and animal species
- The geologic record of the Grand Canyon is particularly well exposed and includes a rich and diverse fossil record. The canyon also contains a great diversity of geological features and rock types
- Numerous caves in the park contain extensive and significant geological, paleontological, archeological, and biological resources
- The park serves as a natural gene pool because of its biological diversity and unique conditions
- Six American Indian groups, represented by eight tribal governments, have close and sacred cultural ties to the Grand Canyon, with some considering the canyon their original homeland and place of origin
- Over 4,500 years of human occupation have resulted in an extensive archeological record, hundreds of miles of established prehistoric and historic routes and trails, and nationally significant examples of rustic architecture
- The Grand Canyon has internationally recognized scenic vistas, qualities, and values
- The Grand Canyon is recognized as a place with unusual and noticeable natural quiet and direct access to numerous opportunities for solitude
- All of the natural, cultural, and scenic qualities of the Grand Canyon, coupled with the canyon’s vast size, give rise to inspirational/spiritual values and a sense of timelessness
- The vast majority of the park provides opportunities for wilderness experiences
- The Colorado River, as it flows through the park, provides opportunities for one of the world’s premier river experiences, including one of the longest stretches of navigable white water on earth

## 1.4.4 VISION FOR THE PLAN

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### 1.4.4.1 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The 1995 *General Management Plan* outlines a vision for managing resources and visitor experiences for undeveloped areas in the park, including the Colorado River. The following vision statement for the river corridor is based on the vision in the 1995 plan and was revised to reflect public comments received during this planning process:

The Colorado River corridor in Grand Canyon National Park would be managed to provide a wilderness river experience in which visitors can intimately relate to the majesty of the Grand Canyon and its natural and cultural resources. Visitors traveling through the canyon on the Colorado River would have the opportunity for a variety of personal outdoor experiences, ranging from solitary to social, with as little influence from the modern world as possible. The Colorado River corridor would be protected and preserved in a wild and primitive condition.

A key part of this vision is the concept of a “wilderness river experience.” Areas recommended or eligible for wilderness designation, including the Colorado River, “offer visitors opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The management of these areas should preserve the wilderness values and character” (NPS 1995a:6). Components of a “wilderness river experience” include:

- The natural sound, silence, smells, and sights of the canyon and the river predominate over those that are caused by humans
- Outstanding opportunities are provided for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation
- The river is experienced on its own terms (that is, visitors accept an undeveloped, primitive environment and assume the potential risks and responsibilities)
- The natural and cultural objects in the riparian zone and side canyons are viewed in a state as little affected as possible by people, given the existence of dams on the Colorado River
- The effect of the river runner’s presence is temporary rather than long lasting

### 1.4.4.2 HUALAPAI TRIBE

The vision of the Hualapai Tribe is to protect the resources of the tribe and to provide for the development of economic opportunities for existing and future members of the tribe. The tribe has limited economic resource potential and looks to the Colorado River corridor as a source of growth for tribal economic development and employment.

## 1.4.5 OBJECTIVES IN TAKING ACTION

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Objectives define what must be achieved to a large degree for the action to be considered a success (NPS 2001a). *Those alternatives carried forward for analysis must meet project objectives to a large degree, although not necessarily completely.* Objectives for managing

recreational use on the Colorado River in Grand Canyon National Park are presented below by resource. They are grounded in the park’s enabling legislation, mandates, purpose, and significance, as well as the *General Management Plan* and other management documents. However, the management objectives in the *General Management Plan* were developed with the presumption that discrete objectives would be developed specifically for the *Colorado River Management Plan*. The *General Management Plan* objectives are by their nature general, and they do not consider the specific relationship of the park and the tribe relative to management of the Colorado River. Therefore, the management objectives in the *General Management Plan* relating to resource conditions may not necessarily apply in their entirety to the Lower Gorge section of the river.

**TABLE 1-1: MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES —GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>General Management Plan Management Objectives</b>	<b>Colorado River Management Plan Management Objectives</b>
<b>Natural Resources</b>		
<b>Soils</b>	Preserve, protect and interpret the park’s natural and scenic resources and values and its ecological processes.	Preserve and protect natural soil conditions by minimizing impacts to soils from river recreational activities.
<b>Water Quality</b>	Preserve natural spring and stream flows and water quality.	Manage river recreation use in a manner that minimizes adverse chemical, physical, and biological changes to the water quality in the main stem of the Colorado River and its tributaries, seeps, and springs.
<b>Air Quality</b>	Preserve, protect, and improve air quality and related values such as visibility.	Manage river recreational use to ensure that exhaust emissions from river recreation related vessels do not degrade ambient air quality below EPA standards or cause major adverse impacts to air quality related values.
<b>Natural Soundscape</b>	Protect the natural quiet and solitude of the park, and mitigate or eliminate the effects of activities causing excessive or unnecessary noise in, over, or adjacent to the park.	Manage river recreational use in a manner that is consistent with management zoning while minimizing the adverse effects of human caused noise impacts to the natural soundscape or natural quiet.
<b>Caves and Paleontological Resources</b>	Preserve, protect, and interpret the park’s natural and scenic resources and values, and its ecological processes. Preserve, manage, and interpret cultural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.	Manage river use to ensure compliance with cave closures and provide for protection of caves and paleontological resources from adverse effects from visitation.
<b>Vegetation</b>	Preserve and protect the genetic integrity and species composition within the park, consistent with natural ecosystem processes. To the maximum extent possible, restore altered ecosystems to their natural conditions and ensure the preservation of native components through active management of nonnative components and processes.	Manage river recreational activities to minimize human-caused impacts to native vegetation, reduce the spread of exotic plant species, and preserve fundamental biological and physical processes.
<b>Terrestrial Wildlife</b>	Preserve and protect the genetic integrity and species composition within the park, consistent with natural ecosystem processes.	Manage river recreational use in a manner that protects native terrestrial wildlife and their habitats, and that preserves wildlife populations by minimizing human-caused wildlife disturbances and habitat alteration.
<b>Aquatic Resources</b>	Preserve and protect the genetic integrity and species composition within the park, consistent with natural ecosystem processes. To the maximum extent possible, restore altered eco-	Manage river recreational use in a manner that protects native aquatic organisms, reduces aquatic habitat alteration, and minimizes the spread of

Resource	General Management Plan Management Objectives	Colorado River Management Plan Management Objectives
	systems to their natural conditions and ensure the preservation of native components through active management of nonnative components and processes.	exotic species.
<b>Special Status Species</b>	Manage ecosystems to preserve critical processes and linkages that ensure the preservation of rare, endemic, and specially protected (threatened/endangered) plant and animal species.	Protect all special status species and their habitats from impacts associated with river recreational activities.
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	<p>Preserve, manage, and interpret park cultural resources (archeological, ethnographic, architectural, and historic resources, trails, and cultural landscapes) for the benefit of present and future generations.</p> <p>Manage visitor use, development, and support services to protect the park's resources.</p> <p>Inventory, monitor, and maintain data on park natural and cultural resources and values, and use this information in the most effective ways possible to facilitate park management decisions to better preserve the park.</p> <p>Identify and evaluate all cultural properties within the park for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>Collect ethnographic data and develop ethno-histories for the Havasupai, Hopi, Hualapai, Navajo, Southern Paiute, and Zuni peoples concerning their associations with the Grand Canyon, as appropriate, in order to preserve, protect, and interpret park resources and values important to diverse American Indian cultures, including significant, sacred, and traditional use areas.</p>	<p>Maintain the integrity of all significant cultural resources, with site preservation the optimal condition. If preservation is not possible, slow the rate at which their essential material qualities are lost.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for present and future populations to understand, experience, and reflect the human history as evidenced through cultural resources in and near the river corridor; protect these resources from adverse effects from visitation.</p> <p>Preserve the integrity and condition of cultural resources and provide opportunities for traditional access by neighboring American Indian tribal members.</p>
<b>Visitor Use and Experience</b>	<p>Provide opportunities for visitors to experience and understand the environmental interrelationships, resources, and values of the Grand Canyon without impairing the resources.</p> <p>Provide a diverse range of quality visitor experiences, as appropriate, based on the resources and values of the Grand Canyon, compatible with the protection of those resources and values.</p> <p>Consistent with park purposes and the characteristics of each landscape unit, preserve and protect the maximum opportunities in every landscape unit of the park for visitors to experience the solitude, natural conditions, primitiveness, remoteness, and inspirational value of the Grand Canyon.</p> <p>Develop visitor use management strategies to enhance the visitor experience while minimizing crowding, conflicts, and resource impacts.</p> <p>Manage the Colorado River corridor through Grand Canyon National Park to protect and preserve the resource in a wild and primitive condition.</p> <p>Provide a wilderness river experience on the Colorado River (this objective will not affect decisions regarding the use of motorboats on the river).</p>	<p>Provide a diverse range of quality recreational opportunities for visitors to experience and understand the environmental interrelationships, resources, and values of Grand Canyon National Park.</p> <p>Levels and types of use enhance visitor experience and minimize crowding, conflicts, and resource impacts.</p> <p>Manage the Colorado River corridor through Grand Canyon National Park to protect and preserve the resource in a wild and primitive condition and provide a wilderness river experience (without affecting decisions regarding the use of motorboats on the river).</p>
<b>Socioeconomic Environment</b>	<p>Understand, assess, and consider the effects of park decisions outside the park as well as inside.</p> <p>Work cooperatively with appropriate entities to encourage compatible, aesthetic, and planned development and recreational opportunities outside park boundaries, and to provide information, orientation, and services to visitors.</p>	Provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities while minimizing the impacts of actions to resources, user groups, and park neighbors.

Resource	General Management Plan Management Objectives	Colorado River Management Plan Management Objectives
<b>Park Operations</b>	<p>Manage and monitor visitor use and park resources in the park's undeveloped areas to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources and ecosystem processes, and to preserve and maintain a wilderness experience or, where an area is not proposed for wilderness, a primitive experience.</p> <p>Establish indicators and standards for desired visitor experiences and resource conditions, monitor the condition of those indicators on a regular basis, and take action to meet the standards if they are not being met.</p> <p>Provide a variety of primitive recreational opportunities consistent with wilderness and NPS policies on accessibility. In deciding which opportunities would be provided in the undeveloped areas of the park, consider recreational opportunities available outside the park, as well as opportunities available in developed areas of the park.</p>	<p>Ensure there are sufficient fiscal and human resources necessary to successfully implement the plan.</p> <p><b>Minimize the adverse effects of administrative use on natural and cultural resources, visitor experience, and wilderness character in the river corridor.</b></p>
<b>Adjacent Lands</b>	<p>Understand, assess, and consider the effects of park decisions outside the park as well as inside.</p> <p>Upon request, work cooperatively to assist local American Indians in planning, developing, and managing lands adjoining the park in a mutually compatible manner.</p> <p>Work cooperatively with appropriate entities to encourage compatible, aesthetic, and planned development and recreational opportunities outside park boundaries, and to provide information, orientation, and services to visitors.</p>	<p>Minimize adverse effects from river management to areas outside of the park.</p> <p>Minimize adverse effects of adjacent land activities on park resources and river activities.</p> <p>Work cooperatively with the Hualapai Tribe and other adjacent land managers on alternatives and implementation of a final <i>Colorado River Management Plan</i></p>
<b>Wilderness Character</b>	<p><b>Manage recommended wilderness areas (over 90% of park lands) as wilderness and offer visitors' opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The management of these areas should preserve the wilderness values and character.</b></p> <p><b>Conduct administrative activities, including research, search-and-rescue, emergencies, and fire management in a manner that is consistent with NPS policy and the use of the minimum tool.</b></p>	<p><b>Provide a range of recreational opportunities consistent with the preservation of wilderness character. Manage administrative use in a manner consistent with the preservation of the wilderness character of the river.</b></p>

## 1.5 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1.5.1 PREVIOUS RIVER MANAGEMENT PLANS

*The first formal river management plan was issued by the park in 1972. It was titled "River Use Plan, Grand Canyon National Park Complex" and included limitations on visitor use and a provision to phase-out motorized use that was consistent with the park's 1971 Master Plan. A Draft Environmental Statement was released in 1973 and river concessioners filed a lawsuit. The NPS director deferred implementing decisions in the plan and directed the NPS to conduct research to determine social and ecological carrying capacity and the impacts of outboard motors. Twenty-eight ecological and social studies were completed by 1976. The park completed a Final Environmental Statement and Colorado River Management Plan in December 1979. This plan titled "1980 Colorado River Management Plan," increased commercial and noncommercial user-days, established a waitlist for noncommercial boaters, and provided for the phase-out of motorized use over five years. This plan was consistent with the 1977 Final Wilderness Recommendation that included the Colorado River as recommended potential wilderness.*

In response to the planned phase-out of motorized use, legislation was *passed* to prohibit the use of appropriated funds to implement any river management plan that “reduces the number of user-days or passenger-launches for commercial motorized watercraft excursions, for the preferred use period, from all current launch points below that which was authorized for the same period in the calendar year 1978” (*Title I, § 112 of the Appropriations Act for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies for Fiscal Year 1981, Public Law 96-514, 94 Stat. 2957, 2972*). In response to that legislation and the possibility of additional legislative intervention, the river management plan was modified. The new plan, finalized in December 1981, retained motorized use and the increase in user-days that had been intended as compensation for the phase-out of motors, resulting in more motorized use of the river. Approximately 77% of commercial trips now are motorized.

To address increasing resource impacts, the 1989 *Colorado River Management Plan* was developed and adopted. This plan retained the commercial and noncommercial user-day allocations, but it added noncommercial launches in the summer to increase opportunities to better use the noncommercial allocation. It also prescribed a resource monitoring program and set visitor experience and resource condition standards. The 1989 plan established a temporal recreational opportunity spectrum (ROS), with three experiential opportunity periods:

- High- and moderate-use level periods within the primary season, April 16 through October 15 for noncommercial boaters, and May 1 through September 30 for commercial boaters
- A low-use period within the secondary season, October 16 through April 15
- A nonmotor season, September 16 through December 15

In September 2000 several interim changes were announced in the River Permits Office for noncommercial waitlist participants. These changes included providing waitlist participants more time to inform the River Permits Office of their continued interest in remaining on the waiting list, allowing more people greater flexibility in scheduling launch dates, providing an opportunity to list two people as alternate trip leaders, and enabling trip leaders an option to defer their scheduled trips to three years later. An additional change was announced in October 2001 to allow trip leaders to request late additions to their river trip participant list between 90 and 14 days prior to launching.

One final, interim change was made to the waitlist in the fall of 2003. Public comments gathered through the current planning process indicated almost universal dissatisfaction with the waitlist system and resultant wait times. As a result the NPS recognized the likelihood that a different permit distribution system could be selected. Attention was given to the problems and challenges of transitioning between systems. Recognizing that adding more names to the waitlist could only make transitioning between systems harder, the NPS placed a temporary moratorium on allowing new additions to the waitlist pending the outcome of this planning process.

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## 1.5.2 PUBLIC AND INTERNAL SCOPING

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The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires that the impacts of a major federal action be analyzed and that the public be allowed to participate in the process before decisions

are made or actions are implemented. In accordance with this act and its implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508), the NPS has engaged the public, affiliated Native American tribes, and concerned stakeholders in the planning process from the onset. An in-depth account of the public involvement process can be found in Chapter 5.

In summer 1997 park staff initiated a review of the 1989 *Colorado River Management Plan* by conducting a series of public workshops. The purpose of the workshops and written comment period was to gather information on the public’s perception of river management at Grand Canyon, and to identify issues and potential solutions. A total of 334 individual letters was received, and a database and summary of comments were produced. This scoping process was suspended until the process was restarted in 2002.

From June 13 to November 1, 2002, planning team members sought public input to reaffirm agency and public issues that were previously identified during 1997 (NPS 1998a), as well as to identify any new public issues and concerns. Information about the process for developing an environmental impact statement was presented through posters, handouts, and a large map of the project area. Press releases, mailings, and public meetings were used to request public input and to disseminate information. All information was also posted on the park’s Colorado River Management Plan website. The park received 13,770 submissions at public meetings, by e-mail, and by regular mail, containing 55,165 individual substantive comments as part of the public scoping effort. (See Appendix B for further details.)

***On October 8, 2004, the NPS released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement Colorado River Management Plan for public review and comment. Public meetings to provide an overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and accept public comment were held throughout the country and were attended by approximately 1,000 people. Press releases, website updates and public meetings were used to request public input and to disseminate information about draft alternatives and their impacts to natural and cultural resources and to visitor experience. During the public comment period, which ended on February 1, 2005, the NPS received nearly 10,000 submissions at public meetings, by email, and by regular mail, containing about 6,000 substantive and 30,000 nonsubstantive comments representing a wide range of interests. Comments from the public and agencies have been addressed either as revised text in Volumes I or II, as responses to comments or summarized in Volume III of this Final Environmental Impact Statement.***

There is almost universal recognition, reflected in public comments, of the special nature of the resources and the experiences in the park’s river corridor. People used terms such as superlative, life changing, unique, and awe-inspiring to describe the canyon and their experiences while floating the river, hiking side canyons, and viewing and learning about scenery, wildlife, and the park’s natural and cultural resources. Preserving the special values of the river corridor identified by the public and improving recreational opportunities for visitors while protecting resources are included in the objectives for this plan.

## 1.6 INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS & PROJECTS

### 1.6.1 WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATION

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The Grand Canyon National Park Enlargement Act of 1975 required the NPS to prepare a wilderness recommendation for the national park. *In 1977, a Final Wilderness Recommendation that identified the Colorado River as potential wilderness was sent to the Department of Interior, but was held in abeyance pending the completion of the CRMP. Upon completion of the plan, the wilderness recommendation was resubmitted to the Department of the Interior. The Colorado River was identified as potential wilderness pending the phase-out of motorboat use described in the 1980 CRMP.*

In 1993 park staff reviewed and updated the 1980 Wilderness Recommendation, including refining acreage estimates through the use of Geographical Information Systems. Revisions were consistent with the original recommendation. *The Final Wilderness Recommendations/1993 Update proposed approximately 1.1 million acres within the park for immediate wilderness designation and identified approximately 29,280 acres within the park, including most of the river corridor, as potential wilderness.*

In accordance with the NPS *Management Policies 2001*, the NPS *will* manage recommended wilderness as wilderness until action has been taken by Congress to either designate wilderness or remove it from consideration. For potential wilderness, the *Management Policies* require the NPS to “seek to remove from potential wilderness the temporary, nonconforming conditions that preclude wilderness designation” (NPS 2000d:65). *This* environmental impact statement evaluates the appropriate level of motorized raft use on the river, including analyzing two no-motor alternatives. *It is important to note that* the continued use of motorboats does not preclude *possible* wilderness designation because *such* use is only a temporary or transient disturbance of wilderness values and does not permanently impact wilderness resources or permanently denigrate wilderness values. *Furthermore, as discussed in more detail in Section 3.8.2 of this document, the continued use of motorboats does not pose a legal impediment to possible wilderness designation.* This document does not reexamine the park’s *Final Wilderness Recommendation/1993 Update*.

### 1.6.2 BACKCOUNTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

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The 1988 *Backcountry Management Plan* addresses resource protection and visitor use in the land-based portions of the park’s recommended wilderness. The backcountry includes most of the inner canyon, a large portion of the North Rim, and remote areas on the South Rim. The Colorado River serves as a destination for backpackers and hikers. River and backcountry users share camps and attraction sites. The overall river use levels will be evaluated in this revised *Colorado River Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* in terms of overlapping uses; however, this environmental impact statement will not evaluate alternatives for resource protection or visitor use alternatives for the entire Grand Canyon backcountry. Management of backcountry wilderness will be addressed through a separate process to be initiated following completion of the river management planning process.

### 1.6.3 WILD AND SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION

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The park's 1995 *General Management Plan* acknowledges that the Colorado River and selected tributaries in the park meet the criteria for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as part of the national system. Prior to designation, a wild and scenic river study must be conducted to determine eligibility, the appropriate classification, and the suitability of the waterways in question. Under a cooperative agreement with Prescott College, the eligibility study for the tributaries and main stem of the Colorado River *has been* completed, ***but the park has yet to review the findings of this study.*** Although wild and scenic river designation is beyond the scope of this environmental impact statement, the planning process will likely provide information and management direction that will contribute to the park's ongoing wild and scenic rivers study.

### 1.6.4 COMMERCIAL OVERFLIGHTS

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Commercial aircraft tour routes over the river corridor will be addressed in a separate planning effort and rule-making process in accordance with the National Parks Overflights Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-91). This law directs the NPS and Federal Aviation Administration to develop a plan to "provide for substantial restoration of the natural quiet and experience of the park." ***This law also states that the NPS shall not prohibit the flight of helicopters "which fly a direct route between a point on the north rim outside of the GCNP and locations on the Hualapai Reservation (as designated by the Tribe); and whose sole purpose is transporting individuals to or from boat trips on the Colorado River and any guide of such trip."*** This environmental impact statement for a river management plan will define resource conditions and desired visitor experiences along the river corridor. Where noise impacts are identified, the information will be forwarded and addressed in a soundscape management plan.

### 1.6.5 COMMERCIAL RIVER SERVICES

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*It is the policy of the National Park Service that:*

*Any concession facilities improvement program, or any service authorized in a concession contract, will be in conformance with the appropriate approved plan(s) for the area being considered. A decision to authorize a park concession will be based on a determination that the facility or service:*

- *Is necessary and appropriate for the public use and enjoyment of the park in which it is located, and identified needs are not, nor can they be, met outside park boundaries;*
- *Will be provided in a manner that furthers the protection, conservation, and preservation of the environment, and park resources and values;*
- *Incorporates sustainable principles and practices in planning, design, siting, construction, utility systems, selection and recycling of building materials, and waste management; and*
- *Will enhance visitor use and enjoyment of the park without causing unacceptable impacts to park resources or values.*

*The number, location, and sizes of sites assigned for necessary facilities will be the minimum necessary for proper and satisfactory operation of the facilities, emphasizing compatibility of design; preservation of esthetic values, and natural and cultural resources; and integration of sustainable design concepts (NPS 2000a:118).*

*Generally, a service is appropriate if it is not in conflict with law, regulation or park policy, and it promotes the park mission. Beyond that, it is necessary if it is a service needed in remote areas, or it is needed to accomplish the park’s mission of preserving its resources, promoting interpretive goals, or facilitating recreation. The decision as to whether a service is necessary and appropriate, and at what level, is a management decision based on park planning.*

*The Environmental Impact Statement addresses issues related to commercial activities on the river. Description and analysis of potential impacts on the affected environment resulting from commercial operations are detailed in Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences.*

*A river trip through the Grand Canyon can be a life-shaping experience. Thousands of visitors each year seek to experience the Grand Canyon in this intimate and adventurous way. Since many visitors who wish to raft on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon possess neither the equipment nor the skill to successfully navigate the rapids and other hazards of the river, the NPS has determined that it is necessary and appropriate for the public use and enjoyment of the park to provide for experienced and professional river guides who can provide such skills and equipment.*

*The park’s “Final Wilderness Recommendation—1993 Update” identifies most of the Colorado River corridor as “potential wilderness.” NPS policy requires potential wilderness “to be managed as wilderness to the extent that existing non-conforming conditions allow.” (NPS 2000a:65-66). Under subsection 4(d)(5) of the Wilderness Act, codified at 16 U.S.C. subsection 113 (d)(5)(2000), commercial services may be authorized and performed within designated wilderness areas “to the extent necessary for activities that are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas.” NPS policy states that commercial services that contribute to public education and visitor enjoyment of wilderness values or provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation may be authorized in wilderness if they meet the necessary and appropriate criteria and if they are consistent with wilderness management objectives (NPS 2000a:71). The NPS has determined that the services provided by commercial outfitters, which enable thousands of people to experience the river in a relatively primitive and unconfined manner and setting (when many of them otherwise would be unable to do so), are necessary to realize the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the park.*

*Commercial outfitters or “concessioners” have been providing river trips on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon for nearly 60 years. There are currently 16 concessioners that hold contracts from the NPS to provide commercial rafting on the Colorado River. These contracts describe the terms and conditions of the concessioner’s operations; including their allocation and type of use, operating standards, environmental practices, safety and health of guests and employees, equipment standards, and training of staff. Concessioners pay a franchise fee commensurate with the value of the business opportunity provided by the contract.*

*New contracts will be issued for commercial operations following the Record of Decision and upon completion of the Colorado River Management Plan. These contracts will be issued in accordance with the National Park Service Concessions Management and Improvement Act of 1998 (16 USC 5951) and implementing regulations at 36 CFR 51. Concession contracts and*

*attached operating plans will reflect management decisions reached in the Record of Decision and will seek to provide quality visitor experiences consistent with the preservation of the park's natural and cultural resources.*

### **1.6.6 ALLOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE USE**

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Grand Canyon National Park will continue to permit administrative activities, such as research, monitoring, and **education** that is based on resource protection, visitor safety, and science needs. Administrative use is considered as an addition to the recreational use allocation described in each of the alternatives. The intent of the National Park Service is to ensure that the number of administrative trips permitted to launch is appropriate for research, resource management, visitor safety, and educational needs.

The National Park Service will implement a process to evaluate and reduce the impacts to cultural and natural resources, recreational users, **and wilderness character** in accordance with park operating requirements, environmental regulations, and minimum requirement protocols. Administrative trips will be scheduled to minimize launch congestion and campsite competition with recreational users whenever possible.

## **1.7 SCOPE OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

This *Environmental Impact Statement* evaluates a full range of alternatives for the identified issues, including visitor use levels, allocation between commercial and noncommercial sectors, motorized raft use, and visitor use management options as well as comprehensively evaluates impacts to natural and cultural resources **and wilderness character** from visitor uses on the Colorado River. The plan also considers and analyzes the significant social and economic effects of the various alternatives on the Hualapai Tribe and its trust resources.

Eight alternatives (a no-action alternative and seven action alternatives) are evaluated for the section of the Colorado River from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek and five alternatives (a no-action alternative and four action alternatives) for the Lower Gorge section of the river, from Diamond Creek to Lake Mead. These alternatives are addressed in detail in Chapter 2.

The *Colorado River Management Plan* is primarily a visitor use management plan that specifies actions to preserve park resources and the visitor experience while enhancing recreational opportunities. The plan prescribes standards and measures for visitor experiences and resource conditions that are to be achieved and maintained in the Colorado River corridor over time. The plan creates or modifies standards and programs where management objectives, research, and public input indicate a need. Although this plan is intended to cover at least the next 10 years, some of the plan's goals, objectives, and desired conditions may require a longer period to achieve. The plan prescribes monitoring to measure progress toward meeting resource condition and visitor experience objectives. Inherent in the plan is a commitment by Grand Canyon National Park to provide the budget and staff to implement the plan through adaptive management and a step-up process to respond to the findings of the monitoring program.

The *Colorado River Management Plan* describes management zones that reflect the variety and intensity of visitor activities, particularly in the river segments downstream of Diamond Creek where the Hualapai Tribe and Grand Canyon National Park share boundaries (see Chapter 2 for discussion of zones). The plan addresses cooperative management issues with neighboring units of the national park system, tribal governments, and other agencies with jurisdiction or interests affected by, or that may themselves affect, management of the Colorado River corridor in the park. In addition, the plan carefully considers the input of other stakeholders as expressed in the scoping and stakeholder participation process. Impacts from Glen Canyon Dam operations, administrative use, backcountry operations, and commercial overflights have been incorporated into the cumulative effects analysis. In addition, any provisions within this plan that may have implications for these other issues will be forwarded to the appropriate agencies for consideration.

Prospectuses for commercial outfitter contracts will be issued after a revised *Colorado River Management Plan* has been approved. The provisions of concession contracts and administrative use are not addressed in this plan, but the noncommercial permit system is addressed in detail in Chapter 2. Commercial and noncommercial operating requirements will be developed pursuant to the *Colorado River Management Plan* and will specify safety and environmental regulation. Guidance for developing and revising the operating requirements, including public involvement and notification, is provided in this plan.

While this river management plan is intended to have a life of at least 10 years, park managers may periodically review the plan, and if necessary, amend specific sections. If it is determined that the plan has continuing viability, then its effective life may be extended.

### **1.7.1 IMPACT TOPICS SELECTED FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS**

Impact topics identified for this environmental impact statement are listed below. Identification of these topics was based on public comments, NPS management policies, federal laws, regulations, and executive orders. Additionally, concerns expressed by park resource specialists and other cooperators during the scoping period were considered. According to Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1508.14) the “human environment” shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people within that environment.

Impact topics or components of the human environment that could be affected by the alternatives and will be addressed in this document include the following:

Natural Resources	Cultural Resources
Soils	Archeological resources
Water quality	Historic resources
Air quality	Ethnographic resources and traditional
Natural soundscape	cultural properties
Caves and paleontological resources	Visitor use and experience
Vegetation	Socioeconomic resources
Terrestrial wildlife	Park management and operations
Aquatic resources	Adjacent lands
Special status species	<i>Wilderness character</i>

## 1.7.2 IMPACT TOPICS DISMISSED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

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The CEQ “Regulations for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act” (40 CFR Part 1500–1508) and NPS policy (Director’s Order 12) require that certain topics be addressed in an environmental impact statement. The following mandatory topics are not analyzed in this document for the reasons stated below:

- *Energy Requirements and Conservation Potential*—While implementation of some alternatives would entail the expenditure of energy by allowing the use of motorized craft and helicopters for the exchange of passengers, this expenditure is not considered a substantial use of national energy resources. Potential for conserving energy includes the required use of four-stroke outboard motors for boats, which are more fuel-efficient than older two-stroke motors, and a strong incentive to implement improved outboard motor technology as it becomes cost-effective.
- *Depletable Resource Requirements and Conservation Potential*—None of the alternatives involves the use of depletable (consumptive) resources.
- *Floodplains*—None of the alternatives has the potential to affect 100-year or 500-year floodplains in regard to critical actions as defined in the NPS floodplain management guidelines.
- *Prime and Unique Agricultural Lands*—No prime or unique agricultural lands occur in the project area.
- *Cultural Landscapes*—As defined in the NPS *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (NPS 1998d), cultural landscapes are settings that humans have created in the natural world. By definition, cultural landscapes do not exist along the Colorado River. While cultural landscapes in the form of historic vernacular landscapes do exist at both Lees Ferry and Phantom Ranch, none of the alternatives would affect these areas. Therefore, impacts to cultural landscapes will not be analyzed in this document.
- *Indian Trust Resources*—Indian trust resources are land, water, minerals, timber, and other natural resources held in trust by the United States for the benefit of an Indian tribe or an individual tribal member. No Indian trust resources are located within Grand Canyon National Park. Impacts on nearby Indian reservations and trust resources are discussed in specific resource topics in Chapters 3 and 4.
- *Environmental Justice*—Executive Order 12898 requires consideration of impacts to minority and low-income populations to ensure that these populations do not receive a disproportionately high number of adverse human health impacts. This issue was dismissed from further analysis for this plan because no alternative would disproportionately impact the health and local environment of minority or low-income populations. Specific impacts to the socioeconomic environment and natural and cultural resources associated with tribal populations are addressed in Chapter 4 of this document.
- *Lightscares*—*None of the alternatives will have an effect on the lightscares of Grand Canyon National Park.*
- *Human Health and Safety*—*Effects on human health and safety have been incorporated into the Visitor Use and Experience and Park Operations and Management sections of this document. Furthermore, health and safety issues are*

*addressed in both the Commercial Operating Requirements and the Noncommercial Trip Regulations, and potential effects were considered in the development of the alternatives. GRCA tracks case incident files for river-related accidents. The NPS has no data to support that there is a difference in the ratio of accidents for commercial and noncommercial trips. Studies that looked at whitewater accidents in Grand Canyon show that the types and ratio of accidents for motorized versus nonmotorized trips are related to various flow levels (Jalbert 1997, 2001a).*



**CHAPTER 2: ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE  
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this plan, the Colorado River has been divided into two geographic sections, with a specific set of alternatives for each section:

- **Lees Ferry Alternatives**—Eight alternatives have been developed for the section of river from Lees Ferry (RM 0)\* to Diamond Creek (RM 226). The alternatives include a no-action alternative (Alternative A) plus Alternatives B through H.
- **Lower Gorge Alternatives**—Five alternatives have been developed for the section of river from Diamond Creek (RM 226) to Lake Mead (RM 277). The alternatives include a no-action alternative (Alternative 1) plus Alternatives 2 through 5.

Various combinations of alternatives for Lees Ferry and the Lower Gorge are possible, consistent with the different management zones described for each area below. This Chapter also discusses the selection of preferred alternatives for both the Lees Ferry and Lower Gorge sections. For the Lees Ferry section the preferred alternative is the *Modified* Alternative H and for the Lower Gorge section the preferred alternative is *Modified* Alternative 4. Together these two alternatives *constitute* the NPS's preferred alternative for the entire Colorado River corridor in Grand Canyon National Park.

This Chapter briefly describes the process and criteria that were used to develop the alternatives including carrying capacity standards and key trip variables. Elements common to all alternatives are then described including the operating requirements, the approach for allocating use, additional concessions contract, a monitoring and implementation plan, and management zoning. The alternatives for the Lees Ferry section are presented, followed by the alternatives for the Lower Gorge. Alternatives considered but eliminated from further study are listed, followed by the discussion of the environmentally preferred alternative as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The Chapter ends with a discussion of noncommercial permit system options as elements independent of alternatives, addressing the primary system for the distribution of river permits and transition options.

## 2.2 CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives were developed for the *Draft Colorado River Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* to address the major issues and concerns raised during public and internal scoping meetings in 1997 and 2002 (see Appendix B) and to fulfill the vision, guiding principles, objectives, mandates, laws, and policies described in Chapter 1: Purpose of and Need for Action. Alternatives were developed during a series of meetings in 2003 and 2004 that involved different combinations of the NPS river management planning team and interdisciplinary team, along with the Hualapai Tribe as a cooperating agency. Representatives of Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument, Grand Canyon National Park, and the

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\* Several river mileage systems are used for the Grand Canyon. River mileages in this document are consistent with the Belknap system, rounded to the nearest whole mile.

Hualapai Tribe also met during this time to discuss management zoning and alternatives related to the Lower Gorge and Whitmore.

*Public meetings to provide an overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and accept public comment were held throughout the country and were attended by approximately 1,000 people. During the public comment period, which ended on February 1, 2005, the NPS received a large volume of comments representing a wide range of interests. Comments from the public and agencies have been addressed either as revised text in Volume I or II, as responses to comments or summarized in Volume III of this FEIS.*

The overarching vision for the plan was derived directly from the vision and management objectives in the park's 1995 *General Management Plan*. The Hualapai Tribe's vision statement relates to all areas adjacent to or including Hualapai tribal land, from approximately RM 165 (*upstream of* National Canyon) to RM 273 (Grand Wash Cliffs), including the Lower Gorge. The reasonable range of alternatives was defined using these vision statements along with the key parameters discussed below.

## **2.2.1 ALLOCATION OF USE**

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Three fundamental ways of distributing trips on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon are considered in this environmental impact statement: (1) a "split" allocation system, where commercial and noncommercial users compete for permits in separate pools with different distribution mechanisms, (2) a "common pool" system, where all users compete for permits in the same pool and in the same way, and (3) an "adjustable split" allocation system that combines features of both.

### **2.2.1.1 OBJECTIVES FOR ALLOCATING USE**

Objectives for allocating use include:

- Address user perception of allocation inequity
- Maintain or improve the quality of commercial services offered to river users
- *Minimize* costs to river users while adequately funding river operations
- *Minimize complexity for people seeking river trip opportunities*

### **2.2.1.2 ALLOCATION OPTIONS**

**Option A: No Action/Split Allocation (Current System).** Recreational river use in Grand Canyon would continue to be allocated between the commercial and noncommercial sectors in a set ratio that *would remain* the same for the life of the plan.

**Option B: Common Pool Allocation.** All access for recreational use would be distributed through a single process. People interested in either commercial or noncommercial trips would apply for launches through the NPS permit system. Successful applicants would then choose to (1) organize their own trip; (2) contract with an outfitter to provide a charter trip; or (3) join a non-charter commercial trip.

Because the exact trip types would not be known in advance of the allocation under a common pool approach, an initial analysis indicates that no more than four launches per day could be allowed from May through August, and two launches per day in March and April and in September and October. This level of use would still ensure a high probability that resource and social carrying capacity guidelines would continue to be met even if every group that received a permit took the maximum number of people for the maximum length trip. Because some launches would likely take smaller groups or make shorter trips, additional launches might be added after the mix of trips was known and overall impact levels could be accurately predicted.

**Option C: Adjustable Split Allocation.** Allocations would be initially set for each sector as in the split allocation system. Then, as new data were obtained, future adjustments would make allocations more reflective of measured demand.

A single registration system would be implemented to enable the NPS to record interest in various types of trips and services. Hopeful recreational users, both commercial and noncommercial, would first register through this system. Those seeking commercial trips would then be instructed to contact the commercial company of choice directly and those seeking to participate in noncommercial trips would be seamlessly passed through to the noncommercial permit system.

Information obtained through this system would be used by the NPS to make demand-responsive transfers between commercial and noncommercial sector allocations. To mitigate the impact of these adjustments, the following safeguards would be imposed:

- (a) The maximum potential transfer between commercial and noncommercial sectors would be two launches per calendar month
- (b) A sector's allocation would only be eligible for a demand-responsive transfer if its allocation during that calendar month was greater than 40% of total launches (i.e., a sector's allocation could not be reduced below 40% of the combined commercial plus noncommercial launches)
- (c) Demand-responsive adjustments would go into effect two years after the system dictated that an adjustment was warranted. In other words, if demand was measured to be unequal in 2006, then the 2008 allocation would be adjusted

This incremental adjustment in allocation, combined with overall safeguards to long-term trip allocation, would provide a level of security to both sectors while providing responsiveness to changes in demand. The allocation uncertainty resulting from these adjustments would not be prohibitive to commercial entities serving either sector. Demand fluctuations within the national recreation industry are typically far greater than they would be under this system.

Commercial contracts would be written to ensure that companies retained a reasonable opportunity to realize a profit without unreasonable risk regarding future sales (e.g., graduated franchise fee schedules, etc.). Appropriate limits on trip lengths and group sizes would be established for "switched trips" to ensure that resource and social carrying capacity guidelines would continue to be met.

### 2.2.1.3 NPS MODIFIED PREFERRED ALLOCATION OPTION

The National Park Service’s preferred option is *Option A*, the *No Action/Split Allocation System*, which continues to allocate use between the commercial and noncommercial sectors. The ratio of commercial to noncommercial use is reflected in the preferred alternative, a ratio that would remain the same for the life of the plan and provide the *greatest planning stability for river users and park managers*.

Profitability for concessions operations is not discussed here because it is implicit that in the implementation of any system the NPS *will* ensure that concessions operations retain a reasonable opportunity to make a profit.

How well each option would meet objectives is summarized in Table 2-1.

TABLE 2-1: HOW ALLOCATION OPTIONS MEET OBJECTIVES

Does Option Meet Objective?	Split Allocation	Common Pool	Adjustable Split
<i>Minimize complexity for people seeking river trip opportunities.</i>	Yes	No	No
Address user perception of allocation inequity.	No	Yes	Yes
Maintain or improve quality of commercial services offered to river users.	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Minimize</i> costs to river users while adequately funding river operations.	Yes	No	Yes

### 2.2.2 CARRYING CAPACITY AND KEY CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPING LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES

The planning process for the *Colorado River Management Plan* has generated several new ways to analyze visitor carrying capacity, visitor experience, and potential “visitor use impacts” on the resource. As applied to national parks, visitor carrying capacity is defined as “the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining acceptable resource and social conditions that complement the park” (NPS 1997a). The concept of carrying capacity is intended to safeguard the quality of park resources and the visitor experience. Park resources in this context encompass all of the biophysical, aesthetic, and cultural elements and features contained in a park. Visitor use impacts are primarily attributable to visitor behavior, use levels, types of use, and location of use.

The primary factors that determine carrying capacity on the Colorado River are:

- Number, size, distribution, and expected lifespan of camping beaches
- Number, types, and condition of natural and cultural resources

- Contacts per day (on-river attraction site encounters), campsite competition, number of trips at one time (TAOT), number of people at one time (PAOT), group size, trip length, and launch patterns

The first two factors describe the physical environment and serve as the foundation for determining appropriate levels of overall use. The third factor describes variables that characterize the visitor experience. Park personnel are familiar with the character of the camping beaches and have data on the types of resources that are located at attraction, camping, and launch sites and on ***how these resources have been affected by visitation***. By using various tools, park staff members have been able to analyze visitor experience indicators and to determine how the limited campsites available on the river accommodate various group sizes, trip lengths, and launch scenarios, along with the related effects on visitor experience and resource vulnerability.

Several other information sources have been extremely valuable in determining carrying capacity include the Grand Canyon River Trip Simulator (GCRTS), public comments, data from the online launch calendar, River Office statistics, visitor use research, and camping beach research. These analysis tools have been used to create new launch schedules and alter existing ones, to analyze current trends and use patterns, and to predict the number of trips, people, group sizes, and user-days that the Colorado River and its camping beaches and attraction sites can accommodate at any given time.

The GCRTS is an integrated statistical computer simulation that models complex and dynamic human/environment interactions along the Colorado River in the park (***O'Brien and Roberts 1999; Gimblett et al. 2000; Roberts and Gimblett 2001; and Roberts et al. 2002***). Data on river trip behavior was collected in the form of trip reports from commercial and noncommercial boaters during the 1998–2000 summer seasons. From these data, river trip speed, the probability of a trip stopping at a site, the average time spent at sites, crowding at attraction and launch sites, and many other important factors were calculated. The trip simulator has many output and analysis options, including graphs, tables, charts, and visualizations.

In addition, maps that show all known cultural and natural resource areas of concern, as well as recreational stopping points (with site impact ratings) and their level of use based on GCRTS, have been developed for NPS use. When different launch schedules are run in the trip simulator, changes in the intensity of use can be predicted at each of the river stops and then compared to biophysical impact data (from various Grand Canyon monitoring projects) and the resource map. In this way areas of resource vulnerability from visitor impacts can be identified based on various launch schedules.

Years of research conducted in the canyon have given park managers baseline data on cultural and natural resources and visitor use, as well as impacts from visitors, nonnative species, and Glen Canyon Dam. These kinds of data have provided an in-depth understanding of the current river corridor environment and how it may be affected in the future. The data have shown the effectiveness and cost of restorative efforts, how visitors impact the environment, and what visitor expectations are for a river trip.

### 2.2.2.1 CARRYING CAPACITY STANDARDS

To develop carrying capacity standards for the Lees Ferry alternatives, spreadsheets were created to estimate the number of TAOT, PAOT, and user discretionary time for any launch schedule (including trip type, size, and length). These spreadsheets allowed the planning team to test a wide range of possibilities and to eventually settle on the range of alternatives described in this chapter.

The planning team concluded that no single standard could be used to calculate carrying capacity for recreational use in the river corridor. Rather, it is necessary to consider the interaction of user-days, the number of trips and people in the canyon at one time, and the amount of user discretionary time, and how they affect resources and visitor experiences. The following discussion summarizes how each of these key standards was used to determine carrying capacity.

- *Trips at One Time (TAOT)*—The number of TAOT is the maximum total number of trips in the canyon at one time under each alternative. This helps to determine the anticipated number of contacts per day, the number of campsites occupied, and crowding at attraction, launch, and takeout sites. These factors and how they influence the level of anticipated impacts to resources and visitor experience are crucial elements of the impact analysis. The number and size of beaches are diminishing. Because beaches are not evenly distributed along the river corridor, bottlenecks occur in some places. Camping at the same site or at nearby sites within sight or sound of another group becomes necessary in some places when there are 70 trips at one time, about the maximum current level. An important decision regarding carrying capacity was to reduce TAOT from the maximum current level and to provide seasonal variations in the number of TAOT. The action alternatives reduce peak trip levels from 70 at one time (the current situation) to between 53 and 60. ***For the action alternatives, TAOT was estimated by multiplying the number of launches by the trip length for each trip type; then divided by the number of days in the time period (e.g., month). The formula was based upon averages of actual trip data adjusted for the parameters of each alternative (e.g., group size and trip length limits).***
- *People at One Time (PAOT)*—The number of people in the river corridor on any given day is an alternative measure that provides information similar to TAOT. The number of PAOT is more useful as a measure of crowding. This variable applies to total recreational users (i.e., all people except commercial guides). The action alternatives reduce the maximum total number of people (passengers and crew) from the current maximum of 1,095 to between 877 and 985. ***For the action alternatives PAOT was estimated by multiplying the estimated TAOT by the number of people per trip for each trip type; then divided by the number of days in the time period (e.g., month). The formula was based upon averages of actual trip data adjusted for the parameters of each alternative (e.g., group size and trip length limits).***
- *User Discretionary Time (UDT)*—User discretionary time is an indicator of the cumulative amount of time that people have to experience and explore the river corridor during their river trip. The type of trip, its length, and the time of year (seasonal availability of daylight) all affect the amount of time that recreationists have available to interact with the environment. Because several assumptions about human behavior on river trips were used to develop the quotient, UDT is a relative indicator rather than a definitive carrying capacity standard.

### 2.2.2.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

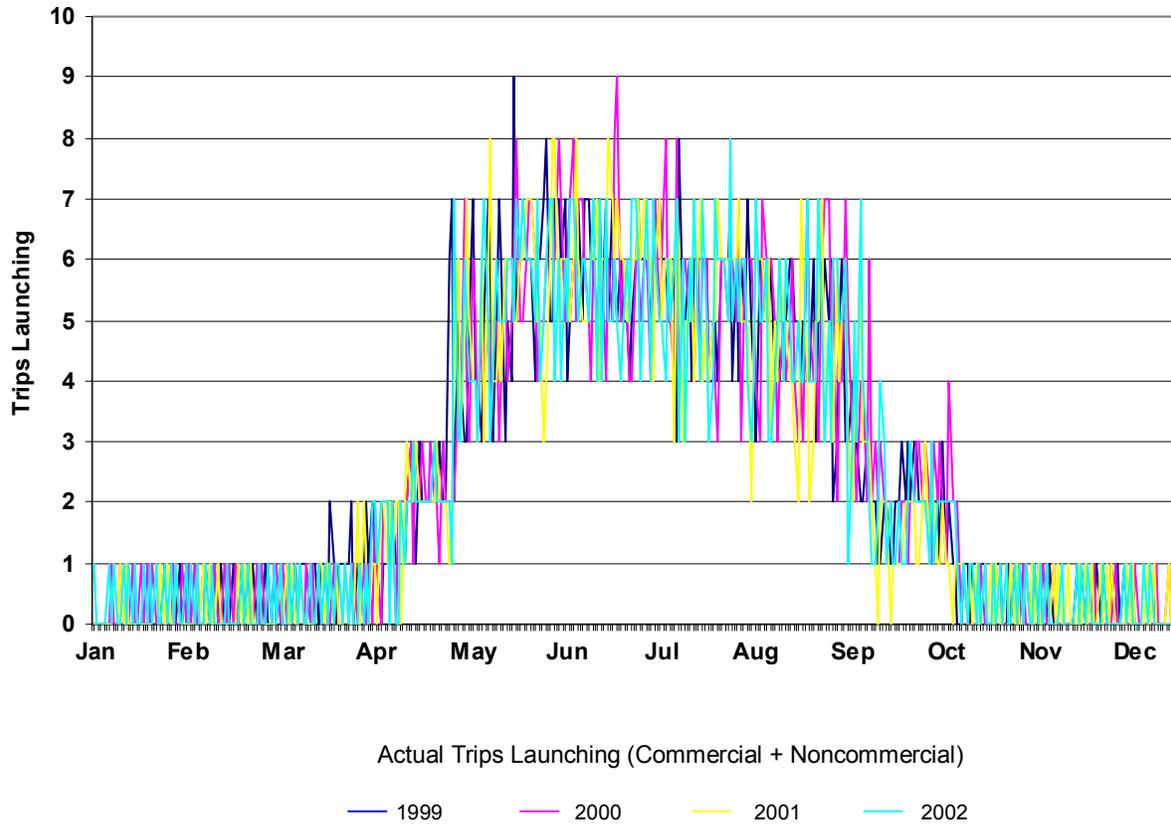
To provide a diverse range of quality visitor experiences while protecting resources and providing access that is appropriate and consistent with each management zone (as discussed beginning on page 36), management prescriptions were developed using key trip variables. These variables—launches per day, group size, trip length, seasonality, and user-day limits—are responsive to changing resource conditions. For example, research indicates that campsites are diminishing in size and distribution and to ensure long-term protection of sensitive resources in the old high-water zone, it may be necessary to reduce group size and the number of launches per day (*see analyses in sections 4.2.1, 4.2.6, and 4.4 of Chapter 4*). The following discussion summarizes how each key trip variable could be managed to achieve management objectives:

- *Launches per Day*—The number of launches per day at Lees Ferry varies widely under current conditions (see Table 2-1). It was decided early in the planning process to move to a launch-based system and to distribute launches more evenly. The number of launches per day for each trip is one of the most important factors in assessing and addressing issues of encounters with other groups, congestion at attraction sites, competition for campsites (especially at bottlenecks), congestion at launch and takeout sites, and other visitor experience and resource issues (discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4). This important variable can be directly prescribed by NPS managers to achieve management objectives. The action alternatives reduce the maximum number of trips launching per day from nine (under the no-action alternative) to between four and six during the summer peak season. (Graphs showing average and maximum launches per day by trip type and month are important parts of the descriptions of Alternatives A–H. The trip types are shown in the following order from bottom to top: commercial motorized trips, commercial nonmotor trips, noncommercial standard size trips [up to 16 people], and noncommercial small size trips [up to 8 people]. Mixed-use months allow launches of both motorized and nonmotorized trip types; no-motor months have no commercial motorized launches. In some cases, half launches are shown; this means that one group of the trip type is allowed to launch every other day.)
- *Group Size*—The size of one’s group is an important consideration in the field of recreational use management, as explained more completely in Chapters 3 and 4. Group size affects one’s own group as well as other groups encountered. It also affects park resources because larger groups need more space for activities. When large groups camp at ever diminishing beaches, they are forced to spread out into the old high-water zone. This intrusion puts sensitive resources at risk. Smaller groups have flexibility to use small or large sites. Larger groups are more likely to disturb larger areas (Hendee, Stankey, and Lucas 1990). Group size is another important variable that can be directly prescribed by the NPS to achieve management objectives. A new small noncommercial group size of no more than eight people is considered in several alternatives. The action alternatives reduce the maximum *commercial* group size from 43 (passengers and crew) to between 24 and 40.
- *Trip Length*—In each alternative maximum trip lengths are assigned to the various trip types. Trip length is defined as the number of different days the trip is on the river between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek (i.e., the number of nights plus one). The minimum and maximum number of days that a trip may be in the canyon is correlated

with such factors as how many miles need to be traveled each day for different trip types, how many campsites are available for use, and how much time is available for hiking and visiting attraction sites. The speed of the river, mostly influenced by flow volume, also affects these factors. Motor trips move more quickly, thus have shorter allowable trip lengths. Trip lengths help determine the amount of time that visitors can experience and interact with the canyon environment. While longer trips allow for more of this interaction, they also contribute to an increase in TAOT, PAOT, and the vulnerability of cultural and natural resources. Trip length is a key factor that can be directly prescribed by the NPS to achieve management objectives and it is a key variable in the river trip simulation modeling.

- *Seasonality*—Seasonality was a key factor in developing and analyzing alternatives. March and April (the spring shoulder season), May through August (summer), September and October (the fall shoulder season), and November through February (winter) are the time periods considered. Varying use by season offers a broader spectrum of visitor experiences and opportunities. Almost all current river use occurs from March through October rather than year-round. In the development of alternatives, the same time period was compared to the other new action alternatives. **Results of** a set of winter test launches **have indicated that** there is interest in trips during the winter. Historically, winter use has been low. However, winter trips offer **greater** opportunities for quiet and solitude **compared to** other times of the year. The less crowded nature of the winter months enhances wildlife viewing and cooler daytime temperatures are conducive to off-river hiking.
- *User-Day Limits*—Each day or portion of a day that a visitor (user) is in the canyon is considered a user-day. User-days can be affected by factors that are directly prescribed (i.e., launches, trip length, and group sizes); therefore, they can be managed to achieve management objectives. Except in one alternative where use is expected to be lower, commercial user-days are capped between March and October at current levels. Noncommercial use is restricted through launches, not user-day caps. In response to public comment, the intent is to allow more noncommercial use while keeping impacts and the other parameters within reasonable levels.

FIGURE 2- 1: ACTUAL TRIPS LAUNCHING PER DAY (1999–2002)



## 2.3 ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

### 2.3.1 OPERATING REQUIREMENTS AND NEW ACTIONS FOR ALL ALTERNATIVES

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In developing alternatives it was assumed that the current operating requirements for commercial and noncommercial users would continue largely unchanged for the near term. The operating requirements include key safety, environmental, and health-related standards; they are not part of this plan, rather they are administrative details that may change as techniques, practices, or data gathering improve or become available. ***Waivers of these requirements may be provided by the NPS for reasons such as an emergency, to improve safety, or to reduce impacts to park resources.*** (Current Commercial ***and Noncommercial*** Operating Requirements for Grand Canyon National Park are available upon request from the ***River Permits Office.***) Procedures to change the operating requirements will not change. The only changes to the operating requirements that are being considered in this plan are to add the following:

- ***Repeat Use***—To maximize opportunities of the public to access and experience Grand Canyon river trips, use in the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section ***will be*** limited to one river trip per year for all recreational users, whether going commercially or noncommercially. ***The NPS will review repeat use information annually. Modifications may be implemented as needed.***
- ***Generator Use***—Generator use will be limited to emergency situations and inflating rafts. Generators may not be used in the river corridor for other purposes including providing power for lights, appliances or sound equipment. ***The use of generators for other purposes will be evaluated through the minimum requirement process.***
- ***Commercial Operator Responsibility for Passengers***—Commercial passengers must be accompanied by a NPS-approved guide on all trip-related hikes, including hiking exchanges into and out of the canyon. ***On hiking exchanges, the guide will act as a “sweep,” accompanying the slowest passenger. The guide could accompany guests from more than one trip. The intent of this requirement is to improve safety for river passengers hiking into and out of the canyon, especially during summer months, when high temperatures and monsoon conditions are common.***
- ***Commercial Group Size Limits***—Guides and other commercial crew will be counted within the group size limits (32 in summer, 24 the rest of the year). ***The NPS recognizes that guides serve as educators and promote minimum impact practices; however, this use is*** indistinguishable from other users regarding ***some*** social and ecological impacts. The number of commercial guides and crew will not count against user-day allocations, but they will be included when reporting actual river use statistics. The intent is to encourage commercial concessioners to provide adequate numbers of guides rather than to maximize limited user-day allocations. It will also ensure that allocation comparisons with previous plans are consistent.

- *Site Restrictions—Tapeats and Kanab Creeks: **Visitation*** at the mouth of Tapeats and Kanab creeks will be restricted to day-use only. River trips must camp well above or below the mouth of Tapeats and Kanab creeks to protect natural and cultural resources in these areas. This site restriction is based on extensive monitoring data and the lack of beach area suitable for camping. Documented impacts to the sites include soil compaction, accumulation of human waste, vegetation damage, and multiple trailing.

**Little Colorado River:** *No boats will be allowed to enter or park in the Little Colorado River. To stop in the vicinity of the Little Colorado River, boats that launched from Lees Ferry may park upstream or downstream of the confluence. Swimming and wading in the Little Colorado River will be allowed year round in the northern half of the river. The southern half of the river from the confluence to the park boundary (located approximately two miles upstream) will be closed to river runner swimming and wading from March 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>. River runners hiking the Little Colorado River who need to cross between the north and south sides will be allowed to wade and cross at the established crossing (marked by cairns), approximately 0.2 miles upstream of the confluence. Camping and fishing bans will remain in place. The purpose of these restrictions is to protect native fish habitat (including phragmites along the south bank of the Little Colorado River) and spawning and young of the year humpback chub (an endangered species).*

FIGURE 2- 2: LITTLE COLORADO RIVER SITE RESTRICTIONS



- *Diamond Creek Takeout Procedure/Scheduling—Commercial takeouts, noncommercial takeouts and launches, and Hualapai River Runner (HRR) launches occur at Diamond*

Creek. The beach area and primitive Diamond Creek road have not always accommodated these various uses at peak periods. Under current conditions, Diamond Creek congestion has increased due to low water levels and increased launches. In addition, the HRR trips must coordinate with helicopter takeouts farther downstream. To that end, the NPS and Hualapai Tribe have agreed that non-Hualapai river runners are not to use the ramp area between 7 A.M. and 9 A.M. This cooperative effort between all launch ramp users will continue. Under the new management plan and monitoring program, actual scheduling of river trip takeouts and launches may be implemented to mitigate the effects of congestion and conflicts at the Diamond Creek launch area.

### **2.3.2 ADMINISTRATIVE USE**

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Administrative use is *not included in* the recreational use allocation described in the alternatives. Administrative *trips are those that focus* on resource management, *education, scientific* research, visitor protection, and tribal issues. These trips will be scheduled to minimize impacts to recreational users. *Administrative trips will be encouraged to use secondary camps to reduce competition, especially during the high-use season.*

*Administrative trips launching from Lees Ferry are subject to the park management review process established in 2004. Scientific research trips are subject to the NPS research permitting process. In addition to the management review process, potential administrative trips will be subject to an evaluation that includes, but is not limited to, the following criteria:*

- (1) Affiliation with an existing educational or service-oriented organization
- (2) Assistance with NPS approved research or conservation projects
- (3) *Trip leaders* agree to complete a report about the trip objectives and accomplishments
- (4) *Trips meet* the minimum tool *requirement for operating* in the recommended potential wilderness area

*Administrative trips may be self-outfitted or outfitted by commercial services or Federal agencies. Administrative trips launching from Diamond Creek will be permitted and scheduled in cooperation with the Hualapai Tribe.*

### **2.3.3 MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

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*After the Record of Decision (ROD) has been signed, the NPS will develop a detailed plan for monitoring and implementation of the CRMP as described in the ROD. To fund the monitoring and implementation plan, including mitigation measures identified in the ROD, the NPS will be considering all possible funding sources, including fee demonstration funds, franchise fees, special park use permits, and funds through special regulations. Any combination of these mechanisms may be used to support on-going monitoring and mitigation. It is the intention of Grand Canyon National Park to pursue long-term permanent solutions to guarantee funds for monitoring, mitigation, and other implementation needs for the life of this CRMP. As part of the monitoring and implementation plan, the existing limits of acceptable change indicators and*

standards from the 1989 CRMP will be **updated and implemented, as appropriate**. If resource conditions (*e.g., disappearing beaches*) change sufficiently to adversely affect **resources or visitor** experiences, or if mitigation measures cannot be adequately **funded or** implemented or are unsuccessful, park managers will use an adaptive management approach to review and revise visitor use prescriptions in this river management plan. **Monitoring and implementation plan is also referred to throughout the document as monitoring and treatment plan, the CRMP, monitoring and mitigation plan, etc.**

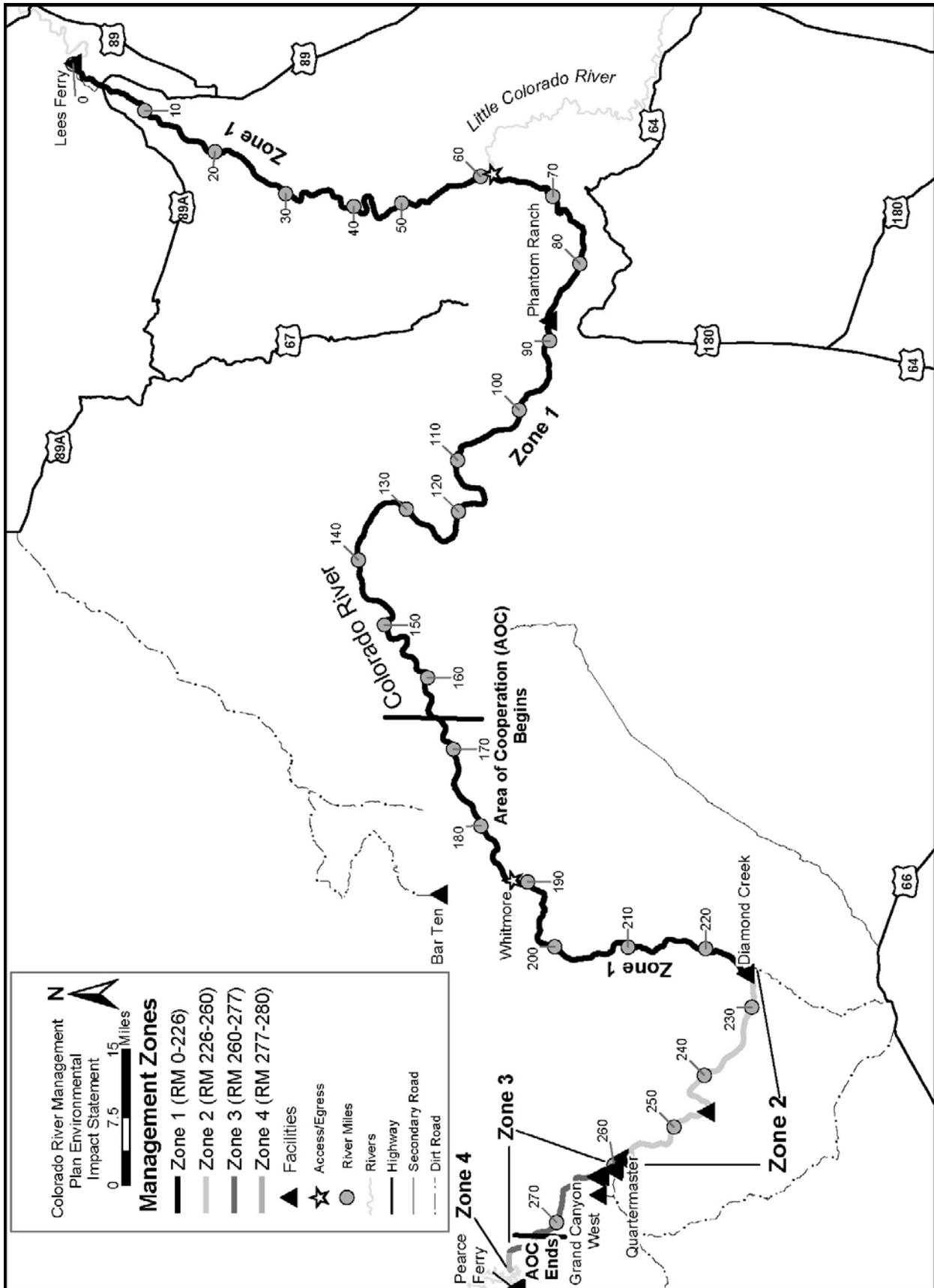
## **2.3.4 MANAGEMENT ZONING**

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NPS *Management Policies* require that management zoning be used to prescribe management strategies that will fulfill management objectives and achieve the purpose of the park. In accordance with the 1995 *General Management Plan*, the Colorado River corridor is within the park's natural zone that is "managed to conserve natural resources and ecological processes and to provide for their use and enjoyment by the public in ways that do not adversely affect these resources and processes." The *General Management Plan* describes specific objectives for managing for a diverse range of visitor experiences compatible with the protection of resources and values.

To represent the diversity of recreational settings and opportunities, the *Colorado River Management Plan* will adopt management zones based on the recreational opportunity spectrum (ROS) framework (see Figure 2-3). This is a planning framework that recognizes that recreationists participate in various activities in different biophysical/social/managerial settings to realize various experiences (Hammit and Cole 1987).

In cooperation with the Hualapai Tribe and Lake Mead National Recreation Area, management zones were defined to reflect the **variety of activities and range of opportunities and visitor experiences along the river corridor from Lees Ferry to Lake Mead. The 108-mile Area of Cooperation defined in the MOU between the Hualapai Tribe, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and Grand Canyon National Park extends from just upstream of National Canyon to Lake Mead and transverses all Zones.** The river management plan also maintains a temporal ROS that recognizes that visitor experiences and opportunities may vary by season.



### 2.3.4.1 ZONE 1: LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK (RM 0 TO RM 226)

Consistent with the goals and objectives in the *General Management Plan*, this zone is characterized as a primitive setting within recommended *potential* wilderness that provides a variety of personal experiences from solitary to social. The Area of Cooperation and Hualapai tribal lands begin in this zone near RM 165 (*upstream of* National Canyon) and extend for approximately 60 river miles to Diamond Creek, and then into Zones 2 and 3. Whitewater rafting trips are the primary activity with opportunities for hiking. Moderate to high levels of use occur from May through August. Opportunities for solitude increase during the shoulder and winter months.

Zone 1 is a natural environment with low to moderate impacts from recreational use, although impacts may be higher at some popular camps, attraction sites, and access areas. Trips originate at Lees Ferry but *popular passenger exchange points are located* at Phantom Ranch and Whitmore. *These exchange locations represent activity nodes that are variants to the otherwise primitive character of Zone 1.* Camping is concentrated on beaches within the post-dam high-water zone and riparian areas. Management activities include resource monitoring, research, and NPS patrols. Site rehabilitation, restoration, or maintenance is conducted to mitigate impacts to natural and cultural resources. With the exception of Phantom Ranch *and Diamond Creek*, there are no facilities in this zone.

### 2.3.4.2 ZONE 2: DIAMOND CREEK TO QUARTERMASTER CANYON (RM 226 TO RM 260)— LOWER GORGE

This zone coincides with a portion of the Area of Cooperation with the Hualapai Tribe and Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and it is characterized as semi-primitive—a transition from a primitive, wilderness-like setting to a social setting resulting from increased use and variety of activity. Diamond Creek road provides motorized access *across the Hualapai Reservation* to the river, thus providing the opportunity for new levels and types of use, such as day and short overnight trips offered by the Hualapai Tribe. River trips from Lees Ferry may takeout at Diamond Creek or continue down river. Use occurs at varying levels year-round, with moderate to high levels of use occurring from March to October. Opportunities for solitude increase during the remainder of the year.

Zone 2 is a natural to modified natural environment due to the influence of Lake Mead that begins near Separation Canyon (RM 240). Due in part to sediment depletion from Glen Canyon Dam, camping beaches are limited in the first 18 miles. Camping areas below Separation Canyon are limited due to lake effects such as vegetation growth. Both the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe periodically monitor and conduct research in this zone. In addition to Diamond Creek road, the Hualapai Tribe maintains “rustic” shade structures with picnic tables and composting or portable toilets at Diamond Creek. A composting toilet is also located at Spencer Canyon. *Diamond Creek launch area represents the activity node that is a variant to the semi-primitive character of Zone 2.*

### **2.3.4.3 ZONE 3: QUARTERMASTER CANYON TO THE PARK BOUNDARY (RM 260 TO RM 277) —LOWER GORGE**

This zone, located within the Area of Cooperation with the Hualapai Tribe *and Lake Mead National Recreation Area*, is characterized as a rural natural setting because of a substantial shift from a semi-primitive experience to more of an urban-oriented experience. In addition to the trips originating from Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek, other recreational activities include *jetboat tow-outs and private power-boaters* originating from Lake Mead, and Hualapai-run helicopter landings and pontoon tours in the Quartermaster area (*RM 261 to RM 263*). High levels of use occur from March to October and moderate to low use occurs during winter months.

Zone 3 is a modified natural environment because of the influence of Lake Mead. Camping is limited to silt banks and open areas. *The Hualapai Tribe maintains rustic recreational facilities including shade structures and composting toilets at the Quartermaster activity node for the safety and convenience of users. (A boat mooring structure may be provided contingent upon removal of existing dock and environmental compliance.)*

### **2.3.4.4 ZONE 4: PARK BOUNDARY TO LAKE MEAD —LOWER GORGE**

This zone is characterized as a transition from a rural natural to an urban setting. There may be an increasing level of recreational activities, including powerboating, fishing, and sightseeing trips originating primarily from Pearce Ferry (currently inaccessible from the river) and South Cove in upper Lake Mead. High use levels occur from March to October and moderate to low use occurs during winter months.

Zone 4 is a modified natural environment. River- and lake-based camping are limited to silt banks and open areas. Facilities at Pearce Ferry (currently inaccessible from the river) and South Cove include launch ramps, parking, and toilets; camping is allowed at Pearce Ferry.

## 2.4 LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES (RM 0 TO RM 226)

Key variables and indicators of use for each of the alternatives for the river section from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek are summarized in Table 2-2, followed by descriptions of the alternatives.

**TABLE 2-2: SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES: LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK**

	Alternatives							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<b>Number of Motor/No-Motor Months</b>	9/3	0/12	0/12	8/4	6/6	6/6	8/4	5.5/6/5
<b>Months with No Motors</b>	Sept 15–Dec 15	All	All	Mar, Apr, Sept, Oct	Oct–Mar	Jul–Dec	Sept–Dec	Sept 16–March 31
<b>Maximum Number of Launches per Day</b>								
Summer	9	4	4	5	6	6	6	6
Shoulder	7	2	3	3	3	4	5	4 (April 16-30), 6 (Sept 1-15), 3 (Remainder)
Winter	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1
<b>Maximum Group Size (including guides)</b>								
Commercial Motor	43	N/A	N/A	25	30	30	40	32 (May-Aug)/24 (Remainder)
Commercial Oar	39	25	30	25	25	30	30	32 (May-Aug)/24 (Remainder)
Noncommercial Standard	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Noncommercial Small	N/A	8	N/A	8	8	8	8	8
<b>Maximum Trip Length to Diamond Creek (in number of days)</b>								
<b>Summer (May–August)</b>								
Commercial Motor	18	N/A	N/A	10	8	10	8	10
Commercial Oar	18	16	16	16	14	16	14	16
Noncommercial Motor	18	N/A	N/A	16	16	16	14	12
<b>Noncommercial Oar</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Shoulder Seasons (March–April/September–October)</b>								
Commercial Motor	18	N/A	N/A	10	8	10	8	12
Commercial Oar	21	18	18	18	16	18	16	18
Noncommercial Motor	21	N/A	N/A	18	18	18	16	12
<b>Noncommercial Oar</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18 (Sept 1-15), 21 (Remainder)</b>
<b>Winter (November–February)</b>								
Commercial Motor	30	N/A	N/A	18	N/A	18	N/A	N/A
Commercial Oar	30	N/A	21	21	N/A	21	N/A	N/A
Noncommercial Motor	30	N/A	N/A	18	N/A	18	18	N/A
Noncommercial Oar	30	18	21	30	21	21	21	25
<b>Whitmore Exchanges (months allowed)</b>								
Helicopter Exchanges**	All	None	None	None	Apr–Sept	Jan–Jun	Jan–Aug	April–Sept
Hiking Exchanges**	All	None	All	All	All	All	All	April–Sept
<b>Estimated Total User-Days</b>								
Commercial	113,083	97,694	166,814	137,368	115,500	128,689	115,500	115,500
Noncommercial	58,048	74,523	115,783	85,946	121,683	106,457	134,410	113,486
<b>Total</b>	<b>171,131</b>	<b>172,218</b>	<b>282,598</b>	<b>223,314</b>	<b>237,183</b>	<b>235,146</b>	<b>249,910</b>	<b>228,986</b>
<b>Estimated Total Yearly Passengers</b>								
Commercial	18,891	7,914	17,686	14,979	16,120	18,671	19,688	17,606
Noncommercial	3,571	4,980	7,543	5,449	7,693	6,745	8,992	7,051
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,461</b>	<b>12,894</b>	<b>25,228</b>	<b>20,427</b>	<b>23,812</b>	<b>25,415</b>	<b>28,680</b>	<b>24,657</b>
<b>Opportunity for Winter Commercial Trips?</b>	Motor or oar	No	Oar	Motor or oar	No	Motor or oar	No	No
<b>UDT (total yearly hours)</b>	355,081	576,754	752,496	710,079	569,603	518,889	421,073	567,238
<b>Estimated Maximum Trips at One Time</b>	70	60*	60*	58	60*	54	53	60*
<b>Estimated Maximum Passengers at One Time</b>	1,095	877	900	890	972	972	895	985

\* NPS would monitor and adaptively manage to ensure that actual TAOT remain at 60 or lower.

\*\*In cooperation with the Hualapai Tribe.

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

## 2.4.1 ALTERNATIVE A: NO ACTION (CURRENT CONDITIONS)

Alternative A is the no-action alternative for the Colorado River section between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek. Under current conditions the number of launches per day at Lees Ferry varies widely, and during spikes in peak season, up to nine trips per day can launch. This alternative would continue to allow mixed use (both motorized and nonmotorized trip types) for nine months and nonmotorized use for three months. There *would continue to be* no limits on *passenger* exchanges at Whitmore, *which currently average 6,630 out and 3,635 passengers in per year, with nearly all passengers accessing the exchange point via helicopter.* The total number of commercial and noncommercial passengers averages 22,461.

### 2.4.1.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- The maximum number of trips at one time would remain at 70.
- The maximum number of people at one time would remain at 1,095.
- Total user discretionary time in hours per year would remain at 355,081.

#### *March to October Overall Use*

- The number of recreational passengers would remain at the current *average* level of 22,143.
- The number of trips launching would remain at the current *average* level of 866.
- The number of user-days would remain at the current *average* level of 164,972.

### 2.4.1.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

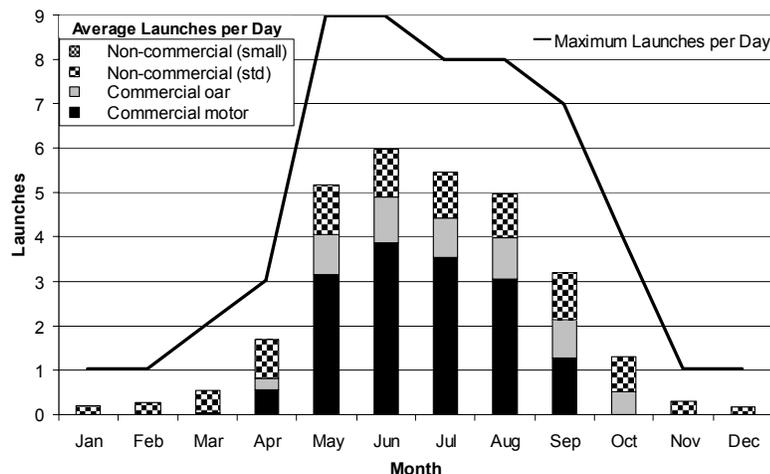
#### *Launches per Day*

- Daily launches would continue to fluctuate widely with as few as three and as many as nine during the peak summer season. Figure 2-3 refines the data presented in Figure 2-1 and shows the average launches per day per trip type, as well as the maximum launches per day based on data from 1998 through 2003. (Similar charts for all the Lees Ferry alternatives allow the alternatives to be readily compared.)

#### *Maximum Group Sizes (includes guides)*

- Commercial motor trip sizes would remain at 43 people, the highest of all alternatives.
- Commercial nonmotorized trip sizes would remain at 39 people, the highest of all alternatives.
- Noncommercial trip sizes would remain at 16 people.

FIGURE 2- 3: AVERAGE AND MAXIMUM LAUNCHES PER DAY BY TRIP TYPE—ALTERNATIVE A



*Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- The maximum number of days for commercial motorized trips would remain at 18 days in the summer and shoulder seasons and 30 days in the winter.
- The maximum number of days for commercial nonmotorized trips would remain at 18 days in summer, 21 days in the shoulder seasons, and 30 days in winter.
- The maximum number of days for noncommercial oar and motor trips would remain at 18 days in summer, 21 days in the shoulder seasons, and 30 days in winter.

*March to October User-Day Limits*

- Commercial use would be capped at 115,500 user-days.
- **Commercial motorized use is expected to continue to average 74,260 user-days, as it has from 1998 to 2003.**
- Noncommercial use would be capped at 54,450 user-days (**noncommercial use during March–October averaged 51,889 user-days from 1998 to 2003**).

*Winter Use*

- Winter use would remain at its current low level of 318 **average** total passengers (the lowest winter use of all alternatives).

**2.4.1.3 OTHER ISSUES**

*Mixed Use/Nonmotorized Seasonal Use*

- The mixed-use season (both motorized and nonmotorized use) would continue to run from December 16 through September 15 (nine months)
- The nonmotorized season would continue to be from September 16 through December 15 (three months)

*Whitmore Exchanges*

- **The NPS has the authority to regulate passenger exchanges, but it has no authority over transportation outside the park boundary, including helicopter flights on Hualapai tribal lands. There would continue to be no limits on passenger exchanges at Whitmore, which currently average 6,630 out and 3,635 passengers in per year, with nearly all passengers accessing the exchange point via helicopter.**

**SUMMARY OF ACTUAL AVERAGE YEARLY USE —ALTERNATIVE A**

Alternative A			Commercial			Noncommercial		
			Motor	No-Motor	Total	Standard	Small	Total
<b>User-Days</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	65,682	26,886	92,568	29,301	0	29,301
		Shoulder	8,578	11,937	20,515	22,588	0	22,588
		Winter	0	0	0	6,159	0	6,159
		Full Year	74,260	38,823	113,083	58,048	0	58,048
<b>Trips Launching</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	417	117	534	129	0	129
		Shoulder	56	50	107	97	0	97
		Winter	0	0	0	28	0	28
		Full Year	473	167	640	253	0	253
<b>Recreational Passengers</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	12,970	3,275	16,245	1,883	0	1,883
		Shoulder	1,517	1,129	2,646	1,370	0	1,370
		Winter	0	0	0	318	0	318
		Full Year	14,487	4,404	18,891	3,570	0	3,570

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

## 2.4.2 ALTERNATIVE B

Alternative B is a no-motor alternative characterized by the lowest group sizes, least number of maximum daily launches, and substantially lower numbers of *estimated* yearly passengers (12,894). Included in this alternative is a limited increase in winter recreational use. *There* would be no *passenger* exchanges *allowed* at Whitmore.

### 2.4.2.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- The maximum number of trips at one time would be reduced to 60 (from 70).
- The maximum number of people at one time would be reduced to 877 (from 1,095).
- Total user discretionary time in hours per year would be increased to 576,754 (from 355,081).

#### *March to October Overall Use*

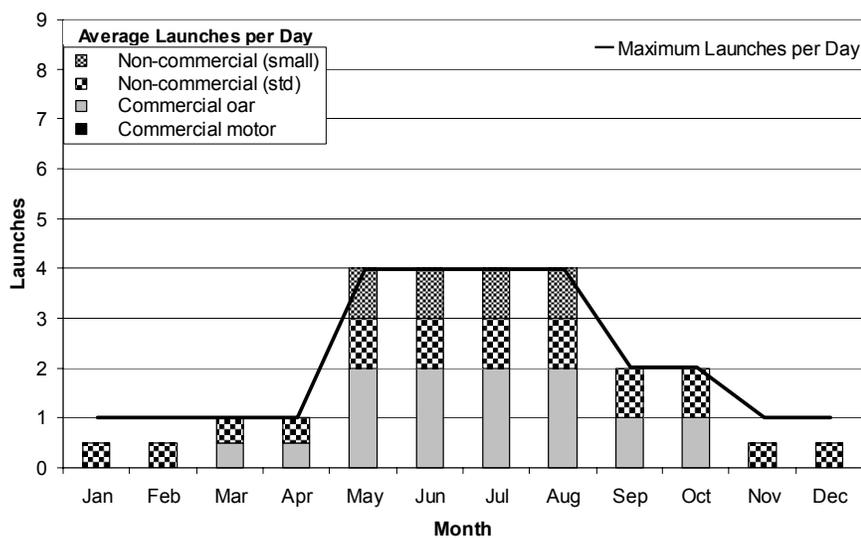
- The *estimated* number of recreational passengers would be reduced to 11,967 (from 22,143).
- The *estimated* number of trips launching would be reduced to 675 (from 866), the lowest launch levels in the summer and shoulder seasons.
- The *estimated* number of user-days would be reduced to 157,759 (from 164,972).

### 2.4.2.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

#### *Launches per Day*

- Launches per day would be reduced from nine to a maximum of four during the summer peak season: two commercial oar; one noncommercial standard; and one noncommercial small. Figure 2-4 shows both the average launches per day per trip type as well as the maximum launches per day.

FIGURE 2- 4: AVERAGE AND MAXIMUM LAUNCHES PER DAY BY TRIP TYPE—ALTERNATIVE B



*Maximum Group Sizes (includes guides)*

- Commercial motor trips would be eliminated as this is a no-motor alternative.
- Commercial nonmotorized trip sizes would be reduced to 25 people from 39.
- Noncommercial trip sizes would remain at the current level of 16 (standard) and a new group size of 8 (small) would be offered to better use small camping beaches.

*Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- **Motor trips (both commercial and noncommercial)** would be eliminated, as this is a no-motor alternative.
- The maximum number of days for commercial nonmotorized trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18), 18 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21), and 0 days in winter (from 30).
- The maximum number of days for noncommercial oar trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18), 18 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21), and 18 days in winter (from 30).

*March to October User-Day Limits:*

- Commercial motor use would be eliminated, as this is no-motor alternative.
- **Estimated** commercial use would be **below** the current **cap of 115,500** user- days, **so there would be no commercial user day cap for Alternative B.**
- Noncommercial use would not be capped, increasing to an **estimated 60,064** user-days (from **an average of 51,889**).

*Winter Use*

- Winter use would increase to accommodate approximately 927 people (from 318).

**2.4.2.3 OTHER ISSUES***Mixed Use/Nonmotorized Seasonal Use*

- The nonmotorized season would be increased to year-round, with no motorized use allowed. Currently motors may be used nine months a year.

*Whitmore Exchanges*

- **The NPS would allow no passenger** exchanges at Whitmore.

**SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED YEARLY USE —ALTERNATIVE B**

Alternative B		Commercial			Noncommercial			
		Motor	Nonmotor	Total	Standard	Small	Total	
<b>User-Days</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	0	69,746	69,746	27,142	10,531	37,673
		Shoulder	0	27,948	27,948	22,391	0	22,391
		Winter	0	0	0	14,459	0	14,459
		Full Year	0	97,694	97,694	63,992	10,531	74,523
<b>Trips Launching</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	0	246	246	123	123	246
		Shoulder	0	92	92	92	0	92
		Winter	0	0	0	60	0	60
		Full Year	0	338	338	275	123	398
<b>Recreational Passengers</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	0	5,853	5,853	1,901	738	2,639
		Shoulder	0	2,061	2,061	1,414	0	1,414
		Winter	0	0	0	927	0	927
		Full Year	0	7,914	7,914	4,243	738	4,980

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

### 2.4.3 ALTERNATIVE C

Alternative C is a no-motor alternative characterized by reduced group sizes and maximum daily launches except in winter and an increase in the number of *estimated* yearly passengers (25,228). Included in this alternative is a substantial increase in shoulder and winter season use. The NPS would allow *passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round, but it is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that helicopter access would not be allowed, but hiking exchanges would be allowed all year.*

#### 2.4.3.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES:

##### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- The maximum number of trips at one time would be reduced to 60 (from 70).
- The maximum number of people at one time would be reduced to 900 (from 1,095).
- Total user discretionary time in hours per year would be increased to 752,496 (from 355,081).

##### *March to October Overall Use*

- The *estimated* number of recreational passengers would be reduced to 20,201 (from 22,143).
- The *estimated* number of trips launching would be reduced to 854 (from 866).
- The *estimated* number of user-days would be increased to 199,639 (from 164,972).

#### 2.4.3.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

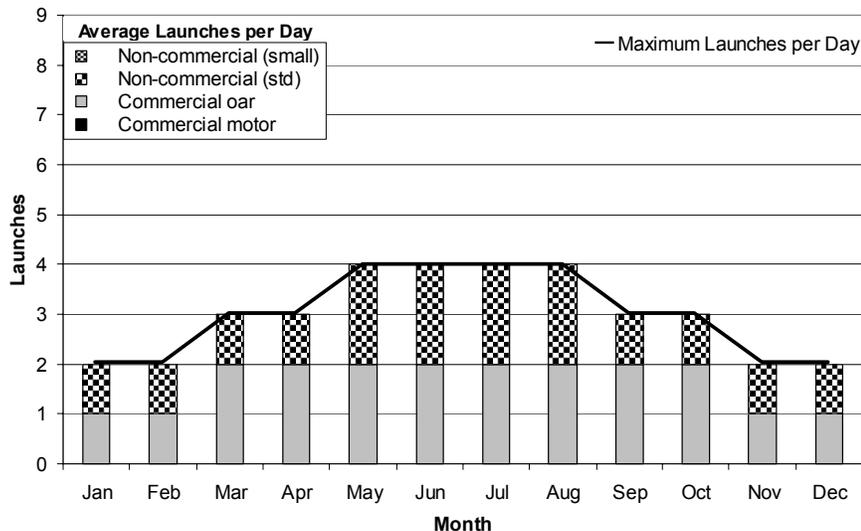
##### *Launches per Day*

- Launches per day would be decreased from nine to a maximum of four during the summer peak season: two commercial oar; and, two noncommercial standard. Figure 2- 5Figure 2-5 shows the launches per day by trip type for each month.

##### *Maximum Group Sizes (includes guides)*

- Commercial motor trips would be eliminated as this is a no-motor alternative.
- Commercial oar trip sizes would be reduced to 30 people (from 39).
- Noncommercial motor trips would be eliminated as this is a no-motor alternative.
- Noncommercial oar trip sizes would remain at 16 people (standard).

**FIGURE 2- 5: AVERAGE AND MAXIMUM LAUNCHES PER DAY BY TRIP TYPE —ALTERNATIVE C**



*Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- **Motor trips (both commercial and noncommercial)** would be eliminated, as this is a no-motor alternative.
- The maximum number of days for commercial nonmotorized trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18), 18 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21), and 21 days in winter (from 30).
- The maximum number of days for noncommercial oar trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18), 18 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21), and 21 days in winter (from 30).

*March to October User-Day Limits*

- Commercial motor use would be eliminated, as this is a no-motor alternative.
- Commercial overall use would be capped at the current 115,500 user-days.
- Noncommercial **nonmotorized** use would not be capped, increasing to an **estimated** 84,139 user-days (from **an average of** 51,889).

*Winter Use*

- Winter use would increase to accommodate approximately 5,027 people per year (from 318).

**2.4.3.3 OTHER ISSUES**

*Mixed Use/Nonmotorized Seasonal Use*

- Nonmotorized season would be increased to year-round, with no motorized use allowed. Currently motors may be used nine months a year.

*Whitmore Exchanges*

- **The NPS has the authority to regulate passenger exchanges, but it has no authority over transportation outside the park boundary, including helicopter flights on Hualapai tribal land. It is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges at Whitmore, so that under this alternative there would be no helicopter access for passenger exchanges at Whitmore, and hiking exchanges would be limited to 2,500 passengers in and 2,500 passengers out throughout the year.**

**SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED YEARLY USE —ALTERNATIVE C**

Alternative C			Commercial			Noncommercial		
			Motor	Nonmotor	Total	Standard	Small	Total
User-Days	Total	Summer	0	55,836	55,836	54,284	0	54,284
		Shoulder	0	59,664	59,664	29,855	0	29,855
		Winter	0	51,315	51,315	31,644	0	31,644
		Full Year	0	166,814	166,814	115,783	0	115,783
Trips Launching	Total	Summer	0	243	243	246	0	246
		Shoulder	0	243	243	122	0	122
		Winter	0	120	120	120	0	120
		Full Year	0	606	606	488	0	488
Recreational Passengers	Total	Summer	0	7,450	7,450	3,802	0	3,802
		Shoulder	0	7,064	7,064	1,886	0	1,886
		Winter	0	3,172	3,172	1,855	0	1,855
		Full Year	0	17,685	17,685	7,543	0	7,543

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

## 2.4.4 ALTERNATIVE D

Alternative D is a mixed motor/nonmotor alternative. The shoulder months of March–April and September–October would be for nonmotorized use with mixed use allowed in the remaining months. This alternative is characterized by the lowest allowable group sizes, reduced maximum daily launches, and a reduction in *estimated* yearly passenger totals (20,427). The NPS would allow *passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round, but it is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that helicopter access would not be allowed, but hiking exchanges would be allowed all year.*

### 2.4.4.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

*Carrying Capacity Standards:*

- The maximum number of trips at one time would be reduced to 58 (from 70).
- The maximum number of people at one time would be reduced to 890 (from 1,095).
- Total user discretionary time in hours per year would be increased to 710,079 (from 355,081).

*March to October Overall Use*

- The *estimated* number of recreational passengers would be reduced to 18,186 (from 22,143).
- The *estimated* number of trips launching would be increased to 890 (from 866).
- The *estimated* number of user-days would be increased to 183,555 (from 164,972).

### 2.4.4.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

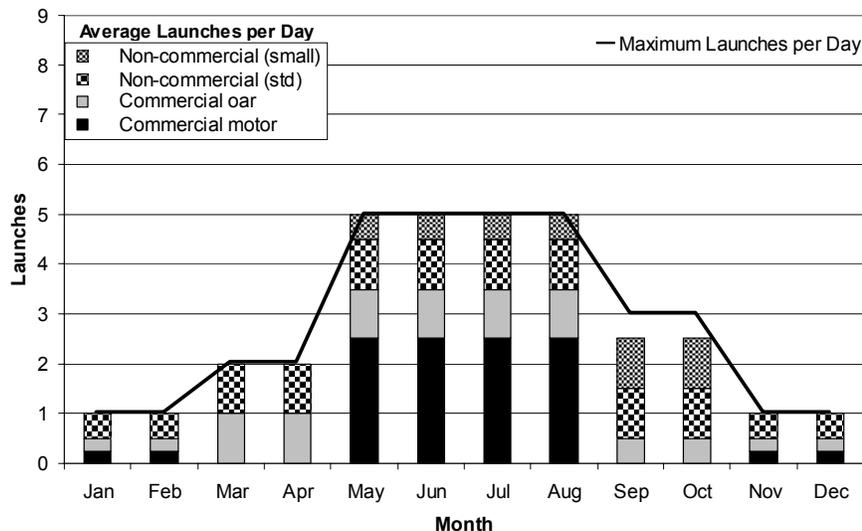
*Launches per Day*

- Launches per day would be decreased from nine to a maximum of five during the summer peak season. Figure 2-6 Figure 2- 6 shows the launches per day by trip type for each month.

*Maximum Group Sizes (includes guides)*

- Commercial motor trip sizes would be reduced to 25 people (from 43).
- Commercial oar trip sizes would be reduced to 25 people (from 39).
- Noncommercial trip sizes would remain at 16 people (standard), and a new group size of 8 people (small) would be offered to better distribute groups along the river.

**FIGURE 2- 6: AVERAGE AND MAXIMUM LAUNCHES PER DAY BY TRIP TYPE —ALTERNATIVE D**



*Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- The maximum number of days for commercial motor trips would be reduced from 18 in the summer and shoulder seasons to 10 days and from 30 in the winter to 18 days.
- The maximum number of days for commercial oar trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18), 18 days in shoulder seasons (from 21), and 21 days in winter (from 30).
- The maximum number of days for noncommercial oar and motor trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18) and 18 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21). In winter the maximum number of days for noncommercial oar trips would be 30 days (same as now) and for noncommercial motor trips 18 days (from 30).

*March to October User-Day Limits*

- Commercial motorized use would be reduced to **an estimated** 58,927 user-days (from **an average of 74,260**).
- Commercial overall use would be capped at the current 115,500 user-days.
- Noncommercial use would not be capped, increasing to an **estimated** 68,055 user-days (from **an average of 51,889**).

*Winter Use*

- Winter use would increase to accommodate approximately 2,242 people per year (from 318).

**2.4.4.3 OTHER ISSUES**

*Mixed Use/Nonmotorized Seasonal Use*

- The mixed-use season would be changed from the current nine months to a total of eight months in winter and summer.
- The nonmotorized use season would be changed from the current three months in the spring and fall months to a total of four months.

*Whitmore Exchanges*

- ***The NPS has the authority to regulate passenger exchanges, but it has no authority over transportation outside the park boundary, including helicopter flights on Hualapai tribal land. It is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges at Whitmore, so that under this alternative there would be no helicopter access or egress for passenger exchanges at Whitmore, and hiking exchanges would be limited to 2,500 passengers in and 2,500 passengers out throughout the year.***

**SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED YEARLY USE —ALTERNATIVE D**

Alternative D			Commercial			Noncommercial		
			Motor	Nonmotor	Total	Standard	Small	Total
<b>User-Days</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	58,927	31,405	90,332	27,142	5,266	32,407
		Shoulder	0	25,168	25,168	29,855	5,792	35,647
		Winter	11,177	10,691	21,868	17,891	0	17,891
		Full Year	70,104	67,264	137,368	74,888	11,057	85,946
<b>Trips Launching</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	308	123	431	123	62	185
		Shoulder	0	92	92	122	61	183
		Winter	30	30	60	60	0	60
		Full Year	338	245	582	305	123	428
<b>Recreational Passengers</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	8,415	3,080	11,495	1,901	369	2,270
		Shoulder	0	2,169	2,169	1,886	366	2,252
		Winter	664	651	1,315	927	0	927
		Full Year	9,079	5,900	14,979	4,714	735	5,449

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

## 2.4.5 ALTERNATIVE E

Alternative E is a mixed motor/nonmotor alternative. A six-month mixed-use season would be allowed from April to September with the remaining six months reserved for nonmotorized use. This alternative is characterized by a reduction in group size and launches per day (except in the winter season) and an increase in *estimated* yearly passenger totals (23,812). **The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round, but it is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that helicopter access would occur only from April through September. Hiking exchanges would be allowed all year.**

### 2.4.5.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- The maximum number of trips at one time would be reduced to 60 (from 70).
- The maximum number of people at one time would be reduced to 972 (from 1,095).
- Total user discretionary time in hours per year would be increased to 569,603 (from 355,081).

#### *March to October Overall Use*

- The *estimated* number of recreational passengers would be reduced to 21,030 (from 22,143).
- The *estimated* number of trips launching would be increased to 993 (from 866).
- The *estimated* number of user-days would be increased to 189,716 (from 164,972).

### 2.4.5.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

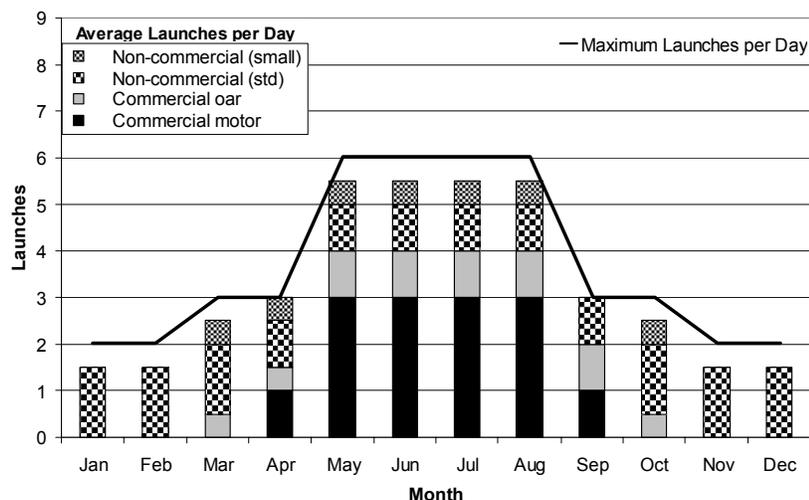
#### *Launches per Day*

- Launches per day would be decreased from a maximum of nine to six during the summer peak season (five every other day). Figure 2-7 shows the launches per day by trip type for each month.

#### *Maximum Group Sizes (includes guides)*

- Commercial motor trips sizes would be reduced to 30 people (from 43).
- Commercial oar trip sizes would be reduced to 25 people (from 39).
- Noncommercial trip sizes would remain at 16 people (standard), and a new group size of 8 (small) would be offered to better distribute groups along the river.

**FIGURE 2- 7: AVERAGE AND MAXIMUM LAUNCHES PER DAY BY TRIP TYPE —ALTERNATIVE E**



*Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- The maximum number of days for commercial motor trips would be reduced to 8 days in summer and the shoulder seasons (from 18); no winter use would be allowed (30 days now).
- The maximum number of days for commercial oar trips would be reduced to 14 days in summer (from 18) and 16 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21); no winter **commercial use** would be allowed (30 days currently allowed).
- The maximum number of days for noncommercial **motor and** oar trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18), and 18 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21). **Noncommercial oar trips would be reduced to 21 days in winter (from 30); no noncommercial motor trips would be allowed in winter (from 30 days).**

*March to October User-Day Limits*

- Commercial motorized use **is expected to increase somewhat, to an estimated 76,913 user-days.**
- Commercial overall use would be capped at the current 115,500 user-days.
- Noncommercial use would not be capped, increasing to an **estimated 74,217 user-days (from an average of 51,889).**

*Winter Use*

- Winter use would increase to accommodate approximately 2,782 people per year (from 318).

**2.4.5.3 OTHER ISSUES**

*Mixed Use/Nonmotorized Seasonal Use*

- The mixed-use season would be changed to April through September, for a total of six months (three fewer less months than currently).
- The nonmotorized use season would be changed to October through March, for a total of six months (three more months than currently).

*Whitmore Exchanges*

- **The NPS has the authority to regulate passenger exchanges, but it has no authority over transportation outside the park boundary, including helicopter flights on Hualapai tribal land. It is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges at Whitmore, so that under this alternative helicopter access or egress for passenger exchanges at Whitmore would be limited to 2,500 passengers out and 2,500 passengers in from April through September. Hiking exchanges would be allowed year-round, but it is assumed that none would occur under this alternative.**

**SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED YEARLY USE —ALTERNATIVE E**

Alternative E			Commercial			Noncommercial		
			Motor	Nonmotor	Total	Standard	Small	Total
<b>User-Days</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	66,409	23,020	89,429	27,142	5,266	32,407
		Shoulder	10,503	15,567	26,070	37,441	4,368	41,809
		Winter	0	0	0	47,466	0	47,466
		Full Year	76,913	38,587	115,500	112,050	9,633	121,683
<b>Trips Launching</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	369	108	477	123	62	185
		Shoulder	60	72	132	153	46	199
		Winter	0	0	0	180	0	180
		Full Year	429	180	609	456	108	564
<b>Recreational Passengers</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	10,288	2,672	12,960	1,901	369	2,270
		Shoulder	1,488	1,672	3,159	2,365	276	2,641
		Winter	0	0	0	2,782	0	2,782
		Full Year	11,776	4,344	16,120	7,048	645	7,693

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

## 2.4.6 ALTERNATIVE F

Alternative F is a mixed motor/nonmotor alternative that would split the year in half, with mixed use allowed in the first half (January–June), and nonmotorized use in the second half (July–December). It is characterized by lower group sizes and a decrease in launches per day (except in the winter season), and an increase in *estimated* yearly passenger totals (25,415). ***The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round, but it is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that helicopter access would occur only from January through June. Hiking exchanges would be allowed all year.***

### 2.4.6.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- The maximum number of trips at one time would be reduced to 54 (from 70).
- The maximum number of people at one time would be reduced to 972 (from 1,095).
- Total user discretionary time in hours per year would be increased to 518,889 (from 355,081).

#### *March to October Overall Use*

- The *estimated* number of recreational passengers would be increased to 22,321 (from 22,143).
- The *estimated* number of trips launching would be increased to 991 (from 866).
- The *estimated* number of user-days would be increased to 181,053 (from 164,972).

### 2.4.6.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

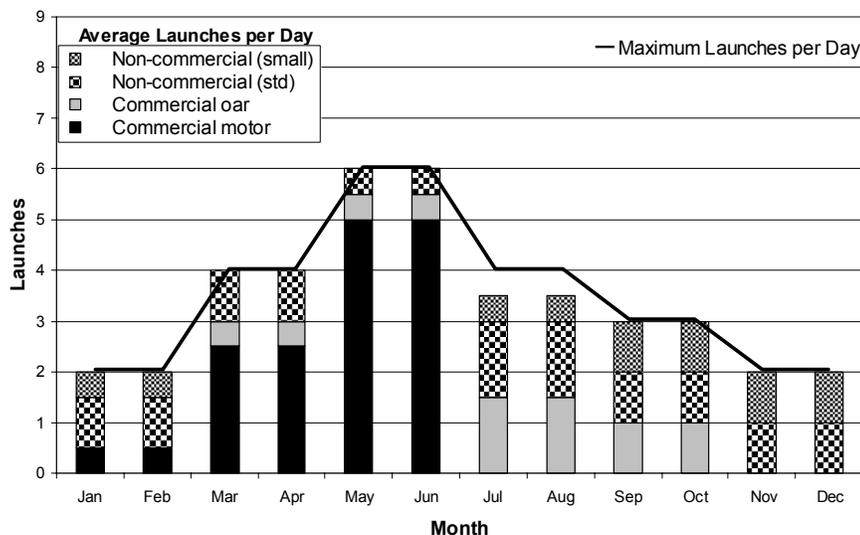
#### *Launches per Day*

- Launches per day would be decreased from a maximum of nine to six. Figure 2-8 shows the launches per day by trip type for each month.

#### *Maximum Group Sizes (includes guides)*

- Commercial motor trips sizes would be reduced to 30 people (from 43).
- Commercial oar trip sizes would be reduced to 30 people (from 39).
- Noncommercial trip sizes would remain at 16 people (standard), and a new group size of 8 (small) would be offered to better distribute groups along the river.

**FIGURE 2- 8: AVERAGE AND MAXIMUM LAUNCHES PER DAY BY TRIP TYPE —ALTERNATIVE F**



*Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- The maximum number of days for commercial motor trips would be reduced to 10 days in summer and the shoulder seasons (from 18) and 18 days in winter (from 30).
- The maximum number of days for commercial oar trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18), 18 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21), and 21 days in winter (from 30).
- The maximum number of days for noncommercial oar and motor trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18) and 18 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21). In winter the maximum number of days for noncommercial oar trips would be 21 days (from 30) and for noncommercial motor trips 18 days (from 30).

*March to October User-Day Limits*

- Commercial motorized use **is expected to increase somewhat, to an estimated 76,913 user-days**.
- Commercial overall use would be capped at the current 115,500 user-days.
- Noncommercial use would not be capped, increasing to an **estimated 65,554 user-days (from an average of 51,889)**.

*Winter Use*

- Winter use would increase to accommodate approximately 3,094 people per year (from 318).

**2.4.6.3 OTHER ISSUES***Mixed Use/Nonmotorized Seasonal Use*

- The six-month mixed-use season would run three fewer months than currently from January through June.
- The six-month nonmotorized use season would run three more months than currently from July through December.

*Whitmore Exchanges*

- ***The NPS has the authority to regulate passenger exchanges, but it has no authority over transportation outside the park boundary, including helicopter flights on Hualapai tribal land. It is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges at Whitmore, so that under this alternative helicopter access or egress for passenger exchanges at Whitmore would be limited to 6,600 passengers out and 3,400 passengers in from January through June. Hiking exchanges would be allowed year-round, but it is assumed that none would occur under this alternative.***

**SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED YEARLY USE —ALTERNATIVE F**

Alternative F		Commercial			Noncommercial			
		Motor	Nonmotor	Total	Standard	Small	Total	
User-Days	Total	Summer	47,019	25,366	72,385	27,252	2,654	29,906
		Shoulder	22,868	20,247	43,115	29,855	5,792	35,647
		Winter	13,189	0	13,189	31,644	9,260	40,904
		Full Year	83,076	45,613	128,689	88,752	17,706	106,457
Trips Launching	Total	Summer	305	110	415	124	31	155
		Shoulder	153	85	238	122	61	183
		Winter	30	0	30	120	91	211
		Full Year	487	196	683	366	183	548
Recreational Passengers	Total	Summer	8,931	2,928	11,859	1,909	186	2,095
		Shoulder	3,972	2,144	6,116	1,886	366	2,252
		Winter	696	0	696	1,855	543	2,398
		Full Year	13,599	5,072	18,671	5,649	1,094	6,744

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

## 2.4.7 ALTERNATIVE G

Alternative G is a mixed motor/nonmotor alternative with mixed use allowed for eight months and nonmotorized use for four months (September–December). It is characterized by slightly smaller maximum group sizes, the highest level of allowable daily launches of all the action alternatives, and the highest number of *estimated* yearly passengers (28,680). ***The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore year-round, but it is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges such that helicopter access would occur only from January through August. Hiking exchanges would be allowed all year.***

### 2.4.7.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- The maximum number of trips at one time would be reduced to 53 (from 70).
- The maximum number of people at one time would be reduced to 895 (from 1,095).
- Total user discretionary hours in hours per year would be increased to 421,073 (from 355,081).

#### *March-to-October Overall Use*

- The *estimated* number of recreational passengers would be increased to 24,970 (from 22,143).
- The *estimated* number of trips launching would be increased to 1,077 (from 866).
- The *estimated* number of user-days would be increased to 187,587 (from 164,972).

### 2.4.7.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

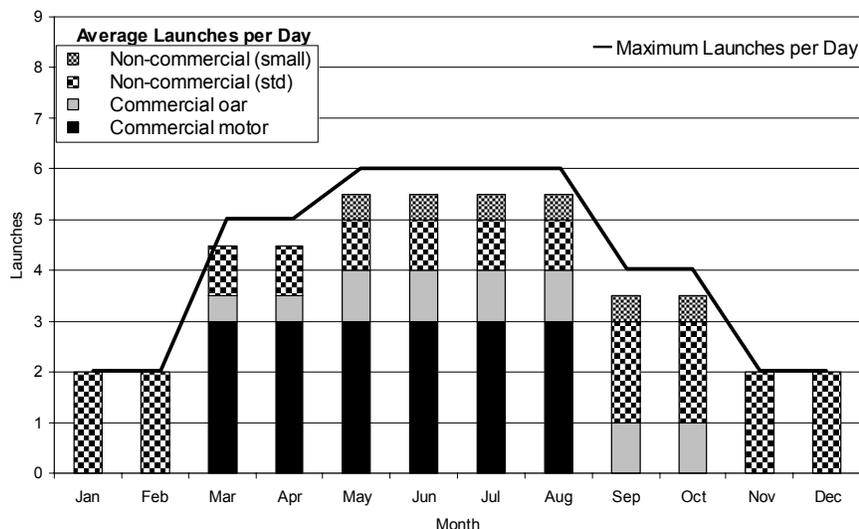
#### *Launches per Day*

- Launches per day would be decreased from nine to a maximum of six during the peak summer season. Figure 2- 8Figure 2-9 shows the launches per day by trip type for each month.

#### *Maximum Group Sizes (includes guides)*

- Commercial motor trip sizes would be reduced to 40 people (from 43).
- Commercial oar trip sizes would be reduced to 30 people (from 39).
- Noncommercial trip sizes would remain at 16 people (standard), and a new group size of 8 (small) would be offered to better distribute groups along the river.

**FIGURE 2- 9: AVERAGE AND MAXIMUM LAUNCHES PER DAY BY TRIP TYPE —ALTERNATIVE G**



*Maximum Trip Lengths (in numbers of days)*

- The maximum number of days for commercial motor trips would be reduced to 8 days in the summer and shoulder seasons (from 18); no commercial motor trips would be offered in winter (30 days currently allowed).
- The maximum number of days for commercial oar trips would be reduced to 14 days in summer (from 18) and 16 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21); no commercial oar trips would be allowed in winter (from 30 days now).
- The maximum number of days for noncommercial oar and motor trips would be reduced to 14 days in summer (from 18) and 16 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21). In winter, the maximum number of days for noncommercial oar trips would be 21 days (from 30) and for noncommercial motor trips 18 days (from 30).

*March to October User-Day Limits*

- Commercial motorized use **is expected to increase somewhat, to an estimated 76,913 user-days**.
- Commercial overall use would be capped at the current 115,500 user-days.
- Noncommercial use would not be capped, increasing to 72,087 user-days (from **an average of 51,889**).

*Winter Use*

- Winter use would increase to accommodate approximately 3,710 people per year (from 318).

**2.4.7.3 OTHER ISSUES**

*Mixed Use/Nonmotorized Seasonal Use*

- The mixed use season would be January through August, for a total of eight months (nine months currently).
- The nonmotorized use season would be September through December, for a total of four months (three months currently).

*Whitmore Exchanges*

- **The NPS has the authority to regulate passenger exchanges, but it has no authority over transportation outside the park boundary, including helicopter flights on Hualapai tribal land. It is assumed that the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe would cooperatively establish a means to regulate the numbers and types of exchanges at Whitmore, so that under this alternative helicopter access or egress for passenger exchanges at Whitmore would be limited to 7,200 passengers out and 3,700 passengers in from January through August. Hiking exchanges would be allowed year-round, but it is assumed that none would occur under this alternative.**

**SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED YEARLY USE —ALTERNATIVE G**

Alternative G		Commercial			Noncommercial			
		Motor	Nonmotor	Total	Standard	Small	Total	
User-Days	Total	Summer	51,884	21,270	73,154	24,146	4,684	28,830
		Shoulder	25,029	17,317	42,346	40,630	2,627	43,257
		Winter	0	0	0	62,323	0	62,323
		Full Year	76,913	38,587	115,500	127,099	7,312	134,410
Trips Launching	Total	Summer	325	94	419	123	62	185
		Shoulder	183	77	260	183	31	214
		Winter	0	0	0	240	0	240
		Full Year	508	171	679	546	92	638
Recreational Passengers	Total	Summer	10,178	2,491	12,669	1,901	369	2,270
		Shoulder	5,078	1,941	7,020	2,829	183	3,011
		Winter	0	0	0	3,710	0	3,710
		Full Year	15,256	4,432	19,688	8,439	552	8,991

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

## 2.4.8 MODIFIED ALTERNATIVE H: NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

*Modified* Alternative H is the NPS preferred alternative. It is a mixed motor/nonmotor alternative *with mixed use allowed for 5.5 months (April 1 through September 15), and nonmotorized use from September 16 through March 31*. It is characterized by lower group sizes and fewer daily launches except during the winter months. This alternative would allow for a *moderate* increase in *estimated* yearly passenger totals (24,657). *The NPS would allow passenger exchanges at Whitmore to accommodate trips launching during the mixed-use season (April 1 through September 15). Hiking exchanges would also only be allowed as described above, and it is assumed that 400 people would hike in each year at Whitmore.*

### 2.4.8.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- The maximum number of trips at one time would be reduced to 60 (from 70).
- The maximum number of people at one time would be reduced to **985** (from 1,095).
- Total user discretionary time in hours per year would be increased to **567,238** (from 355,081).

#### *March to October Overall Use*

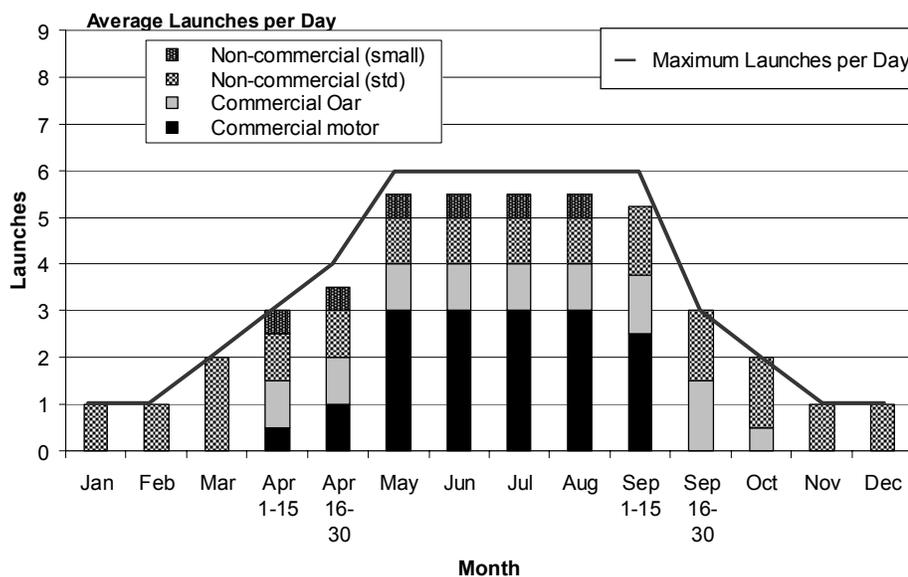
- The *estimated* number of recreational passengers would be increased to **22,802** (from 22,143).
- The *estimated* number of trips launching would be increased to **981** (from 866).
- The *estimated* number of user-days would be increased to **194,899** (from 164,972).

### 2.4.8.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

#### *Launches per Day*

- Launches per day would be decreased to a maximum of six (from nine). Figure 2-10 shows the launches per day by trip type for each month.

FIGURE 2- 10: AVERAGE AND MAXIMUM LAUNCHES PER DAY BY TRIP TYPE —MODIFIED ALTERNATIVE H



*Maximum Group Sizes (includes guides)*

- Commercial motor trip sizes would be reduced to 32 people in the summer and 24 people during the rest of the year (from 43).
- Commercial oar trip sizes would be reduced to 32 people in the summer and 24 people during the rest of the year (from 39).
- Noncommercial trip sizes would remain at the current level of 16 people (standard), and a new group size of 8 (small) would be offered to **reduce campsite competition** along the river.

*Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- The maximum trip length for commercial motor trips would be reduced to 10 days in summer and **12 days in the** shoulder seasons (from 18); there would be no winter commercial motor trips (from 30 days currently).
- The maximum trip length for commercial oar trips would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18), and 18 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21); **there would be no winter commercial oar trips** (from 30 days currently).
- The maximum noncommercial oar trip length would be reduced to 16 days in summer (from 18), **18 days September 1-15 (from 21), 21 days in the remainder** of the shoulder seasons (from 21), and 25 days in winter (from 30 days currently). **Noncommercial motor trips would be reduced to 12 days in summer (from 18), 12 days in the shoulder seasons (from 21),** and no motor trips would be allowed **in winter**.

*March to October User-Day Limits*

- Commercial motorized use **is expected to increase somewhat, to an estimated 76,913 user-days**.
- Commercial overall use would be capped at the current 115,500 user-days.
- Noncommercial use would not be capped, increasing to **79,399** user-days (from **an average of 51,889**).

*Winter Use*

- Winter use would increase to accommodate approximately **1,855** people per year (from 318).

**2.4.8.3 OTHER ISSUES***Mixed Use/Nonmotorized Seasonal Use*

- The mixed-use season would decrease to **5.5** months (**April 1 through September 15**).
- The nonmotorized use season would increase to **6.5** months (**September 16 through March 31**)

*Whitmore Exchanges*

- **The NPS has the authority to regulate passenger exchanges, but it has no authority over transportation outside the park boundary, including helicopter flights on Hualapai lands. Passenger exchanges would be allowed at Whitmore to accommodate trips launching during the mixed use season (April 1 through September 15) with a time-of-day restriction (i.e., all exchanges must be completed by 10:00 A.M. local time each day). Exchanges of commercial passengers would only be allowed by companies currently conducting Whitmore exchanges (i.e., grandfather clause in contracts). It is assumed that all passengers exiting their trips at Whitmore would continue to be transported by helicopter similar to today. For passengers beginning their river trips at Whitmore, an estimated 3,635 would be transported in by helicopter and 400 would hike in for a total of 4,035 passengers entering the river corridor. Using the average percentage of total Lees Ferry passengers exchanging at Whitmore from 1998 to 2003, this would result in an estimated 5,715 passengers exiting the river corridor at Whitmore. (See Appendix K for more details about assumptions used in Whitmore passenger exchange calculations.)**

**SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED YEARLY USE —MODIFIED PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE H**

Modified Alternative H		Commercial			Noncommercial			
		Motor	Nonmotor	Total	Standard	Small	Total	
<b>User-Days</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	67,329	24,580	91,909	27,142	5,266	32,407
		Shoulder	9,584	14,007	23,591	45,547	1,445	46,992
		Winter	0	0	0	34,087	0	34,087
		Full Year	76,913	38,587	115,500	106,776	6,710	113,486
<b>Trips Launching</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	369	107	476	123	62	185
		Shoulder	60	62	122	184	15	199
		Winter	0	0	0	120	0	120
		Full Year	429	169	598	427	77	503
<b>Recreational Passengers</b>	<b>Total</b>	Summer	11,511	2,874	14,385	1,901	369	2,270
		Shoulder	1,666	1,556	3,221	2,836	90	2,926
		Winter	0	0	0	1,855	0	1,855
		Full Year	13,177	4,430	17,606	6,592	459	7,051

NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.

## 2.4.9 SUMMARY OF THE LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES

TABLE 2-3: COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES —LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

	Alternatives							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<b>Number of Motor/No-Motor Months</b>	9/3	0/12	0/12	8/4	6/6	6/6	8/4	5.5/6.5
<b>Months with No Motors</b>	Sept 16–Dec 15	All	All	Mar, Apr, Sept, Oct	Oct–Mar	Jul–Dec	Sept–Dec	Sept 16–Mar 31
<b>Maximum Trip Length (in number of days)</b>								
<b>Summer (May–August)</b>								
Commercial Motor	18	0	0	10	8	10	8	10
Commercial Oar	18	16	16	16	14	16	14	16
<b>Noncommercial Motor</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>
Noncommercial Oar	18	16	16	16	16	16	14	16
<b>Shoulder Seasons (March–April/September–October)</b>								
Commercial Motor	21	0	0	10	8	10	8	12
Commercial Oar	21	18	18	18	16	18	16	18
<b>Noncommercial Motor</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>
Noncommercial Oar (Sept 1–15)	18	18	18	18	18	18	16	18
<b>Noncommercial Oar (Other dates)</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Winter (November–February)</b>								
Commercial Motor	30	0	0	18	0	18	0	0
Commercial Oar	30	0	21	21	0	21	0	0
Noncommercial Motor	30	0	0	18	0	18	18	0
Noncommercial Oar	30	18	21	30	21	21	21	25
<b>Maximum Group Size</b>								
Commercial Motor	43	0	0	25	30	30	40	32/24**
Commercial Oar	39	25	30	25	25	30	30	32/24**
Noncommercial Standard	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Noncommercial Small	0	8	0	8	8	8	8	8
<b>Estimated Number of Launches</b>								
Summer	663	492	489	615	662	570	603	661
Shoulder Seasons	204	183	365	275	331	421	474	320
Winter	28	60	240	120	180	240	240	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>1,094</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>1,231</b>	<b>1,317</b>	<b>1,101</b>
<b>Estimated Number of Passengers</b>								
Summer	18,127	8,492	11,252	13,765	15,230	13,954	14,939	16,655
Shoulder Seasons	4,016	3,475	8,949	4,420	5,800	8,367	10,031	6,147
Winter	318	927	5,027	2,242	2,782	3,094	3,710	1,855
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,461</b>	<b>12,894</b>	<b>25,228</b>	<b>20,427</b>	<b>23,812</b>	<b>25,415</b>	<b>28,680</b>	<b>24,657</b>
<b>Estimated User-Days</b>								
Summer	121,869	107,419	110,120	122,739	121,837	102,292	101,984	124,316
Shoulder Seasons	43,103	50,340	89,519	60,816	67,879	78,762	85,603	70,583
Winter	6,159	14,459	82,959	39,759	47,466	54,093	62,323	34,087
<b>Total</b>	<b>171,131</b>	<b>172,218</b>	<b>282,598</b>	<b>223,314</b>	<b>237,182</b>	<b>235,147</b>	<b>249,910</b>	<b>228,986</b>
<b>Whitmore Exchanges</b>								
<b>Passengers in</b>	<b>3,635</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>3,700</b>	<b>4,035</b>
<b>Passengers out</b>	<b>6,630</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>7,200</b>	<b>5,715</b>
<b>Allocation Split (Probable Commercial/Noncommercial Percentage of Annual Use)</b>								
Launches	72/28	46/54	55/45	58/42	52/48	55/45	52/48	54/46
Passengers	84/16	61/39	70/30	73/27	68/32	73/27	69/31	71/29
User-days	66/34	57/43	59/41	62/38	49/51	55/45	46/54	50/50
NOTE: These are nearest whole numbers. Totals reflect cumulative fractional differences.								
* In September motor trips allowed until the 15th of the month; in December motor trips allowed after the 15th (½ motor and ½ no-motor month).								
** Group Size = 32 in the summer months, 24 the rest of the year for commercial motor and oar trips.								

**TABLE 2-4: SUMMARY COMPARISON OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS —LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES**

NOTE: No natural or cultural resources would be impaired as a result of alternatives considered in this *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*.

Impact Topic	Alternatives							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<b>Natural Resources</b>								
<b>Soils</b>	Adverse, localized, short-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, year-round, and moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, year-round, and moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, year-round, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, year-round, moderate effects.
<b>Water Quality</b>	Adverse, localized, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, minor to moderate effects.
<b>Air Quality</b>	Adverse, negligible, local effects on human health and on air quality related resources.	Beneficial, long-term, negligible effects on human health and on air quality related resources.	<b>Beneficial</b> , negligible, local effects on human health and on air quality related resources.	Beneficial, negligible, local effects on human health and on air quality related resources.	Adverse, negligible, local regional effects on human health and on air quality related resources.	Adverse, negligible, <b>local</b> regional impacts on human health and on air quality related resources.	Adverse, negligible, regional impacts on human health and on air quality related resources.	Adverse, negligible, regional impacts on human health and on air quality related resources.
<b>Natural Soundscape</b>	Overall adverse, localized <b>and regional</b> , short-term, minor to moderate effects, with major adverse impacts at Whitmore.	Overall adverse, localized <b>and regional</b> , short-term, negligible to minor effects, with no helicopter impacts at Whitmore.	Overall adverse, localized <b>and regional</b> , short-term, minor effects, with no helicopter impacts at Whitmore.	Overall adverse, localized <b>and regional</b> , short-term, minor to moderate effects, with no helicopter impacts at Whitmore.	Overall adverse, localized <b>and regional</b> , short-term, minor to moderate effects, with adverse moderate to major impacts at Whitmore.	Overall adverse, localized <b>and regional</b> , short-term, moderate effects, with adverse major impacts at Whitmore.	Overall adverse, localized <b>and regional</b> , short-term, moderate effects, with adverse moderate to major impacts at Whitmore.	Overall adverse, localized <b>and regional</b> , short-term, minor to moderate effects, with adverse major impacts at Whitmore.
<b>Cave and Paleontological Resources</b>	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, negligible to <b>minor</b> effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, moderate to <b>major</b> effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, minor to moderate effects.

Impact Topic	Alternatives							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<b>Vegetation</b>	Adverse, localized, seasonal to year-round, short- to long-term, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized, seasonal to year-round, short- to long-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, seasonal to year-round, short- to long-term, moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, seasonal to year-round, short- to long-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, seasonal to year-round, short- to long-term, <b>minor</b> to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, seasonal to year-round, short- to long-term, <b>minor</b> to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, seasonal to year-round, short- to long-term, <b>minor</b> to <b>major</b> effects.	Adverse, localized, seasonal to year-round, short- to long-term, <b>minor</b> to <b>major</b> effects.
<b>Terrestrial Wildlife</b>	Adverse, regional and local, short and long-term, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short and long-term, negligible to <b>moderate</b> effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short and long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short and long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short and long-term, <b>negligible</b> to moderate effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short and long-term, negligible to <b>major</b> effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short and long-term, negligible to <b>major</b> effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short and long-term, negligible to moderate effects.
<b>Aquatic Resources</b>	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal, negligible to major effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal, negligible to major effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal, negligible to major effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal, negligible to major effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal, negligible to moderate effects.
<b>Special Status Species</b>	Adverse, regional and local, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and <b>negligible</b> to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and <b>minor</b> to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and moderate to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and minor to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and minor to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and minor to major effects.
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	Adverse, localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, localized, long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized, long-term, year-round, minor to moderate effects.
<b>Visitor Experience</b>	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round,	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round,	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to major impacts	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to major impacts	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to major impacts	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to major impacts	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to major impacts	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to moderate

Impact Topic	Alternatives							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
	negligible to major impacts for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short-term, seasonal to year-round minor to moderate impacts for others.	negligible to major impacts for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short-term, seasonal to year-round, moderate to major impacts for others.	for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to moderate impacts for others.	for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to moderate impacts for others.	for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short-term, seasonal to year-round, minor impacts for others.	for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short-term, seasonal to year-round, minor impacts for others.	for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short-term, seasonal to year-round, minor impacts for others.	impacts for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to moderate impacts for others.
<b>Socioeconomic Resources</b>	Direct and indirect impacts: negligible.	Adverse, long-term, moderate for commercial <b>operators; adverse, long-term and major for Bar 10;</b> adverse, long-term, and minor for Hualapai tribal revenues. Negligible for the regional economy.	Beneficial, long-term, and major for commercial <b>operators; adverse, long-term, and major for Bar 10;</b> adverse, long-term, and minor for Hualapai tribal revenues. Negligible for the regional economy.	Beneficial, long-term, and major for commercial <b>operators; adverse, long-term, and major for Bar 10;</b> negligible for Hualapai tribal revenues. Negligible for the regional economy.	Beneficial, long-term, and moderate for commercial <b>operators; adverse, long-term and minor for Bar 10;</b> negligible for Hualapai tribal revenues. Negligible for the regional economy.	Beneficial, long-term, and minor for commercial <b>operators; beneficial, long-term and minor for Bar 10 and Hualapai tribal revenues.</b> Negligible for the regional economy.	Beneficial, long-term, and minor for commercial <b>operators; adverse, long-term, and minor for Bar 10;</b> negligible for Hualapai tribal revenues. Negligible for the regional economy.	Beneficial, long-term, and minor for commercial <b>operators; adverse, long-term, and minor for Bar 10;</b> negligible for Hualapai tribal revenues. Negligible for the regional economy.
<b>Park Management and Operations</b>	Adverse, localized and regional, short-term, negligible to long-term moderate effects. Beneficial effects with additional funding and staff.	Adverse, localized and regional, short-term minor to long-term moderate effects. Beneficial effects with additional funding and staff.	Adverse, localized and regional, short-term moderate to long-term minor effects. Beneficial effects with adequate funding and staff.	Adverse, localized and regional, short-term moderate to long-term minor effects. Beneficial effects with adequate funding and staff.	Adverse, localized and regional, short-term moderate to long-term minor effects. Beneficial effects with adequate funding and staff.	Adverse, localized and regional, short-term major, moderate effects. Beneficial effects with adequate funding and staff.	Adverse, localized and regional, short-term major effects. Beneficial effects with adequate funding and staff.	Adverse, localized and regional, short-term moderate and long-term moderate effects. Beneficial effects with adequate funding and staff.

Impact Topic	Alternatives							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
Adjacent Lands	Adverse, localized, seasonal, short-term, moderate effects.	Beneficial, localized, year-round, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, <b>negligible to minor, beneficial, minor to moderate</b> , localized, year-round, short-term effects.	Adverse, <b>negligible to minor to beneficial, minor to moderate</b> , localized, year-round, short-term effects.	Adverse minor to beneficial minor, localized, year-round, short-term effects.	Adverse, localized, seasonal, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, seasonal, short-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, moderate effects.
Wilderness Character	Overall, adverse, localized to regional, short-term to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects.	Overall, beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short-term to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to moderate effects.	Overall, beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short-term to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to moderate effects.	Overall, beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short-term to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to moderate effects.	Overall, beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short-term to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to moderate effects.	Overall, beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short-term to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects.	Overall, beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short-term to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects.	Overall, beneficial and adverse, localized to regional, short-term to long-term, seasonal to year-round, negligible to moderate effects.

TABLE 2-5: HOW WELL THE ALTERNATIVES MEET COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES —  
LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES

Resource/Management Objectives	Alternatives							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<b>Natural Resources</b>								
<b>Soils</b> • Preserve and protect natural soil conditions by minimizing impacts to soils from river recreational activities.	Does not meet in the old high-water zone and would only be met in the new high-water zone by employing additional mitigations at greater levels because of large group sizes and long trips, as well as erratic launch patterns.	Meets because of low use levels, reduced group sizes and trip lengths, and evening out launch patterns, which would reduce impacts to soils.	Does not meet because the benefits gained by decreasing group size and trip length and evening out launch patterns would be offset by increased spring use. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.	Meets because of reduced numbers of passengers, group sizes, and trip lengths; low use in spring would reduce soil impacts. Increased mitigation would be needed due to higher total number of users.	Meets because of reduced group sizes and trip lengths, and keeping use numbers in spring and summer similar to current conditions. Increased mitigation would be needed due to higher total number of users.	Does not meet because of doubling use in the spring, as well as the high motor use in spring and early summer. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.	Does not meet because of the large group sizes, doubling of user-days in the spring, and great increase in total use. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.	Meets because of reduced launches per day, trip lengths, and group sizes; low use in the spring would reduce impacts to soils. Increased mitigation would be needed due to higher total number of users.
<b>Water Quality</b> • Manage river recreation use in a manner that minimizes adverse chemical, physical, and biological changes to the water quality in the main stem of the Colorado River and its tributaries, seeps, and springs.	Does not meet due to spikes in use, large group sizes, and lack of focused management/mitigation.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating use spikes and localized congestion.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating use spikes and localized congestion.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating use spikes and localized congestion.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating use spikes and localized congestion.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating use spikes and localized congestion.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating use spikes and localized congestion.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating use spikes and localized congestion.
<b>Air Quality</b> • Manage river recreational use to ensure that exhaust emissions from river recreation related vessels do not degrade ambient air quality or adversely affect air quality related values.	Meets because levels of motor use have a negligible contribution to air quality impacts.	Meets because no motors would have beneficial effects.	Meets because no motors would have beneficial effects.	Meets because there would be beneficial <b>negligible</b> effects to air quality.	Meets because levels of motor use would have a negligible contribution to air quality impacts.	Meets because levels of motor use would have a negligible contribution to air quality impacts.	Meets because levels of motor use would have a negligible contribution to air quality impacts.	Meets because levels of motor use would have a negligible contribution to air quality impacts.

Resource/Management Objectives		Alternatives							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<p><b>Natural Soundscape</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Manage river recreational use in a manner that is consistent with the management zoning while minimizing the adverse effects of human caused noise impacts to the natural soundscape or natural quiet.</li> </ul>		Does not meet in peak season even with mitigation due to uneven launch patterns, large group sizes, highest launches per day, and motorboats and Whitmore helicopter use allowed nine months.	Exceeds in peak season with mitigation by eliminating motorboats and Whitmore helicopters, even launch patterns, reduced launches and group sizes, and opportunities for long periods of unaffected natural sounds even in peak season.	Exceeds in peak season with mitigation by eliminating motorboats and Whitmore helicopters, even launch patterns, reduced group sizes, and opportunities for long periods of unaffected natural sounds even in peak season.	Meets in peak season with mitigation by evening out launch patterns, reducing group sizes, allowing motorboats eight months per year, but eliminating Whitmore helicopters.	Meets in peak season with mitigation by evening out launch patterns, reducing trip lengths and group sizes, and allowing motorboats and Whitmore helicopters six months per year.	Does not meet in May and June even with mitigation due to very high motorboat levels. Meets objective during rest of year with mitigation by evening out launch patterns, reducing trip lengths, and allowing motorboats and Whitmore helicopters six months per year.	Does not meet even with mitigation due to very high launch levels in all seasons, second largest group sizes, and allowing motorboats and Whitmore helicopters eight months per year.	Meets in peak season with mitigation by evening out launch patterns, reducing trip lengths and group sizes, and allowing motorboats <b>5.5</b> months per year, and Whitmore helicopters <b>to accommodate motorized launches</b> .
<p><b>Caves and Paleontological Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Manage river use to ensure compliance with cave closures and provide for protection of caves and paleontological resources from adverse effects from visitation.</li> </ul>		Does not meet due to spikes in visitation, large group sizes and lack of active site management. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size.

Resource/Management Objectives		Alternatives							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<b>Vegetation</b> •Manage river recreational activities to minimize human-caused impacts to native vegetation, reduce the spread of exotic plant species, and preserve fundamental biological and physical processes.	<b>A</b> Does not meet in the old high-water zone and would only be met in the new high-water zone by employing additional mitigation actions at greater levels because of large group sizes and long trips, as well as erratic launch patterns.	<b>B</b> Meets because of low use reduction in group size and trip length, and evening out launch patterns, which would reduce impacts to vegetation.	<b>C</b> Does not meet because the benefits of decreasing group size and trip length and evening out launch patterns offset by increased <b>annual use</b> and use in the spring. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels in spring.	<b>D</b> Meets because of reduced number of passengers, group sizes, and trip lengths; reduced vegetation impacts from low use in the critical spring season. An increase in the level of mitigation would be needed.	<b>E</b> Meets because of reduced group sizes and trip lengths, and preservation of use numbers in spring and summer similar to current conditions. Increased mitigation needed due to higher total number of users.	<b>F</b> Does not meet because of the doubling of use in the critical spring season. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.	<b>G</b> Does not meet because of the large group sizes, doubling of user-days in the critical spring season and great increase in total use. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.	<b>Modified H</b> Meets because of reduced trip lengths, daily launches, group sizes in the spring; decreased impacts from low use in the spring. Increased mitigation needed due to higher total number of users.	
<b>Terrestrial Wildlife</b> •Manage river recreational use in a manner that protects native terrestrial wildlife and their habitats, and that preserves wildlife populations by minimizing human-caused wildlife disturbances and habitat alteration.	<b>A</b> Meets because of low spring and winter use, low motor use in the spring and low user discretionary time, but an increase in the level of mitigation would be needed.	<b>B</b> Meets because of reduction in number of passengers in spring and summer and year round no motor season. Impacts could reasonably be mitigated down to minor with a moderate increase in levels of mitigation.	<b>C</b> Does not meet due to doubling of user-days and passengers in the spring and tripling of user discretionary time in the spring. Large increase in winter use will increase impacts. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.	<b>D</b> Meets because the reduction in number of passengers, group size and trip length, and preserving low use and eliminating motors in the spring would minimize impacts. A significant but reasonable increase in the level of mitigation would be needed.	<b>E</b> Meets due to reduction in group size, trip length, and a more regular launch pattern. Impacts could be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.	<b>F</b> Does not meet because of the doubling of use in the spring and huge increase in winter use, high spring user discretionary time, and high motor use in the spring and early summer. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor.	<b>G</b> Does not meet due to significant increases in use numbers in winter and spring. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor.	<b>Modified H</b> Meets because use levels are <b>low</b> in the spring, group size is reduced to 24 in the spring and trip lengths are reduced. A reasonable increase in level of mitigation would be necessary	

Resource/Management Objectives		Alternatives							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<p><b>Aquatic Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Manage river recreational use in a manner that protects native aquatic organisms, reduces aquatic habitat alteration, and minimizes the spread of exotic species.</li> </ul>	<p>Does not meet because impacts caused by crowding and congestion that occurs at attraction sites due to erratic launch patterns, large group sizes and long trip lengths would necessitate excessive tributary and attraction site closures to reduce impacts to minor.</p>	<p>Meets due to the reduction in group size and trip length, no motor launch patterns, and decreased use in critical spring and summer months. Additional reasonable site restrictions would be needed to reduce impacts to minor.</p>	<p>Does not meet because reductions in group size and trip length would be offset by high increases in total users and discretionary time. Impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated to a minor level.</p>	<p>Meets due to the reduction in number of passengers, group size and trip length, and preserving low use and elimination of motors in the critical spring season would minimize impacts. An increase in the level of mitigation would be needed.</p>	<p>Meets because the new launch pattern, and group size and trip length reduction will result in fewer people at one time visiting aquatic attractions thereby reducing impacts to resources. A reasonable increase in mitigation would be necessary.</p>	<p>Does not meet because of the doubling of use in the spring, as well as the high motor use in the spring and early summer. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.</p>	<p>Does not meet because of the large group sizes, large increase in shoulder season passengers, in conjunction with a doubling of spring user-days and the concentration of motor use in the spring and summer. At the levels of proposed use, impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.</p>	<p>Meets because use levels are <b>low</b> in the spring, group size is reduced to 24 in the spring and trip lengths are reasonable. A increase in level of mitigation would be necessary.</p>	
<p><b>Special Status Species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Protect all threatened, endangered, sensitive, and candidate species and their habitats from impacts associated with river recreational activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Meets because of low spring and winter use, low motor use in the spring and low user discretionary time, but an increase in the level of mitigation would be needed.</p>	<p>Meets because of reduction in number of passengers in spring and summer and year round no motor season. Impacts could reasonably be mitigated down to minor with a moderating increase in levels of mitigation.</p>	<p>Does not meet due to doubling of user-days and passengers in the spring and tripling of user discretionary time in the spring. Huge increase in winter use will increase impacts. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.</p>	<p>Meets because increases in user discretionary time, the reduction in number of passengers, group size and trip length, and preserving low use and eliminating motors in the critical spring season would minimize impacts. A substantial but reasonable increase in mitigation would be needed.</p>	<p>Meets due to reduction in group size, trip length, and a more regular launch pattern. Impacts could be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.</p>	<p>Does not meet because of the doubling of use in the spring and huge increase in winter use, high spring user discretionary time, and high motor use in the spring and early summer. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor.</p>	<p>Does not meet due to significant increases in use numbers in winter and spring. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor.</p>	<p>Meets because use levels are <b>low</b> in the spring, group size is reduced to 24 in the spring and trip lengths are reasonable. A increase in level of mitigation would be necessary.</p>	

Resource/Management Objectives		Alternatives							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<p><b>Cultural Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain the integrity of all significant cultural resources, with site preservation the optimal condition. If preservation is not possible, slow the rate at which their essential material qualities are lost.</li> </ul>	<p>Does not meet due to spikes in visitation, large group sizes and lack of active site management. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size that helps to maintain the integrity of significant cultural resources.</p>	<p>Does not meet due to increase in use, especially during the off-season months. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.</p>	<p>Does not meet due to increase in use, especially during the off-season months. Effects from increased visitation cannot be reasonably mitigated.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size and providing increased education and interpretation of sensitive cultural resources.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size that helps to maintain the integrity of significant cultural resources.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size that helps to maintain the integrity of significant cultural resources.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size that helps to maintain the integrity of significant cultural resources.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group size that helps to maintain the integrity of significant cultural resources.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for present and future populations to understand, experience, and reflect the human history as evidenced through cultural resources in and near the river corridor; protect these resources from adverse effects from visitation.</li> </ul>	<p>Does not meet due to limited interpretation and protection of sensitive resources from unregulated visitation.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size and providing increased education and interpretation of sensitive cultural resources.</p>	<p>Does not meet due to increase in use, especially during the off-season months. Effects from increased visitation cannot be reasonably mitigated.</p>	<p>Does not meet due to increase in use indicators, especially during the off-season. Fewer yearly passengers. Effects from increased visitation cannot be reasonably mitigated.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size and providing increased education and interpretation of sensitive cultural resources.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size and providing increased education and interpretation of sensitive cultural resources.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size and providing increased education and interpretation of sensitive cultural resources.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size and providing increased education and interpretation of sensitive cultural resources.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserve the integrity and condition of cultural resources and provide opportunities for traditional access by neighboring American Indian tribal members.</li> </ul>	<p>Does not meet due to lack of preservation of significant resources and lack of identified opportunities for American Indian tribal members to access traditional resources.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.</p>	<p>Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.</p>

Resource/Management Objectives		Alternatives							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<p><b>Visitor Experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a diverse range of quality recreational opportunities for visitors to experience and understand the environmental interrelationships, resources, and values of Grand Canyon National Park.</li> </ul>	Meets by providing a diverse range of river trip opportunities with a variety of group sizes and trip lengths.	Does not meet due to the elimination of motorized river trip and Whitmore exchange opportunities. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.	Does not meet due to the elimination of motorized river trip and Whitmore exchange opportunities. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.	Does not meet due to the elimination of motorized river trip and Whitmore exchange opportunities. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.	Meets by providing a diverse range of opportunities with a variety of group sizes and trip lengths (although Whitmore helicopter exchange opportunities are eliminated).	Meets by providing a diverse range of river trip opportunities with a variety of group sizes and trip lengths.	Meets by providing a diverse range of river trip opportunities and a variety of group sizes and trip lengths.	Meets by providing a diverse range of river trip opportunities with a variety of group sizes and trip lengths (although eliminates winter commercial river trips and provides the shortest trip lengths of all alternatives).	Meets by providing a diverse range of river trip opportunities with a variety of group sizes <b>and trip lengths (although eliminates winter commercial river trips)</b> .
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels and types of use enhance visitor experience and minimize crowding, conflicts, and resource impacts.</li> </ul>	Does not meet due to substantial spikes in use, large group sizes, camp competition, and congestion at popular attraction sites during the summer. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.	Meets by setting daily launch limits and reducing group size, camp competition, and congestion at popular attraction sites.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by setting daily launch limits and reducing group size, camp competition, and congestion at popular attraction sites.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by setting daily launch limits and reducing group size, camp competition, and congestion at popular attraction sites.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by setting daily launch limits and reducing group size, camp competition, and congestion at popular attraction sites.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by setting daily launch limits and reducing group size, camp competition, and congestion at popular attraction sites.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by setting daily launch limits and reducing group size, camp competition, and congestion at popular attraction sites.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by setting daily launch limits, reducing group size, camp competition, and congestion at popular attraction sites.

Resource/Management Objectives		Alternatives							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the Colorado River corridor through Grand Canyon National Park to protect and preserve the resource in a wild and primitive condition and provide a wilderness river experience.</li> </ul>	Meets (with reasonable mitigation), although to a lesser degree than most action alternatives due to large group sizes, substantial spikes in use, camp competition, and congestion at popular attraction sites during the summer months.	Meets by reducing group sizes, setting daily launch limits, prohibiting Whitmore helicopter exchanges, and providing increased nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group sizes, setting daily launch limits, prohibiting Whitmore helicopter exchanges, and providing increased nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets by reducing group sizes, setting daily launch limits, prohibiting Whitmore helicopter exchanges, and providing increased nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets by reducing group sizes, setting daily launch limits, restricting the number and timing of Whitmore helicopter exchanges, and providing increased nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group sizes, setting daily launch limits, restricting the number and timing of Whitmore helicopter exchanges, and providing increased nonmotorized opportunities (although to a lesser degree than other action alternatives).	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group sizes, setting daily launch limits, restricting the number and timing of Whitmore helicopter exchanges, and providing increased nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group sizes, setting daily launch limits, restricting the number and timing of Whitmore helicopter exchanges, and providing increased nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets by reducing group sizes, setting daily launch limits, restricting the number and timing of Whitmore exchanges, and providing increased nonmotorized opportunities.
<b>Socioeconomic Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities while minimizing the impacts of actions to resources, user groups, and park neighbors.</li> </ul>	Meets.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation to commercial operators.) Impacts to Bar 10 cannot be mitigated.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation to commercial operators.) Impacts to Bar 10 cannot be mitigated.	Meets. Impacts to Bar 10 cannot be mitigated.	Meets. Impacts to Bar 10 may not be mitigated).	Meets. No mitigations required. Increased revenue for all commercial operators).	Exceeds. No mitigations required. Increased revenue for all commercial operators).	Meets. No mitigations required.	<b>Meets.</b> No mitigations required. Increased revenue for all commercial operators.
<b>Park Operations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure sufficient fiscal and human resources necessary to successfully implement the plan.</li> </ul>	Does not meet due to current deficiencies in fiscal and human resources.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing use levels.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size, and spreading use throughout the year.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size, and spreading use throughout the year.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size, and spreading use throughout the year.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size, and spreading use throughout the year.	Does not meet due to the substantial shift in use patterns and increased use in spring months.	Does not meet due to large group size and increased year round use.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size, and spreading use throughout the year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize adverse effects of administrative use on natural and cultural resources, visitor experience, and wilderness character in the river corridor.</li> </ul>	<b>Meets (by implementing minimum requirement protocols).</b>	<b>Meets.</b>	<b>Meets.</b>	<b>Meets.</b>	<b>Meets.</b>	<b>Meets.</b>	<b>Meets.</b>	<b>Meets.</b>	<b>Meets.</b>

Resource/Management Objectives	Alternatives							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Modified H
<b>Adjacent Lands</b> • Minimize adverse effects from river management to areas outside of the park.	Does not meet. Spikes in use and large group sizes result in impacts at exchanges, put-ins and take-outs. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.	Meets by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group sizes. No mitigation required.	Meets by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group sizes. No mitigation required.	Meets by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group sizes. No mitigation required.	Meets by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group sizes. No mitigation required.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group sizes.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group sizes.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by eliminating spikes in use and reducing group sizes.
• Minimize adverse effects of adjacent land activities on park resources and river activities. • Work cooperatively with the Hualapai Tribe and other adjacent land managers on alternatives and implementation of a final Colorado River Management Plan.	Meets (no mitigation required).	Meets (no mitigation required).	Meets (no mitigation required).	Meets (no mitigation required).	Meets (no mitigation required).	Meets (no mitigation required).	Meets (no mitigation required).	Meets (no mitigation required).
<b>Wilderness Character</b> • Provide a range of recreational opportunities consistent with the preservation of wilderness character.	Meets.	Meets (by analyzing range of alternatives).	Meets (by analyzing range of alternatives).	Meets (by analyzing range of alternatives).				
• Manage administrative use in a manner consistent with the preservation of the wilderness character of the river.	Does not meet due to large group size and limited nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets due to small group size and year round nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets due to small group size and year round nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets, but to a lesser degree due to limited nonmotorized periods.	Meets, but to a lesser degree due to limited nonmotorized periods.	Meets for only a portion of the year due to limited nonmotorized opportunities.	Does not meet for most of the year due to large group size and limited nonmotorized opportunities.	Meets due to small group size and increased nonmotorized opportunities.
	Meets (by implementing minimum requirement protocols).	Meets.	Meets.	Meets (by implementing minimum requirement protocols).	Meets (by implementing minimum requirement protocols).	Meets (by implementing minimum requirement protocols).	Meets (by implementing minimum requirement protocols).	Meets (by implementing minimum requirement protocols).

## 2.5 LOWER GORGE ALTERNATIVES (RM 226 TO RM 277)

The Lower Gorge alternatives relate to the section of the Colorado River from Diamond Creek (RM 226) to Lake Mead (RM 277). Five alternatives that represent the full range of use from low to very high levels have been developed for this river section. These alternatives are independent of the alternatives for the upper river from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek. It is possible to combine any of the Lower Gorge alternatives with any of the Lees Ferry alternatives.

Recreational use patterns change in this section of the river as a result of differing land management practices and road and boat access to the river by way of the Hualapai Reservation and Lake Mead. The complexities of land management are addressed in more detail in Section 3.7 (Adjacent Lands) of Chapter 3. For the purpose of developing alternatives, the Hualapai Tribe controls the access and use of lands on the south side of the river above the historic high water line *from upstream of National Canyon (RM 167) at RM 165 to the Hualapai reservation boundary at RM 273*. An 18-mile-long unpaved road across Hualapai tribal land provides access from Peach Springs, Arizona to the mouth of Diamond Creek (RM 226). This road provides the first vehicle access to the river below Lees Ferry; therefore, Diamond Creek is used as a primary takeout point for river trips, especially nonmotorized trips. Trips bypassing Diamond Creek must travel an additional 54 miles to the next takeout opportunity at Pearce Ferry (now closed due to low water) or more than 70 miles to South Cove on Lake Mead. Diamond Creek is also a launching point for trips running just the Lower Gorge.

Many of the commercial companies coming downriver from Lees Ferry use the *exchange point* at Whitmore (RM 187), which allows passengers to end their trip at this point and exit *the canyon* by helicopters *landing on and taking off from Hualapai tribal land. Similar to helicopter flights in the Quartermaster area, the National Park Service has no authority over these transportation options located outside the park boundary*. The boats must continue to Diamond Creek or Lake Mead. Boats proceed with or without passengers (deadhead) and some exit the river by way of the Diamond Creek road. However, deadhead trips generally bypass Diamond Creek and takeout at Pearce Ferry (or South Cove at low lake levels). Below Diamond Creek the user day limits established by Grand Canyon National Park do not currently apply. Some companies use the Whitmore exchange point to not only take passengers out but also to bring new passengers in for a short, three-day trip through the Lower Gorge. After a three day river trip, these passengers are usually met by a jetboat and taken to South Cove. Other trips, both commercial and private, end at Diamond Creek, and both passengers and boats travel across Hualapai tribal land. HRR trips and some private trips launch at Diamond Creek to run through the Lower Gorge. Farther down the river, at *RM 262/263*, helicopters operating for the tribe carry people to the river for a quick pontoon boat ride and then a helicopter trip out at the same point. HRR trips launching at Diamond Creek also use the helicopters at RM 262 to exit or exchange their passengers and the boats continue on to Lake Mead. Occasionally, HRR trips bring in new passengers at this location and continue downriver to Lake Mead. Upriver travel from Lake Mead in motorized boats is permitted as far as Separation Canyon. Encounters with other groups and congestion are at their highest levels in the Lower Gorge; for instance, group sizes are higher and pontoon trips can be encountered on both their upriver and downriver course.

To accommodate the use levels from upriver trip takeouts, as well as commercial operations, *the Hualapai Tribe has installed limited facilities on tribal lands* at the following locations:

Diamond Creek	2 ramadas, 1 toilet
Spencer Canyon	1 toilet
RM 259	2 helicopter pads, 4 shade umbrellas
RM260	4 helicopter pads, 2 ramadas
RM262	2 helicopter pads, 1 ramada, 1 fuel storage area, 1 boat mooring facility
RM263	7 helicopter pads, 3 ramadas, 2 toilets, 1 boat mooring facility

*Modified* Alternative 4 is the NPS preferred alternative *for the Lower Gorge* and together with the Lees Ferry *Modified* Preferred Alternative H represent the combined *NPS* preferred alternative in this *Final Environmental Impact Statement*.

## 2.5.1 CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES

### 2.5.1.1 CARRYING CAPACITY STANDARDS

Use in the Lower Gorge represents an increase in the intensity and variety of use; trip lengths range from less than one hour to several days *and trips launching in the Lower Gorge are joined by continuation trips from Lees Ferry*. Additionally, river traffic is two-directional below Separation Canyon. This complexity and high degree of variety makes setting the number of trips at one time, people at one time, and user discretionary time less useful than in the upper section of the river. At the same time, many standards remain important. The following key standards were used to calculate carrying capacity in the Lower Gorge:

- Number, size, distribution, and expected lifespan of camping beaches
- Number, types, and condition of natural and cultural resources
- Contacts per day (on-river attraction site encounters), campsite competition, group size, trip length, and launch patterns
- *Trip type (continuation trip, day trip, overnight trip, and pontoon trip)*

### 2.5.1.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

**Diamond Creek Launches.** The significance of launches per day as a management variable is detailed in the discussion of the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek key trip variables (see Chapters 3 and 4). The current condition of two private launches per day is carried throughout each of the alternatives, but launches for HRR day and overnight trips have been set to address carrying capacity in the reaches below Diamond Creek.

**Group Size.** The significance of group size as a management variable is detailed in the discussion of the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek key trip variables (see Chapters 3 and 4). The zones below Diamond Creek are characterized as semi-primitive, recognizing higher use and a greater variety of activities. The size and capacity of camping beaches in the Lower Gorge is diminishing due to erosion and vegetation encroachment by exotic plant species accounts for

much of the loss of areas suitable for camping. Group size affects park resources because larger groups need more space at lunch, camping, and attraction sites. This is another important variable that can be directly prescribed by the NPS to achieve management objectives.

**Maximum Trip Lengths.** The significance of trip length as a management variable is detailed in the discussion of the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek key trip variables (see Chapters 3 and 4). *Shorter trip lengths are consistent with the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum zoning in the Lower Gorge.*

**Campsites and Attraction Sites.** As described in Section 3.4 (Visitor Use and Experience) of Chapter 3, there are fewer campsites in the Lower Gorge, particularly downstream of Separation Canyon. Within the first 14 miles below Diamond Creek there are 15 camps and three popular attraction sites. The number of existing camps, as well as the number of new camps allowed to be created, and the degree of development allowed at these new camps, were key factors in determining the number of trips launching per day.

**Upriver Travel.** Boats traveling upriver from Lake Mead and the pontoon boat tours in the Quartermaster area currently add to the mix of recreational use and activity, especially in Zone 3 and upriver as far as Separation Canyon in Zone 2. Upriver travel from Lake Mead is addressed in each alternative by placing limits on the types of upriver travel allowed and the allowable destination. The destinations and type of uses are key to carrying capacity, visitor safety, and the range of opportunities in the Lower Gorge.

## **2.5.2 ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL LOWER GORGE ALTERNATIVES**

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Several elements that are common to all alternatives for the Lower Gorge are summarized below:

**HRR Boats**—All HRR boats (day or overnight trips) are assumed to be motorized boats similar to those in current use. These have a total capacity of 10 people: eight passengers and two crewmembers.

**HRR Deadhead Trips**—HRR trips do not generally “deadhead” boats from Diamond Creek to RM 262 for trips from that point to Lake Mead. The Hualapai Tribe offers exchanges at RM 262, but the practice of having empty boats traveling the first part of the Lower Gorge is inefficient and contributes to congestion in the Lower Gorge.

**Spencer Creek Toilet**—The existing composting toilet at Spencer Creek, *installed by the Hualapai Tribe*, will remain in all alternatives as agreed to with the tribe relative to the Area of Cooperation.

**Educational Trips**—A distinction will no longer be made between noncommercial and educational special use trips from Diamond Creek to Lake Mead. Educational groups can apply as a noncommercial trip with a 16-person limit.

**Group Size**—Group size limits as part of continuation trips will be as defined for the Lees Ferry alternatives (see Table 2-3).

**Upriver Travel**—No upriver travel will be allowed above Separation Canyon.

**Operating Requirements for Pontoon Boats**—Pontoon boats will be operated in accordance with U.S. Coast Guard regulations for commercial use, which require a 6-pack license to carry six passengers. A captain’s license is required to carry additional passengers.

**Permit System**—The permit system for noncommercial trips starting at Diamond Creek will be handled by Grand Canyon National Park personnel and will be separate from the permit system for launches at Lees Ferry. The park will provide permit information to the Hualapai Tribe so that they know what to expect and who to contact for their fees. Hualapai River Runners, a Hualapai tribal enterprise, runs the only commercial operation that launches at Diamond Creek. *Permits will continue to be issued on a first come/first serve basis. The NPS reserves the right to implement an alternate permit distribution system should the need arise.*

**Concession Contract**—Subject to compliance with 36 CFR Part 51 Subpart D, the NPS intends to award the Hualapai Tribe a temporary noncompetitive concession contract for a maximum of three years for Lower Gorge operations as described in the Final River Management Plan and the *Record Of Decision* for this *Environmental Impact Statement*.

**Continuation Trips**—*Lees Ferry trips bypassing Diamond Creek (continuation trips) will have the same trip length limits that are required of overnight trips launching at Diamond Creek. Operating requirements for continuation trips will not change below Diamond Creek. Visitation of Hualapai lands requires a permit from the Hualapai Tribe.*

**Trip Lengths**—*Trip length limits apply to all overnight trips below Diamond Creek, including HRR trips, non-commercial trips launching at Diamond Creek, and commercial and noncommercial continuation trips.*

### 2.5.3 ALTERNATIVE 1: NO ACTION (CURRENT CONDITIONS)

Alternative 1 is the no-action alternative for the section of river between Diamond Creek and Lake Mead where existing operations and current conditions would continue. Use in this area is characterized by upriver trip takeouts, including jetboats (with use varying between the primary and shoulder seasons); HRR day trips (primary season is March–October) and occasional overnight trips; upriver continuation trips; noncommercial trips launching at Diamond Creek; and pontoon boat excursions in the Quartermaster area (about RM 262) that are operated by Oriental Tours Incorporated (OTI) under contract with the tribe. Launch and takeout congestion occurs primarily during the high-use summer months at Diamond Creek. Occasionally, flash floods on the Diamond Creek road make launches and takeouts impossible. Passengers for the pontoon boat excursions and the HRR trips enter and exit the river corridor by means of helicopters at helipads in the Quartermaster area. In addition to the downriver traffic, riverboat takeout shuttles and recreational users from Lake Mead make periodic journeys into the lower gorge of the Grand Canyon. Based on agreements between the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe in 2000, a moratorium was placed on recreational use levels occurring at that time. ***Launches and trip lengths are not currently capped and daily use is highly variable. For this reason, current condition use is presented using averages based on data provided by the Hualapai Tribe in 2003.***

#### 2.5.3.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

##### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- Current operations would be continued. Recreational use would not be limited except noncommercial launches from Diamond Creek (two per day for a maximum of 16 people each).
- The number of pontoon boats in the Quartermaster area would be maintained at five.
- The number of pontoon passengers would be maintained at current levels.
- The current 15 campsites would be maintained in nonmanipulated areas.

##### *Peak Season Overall Use*

- Current operations would be continued (for continuation trips, HRR day and overnight trips, and pontoon boat trips).
- Launches per day from Diamond Creek would include two noncommercial and one HRR day trip, plus occasional HRR overnight trips.
- Overall use would continue current operations, including jetboat commercial passenger pickups and tow-outs from Lake Mead.

#### 2.5.3.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

##### *Diamond Creek Launches (number per day)*

- HRR day trips would continue to average one launch per day in the peak season, with a maximum of 10 boats launching at the same time; there would be no annual limit on the number of trips.
- HRR overnight trips would average three per month, with no annual limit on the number of trips. Trips are generally for two days and one night.
- Noncommercial river trips would be limited to two launches per day. About 100 noncommercial overnight, educational, or administrative trips launch from Diamond Creek annually.

##### *Group Sizes (in numbers of people)*

- HRR day trips would be limited to one per day, with a maximum capacity of 80 passengers and 20 crew members per day (each of the 10 boats accommodates a maximum of 8 passengers and 2 crew members); trip sizes vary from a low of 2 passengers to a high of 89 passengers on any given day. Overnight trips generally consist of three boats with a total of 28 passengers and up to 6 crew members (34 people total).

- Noncommercial trips would be limited to 16 people (32 people total per day).
- Groups sizes for continuation trips would be consistent with current upriver operations for both commercial and noncommercial trips.

*Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- There would be no restrictions on the number of days for trips.

*Campsites*

- There are no developed campsites.
- Camps would be available on a first-come basis; there would be no limit on the number of nights that trip participants could camp in the Lower Gorge.
- There would be no scheduling of campsites.

*Upriver Travel*

- There would be no limits on the number of boats traveling upriver from Lake Mead.
- Upriver travel would be restricted to the river section below Separation Canyon.

**2.5.3.3 OTHER ISSUES**

*Helicopter Use*

- Helicopter use associated with river use would be limited to HRR exchanges and pontoon trips in the Quartermaster area. Helicopter operations in the Quartermaster area take off and land on sovereign tribal land; thus, the National Park Service does not regulate helicopter operations in this area.

*Exchanges*

- There would be no limits on the number of exchanges. Exchanges would be restricted to the **docks** in the Quartermaster area.

*Pontoon Use and Associated Facilities*

- Five pontoon boats (21–24 feet long) would continue to take visitors on a 20-minute boat tour, with a maximum of 10 passengers per boat at one time. There would be no limits on the number of pontoon boats on the water at one time.
- ***In 2003 a total of 56,562 passengers was reported, with an annual average of 160 passengers per day and a seasonal average of 188 passengers per day from May through September. Daily passenger numbers vary, from 0 to more than 350. When use levels were frozen as part of the Core Team agreement in 2000, the yearly passenger total was 22,670.***
- Two small floating docks at RM 262 and RM 263 would be continued for passenger loading and unloading (see previous listing for available facilities).
- Access for all pontoon boat passengers would continue by helicopter.

**SUMMARY OF USE —ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)**

Diamond Creek Launches (Group Size, Including Guides)			Available Campsites	Pontoon Trips* (Average Daily Passengers)		Upriver Travel from Lake Mead
Noncommercial Trips	HRR Day Trips	HRR Overnight Trips		Peak Season	Year-round	
Maximum of two trips per day (16 people each).	Average of one trip per day (up to 100 people).	Average of three trips per month (34 people).	15	188**	160	Allowed (unlimited below Separation Canyon).

\* Passenger access is by helicopter.

\*\*Daily passenger numbers vary widely, occasionally surpassing 350/day

## 2.5.4 ALTERNATIVE 2

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Alternative 2 is characterized by the implementation of daily passenger limits launching from Diamond Creek and by the elimination of pontoon boat operations and associated facilities in the Quartermaster area. Upriver trip takeouts would be allowed based on continuation trip needs; HRR day trips would be restricted during the peak season to two trips of 30 people per day (for a maximum of 60 people, including guides), and during the rest of the year to one trip per day (maximum of 30 people including guides). HRR overnight trips would be restricted to one trip per day of 30 people (including guides) year-round. The number of boats allowed to travel upriver as far as RM 262 would be decreased to two per day.

### 2.5.4.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- Current operations would be reduced by decreasing group size for HRR day trips from one trip of up to 100 people per day to two launches of 30 people per day (for a maximum of 60 people, including guides). HRR overnight trips would be increased to one launch per day (up from three per month), with a maximum group size of 30, down from an average of 34 people per trip (including guides). Two noncommercial launches per day would be allowed (16 people each), the same as Alternative 1.
- The current pontoon boat operation and associated facilities in the Quartermaster area would be eliminated.
- One additional campsite would be created, contingent on environmental compliance, primarily for HRR overnight trips. Resource manipulation of the area would be restricted to removal of vegetation only. The 15 existing campsites would not be changed.

#### *Peak Season Overall Use*

- The number of recreational passengers per day would be reduced and would be comprised only of continuation trips, along with HRR day and overnight and noncommercial launches from Diamond Creek. Yearly passenger totals for HRR could increase.
- Daily launches from Diamond Creek during the peak season would include two HRR day trips and one HRR overnight trip; noncommercial launches (two per day) would be the same as Alternative 1.

### 2.5.4.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

#### *Diamond Creek Launches (maximum number per day)*

- HRR day trips would be limited to two launches per day in the peak season and one launch per day in the non-peak season.
- HRR overnight trips would be limited to one launch per day year-round.
- The maximum number of noncommercial launches would remain at two per day.

#### *Maximum Group Sizes (in numbers of people)*

- Each HRR day and overnight trip would be limited to 30 people (including guides).
- Noncommercial trips would remain at 16 people.

#### *Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- During the peak season trips would be limited to four nights (one night between Diamond Creek and Separation Canyon, one night between Separation Canyon and RM 260, and two nights between RM 260 and RM 277).

- During the non-peak season trips would be limited to five nights (one night between Diamond Creek and Separation Canyon, two nights between Separation Canyon and RM 260, and two nights between RM 260 and RM 277).

*Campsites*

- One new campsite would be developed for HRR use (below Separation Canyon), with a low level of resource manipulation (vegetation removal only).

*Upriver Travel*

- Motorized tow-outs would be allowed below RM 262.
- Commercial pick-ups would be limited to two per day during the peak season.
- No commercial pick-ups would be allowed during the non-peak season.
- No jetboat tours would be allowed.

**2.5.4.3 OTHER ISSUES**

*Helicopter Use*

- Helicopter use associated with river use would be limited to HRR exchanges in the Quartermaster area. Because pontoon trips would be eliminated, associated helicopter use would be eliminated as well. Helicopter operations in the Quartermaster area take off and land on sovereign tribal land; thus, the NPS does not regulate helicopter operations in this area.

*Lunch Stops*

- Trips could not combine lunch stops due to the limited physical capacity of nearshore areas.

*Pontoon Use and Associated Facilities*

- Pontoon use and associated facilities would be eliminated under this alternative.

**SUMMARY OF USE —ALTERNATIVE 2**

Diamond Creek Launches (Maximum Group Size, Including Guides)			Available Campsites	Pontoon Trips (Average Daily Passengers)		Upriver Travel from Lake Mead
Noncommercial Trips	HRR Day Trips	HRR Overnight Trips		Peak Season	Year-round	
Maximum of two trips per day (16 people each).	Peak season: two trips per day (30 people each). Non-peak season: one trip per day (30 people).	One trip per day (30 people).	15+1*	0	0	Commercial pick-ups: peak season —two per day; non-peak season —none. Tow-outs allowed below RM 262.

\* Allows for vegetation removal to develop one 1 HRR campsite on river left.

## 2.5.5 ALTERNATIVE 3

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Alternative 3 is characterized by the implementation of daily passenger limits for HRR (up to 150 people per day in the peak season) and pontoon boat operations (up to 400 people per day). Peak daily use for HRR day trips would be reduced from 100 to 90 people per day (including crew), while HRR overnight trips would go from an average of three trips per month to two trips per day year-round, with a daily maximum of 60 people (including crew). Pontoon operations would continue in the Quartermaster area with five boats and daily passenger totals up to 400. Takeouts for upriver trips would be allowed based on takeout needs for continuation trips. An additional commercial use—jetboat tours—would be allowed with a maximum of two tours per day. A floating, formal dock would be installed at RM 262.5, contingent on environmental compliance and the removal of the informal docks at RM 262 and 263. The dock would be sized to allow mooring of three pontoon boats and HRR downriver boats while unloading and loading passengers.

### 2.5.5.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- Overall operations would be increased while reducing group size for all HRR trips (both day and overnight).
- Five pontoon boats would be maintained in the Quartermaster area.
- The number of pontoon passengers would be capped at 400 per day, an increase from the current daily average.
- Two additional campsites would be created, contingent on environmental compliance, primarily for HRR overnight trip use; resource manipulation would be restricted to vegetation removal and limited supply storage. The 15 existing campsites for other users would not be changed.

#### *Peak Season Overall Use*

- The number of recreational passengers per day would be increased, including continuation trips, HRR day and overnight trips, noncommercial trips launching from Diamond Creek, and pontoon boat excursions. Yearly passenger totals for HRR could increase.
- Trips launching from Diamond Creek would include three HRR day trips and two HRR overnight during peak season; two noncommercial launches per day would be allowed, the same as Alternative 1.
- Two upriver jetboat tours per day would be allowed.

### 2.5.5.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

#### *Diamond Creek Launches (maximum number per day)*

- HRR day trips would be limited to three launches per day in the peak season and two launches in the non-peak season.
- HRR overnight trips would be limited to two launches per day year-round.
- The maximum number of noncommercial daily launches would remain at two.

#### *Maximum Group Sizes (number of people)*

- HRR day and overnight trips would be limited to 30 people each (including guides).
- Noncommercial trips would remain at 16 people.
- Group sizes for jetboat tours would be subject to legal carrying capacity standards of the craft, but no more than 36.

*Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- During the peak season trips would be limited to five nights (one night between Diamond Creek and Separation Canyon, two nights between Separation Canyon and RM 260, and two nights between RM 260 and RM 277).
- During the non-peak season trips would be limited to eight nights (two nights between Diamond Creek and Separation Canyon, three nights between Separation Canyon and RM 260, and three nights between RM 260 and RM 277).

*Campsites*

- Two new campsites for HRR use would be developed below Separation Canyon, allowing a medium level of development (vegetation removal and limited supply storage).
- The total number of other campsites would remain unchanged.

*Upriver Travel*

- Motorized tow-outs would be allowed below Separation Canyon.
- Commercial pick-ups would be limited to four per day year-round.
- Commercial pick-ups would be allowed to shuttle kayak trips upstream, dropping them off at RM 273.
- Jetboat tours would be limited to two per day during the peak season only.

**2.5.5.3 OTHER ISSUES**

*Helicopter Use*

- Helicopter use associated with river use would be limited to HRR exchanges and pontoon passenger access in the Quartermaster area. Helicopter operations in the Quartermaster area take off and land on sovereign tribal land; thus, the NPS does not regulate helicopter operations in this area.

*Lunch Stops*

- Trips could not combine lunch stops due to the limited physical capacity of nearshore areas.

*Pontoon Use*

- There would be a maximum of five boats in the Quartermaster area.
- A maximum of five boats (with a maximum of 10 passengers per boat) could operate at one time.
- The maximum number of passengers would be 400 per day.
- Existing docking facilities would be removed and a formal dock would be constructed at RM 262.5, contingent on environmental compliance.

**SUMMARY OF USE —ALTERNATIVE 3**

Diamond Creek Launches (Group Size Including Guides)			Available Campsites	Pontoon Trips* (Maximum Daily Passengers)	Upriver Travel from Lake Mead
Noncommercial Trips	HRR Day Trips	HRR Overnight Trips			
Maximum of two trips per day (16 people each).	Peak season: three trips per day (30 people each). Non-peak season: two trips per day (30 people).	Two trips per day (30 people).	15+2**	400	Four commercial pick-ups per day, year-round.*** Two jetboat tours per day in the peak season. Tow-outs allowed below Separation Canyon.

\* Passenger access by means of helicopter.

\*\* Allows for vegetation removal to develop two HRR campsites with limited supply storage on river left.

\*\*\* Commercial pick-ups would be allowed to shuttle kayak trips up to RM 273.

## 2.5.6 MODIFIED ALTERNATIVE 4: NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

*Modified* Alternative 4 is *the NPS preferred alternative for the Lower Gorge*. It is characterized by a redistribution of HRR operations and represents a consensus between Grand Canyon National Park and the Hualapai Tribe on levels of HRR use and other uses originating at Diamond Creek. ***This alternative, however, presents the NPS's preference for lower levels of pontoon boat use in the Quartermaster area compared to levels proposed by the Hualapai Tribe. Pontoon use levels in this alternative allow for economic growth within the constraints of resource protection.*** HRR daily passenger totals during the peak season would be limited to 96 with group sizes (including guides) not to exceed 40. No limits would be placed on trips per day in the peak season. This would offer HRR managers increased flexibility in scheduling launches while encouraging booking of smaller trips. Two trips of 35 people (including guides) would be permitted daily during the non-peak season. For HRR overnight trips, three trips per day of 20 people (including guides) would be allowed in the peak season, and one trip of 20 people (including guides) in the non-peak season. ***Pontoon operations would continue with six boats in the Quartermaster area, with a preliminary maximum daily capacity of 480 passengers. Maximum daily pontoon passengers could be increased to 600 per day based on favorable performance reviews of concession operations and resource monitoring data.*** Upriver trip takeouts would be allowed based on continuation trip needs ***with a maximum of four take outs per day***. A floating, formal dock would be allowed at RM 262.5, contingent on environmental compliance and removal of the informal docks at RM 262 and 263. The dock would ***be appropriately sized to safely accommodate HRR and pontoon use***.

### 2.5.6.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards*

- Overall HRR operations would increase, while reducing group size for all HRR trips (both day and overnight trips).
- The number of pontoon boats in the Quartermaster area would ***be increased to six; however, a maximum of five would be allowed to operate at any one time.***
- ***The number of pontoon passengers would be preliminarily capped at 480 per day. Maximum daily pontoon passengers could be increased to 600 per day based on favorable performance reviews of concession operations and resource monitoring data. Both caps represent an increase from current daily average.***
- Three additional campsites would be created, contingent on environmental compliance, primarily for the use by HRR overnight trips. Manipulation of the area would be restricted to the removal of vegetation. The existing campsites would not be changed.

#### *Peak Season Overall Use*

- Recreational passengers per day would be ***increased***. Pontoon boat use would remain constant throughout the year. Yearly HRR ***and pontoon*** passenger totals would have the potential to increase.
- Three HRR overnight trips and a variable number of HRR day trips (with a total passenger cap of 96) would be allowed to launch daily from Diamond Creek; noncommercial launches would remain the same as the no-action alternative (two launches per day with a maximum of 16 people each).

### 2.5.6.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

#### *Diamond Creek Launches (number per day)*

- HRR day trips would be unlimited during the peak season (aside from group size and daily passenger limits) and limited to two launches per day (of up to four boats) during the non-peak season.
- HRR overnight trips would be limited to three launches per day in the peak season and one launch per day in the non-peak season
- The maximum number of noncommercial daily launches would remain at two.

#### *Maximum Group Sizes (in numbers of people)*

- HRR day trips would be limited to 40 people (including guides) in the peak season and 35 in the non-peak season.
- HRR overnight trips would be limited to 20 people (including guides) year-round.
- Noncommercial trip group sizes would remain at 16 people per trip.

#### *Maximum Trip Lengths (in number of days)*

- During the peak season trips would be limited to three nights (one night between Diamond Creek and Separation Canyon, one night between Separation Canyon and RM 260, and one night between RM 260 and RM 277).
- During the non-peak season trips would be limited to five nights (one night between Diamond Creek and Separation Canyon, two nights between Separation Canyon and RM 260, and two nights between RM 260 and RM 277).

#### *Campsites*

- Three new campsites could be developed for HRR use (below Separation Canyon) with a low level of development (vegetation removal only).

#### *Upriver Travel*

- Motorized tow-outs would be allowed below Separation Canyon (RM 240).
- Commercial pick-ups would be limited to four per day during the peak season and one per day during the non-peak season.
- No jetboat tours would be allowed.

### 2.5.6.3 OTHER ISSUES

#### *Helicopter Use*

- Helicopter use associated with river trips would be limited to HRR exchanges and pontoon passenger access in the Quartermaster area. Helicopter operations in the Quartermaster area take off and land on sovereign tribal land; thus, the NPS does not regulate helicopter operations in this area.

#### *Lunch Stops*

- Trips could not combine lunch stops due to the limited physical capacity of nearshore areas.

#### *Pontoon Use*

- There could be a maximum of six pontoon boats in the Quartermaster area.
- A maximum of five boats could operate at one time.
- ***The number of pontoon passengers would be preliminarily capped at 480 per day. Maximum daily pontoon passengers could be increased to 600 per day based on favorable performance reviews of concession operations and resource monitoring data.***
- A formal dock, sized to ***safely*** accommodate HRR and pontoon use, would be built at RM 262.5, contingent on environmental compliance and removal of existing docks.

**SUMMARY OF USE —MODIFIED ALTERNATIVE 4**

Diamond Creek Launches (Maximum Group Size, Including Guides)			Available Campsites	Pontoon Trips* (Maximum Daily Passengers)	Upriver Travel from Lake Mead
Noncommercial Trips	HRR Day Trips	HRR Overnight Trips			
Maximum of two trips per day (16 people each).	Peak season: variable (40 people per trip). Non-peak season: two trips per day (35 people).	Peak season: three trips per day (20 people per trip). Non-peak season: one trip per day (20 people).	15+3**	<b>480 (600 based on favorable performance reviews and resource monitoring data).</b>	Commercial pick-ups: peak season —four per day; non-peak season —one per day. Tow-outs allowed below <b>RM 240</b> . <b>No jetboat tours.</b>

\* Passenger access by means of helicopter.

\*\* Allows for vegetation removal only to develop three HRR campsites on river left.

## 2.5.7 ALTERNATIVE 5: HUALAPAI TRIBE PROPOSED ACTION

Alternative 5 is characterized by a redistribution of HRR operations and represents a consensus between Grand Canyon National Park and the Hualapai Tribe on levels of HRR use and other uses originating at Diamond Creek. This alternative, however, presents the tribe's proposed higher levels of pontoon use in the Quartermaster area compared to *the Modified Preferred Alternative 4*. HRR daily passenger totals during the peak season would be limited to 96, with a maximum group size of 40 people (including guides). No limits would be placed on trips per day in the peak season, offering HRR managers increased flexibility in scheduling launches, while encouraging the booking of smaller trips. Two trips of 35 passengers (including guides) would be permitted daily during the non-peak season. For HRR overnight trips, three trips per day of 20 people (including guides) would be allowed during the peak season, and one trip of 20 people (including guides) during non-peak season. Pontoon operations would be expanded, with a maximum of seven boats in the Quartermaster area and a maximum daily capacity of 960 passengers. Upriver trip tow-outs would be allowed based on continuation trip takeout needs. A floating, formal dock (sized to accommodate seven pontoon boats and two HRR boats) would be allowed at RM 262.5, contingent on environmental compliance and the removal of the informal docks at RM 262 and 263. All upriver travel, with the exception of upriver pontoon traffic, would be prohibited above RM 273.

### 2.5.7.1 WHAT THIS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMPLISHES

#### *Carrying Capacity Standards:*

- Overall HRR operations would be increased; however, group sizes would be reduced.
- The current number of pontoon boats in the Quartermaster area would be increased to seven.
- The maximum number of pontoon passengers would be increased to 960 per day.
- Three campsites would be created, contingent on environmental compliance, primarily for the use of HRR overnight trips. Manipulation of the area would be restricted to removal of vegetation. The existing campsites would not be changed.

#### *Peak Season Overall Use*

- HRR use would increase during the peak season. Pontoon boat use would remain constant throughout the year. Yearly passenger totals for HRR could increase.
- Three HRR overnight trips and a variable number of HRR day trips (with a total passenger cap of 96) would be allowed to launch daily from Diamond Creek; allowable noncommercial launches would remain the same as the no-action alternative (two launches per day).

### 2.5.7.2 KEY TRIP VARIABLES

#### *Diamond Creek Launches (maximum per day)*

- HRR day trips would be unlimited during the peak season (aside from group size and daily passenger limits) and limited to two launches per day (of up to four boats) during the non-peak season.
- HRR overnight trips would be limited to three launches per day in the peak season and one launch per day in the non-peak season.
- The maximum number of noncommercial daily launches would remain at two.

*Maximum Group Sizes (number per day)*

- HRR day trips would be limited to 40 people (including guides) in the peak season and 35 in the non-peak season
- HRR overnight trips would be limited to 20 people (including guides) year-round.
- Noncommercial trip group sizes remain at 16 people.

*Maximum Trip Lengths*

- During the peak season trips would be limited to three nights (one night between Diamond Creek and Separation Canyon, one night between Separation Canyon and RM 260, and one night between RM 260 and RM 277).
- During the non-peak season trips would be limited to five nights (one night between Diamond Creek and Separation Canyon, two nights between Separation Canyon and RM 260, and two nights between RM 260 and RM 277).

*Campsites*

- Three new campsites could be developed for HRR use (below Separation Canyon), with a low level of development (vegetation removal only).

*Upriver Travel*

- Upriver travel would be prohibited above RM 273. Commercial pickups (jetboat) and noncommercial tow-outs would be allowed below RM 273.

**2.5.7.3 OTHER ISSUES**

*Helicopter Use*

- Helicopter use associated with river use would be limited to HRR exchanges and pontoon passenger access in the Quartermaster area. Helicopter operations in the Quartermaster area take off and land on sovereign tribal land; thus, the NPS does not regulate helicopter operations in this area.

*Lunch Stops*

- Trips **cannot** combine lunch stops due to the limited physical capacity of nearshore areas.

*Pontoon Use*

- There would be a maximum of 7 boats in the Quartermaster area.
- A maximum of 6 boats could operate at one time.
- There would be a maximum of 960 passengers per day.
- A formal dock would be constructed at RM 262.5, contingent on environmental compliance and removal of existing docking facilities.

**SUMMARY OF USE —ALTERNATIVE 5**

Diamond Creek Launches (Maximum Group Size, Including Guides)			Available Campsites	Pontoon Trips: Maximum Daily Passengers*	Upriver Travel from Lake Mead
Noncommercial Trips	HRR Day Trips	HRR Overnight Trips			
Maximum of two trips per day (16 people each).	Peak season: variable (40 people per trip). Non-peak season: two trips per day (35 people).	Peak season: three trips per day (20 people per trip). Non-peak season: one trip per day (20 people).	15+3**	960	Upriver travel prohibited above RM 273. Commercial pickups (jetboat) and noncommercial tow-outs allowed below RM 273.

\* Passenger access by means of helicopter.

\*\* Allows for vegetation removal only to develop three HRR campsites on river left.

## 2.5.8 SUMMARY OF THE LOWER GORGE ALTERNATIVES

TABLE 2-6: COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES —LOWER GORGE

	Alternatives				
	1	2	3	Modified 4	5
<b>Diamond Creek Launches (maximum group size, including guides)</b>					
Noncommercial	Maximum of two launches per day (16 people each).	Same as alternative 1.	Same as alternative 1.	Same as alternative 1.	Same as alternative 1.
HRR Day Trips	Average of one launch per day (up to 100 people).	Peak season: two launches per day (30 people). Non-peak season: one launch per day (30 people).	Peak season: three launches per day (30 people). Non-peak season: two launches per day (30 people).	Peak season: variable (40 people), not to exceed 96 passengers per day. Non-peak season: two launches per day (35 people).	Same as Modified Alternative 4.
HRR Overnight Trips	Average of one trip per week (34 people).	One trip per day (30 people).	Two trips per day (30 people).	Peak season: three trips per day (20 people). Non-peak season: one trip per day (20 people).	Same as Modified Alternative 4.
<b>Maximum Trip Lengths (nights in the Lower Gorge)</b>					
<i>Diamond Creek to Separation Canyon</i>	<i>No restrictions.</i>	<i>Peak season: 1</i> <i>Non-peak season: 1</i>	<i>Peak season: 1</i> <i>Non-peak season: 2</i>	<i>Peak season: 1</i> <i>Non-peak season: 1</i>	<i>Peak season: 1</i> <i>Non-peak season: 1</i>
<i>Separation Canyon to RM 260</i>	<i>No restrictions.</i>	<i>Peak season: 1</i> <i>Non-peak season: 2</i>	<i>Peak season: 2</i> <i>Non-peak season: 3</i>	<i>Peak season: 1</i> <i>Non-peak season: 2</i>	<i>Peak season: 1</i> <i>Non-peak season: 2</i>
<i>RM 260 to Lake Mead</i>	<i>No restrictions.</i>	<i>Peak season: 2</i> <i>Non-peak season: 2</i>	<i>Peak season: 2</i> <i>Non-peak season: 3</i>	<i>Peak season: 1</i> <i>Non-peak season: 2</i>	<i>Peak season: 1</i> <i>Non-peak season: 2</i>
<b>Campsites</b>					
Available Campsites	15	15+1	15+2	15+3	15+3
Modification of New Campsites*	N/A	Low	Medium	Low	Low
<b>Quartermaster Area Dock</b>					
Type of Dock	Two small floating docks (deteriorated).	None.	One small floating dock.**	<b>One floating dock, sized to safely accommodate HRR and pontoon use.**</b>	One large floating dock.**
<b>Pontoon Operations</b>					
Maximum Daily Passengers†	Peak season: 188. Non-peak season: 130.	0	400	<b>480 (600 based on favorable review of operations and resource monitoring data).</b>	960
<b>Upriver Travel from Lake Mead</b>					
Allowable Destination	Unlimited below Separation Canyon.	Below RM 262.	Below Separation Canyon.	<b>Below Separation Canyon.</b>	Below RM 273.
<b>Allowable Use (exceptions may be granted by NPS when Diamond Creek floods)</b>	Unrestricted commercial pick-ups, tow-outs, and noncommercial jetboats.	Commercial pick-ups: peak season —two per day; non-peak season — none. Tow-outs allowed below RM 262.	Four commercial pick-ups per day, year-round. ‡ Two jetboat tours per day in the peak season. Tow-outs allowed below Separation Canyon.	Commercial pick-ups: peak season —four per day; non-peak season —one per day. Tow-outs below <b>RM 240.</b>	Jetboat pick-ups and tow-outs below RM 273.

\* Low —vegetation removal only; medium —vegetation removal and limited supply storage.

\*\* Assumes removal of existing docks and installation of a single dock at RM 262.5, contingent on full environmental compliance.

† Passenger access occurs via helicopter.

‡ Commercial pickups would be allowed to shuttle kayak trips up to RM 273.

**TABLE 2-7: SUMMARY COMPARISON OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS —LOWER GORGE ALTERNATIVES**

NOTE: No natural or cultural resources would be impaired as a result of alternatives considered in this *Final Environmental Impact Statement*.

Impact Topic	Alternatives				
	1	2	3	Modified 4	5
<b>Natural Resources</b>					
<b>Soils</b>	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, year-round, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, year-round, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, year-round, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, year-round, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, year-round, moderate to major effects.
<b>Water Quality</b>	Adverse, localized, short-term, year-round, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, year-round, minor effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, year-round, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, year-round, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized, short-term, year-round, minor to major effects.
<b>Air Quality</b>	Adverse, negligible regional effects on human health and on air quality related resources. <b>Adverse, minor CO effects.</b>	<b>Negligible, adverse, regional</b> effects on human health and on air quality related resources.	<b>Negligible to minor adverse</b> effects on human health; and adverse, negligible to moderate effects on air quality related resources. <b>Adverse, minor CO effects. Beneficial, negligible ozone effects.</b>	<b>Negligible, adverse</b> effects on human health and on air quality related resources. <b>Adverse, minor CO effects.</b>	Negligible adverse effects on human health and on air quality related resources. <b>Adverse, minor CO effects.</b>
<b>Natural Soundscape</b>	In zone 3 adverse, short- to long-term, major impacts. In zone 2 adverse, short- to long-term, moderate to major impacts.	In zone 3 adverse, short- to long-term, major impacts. In zone 2 adverse, short- to long-term, moderate to major impacts.	In zone 3 adverse, short- to long-term, major impacts. In zone 2 adverse, short- to long-term, moderate to major impacts.	In zone 3 adverse, short- to long-term, major impacts. In zone 2 adverse, short- to long-term, moderate to major impacts.	In zone 3 adverse, short- to long-term, major impacts. In zone 2 adverse, short- to long-term, moderate to major impacts.
<b>Caves and Paleontological Resources</b>	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, negligible to moderate effects.
<b>Vegetation</b>	Adverse, localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, moderate effects.
<b>Terrestrial Wildlife</b>	Adverse, regional and local, short- and long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- and long-term, minor to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- and long-term, minor to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- and long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, short- and long-term, minor to major effects.
<b>Aquatic Resources</b>	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and major effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and moderate effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and moderate effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and moderate effects.	Adverse, regional to localized, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, and moderate effects.
<b>Special Status Species</b>	Adverse, regional and local, seasonal to year-round, short- and long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, seasonal to year-round, short- and long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, seasonal to year-round, short- and long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, seasonal to year-round, short- and long-term, moderate to major effects.	Adverse, regional and local, seasonal to year-round, short- and long-term, moderate to major effects.

Impact Topic	Alternatives				
	1	2	3	Modified 4	5
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, minor to major effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, negligible to moderate effects.	Adverse, localized, year-round, long-term, negligible to moderate effects.
<b>Visitor Experience</b>	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , negligible to major impacts for some users, with beneficial, localized, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , negligible to moderate impacts for others.	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , negligible to moderate impacts for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , negligible to major impacts for others.	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , negligible to major impacts for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , minor to major impacts for others.	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , minor to major impacts for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , minor to major impacts for others.	Adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , minor to major impacts for some users, with beneficial, localized to regional, short- to long-term, <b>seasonal to year-round</b> , minor to major impacts for others.
<b>Socioeconomic Resources</b>	Long-term, localized, negligible <b>beneficial impact on Hualapai tribal revenues. Negligible for the regional economy.</b>	Beneficial, localized, long-term, major impact on Hualapai tribal revenues. <b>Negligible for the regional economy.</b>	Beneficial, localized, long-term, major impact on Hualapai tribal revenues. <b>Negligible for the regional economy.</b>	Beneficial, localized, long-term, major impact on Hualapai tribal revenues. <b>Negligible for the regional economy.</b>	Beneficial, localized, long-term, major impact on Hualapai tribal revenues. <b>Negligible for the regional economy.</b>
<b>Park Management and Operations</b>	Adverse, localized and regional, short-term negligible to long-term, major effects. Beneficial effects with additional funding and staff.	Adverse, regional, short-term major effects on park patrol operations. Beneficial, localized and regional, long-term moderate effects related to visitor safety and resource management.	Adverse, localized and regional, short- to long-term, major effects.	Adverse, localized and regional, short- to long-term, moderate <b>to major</b> effects on park management and operations. Beneficial, localized, long-term moderate effects on visitor safety and resource management.	Adverse, localized and regional, short- to long-term, moderate <b>to major</b> effects.
<b>Adjacent Lands</b>	Negligible.	Negligible.	Negligible.	Negligible.	Negligible.
<b>Wilderness Character</b>	<b>Overall, adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects.</b>	<b>Overall, adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects in Zone 2 and Zone 3.</b>	<b>Overall, adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects in Zone 2 and Zone 3.</b>	<b>Overall, adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects in Zone 2 and Zone 3.</b>	<b>Overall, adverse, localized to regional, short- to long-term, seasonal to year-round, minor to major effects in Zone 2 and Zone 3.</b>

**TABLE 2-8: HOW WELL THE ALTERNATIVES MEET COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES — LOWER GORGE ALTERNATIVES**

Resource/Management Objectives	Alternatives				
	1	2	3	Modified 4	5
<p><b>Soils</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve and protect natural soil conditions by minimizing impacts to soils from river recreational activities.</li> </ul>	Does not meet because of uncontrolled use, large group sizes, and high numbers of users. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.	Meets because reduced group sizes, reduced trip lengths, no pontoon boat use and reduced number of jet boats would reduce impacts to soils. Increased mitigation would be needed to reduce impacts to minor.	Meets because reducing group size and trip length, regulating upriver use, and building a dock, will reduce impacts to soils. Mitigation measures would need to be employed at increased levels to reduce impacts to minor.	Meets because reducing group size, trip length, and regulating upriver use, as well as building a dock, would reduce impacts to soils. Increased mitigation measures would be needed to reduce impacts to minor.	Does not meet because of the significant increase in number of passengers, fuel storage areas, and helicopter use, which offsets the benefits of a reduction in upriver use and a dock. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.
<p><b>Water Quality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage river recreation use in a manner that minimizes adverse chemical, physical, and biological changes to the water quality in the main stem of the Colorado River and its tributaries, seeps, and springs.</li> </ul>	Due to fuel storage hazards, large groups, unlimited trip lengths, and unregulated use, this alternative does not meet the management objective.	With reasonable mitigation, this alternative meets the management objective by reducing group size and trip length, eliminating fuel storage, and regulating use.	With reasonable mitigation, this alternative meets the management objective by regulating use and reducing group size and trip length.	With reasonable mitigation, this alternative meets the management objective by regulating use and reducing trip length and group size.	With reasonable mitigation, this alternative meets the management objective by regulating use and reducing group size and trip length.
<p><b>Air Quality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage river recreational use to ensure that exhaust emissions from river recreation related vessels do not degrade ambient air quality or adversely affect air quality related values.</li> </ul> <p><b>Natural Soundscape</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage river recreational use in a manner that is consistent with the management zoning while minimizing the adverse effects of human caused noise impacts to the natural soundscape or natural quiet.</li> </ul>	Meets for all pollutants except CO.	Meets for all pollutants.	Meets for all pollutants except for CO.	Meets for all pollutants except for CO.	Meets for all pollutants except for CO.
	Does not meet in Zone 3 even with mitigation due to almost continuous noise in Quartermaster area and >25% audibility in other areas. Meets in Zone 2 with enough mitigation.	Does not meet in Zone 3, even though noise would be reduced compared to Alt. 1, due to >25% audibility in Quartermaster area and other areas. Meets in Zone 2 with mitigation, reduces noise compared to Alt. 1.	Does not meet in Zone 3 even with mitigation due to almost continuous noise in Quartermaster area and >25% audibility in other areas. Possible to meet in Zone 2 with enough mitigation.	Does not meet in Zone 3 even with mitigation due to almost continuous noise in Quartermaster area and >25% audibility in other areas. Meets in Zone 2 with mitigation.	Does not meet in Zone 3 due to the most noise of all alternatives in Quartermaster area, and >25% audibility in other areas. Meets in Zone 2 with mitigation due to elimination of upriver boats above RM 273.

Resource/Management Objectives	Alternatives				
	1	2	3	Modified 4	5
<b>Caves and Paleontological Resources</b> •Manage river use to ensure compliance with cave closures and provide for protection of caves and paleontological resources from adverse effects from visitation.	Does not meet due to unregulated visitation, unlimited trip lengths, large group sizes and lack of active cave and paleontological site management. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) the objective by regulating use, limiting trip lengths and reducing group size.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) the objective by regulating use, limiting trip lengths and reducing group size.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) the objective by regulating use, limiting trip lengths and reducing group size.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) the objective by, regulating use, limiting trip lengths and reducing group size.
<b>Vegetation</b> •Manage river recreational activities to minimize human-caused impacts to native vegetation, reduce the spread of exotic plant species, and preserve fundamental biological and physical processes.	Does not meet because of uncontrolled use, large group sizes, and high numbers of users. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.	Meets because of reduced group sizes, trip lengths, and overall use including upriver travel, which would reduce impacts to vegetation.	Meets because reducing group size, trip length, number of passengers, and regulating upriver use will reduce impacts to vegetation. Mitigation measures would be extensive and need to be employed at increased levels.	Meets but group size is still too large and the increase in overnight use will have adverse effects on vegetation. Short trip lengths will help reduce impacts. Mitigation measures would need to be extensive and need to be employed at increased levels.	Does not meet because total use and number of fuel storage areas increases significantly, while group sizes remain high. Impacts could not be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.
<b>Terrestrial Wildlife</b> •Manage river recreational use in a manner that protects native terrestrial wildlife and their habitats, and that preserves wildlife populations by minimizing human-caused wildlife disturbances and habitat alteration.	Does not meet due to unregulated motorboat, jet boat and helicopter use, as well as large group sizes. Impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated to minor.	Meets, but only with increased mitigation because increasing overnight trips will have some adverse effects.	Does not meet because increased overnight use along with doubling pontoon use and helicopter use will have adverse impacts on wildlife. Impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated to minor.	Does not meet because of increases in total HRR use including overnight trips and day use passengers <b>and pontoon and associated helicopter use.</b> Impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated to minor.	Does not meet because of increases in total HRR use including overnight trips and day use passengers as well as significant increases in numbers of pontoon boats and helicopters. Impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated to minor.
<b>Aquatic Resources</b> •Manage river recreational use in a manner that protects native aquatic organisms, reduces aquatic habitat alteration, and minimizes the spread of exotic species.	Does not meet because large group sizes, long trip lengths, and uncontrolled motor use all create unacceptable levels of impacts that cannot be reasonably mitigated.	Meets because smaller group sizes, short trip lengths, the elimination of pontoon boats, reduction in jet boats will all reduce impacts to aquatic resources to minor levels.	Meets with extensive mitigations because of reductions in group size and trip length and the short-term nature of the mainstem impacts.	Meets with extensive mitigations because of reductions in group size, trip length.	Does not meet because increasing use to significantly higher levels increases impacts even with mitigations. Impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated to minor levels.

Resource/Management Objectives	Alternatives			
	1	2	3	Modified 4
<b>Special Status Species</b> •Protect all threatened, endangered, sensitive, and candidate species and their habitats from impacts associated with river recreational activities.	Does not meet due to unregulated motorboat, jet boat and helicopter use, as well as large group sizes. Impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated to minor.	Meets, but only with increased mitigation because increasing overnight trips will have some adverse effects.	Does not meet because increased overnight use along with doubling pontoon use and helicopter use will have adverse impacts on threatened and endangered wildlife. Impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated to minor.	Does not meet because of increases in total HRR use including overnight trips and day use passengers as well as significant increases in numbers of pontoon boats and helicopters. Impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated to minor.
	<b>Cultural Resources</b> •Maintain the integrity of all significant cultural resources, with site preservation the optimal condition. If preservation is not possible, slow the rate at which their essential material qualities are lost. •Provide opportunities for present and future populations to understand, experience, and reflect the human history as evidenced through cultural resources in and near the river corridor; protect these resources from adverse effects from visitation.	Does not meet the objective due to unregulated use, large group sizes and lack of active site management. Effects cannot be reasonably mitigated.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) the objective by regulating use, limiting trip lengths and reducing group size that helps to maintain the integrity of significant cultural resources.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) the objective by regulating use, limiting trip lengths and reducing group size that helps to maintain the integrity of significant cultural resources.
•Preserve the integrity and condition of cultural resources and provide opportunities for traditional access by neighboring American Indian tribal members.	Does not meet the objective due to limited interpretation and protection of sensitive resources from unregulated visitation.	Meets the objective (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size and length of trip and providing increased education and interpretation of sensitive cultural resources.	Meets the objective (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size and length of trip and providing increased education and interpretation of sensitive cultural resources.	Meets the objective (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing group size and length of trip and providing increased education and interpretation of sensitive cultural resources.
<b>Visitor Experience</b> •Provide a diverse range of quality recreational opportunities for visitors to experience and understand the environmental interrelationships, resources, and values of Grand Canyon National Park.	Does not meet the objective due to lack of preservation of significant resources and lack of identified opportunities for American Indian tribal members for access to traditional resources.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) the objective by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) the objective by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) the objective by reducing the group size and congestion at significant cultural resources and sensitive traditional cultural sites.

Resource/Management Objectives	Alternatives				
	1	2	3	Modified 4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels and types of use enhance visitor experience and minimize crowding, conflicts, and resource impacts.</li> </ul>	Does not meet due to high pontoon tour and helicopter use levels in Zone 3.	Meets by reducing group size, setting daily launch limits and prohibiting pontoon tours.	Meets (with reasonable mitigations) by reducing group size, setting lower launch limits in non-peak use periods and designating HRR camps.	Meets (with reasonable mitigations) by reducing group size, setting lower launch limits in non-peak use periods designating HRR camps, and <b>regulating</b> pontoon tour use levels in Zone 3.	Does not meet due to higher pontoon tour use levels in Zone 3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park to protect and preserve the resource in a wild and primitive condition and provide a wilderness river experience.</li> </ul>	Does not meet due to pontoon tour use and cumulative effects of helicopter tours and flights associated with pontoon tours.	Meets by prohibiting pontoon tours and reducing jet boat use.	Does not meet due to pontoon tour use and cumulative effects of helicopter tours and flights associated with pontoon tours.	Does not meet due to pontoon tour use and cumulative effects of helicopter tours and flights associated with pontoon tours.	Does not meet due to pontoon tour use and cumulative effects of helicopter tours and flights associated with pontoon tours.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Socioeconomic Environment</b></li> <li>Provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities while minimizing the impacts of actions to resources, user groups, and park neighbors.</li> </ul>	Meets.	Meets by providing opportunity for increase in tribal income.	Meets by providing opportunity for increase in tribal income.	Meets by providing opportunity for increase in tribal income.	Meets by providing opportunity for increase in tribal income.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Park Operations</b></li> <li>Ensure sufficient fiscal and human resources necessary to successfully implement the plan.</li> </ul>	Does not meet due to current deficiencies in fiscal and human resources.	Meets (with reasonable mitigation) by reducing use levels and prohibiting pontoon tours.	Does not meet due to number of pontoon tours in addition to increased daily launches.	<b>Does not meet due to</b> increased pontoon tours plus increased daily launches.	Does not meet due to high pontoon tours in addition to increased daily launches.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Minimize adverse effects of administrative use on natural and cultural resources, visitor experience, and wilderness character in the river corridor.</b></li> </ul>	<b>Does not meet.</b>	<b>Meets in Zone 2 only.</b>	<b>Meets in Zone 2 only.</b>	<b>Meets in Zone 2 only.</b>	<b>Meets in Zone 2 only.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Adjacent Lands (See Other Resource Topics for Resource Specific Objectives)</b></li> <li>Minimize adverse effects from river management to areas outside of the park.</li> </ul>	Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.	Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.	Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.	Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.	Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize adverse effects of adjacent land activities on park resources and river activities.</li> </ul>	Identified impacts are beyond the scope or control of this plan.	Identified impacts are beyond the scope or control of this plan.	Identified impacts are beyond the scope or control of this plan.	Identified impacts are beyond the scope or control of this plan.	Identified impacts are beyond the scope or control of this plan.

Resource/Management Objectives	Alternatives				
	1	2	3	Modified 4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Work cooperatively with the Hualapai Tribe and other adjacent land managers on alternatives and implementation of a final <i>Colorado River Management Plan</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.</p> <p><b>Does not meet.</b></p>	<p>Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.</p> <p><b>Meets but to a lesser degree in Zone 2 due to decreased motorized activity.</b></p>	<p>Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.</p> <p><b>Does not meet due to group size and increased motorized activity.</b></p>	<p>Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.</p> <p><b>Does not meet due to group size and increased motorized activity.</b></p>	<p>Meets (range of opportunity consistent with the Lake Mead Management Plan, topography minimizes trespass) Assumes greater enforcement and implementation of permit systems.</p> <p><b>Does not meet due to group size and increased motorized activity.</b></p>
<p><b>Wilderness Character</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Provide a range of recreational opportunities consistent with the preservation of wilderness character.</li> <li>•Manage administrative use in a manner consistent with the preservation of the wilderness character of the river.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Does not meet.</b></p>	<p><b>Meets in Zone 2 only.</b></p>	<p><b>Meets in Zone 2 only.</b></p>	<p><b>Meets in Zone 2 only.</b></p>	<p><b>Meets in Zone 2 only.</b></p>

## 2.6 THE ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

The environmentally preferred alternative is defined by the Council on Environmental Quality as the alternative that best meets the following criteria or objectives, as set out in Section 101(b) of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 USC 4331):

- Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations
- Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings
- Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradations, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences
- Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity, and variety, of individual choice
- Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities
- Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources

This section is based on the results of the impact analysis for each of the alternatives, as presented in Chapter 4 and summarized in Table 2-9. The environmentally preferred alternative for the Lees Ferry alternatives and the Lower Gorge alternatives is the alternative that best meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in section 101(b) of the National Environmental Policy Act.

### 2.6.1 LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES

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#### 2.6.1.1 NEPA SECTION 101(B) COMPLIANCE

The following *is an* evaluation *of how well the Lees Ferry alternatives meet section 101(b) NEPA compliance* criteria:

- *Criterion 1*—As trustees of the environment for future generations, the primary threat to the resources from recreational use comes from congestion and crowding. Therefore reductions in daily launches, trips at one time, group size, and trip length would contribute to resource preservation through reductions in impacts. Significant decreases in the yearly total passengers, coupled with the above variables, would further aid in the preservation of the physical environment. The preservation of the environment would ensure that future generations would be able to enjoy it.
- *Criterion 2*—To assure safe, healthful, productive, and pleasing surroundings, the river environment should be free of many of the day-to-day urban experiences the public leaves behind when they enter into the Grand Canyon environment. Crowding is known to have a significant effect on the experience and satisfaction of river trip participants (Shelby and Whittaker 2004). Alternatives that reduce crowding through reductions in daily launches, trips at one time, trip length, and group size would contribute to compliance with this criterion by making surroundings more aesthetically pleasing.

However, these reductions must be balanced with ample opportunities to experience a culturally pleasing environment. One important consideration is the opportunity to experience the natural soundscape of the canyon without the intrusion of boat and helicopter motor noise. Alternatives with more opportunities *to experience natural quiet* would contribute more to the desired balance than alternatives in which there *were fewer opportunities* to take a trip that would never encounter motor noise.

- *Criterion 3*—To attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradations, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences, management of recreational use must reduce threats to resources while offering a variety of recreational opportunities. Degradation of the river environment from crowding represents one of the primary recreational use threats within the area of potential effect. Therefore, reductions in daily launches, trips at one time, trip length, and group size contribute to resource preservation through reductions in impacts. These reductions, however, must be balanced with the ability of each alternative to offer the widest range of appropriate river experiences. Alternatives would contribute to the achievement of this element of the criterion based on the degree to which they would offer a balanced variety of trip types and characteristics (motorized and nonmotorized, varied group sizes, seasonal access to commercial and noncommercial trips, varied exchange options and trip lengths, and opportunities for solitude or social experience).
- *Criterion 4*—To preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and to maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice, recreational use management must reduce threats to these resources while offering a diverse range of recreational opportunities. Crowding represents one of the primary recreational use threats to the preservation of resources in the river corridor. Therefore reductions in daily launches, trips at one time, and group size contribute to resource preservation through reductions in impacts. These reductions, however, must be balanced with the ability of each alternative to offer the widest diversity and variety of choices for river trips. Alternatives would contribute to the achievement of this element of the criterion based on the degree to which they offered a balanced variety of trip types and characteristics (motorized and nonmotorized, varied group sizes, seasonal access to commercial and noncommercial trips, varied exchange options and trip lengths, and opportunities for solitude or social experience).
- *Criterion 5*—To achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities, recreational use must be managed to offer reasonable access to a variety of recreational opportunities that range from solitary to social enjoyment of the river environment. Daily life on the river and the ability to enjoy the amenities of a river trip are known to be affected by crowding (Shelby and Whittaker 2004). Crowding also has a significant effect on the resource. Alternatives that mitigate crowding through reductions in daily launches, trips at one time, and group size contribute to achievement of this criterion. Reductions in crowding, however, must be balanced with parity in access to a wide variety of people, including both the commercial and noncommercial boating communities. While specific demand for both groups is unknown, it is assumed that in both cases it is higher than current. Alternatives that bring parity to use levels for these groups (as measured by user-days and total passengers), while allowing at least current use, would contribute more to this element of

the criterion than alternatives that reduced overall use or failed to address disparity of allocation.

- *Criterion 6*—To enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources, recreational use should be managed to limit loss and promote generation of renewable resources. Renewable resources in the area of potential effect are primarily natural resources, such as biological resources and soundscape. Crowding represents one of the primary threats to biological resources; therefore, reductions in daily launches, trips at one time, and group size contribute to the enhancement of these resources through reductions in impacts. Natural soundscape is affected primarily by motorboat and helicopter use. Thus, alternatives that have no motorized use would contribute to achieving this criterion more than alternatives that would have temporally limited motorboat and/or helicopter use.

Table 2-9 shows how each alternative would achieve the requirements of the six criteria.

### **2.6.1.2 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

Based on the analysis in Table 2-9, *Modified* Alternative H (the NPS *modified* Preferred Alternative) best achieves the requirements of the NEPA Section 101(b) criteria. This alternative meets, and sometimes exceeds, each of the six criteria.

TABLE 2-9: HOW WELL THE LEES FERRY ALTERNATIVES MEET NEPA SECTION 101(b) CRITERIA

Criterion	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative F	Alternative G	Alternative H
1. Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Big groups, spikes in trips at one time and launches, long trips (in number of days).	<b>Exceeds:</b> Fewer trips and people, smaller groups, less crowding.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding.
2. Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Crowding, large groups, spikes in number of launches. Unequal motor/no-motor seasons. Continued Whitmore helicopter exchanges year-round.	<b>Exceeds:</b> Fewer daily launches, trips and people; smaller groups; substantially less crowding. No motorized river use. No Whitmore helicopter exchanges.	<b>Exceeds:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups; less crowding. No motorized river use. No Whitmore helicopter exchanges.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding. Unequal motor/no-motor seasons. No Whitmore helicopter exchanges.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding. Equal motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges six months a year.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding. Equal motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges six months a year.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Large groups, little opportunity for solitude. Unequal motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges eight months a year.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding. <b>Nearly equal</b> motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges <b>at least six months</b> a year.
3. Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradations, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Big groups, spikes in trips at one time and launches, Long trips (in number of days), resource damage. Unequal motor/no-motor seasons. No small trips offered.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Limited trip type opportunities (compared to existing conditions).	<b>Does not meet:</b> Limited trip type opportunities (compared to existing conditions).	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, small groups, less crowding. Variety of trip types, including winter commercial trips, but unequal motor/no-motor seasons. No Whitmore helicopter exchanges.	<b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, small groups, less crowding. Short trips, variety of trip types. No winter commercial trips, but equal motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges six months a year.	<b>Exceeds:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding. Variety of trip types, including commercial winter trips and equal motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges six months a year.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Fewer daily launches, short trips. Variety of trip types, but no commercial winter trips and unequal motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges eight months a year.	<b>Exceeds:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller group sizes, various motor group sizes, less crowding. Variety of trip types, and <b>nearly equal</b> motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges <b>at least six months</b> a year.

Criterion	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative F	Alternative G	Modified Alternative H
4. Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment, which supports diversity and variety, of individual choice.	<p><b>Meets:</b> Natural and cultural sites preserved (more so than if they were not in a park). Many trip choices. Continued Whitmore helicopter exchanges year-round.</p>	<p><b>Does not meet:</b> Increased preservation. Decreased trip variety and exchange options.</p>	<p><b>Does not meet:</b> Increased preservation. Decreased trip variety and exchange options.</p>	<p><b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, small groups, less crowding. Variety of trip types, including winter commercial trips, but unequal motor/no-motor seasons. No Whitmore helicopter exchanges.</p>	<p><b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding. Variety of trip types, including winter commercial trips; equal motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges six months a year.</p>	<p><b>Meets:</b> Fewer daily launches, smaller groups, less crowding. Variety of trip types, including winter trips, and equal motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges eight months a year.</p>	<p><b>Does not meet:</b> Short trips, less opportunity for solitude, big groups. No commercial winter trips, and unequal motor/no-motor seasons. Whitmore helicopter exchanges eight months a year.</p>	<p><b>Exceeds:</b> Fewer smaller group sizes, variety of commercial group sizes, less crowding. Variety of trip types <b>but no commercial winter trips; nearly equal motor/no-motor seasons.</b> Whitmore helicopter exchanges <b>at least six months</b> a year.</p>
5. Achieve a balance between population and resource use, which will permit high standards of living, and a wide sharing of life's amenities.	<p><b>Does not meet:</b> Current use represents commercial demand. Disparity between commercial and private user-day allocation (66/34). Substantial disparity between commercial/private passenger numbers (84/16) Large trips, crowding.</p>	<p><b>Does not meet:</b> Does not allow for current commercial passenger numbers. Increase in private passenger numbers. Decrease in yearly total passenger numbers. Near parity between commercial/private user-day allocation (57/43). Less disparity between commercial/private passenger numbers (70/30) Smaller groups, less crowding.</p>	<p><b>Meets:</b> Does not allow for current commercial passenger numbers. Increase in private passenger numbers. Increase in yearly total passenger numbers. Less disparity between commercial/private user-day allocation (59/41). Less disparity between commercial/private passenger numbers (62/38). Less disparity between commercial/private passenger numbers (68/32) Smaller groups, less crowding.</p>	<p><b>Does not meet:</b> Does not allow for current commercial passenger numbers. Increase in private passenger numbers. Increase in yearly total passenger numbers. Parity between commercial/private user-day allocation (49/51). Less disparity between commercial/private passenger numbers (68/32) Smaller groups, less crowding.</p>	<p><b>Meets:</b> Does not allow for current commercial passenger numbers. Increase in private passenger numbers. Increase in yearly total passenger numbers. Parity between commercial/private user-day allocation (49/51). Less disparity between commercial/private passenger numbers (68/32) Smaller groups, less crowding.</p>	<p><b>Exceeds:</b> Allows for at least current use, with increase in private use. Near parity between commercial/private user-day allocation (55/45). Less disparity between commercial/private passenger numbers (73/27). Smaller groups, less crowding.</p>	<p><b>Meets:</b> Allows for at least current use, with increase in private use. Near parity between commercial/private user-day allocation (46/54). Less disparity between commercial/private passenger numbers (69/31). Short trips, large groups not high quality, little opportunity for solitude.</p>	<p><b>Exceeds:</b> Allows for at least current use, with increase in private use. Parity between commercial/private user-day allocation (50/50). Less disparity between commercial/private passenger numbers (71/29) Smaller groups, less crowding.</p>

Criterion	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative F	Alternative G	Modified Alternative H
6. Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.	Does not meet: Crowding from use spikes and large group sizes damage vegetation. Soundscape impacts from nine-month motor/helicopter season.	Exceeds: Fewer daily launches, smaller groups. No soundscape impacts from motorized use/helicopters.	Exceeds: Fewer daily launches, smaller groups. No soundscape impacts from motorized use/helicopters.	Meets: Fewer daily launches, smaller groups. Fewer soundscape impacts from four-month no-motor use, no helicopters.	Meets: Fewer daily launches, smaller groups. Fewer soundscape impacts from six-month no-motor/no helicopters.	Meets: Fewer trips and people, smaller groups. Fewer soundscape impacts from six-month no-motor/no helicopters.	Does not meet: Large groups for an entire season. Soundscape impacts from eight-month motor season and helicopters.	Meets: Fewer trips and people, smaller groups. Fewer soundscape impacts from <b>at least six-month</b> motor season and helicopters.

## 2.6.2 LOWER GORGE ALTERNATIVES

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### 2.6.2.1 NEPA SECTION 101 COMPLIANCE

The following *is an* evaluation *of how well the Lower Gorge alternatives meet section 101(b) NEPA compliance* criteria:

- *Criterion 1*—As trustees of the environment for future generations, the primary threat to the resources from recreational use comes from congestion and crowding. Therefore reductions primarily in group size, but also in daily launches, daily total passengers, trip length, and upstream travel would contribute to resource preservation through reductions in impacts. Coupled with the above variables, the creation of additional campsites (at low levels of development) would further aid in the preservation of the physical environment. The preservation of the environment would ensure that future generations would be able to enjoy it.
- *Criterion 2*—To assure safe, healthful, productive, and pleasing surroundings, the river environment should be free of many of the day-to-day urban experiences the public leaves behind when they enter the canyon environment. Crowding is known to have a significant effect on the experience and satisfaction of river trip participants (Shelby and Whittaker 2004). Alternatives that reduce crowding through reductions in daily launches, group size, daily total passengers, trip length, upstream travel, and number of boats would contribute to compliance with this criterion by making surroundings more aesthetically pleasing. However, these reductions must be balanced with ample opportunities to experience a culturally pleasing environment within the context of the management zone. One important opportunity is the ability to experience periods of natural quiet in the canyon without the intrusion of boat and helicopter motor noise. All of the Lower Gorge alternatives would allow motorboats, thus the number of motor raft trips, pontoon trips (with their associated helicopter shuttles), and the number of jetboat trips allowed from Lake Mead were analyzed to determine the level and anticipated duration of noise that might detract from achieving a culturally pleasing environment.
- *Criterion 3*—To attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradations, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences, recreational use management must reduce threats to resources while offering a variety of recreational opportunities. Degradation of the river environment from crowding represents one of the primary recreational use threats within the area of potential effect. Reductions primarily in group size, but also in daily launches, daily total passengers, trip length, upstream travel, and number of boats would contribute to compliance with this criterion by mitigating impacts to resources from visitation. These reductions would also mitigate safety hazards, a consideration in higher use alternatives where there would be a substantial increase in river use and, consequently, air traffic. These reductions, however, must be balanced with the ability of each alternative to offer the widest range of appropriate river experiences. Alternatives would contribute to the achievement of this element of the criterion based on the degree to which they offered a balanced variety of trip types (day and overnight raft trips, pontoon trips, and upriver trips from Lake Mead) and characteristics (group sizes, trip lengths, varied exchange options, and opportunities for solitude or social experience).

- *Criterion 4*—To preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and to maintain wherever possible an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice, recreational use management must reduce threats to these resources while offering a diverse range of recreational opportunities. Crowding represents one of the primary recreational use threats to the preservation of resources of national significance in the Lower Gorge. Reductions primarily in group size, but also in daily launches, daily total passengers, trip length, upstream travel, and number of boats contribute to compliance with this criterion by mitigating impacts to resources from visitation. These reductions, however, must be balanced with the ability of each alternative to offer the widest diversity and variety of choices for river trips. Alternatives would contribute to the achievement of this element of the criterion based on the degree to which they offered a balanced variety of trip types (day and overnight raft trips, pontoon trips, and upriver trips from Lake Mead) and characteristics (group sizes, trip lengths, varied exchange options, and opportunities for solitude or social experience).
- *Criterion 5*—To achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities, recreational use must be managed to offer reasonable access to a variety of recreational opportunities that range from solitary to social enjoyment of the river environment. Daily life on the river and the ability to enjoy the amenities of a river trip are affected by crowding, even in management zones that are less than primitive. Crowding also has a significant effect on the resource. Alternatives that mitigate crowding through reductions in daily launches, group size, daily total passengers, upstream travel, and number of boats would contribute to compliance with this criterion. Reductions in crowding, however, must be balanced with meeting the current demand for river trips in the Lower Gorge. Alternatives that would allow for current types of use, while allowing at least current use, would contribute more to this element of the criterion than alternatives that decreased trip types and use levels for each trip type.
- *Criterion 6*—To enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources, recreational use should be managed to limit loss and promote the generation of renewable resources. Renewable resources in the area of potential effect are limited primarily to natural resources such as vegetation, biological resources, soundscape, and air quality. Crowding represents one of the primary threats to vegetation and biological resources; therefore, reductions in group size, daily launches, daily total passengers, upstream travel, and number of boats would contribute to the enhancement of these resources through reductions in impacts. Soundscape, or natural quiet, and air quality are affected primarily by pontoon boats, jetboats and helicopter use. Thus, reductions in pontoon, jetboat, and helicopter use would contribute to compliance with this aspect of this criterion.

An analysis of how each alternative would achieve the requirements of these six criteria is detailed in Table 2-10.

### **2.6.2.2 Environmentally Preferred Alternative**

Based on the analysis in Table 2-10, *Alternative 3 and Modified Alternative 4* (the NPS Preferred Alternative) would best achieve the requirements of the NEPA Section 101(b) criteria. *These alternatives meet* each of the six criteria.

TABLE 2-10: HOW WELL THE LOWER GORGE ALTERNATIVES MEET NEPA SECTION 101(b) CRITERIA

Criterion	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Modified Alternative 4	Alternative 5
<b>1. Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations</b>	<b>Does not meet:</b> Very large groups; unrestricted group sizes and daily passengers. Unrestricted upstream travel. Limited camps. Deteriorating facilities.	<b>Exceeds:</b> Much smaller groups, far fewer daily passengers from Diamond Creek. No pontoon use or helicopter support. Limited upstream travel (two jetboats). Additional camps. No facilities.	<b>Meets:</b> Near current levels of Diamond Creek passengers per day, but much smaller group sizes. Above current average of pontoon use, with associated helicopter support. Fewer jetboats. Two additional camps. Improved small dock.	<b>Meets:</b> Smaller groups, but increase in Diamond Creek passengers per day. <b>Above</b> current average daily pontoon passengers and associated helicopter support. Limited upstream travel (four jetboats). Three additional undeveloped camps. Improved small dock.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Smaller groups, but increase in Diamond Creek passengers per day. Substantial increase in pontoon use and associated helicopter support. No jetboat use. Three additional developed camps. Improved large dock.
<b>2. Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings</b>	<b>Does not meet:</b> Very large groups; unrestricted group sizes and daily passengers. Spikes in pontoon use and associated helicopter support. Unrestricted upstream travel. Limited camps. Deteriorating facilities.	<b>Exceeds:</b> Much smaller groups, far fewer daily passengers from Diamond Creek. No pontoon use or associated facilities/helicopter support. Limited upstream travel (two jetboats). Additional camps.	<b>Meets:</b> Near current levels of Diamond Creek passengers per day, but much smaller group size. Above current average of pontoon use, with associated helicopter support. Fewer jetboats. Two additional camps. Improved small dock.	<b>Meets:</b> Smaller groups, but increase in Diamond Creek passengers per day. <b>Above</b> current average daily pontoon passengers and associated helicopter support. Limited upstream travel (four jetboats). Three additional undeveloped camps. Improved small dock.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Smaller groups, but increase in Diamond Creek passengers per day. Substantial increase in pontoon use and associated helicopter support. No jetboat use. Three additional developed camps. Improved large dock.
<b>3. Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradations, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences</b>	<b>Does not meet:</b> Variety of trip types, but very large groups, unrestricted group sizes and daily passengers. Spikes in pontoon use and associated helicopter support. Unrestricted upstream travel. Deteriorating facilities	<b>Does not meet:</b> Reduced resource impacts, but pontoon and helicopter trips eliminated.	<b>Meets:</b> Near current use levels for HRR day trips, and above average use for HRR overnight and pontoon trips, but reduced group sizes. Use spikes eliminated. Dock facilities improved.	<b>Meets:</b> Smaller groups, but increase in Diamond Creek passengers per day. All trip types offered. Caps on HRR and pontoon passengers. Limited upstream travel. Improved docking facility.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Smaller groups, but increase in Diamond Creek passengers per day. Substantial increase in pontoon use and associated helicopter support. No jetboat use. Improved large dock.
<b>4. Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety, of individual choice</b>	<b>Meets:</b> Natural and cultural sites preserved (more so than if they were not in a park). Lots of trip choices.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Reduced resource impacts, but pontoon and helicopter trips eliminated.	<b>Meets:</b> Near current use levels for HRR day trips and above average use for HRR overnight and pontoon trips, but reduced group sizes and use spikes eliminated.	<b>Meets: <i>Near current use levels for HRR day trips and above average use for HRR overnight and pontoon trips, but reduced group sizes and use spikes eliminated.</i></b>	<b>Meets:</b> Smaller groups, but increased Diamond Creek passengers per day. Substantial increase in pontoon use and associated helicopter support. No jetboat use.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>	<b>Alternative 3</b>	<b>Modified Alternative 4</b>	<b>Alternative 5</b>
<b>5. Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities</b>	<b>Does not meet:</b> Unregulated spikes in use affect resources and visitor experience. Use represents current demand.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Reduced resource impacts, but pontoon and helicopter trips eliminated, decreased HRR day trip passengers, increased overnight passengers.	<b>Meets:</b> Near current average for HRR use and above current average for pontoon use while spikes eliminated and group sizes reduced. Increased HRR overnight passengers.	<b>Meets: <i>Near current use levels for HRR day trips and above average use for HRR overnight and pontoon trips, but reduced group sizes and use spikes eliminated.</i></b>	<b>Does not meet:</b> While use levels increased over current average HRR day and overnight use, and substantially above average pontoon use. Use allowed to increase above current demand for all trip types, but visitor experience degraded by crowding and continuous noise from pontoons and helicopters.
<b>6. Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources</b>	<b>Does not meet:</b> Very large groups, unrestricted group sizes, daily passengers, and upstream travel. Spikes in HRR and pontoon use and associated helicopter support. Limited camps.	<b>Exceeds:</b> Much smaller groups, far fewer daily passengers from Diamond Creek, limited upstream travel (two jetboats). No pontoon use or associated facilities or helicopter support. Additional camps.	<b>Meets:</b> Near current levels of Diamond Creek passengers per day, but much smaller group sizes. Above current average of pontoon use, with associated helicopter support. Fewer jetboats. Two additional camps.	<b>Meets:</b> Smaller groups, but increase in Diamond Creek passengers per day, limited upstream travel (four jetboats). <b><i>Above current average of daily</i></b> pontoon passengers and associated helicopter support. Three additional undeveloped camps.	<b>Does not meet:</b> Smaller groups, but increase in Diamond Creek passengers per day. Substantial increase in pontoon use and associated helicopter support. No jetboats. Three additional undeveloped camps.

## 2.7 ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER STUDY

Several alternatives considered in the development of this *Final Environmental Impact Statement* were eliminated from additional study. This section describes those alternatives and the basis for not analyzing them further.

### 2.7.1 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED BECAUSE OF UPPER BOUND CONCERNS

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In the early stages of developing alternatives, the NPS ran river trip simulation models for 36 distinct launch patterns. Simulator models examined two, four, six, and eight launches per day, with different combinations of commercial motor, commercial oar, and noncommercial trips. One goal was to show relationships between use patterns and key indicators (trips at one time, river encounters, and densities at attraction sites); a second goal was to establish the upper bounds of possible launch patterns.

Preliminary analysis helped establish upper bounds for non-summer use. An NPS goal was to ensure that lower density opportunities were provided in spring and fall than in summer, with the lowest density in winter. Accordingly, alternatives with more than four mixed-use launches in spring and fall or more than two in winter were eliminated, *with the exception of the last two weeks in April (with 4 launches) and the first two weeks in September (with 6 launches) in the modified preferred Alternative H. This was in response to public comments to lengthen the primary use season and the NPS desiring a ramp up and ramp down approach to distributing launches throughout the year. Launches in these two time frames have smaller group sizes than those in the summer season.*

### 2.7.2 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED BECAUSE OF REDUNDANCY

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The development of alternatives involved decisions about use levels, types of trips, group sizes, trip length, commercial and noncommercial use, and whether motorized boats or helicopter shuttles would be allowed. Use patterns also vary by month. With so many variables, it is possible to develop many combinations. To standardize options and improve comparability for later analysis, a monthly seasonal use structure was used for all the alternatives—two months in spring, four in summer, two in fall, and four in winter. When the NPS did a preliminary analysis of 36 launch patterns (including those that were offered during public scoping), several were found to be very similar in spirit. To arrive at a workable number of alternatives, alternatives with similar characteristics were consolidated, while still trying to retain the intent of each.

### 2.7.3 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED BECAUSE OF CUMULATIVE ANNUAL USE OR OTHER CONCERNS

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Several alternatives were identified that solved issues related to allocation and scoping comments encouraging increased access, but the level of projected annual use approached a threefold increase from current conditions. Research on visitor experience and impacts to cultural and natural resources indicated that such a high level of use was unacceptable.

The Lower Gorge alternatives were similarly developed, analyzed, and refined in consultation with the Hualapai Tribe. Higher *exchange rates at* Whitmore were eliminated from further consideration due to impacts occurring from current use and problems of increased Lower Gorge activity (e.g., increased numbers of jetboats to takeout additional passengers from Whitmore down). Mule-based exchanges at Whitmore were eliminated from further consideration because of concerns about biophysical or cultural impacts. ***In addition, the NPS does not believe that it is feasible to upgrade or maintain the Whitmore Trail to the required stock use standards.*** Higher levels of hike-out exchanges *at Whitmore* were also eliminated, assuming that interest would not exceed the number currently occurring (with no limits) at Phantom Ranch (a longer and more difficult hike, but at a location more advantageous for exchanges). The transportation and facility needs associated with higher levels of hikers *at the Whitmore area* would be inconsistent with management goals and actions for the adjacent Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument.

***Public comments on the DEIS yielded several alternatives that were analyzed but rejected for various reasons. Responses to these suggestions are presented in Volume III.***

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## **2.7.4 SUPPLEMENTAL PERMIT DISTRIBUTION OPTIONS**

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Currently there is no supplemental permit distribution option. The planning team considered several options, including releasing one launch per day through a common pool lottery. It was concluded that this option would unnecessarily add ***another layer of complexity*** to the ***application process of the*** permit system, with little benefit. Therefore, adding a supplementary permit distribution system to the alternatives was considered but eliminated from further study.

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## **2.7.5 OTHER MANAGEMENT ACTIONS**

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***Minimum Trip Length to Phantom Ranch—Based on public comment on the DEIS, the minimum trip length requirement was re-evaluated and was determined to be unnecessary. Therefore, the NPS will not be implementing the Phantom Ranch minimum trip length requirement at this time.***

***Guides on Noncommercial Trips—The NPS received public comment concerning the issue of allowing paid "guides" on noncommercial trips. The definition of noncommercial trip will stand, and guides on noncommercial trips will not be allowed. As defined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Title 36, Part 7.4): "an operation is commercial if any fee, charge or other compensation is collected for conducting, leading, guiding, or outfitting a river trip. A river trip is not commercial if there is a bona fide sharing of actual expenses." Collecting compensation payable to an individual, group or organization for conducting, leading, or guiding a noncommercial trip is not allowed. No person may be hired or paid to participate in a trip operating under the noncommercial permit system.***

## 2.8 ELEMENTS INDEPENDENT OF THE ALTERNATIVES

### 2.8.1 NONCOMMERCIAL PERMIT SYSTEM OPTIONS

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The following description of permit system options is subdivided into *two* main sections: *permit system and transition options for those who are currently on the waitlist. Under any permit system, trips are sometimes canceled by the participants. If the primary distribution system is well-designed, cancellations should be minimal because groups apply for time periods when they can reasonably expect to take the trip and they have enough time to prepare for it. While cancellations might occur because of illness or similar unforeseen problems for key participants, allowing alternate trip leaders and some trip participant changes should dramatically reduce the percentage of cancellations that occurs now. Nevertheless, a secondary distribution system is needed to distribute canceled permits and is discussed under each option.*

#### 2.8.1.1 ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL PERMIT SYSTEM OPTIONS

*Only the overall parameters for the permit system need to be included in the Record of Decision for the CRMP. Many of the specific details in Section 2.8 are administrative in nature, and may change as part of the implementation of the CRMP. Such administrative details (e.g., due dates, application procedures, lottery chances, etc.) would be subject to change by the NPS without an amendment to the CRMP, as long as they stay within the overall parameters specified in the CRMP.*

*All individuals listed on a lottery application as potential trip leaders would automatically be eligible to qualify as alternate trip leaders.* This way if the original trip leader must drop out, the rest of the group could continue with their plans.

Unless a common pool system was chosen, permits for commercial companies would be issued through a separate system. Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section *of the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park. (See also Section 2.3.1).*

Permits for the Diamond Creek to Lake Mead section of the river would continue to be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, and applications would be accepted no earlier than one year in advance. If demand for Diamond Creek to Lake Mead permits rose to the point that competition for permits was obviously intense, the NPS would reserve the right to implement the same kind of a permit system for the lower section of the river as for the upper (depending on the system chosen through this planning process). Recreational passengers would be allowed to run the Diamond Creek to Lake Mead section of the river as frequently as they desired, as long as they were able to obtain permits. Permits from the Navajo Nation, the Havasupai Tribe, or the Hualapai Tribe would be required to access all the respective *tribe's* tribal lands.

*Other existing standards, as listed in the Noncommercial River Trip Regulations, would be maintained and modified as necessary by the NPS.*

*All permit system options would make use of the Internet. Alternative ways of applying for a river permit will be made available for those without access to the Internet.*

### **2.8.1.2 PRIMARY PERMIT SYSTEM FOR DISTRIBUTION OF RIVER PERMITS**

Objectives for selecting *a noncommercial permit system*.

- Offer opportunities for new *noncommercial* users to succeed in obtaining a permit
- Favor requests from those who have been unsuccessful in previous years
- *Minimize complexity of application process for applicants*
- Preserve the group character of noncommercial trips (those who want to travel together in a group)
- *Encourage people to apply for launches only in years when they are really interested in going* (Administrative rules and penalties would be established to help prevent individuals from exploiting the system)

#### **2.8.1.2.1 Waitlist for Trip Leaders (Current Permit System)**

Each year those who have waited the longest on the current waitlist are contacted and offered a chance to schedule launch dates. Permits for noncommercial trips are initially distributed through a waitlist scheduling system for trip leaders (not trip members); if trips are canceled, secondary distributions are available to those on the waiting list. Due to the length of the list (about 8,000 names), it can be 10 to 20 or more years before a person can lead a noncommercial river trip through the Grand Canyon.

Each year within a specific time window waitlist members are expected to verify their continuing interest *to remain* on the list. Those who fail to meet this requirement twice in any four-year timeframe are removed from the list.

To remain on the list, waitlist members may participate in no more than one other Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek noncommercial trip.

*Cancellations are handed out through a call-in system that allows people to call in based on their general place on the waitlist. Launch dates are awarded on a first-call, first-served basis to eligible callers. Those in the top fifth of the list (currently 1–1,500) could call-in on Mondays. On Tuesdays, anyone with waitlist numbers 1–3,000 could call in, etc. This pattern would continue throughout the week until Friday when all those on the waitlist would be eligible to call-in.*

#### **2.8.1.2.2 Waitlist for Groups**

Under this option a waitlist would be maintained for groups, where all members of each group would be listed along with the trip leader. Nobody could be listed more than once. Each year

those groups who have waited the longest on the current waitlist would be contacted and offered a chance to schedule launch dates.

Each year within a specific time window waitlist groups would be expected to verify their continuing interest in remaining on the list. Those who failed to meet this requirement twice in any four-year period would be removed from the list.

***Launch dates made available due to cancellations would be distributed through the same cancellation system discussed in the Waitlist for Trip Leaders permit option.***

#### **2.8.1.2.3 Pure Lottery for Groups**

By the lottery drawing date, all those who had expressed an interest in that particular launch date would be given equal chances at being awarded the requested launch date.

Monthly lotteries would be held one year in advance on the first of the month and applicants could compete in only one month's lottery each year.

***Launch dates due to cancellations would be awarded as they occur through subsequent runs of the pure lottery.***

#### **2.8.1.2.4 Weighted Lottery for Groups**

Each launch opportunity would be awarded to a member of the pool of people who had registered their interest in a particular launch date by the drawing deadline. Each applicant would be given one additional chance for each year they had continuously competed in the lottery but had not been successful. Thus, someone applying for a May launch date who had applied in the lottery for a launch every year for the last five years would be given six chances.

It would be a weighted lottery for groups because all trip members listed on the original application before the drawing date would receive a fee discount and would be eligible to be alternate trip leaders should the main applicant not be able to continue the trip as planned. For the lottery drawing, trip members could be listed on only one application. Additional participants could be added later for higher fees but would not be eligible to be alternate trip leaders.

Monthly weighted lotteries would be held one year in advance on the first of the month and applicants could compete in only one month's lottery per year.

***Launch dates due to cancellations would be awarded as they occur through subsequent runs of the weighted lottery for groups.***

#### **2.8.1.2.5 Point-Based Auction for Groups**

People would earn "wait points" for the length of time they were registered, and the points would become a "currency" that would be used to "bid" for permits in monthly auctions. Groups with

more people and more time on the list would therefore have more points than smaller groups with less time on the waitlist.

Waiting points would be earned by individuals for each year on the registration list, but applications for permits would be made by groups (a roster of trip participants could not exceed group size limits). Members of a group would pool their collective waiting points to compete for a permit. Bidding would take place each month for all dates in the same month one year later. The group with the highest collective number of waiting points at the close of the bidding period would be awarded the permit.

*Launch dates made available from cancellations would be distributed through either a call-in system like that in the waitlist for trip leaders section or through a subsequent point-based auction.*

#### **2.8.1.2.6 “Hybrid” Weighted Lottery for Trip Leaders**

*The hybrid weighted lottery option is a combination of several elements of the permit system options listed above and responds to the public’s suggestions during public scoping. Once each year, a lottery would be used to award the following year’s noncommercial launches. Lottery applications would list the applicant and all potential alternate trip leaders (“potential leaders”) and could include up to five launch dates throughout the year for initial consideration. Each applicant’s chance in that year’s lottery would vary depending on the minimum number of years it would have been since any potential leader had won through the lottery or participated in any part of a Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek river trip. For example, based on the most recent time any potential leader had been on a commercial or noncommercial river trip, the application would receive the following number of chances in the lottery to obtain a river permit:*

<i>5 or more calendar years before launch date</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>5 chances</i>
<i>4 calendar years before launch date</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>4 chances</i>
<i>3 calendar years before launch date</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>3 chances</i>
<i>2 calendar years before launch date</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>2 chances</i>
<i>1 calendar year before launch date</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>1 chance</i>

*Individuals could be listed as potential leaders on only 1 application per year and must be 18 years old by the requested launch date. Once a river permit had been awarded, deposits would be charged immediately and would become nonrefundable. Deferments and/or swapping of permits would not be allowed. Trips could be passed to any of the potential leaders listed on the lottery application, and trip leaders would continue to have the freedom to change their list of participants up to within three weeks of launch.*

*As any unclaimed or cancelled permits become available, they would be awarded through subsequent lottery drawings. Thus, applications could include more than the five launch dates initially considered. Applicants would be prompted to indicate on their applications the latest date they would be willing to accept a specific launch date should it become available due to cancellations. For example, an applicant would be asked on their application if they would be*

*willing to accept a river trip if it suddenly became available 10 days before the launch is scheduled.*

*Permits that continue to be unclaimed through the lottery 30 days before the launch would be posted on the internet and awarded on a first-apply, first serve basis.*

### 2.8.1.3 NPS PREFERRED OPTION FOR PERMIT SYSTEM

*The NPS modified preferred option for the permit system is the hybrid weighted lottery. This option offers the advantage of favoring those who have been unsuccessful in obtaining a permit in previous years and encourages individuals to apply for launches only when they are genuinely interested in taking a river trip.*

Table 2-11 shows how well each option achieves project objectives.

TABLE 2-11: HOW PERMIT SYSTEM OPTIONS WOULD ACHIEVE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Objective	Does Option Meet Objective?					"Hybrid" Weighted Lottery for Trip Leaders
	Waitlist for Trip Leaders	Waitlist for Groups	Pure Lottery for Groups	Weighted Lottery for Groups	Point- Based Auctions for Groups	
<i>Offer opportunities for new noncommercial users to succeed in obtaining a permit</i>	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Favor requests from those who have been unsuccessful in previous years.</i>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Minimize complexity of application process for applicants.</i>	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Preserve the group character of noncommercial trips (those who want to travel together in a group).</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Somewhat	Yes
<i>Encourage people to apply for launches only in years when they are really interested in going.</i>	No	No	Yes	No	Somewhat	Yes

### 2.8.1.4 TRANSITION OPTIONS

*The following transition options explore various ways that boaters who are on the noncommercial waitlist may transition to the new permit system. Additions to the waitlist for noncommercial permits have not been allowed since 2003. As of May 2005, 7,213 people remained on the noncommercial waitlist, waiting for their chance to go down the river: 1,790 had been on the list 11–15 years, 2,762 had been on the list 6–10 years, and 2,661 had been on the list 3–5 years. Most paid \$100 though some paid as low as \$25 or as much as \$125.*

**Objectives for selecting transition options for those on the existing waitlist include:**

- *Expedite transition to the new permit system*
- *Offer opportunities for new noncommercial users to succeed in obtaining a permit*
- *Ensure those on the waitlist are treated fairly*
- *Offer ample opportunities for those on the waitlist to succeed*

**2.8.1.4.1 New Permit System Augments Frozen Waitlist System (Existing Condition)**

The current waitlist is frozen and waitlist members would continue to be allocated 240 launches per year at roughly the same launch pattern as today until waitlist is exhausted. All other launches would be awarded through the new system selected for the initial distribution of permits. People would not be permitted to participate in both permit systems.

**2.8.1.4.2 Encourage People to Leave Current Waitlist and Reduce the Waitlist Allocation**

The current waitlist would still be frozen and existing waitlist members could either (1) remain on the waitlist and accept rule changes, or (2) accept payment in the form of an incentive in exchange for voluntarily giving up their place on the waitlist.

The rule changes for waitlist members would include all of the following:

- Waitlist members would have to list everyone else from their group at this time. Before anyone of these could apply through the new permit system, they would be required to give up their place on the waitlist member's trip. Further additions to trips would not be allowed.
- As waitlist members moved off the list (through incentives, etc.), that proportion of permits would no longer be available to waitlist participants. For instance, if 40% of the people on the existing waitlist took incentives and left the waitlist, then 40% of the existing allocation would be transferred to the new permit system.
- Waitlist members would be allowed to band together as new single entries on the list and would be moved forward to the equivalent spot of their combined wait (e.g., if Fred had been on the list for five years and Mary for nine years, their combined wait would be 14 years, so they would receive one number and be ahead of all those who had waited 13 years or less). In addition, each person who gave up their waitlist number to "band together" with others from the waitlist would be exempted from being charged their portion of the permit fee.

To encourage waitlist members to be removed from the current waitlist, any or all of the following would be offered (pending a legal review):

- Receive \$200 in transferable backcountry credit for use anytime within the next five years. This "backcountry credit" could be used toward river or backcountry use permits at Grand Canyon.
- Accept a refund of \$150. (This would be at least as much as anyone paid to join or renew their place on the existing waitlist.)
- Accept \$150 in transferable "backcountry credit" for use anytime within the next five years plus a free, single, weighted chance in the new permit system.

- Accept a refund of \$75 plus one free weighted chance in the new permit system.
- Accept one free weighted chance in the new permit system lottery for each year an applicant has been on the waitlist. In the weighted lottery each waitlisted person who accepted this offer would start with extra chances based on number of years they were on the current list; if unsuccessful, in subsequent years they would get additional chances as long as they kept applying for the same month in each subsequent year.

#### **2.8.1.4.3 Same as “Encourage people to leave current waitlist...”, but Abandon Waitlist in Five Years**

With one exception this option would be the same as the previous option except the existing waitlist would expire in five years from the implementation date, at which time those who had not accepted any incentives and remained on the list would be given full refunds of what they paid to be waitlisted.

#### **2.8.1.4.4 Three Stage Expedited Transition**

*Under this option, three stages of expedited transition would take place during the first four to six months after the Record of Decision (ROD) is signed.*

*Stage 1 would be first stage of transitioning from the current waitlist to the new permit system. In this stage, members of the waitlist would be given one final two-month chance to schedule launch dates through the existing waitlist. A total of 600 launch dates (from the 2007 through 2011 seasons) would be made available for this purpose. All those people who do not succeed in this stage would then transition to stage 2.*

*Stage 2 would be the modified waitlist stage, in which existing waitlist rules would be changed to allow waitlist members to band together and advance up the list based on their combined waits. For example, if Tom had been on the waitlist for five years and Robin for nine years, their combined wait would be 14 years, so they would receive one number and be ahead of all those who had waited 13 years or less. After a two-month period, where members would be allowed to join together, 600 additional launch dates (from the 2007 through 2011 seasons) would be made available to those combined waitlist members with the greatest wait totals. All those who had not succeeded in this stage would then move onto stage 3.*

*Stage 3 would be the final transition stage. Everyone would need to give up their old waitlist spot and the existing waitlist would no longer exist. In exchange for individual waitlist members giving up their spots, each waitlist member would have their choice of the following two basic options:*

- *One option would consist of individuals on the waitlist trading their spot on the waitlist for one extra chance, in addition to the total chances they would normally have had, in the new hybrid lottery for each year they had been on the existing waitlist. These extra chances would expire only upon being awarded a trip or through participation in any other trip (noncommercial or commercial). These extra chances would greatly improve each person’s chances in the lottery.*

- *The other option would be for an individual to accept a refund for the price they paid to join and leave the waitlist.*

*This three-stage expedited transition process would transition all members off the waitlist within 6 months. The Park expects the majority of stage 1 launch dates will go to people at the very top of the waitlist. In addition, the Park assumes that an average of 3 people will join together to claim each stage 2 launch. Together this would allow 33% (2,400 people) to have gained a launch date through this point in the transition. The 10-year chances for the remaining 4,300 former waitlist members could be calculated as follows: If all 4,300 apply each year and are part of an assumed 7,000 total lottery applications received each year, the Park predicts that over half of these people will have received a launch date within ten years. The Park also predicts that in twenty years, no more than 561 of these people will continue to have been unsuccessful in obtaining a launch date. Therefore, this three-stage expedited transition process, coupled with the new permit system, should result in a much improved success rate for the majority of those who are currently on the waitlist.*

### 2.8.1.5 NPS PREFERRED TRANSITION OPTION

The NPS preferred option for the transition system would be the Three Stage Expedited Transition option. This option would expedite the transition to the new permit system, immediately benefit approximately 33% of waitlist members with launch dates, and result in most others obtaining launches within 10 years. Table 2-12 illustrates how well each of the options would achieve project objectives.

**TABLE 2-12: HOW THE TRANSITION SYSTEM WOULD ACHIEVE PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

Objective	Does Option Meet Objective?			
	New Permit System Augments Frozen Waitlist System	Encourage People to Leave Waitlist and Reduce Waitlist Allocation	Encourage People to Leave Current Waitlist, Reduce Waitlist Allocation and Abandon List in 5 Years	Three Stage Expedited Transition
Expedite transition to the new permit system.	No	Somewhat	Somewhat	Yes
Offer opportunities for new <i>noncommercial</i> users to succeed in <i>obtaining</i> a permit.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ensure those on the waitlist are treated fairly.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Offer ample opportunities for those on the waitlist to succeed.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

## 2.8.2 ISSUES RELATED TO CULTURALLY AFFILIATED AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES

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*In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the CRMP, the NPS proposed implementing three initiatives related to culturally affiliated American Indian tribes and enhanced interpretation of the Grand Canyon from a Native American perspective. After receiving public comment on these initiatives and further considering them, the NPS has decided to proceed as follows:*

- 1. The NPS proposed offering a new, full-river concession contract, carved out of the current commercial allocation, to be awarded competitively under existing authorities, including, if appropriate, 36 CFR subsection 51.17(b)(2). The new contract would comprise 2,500 user-days (six launches) during the spring and summer. The public did not support this initiative and the NPS has reconsidered the benefits of offering a new concession contract. Instead, in accordance with 36 CFR subsection 51.17(b)(2), the NPS will include in the prospectus for the commercial river-running concession contracts a secondary selection factor calling for the interpretation of the Grand Canyon from the perspective of American Indian tribes that have historical ties to the canyon and are culturally affiliated with it, especially if such interpretation is provided by a member of a culturally affiliated tribe employed by the offerer.*
- 2. The NPS proposed recommending to the Department of the Interior that it support the Hualapai Tribe's efforts to obtain special legislation authorizing a noncompetitive full-river concession contract for the Tribe or a tribally owned enterprise, if the tribe's legislative proposal is consistent with the management objectives of the Lees Ferry and Lower Gorge alternatives selected as the final management plan and the record of decision for this environmental impact statement. The NPS has initiated the requisite discussions with departmental officials concerning the Tribe's efforts. At an appropriate time and in response to a request from Congress, the department will determine its official position with respect to any such legislative proposal.*
- 3. The NPS proposed assisting any federally recognized American Indian tribe that has historical ties to the canyon and is culturally affiliated with it in gaining the expertise and skills necessary to compete for procurement contracts to provide services and logistical support for administrative trips, including research trips. At the request of any tribe meeting those criteria, the NPS will provide such assistance.*



## **CHAPTER 3: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

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### 3.1 AREA OF ANALYSIS

The regional area potentially affected by the alternatives considered in this environmental impact statement is the 277-mile long Colorado River corridor as it passes through Grand Canyon National Park in northwestern Arizona. Designated as a world heritage site in 1979, the Grand Canyon is perhaps the most spectacular river gorge in the world. The rock strata exposed by the downcutting of the river provides a unique view of the evolutionary history of the earth's crust over approximately two billion years. The ongoing geologic processes at work in the canyon are essential to the development of important ecosystems in both the terrestrial and aquatic realms, supporting habitat for threatened and endangered species. *The historic properties located in the Colorado River corridor are eligible for listing as an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places.* In addition, the canyon offers exceptional natural beauty with varied opportunities for visitors to access the resources. As a world heritage site, the canyon is not only a treasure for the United States but for the world's people as well.

The area of the impact analysis includes about 2 miles on either side of the river that are readily accessible by hiking to river runners. Areas over 2 miles are included if known to be visited by river runners according to river guides, publications, and park staff. This area of analysis falls mostly within the national park; however, *since recreational users do not always stay within the boundaries of the park*, the area also includes lands within the Navajo, Havasupai, and Hualapai Reservations.

For the socioeconomic analysis the regional area of potential impact includes lands adjacent to Grand Canyon, as well as communities in northern Arizona, southern Utah, and southeastern Nevada that have socioeconomic ties to river running in Grand Canyon. Lands adjacent to the park that may be affected by the preferred alternative include the Navajo, Havasupai, and Hualapai Reservations; Glen Canyon and Lake Mead National Recreation Areas; Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument; Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land to the north and west of the park; and Kaibab National Forest districts north and south of the park. *At least nine* American Indian tribes have cultural affiliation to Grand Canyon.

Distance along the river corridor is measured in river miles (RM), beginning with RM 0 at Lees Ferry and ending with RM 277 at Grand Wash Cliffs. Most river trips launch at Lees Ferry within Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, approximately 1 mile upstream of the Grand Canyon National Park boundary. Within the 277 miles of Grand Canyon, boats can be taken out only at Diamond Creek (*RM 226*) where the majority of trips terminate. Continuing trips take out at South Cove on Lake Mead, 18 miles beyond Grand Wash Cliffs. Prior to 2001, trips took out at Pearce Ferry on Lake Mead, three miles beyond Grand Wash Cliffs, but because of drought conditions and low water levels, mud flats have made the Pearce Ferry takeout inaccessible.

Passengers can be exchanged throughout the trip at additional points where established hiking trails meet the river. Both commercial and noncommercial trip participants commonly hike in or out of the canyon at Phantom Ranch (RM 88), using either the Bright Angel Trail or the South Kaibab Trail. Many commercial passengers leave or join trips by helicopter at Whitmore (RM 187) and below Diamond Creek (RM 226) in the Lower Gorge. Private and commercial HRR river trips also launch at Diamond Creek and take boats out at South Cove.

In addition to these launch and takeout locations, the area of potential effect includes 200 camping beaches and numerous attractions along the river corridor. These specific sites are considered the local area of impact. Attraction sites include side canyons (particularly those with perennial streamflow), archeological and paleontological sites, historic locations and properties, caves, springs, and hiking trails. Most recreational use occurs close to the river; however, river runners venture into side canyons to explore.

Types and level of recreational use in the Lower Gorge below the confluence of Diamond Creek vary greatly from those above **RM 226**. The primitive zone that starts at Lees Ferry (Zone 1) ends at Diamond Creek. From **RM 226** to RM 260 the zone is a transitional one, changing from primitive to semi-primitive. From RM 260 to RM 277 the setting is rural natural, and below RM 277 the setting becomes urban on Lake Mead. Visitors to the Lower Gorge experience an increase in motorized use from upriver travel from Lake Mead, pontoon boat excursions, and helicopter tours and shuttles in the Quartermaster area (**RM 261 to RM 263**).

## 3.2 NATURAL RESOURCES

The Colorado River corridor is canyon-bound for its entire length below Glen Canyon Dam with the exception of its starting point at Lees Ferry. Here the river is accessible by road due to a natural break in the landscape after the river emerges from Glen Canyon and before it enters the Marble Canyon section of Grand Canyon. Immediately downstream from Lees Ferry the river begins to downcut through uplifted terrain, slicing through ever-deeper rock layers until the canyon walls rise over a mile above river level. These walls, generally alternating between cliffs of harder rock and talus-covered slopes of softer rock, dominate the terrain. Eleven Paleozoic era layers of rock rest on older igneous and metamorphic rocks. Over the course of its passage, the river winds into and out of the crystalline rock three times, forming the Upper, Middle, and Lower Granite Gorges. Tributary side canyons cut through the walls of Grand Canyon at frequent intervals.

Within the Grand Canyon the river is strongly influenced by both upstream and downstream dams. Glen Canyon Dam is located approximately 15 miles upstream of Lees Ferry in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, this dam affects the volume, pattern, temperature, and sediment load of river flows in Grand Canyon. Hoover Dam, located about 70 miles downstream of the park boundary, has backed the waters of Lake Mead approximately 40 miles into Grand Canyon (at full pool), slowing current and burying the historic river channel under thick deposits of sand and silt. This has transformed the river into a lake (when water levels in Lake Mead are up) or a sluggish river meandering across a steadily widening cliff-bound floodplain (at lower lake levels).

The climate of the river corridor is generally arid; average annual precipitation ranges between six and ten inches. Precipitation comes in the form of summer thundershowers and gentle winter rains; snow occurs infrequently. Temperatures are hot in the summer, with the average July maximum at Phantom Ranch (RM 88) exceeding 105°F. Winter temperatures are relatively mild, with the January maximum at Phantom Ranch averaging about 56°F and the minimum averaging about 37°F (Western Regional Climate Center 2003).

### 3.2.1 SOILS

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#### 3.2.1.1 GEOMORPHOLOGY OF THE COLORADO RIVER IN THE GRAND CANYON

Elevation at river level ranges from 3,100 feet above mean sea level at Lees Ferry to about 1,200 feet at Grand Wash Cliffs. The Colorado River descends an average of eight feet per mile over the length of the canyon, with more than half of this drop occurring in roughly 160 rapids (Leopold 1969). The river is geologically constrained to a narrow width by steep bedrock canyon walls, large talus blocks, alluvial fans, and cobble bars. Rock type strongly influences the morphology of the river. Softer rocks offer less resistance and result in a wider valley, a meandering channel, and many cobble bars and sand deposits, while harder rocks are more resistant to erosion and form a narrower channel with rapids and deep pools. As in many canyon rivers, coarse sediment delivered by flooding tributaries forms debris fans at the mouths of side

canyons. These debris fans partially fill and constrict the river channel, creating the classic pool-rapid longitudinal profile of the Colorado River through Grand Canyon. Flows back up behind the constrictions to form quiet pools, then pour through the constrictions, producing rapids and downstream scour holes. Channel width expands downstream of the constriction, allowing low-velocity recirculation zones (eddies) to form along the shoreline. The majority of Grand Canyon's 160 plus rapids conform to this pattern (Kieffer 1985; Schmidt and Graf 1990).

### **3.2.1.2 DEBRIS FLOWS AND RAPIDS**

Glen Canyon Dam traps the river's sediment supply in Lake Powell, leaving the approximately 750 tributaries of the Colorado River between Lees Ferry and the Grand Wash Cliffs as the only source of sediment for the river in Grand Canyon. The primary sediment transport processes in these tributaries are sediment-laden flash floods called debris flows, which contain 70% to 90% sediment by weight. In Grand Canyon debris flows begin as slope failures during intense rainfall. They can occur in weathered bedrock (particularly in soft shale or siltstone) or when runoff pours over cliffs onto consolidated colluvial slopes, triggering failure or the "firehose effect" (Griffiths, Webb, and Melis 1996).

Debris flows deposit poorly sorted sediment, including extremely large boulders, as debris fans in the river. Before the Glen Canyon Dam was constructed, large spring floods periodically reworked these deposits, reducing the constriction to a remarkably uniform value throughout the canyon (one-half the width of the river channel upstream of the fan). The dam reduced the magnitude and frequency of mainstem floods, which has limited the ability of the river to move large boulders in recently aggraded debris fans. As a result, constrictions created by post-dam debris flows are likely to remain narrower, increasing river flow velocities and turbulence in rapids. During high flows huge waves can form, as happened at Crystal Rapid in 1983. Rapids in Grand Canyon are likely to become more severe and may present hazards to recreational river use over time (Kieffer 1985).

### **3.2.1.3 SAND DEPOSITS**

Sediments in the Colorado River range in size from boulders and cobbles to gravel, sand, and silt. The finer-grained sediments (sand sized and smaller) are the most important in terms of relative abundance (99% of the total sediment load) and the extent of deposits (Kearsley, Schmidt, and Warren 1994). Sand is deposited in pools and along channel margins, but the largest and most common sand deposits are formed in the zones of recirculating current associated with the debris fans (Schmidt and Graf 1990). Sand deposits are an important component of the riparian ecosystem providing low-velocity habitats for fishes, substrate for riparian vegetation, erosion protection for archeological sites, and campsites for river recreationists (Hazel et al. 2002; Rubin et al. 2002). The size, abundance, and distribution of the sand deposits that serve as campsites limit the river's recreational carrying capacity. Geomorphic studies of changes in the sand deposits, photo documentation, and the experience of river guides indicate that since the completion of Glen Canyon Dam in 1963, sediment load in the river has been reduced by approximately 90% and erosive conditions have been created. Degradation

(erosion) is exceeding aggradation (deposition of new sand), and sand is being transported downstream, eventually to Lake Mead.

Over the last 40 years sand deposits suitable as campsites have decreased dramatically in both size and abundance, and campsites have changed more than any other aspect of the river recreation resource during this time. Loss of sand is most pronounced above the confluence with the Little Colorado River (RM 61.5). Efforts to retard loss of sand from the system and rebuild beaches through dam operations have met with limited success. Under current operations as stipulated in the record of decision (USDI 1996), new sand entering the Colorado River from the tributaries is exported downstream within weeks to months, especially in Marble Canyon (Rubin et al. 2002).

The Adaptive Management Work Group, formed as a result of the Grand Canyon Protection Act and the Glen Canyon Dam *Final Environmental Impact Statement* (BOR 1995) and *Record of Decision* (USDI 1996) has made recommendations for future dam operations to address this issue. One recent recommendation includes scheduling dam releases in excess of power plant capacity or 31,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), after flooding in the Paria River delivers more than one million metric tons of fine-grained sediment to the Colorado River. The intent of such spike releases is to transport the new sand from the riverbed to higher elevation deposits farther downstream, thus rebuilding camping beaches (Hazel et al. 2002). The focus is on flooding in the Paria River (RM 1), one of the two primary contributors of sediment (along with the Little Colorado River) to the Colorado River in Grand Canyon; together, these rivers contributed about 12% of the annual average pre-dam sediments to Grand Canyon. Augmenting sediment by artificial means has also been proposed (Rubin et al. 2002).

Other factors contributing to the decline of beaches include encroachment of both native and nonnative vegetation and erosion caused by flash floods in side canyons, precipitation runoff, wind, and human use.

#### **3.2.1.4 BEACHES AND CAMPSITES**

The recreational use carrying capacity is closely tied to the number, size, and location of beaches suitable for camping along the river corridor. Several attempts have been made to inventory beach campsites in Grand Canyon, as well as considerable work on the effects of Glen Canyon Dam and dam operations on beach abundance, size, and attributes. Kearsley and Warren completed one of the most comprehensive campsite inventories in 1993. Subsequent studies have updated information on beach size and abundance on subsets of these beaches. The “adopt-a-beach” program that has been developed by the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center, independent researchers, and the Grand Canyon River Guides has examined the effects of dam operation on various beaches (Kearsley, Schmidt, and Warren 1994; Kearsley 1995; Kearsley and Quartaroli 1997; Kaplinski et al. 2002; and Thompson 2002). Additionally, in October 2002 Grand Canyon National Park initiated a biophysical impact monitoring study, including data on campable beaches and recorded as the number of available tent sites (Brown and Jalbert 2003). The most current data available were used in the Grand Canyon River Trip Simulator.

Currently slightly more than 200 camping beaches in Grand Canyon are consistently identifiable from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek and approximately 15 from Diamond Creek to Lake Mead. The precise number varies from year to year and may depend on recent water level regimes (including experimental floods to maintain or rebuild beaches); vegetation changes; erosion from tributary flooding, wind, or recreational use; regulations that prevent use of some camps with sensitive cultural or natural resources; and the specific methodological criteria regarding what beaches to count (e.g., what flow level defines availability of “low water camps,” deciding how much vegetation encroachment or tributary erosion makes a camp unusable). The 1993 inventory by Kearsley and Warren identified 226 camps at normal flow levels between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek, an average density of about one per mile. It also identified 37 camps that are only available at low flows. More recent partial inventories indicate there may be a smaller number of sites, as some of the beaches available a decade ago are no longer present. The 2003 beach inventory by Brown and Jalbert identified 214 campsites between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek, of which only 55 were considered large enough to accommodate 36 people, 106 could accommodate up to 24 people, and 53 could accommodate 12 or fewer people (see Appendix I). In a survey of 31 campsites from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek between 1998 and 2000, the total camp area above the 25,000 cfs discharge stage had decreased by 25% as a result of vegetation encroachment, wind deflation, erosion from precipitation runoff, and human traffic (Kaplinski et al. 2002).

It is clear that campsites are becoming smaller and less abundant (see Photo 3-1) and that this trend will persist. Because fewer campsites are available, river trips have camped on rock ledges and in areas that are far less desirable than sandy beaches. This trend will affect future park management decisions about recreational use in the river corridor.

The distribution of campsites is not uniform through the canyon. In some reaches of the river campsite densities are lower and large primary camps are particularly scarce. Geomorphologists and others have identified these as critical reaches, which typically correspond to narrower, gorge-like segments with higher floodwater velocities. In critical reaches that are 25 to 40 miles long, competition for the few most desirable camps can be a major issue. Erratic launch patterns and the location of specific attraction sites further exacerbate camp competition in these critical reaches, creating campsite bottlenecks. Examples of critical reaches include reach 2 (RM 11.3–RM 22.6) that contains two large beaches, and reach 9 (RM 139.9–RM 159.9) that contains only one large beach (see Appendix I; Brown and Jalbert 2003). Campsite competition also occurs in the Lower Gorge where rafters and visitors traveling upriver from Lake Mead compete for 15 campsites along over 50 miles of river (see Appendix I).

### **3.2.1.5 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK**

Soils along the river corridor of the canyon occur in three hydrologic zones defined by Kearsley et al. (2003): (1) shoreline (water’s edge to the 25,000 cfs stage elevation); (2) new high-water zone (upper shoreline boundary to 90,000 cfs); and (3) old high-water zone (upper boundary of the new high-water zone to ca. 150,000 cfs stage elevation where vegetation grades into desert scrub). Xeric soils occur on talus slopes and cliffs above these hydrologic zones. In tributaries and at seeps and springs, riparian soils occur.

**FIGURE 3- 1: TAPEATS BEACH SEDIMENT LOSS FROM 1952–1995****1952****1995**

Soils near the shoreline are subject to scour and fill events from experimental releases from Glen Canyon Dam, which range as high as 31,000 cfs (power plant capacity) to 45,000 cfs (USDI 2002a). The new high-water zone is within the hydrologic zone that was last affected by flooding during the 1983–1986 flood flows; this zone is rarely subjected to scour and fill by fluctuating water flows. The old high-water zone is above any hydrologic zone that has been subjected to scour and fill since the creation of Glen Canyon Dam in 1963. Riparian soils occur in all three hydrologic zones (Kearsley et al. 2003) and at seeps or springs along the corridor or in tributary canyons.

Riparian soil textures in the inner canyon usually consist of sands, silts, sandy loam, or loamy sands that erode very easily and regenerate relatively slowly. Riparian substrates along the river are generally young alluvial deposits that are modified by hydraulic reworking, weathering, vegetation, wildlife, and recreational use (Stevens and Ayers 1993). Sediments for the most part consist of interbedded layers of fine silts, sand, and mixed-size particles. Soils in fluvial marshes are notably different; they are high in clayey silt, relatively low in sand, and can contain high levels of organic matter. Pre-dam sediments on the higher terraces (the old high-water zone) contain much more silt than do post-dam deposits. The flood releases of 1983 scoured alluvial deposits of fine silts and nutrients, generally increasing sand grain size and decreasing the ability of sediments to retain moisture. This reflects the low sediment load and highly erosive nature of the post-dam river. Nutrient concentrations are highest in pre-dam deposits (the old high-water zone) and shoreline marshes, and lowest in post-dam deposits (the new high-water zone and along the shoreline).

Above the new and old high-water zones, xeric soils on talus slopes and cliffs have been called skeletal and poorly developed (Stevens and Ayers 1993). They are assigned to the torriorthents-camborthids-rock outcrop association, which are generally shallow, moderately sloping to extremely steep, gravelly, cobbly and stony, moderately coarse to moderately fine-textured soils developed in colluvial material or on bedrock (Hendricks 1985; see Appendix C). The Natural Resources Conservation Service initiated a soil survey of Grand Canyon National Park in May 1998 and the soil types found above the hydrologic zones are listed in Appendix C. Soils on these talus slopes also contain a fine-textured component that was created when wind-deposited (eolian) materials filled in the spaces between boulders of talus slopes before Glen Canyon Dam was constructed (Lindsay 2003). Eolian sediments also fill spaces and fractures in Precambrian crystalline rock in the inner gorge.

Soils in the old high-water zone and above on the terraces can be relatively fragile and include biotic communities called biological soil crusts. Biological soil crusts are a complex mosaic of cyanobacteria, green algae, lichens, mosses, microfungi, and other bacteria (USGS 2001). Cyanobacteria and microfungal filaments weave through the top few millimeters of soil, gluing loose particles together and creating a highly irregular surface crust of raised pedestals (typically black and several centimeters tall). Biological soil crusts play a major role in preventing erosion, cycling nutrients, and providing sites for seed germination and plant growth.

Springs, seeps, and tributary soils can occur within or above the three hydrologic zones. Tributary soils are typically composed of gravelly streambed alluvium, with sandy or silty soil, cobbles, and other rock fragments up to boulder size. Soils in tributaries with perennial water generally contain more organic matter and exhibit lower pH. Thick riparian vegetation contributes substantially to the organic content of soils near streams, seeps, and springs.

### **3.2.1.6 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD**

The same three hydrologic zones apply to soils in the Lower Gorge. Studies of shoreline erosion and beaches within the new high-water zone have been concentrated above the Lower Gorge, in the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek stretch. Little campsite information exists for the Lower Gorge campsites. Riparian soils found along the shoreline and in the new high-water zone below

Diamond Creek are similar to the upper stretch in that they are young alluvial deposits consisting of sands, silts, sandy loam, or loamy sands. Old high-water zone soils consist of pre-dam sediments that are higher in clayey silt and contain biological soil crusts. As water levels in Lake Mead drop, mud flats *and* elevated river *banks* have made it difficult to access attractions and campsites.

Soils located above the new and old high-water zones in the Lower Gorge are primarily rock outcrop-lithic torriorthents, typic torrifluvents, or lithic torriorthents-lithic calciargids. Parent material consists of colluvium derived from schist and sandy eolian deposits from mixed sources, alluvium or residuum weathered from calcareous shale (see Appendix C).

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## 3.2.2 WATER QUALITY

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### 3.2.2.1 GENERAL HYDROLOGY

Surface water resources in Grand Canyon consist of the Colorado River, tributary side streams, and seeps and springs. Colorado River flows entering the Grand Canyon are controlled through Glen Canyon Dam. Through the canyon the river gains water from perennial tributaries, flash flood flows in side canyons, and groundwater discharge through springs and seeps.

#### 3.2.2.1.1 Colorado River Mainstem

Since the Glen Canyon Dam was finished in 1963, Colorado River flows through Grand Canyon have averaged about 13,700 cfs, with winter flows averaging less than summer flows. The maximum flow since 1963 was 92,600 cfs released during the unusually wet year of 1983; the minimum flow was 700 cfs, released when Lake Powell was filling (USGS 2003). Under normal operating criteria in effect since 1996, releases cannot exceed 25,000 cfs except during habitat maintenance or other experimental flows, under emergency conditions, or when required for flood control. Releases cannot drop below 8,000 cfs between 7 A.M. and 7 P.M. or 5,000 cfs at night. Daily fluctuations cannot exceed 8,000 cfs during high-release months (800,000 acre-feet [ac. ft.]), 6,000 cfs for medium-release months (600,000 to 800,000 ac. ft.), and 5,000 cfs for low-release volume months (less than 600,000 ac. ft) (BOR 1995).

Within the context the *Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program* (BOR, NPS, and USGS 2001), several experimental flows have been released since 1996, some lasting a few days, others a few months. These include a beach habitat building flow of 45,000 cfs in 1996, habitat maintenance flows of 30,700 cfs in 1997 and 30,300 cfs in 2000, high steady flows of 27,000 cfs in 1997, low steady summer flows with spike releases in 2000, and high fluctuating flows in 2003 and 2004. The intent of all experimental flows has been to improve natural resource conditions (Hazel et al. 2002; Thompson 2002).

Drought conditions have prevailed in the river basin for over four years. Inflows to Lake Powell were 62% of normal in 2000, 59% of normal in 2001, and 25% of normal in 2002. Total unregulated inflow for water in 2003 was projected to be about 60% of normal (BOR 2003a). Lake Powell's elevation was more than 90 feet below full pool in June 2003 and is expected to

continue to drop if the drought endures. Because of these drawdown conditions in Lake Powell, releases from Glen Canyon Dam in 2003 were scheduled to meet the minimum objective release of 8.23 million acre-feet. Minimum annual releases can be expected until water levels in Lake Powell recover.

### **3.2.2.1.2 Tributaries**

Of the 750+ tributary canyons in the Grand Canyon, the majority are ephemeral watercourses flowing only during local storm events. The largest tributaries with perennial flow are listed in Appendix D. The Paria and Little Colorado Rivers and Kanab, Havasu, Diamond, and Spencer Creeks originate outside the canyon, drain large plateau areas, and are major drainage features in the park. These tributaries derive flow from perennial runoff and perennial spring sources as well as intermittent runoff events.

Perennial tributaries, in general, are popular attraction sites for river runners. Many offer clear water, lush vegetation, cascades, pools, and waterfalls. Angling is popular at cool-water tributaries like Bright Angel and Tapeats Creeks, which can be accessed by backcountry hikers.

Seeps and springs issue from thick sections of sedimentary rocks as the groundwater emerges into the canyon. Seeps and springs occur usually at the contact between a permeable rock unit and a nonpermeable rock. Most of the springs issue from the Muav and Redwall limestones, although a few small springs issue from the Tapeats sandstone. If the seep or spring emerges on a cliff face, waterfalls and hanging gardens may develop. If the source of the spring is covered by rock fall, water may emerge at the base of a talus slope. Springs are the source of base flow in most of the perennial tributaries to the Colorado River. The largest springs in the canyon—Blue, Havasu, Thunder River, and Roaring springs—provide base flow for the Little Colorado River, Havasu Creek, Tapeats Creek, and Bright Angel Creek, respectively.

Other large springs accessible from the river include Vasey's Paradise, Upper and Lower Deer Springs, and Pumpkin Spring. River runners generally make use of the streams and riparian areas downstream of the large springs rather than the point of emergence itself, which is often difficult to access. A major exception is Pumpkin Spring, which is a highly mineralized spring that fills a travertine bowl at the river's edge and was once commonly used as a warm-water swimming hole; it is now generally avoided because of high arsenic levels.

### **3.2.2.2 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK**

#### **3.2.2.2.1 Colorado River Mainstem**

**Arizona Status.** The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) assesses the water quality of two stretches of the river below Glen Canyon Dam: the first from the dam to the Paria River (RM 1) and the second from Parashant Canyon (RM 198.5) to Diamond Creek (RM 225). At the time of ADEQ's 1998 "Water Quality Limited Waters List," the first stretch was considered to have impaired uses because of elevated levels of selenium (ADEQ 1998). The second stretch was considered to have impaired uses because of high turbidity. In 2000 the department adopted new procedures and now reports their water quality findings based on whether or not a water body has attained established standards for certain water quality

parameters for designated uses. Water quality parameters include temperature, pH, turbidity, total dissolved solids (TDS), numerous chemical elements and compounds, and pathogens (disease-causing microbes). Designated uses for the Colorado River below Glen Canyon Dam include agriculture, aquatic wildlife (cold-water fishery), domestic water source, fish consumption, and full body contact (swimming). In 2002 the stretch of the river from Parashant to Diamond Creek was considered impaired because turbidity levels exceeded ADEQ's standard of 10 nephelometric turbidity unit (NTU) for a cold-water fishery. Attainment for all other uses was judged inconclusive because of insufficient data given ADEQ's revised requirements (ADEQ 2002).

**Physical Characteristics.** Because it is drawn from deep within Lake Powell, Colorado River water in Grand Canyon is cold year-round varying little with season. River temperatures at Lees Ferry average 46°F (BOR 1995). Seasonally, temperatures gradually warm from a low in February/March of 43°F to a maximum in December of 54°F (Hueftle and Vernieu 1998). From June through August temperatures slowly increase downstream until reaching about 60°F at Diamond Creek (Vernieu 2000; BOR 1995). Releases from Glen Canyon Dam are generally clear and low in nutrients owing to the lack of nutrient-rich sediments and algae (Wilson, Shannon, and Blinn 1999). Turbidity, nutrients, and total dissolved solids all tend to increase farther downstream from the dam owing to tributary inflows and side canyon runoff. During the last decade, total dissolved solids have fluctuated from 390 to 650 milligrams per liter (mg/L), with a typical annual fluctuation of about 130 mg/L (Vernieu 2000). River water is alkaline.

**Pathogens.** Water samples collected from the Colorado River and tributaries in Grand Canyon were examined for protozoan parasites (*Giardia* spp. and *Cryptosporidium parvum*, both derived from animal fecal material), enteroviruses (derived only from humans), and the bacteria *Escherichia coli* (derived from human and animal fecal material\*) (Gerba, Enriquez, and Gaither 1997). Samples were not tested for Norovirus (formerly called Norwalk-like virus). Three mainstem sites were sampled and one site, RM 52, was sampled four times (June and August 1995, July and August 1996) for *E. coli* and parasites and twice for enteroviruses. Results were positive once for *E. coli* (low count) and once for *Cryptosporidium*. No enteroviruses were found. Two additional mainstem sites were sampled once (June 1995) for *E. coli* with immeasurable results.

In earlier mainstem sampling, a correlation was found between increased total coliform levels and increased turbidity (Sommerfeld, Crayton, and Crane 1976). Bacteria adhere to sediment and are found in larger concentrations in bottom sediments than in the water column. Elevated bacteria counts in water, therefore, are associated with activities that entrain sediments, such as storm runoff and human wading.

Several outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness have occurred among river users since 1972. Outbreaks in 1994, 2000, and 2002 involved more than 300 persons (Higgins 2002). Specimens taken from afflicted individuals in 2002 were positive for the enteric Norovirus. ***Other possible sources of contamination include Phantom Ranch, Cottonwood, Roaring Springs, and the Lees Ferry septic system.*** To protect against potential illness-causing viruses, parasites, and

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\* *E. coli* has increasingly replaced fecal coliform as an indicator of human pathogens in recreational waters (ADEQ 2002).

bacteria, all of which have been documented from the Colorado River in recent years, the water should be settled if cloudy, filtered, and disinfected with chlorine before being consumed.

### **3.2.2.2 Tributaries and Springs**

**State of Arizona Status.** ADEQ's 2002 water quality assessment was inconclusive for Grand Canyon tributaries due to insufficient data; however, the 1998 "Water Quality Limited Waters List" reported four streams as having impaired uses for the parameters indicated: Paria River (beryllium, turbidity), Lava/Chuar Creek (turbidity), Royal Arch Creek (selenium), and Havasu Creek (turbidity).

**Physical Characteristics.** Grand Canyon's tributaries were found to be characterized by dissolved oxygen within the range of healthy streams and high alkalinities (Mazzu 1995). Spring-fed tributaries that emanate from the Redwall or Muav limestone formations of the North Rim (Vasey's Paradise and Saddle, Clear, Bright Angel, Shinumo, Stone, Tapeats, and Deer Creeks) generally have low TDS levels. Spring-fed streams that emanate from lower carbonate strata (Little Colorado River and Kwagunt, Nankoweap, Hermit, Crystal, Royal Arch, Matkatamiba, Havasu, National, and Spring Canyon Creeks) have higher TDS levels. Some of these streams have high levels of sulfate and/or arsenic or, more rarely, elevated levels of metals. Mazzu (1995) found levels of radioactive elements (radionuclides) to be above the natural range in the Paria River, Lava/Chuar Creek, Hermit Creek, and Kanab Creek, with levels in Kanab Creek at flood stage well above health standards. Oily discoloration has been observed in Kanab Creek, possibly indicating petrochemical contamination from an upstream source outside the park (Rihs 2003). Such discoloration may also be caused by naturally generating methane. (see Appendix D for a summary of available water quality information.)

**Pathogens.** During June and July 1995, and July and August 1996, 14 tributaries, 3 inflow areas, and 2 springs were sampled for *Giardia*, *Cryptosporidium*, enteroviruses, and *E. coli* (Gerba, Enriquez, and Gaither 1997). Waters from six sites tested positive for *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium*—Vasey's Paradise and Nautiloid, Nankoweap, Bright Angel, Pipe, and Hermit Creeks. Vasey's Paradise tested positive for both parasites and had the highest counts for both. No enteroviruses were detected at any of the 12 sites sampled. *E. coli* was detected in measurable amounts at 13 of the 19 sites sampled, with six sites registering counts of over 100 organisms per 100 ml. Of these, three sites exceeded the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) standard for *E. coli* in recreational water (235/100 ml): Nautiloid inflow, Royal Arch Creek, and Tapeats Creek. One sample from Tapeats Creek reached at least 900/100 ml. High counts may have been related to high runoff conditions, but the data were not sufficient to make this determination. The report concluded that the concentrations of parasites are low, and tributary waters generally do not exceed health standards (Gerba, Enriquez, and Gaither 1997). Nonetheless, all drinking water should be taken **from rapidly flowing portions** of the Colorado River, and all water should be filtered and treated with chlorine to ensure purity before consuming.

Mazzu (1995) found that water quality of springs and tributaries in the Grand Canyon varied greatly with respect to fecal coliform and fecal streptococcus, but over the course of a 1992–1994 study most of the tributaries exhibited high bacteria levels at least some of the time. High

bacteria levels generally, but not always, correlated with high turbidity. In a follow up to Mazzu's work, park staff monitored 25 tributaries in the Grand Canyon for bacteria during June, August, and October 1995 (Rihs 1995). Fecal coliform levels were generally low for all sampling periods and fecal streptococcus levels were generally high. Since fecal coliform is more correlated with human contamination and fecal streptococcus is more correlated with wildlife contamination, the result "strongly suggests that the dominant contributor was wildlife" (Rihs 1995). Overall, bacteria levels were generally highest during the August trip. This timing may be related to higher discharge and turbidity resulting from summer storm activity, higher visitor levels in August, or both.

### 3.2.2.3 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD

*While some water quality issues from Diamond Creek to Lake Mead are similar to those from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek, the types and intensity of use (as well as associated facilities) increase markedly in the Lower Gorge. In this section of the river, less monitoring occurs and there are fewer baseline data on water quality. Also, water quality parameters in the Lower Gorge differ from those in the Upper Gorge due to the rise in turbidity that results from side tributaries feeding into the Colorado River.* The ADEQ does not assess water quality of the mainstem in this reach or the major tributaries such as Diamond Creek or Spencer Creek. The U.S. Geological Survey does not operate any monitoring stations on the mainstem below Diamond Creek. USGS volumetric data is available for Diamond and Spencer Creeks and for the mainstem just above Diamond Creek, but limited water quality data are available from the agency. The NPS has not inventoried or sampled tributaries or springs in the Lower Gorge or the mainstem (Rihs, pers. comm. 2004).

The Hualapai Tribe has a water quality monitoring program and works in collaboration and cooperation with the USGS. Forty-four seeps and springs and associated wetlands throughout the Hualapai Reservation are significant to the tribe and are monitored (Cabillo, pers. comm. 2004). Use of these water sources includes aquatic and wildlife, full body contact, domestic, fish consumption, and agriculture (irrigation and livestock). Lava Spring, Diamond Spring Canyon, Pumpkin Spring, and Three Springs are among the most well-known springs that the tribe monitors (Cabillo 2003). Pumpkin Spring is a warm spring at RM 213 that chronically exceeds state health standards for arsenic (naturally occurring), and the NPS advises recreationists to avoid it.

## 3.2.3 AIR QUALITY

### 3.2.3.1 GRAND CANYON AIR QUALITY

Clean, clear air is essential for park visitors to be able to appreciate Grand Canyon's most valued characteristics—the visual grandeur of its scenery, scale, form, colors, and wilderness qualities. It is also important for the health of visitors, as well as tribal and local residents. Atmospheric conditions in and around Grand Canyon influence the diffusion of natural and anthropogenic emissions and affect the general air quality of the Grand Canyon. Temperature, precipitation, cloud cover, dew point, and other factors are relevant, but wind is particularly important for diffusing pollutants.

Southerly and southwesterly directions throughout most of the year dominate prevailing winds in the region. However, there is a significant northeasterly direction during winter. Prevailing winds tend to be strongest in spring and weakest in winter. Meteorological studies conducted in the 1980s indicate that once pollutants are introduced into Grand Canyon, they tend to recirculate within the canyon until removed by moderate to strong prevailing winds. This effect, coupled with temperature inversions, causes locations within the canyon to have generally higher pollution levels than sites on the rims (Whiteman, Allwine, and Hubbe 1991; Bowman 2003a). Emissions from local sources, such as wildland fire smoke and dust generated on the Diamond Creek road on the Hualapai Reservation, can also become trapped.

Temperature inversions may occur in the winter when cold, dense air drains into the canyon at night and is trapped by a cap of warmer air. Extended inversions have the potential to cause stagnant conditions in lower canyon elevations and pollutants can become trapped, degrading air quality, creating hazy conditions, and impairing visibility. During winter, passing cold fronts can break up inversions and result in the clearest conditions at the canyon.

### **3.2.3.2 AMBIENT AIR QUALITY**

Air pollution levels within Grand Canyon are generally low and within federal standards (EA Engineering, Science, and Technology 2002). The EPA has promulgated national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). Regulated pollutants include carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter (PM), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and lead (Pb). Areas within the United States where measured concentrations of these pollutants are above the national standards are known as nonattainment areas. All others are defined as attainment areas or are unclassified. Grand Canyon National Park and the Hualapai Reservation are located in Coconino and Mohave Counties, which are both classified as attainment *and unclassifiable* areas for all five pollutants. In accordance with the federal Clean Air Act, Grand Canyon has been mandated as a Class I area. This rating requires the most stringent protection against increases in air pollution and further degradation of air quality related values. Relative to the air quality related values, the Clean Air Act sets a goal of natural visibility conditions that are not impacted by human-caused visibility degradation. The Hualapai Tribe of the Grand Canyon, through its Tribal Council, has passed a Hualapai Air Ordinance and is considering requesting the EPA to redesignate its airshed to Class I.

Measured levels for PM, SO<sub>2</sub>, and Pb at the park are well below the health-related national ambient air quality standards (see Table 3-1). Levels of O<sub>3</sub> are relatively high and have been trending upward since the late 1980s; however, measured values continue to meet federal and state ambient air quality standards. The other regulated pollutants, CO and NO<sub>2</sub>, are not routinely monitored at Grand Canyon, although research in 2001–2002 measured very low average CO levels in the southeast area of the park (averaging 0.12 ppm in the summer and 0.05 ppm in the winter) (Martin et al. 2002). Routine pollutant monitoring has been done in the eastern part of the park, although special studies have measured pollutants in the central portion (Tuweep) and just west of the park at Meadview in Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Measured levels of PM on the Hualapai Reservation on the South Rim are well below national standards. SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> data are now being collected there, but no definitive health-related effects are known yet (Havatone, pers. comm. 2004).

**TABLE 3-1: FEDERAL AND ARIZONA AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR CRITERIA POLLUTANTS, AND AVAILABLE DATA FROM GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, 1991–2000**

Pollutant	Averaging Time	National Ambient Air Quality Standards	Maximum Measured at Grand Canyon (10-year average)		Maximum Measured at Grand Canyon (10-year range)	
			South Rim	Indian Garden	South Rim	Indian Garden
Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> )	One Hour <sup>a</sup>	235	155.38	-	143.22–170.69	-
	Eight Hour <sup>b</sup>	157	135.96	-	125.56–143.22	-
Coarse Particulate Matter (PM <sub>10</sub> )	24 Hour <sup>c</sup>	150	26.51	32.01	18.27–44.99	22.50–45.78
	Annual <sup>d</sup>	50	8.42	10.63	7.37–9.65	8.62–11.78
Fine Particulate Matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> )	24 Hour <sup>e</sup>	65	8.04	9.91	6.65–9.28	9.11–11.15
	Annual <sup>f</sup>	15	3.30	4.38	2.99–3.56	4.00–4.94
Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )	24 Hour <sup>g</sup>	365	3.0386	2.2961	0.0015–7.8409	0.5321–6.4359
	Annual <sup>h</sup>	80	0.2951	0.3641	0.0015–0.5052	0.2072–0.5077
Lead (Pb)	Quarterly <sup>i</sup>	1.5	0.00092	0.00114	0.00058–0.00165	0.00071–0.00181

SOURCES: US EPA 2004.

Bowman 2003b: Grand Canyon ozone data are from the NPS Gaseous Pollutant Monitoring Network station near Grand Canyon Village. Statistics were compiled by the National Park Service Air Resources Division. These data meet EPA standards for NAAQS evaluation.

All other Grand Canyon data are from the Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments (IMPROVE) monitors GRCA1 (near Hopi Point, 1988–98) and GRCA2 (near Grandview Point, 1997–present); and INGA (at Indian Garden, 3200' below the South Rim), filter samples made Wednesday and Saturday (1988 through September 2000), or every third day (October 2000 to present). PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> data meet EPA standards for background monitoring only (not NAAQS attainment). SO<sub>2</sub> and Pb data are used to characterize concentrations but do not meet EPA standards for NAAQS evaluation.

**Ozone:**

- 1 Hour: To attain this standard, the daily maximum 1-hour average concentration measured by a continuous ambient air monitor must not exceed 0.12 parts per million (ppm) more than once per year, averaged over three consecutive years.
- 8 Hour: To attain this standard, the three-year average of the fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour average of continuous ambient air monitoring data over each year must not exceed 0.08 ppm.

**Coarse Particulate Matter:**

- 24 Hour: To attain this standard, the 99th percentile of the distribution of the 24-hour concentrations for a period of one year, averaged over three years, must not exceed 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at each monitor within an area.
- Annual: To attain this standard, the arithmetic average of the 24-hour samples for a period of one year, averaged over three consecutive years, must not exceed 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

**Fine Particulate Matter:**

- 24 Hour: To attain this standard, the 98th percentile of the distribution of the 24-hour concentrations for a period of one year, averaged over three years, must not exceed 65 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at each monitor within an area.
- Annual: To attain this standard, the three-year average of the annual arithmetic mean of the 24-hour concentrations from single or multiple population oriented monitors must not exceed 15.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

**Sulfur Dioxide:**

- 24 Hour: Average.
- Annual: Arithmetic mean.

**Lead:**

- Quarterly: Average.

While air quality in the Grand Canyon area is generally good, pollution levels are high enough to create haze that often reduces visibility. Most of this visibility degradation is attributable to a widespread, homogeneous haze from a multitude of sources (EPA 1999) that is transported to the area predominantly from industrial and metropolitan sources in southern Arizona, Nevada, California, and northern Mexico (EA Engineering, Science, and Technology 2002). These sources are outside the Park's and the Hualapai Tribe's direct influence and control, and they are the subject of a collaborative pollution-reduction effort by western states, tribes, and the federal government.

Unlike other pollutants regulated under the national standards, ozone is not emitted directly into the atmosphere. Rather, it forms through a series of chemical reactions between NO<sub>x</sub> and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of sunlight. Consequently, levels of ozone are

highest during the summer (when solar radiation peaks) and tend to rise during the day and fall at night. This pattern has been observed in the western Grand Canyon (closer to pollution sources), but daily “swings” in ozone are not observed near Grand Canyon Village. The stability and timing of ozone levels in the eastern Grand Canyon indicate that local production of ozone (expected during daylight) is at least augmented, if not dominated, by transport of ozone from upwind source areas throughout the day and night.

Estimated emissions within Grand Canyon National Park (including Grand Canyon Airport, which is near the park) account for a generally small fraction of total estimated emissions for both Coconino and Mohave Counties. A microinventory of these park emissions was conducted for 2000 (EA Engineering, Science, and Technology 2002), but did not include emissions from river activities except motorized rafts above Diamond Creek. For this environmental impact statement, the 2000 emissions data have been supplemented with river activity-related data developed for each alternative. The resulting contribution from all park pollution sources to emissions for Coconino and Mohave Counties is shown in Table 3-2.

**TABLE 3-2: GRAND CANYON AND COUNTY EMISSIONS OF AIR POLLUTANTS**  
(tons/year)

	<b>SO<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>NO<sub>x</sub></b>	<b>CO</b>	<b>PM<sub>10</sub></b>	<b>VOC</b>	<b>Total</b>
Grand Canyon Emissions (2000)	3.19	<b>101.25</b>	<b>2,344.19</b>	<b>208.02</b>	<b>222.51</b>	<b>2,879.15</b>
Coconino and Mohave County Emissions (NEI)	1,934	35,854	104,599	2,209	18,074	162,670
Grand Canyon Contribution	0.16%	<b>0.28%</b>	<b>2.24%</b>	9.42%	<b>1.23%</b>	<b>1.77%</b>

Road vehicles, wildland fires, and prescribed burning are the chief sources of emissions in the park overall. Within the river corridor, sources of pollutants include motorized boats, helicopters, and campfires in the winter that can attribute to localized haze due to temperature inversions.

### **3.2.3.3 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK**

The primary sources of emissions related to recreational use of the Colorado River above Diamond Creek (RM 226) are motorized rafts and commercial use of helicopters at Whitmore for exchanging passengers.

#### **3.2.3.3.1 Helicopter Exchanges at Whitmore**

Many of the commercial companies coming down river from Lees Ferry use the helicopter exchange point at Whitmore (RM 187) to allow their passengers to exit the river by means of helicopter and end their trip at Bar 10 Ranch on the adjacent North Rim. Helicopter flights at Whitmore in 2002 were estimated at 1,600 flights during the commercial river season, and approximately 3,500 people were transported into the canyon and 6,800 people out.

#### **3.2.3.3.2 Criteria Pollutants**

The use of the river within the Grand Canyon for recreational activities is known to create air pollutant emissions that could affect air quality resources. For each alternative, emissions from

motorized watercraft, aircraft, and campfires were considered. Estimated emissions for CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, and VOCs for the entire canyon are summarized in Table 3-3. Individual source types generally contribute less than **2%** of the park's emissions for a given pollutant; **although, aircraft emissions of some pollutants are higher**. Current river operations between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek produce about **2.5%** of the park's non-fire emissions of CO, **1%** of NO<sub>x</sub>, less than 1% of PM<sub>10</sub>, 4% of SO<sub>2</sub>, and **1%** of VOCs.

### 3.2.3.3.3 Acid Deposition on Aquatics and Soils

Deposition of total nitrogen and sulfur from emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>2</sub> has the potential for acidification on aquatic areas as well as soils. Major sources of NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>2</sub> emissions are required to assess the impacts of the emissions on these resources. The emissions from the river operations above Diamond Creek are well below the 100-tons-per-year threshold for such assessment (0.1 ton SO<sub>2</sub> and **1.3** tons NO<sub>x</sub>). In addition, the NPS Air Resources Division has determined that there is a sufficient buffer in the Grand Canyon region to neutralize any potential effect from acidification from these compounds on both soils and aquatic regions (Binkley et al. 1997).

### 3.2.3.3.4 Ozone Impacts on Vegetation

Ozone has been known to affect several plant species that occur within the Grand Canyon National Park and the reservation. Major sources of NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC emissions (precursors to ozone formation) are required to assess the impacts of the emissions on these resources. Emissions of these pollutants from the river operations above Diamond Creek total **less than 3.4** tons per year (**1.3** tons NO<sub>x</sub> and **2.0** tons VOC), **1%** of the total park emissions of these pollutants and well below the 100-tons-per-year threshold for major source assessment.

**TABLE 3-3: EMISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH RECREATIONAL USE OF THE COLORADO RIVER IN GRAND CANYON**

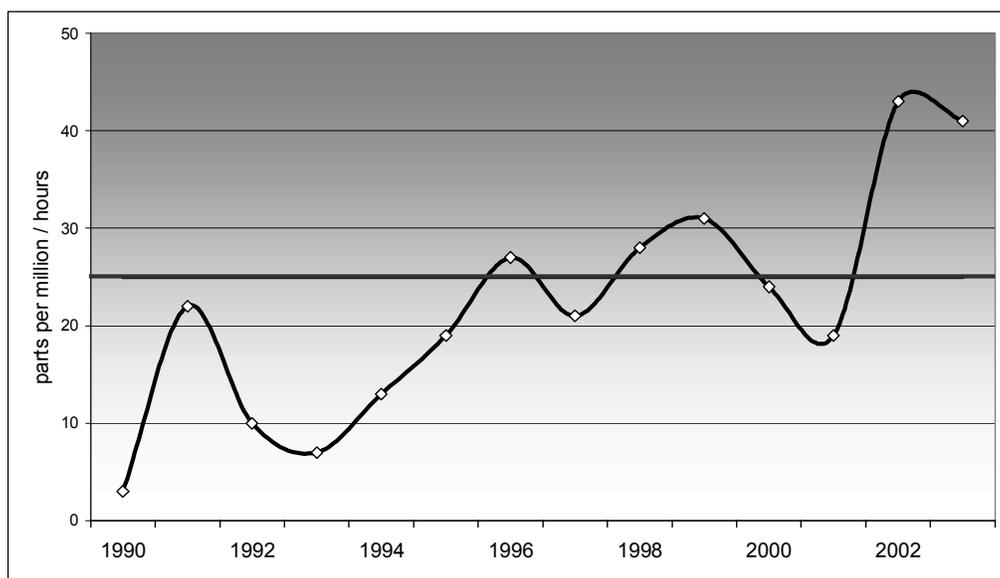
	SO <sub>x</sub>		NO <sub>x</sub>		CO		PM		VOC	
	tons	%	tons	%	tons	%	tons	%	tons	%
Total estimated park emissions	3.25	100.00%	<b>101.68</b>	100.00%	<b>745.07</b>	100.00%	<b>59.23</b>	100.00%	<b>184.92</b>	100.00%
Campfire emissions	0.00	0.09%	0.02	0.02%	1.84	<b>0.25%</b>	0.25	<b>0.43%</b>	1.67	<b>0.90%</b>
•Above Diamond Creek	0.00	0.06%	0.01	0.01%	1.21	<b>0.16%</b>	0.17	0.28%	1.10	<b>0.59%</b>
•Below Diamond Creek	0.00	0.03%	0.01	0.01%	0.63	<b>0.08%</b>	0.09	0.14%	0.57	<b>0.31%</b>
Aircraft emissions	0.53	16.16%	4.25	<b>4.18%</b>	24.48	<b>3.29%</b>	0.03	0.05%	3.62	<b>1.96%</b>
•Quartermaster passenger exchanges	0.40	12.17%	3.27	<b>3.22%</b>	23.09	<b>3.10%</b>	0	0.00%	3.41	<b>1.85%</b>
•Whitmore passenger exchanges	0.13	4.00%	0.98	<b>0.96%</b>	1.39	<b>0.19%</b>	0.03	0.05%	0.21	0.11%
Watercraft emissions	0.0	0.00%	<b>14.27</b>	<b>14.03%</b>	<b>46.26</b>	<b>6.21%</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.68%</b>	<b>2.39</b>	<b>1.29%</b>
•Commercial outboards LF-DC	0.0	0.00%	<b>0.34</b>	<b>0.33%</b>	<b>15.29</b>	<b>2.05%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.36%</b>
•Private outboards LF-DC	0.0	0.00%	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.02%</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.11%</b>	<b>0</b>	0.00%	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.02%</b>
•Lower Gorge commercial	0.0	0.00%	<b>0.23</b>	<b>1.23%</b>	<b>10.48</b>	<b>1.41%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.25%</b>
•Lower Gorge noncommercial	0.0	0.00%	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>0.01%</b>	<b>0</b>	0.00%	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
•HRR day trips	0.0	0.00%	<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.18%</b>	<b>8.19</b>	<b>1.10%</b>	<b>0</b>	0.00%	<b>0.36</b>	<b>0.19%</b>
•HRR overnight trips	0.0	0.00%	<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.18%</b>	<b>8.19</b>	<b>1.10%</b>	<b>0</b>	0.00%	<b>0.36</b>	<b>0.19%</b>
•Pontoon tours near Quartermaster	0.0	0.00%	<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.03%</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>0.16%</b>	<b>0</b>	0.00%	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.03%</b>
•Jetboat pick-ups	0.0	0.00%	13.30	<b>13.08%</b>	2.04	<b>0.27%</b>	0.40	0.67%	0.44	<b>0.24%</b>
Lees Ferry—Diamond Creek emissions	0.13	4.06%	<b>1.35</b>	<b>1.32%</b>	<b>18.71</b>	<b>2.51%</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>0.34%</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>1.09%</b>
Lower Gorge emissions	0.40	12.20%	<b>17.19</b>	<b>16.91%</b>	<b>53.87</b>	<b>7.23%</b>	0.49	<b>0.82%</b>	<b>5.66</b>	<b>3.06%</b>
Total river-associated emissions	0.53	16.25%	<b>18.54</b>	<b>18.23%</b>	<b>72.58</b>	<b>9.74%</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>1.16%</b>	<b>7.68</b>	<b>4.15%</b>

The NPS determined that the sum of daytime ozone concentrations greater than **0.060** ppm during the highest three months of the growing season (referred to as SUM06) would have a major impact if the value exceeded 25 ppm-hrs. Figure 3-2 illustrates that the SUM06 values measured in the park have exceeded the 25 ppm-hrs in 1996, 1998, 1999, 2002, and 2003 (Figure 3- 2GRCA air quality resource files). The park genotypes for ozone-sensitive plant species have not been tested under controlled conditions for sensitivity. Although no signs of injury from air pollution have been reported for ponderosa pine or lichens in the park, these observations are based on limited studies performed in 1992 and 1993 (Binkley et al. 1997). SUM06 values exceeding 25 ppm-hrs were not observed until 1996 and widescale systematic studies have not been conducted.

### 3.2.3.3.5 Visibility

Concerns about visibility degradation in the Lees Ferry reach generally parallel those outlined above. Although vistas are not as extensive within the canyon as they on the rims, poor visibility is still readily apparent in muted colors and loss of texture inside the canyon itself. Especially in more open sections like Furnace Flats, views from the river include long stretches of the canyon rim and long views down canyon. Although colored gases can reduce visibility, nearly all haze within the canyon is the result of fine particles (PM<sub>10</sub> and especially PM<sub>2.5</sub>) suspended in the atmosphere. Poor visibility is generally the result of sources outside the park. There is little direct emission of PM related to river recreation in the Lees Ferry reach (0.2 ton, **0.34%** of park totals). Other pollutants, including NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, and VOCs, can react in the atmosphere to form haze-causing particles. However, this transformation takes time, allowing the relatively low emissions from river use to disperse and leave the canyon before particles form. Occasionally, localized visible plumes may form (especially under calm, winter conditions) from campfires or engine exhaust. Such plumes generally disperse quickly (within minutes to hours).

FIGURE 3- 2: ANNUAL OZONE EXPOSURE —GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK



### 3.2.3.4 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD

Air quality of the Lower Gorge is somewhat different than that from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek. Monitoring conducted by the National Park Service in 2003 found ozone levels at Meadview (*located near Pearce Ferry RM 280*) actually exceeding the EPA 8-hour standard (although three years of such concentrations would be needed to violate the national standard) (results located at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/air/monitoring/exceed.htm>). Ozone levels at Tuweep (central Grand Canyon) exhibited a dramatic diurnal variation, possibly resulting from an up-canyon wind in the day drawing in pollution from the west and down-canyon wind at night bringing relatively clean air from the Arizona Strip.

The Lower Gorge also experiences a greater influence from urban areas, as evidenced by a study in the late 1980s (Miller et al. 1990) in which effects of air quality of the five-day workweek and two-day weekend pattern of the Los Angeles basin was seen as far east as Meadview, but not in Grand Canyon Village. In an attempt to explain the urban pattern (in this case, focusing on Las Vegas), the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission was not able to accurately model transport to Grand Canyon from Las Vegas due to computer model limitations. However, a conceptual model suggested nocturnal drainage to Lake Mead basins, then daytime ventilation, assisted by solar heating on the Grand Wash Cliffs, “pumping” these pollutants onto the plateau during the day (Holmes, pers. comm. 1996).

Air quality in adjacent regions of Nevada is generally much worse than conditions monitored to the east near Grand Canyon Village. Portions of Clark County (including Las Vegas) have failed to meet the national ambient air quality standards for CO, PM<sub>10</sub>, and ozone, *and are designated as nonattainment*. Even though the county is a nonattainment area for CO, trends over the last decade have improved, with no violations of the standard from 2001 to 2003. High CO concentrations are generally confined to large urban areas, diluting and depositing rapidly downwind (see EPA 2000). In the absence of monitoring data from western Grand Canyon, elevated CO levels are possible but unquantifiable. *The basins around Lake Mead are not part of the area EPA designated as failing to meet the ozone standard (USEPA 2005a). However, ozone monitoring data from Meadview (discussed above) indicated elevated ozone concentrations are present at the western end of Grand Canyon.* Until more data are available, the relationship between PM concentrations in Clark County and the western Grand Canyon will remain somewhat vague. However, meteorological conditions and various special studies (e.g., Project MOHAVE) show pollutants reaching the Grand Wash Cliffs from the west.

Recreational use of the Colorado River changes below Diamond Creek. In addition to private and commercial river trips (including those operated by HRR), emissions are generated by four additional sources: (1) helicopter traffic near RM 262; (2) pontoon boats operated near RM 262 for flat-water excursions; (3) large jetboats that travel upriver as far as Separation Canyon (RM 240) to pick up river trip passengers for a high-speed shuttle to Lake Mead; and (4) noncommercial upriver motor boat traffic from Lake Mead. Passenger exchanges for raft trips and pontoon tours occur near Quartermaster. Based on use in July, it is estimated that as many as 600 to 800 helicopter flights a week land and take off on approximately 15 helipads near RM 262 (Mengel, pers. comm. 2003a). The majority of these flights are Hualapai tribal land use tours, with up to 37% associated with pontoon boat rides and the remainder used to transport

HRR passengers out of the canyon. This mix of river recreation results in higher emissions from Lower Gorge activities than from upstream recreational uses.

Based on current information, ambient air pollutant concentrations in the Lower Gorge appear to be higher than from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek, probably as a result of the proximity to urban and utility source areas. This means that emissions in the western canyon may be a smaller percentage of the ambient load, but that ambient load may already be at levels worthy of concern.

#### **3.2.3.4.1 Criteria Pollutants**

Recreational activities on the Colorado River within the Lower Gorge related to motorized rafts, jetboats, helicopters, and campfires are known to create air pollutant emissions that could affect air quality resources. Estimated emissions for CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, and VOCs for the entire canyon are summarized in Table 3-3. Generally, specific craft types produce less than 5% of the park's total emissions of a given pollutant. However, helicopter traffic near Quartermaster produces 12% of the canyon's total emissions of sulfur dioxide **and jetboats produce 13% of the park's nitrogen oxide emissions**. Current total emissions from Lower Gorge watercraft and helicopters account for 7.2% of park non-fire emissions of CO, 16.9% of NO<sub>x</sub>, 0.8% of PM<sub>10</sub>, 12.2% of SO<sub>2</sub>, and 3.1% of VOCs.

The NPS does not routinely monitor criteria pollutants in the Lower Gorge. In 2003, a special study recorded summer ozone concentrations at Meadview, west of the park in Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Also that same year, Arizona began particulate monitoring at Meadview, and the Hualapai Tribe monitors PM, SO<sub>2</sub>, and NO<sub>2</sub> on their reservation. However, long-term trends like those available in the eastern Grand Canyon are not yet available.

#### **3.2.3.4.2 Acid Deposition on Aquatics and Soils**

Deposition of total nitrogen and sulfur from emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>2</sub> has the potential to acidify aquatic areas, as well as soils. Major sources of NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>2</sub> emissions are required to assess the impacts of the emissions on these resources. The emissions from the river operations below Diamond Creek are well below the 100-tons-per-year threshold for such assessment (0.4 ton SO<sub>2</sub> and 17 tons NO<sub>x</sub>). As in the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek reach, soils should be adequately buffered.

#### **3.2.3.4.3 Ozone Impacts on Vegetation**

Emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs (precursors to ozone formation) from the river operations are estimated to total 22.9 tons per year (17.2 tons NO<sub>x</sub> and 5.7 tons VOC). This amounts to 8% of the total park emissions of these pollutants, which is well below the 100-tons-per-year threshold for major source assessment.

There is insufficient data to calculate SUM06 values for the Lower Gorge. However, the initial results of monitoring at Meadview, and the proximity of high ozone levels in the Las Vegas metropolitan area to the west, suggest ozone exposures in the Lower Gorge may be even higher than those measured near Grand Canyon Village.

#### 3.2.3.4.4 Visibility

Concerns about visibility degradation in the Lower Gorge generally parallel those outlined for the upper stretch of river. Although vistas are not as extensive within the canyon as they are on the rims, poor visibility is still readily apparent in muted colors and loss of texture inside the canyon itself. Especially in more open sections, views from the river include long views down canyon. Although colored gases can reduce visibility, nearly all haze within Grand Canyon is the result of fine particles (PM<sub>10</sub> and especially PM<sub>2.5</sub>) suspended in the atmosphere. Poor visibility in the canyon is generally caused by sources outside the park, particularly because of the Lower Gorge's proximity to large metropolitan areas and utilities. There is little direct emission of PM related to river recreation in the Lower Gorge (0.5 ton, **0.8%** of park totals). Other pollutants, including NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, and VOCs, can react in the atmosphere to form haze-causing particles. However, this transformation takes time, allowing the relatively low emissions from river use to disperse and leave the canyon before particles form. Occasionally, localized visible plumes may form (especially under calm, winter conditions) from campfires or engine exhaust. Such plumes generally disperse quickly (within minutes to hours).

### 3.2.4 NATURAL SOUNDSCAPE

In accordance with NPS *Management Policies (Section 4.9)*, the NPS is to preserve to the greatest extent possible the natural soundscapes of the park, which exist in the absence of **human-caused sound**. The natural soundscape is an aggregate of all natural sounds that occur in parks, together with the physical capacity for transmitting natural sounds. Natural sounds occur within and beyond the range of sound that humans can perceive, and are transmitted through air, water, and solid materials. Natural sounds are considered an inherent component of the scenery, natural and historic properties, and wildlands and **recommended** wilderness that constitute the bulk of the park (94%). Natural sound is **a key component of the wilderness river experience (see Section 1.4.4.1)**, and can provide valuable indicators of the health and “naturalness” of the ecosystems found here. ***In this EIS, the terms “sound” and “noise” are generally used interchangeably, with no implication of appropriateness or inappropriateness attached to either term. (See also Section 4.2.4.)***

The components of soundscape along the river corridor are made up of natural sounds like flowing water, wind, storm activity, wildlife activity, other natural sound generation (rock slides, fire, etc.), and human-induced noise (motorized recreation, aircraft, human vocalization, electronics, etc.). Man-made or human sound is the ambient sound attributable to human activity, both near and far, and heard as a composite or individually. The NPS is tasked to restore degraded soundscapes to the natural condition wherever possible, and to protect natural soundscapes from degradation due to noise. Human noise sources within the river corridor are motorized watercraft, vehicle and tour bus noise from roads at launch/retrieval sites, camp activities, and aircraft overflights, with aircraft noise being the dominant noise source most often noticed by visitors.

Noise can distract visitors from park resources, purposes, and values, affect traditional cultural properties and the tranquility of historic park settings, and affect wildlife use patterns and daily life activities. Grand Canyon's natural soundscape is considered a disappearing resource that requires

restoration, protection, and preservation as a means of preventing natural sounds from being masked or obscured by the wide variety of human caused noise impacts. The soundscape is but one dimension of the complex problem of achieving a balance between resource preservation and recreational use. Preserving the natural soundscape for the enjoyment of future generations and preventing impairment of park resources is a major component of the NPS mission.

### 3.2.4.1 NATURAL AMBIENT SOUND LEVELS

Natural ambient sound levels of the park along the river corridor vary considerably from location to location and from time to time at any given site. The best available science has been used to define the background ambient sound levels in representative locations and vegetation types along the river corridor and to account for additions of human-caused noise that affect the ambient soundscape in these areas. In areas not affected by human-caused noise, variations in natural ambient sound levels are generally due to wind, water, and wildlife, and they are affected by the vegetation type and topography. During the late summer and early fall of 1992, the NPS contracted with Harris Miller Miller and Hansen, Inc. (1993) to conduct a study of ambient sound levels in Grand Canyon using A-weighted sampling. For purposes of the study, natural ambient sound levels in Table 3-4 were determined in the presence of audible human-caused noise including aircraft overflights. Typical sound level measurements consisted of a series of 10- to 20-minute sample intervals at 23 different sites, equaling a total measurement period of over 300 hours. Not surprisingly, the natural soundscape along the Colorado River is directly influenced by the presence of fast-moving water. Applicable natural ambient sound levels at selected sites along the Colorado River corridor and on the canyon rim are shown in Table 3-4. For comparison purposes, dBA values for commonly experienced sounds are given in Table 3-5.

**TABLE 3-4: SUMMARY OF NPS AMBIENT SOUND LEVEL MEASUREMENT DATA SELECTED LOCATIONS IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 1992**

Location	Typical Measured Soundscape Ambient Level (dBA)	Natural Ambient Sound Level, dBA*		
		L <sub>MAX</sub> **	L <sub>90</sub> **	Sound Source
Lipan Point	30-40	49	27	East Rim Drive
Bright Angel Point	17-25	38	21	North Rim, near lodge
Point Sublime	13-15	38	12	<i>Birds, insects</i>
<b>Marble Canyon (RM 35.2)</b>	<b>50-51</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>Water</b>
<b>Marble Canyon Dam Site (RM 40.5)</b>	<b>22-25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Water, insects</b>
<b>Little Colorado River</b>	<b>35-37</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Water, wind</b>
96 Mile Camp	35-38	52	37	Water, wind
<b>117.4 Mile Camp</b>	<b>41-44</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>Water</b>
<b>Stone Creek</b>	<b>46-49</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>Water</b>
Deer Creek Falls	43-44	52	44	Water
<b>Havasu Creek</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Water</b>
Whitmore Rapids	34-40	52	35	Water, wind, <i>insects</i>
Toroweap Overlook	12-15	44	14	Wind, wildlife
<b>Diamond Creek</b>	<b>22-29</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Insects, water</b>
Separation Canyon	11-21	31	16	Water, wildlife
Burnt Springs Canyon	13-17	29	16	Wildlife

SOURCE: Harris Miller Miller and Hansen, Inc. (1993)

\* Natural sound level in the presence of human noise from aircraft or other human-caused noise sources.

\*\* L<sub>MAX</sub> is the highest measured decibel level, and L<sub>90</sub> is the level exceeded 90% of the time.

**TABLE 3-5: COMMONLY EXPERIENCED SOUNDS**

Reference Sound	dBA Level
Whispering at 5 feet	20 dBA
Quiet residential area	40 dBA
Normal conversation	60 dBA
Helicopter landing at 200 feet	80 dBA
Steam train whistle at 100 feet	90–100 dBA
Jet aircraft takeoff at 500 feet	100 dBA

SOURCES: *League for the Hard of Hearing, 2005; NPS 1995a:139.*

### 3.2.4.2 AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHTS

Visitor experiences in the entire park are affected by aircraft noise impacts from a range of overflight sources, including high-altitude commercial jet traffic, military training activity, general aviation use, NPS administrative operations (emergency and facility maintenance), and commercial air tours. Impacts from these overflights, along with river running activity noise, are analyzed in the impact analysis in Chapter 4. Natural quiet in Grand Canyon National Park has been “significantly and adversely” affected by aircraft noise for a number of years, as specifically noted in the National Parks Overflights Act of 1987 (*Public Law 100-91*). The NPS is working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to reduce aircraft noise levels and associated impacts and to substantially restore natural quiet by 2006. The current percentage of the park affected by aircraft noise has not yet been computed *using updated methodology*.

When characterizing the natural soundscape environment at Grand Canyon National Park, early predictive models determined that 19%–40% of the park area was “free” from overflight noise for three-quarters to all day (*FAA 2000; NPS 1994*). Aircraft noise data are currently being gathered to update noise simulation model runs, which will more accurately predict the percentage of the park that is actually free of aircraft noise and provide an updated scientifically based estimate on the degree of progress in restoring natural quiet at Grand Canyon. Early indications of progress on this effort are expected to be available in late 2005. *In March, 2005, the FAA published* a final rule on the standard to be used for defining “quiet technology,” which will further address the aircraft noise issue at Grand Canyon (*70FR 16084, March 29, 2005*).

### 3.2.5 CAVE RESOURCES

The Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988 defines the term cave as:

Any naturally occurring void, cavity, recess, or system of interconnected passages beneath the surface of the earth or within a cliff or ledge, including any cave resource therein, and which is large enough to permit a person to enter, whether the entrance is excavated or naturally formed. Such term shall include any natural pit, sinkhole, or other feature that is an extension of a cave entrance or which is an integral part of the cave.

For management purposes, Grand Canyon National Park extends this definition to include natural features only if they contain a twilight zone and a zone of perpetual darkness (therefore, Redwall Cavern is not defined as a cave). In addition, human-made features (i.e., mine works)

that comprise a twilight zone and a zone of perpetual darkness may be managed as caves per initial recommendations, except more latitude is given for mitigating hazards to human health and safety (NPS 2003a, 2003b).

The term “cave resource” includes any material or substance occurring naturally in caves on federal lands, such as mineral formations (speleogens and speleothems), paleontological deposits (including quaternary deposits), and plant and animal life (Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988). Grand Canyon National Park has extended this definition through initial recommendations in the “Draft Cave and Karst Management Plan” (NPS 2003a) to include intrinsic historic and/or archeological resources contained within, or associated with, cave and karst features, as discussed below:

- Within Grand Canyon caves, mineral formations such as stalactites and stalagmites (called speleothems) take many forms, develop very slowly, are often fragile, and are irreplaceable if damaged or destroyed. Unconsolidated floor deposits in dry caves are unique regionally, if not globally, and have great scientific and aesthetic value. These deposits have been used to reconstruct past climatic conditions and may yet yield valuable paleo-hydrological information.
- Caves in Grand Canyon are integral to the hydrologic setting and the source of many spectacular waterfalls. Caves are important pathways for unique water resources. The park’s water supply comes from Roaring Springs, which emanates from a cave below the North Rim.
- Paleontological resources discovered in Grand Canyon caves include the bones and other remains of Pleistocene-age animal species, some of which are extinct and some that still exist in the area. Pollen, seeds, and other plant parts, as well as the bones and teeth of small animals encased in animal dung and packrat middens (urine-cemented nest debris), provide invaluable evidence about ancient environments in the region (Euler 1984; Emslie 1988). Other paleontological resources found outside caves include lizard tracks, nautiloids, and other fossil resources primarily in limestone and sandstone deposits.
- Archeological resources include small animal effigies (split-twig figurines), grass bundles, human-modified twigs, and small rock cairns dating from the Archaic period, some 2,000 to 4,000 years ago (Schroedl 1977; Emslie et al. 1995). Prehistoric and protohistoric artifacts left by ancestral Puebloans, the Cohonina, and the ancestors of modern tribes have been found in caves as well. Historic artifacts include, but are not limited to, excavation equipment left by researchers from the 1940s (Moffitt 2002).
- Grand Canyon caves also provide habitat for wildlife species, including cave invertebrates, raptors, small ground-dwelling mammals, and several species of roosting and breeding bats, some of which are considered federal or state species of concern (see “Special status Species”) (Emslie 1988; Quinn and Petterson 1997). The documented caves in Grand Canyon are located in the natural area and provide relatively rare and unique nesting and roosting opportunities for California condors and breeding bats. As evidenced by their bones and the fossil remains of their prey, California condors (a federal endangered species) used Grand Canyon caves for thousands of years before being extirpated from the region (Emslie 1987). Reintroduced in 1996, condors are now occupying the same caves that members of their species used prehistorically and

historically for nesting (Osborn 2002). Caves are used by condors for hatching their young, which begins in February, and birds hatched in May could remain in the nest through December making them susceptible to impacts essentially throughout the entire year (February to December). Caves are used by Townsend's big-eared bat young, which are born in May and early June and remain in the nursing colony for two months making them susceptible to impacts from May to about August.

In addition to the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988, the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998, and the Endangered Species Act of all provide additional levels of protection for cave resources.

All caves within Grand Canyon National Park are restricted except Cave of the Domes off Horseshoe Mesa. Entry is limited to visitors with valid permits. Stanton's Cave and Rampart Cave have been gated to prevent unauthorized access by humans but still allow access for bats, small mammals, and invertebrates.

### 3.2.5.1 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

More than 300 caves have been documented within Grand Canyon, predominantly in the Redwall and Muav limestone formations, which are at or near river level in parts of upper, middle, and lower canyon. Several caves are accessible from the river and are thus vulnerable to impacts from visitation by river runners.

The most well-known cave in this area is Stanton's Cave. Named for Robert Brewster Stanton, it is located at RM 31 (right bank) and was the site of intensive archeological and paleontological research in the 1960s and 1980s (Euler et. al. 1984). Over 100 split-twig figurines were found during the initial excavations and bones of extinct animals, mainly condor bones and Harrington mountain goats, were recovered. Evidence of Paleo-flooding was documented from driftwood deposited in the cave some 43,000 years ago.

In addition to the archeological and paleontological resources, the *Pale* Townsend's big-eared bat (a *Grand Canyon National Park* species of concern) occupies the cave. A bat-friendly gate was installed to protect the species from human incursions into the cave while allowing free access for the bats.

Numerous caves occur in the Redwall limestone cliffs in the Nankoweap area. Many of these caves hold significant archeological remains and have been the subject of vandalism (inadvertent and deliberate) from visitors accessing the area from the Colorado River.

### 3.2.5.2 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD

Cave resources in the Lower Gorge are similar to those described for the Lees Ferry reach, but because the limestone layers are closer to the river, they are more accessible to river runners. Bat guano and sloth dung are well documented in this area, prompting considerable exploration and exploitation of the resource in the 1950s.

Severe damage occurred in Rampart Cave in 1976 and 1977 when a human-caused fire destroyed the majority of a vast deposit of Pleistocene-age ground sloth and mountain goat dung, bones, hair, and other soft tissue, as well as the scientific information contained in the lost material. Rampart Cave has been gated to prevent unauthorized access by humans but to allow access for bats, other small mammals, and invertebrates. Additional cave sites in the area are known to contain the remains of the extinct ground sloth. The Muav caves were documented in the 1950s and have been the subject of limited scientific investigation.

### 3.2.6 VEGETATION

Table 3-6 lists common vegetative species in the Grand Canyon and their scientific names.

**TABLE 3-6: COMMON PLANT SPECIES IN THE COLORADO RIVER CORRIDOR  
IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
African mustard	<i>Brassica tournefortii</i>	McDougall's yellowtops	<i>Flaveria mcdougallii</i>
Agave	<i>Agave</i> spp.	Mormon tea	<i>Ephedra</i> spp.
Apache plume	<i>Fallugia paradoxa</i>	Navajo sedge	<i>C. specuicola</i>
Arrowweed	<i>Pluchea sericea</i>	Netleaf hackberry	<i>Celtis laevigata</i> var. <i>reticulata</i>
Barberry	<i>Mahonia fremontii</i>	Ocotillo	<i>Fouquieria splendens</i>
Bermuda grass	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Pepperweed	<i>Lepidium</i> spp.
Boxelder	<i>Acer negundo</i>	Plantain	<i>Plantago</i> spp.
Broadleaved pepperweed	<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>	Poison ivy	<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>
California barrel cactus	<i>Ferocactus cylindraceus</i> var. <i>cylindraceus</i>	Pricklypear cactus	<i>Opuntia</i> spp.
California redbud	<i>Cercis orbiculata</i>	Ravennagrass	<i>Saccharum ravennae</i>
Camelthorn	<i>Alhagi maurorum</i>	Red brome	<i>Bromus rubens</i>
Catclaw acacia	<i>Acacia greggii</i>	Ripgut brome	<i>Bromus rigidus</i>
Cattail	<i>Typha domingensis</i>	Rushes	<i>Juncus</i> spp.
Cheatgrass	<i>B. tectorum</i>	Russian thistle	<i>Salsola tragus</i>
Cholla cactus	<i>Opuntia</i> spp.	Sawgrass	<i>Cladium californicum</i>
Common reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Scouring rush	<i>Equisetum</i> sp.
Cotton cudweed	<i>Pseudognaphalium stramineum</i>	Scrub oak	<i>Quercus turbinella</i>
Cottonwood	<i>Populus fremontii</i>	Seep willow species	<i>Baccharis</i> spp.
Coyote willow	<i>Salix exigua</i>	Single-leaf ash	<i>Fraxinus anomala</i>
Creosote bush	<i>Larrea tridentata</i>	Sowthistles	<i>Sonchus asper</i> , <i>S. oleraceus</i>
Crimson monkeyflower	<i>Mimulus cardinalis</i>	Speedwell	<i>Veronica</i> spp.
Desert broom	<i>Baccharis sarothroides</i>	Tamarisk	<i>Tamarix ramosissima</i>
Giant hellebore	<i>Epipactis gigantea</i>	Thistle	<i>Cirsium</i> spp.
Golden columbine	<i>Aquilegia chrysantha</i>	Tree of heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>
Grapevines	<i>Vitis arizonica</i>	Velvet ash	<i>F. velutina</i>
Great bulrush	<i>Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani</i>	Water sedge	<i>Carex aquatilis</i>
Honey mesquite	<i>Prosopis glandulosa</i>	Watercress	<i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i>
Hydrilla	<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>	Weeping lovegrass	<i>Eragrostis curvula</i>
Joshua Tree	<i>Yucca brevifolia</i>	White brittlebush	<i>Encelia farinosa</i>
Kaibab sedge	<i>Carex curatorum</i>	Willows	<i>Salix</i> spp.
Maidenhair fern	<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>		

### 3.2.6.1 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

Vegetation along the Colorado River grows in three, roughly parallel bands within the inner canyon. From river level, extending upwards, these bands are (1) the new high-water zone along the shoreline but above the scour zone of fluctuating river flows; (2) the old high-water zone on older, pre-dam river terraces above the new high-water zone; and (3) desert scrub on the xeric talus slopes and cliffs above the old high-water zone (BOR 1995). The specific species found in each hydrologic zone are directly related to soil type, aspect, available moisture, topography, elevation, and temperature (Natural Resources Conservation Service and NPS 2003).

Wetland and marsh vegetation grows intermittently along the river's edge in the new high-water zone and is most common in backwaters. It also occurs along tributaries in some of the side canyons and at numerous seeps and springs, which provide havens for these mesic plants.

Driftwood, used by river runners for firewood in the winter, is deposited during flood events and found along the mainstem shores and floating in the river and tributaries. River runner campsites generally are located on sandy beaches within the new high-water zone or between vegetation in new and old high-water zones.

#### 3.2.6.1.1 New High-Water Zone

The new high-water zone (from the shoreline up to the discharge level, or approximately 125,000 cfs; BOR 1995) is populated by riparian vegetation that is often dense and has proliferated since scouring spring floods ceased after construction of Glen Canyon Dam. Once seasonal flows stabilized, riparian vegetation expanded into the old scour zone, initially increasing by one-half acre per mile per year and later slowing to one-quarter acre per mile per year (Pucherelli 1988). Vegetation in this zone is greatly influenced by river flow. For example, the extent of vegetation was greatly reduced by high flows in 1983, which peaked at over 92,000 cfs, but it recovered to pre-flood levels in subsequent years (Kearsley and Ayers 2001). Despite short-term fluctuations, the overall trend since completion of the dam has been the encroachment of new high-water zone vegetation onto sandy beaches used by river recreationists for camping and lunch stops (Kearsley, Schmidt, and Warren 1994; Webb, Melis, and Valdez 2002). Encroachment has been identified at 72 of the 148 commonly used sites currently being monitored by park staff (Brown and Jalbert 2003). Vegetation in this zone tends to recover relatively quickly from impacts.

**Native Species.** Native species represented in the new high-water zone include coyote willow, arrowweed, numerous species of seep willow, and many herbaceous species. Honey mesquite and other more xeric species have increasingly moved into this zone from the old high-water zone farther upslope. With the introduction of lower fluctuating flows in 1992, groundwater elevation dropped, resulting in a shift toward more upland species in most new high-water zone vegetation patch types (channel margin, sandbar-top, and water's edge) (Kearsley and Ayers 1996).

**Exotic Species.** Exotic species have been introduced to the corridor area and thrive in riparian areas along the new high-water zone. Tamarisk is the dominant woody riparian species, although species composition varies depending on geomorphic setting and antecedent flows (BOR 1995; Kearsley and Ayers 2001). Tamarisk was common throughout the reaches of the Colorado River

drainage by the 1920s–1930s, with the fastest rate of invasion likely between 1935 and 1955 (Christensen 1962). Tamarisk quickly dominated the new high-water zone following dam construction; however, the trend toward increased sediment grain size in post-dam river deposits appears to be reducing germination success for this seed-bearing species and prompting a compositional shift toward clonal or rhizomatous species like willows, arrowweed, and exotic camelthorn (Stevens and Ayers 1993; GCMRC 1999). The most common exotic plant species found in the new high-water zone include the invasive ravengrass, Russian thistle, Bermudagrass, ripgut brome, red brome, sowthistles, and cheatgrass. Additional exotic species include tree of heaven, broadleaved pepperweed, and weeping lovegrass (Stevens and Ayers 1993). The park's Science Center is monitoring the advance of African mustard, which is being transported downstream from Lees Ferry and upstream into the western end of the park from Lake Mead. The Hualapai Tribe has reported that hydrilla is moving upstream from Lake Mead.

Invasive exotic species are ecologically damaging because they crowd out native plants and threaten biodiversity, habitat quality, and natural ecosystem functions. These exotic plants can present problems for recreationists as well. Camelthorn, Russian thistle, and some of the grasses have spines or spikes that can make campsites and attraction sites very uncomfortable for river runners. Tamarisk can develop dense, nearly impenetrable thickets that overgrow campsites and limit access to attraction sites. However, tamarisk has some beneficial aspects as well, such as providing much appreciated shade for river runners and habitat for some insects, birds, reptiles and small mammals (Kearsley et al. 2003).

#### **3.2.6.1.2 Old High-Water Zone**

The old high-water zone is characterized by notably stable xeroriparian vegetation that was established just above the historic high waterline before construction of Glen Canyon Dam and since reworked by eolian processes (Turner and Karpiscak 1980). In upper Marble Canyon the dominant native plants include netleaf hackberry, California redbud, Apache plume, and scrub oak. In the remainder of the canyon catclaw acacia and honey mesquite dominate. Perennial bunchgrasses and xerophytes (e.g., cacti) characterize the understory (Stevens and Ayers 1993). Some mature trees in this zone are continuing to grow despite the absence of historically high flows, but other plants are dying off (Stevens and Ayers 1993; GCMRC 1999). Species such as mesquite and hackberry are no longer recruiting in the old high-water zone, but they are becoming established in the new high-water zone where moisture is available for seed germination (Anderson and Ruffner 1988; BOR 1995). Many plants of the old high-water zone are slow-growing and long-lived and require decades to recover from impacts (Webb and Melis 1996). Exotic invaders in the old high-water zone include Russian thistle and various brome grasses.

#### **3.2.6.1.3 Upland/Desert Scrub**

Desert grasses, forbs, cacti, and shrubs grow in low to moderate densities on talus slopes and cliffs above the old high-water zone and in side canyons. This community exhibits very slow biomass growth and low production of detritus and fewer insects (Walters et al. 2000). Characteristic species include Mormon tea, pepperweed, and pricklypear cactus in the upper canyon reaches (Carothers and Brown 1991). White brittlebush, creosote bush, ocotillo, agave,

California barrel cactus, desert broom, and cholla cactus are characteristic of the lower canyon reaches. Like the old high-water zone, exotic invaders in this zone include various brome grasses. Two *species considered salvage restricted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture and Grand Canyon National Park species of concern* that grow in the old high-water zone—the Kaibab agave and the Grand Canyon beavertail cactus—are discussed in Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species.

#### 3.2.6.1.4 Wetlands

Fluvial marshes are wetlands associated with rivers that are frequently or continually inundated with water and are characterized by emergent soft-stemmed vegetation adapted to saturated soil conditions. Following construction of Glen Canyon Dam, fluvial marshes were established in backwaters (return-current channels) that were once reworked and scoured clean of vegetation by spring floods before the presence of the dam (Stevens and Waring 1985). Established marshes along the Colorado River are extremely dynamic and are continually altered by fluctuating water flows. High water releases from Glen Canyon Dam, which scour and deposit new sediments, have the most dramatic effect on marshes. Steady low flows can isolate marsh patches causing them to dry out.

Estimates of total marsh area within the river corridor ranged from less than 1.24 acres in 1987 to 63.75 acres in 1992 (Stevens and Ayers 1993). An actual count of marshes in 1991 noted 253 wet marshes (cattail/reed and horsetail/Bermuda grass) and 850 dry marshes (horsetail/willow) between Lees Ferry and Lake Mead (Stevens et al. 1995). The experimental flood release in 1996 resulted in short-term burying of marshes by up to six feet of soil, but within six months, wetland patches appeared to have been restored to their pre-flood status (Kearsley and Ayers 1996). There have been no significant changes in vegetation patches along the river *in* subsequent years (Kearsley and Ayers 2001; Kearsley et al. 2003).

While not large in area, marsh patches are important because they provide habitat for numerous faunal species. Birds, fish, and many wetland plants use the slower moving water in these marshes for nurseries and sanctuaries from the faster moving water of the mainstem (BOR 1995). Soils are rich in nutrients and the slow currents allow fine-sediment particles to settle from suspension, which allows seed germination and seedling establishment. Vegetation in marshes typically consists of obligate wetland species such as rushes, great bulrush, water sedge, common reed, plantain, speedwell, cotton cudweed, cattail, and scouring rush. Exotic species include ravennagrass, tamarisk, and lovegrass.

Perennial tributaries, seeps, and springs also provide habitat for many of the obligate wetland species listed above. Spence (2002) identified four major types of habitat in side canyons: hanging garden backwalls, hanging garden colluvial slopes, wetlands dominated by water-loving plants like reeds and cattails, and riparian-like woodlands. Within these habitats, Spence (2002) identified four endemic plant species: Kaibab sedge, Navajo sedge, an undescribed thistle, and McDougall's yellowtops. Other wetland species found in side canyons include maidenhair fern, crimson monkeyflower, golden columbine, giant hellebore, sawgrass, watercress, and other shade- and moisture-loving plants (Carothers and Brown 1991). Vasey's Paradise is known for its lush growth of poison ivy and Havasu Creek for its grapevines. Several woody species rarely

or never found in the main canyon find suitable conditions in watered side canyons. These species include boxelder, cottonwood, single-leaf ash, velvet ash, and barberry. Some species common in the main canyon, such as willow, tamarisk, and baccharis, colonize the sandy or cobbled substrates of the side canyons and occasionally form dense thickets.

Desert seeps and springs create important, sensitive habitats. They rank among the most productive and biologically diverse terrestrial ecosystems and commonly host 100- to 500-fold higher concentrations of species than the surrounding landscapes (Grand Canyon Wildlands Council 2003). Southwestern seeps and springs are often isolated islands of habitat that support an unusual proportion of relict and endemic species. Given their small scale and isolation, seep and spring habitats are particularly vulnerable to irreversible destruction. These keystone habitats contribute significantly to regional biodiversity. McDougall's yellowtops, *a species considered salvage restricted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture and a Grand Canyon National Park species of concern that* grows in some of these moist saline seeps, is discussed in Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species.

#### **3.2.6.1.5 Driftwood**

Woody material entrained in flooding tributaries enters the river as driftwood. A great percentage of driftwood originates from tributaries with large wooded watersheds. The amount of driftwood delivered to the river corridor depends on the frequency and magnitude of floods in those tributaries, so new supplies vary from year to year. Once in the river, driftwood floats downstream until it is deposited along the shore in areas of slow current. Piles of driftwood are commonly found in association with slow eddy currents at the base of rapids. Rapids in the canyon generally occur where the contents of debris flows have partially blocked the river at the mouths of steep side canyons. Consequently, driftwood tends to be plentiful in reaches that are characterized by numerous steep side canyons, which experience debris flows and resultant rapids. Driftwood on shore provides habitat for terrestrial invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals, and nesting material for some birds. Haden et al. (1999) suggest that driftwood may be an important habitat for macroinvertebrates and documented 20 taxa of several orders in that substrate.

#### **3.2.6.2 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD**

Vegetation in the Lower Gorge also occurs in three zones: (1) the new high-water zone, (2) the old high-water zone, and (3) upland or desert scrub, but the Mohave Desert influence is greater. Wetlands occur along the river in the form of marshes and in side canyon tributaries near seeps and springs, and driftwood can be found along the beaches near rapids or trapped in mud flats. The cave-dwelling primrose is *a species considered salvage restricted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture and a Grand Canyon National Park species of concern that* grows on limestone walls in seeps and hanging gardens in the western end of Grand Canyon from Separation Canyon to Spencer Canyon (see Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species). A beaver dam in Lost Creek has created a lake-like environment with associated wetland vegetation uncommon to the desert.

More than 1,850 hectares of riparian and wetland habitats occur in the Lower Gorge—characterized by wet and dry marshes, Gooding’s willow, arrowweed, grasslands, seep willow, coyote willow, and tamarisk (Christensen 2001). Tamarisk stands grow much denser because the tributaries tend to be wider. Aerial surveys conducted by the Hualapai Tribe in 1994 show the dominant riparian species to be tamarisk, Gooding’s willow, and coyote willow. The Kaibab suncup (*aka. the Grand Canyon Evening-primrose*), a *Grand Canyon National Park species of concern*, grows on sandy or gravelly beaches, up side canyons that are rarely visited, and in dry washes on the Havasupai and Hualapai Reservations (see Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species).

Vegetation in the old high-water zone is similar to that found within the lower sections of Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek. Common species include catclaw acacia, honey mesquite, perennial bunchgrasses, and xerophytes (cacti). Common desert scrub species in the lower gorge are white brittlebush, creosote bush, ocotillo, agave, California barrel cactus, and cholla cactus. The only Joshua tree forest in the canyon occurs in the Lower Gorge along the western rim.

## 3.2.7 TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE

### 3.2.7.1 HABITAT

Variations in topography, vegetation structure, cover, moisture, and soil texture from Lees Ferry to Lake Mead and among the three hydrologic zones influence the types, abundance, and distribution of terrestrial wildlife communities.

- **Shoreline**—Along the shoreline wet and dry marsh vegetation such as cattails, bulrushes, horsetail, and giant reeds provide cover in the form of dense vegetation. There is an abundance of insect life, such as crickets, ground-dwelling spiders, carabid ground beetles, and plant-dwelling flies (Brantley et al. 2003).
- **New high-water zone**—In the moist sandy soil of the new high-water zone, riparian vegetation such as tamarisk, arrowweed, and willow grows. These plants, as well as driftwood and scattered rocks, provide cover for invertebrates, birds, small mammals, and reptiles. Bird species richness is greatest in this zone (Yard, pers. comm. 2003c). Marsh and new high-water zone vegetation provides forage for deer and bighorn sheep.
- **Old high-water zone**—More xeric plant species such as catclaw, mesquite, and cacti are found in the old high-water zone. Drier soils, extensive rock shelters, and older established plant communities provide a stable environment for terrestrial wildlife. This zone is rich in small mammals, reptiles, moths and plant-dwelling caterpillars and beetles (Carpenter 2003; Frey 2003; Brantley et al. 2003).

Ungulate species frequent all three zones on a seasonal basis.

### 3.2.7.2 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

Scientific names of species discussed in this section are given in Table 3-7.

TABLE 3-7: COMMON NATIVE WILDLIFE SPECIES IN THE COLORADO RIVER CORRIDOR IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
<b>Invertebrates</b>		<b>Birds —Spring, Fall, and Winter Transients</b>	
Black witch moth	<i>Ascalapha erebus odorata</i>	Great blue heron (also nests)	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Tailless whipscorpion	<i>Paraphyrnus</i> spp	Snowy egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
Salticid jumping spider	<i>Thiodina</i> spp.	American wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>
Grand Canyon endemic tiger beetle	<i>Cicindela hemorrhagica arizonae</i>	Lesser scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>
Hesperiid Arizona powdered-skipper butterfly	<i>Systacea xampa</i>	Bufflehead	<i>B. albeola</i>
Megathymid piute agave skipper butterfly	<i>Agathymus alliae piute</i>	Common goldeneye	<i>B. clangula</i>
Desert marble butterfly	<i>Euchloe lotta</i>	Bald eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
Desert elfin butterfly	<i>Callophrys fotis</i>	American coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>
Tadpole shrimp	<i>Triops longicaudatus</i>	Ruby-crowned kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
<b>Amphibians</b>		Dark-eyed junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
Great Plains toad	<i>Bufo cognatus</i>	<b>Mammals</b>	
Red-spotted toad	<i>B. punctatus</i>	California myotis	<i>Myotis californicus</i>
Woodhouse's toad	<i>B. woodhousii</i>	Yuma myotis	<i>M. yumanensis</i>
Canyon treefrog	<i>Hyla arenicolor</i>	Western pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus hesperus</i>
<b>Reptiles</b>		Mexican free-tailed bat	<i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i>
Western whiptail lizard	<i>Cnemidophorus tigris</i>	Rock squirrel	<i>Spermophilus variegatus</i>
Desert spiny lizard	<i>Sceloporus magister</i>	White-tailed antelope ground squirrel	<i>Ammospermophilus leucurus</i>
Side-blotched lizard	<i>Uta stansburiana</i>	Cliff chipmunk	<i>Tamias dorsalis</i>
Tree lizard	<i>Urosaurus ornatus</i>	Brush mouse	<i>Peromyscus boylii</i>
Western banded gecko	<i>Coleonyx variegates</i>	Canyon mouse	<i>P. crinitus</i>
Collared lizard	<i>Crotaphytus collaris</i>	Cactus mouse	<i>P. eremicus</i>
Common chuckwalla	<i>Sauromalus ater</i>	Deer mouse	<i>P. maniculatus</i>
Speckled rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus mitchellii</i>	Pinon mouse	<i>P. truei</i>
Black-tailed rattlesnake	<i>C. molossus</i>	Rock pocket mouse	<i>Chaetodipus intermedius</i>
Grand Canyon pink rattlesnake	<i>C. viridis abyssus</i>	Western harvest mouse	<i>Reithrodontomys megalotis</i>
Common kingsnake	<i>Lampropeltis getula</i>	White-throated woodrat	<i>Neotoma albigula</i>
Gila monster	<i>Heloderma suspectum suspectum</i>	Desert woodrat	<i>N. lepida</i>
<b>Birds —Nesting Species (Riparian Vegetation)</b>		Stephen's woodrat	<i>N. stephensi</i>
Black-chinned hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>	Bushy-tailed woodrat	<i>N. cinerea</i>
Ash-throated flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	Beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>
Bewick's wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>
Blue-gray gnatcatcher	<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>	Ringtail	<i>Bassariscus astutus</i>
Bell's vireo	<i>Vireo bellii</i>	Gray fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>
Lucy's warbler	<i>Vermivora luciae</i>	Mule deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>
Yellow warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	Bighorn sheep	<i>Ovis canadensis</i>
House finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	Mountain lion	<i>Felis concolor</i>
<b>Birds —Nesting Species (Cliffs and/or Desert)</b>		Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>
White-throated swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>	Badger	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>
Black phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>		
Say's phoebe	<i>S. saya</i>		
Violet-green swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>		
Canyon wren	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>		
<b>Birds —Nesting Species (Ground)</b>			
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		
Common merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>		
Spotted sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>		

SOURCES: Carothers and Aitchison 1976; Butterfield et al. 1981; Miller et al. 1982; Brown, Carothers, and Johnson 1987; Carothers and Brown 1991; BOR 1995; Peterson and Spence 1997; Christensen 1998; Sogge, Felley, and Wotawa 2000; Kearsley et al. 2001; Yard, pers. comm. 2003c.

Nomenclature is according to the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS).

### 3.2.7.2.1 Invertebrates

Invertebrates along the river corridor include scorpions, spiders, and several thousand species of insects from over 200 families (BOR 1995; Stevens 2002). They play an important role in terrestrial ecosystems by providing abundant supplies of food for other invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Terrestrial insect populations and diversity have appeared to increase since construction of Glen Canyon Dam due to the increase in riparian vegetation in the new high-water zone (Carothers and Brown 1991). Certain species of the orders Orthoptera, Coleoptera, Neuroptera, and Lepidoptera are closely tied to the presence of tamarisk and coyote willow, the most prevalent woody plants occurring in this zone. During a 2000 study of the river corridor, 199 terrestrial invertebrate taxa and 93 aquatic invertebrate taxa were recorded (Leslie 2000a). Four species of butterflies never previously reported from Grand Canyon were also found (hesperiid Arizona powdered-skipper, the Megathymid Piute agave skipper, the desert marble, and the desert elfin).

Aquatic insects like chironomids (midges), simuliids (blackflies), and ephemeropterans (mayflies) are aerial in their adult stages and may be encountered on beaches used for camping and lunch stops. An aging tadpole shrimp was recorded in an ephemeral pool in North Canyon (Leslie 2000a).

Insects that annoy recreationists include flies, particularly biting flies, and harvester ants, which deliver a painful sting. Recreational activity in the river corridor appears to attract some terrestrial invertebrates to sites where organic waste accumulates. The abundance of harvester ants on beaches has been correlated to presence of small food particles, grease, and other types of organic litter left behind by campers (Carothers and Brown 1991). The distribution and size of flesh fly (Sarcophagidae) and blow fly (Calliphoridae) populations have also been correlated with campsite organic debris, including feces. Human feces were recorded at 21 (45.7%) of 46 camping beaches in Grand Canyon in a recent survey (Brown, M. 2003).

Recent surveys of arthropod abundance and species richness conducted by the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center found that sites below the confluence with the Little Colorado River exhibited much higher values than sites above the confluence (Lightfoot, Brantley, and Cobb 2001). Depending on arthropod species, some are more abundant in the shoreline zone and others in the old high-water zone (Brantley et al. 2003). Two invertebrate species, the cave pseudoscorpion and the Kanab ambersnail, are described in more detail in Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species.

### 3.2.7.2.2 Vertebrates

**Amphibians.** Amphibians are not well represented in the inner canyon due to generally arid surface conditions (GRCA 1997c); however, the Woodhouse's and red-spotted toads are often reported by river recreationists near the river and in perennial tributaries. A hybrid species of these two toads has also been described (Leslie 2000c). Tree frogs are rarely observed along the river, but are common in warmer tributaries. Leopard frogs, which were historically recorded both along the river and in perennial side canyon areas, are now uncommon in the canyon. With the completion of Glen Canyon Dam and the change from seasonally warm mainstem water to year-round temperatures below 50°F, leopard frog habitat has become fragmented. Current

population status of leopard frogs is unknown, and NPS personnel have initiated a Colorado Plateau-wide survey to assess numbers and distribution of both the northern leopard frog and relict leopard frog (see Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species).

**Reptiles.** Sixteen species of reptiles have been identified along the Colorado River (Carpenter 2001). Reptiles commonly associated with the river corridor include Western whiptail lizards, tree lizards, desert spiny lizards, and Grand Canyon pink rattlesnakes. The Grand Canyon pink rattlesnake is endemic to the canyon and is the most commonly seen snake from Lees Ferry to below National Canyon (Carpenter 2003). Warren and Schwalbe (1988) found that specific sites within the new high-water zone, including the interface between the water and exposed sediment and open tamarisk sites, supported lizard densities equal to or higher than any other sites reported in the Southwest. Their studies also indicated that lizard densities were lowest in thick tamarisk sites within the new high-water zone. Carpenter (2003) found that snakes were more abundant in the old high-water zone and several species of lizards were restricted to this zone.

**PHOTO 3- 1: GRAND CANYON PINK RATTLESNAKE**



Grand Canyon Foundation Photo

**Birds.** Riparian habitats along the river in Grand Canyon National Park provide breeding habitat, migratory stopover sites, and wintering areas for birds throughout the year (Brown, Carothers, and Johnson 1987; Sogge 1998). Over 350 species of birds have been recorded in the Grand Canyon region, approximately 250 of which are from the river corridor (Johnson 1991). Some species are year-round residents such as the canyon wren and the American dipper, but most are migrants that use the river seasonally for breeding or as a travel corridor, or they are from other canyon habitats and use the river corridor during nonbreeding or migratory seasons.

At least 48 species of birds nest along the Colorado River in the park, primarily from April through June (BOR 1995). Numerous researchers have noted the importance of the riparian habitat along the river for neotropical migratory bird species (Brown, Carothers, and Johnson 1987; Sogge 1998). Nesting habitat includes ground cover near the river, riparian trees and shrubs in the new and old high-water zones, cliff walls, and desert habitats (Brown, Carothers, and Johnson 1987). Bird species characteristic of the new high-water zone include the yellow warbler, Lucy's warbler, Say's phoebe, and the black phoebe. The old high-water zone is characterized by the Ash-throated flycatcher, canyon wren, and rock wren.

Other species that breed in the canyon and are present through most of the summer include the song sparrow, house finch, and Bell's vireo (Yard, pers. comm. 2003c; Spence 2003). Recent studies have noted the expansion of breeding populations of the song sparrow and Bell's vireo upriver from Lake Mead (Kearsley et al. 2003). These changes are possibly due to changes in vegetation and other habitat characteristics brought about by the operation of Glen Canyon Dam.

Mallards and common mergansers also breed in the park and build their nests on the ground. Numerous transient birds such as the great blue heron and snowy egret use the canyon's riparian habitats primarily during spring and fall migrations. Stevens et al. (1997) found that waterfowl

were more abundant in winter than in the other three seasons and are particularly abundant in the upper reaches of the canyon between Lees Ferry and the confluence with the Little Colorado River. Birds that are considered endangered, threatened, or sensitive species including the California brown pelican, California condor, bald eagle, American peregrine falcon, Mexican spotted owl, and southwestern willow flycatcher are described more fully in Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species.

**Bats.** At least 22 species of bats have been documented in Grand Canyon (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003). All but one of these are insectivorous and may be attracted to the river corridor by the numerous insects associated with the river and riparian vegetation. Some roost in caves and crevices that abound in the inner canyon, while others are forest dwelling and use the riparian corridor for foraging. Common bat species are listed in Table 3-7. Uncommon to rare species occurring along the riparian corridor include the hoary bat, fringed myotis, red bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, and long-tongued bat (Butterfield et al. 1981; Leslie, pers. comm. 2003). The Mexican long-tongued bat is primarily nectarivorous and fugivorous and is the only phyllostomid species found in the park. More detailed descriptions of bat species listed as species of concern are given in Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species.

During hibernation, bats are highly susceptible to disturbance, making hibernacula an important focus for management and protection efforts. For Mexican long-tongued bats that do not enter torpor, warm geothermally heated winter roosts in caves and mines are critical for their survival. In some situations metal gates can be installed to allow passage by bats while restricting access by humans. Such gates, when properly designed and installed (e.g., Stanton's Cave), have allowed populations to recover at many sites where humans entering caves have disturbed bat colonies.

**Small Mammals.** Within the riparian zone, rodents are the most common small mammals with at least 14 species representing seven genera (Carothers and Aitchison 1976; Leslie, pers. comm. 2003). The deer mouse is the only rodent that depends directly on the riparian zone for its existence (BOR 1995). Small mammal abundance and richness is greatest in the old high-water zone, where steeper slopes, rock falls, and canyon wall crevices provide greater structure for wildlife habitat (Frey 2003). Common old high-water zone species captured by Frey include the cactus mouse, brush mouse, desert woodrat, canyon mouse, rock pocket mouse, and white-throated woodrat. NPS surveys conducted in 2000 also *consistently trapped* the pinon mouse, Western harvest mouse, and bushy-tailed woodrat (Leslie 2000a). Woodrats provide forage for Mexican spotted owls. One of the rarest small mammal species in the canyon is the Ord's kangaroo rat (Leslie 2000a; Frey 2003).

Historically, three furbearers were known to the Grand Canyon—muskrats, otters, and beavers. All are native inhabitants to Arizona, though none is considered numerous or well-known. Since the completion of the Glen Canyon Dam in 1963, muskrats have rarely been observed along the river corridor. An inventory conducted in 2000 reported no signs of muskrats along 143 river bank miles (Breck and Kellett 2000); muskrats have likely been extirpated from the park.

The least known of these three mammals is the southwest river otter. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is presently investigating its status because of its limited distribution, low numbers, and potentially threatened or endangered status in Arizona. It is further described in Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species.

Beavers occur throughout the river corridor, from Glen Canyon Dam to the Grand Wash Cliffs, being most common where riparian vegetation is well developed. Beavers have probably been present in the canyon throughout the last 10,000 years (4,000 year-old bones were found in Stanton's Cave). Beaver populations began to expand in the canyon after the completion of Glen Canyon Dam (Carothers and Brown 1991), which is attributed to the cessation of spring floods and the post-dam development of extensive riparian vegetation. The inventory conducted in 2000 recorded beaver signs at 23 sites from RM 0.8 to RM 208.5 (Breck and Kellett 2000); five of these sites were identified as river runner campsites. NPS surveys during the same year indicate that beavers are evenly distributed along the river in suitable habitat (Leslie 2000b). Examinations of dens indicate a variety of preferred foods, including willow cuttings, tamarisk, mesquite, catclaw acacia, cottonwood, cattails, and tuberous roots of aquatic and riparian plants (GRCA Wildlife Files, unpublished data 1999-2000). Coyote willow appears to be the staple food in the canyon. Beaver also use the larger Gooding's willow. Gooding's willows at Buck farm and Saddle were cut by beaver in the mid 1980s, and Gooding's willows near Cardenas are interspersed with the old stumps felled by beaver.

PHOTO 3- 2: BEAVER



**Large Mammals.** Large mammals found within the river corridor include several game species. Bighorn sheep are often seen by river runners when the sheep descend to the river to forage. Mule deer are common seasonally and can be seen browsing on riparian vegetation. NPS staff have documented the presence of mountain lions and bobcats feeding on these ungulates near the river. Feral burros, an introduced species that proliferated and roamed throughout the inner canyon, were largely eradicated in the 1970s. They are once again found in the park in low numbers in the west end (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003). Burros and trespass cattle are considered exotic species in the park and are removed whenever possible.

PHOTO 3- 3: MOUNTAIN LION



NPS Photo

### 3.2.7.3 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD

Many of the species that occur above Diamond Creek also occur in the Lower Gorge. In addition to the terrestrial wildlife species discussed there are several other species that occur within the park that have only been observed or are more prevalent in the Lower Gorge.

**Amphibians.** In 1987, Larry Stevens found a decomposed leopard frog specimen in a Lower Gorge tributary; it was later identified as a relict leopard frog. This discovery was included in the petition to list the relict leopard frog as a candidate species on the *Federal* list of threatened *or endangered* wildlife (see Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species) ***During a 2004 NPS leopard frog survey, sub-adults and egg masses were discovered in this same side canyon. Genetic analysis was recently completed on these species and they were determined to be more closely related to the lowland leopard frog than to the relict leopard frog.*** Hualapai biologists reported collecting a desiccated relict frog specimen in a tributary on the Hualapai Reservation below Diamond Creek (Hualapai Department of Natural Resources, pers. comm. 2003), ***but a genetic analysis has not been performed.***

**Reptiles.** The only known population of Sonoran desert tortoise in the park occurs in the upland habitat in the Lower Gorge. Gila monster habitat is also present in the Lower Gorge, and this species has been observed more often here than anywhere else in the park. The speckled rattlesnake is the most commonly observed snake from near Lava Canyon to below Diamond Creek, but blacktail rattlesnakes have been encountered from Stairway to Pearce (GRCA Wildlife Files, unpublished data 1999-2000; Carpenter 2003).

**Birds.** Based on surveys in 2001 and 2002 (Christensen 2002), the most common bird species in the Lower Gorge include the yellow-breasted chat, Bell's vireo, song sparrow, yellow warbler, blue-gray gnatcatcher, Bewick's wren, and Lucy's warbler. Song sparrows appear to be increasing in the Lower Gorge (Christensen 2002) and extensive heron rookeries are also present. The Burnt Springs area contains excellent bird habitat and is the site of a yellow-billed cuckoo observation and three individual Yuma clapper rails (San Bernardino College, pers. comm. 2001). The Lower Gorge also contains a population of peregrine falcons in numbers and distribution similar to that observed in the Upper Canyon. In addition, a significant portion of proposed critical habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher is found below RM 246. Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species presents a more detailed description of these federally listed bird species.

PHOTO 3- 4: YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT



**Bats.** Bat Cave is a summer maternity colony of Mexican free-tailed bats that varies in size from 50,000 to 500,000 and a smaller number of over-wintering bats (Bat Conservation International 1998; GRCA Wildlife Files, unpublished data 1996). This population is likely the largest known population in Arizona and may be the largest population west of Texas. At one time the preguano mining population was thought to be as large as 20 million individuals.

Long-tongued bats are also common in the Lower Gorge, and half of those collected during surveys came from below Diamond Creek. A collection of Pleistocene era vampire bats came from Rampart Cave located in the Lower Gorge.

**Mammals.** Most of the common mammal species also occur below RM 226. Mesocarnivore surveys conducted by Reed and Leslie in 2003 indicate that there tends to be a greater concentration of badgers in the Lower Gorge. The gray fox is another abundant mammal species (GRCA Wildlife Files, unpublished data 2003), and coyotes are often seen feeding on vegetation, small mammals, and reptiles.

## 3.2.8 AQUATIC RESOURCES

### 3.2.8.1 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

#### 3.2.8.1.1 Aquatic Habitat

**Mainstem.** The aquatic ecosystem of the Colorado River in Grand Canyon National Park is strongly influenced by the presence and operation of Glen Canyon Dam 15 miles upstream of the park boundary. How the river ecosystem has changed is highlighted in Table 3-8.

**TABLE 3-8: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLORADO RIVER BEFORE AND AFTER GLEN CANYON DAM CONSTRUCTION**

Characteristics before Dam Construction	Present Characteristics after Dam Construction
1. Muddy water from high sediment loads.	1. Generally clear water.
2. A food base dependent on tributary input of terrestrial vegetation and detritus.	2. A food base dependent on photosynthetically produced algae and macrophytes.
3. Seasonally varying temperatures ranging from freezing to 86°F (30°C).	3. Thermally constant dam releases ranging from 46°F to 50°F (8°C to 10°C).
4. High spring floods but stable flows for most of the year.	4. Daily variability in discharge (doubling of river volume) due to hydroelectric production.
5. Diverse aquatic insect assemblage supporting abundant native fish.	5. Depurate aquatic insect assemblage supporting an abundant alien fish community.

Source: Before dam construction —Haden et al. 2003; present characteristics (after dam construction) —Shannon 2001.

**Tributaries and Springs.** Tributary streams in the canyon can be depicted as either small, spring-derived, cool-water streams with high benthic biomass and species richness or watershed-derived, warm-water streams with low benthic biomass and species richness (Oberlin, Shannon, and Blinn 1999; Shannon 2001). All of these tributaries have a natural seasonal range of temperatures and discharge. For example, Bright Angel and Tapeats Creeks have a spring source, cooler range of temperatures, and support introduced nonnative trout species. Watersheds such as the Paria River, Little Colorado River, Kanab Creek, and Havasu Creek have higher stream temperatures and support more native fish species. Tributaries also vary in other water quality parameters (see Appendix D).

Over 680 seeps and springs have been identified in Grand Canyon National Park with more than 500 accessible from the river (Stevens 2003). While the ecology of these springs is only beginning to be described, they are recognized as vital hubs of biodiversity, especially for invertebrates in this arid region (Thomas, Blinn, and Keim 1998). Spring-derived tributaries are

key habitats in the canyon—their ecological importance exceeds what would be expected given their drainage area, such as Roaring Springs, the source of Bright Angel Creek (Drost and Blinn 1997). Many species associated with springs in the canyon are relicts from a time when climactic conditions were different and springs were more widespread (Blinn, Stevens, and Shannon 1994).

### 3.2.8.1.2 Aquatic Flora and Invertebrate Fauna

**Mainstem.** Since 1995, the aquatic community has been dominated by a mixed green algae (primarily *Ulothrix zonata*, *Spirogyra* spp.) and macrophyte assemblage (*Fontinalis* spp. and *Chara contraria*) (Benenati et al. 2000). Although the previous dominant for about 30 years, *Cladophora glomerata* is still present but greatly diminished, probably as a result of changes in reservoir and river chemistry and discharge regimes that occurred in 1995 (Benenati et al. 2000). Prior to August 1995, *Cladophora* composed 90% of the algal community (Benenati et al. 2002). *Cladophora* is a keystone species and superior algal host over other green filamentous algae and macrophytes due to its ability to support greater numbers of larger and more easily grazed diatoms that feed invertebrates and fishes. Primary consumers include nonnative species such as scuds, midges, black flies, and snails, including the invasive New Zealand mudsnail.

**Tributaries and Springs.** Tributaries are an important source of aquatic invertebrates for the Colorado River; they contribute biomass to the mainstem drift and increase the diversity of the food base for fish (Shannon et al. 1996). Common species include caddis flies, mayflies, midges, blackflies, and stoneflies. The New Zealand mudsnail has recently been found in at least five of the 23 tributaries sampled. River runners may inadvertently be spreading these pests (Shannon et al. 2003). For example, the mudsnail was not collected above the confluence of Havasu Creek in October 2003, but was collected in low numbers (less than 20 per square meter) in October 2004 at the first crossing above a series of waterfalls where river runners wade.

Tributaries are vital for the persistence of native fish populations and provide critical year-round spawning grounds for adult fish and rearing areas for juveniles. Western native fish have evolved the ability to spawn multiple times, from spring to fall, usually triggered by flash floods, photoperiod, and water temperature. In 2000, researchers reported that native suckers can spawn into October within Grand Canyon tributaries (Douglas and Douglas 2000). Fall into winter is suspected to be an important growth period for young of the year humpback chub, according to a review of 30 years of data by Meretsky et al. (2000).

In 2002, a researcher reported that many seeps and springs in the Grand Canyon supported unusual and rare insects, particularly on dripping backwall habitats (Spence 2002). Observations included new documentation for a species of *Ochterus* (Hemiptera), an undescribed species of *Clinocera* (Diptera) and a possible undescribed species in the neotropical genus *Asymphyloptera* (Diptera). The federally endangered Kanab ambersnail is native to vegetation surrounding the springs at Vasey's Paradise and at a translocation site in *Upper* Elves Chasm.

### 3.2.8.1.3 Native Fishes

Half of the native fish species historically known from Grand Canyon have been locally extirpated. Their loss has been attributed to two primary factors: (1) habitat degradation caused by construction and operation of Glen Canyon Dam, and (2) predation and competition from nonnative fishes (Douglas and Douglas 2000). Adult native fish persist in the mainstem, but the recruitment of young fish has been significantly limited by cool river temperatures and inconsistent habitat availability as well as nonnative fish predation (Douglas and Marsh 1996; Gorman and Stone 1999). Many native fishes spawn in the warmer waters of tributaries, including the Paria River, the Little Colorado River, Shinumo Creek, Kanab Creek, and Havasu Creek (Robinson et al., 1996).

Only four native fish species are regularly found in the Colorado River in Grand Canyon—the humpback chub, flannelmouth sucker, bluehead sucker, and speckled dace. ***The park works in cooperation with the Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program, the Little Colorado River Watershed Project, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department in the management of fish species in Grand Canyon.*** A fifth species, the razorback sucker, is extremely rare and may be extirpated from ***Grand Canyon National Park, or occur only at the extreme western edge of the park.*** The humpback chub and razorback sucker (federally endangered species) and the flannelmouth sucker (***a Grand Canyon National Park species of concern***) are addressed in Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species. The bluehead sucker and speckled dace currently have no special management status.

**Bluehead Sucker**—Bluehead suckers are found throughout the Colorado River basin in mainstem habitats but are more common in tributaries and their inflows (Valdez et al. 1998). In clear water, adults occupy deep pools and eddies during the day and move to shallow riffles, tributary mouths, or shorelines to feed at night (Converse, Hawkins, and Valdez 1998). In turbid conditions they remain in shallow habitats day and night. In 1999, researchers found bluehead suckers in 10 tributaries during spring and summer (Valdez and Hoffnagle 1999). Spawning occurs from mid-March through June in Shinumo Creek, Kanab Creek, the Little Colorado River, and probably in other tributaries. The distribution of bluehead suckers in the canyon appears to have remained the same since the 1970s but relative abundance may be decreasing; no population estimates are available.

**Speckled Dace**—Speckled dace are one of the most widespread fish species in western North America; they are common in the river and its tributaries in the canyon (Valdez et al. 1998). They are found most often in shoreline habitats and along sandbars ***in the mainstem***, and at tributary mouths and in the tributaries themselves (Minckley and Deacon 1991; Valdez and Hoffnagle 1999). Spawning occurs in spring and autumn and takes place in tributaries. The abundance of speckled dace in Bright Angel Creek declined from “common” in the 1970s (Minckley 1978) to “very rare” in the 1990s, at the same time as a decrease in the abundance of rainbow trout and an increase in brown trout (Otis 1994). In other tributaries where brown trout are less common ***and less likely to feed on them***, speckled dace occur in large numbers (Allan 1993; Weiss 1993).

### 3.2.8.1.4 Nonnative Fishes

Twenty-six species of nonnative fish have been collected in the Grand Canyon (Table 3-9) (Valdez et al. 1998). Nonnative fish were introduced to the Colorado River system as early as the 1800's and were altering the native fish population structure in the canyon well before the completion of Glen Canyon Dam (Carothers and Brown 1991; Leibfried 1999). The changes in mainstem habitat conditions subsequent to dam construction have benefited some nonnative fishes, especially rainbow trout and brown trout, which were previously restricted to cool, clear tributaries. At the same time, these changes apparently limited the success of some warm-water species, notably channel catfish and common carp, which were reported in greater abundance and wider distribution in the 1970's than in recent years (Carothers and Minckley 1981; Valdez and Ryel 1995). Competition and predation between introduced and native fishes have been implicated in the decline and extinction of native fishes throughout the Colorado River basin (Meretsky et al. 2000; Douglas and Marsh 1996; Converse, Hawkins, and Valdez 1998).

Introduced trout now dominate the fish assemblage in the mainstem of the river. Current population estimates for rainbow and brown trout combined between RM 39 and RM 196 exceed 380,000 adults (Speas et al. 2003), more than 100 times the estimated humpback chub population. Rainbow trout account for about two-thirds of the total trout population. The number of rainbow trout in the mainstem decreases downstream from the Little Colorado River, coincident with increased turbidity and declining food resources; in this section of the river, trout have a greater dependence on tributaries and tributary inflows. Rainbow trout spawn in several streams including Nankoweap, Bright Angel, Tapeats, and Deer Creeks. Bright Angel Creek is the primary spawning tributary for brown trout (Leibfried et al. 2003). Efforts by the NPS and the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center are currently underway to reduce trout population densities at selected Grand Canyon sites to relieve predation and competitive pressures on the endangered humpback chub and other native fishes.

**TABLE 3-9: COMMON INTRODUCED FISH SPECIES IN THE COLORADO RIVER IN GRAND CANYON**

Warm-Water Species	Cold-Water Species
Channel catfish ( <i>Ictalurus punctatus</i> )	Brown trout ( <i>Salmo trutta</i> )
Common carp ( <i>Cyprinus carpio</i> )	Rainbow trout ( <i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i> )
Fathead minnow ( <i>Pimephales promelas</i> )	
Plains killifish ( <i>Fundulus zebrinus</i> )	
Red shiner ( <i>Cyprinella lutrensis</i> )	
Striped bass ( <i>Morone saxatilis</i> )	

### 3.2.8.2 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD

When Lake Mead is at full pool it extends past the Separation rapid at RM 242. In comparison to the eastern Grand Canyon, the mainstem below Diamond Creek is turbid more often, reducing benthic biomass by a factor of three and thereby supporting fewer fish. Nonnative fish such as striped bass, which prey on native fishes, swim upriver from Lake Mead into the Lower Gorge and beyond. In 1999, researchers reported a precipitous decline in speckled dace below Bridge Canyon (RM 235) where nonnative red shiners became abundant (Valdez and Hoffnagle 1999). The last observations of razorback suckers, which are probably extirpated from Lees Ferry to

Diamond Creek, were in the western canyon during high lake levels in the 1990's (see Section 3.2.9 Special Status Species).

The slower moving water and clay/silt sediments in the Lower Gorge favor the creation of marsh habitat that provides shelter and refuge for aquatic species. Insects are abundant in the marsh vegetation and provide a food source for lake fish and insectivorous birds.

Western canyon tributaries provide habitat for native and introduced fishes, but also house *amphibian* species such as the leopard frog (Drost, pers. comm. 2004). Some seeps and springs, including Travertine Falls, Diamond Creek, and Spencer Creek, have been designated by the Hualapai Tribe as water sources specifically for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

### 3.2.9 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

One of *the NPS's* management objectives *at Grand Canyon National Park* is to “manage ecosystems to preserve critical processes and linkages that ensure the preservation of rare, endemic, and specially protected (threatened/endangered) plant and animal species” (NPS 1995a). Included are species federally listed as endangered or threatened, or candidates for listing as determined by the USFWS; all such species receive the full protection of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Table 3-10 includes all federally protected wildlife and plant species that have been recorded or are likely to occur within the area potentially affected by river recreationists in the park. *Many of the special status species listed in the Lee's Ferry to Diamond Creek stretch are also found in the Lower Gorge.* The table also lists species that are not protected under the act but that have been granted special status by various agencies because of concern over low or declining populations, threats to the species within its range, or because the species is considered to have particular ecological importance. In addition to species listed by the Fish and Wildlife Service, there are plants and animals that have been recognized by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Arizona Department of Agriculture, *Grand Canyon National Park*, and the Navajo Nation's Department of Fish and Wildlife. No plant in the park may be removed without a federal permit; plants listed by the Arizona Department of Agriculture also require a permit from that agency and payment of salvage fees. All special status species are managed to assist in their preservation.

TABLE 3-10: SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES KNOWN TO OR LIKELY TO OCCUR IN THE COLORADO RIVER CORRIDOR IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status*			
		Federal	State	Navajo **	GCNP
<b>Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek —Wildlife</b>					
<b>Invertebrates</b>					
Grand Canyon cave pseudoscorpion	<i>Archeolarca cavicola</i>	-	-	-	SC
Kanab ambersnail	<i>Oxyloma haydeni kanabensis</i>	E	-	-	
<b>Fish</b>					
Flannelmouth sucker	<i>Catostomus latipinnis</i>	-	-	-	SC
Humpback chub	<i>Gila cypha</i>	E	WSC	G2	
<b>Amphibians</b>					
Northern leopard frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	-	WSC	G2	
<b>Reptiles</b>					
Desert tortoise (Mojave population)	<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>	T	WSC	-	-

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status*			
		Federal	State	Navajo **	GCNP
<b>Birds</b>					
American peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	-	WSC	-	
Bald eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	T	WSC	-	
California brown pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis californicus</i>	E	-	-	
California condor	<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	E,XN	WSC	-	
Mexican spotted owl	<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	T	WSC	G3	
Southwestern willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	E	WSC	G2	
<b>Mammals</b>					
Allen's lappet-browed bat	<i>Idionycteris phyllotis</i>	-	-	-	SC
Greater western mastiff bat	<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i>	-	-	-	SC
Mexican long-tongued bat	<i>Choeronycteris mexicana</i>	-	WSC	-	SC
Pale Townsend's big-eared bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	-	-	-	SC
Pocketed free-tailed bat	<i>Nyctinomops femorosacca</i>	-	-	-	SC
<b>Southwestern myotis</b>	<b><i>Myotis auriculus</i></b>	-	-	-	SC
Spotted bat	<i>Euderma maculatum</i>	-	WSC	-	SC
Western red bat	<i>Lasiurus blossevillei</i>	-	WSC	-	
Long-legged myotis	<i>Myotis volans</i>	-	-	-	SC
Southwest river otter	<i>Lontra canadensis sonora</i>	-	WSC	G1	SC
Desert bighorn sheep	<i>Ovis canadensis mexicana</i>	-	-	G3	
<b>Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek —Plants</b>					
Grand Canyon beavertail cactus	<i>Opuntia basilaris</i> var. <i>longiareolata</i>	-	SR	-	SC
Kaibab agave	<i>Agave utahensis</i> ssp. <i>kaibabensis</i>	-	SR	-	SC
McDougal's yellowtops	<i>Flaveria mcdougallii</i>	-	SR	-	SC
<b>Diamond Creek to Lake Mead Only —Wildlife</b>					
<b>Fish</b>					
Razorback sucker	<i>Xyrauchen texanus</i>	E	WSC	G2	
<b>Amphibians</b>					
<b>Lowland leopard frog</b>	<b><i>Rana yavapaiensis</i></b>	-	WSC	-	-
Relict leopard frog	<i>Rana onca</i>	C	WSC	-	-
<b>Reptiles</b>					
Desert tortoise (Sonoran population)	<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>	-	WSC	-	SC
<b>Birds</b>					
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>	C	WSC	G3	
Yuma clapper rail	<i>Rallus longirostris yumanensis</i>	E	WSC-	-	
<b>Diamond Creek to Lake Mead Only —Plants</b>					
Grand Canyon cave-dwelling primrose	<i>Primula specuicola</i>	-	SR	-	SC
Kaibab suncup (Grand Canyon evening-primrose)	<i>Camissonia specuicola</i> ssp. <i>hesperia</i>	-	-	-	SC

SOURCE: to 66 FR 54808; 50 CFR 17.11–17.12; AGFD 2003A; Brian 2000; NPS 2003E; species names conform to the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS).

\* **Federal Status:**

E —Endangered, in danger of extinction.

T —Threatened, severely depleted.

C —Candidate for listing as threatened or endangered.

XN —Experimental, non-essential population; in Grand Canyon condors are managed as federally endangered.

**State Status:**

WSC —Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona.

SR —Listed as salvage restricted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture; the plant is subject to damage by theft or vandalism; a state permit and salvage fees required for removal.

**Navajo Endangered Species List:**

Group 1 (G1) —No longer occurs on Navajo Nation lands. *Arizona Game and Fish Department, 1996.*

Group 2 (G2) —Prospect of survival or recruitment is in jeopardy.

Group 3 (G3) —Prospect of survival or recruitment is likely to be in jeopardy in the foreseeable future.

\*\* Navajo status determination is not used by any other affiliated Grand Canyon tribes.

**Grand Canyon National Park:**

**SC —Species of Concern.** Some information showing vulnerability or threat, but not enough to support listing under the Endangered Species Act. These species are former USFWS Category 1, 2, and 3 species (Note: the Southwest Region of the USFWS no longer maintains a list of Category 1, 2, or 3 species).

### 3.2.9.1 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

#### 3.2.9.1.1 Wildlife

##### 3.2.9.1.1.1 Invertebrates

**Grand Canyon Cave Pseudoscorpion.** The Grand Canyon cave pseudoscorpion (*a Grand Canyon National Park species of concern*) is similar in appearance to a scorpion, but it does not have a telson or stinger. Their population status within Arizona is unknown and little is known about their life history. Most pseudoscorpions live among debris and in decaying cacti (Biota Information System of New Mexico 2000); however, cave pseudoscorpions differ in that they live in rodent middens that are found inside caves (Spiller, pers. comm. 1991; AGFD 2003B). All species typically have highly localized distributions, low dispersal, and cannot live outside the cave (AGFD 2003B). One female specimen that was collected in a cave off the Grandview Trail was three (3) mm long with a reddish-brown carapace (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003). Several other specimens were confirmed in two caves in the Lower Gorge (Hill and Polyak 2004).

**Kanab Ambersnail.** The federally endangered Kanab ambersnail is known from three extant populations: one in Kane County, Utah (a second population there appears to be extirpated); one at Vasey's Paradise along the river in Grand Canyon National Park; *and a translocated population in Upper Elves Chasm, also in the park* (USFWS 1995; Sorenson, pers. comm. 2003). The Elves Chasm population was successfully established by the Arizona Game and Fish Department in 1998 (AGFD 1998a; Sorenson, pers. comm. 2003). At Vasey's Paradise the ambersnail occupies a spring-fed wetland habitat of cardinal monkey-flower and watercress above the 20,000 cfs waterline stage (USFWS 1995). Vasey's Paradise is a popular attraction site for river recreationists who often stop to draw water from the spring or fish the eddy. *Access to Upper Elves Chasm is challenging and not attempted by most river runners.*

PHOTO 3- 5: KANAB  
AMBERSNAIL



Arizona Game and Fish  
Department photo

##### 3.2.9.1.1.2 Fish

**Flannelmouth Sucker.** The flannelmouth sucker (*a Grand Canyon National Park species of concern*) is found in the mainstem of the river throughout Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Grand Canyon National Park, and in most the tributaries including the Paria River, the Little Colorado River, Bright Angel Creek, Kanab Creek, Shinumo Creek, and Havasu Creek (Valdez et al. 1998). Tributaries and confluence areas have generally had higher densities of this species than the mainstem and are the most likely sites for successful reproduction (Valdez and Ryel 1995). Spawning occurs March through July and has been reported from the Paria River, the Little Colorado River, and Shinumo, Bright Angel, Kanab, Havasu, Spencer, and Surprise Canyon Creeks (Valdez et al. 1998; AGFD 2001a). Mainstem spawning has also been documented in the tailwaters of Glen Canyon Dam (apparently unsuccessful because of cold water temperatures) and in the western Grand Canyon (AGFD 1996; McKinney et al. 1999). The canyonwide population of flannelmouth suckers has never been formally estimated but is considered to be relatively stable (Valdez et al. 1998).

**Humpback Chub.** Critical habitat for the federally endangered humpback chub has been designated in Grand Canyon National Park from about RM 35 to about RM 209 (59 FR 13374). The chub is also listed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Navajo Nation. Humpback chub are found in canyon-bound reaches of large rivers (Colorado, Little Colorado, Green, and Yampa) with turbulent flow (AGFD 2001b). Larvae and juvenile fish prefer shallow, low-velocity, nearshore habitats. With increasing size and age, the fish move to deeper areas with faster current. Of the 10 aggregations that have been identified in the park, the two largest are those found in the Little Colorado River and in the mainstem near the confluence. Spawning for both of these aggregations occurs in the Little Colorado River, generally commencing in late March, peaking in mid-April, and waning in mid-May (Valdez et al. 1998). Humpback chub have been observed *entering* the Little Colorado River from the mainstem *to spawn* as late as July (Valdez and Ryel 1995). The eight smaller mainstem aggregations consist primarily of adults, although a few juvenile fish have been found far from the Little Colorado River suggesting that limited spawning may take place in the mainstem.



NPS photo

Population estimates made in 2001 and 2002 for the humpback chub aggregations in and near the Little Colorado River indicate a real and significant decline in numbers over the last decade (Van Haverbeke and Coggins 2003; Van Haverbeke 2003). In an overview of status and trend of the humpback chub, biologists from the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center estimate that the current spawning population is probably somewhere between 2,000 and 4,000 for age four and older fish, possibly a 50% decline since 1990 (GCMRC 2003a). They have attributed the decline primarily to habitat modification and predation and competition by nonnative fish species. *An experiment* recommended by the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group to reduce nonnative fish, particularly rainbow *and brown* trout, to benefit the humpback chub was approved by the Secretary of the Interior in 2002 and begun in January 2003. It includes an attempt to disrupt trout breeding and habitat by varying daily flows from Glen Canyon Dam during the trout's spawning and rearing seasons (January through March) and by mechanically removing nonnative fish from approximately 16 miles of the Colorado River around the mouth of the Little Colorado River (GCMRC 2003b; Yard and Coggins 2003). *Managers conduct six trips per year and assess current native and nonnative fish numbers before killing (electrofishing) nonnative fish. The next month they return to see if the removal was effective.*

### 3.2.9.1.1.3 Amphibians

**Northern Leopard Frog.** The northern leopard frog (listed as an Arizona *wildlife* species of special concern and as a species in jeopardy by the Navajo Nation) occurs in northeastern and north-central Arizona in and near permanent water with rooted aquatic vegetation, generally at elevations from about 2,640 to 9,155 feet (AGFD 2002a). These frogs use springs, streams, and ponds, as well as moist habitat in grasslands, brush lands, woodlands, and forests. Breeding takes place March through May, eggs are deposited on submerged vegetation in shallow water, and tadpoles transform to frogs June through August (Miller et al. 1982). Leopard frogs (either adults or tadpoles) were historically observed at one locality along the river in the canyon and in several

tributaries. One extant population is known to occur along the river in Glen Canyon a few miles upstream of the park boundary (Spence 1996). A survey to determine the status of northern leopard frog populations within the river corridor is currently being conducted by the NPS.

### 3.2.9.1.1.4 Reptiles

**Desert Tortoise.** The Mojave population is a federally threatened species and an Arizona species of special concern that inhabits the north side and west end of the Grand Canyon. Critical habitat for the Mojave tortoise was designated in 1994 and includes areas adjacent to the Park in Lake Mead National Recreation Area. In May 2004, in the Whitmore area on the north side of the river, biologists from Lake Mead National Recreational Area and Grand Canyon National Park discovered desert tortoise scat and a burrow that was thought to belong to the Mojave tortoise (Leslie, pers. comm. 2004b). In late August 2004, the University of Reno confirmed that the scat collected from the area belongs to the Mojave population of the desert tortoise.

### 3.2.9.1.1.5 Birds

**American Peregrine Falcon.** The American peregrine falcon was listed as endangered in 1970; however, recovery efforts were successful, and the species was removed from the list in 1999. It is now considered an Arizona species of special concern. To ensure the peregrine falcon's recovery in Grand Canyon, the park treated the species as endangered until 2004. Currently, over 50 pairs nest in the park *from Lees Ferry to Lake Mead* and a monitoring program is in place (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003; Ward 2000). Peregrines use areas with high massive cliffs, preferably near water, where bird concentrations (*food source*) are relatively high.

PHOTO 3-7:  
PEREGRINE FALCON



USFWS photo

**Bald Eagle.** The bald eagle, which was listed as endangered in 1967, was reclassified as threatened in the lower 48 states in 1995, and was proposed for delisting in 1999. The bald eagle is listed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department *as a wildlife species of special concern*. Bald eagles are found in all counties of Arizona, typically near lakes and rivers where they forage for fish (AGFD 2002b). They arrive in Grand Canyon as early as the last week of October and typically leave by the third week of March (Jurgensen, pers. comm. 2004). Bald eagles roost and nest in large trees or on cliffs or pinnacles near the water, but nesting does not occur in the canyon (Brown and Stevens 1992). In the 1980s and early 1990s many bald eagles congregated at the mouth of Nankoweap Creek to feed off spawning rainbow trout. Their numbers have been greatly reduced in recent years since changes in stream morphology have hampered movement of trout into the creek and reduced foraging opportunities for eagles. Despite the diminished use of Nankoweap Creek, bald eagles remain the most frequently seen raptor along the river in winter (Yard, pers. comm. 2003b). Bald eagles have been observed along the river corridor from Lees Ferry to RM 105 (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003). Monitoring of wintering bald eagle populations has begun in the canyon and will continue through 2005 (Ward 2004).

PHOTO 3-8: BALD EAGLE



USFWS photo

**California Brown Pelican.** The federally endangered brown pelican is a subspecies of the brown pelican that is found mostly along the California and Mexico coasts (USFWS 2001); however, it has been observed inland in Arizona along the Colorado River, near Lake Mead and in Gila Valley, and near other bodies of water throughout the state. *Until recently, the California brown pelican was considered an infrequent winter migrant and winter sightings were only occasionally recorded. However, in 2004, a number of pelicans occurred in the river corridor in June and there were some incidents of interactions between the birds and recreationists.*

**California Condor.** The federally endangered California condor has critical habitat designated in California. An experimental, nonessential population was reintroduced into northern Arizona and southern Utah in December 1996, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department now lists this species *as a species of special concern*. Experimental populations in national parks are managed as a threatened species. As of *June 2005, there were 118* free-flying condors, *53 in Arizona with six breeding pairs in Northern Arizona, which includes the Grand Canyon area (Olson, pers.*

*comm. 2005)*. The first wild reared chick in the program's history and likely the first chick in Arizona in 100 years fledged in November 2003. Since then, two additional chicks have been born *in Grand Canyon National Park*. Condors are known to create nesting sites in various rock formations, such as caves, crevices, and potholes (USFWS 2002a). Their preferred roosting habitat consists of rock cliffs, snags, and live conifer stands, where they can rest, preen, and socialize. Condors are known to prefer the river corridor in the winter months. Adverse human and condor interactions have been documented *at campsites along the river*.

**Mexican Spotted Owl.** The federally threatened Mexican spotted owl has critical habitat designated within Grand Canyon National Park that includes portions of the river corridor (unit CP-10) (USFWS n.d.). Also listed as a species of concern by Arizona and the Navajo Nation, Mexican spotted owls are typically associated with mature forest habitat, and their presence has been confirmed within arid canyonlands scattered across southern Utah and northern Arizona (Willey 1995). Surveys within the park have recorded spotted owls within the upper reaches of several large, steep-walled tributary side canyons (Willey 2000). Habitat at these sites ranges from desert scrub to mixed coniferous forest. Radio-tracking studies have begun to determine nesting, roosting, and foraging sites used by this species (Ward, pers. comm. 2004).

PHOTO 3- 9: CALIFORNIA CONDOR



USFWS photo

PHOTO 3- 10:  
MEXICAN SPOTTED  
OWL

USFWS photo

**Southwestern Willow Flycatcher.** *This federally endangered flycatcher* (also listed as an Arizona species of special concern and a species in jeopardy by the Navajo Nation) was *listed in 1995. Critical habitat was first designated in 1997. Following legal challenges, critical habitat was set aside in 2001 and then re-proposed on October 12, 2004. Proposed critical habitat within Grand Canyon National Park encompasses 32 miles of the river corridor from Spencer Canyon (RM 246) to the Lake Mead Delta (RM 278).* Critical habitat is extensive on both sides of the river, including the Area of Cooperation between the Hualapai Tribe and the NPS. *Southwestern willow flycatcher are also known to occur in Marble Canyon.* Typical nesting habitat contains dense, riparian woodland vegetation averaging 13 to 23 feet tall with a dense canopy cover (USFWS 2002b). Nesting occurs during the spring and early summer months in the park. During the rest of the year, flycatchers can be found in the tropical areas of Central America. In the park this species has been found only above 2,800 feet elevation along the river corridor in dense riparian habitat dominated by tamarisk, but including some willows (Sogge n.d.). Thick tamarisk and willow vegetation in the new high-water zone provide increasingly rare nesting opportunities for this riparian obligate species as habitat in other areas of the West is destroyed or fragmented. Ornithological surveys *by GCMRC* in June 2003 recorded the presence of two pairs of flycatchers at different locations near the river in the upper canyon (Yard, pers. comm. 2003b). *In 2004, one pair and a female southwestern willow flycatcher were located at two separate locations in the upper canyon (McLeod et al 2005.; Leslie, pers. comm. 2004c).* A nest and one fledgling were observed at one of the sites. *The NPS has recently initiated surveys in the Marble Canyon stretch of the river to assess the impacts of cowbirds on Southwestern willow flycatchers.*

PHOTO 3- 11:  
SOUTHWESTERN  
WILLOW FLYCATCHER



NPS Photo

### 3.2.9.1.1.6 Mammals

**Allen's Lappet-browed Bat.** Allen's lappet-browed bat (*a Grand Canyon National Park* species of concern) is found in Mexico, Arizona, and New Mexico (AGFD 2001c). Within Arizona, the bat occupies mountainous regions at higher elevations. Typical habitat includes ponderosa pine, pinyon/juniper, and riparian areas with sycamore, cottonwood, and willow. Individuals have also been observed in Mojave desert scrub and white fir. Boulder piles, cliffs, rocky outcrops, and lava flows also tend to be associated with their preferred habitat. Day roosts include rock shelters, caves, mines, and trees. The status of the lappet-browed bat population along the river corridor is unknown, but individuals have been observed and collected in the river corridor (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003).

**Greater Western Mastiff Bat.** The greater western mastiff bat (*a Grand Canyon National Park* species of concern) has been observed year-round in most Arizona counties, including Coconino and Mohave (AGFD 2002a) and has been recorded in the park. These bats prefer narrow, rocky canyon walls with many crevices in lower and upper Sonoran desert scrub habitat. They crowd into tight, deep crevices and are able to crawl through small passageways to reach the roosting site.

**Mexican Long-tongued Bat.** *The Mexican long-tongued bat is an Arizona wildlife species of special concern and is the only phyllostomid species found in the park. It lives in caves and mines within the park and is primarily nectarivorous and fugivorous. Mexican long-tongued bats do not enter the torpor in the winter, so warm geothermally heated roosts are important for their survival.*

**Pale Townsend's Big-eared Bat.** The pale Townsend's big-eared bat (a *Grand Canyon National Park* species of concern) is found in Arizona from the vicinity of the Grand Canyon to the southeastern portion of state (AGFD 1998B). Habitat types used by this bat include desert scrub, oak woodland, oak/pine forests, pinyon/juniper forests, and coniferous forests. Caves are a preferred location for day roosts in summer and hibernation in winter. Stanton's Cave, once the site of the largest maternity colony of this species west of the Rocky Mountains, was abandoned by 1986 as a result of visitation by river runners, scientific excavations, and fencing across the entrance (Quinn and Petterson 1997; Leslie, pers. comm. 2003). This species is sensitive to disturbance and often abandons maternity colonies as a result of human activity. A gate designed to keep out human visitors but allow entry by bats was installed in 1997, and the cave is once again home to a maternity colony of this species.

PHOTO 3- 12: PALE TOWNSEND'S BIG-EARED BAT



NPS Photo

**Pocketed Free-tailed Bat.** *The Pocketed free-tailed bat is a Grand Canyon National Park species of special concern. The pocket for which it is named consists of a membrane that extends the length of the femur. Arizona is the northern limit of its range and it has been found from Lake Mead to below the Mogollon Rim. It was first collected in Grand Canyon National Park in 2002 near RM 209. It prefers caves and crevices along rocky cliffs and lives in colonies of less than 100 individuals.*

**Southwestern Myotis Bat.** *The southwestern myotis is a small brown bat that inhabits Arizona and New Mexico and is predominantly found in the southern parts of these states. It is a Grand Canyon species of special concern because it was caught only once along the Colorado River in the park. It primarily lives in ponderosa pine forests, oak woodlands, pinyon-juniper, chaparral and mesquite, but it roosts in riparian habitat adjacent to water. It relies on cliff-face crevices for hibernation and makes maternity roosts in cavities of living and dead Gambel oak and under the bark of ponderosa pine snags.*

**Spotted Bat.** The spotted bat (an Arizona *wildlife* species of special concern) is found in central western North America, from Canada to Mexico (AGFD 2002C). Multiple populations have been found throughout Arizona, with a fairly large one near the Utah-Arizona border. In Arizona, this species has mostly been collected from dry, rough desert scrub, although a few have been documented in ponderosa pine forest. They roost in small cracks in rocky cliffs. Spotted bats have been collected from the canyon rim to the river throughout the park (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003).

**Western Red Bat.** The western red bat (an Arizona *wildlife* species of special concern) ranges from southern Canada to South America where it migrates during the winter (AGFD 2002C). It resides in Arizona from April through September and is found primarily in riparian and woodland habitats. Roosting sites are located in the foliage of trees and shrubs. Fewer than 100 individuals have been sighted throughout the state. It is dispersed throughout the river corridor and has been observed and collected at various locations from Bright Angel Creek to Diamond Creek (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003).

**Long-legged Myotis.** The long-legged myotis bat (a *Grand Canyon National Park* species of concern) ranges from southeastern Alaska and western Canada to central Mexico (AGFD 1997a). Its preferred habitat type is coniferous forests but riparian and desert habitats are occasionally used. Typical roosting sites include abandoned buildings, cracks in the ground, cliff crevices, and behind exfoliating tree bark. Caves are used for hibernating in winter. Long-legged myotis have been collected along the river corridor and use it for foraging and other habitat requirements (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003).

**Southwest River Otter.** The *Sonoran subspecies of* southwest river otter (an Arizona *wildlife* species of special concern, but considered extirpated from Navajo tribal land) is the only subspecies native to Arizona (Compton 2000), although a different subspecies, (*Lontra canadensis lataxina*) was introduced into the Verde River in central Arizona between 1981 and 1983 (AGFD 2002d). The southwest river otter is a rare inhabitant of the aquatic communities of Arizona (Hoffmeister 1986); however, rivers, streams, lakes, and marshes with adequate prey all provide potential habitat (AGFD 2002d). Sightings prior to the construction of Glen Canyon Dam indicate that river otters were present within the river corridor at one time, but at low densities. Since the late 1950s, scat and a few tracks seen along the river may possibly have been those of a river otter (Compton 2000). During a May 2000 wildlife inventory trip, a series of tracks in the canyon were photographed, which were confirmed by experts to be otter tracks. Later in the summer of that same year, a pair of otters was observed by NPS wildlife staff on Lake Powell. The otter tracks in Grand Canyon are believed to have been those of a lone, juvenile male possibly originating from the Glen Canyon pair (Leslie 2000a). It is unlikely that these otters were the native Sonoran species and most probably were dispersed animals from nonnative species that were introduced into the river drainage by the Arizona Game and Fish Department between 1978 and 1991 (GRCA Wildlife Files, unpublished data 1999). The status of this species in the park is uncertain; however, a viable population does not exist (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003).

**Desert Bighorn Sheep.** *Preferred habitat for the desert bighorn sheep (classified by the Navajo Nation as potentially in jeopardy in the future) is rough, rocky, sparsely vegetated land, characterized by steep slopes, canyons, and washes. They tend to stay within a few miles of perennial water, but also use ephemeral pools and moisture from succulent plants (Hoffmeister 1986). Breeding occurs July through September peaking in August. Lambing typically occurs in February; once lambing commences, bighorn move to lower elevations. Bighorn are*

PHOTO 3- 13: BIGHORN SHEEP



NPS Photo

*commonly seen on rocky cliffs along the river. In a 2002 NPS-sponsored survey, approximately 100 to 120 sheep were counted from the river (NPS 2003k). Little is known about the population status of desert bighorn sheep in the park.*

### 3.2.9.1.2 Plants

**Grand Canyon Beavertail Cactus.** Grand Canyon beavertail (classified as salvage restricted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture *and a Grand Canyon species of concern*) is a member of the cactus family. This succulent perennial has spineless spatulate joints and light cerise to vivid purplish red flowers. Grand Canyon beavertail grows on gravelly or rocky slopes in the Granite Gorge at an elevation of 2,350 to 4,000 feet (Brian 2000). Hikers from river trips may trample or dislodge this plant; however, people tend to avoid cacti, assuming that they have spines.

**Kaibab Agave.** Kaibab agave (classified as salvage restricted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture *and a Grand Canyon National Park species of concern*) is a member of the agave family, has large, robust, straight leaves, and yellow rosettes growing along the upper portion of a slender stalk that can reach 12 feet or more in height. This plant grows on moderately to sloping ledges of limestone- and sandstone-derived soil in desert scrub at an elevation of 1,200 to 7,200 feet (Brian 2000).

**McDougall's Yellowtops.** McDougall's yellowtops (classified as salvage restricted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture *and a Grand Canyon species of concern*) is also known as McDougall's flaveria. With stems up to three feet tall, this member of the sunflower family has narrow, linear leaves and a flat-topped blossom composed of numerous tiny, yellow florets (Arizona Rare Plant Committee 2001). This plant grows in moist saline seeps with maidenhair fern and monkey-flower and on open slopes in Muav limestone and Bright Angel shale at an elevation of 1,800 to 1,670 feet (Brian 2000).

### 3.2.9.2 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD

Many of the *federally listed* threatened, endangered, and *candidate* species and *Arizona state listed wildlife species of special concern* found in the upper stretch also inhabit the Lower Gorge. *Special status* species known *only* to occur *in the Lower Gorge or for which habitat is present below* Diamond Creek include *the razorback sucker*, relict leopard frog, *lowland leopard frog*, *Sonoran desert tortoise*, *Western* yellow-billed cuckoo, Yuma clapper rail, *Grand Canyon cave-dwelling primrose*, and Kaibab suncup.

Spencer Canyon has been included as a site to be managed through the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program. Management actions in these side canyons would result in the preservation, creation, and restoration of habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo. Habitat may also be created to support the Yuma clapper rail and other marsh and aquatic wildlife.

The species detailed below include only those that were not described in the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of this chapter.

### 3.2.9.2.1 Wildlife

#### 3.2.9.2.1.1 Fish

**Razorback Sucker.** The razorback sucker (federally endangered, an Arizona *wildlife* species of special concern, and a Navajo Nation species in jeopardy) has designated critical habitat in the canyon that extends from about RM 0 (near the Paria River) to Hoover Dam. Razorback suckers prefer slower current and are found in backwaters, side channels, flooded bottomlands, pools, and lakes in the river drainage (AGFD 2002e). They spawn over clean gravel and cobbles in pond and river habitats from January into April (Mueller and Marsh 2002). In the lower Colorado River basin, razorback suckers are now restricted to Lakes

PHOTO 3- 14: RAZORBACK SUCKER



Colorado Division of Wildlife Photo

*Mead and Mohave, with larvae captured in 2000 and 2001 between Pearce Ferry and South Cove (Haley pers. comm. 2005), suggesting that adult suckers may have spawned in the Lower Gorge of Grand Canyon National Park.* This species is considered extremely rare in the park and may be extirpated here (Minckley 1991). Only 10 specimens, all adults, were collected *in the park* between 1944 and 1990 (Valdez et al. 1998); no wild razorback sucker *adults* have been collected since 1990. In 1997 the Hualapai Tribe released 15 hatchery-raised razorback suckers into the river at three locations in the Lower Gorge (Zimmerman and Leibfried 1997). The results of this introduction are unknown.

#### 3.2.9.2.1.2 Amphibians

**Lowland Leopard Frog.** *The lowland leopard frog is an Arizona wildlife species of special concern. It has been found in streams, springs, ponds and river side channels in desert scrub, grassland and woodland habitat. It needs slackwater aquatic habitat dominated by riparian vegetation such as bulrushes, cattails and grasses for cover. On an NPS river trip in 2004, leopard frog egg masses and tadpoles were discovered in a pond in Surprise Canyon. Initially these frogs were thought to be relict leopard frogs, but recent genetic analysis has determined that they are genetically more similar to the lowland leopard frog.*

**Relict Leopard Frog.** The relict leopard frog (a USFWS candidate for listing *as endangered or threatened*, and an Arizona *wildlife* species of special concern) was considered extinct until small populations were located in *1991*. This species persists in Nevada near the Overton Arm of Lake Mead and in Black Canyon below Hoover Dam (USFWS 2002c). Potential habitat in the form of small streams, springs, and spring-fed wetlands between 1,214 and 2,494 feet above sea level exists within the *area of analysis*. In *1987* a researcher found a decomposed leopard frog specimen in a Lower Gorge tributary, which was identified as a relict leopard frog (Stevens, pers. comm. 2004). *In 2004, a leopard frog survey was conducted by Park biologists and a population of leopard frogs was discovered in a small pool of water up a side canyon in the Lower Gorge (Drost, pers. comm. 2004). Initially thought to be relict leopard frog tadpoles,*

*genetic analysis recently completed determined them to be more closely related to the lowland leopard frog (rana yavapaiensis) than to the relict leopard frog.* The NPS is *continuing to* survey to determine the status of the relict leopard frog in Grand Canyon. *There are no known populations of relict leopard frog within the park at this time. One leopard frog specimen, presumed to be rana onca, has been documented on the Hualapai Reservation by tribal biologists, but genetic analysis has not been performed.*

### 3.2.9.2.1.3 Reptiles

**Desert Tortoise.** The Sonoran population of the desert tortoise is an Arizona *wildlife* species of special concern. *It* is found along the *south*western end of the canyon and around Lake Mead (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003, *Murray and Dickinson 1996*). The tortoise generally occupies creosote bush flats in basins and mountain bajadas and it is occasionally found on rocky slopes. The Joshua tree forest along the rim in the Lower Gorge is an important component of desert tortoise habitat.



PHOTO 3- 15: DESERT TORTOISE

AZ Game and Fish Department Photo

### 3.2.9.2.1.4 Birds

**Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo.** The *western* yellow-billed cuckoo (a federal candidate species in the western U.S., an Arizona *wildlife* species of special concern, and a future jeopardy species for the Navajo Nation) prefers breeding habitat that includes large blocks of riparian woodland, consisting of cottonwoods, willows, and tamarisk. Nests are built in trees with dense understory foliage. Cuckoos arrive at their breeding grounds in mid to late May and stay into September (Hughes 1999; AGFD 2000). Habitat for the yellow-billed cuckoo in the canyon only occurs below Diamond Creek in the western end of the river corridor (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003). In 2001, one individual was observed by San Bernardino College (San Bernardino College, pers. comm. 2001).

**Yuma Clapper Rail.** The current range of the Yuma clapper rail (federally endangered and an Arizona species of special concern) includes the river from the lower Virgin River to Mexico and various locations in the Gila River drainage (USFWS 2002d, 2003). Its preferred habitat is freshwater or brackish stream sides and marshlands at elevations under 4,500 feet. Nests are built 3–6 inches above the surface in sloughs and backwaters that support dense stands of bulrush and cattails and breeding occurs from March to July. This species has been recorded within the lower end of the river corridor (Leslie, pers. comm. 2003). In 1996 and 1997 researchers reported the rail as occurring between Separation Canyon and the Lake Mead delta (McKernan and Braden 2002). Three individuals were observed by San Bernardino College in 2001 (San Bernardino College, pers. comm. 2001).

### **3.2.9.2.2 Plants**

**Grand Canyon Cave-dwelling Primrose.** The *Grand Canyon* cave-dwelling primrose (classified as salvage restricted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture and a *Grand Canyon National Park species of concern*) is a perennial plant in the primrose family with long, spatula-shaped leaves and purple flowers clustered in umbels on a stalk that extends up to 11 inches above the basal leaves. This plant grows on limestone walls in seeps and in hanging gardens at an elevation of 1,250 to 7,600 feet (Brian 2000). It has only been identified at the western end of the canyon between Separation and Spencer Canyons.

**Kaibab Suncup (aka. the Grand Canyon Evening-primrose).** The Kaibab suncup (*a Grand Canyon National Park species of concern*) is a densely tufted perennial that is a member of the evening primrose family. It has small flowers with four yellow petals (Arizona Rare Plant Committee 2001). The Kaibab suncup grows on sandy or gravelly beaches and in dry washes, often on limestone substrates, at an elevation of 2,300 to 3,500 feet (Brian 2000). It has been documented from a few side canyons along the river in the western end of the canyon (Brian 2000).

## 3.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES

### 3.3.1 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

#### 3.3.1.1 CULTURAL OVERVIEW

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado is significant for its human history and its ongoing role in the lives and traditions of American Indians of the Colorado Plateau. Archeologists generally divide the nearly 12,000 years of human history in the American Southwest into four broad periods—Paleoindian, Archaic, formative, and historic—all of which are represented in Grand Canyon (Coder 2000). Paleoindian presence is indicated by a single Folsom preform projectile point *and partial Clovis* dating to *over* 10,500 before present (BP). Evidence of Archaic occupation is more abundant but still sparse, consisting primarily of rock art panels, temporary campsites, and split-twig figurines dating to 3,000-4,000 BP. The majority of prehistoric sites in Grand Canyon’s eastern section date from the formative period (beginning around AD 500) and typically include Puebloan characteristics. This phase of prehistoric occupation ended mostly by 1150, but some areas were inhabited until at least the early 1200s. Limited occupation may have continued after that, but this has not been confirmed by physical evidence. Some prehistoric inhabitants of Grand Canyon moved to locations east of the canyon and are ancestral to modern Puebloan people (Ahlstrom et al. 1993). Artifactual evidence of the Pai (ancestors of the Hualapai and Havasupai Tribes), Paiute, and Cerbat occupation of Grand Canyon, particularly its western section, dates back to at least A.D. 1300 (Euler 1979). Pai occupation of areas along the Colorado River downstream of the Grand Canyon likely goes back many more centuries to at least AD 700 (Gilpin and Phillips 1998). For a summary of the Grand Canyon’s prehistory see Coder (2000).

As documented by written records, the historic period (starting with European contact in 1540) witnessed the Navajo arrival and ongoing American Indian use, which included shelter, farming, hunting, gathering of plant and mineral resources, ritual, and refuge. Navajo oral histories tell a more expansive story, including association with specific deities (Roberts, Begay and Kelley, 1995). Euro-American uses included exploration, mining, power production, and tourism. All prehistoric and historic uses are represented by archaeological sites along both the mainstem and side canyons of the Colorado River. *Several American Indian tribes in the region have expressed or claimed cultural affiliation to the Grand Canyon—the Havasupai, Hopi, Hualapai, Navajo, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah (representing the Shivwits Paiute), Las Vegas Paiute, Moapa Band of Paiute Indians, San Juan Southern Paiute, Yavapai-Apache (representing the White Mountain, San Carlos, Yavapai and Tonto nations), and the Pueblo of Zuni.*

Researchers primarily think about the significance of cultural resources in terms of their potential to reveal new knowledge about human history and culture. Other groups have different points of view. Tourists on river-rafting expeditions often value the experience of seeing unexcavated archaeological sites and observing intact features and artifacts still scattered across the surface. American Indians see such sites as markers left by their ancestors, providing evidence of their ancestors’ passage and continuing presence, and as places where traditional materials can be accessed. The historical nature of the river-running experience itself is also represented at sites in the Grand Canyon and is valued by those who make their living running the river and who

cherish the memories of those who have come before them. Therefore, the resources documented as archeological sites or traditional cultural places are likely to grow in number or to be redefined over time. Generally, despite the variation in points of view, the river's cultural sites have much value to many, including those who visit them and those who do not.

### **3.3.1.2 ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Based on site records of Grand Canyon National Park and the Hualapai Department of Cultural Resources (HDCR), *to date*, a total of 674 archeological sites, both prehistoric and historic, are known to be along the Colorado River from Glen Canyon Dam to Lake Mead, and in side canyons below Lees Ferry within approximately a two-mile hiking distance from the river (Fairley et al. 1994; Jackson 1997; GRCA files). Side canyon sites farther than two miles are included if they are known to be visited by river runners, based on conversations with Grand Canyon river guides, various publications, and park staff. Of the 674 sites, 487 are along the mainstem of the Colorado River and 187 are in side canyons. The number of mainstem sites is well documented as a result of an archeological inventory conducted in 1990–91 by NPS archeologists in conjunction with personnel from Northern Arizona University (Fairley et al. 1994). Little systematic survey of side canyons has been conducted, so the actual number of accessible sites in those locations is unknown. In 1992, 336 of the 487 mainstem sites were submitted to the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office for a formal determination of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; 323 of these were determined eligible (NPS 1992). Many of the remaining mainstem properties have been assessed with regards to their national register eligibility, but no additional formal determinations have been conducted. Because the properties retain aspects of integrity in accordance with national register criteria, they are considered eligible for the register and are treated as such. The 187 known side canyon sites are considered eligible for the register as contributors to the Grand Canyon multiple property submission to the State Historic Preservation Office in 1980. In the subsequent evaluation (dated 1984), all properties covered by the submission were determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Balsom, pers. comm. 2003). Following current management practices, all of the documented archeological sites and traditional cultural properties (TCPs) within the Colorado River corridor and its side canyons are considered eligible for listing on the national register as contributors to the overall Grand Canyon multiple property nomination.

Evidence of prehistoric occupation in the Colorado River corridor is seen in the wide variety of recorded resource types, including pueblos, small habitation structures, storage features, rockshelters, thermal features and roasters, artifact scatters and caches, water control features, trails, rock art, a variety of isolated finds, and burials. Some archeological resources in the river corridor have been known since the 19th century, but many more sites were documented in limited surveys in 1965 and 1966, systematic site monitoring begun in 1978, and the river corridor inventory conducted in 1990–1991 (Ahlstrom et al. 1993).

### **3.3.1.3 HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Types of historic resources along the mainstem of the Colorado River and accessible side canyons include artifact caches and isolated occurrences, abandoned boats, dwellings, remnants of mining operations, camps, features related to dam site development, trails, inscriptions, and plaques. Of the total number of identified archeological sites along the mainstem, at least 71 have a Euro-American historical component (BOR 1995).

Historic resources represent Euro-American incursions into the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River beginning with the 1869 Powell expedition. Although physical remains from this journey do not exist, evidence from subsequent river explorations, beginning with the Stanton expedition in 1889, dot the confines of the river and its side canyons. Powell was not the first to explore the inner canyon, but he was the first to fully document the river itself. Over 200 years before Powell's journey, the earliest Spanish explorers gazed upon the river somewhere near Desert View, attempting to reach the Colorado River but never making it beyond a third of the way to the river (Winship 1964).

Evidence of historic uses of the Colorado River and side canyons dating between 1540 and the mid-1900s are numerous, with each location telling a story of past human endeavors. Mining and exploration are the principal activities documented in the historic record. Included in these sites are the remains of mining camps, Bureau of Reclamation dam survey sites, evidence of scientific explorations, and early river runners' camps (Fairley et al 1994).

### **3.3.1.4 TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTIES AND ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES**

American Indian groups in the region recognize certain tangible properties as important in their traditional tribal histories. These properties, which may or may not correspond to archeological sites, are referred to as traditional cultural properties (NPS, Parker and King 1990). Like historic properties, traditional cultural properties are given consideration under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. During research related to Glen Canyon Dam operations and sponsored by the Bureau of Reclamation, five tribes identified cultural resources of importance to them in the river corridor. A total of 324 known archeological sites were identified as traditional cultural properties by one or more tribal groups (NPS 2003C; Glassco 2003a). Of these 324 sites and traditional cultural properties, the Hopi Tribe identify with 256 of them, the Hualapai Tribe with 118, the Pueblo of Zuni with 99, the Navajo Nation with 31, and the Southern Paiute Consortium with 2.

In addition to specific locations, American Indian people in the area hold many broader attributes of the Grand Canyon to be of traditional, even sacred, importance. Elders express a traditional veneration for the canyon's water, minerals, plants, and animals, and their oral traditions reveal a strong spiritual relationship to the Grand Canyon as a whole. The Havasupai and Hualapai Tribes revere the Colorado River as the backbone of their lifeline. The Hopi Tribe and the Pueblo of Zuni consider the Grand Canyon to be the place of their emergence into the present world. To the Navajo Nation, the Colorado and Little Colorado Rivers are sacred female and male entities, respectively, and these rivers, as well as the canyons that engulf them, provide protection to the Navajo people. To the Southern Paiute Consortium, the Colorado River is one of the most powerful of all natural resources in their traditional lands, and the Grand Canyon has taken on special cultural significance as a place of refuge that has allowed their people to endure in the face of Euro-American encroachment (BOR 1995).

### **3.3.1.5 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES**

As defined in the NPS *Cultural Resource Management Guidelines* (NPS 1998d), cultural landscapes are settings that humans have created in the natural world. They are intertwined

patterns of things both natural and constructed, expressions of human manipulation and adaptation of the land. One type of cultural landscape, the historic vernacular landscape, is represented in the Colorado River corridor at both Lees Ferry and Phantom Ranch.

- At Lees Ferry, the river briefly flows free of canyon walls, historically the only place in over 400 miles that it could be accessed on both banks by wagon. This natural attribute has influenced the site's history for 130 years. Today, historic buildings and a cemetery, shade trees, an orchard, fields, trails, and dugways carved into the river bluffs combine with more contemporary structures to illustrate the site's use as a farm, a vital ferry link between settlements in Utah and Arizona, and an access point for river runners.
- At Phantom Ranch, major side canyons and perennial tributaries provided the natural context for what would become the nexus of a cross-canyon corridor and the most popular site in the inner canyon. Here, historic guest lodges and NPS buildings, livestock structures, cottonwood trees, a campground, bridges across Bright Angel Creek and the river, and a network of trails document 80 years of recreational activity at the very bottom of the Grand Canyon.

On a broader scale, the whole river corridor can be viewed as a cultural landscape in which American Indians for millennia have farmed, hunted, gathered plants and minerals, and performed rituals. Ancient trails, remnants of stone structures, traces of fields, and prayer objects enshrined in travertine and salt are enduring evidence of a subtly altered landscape. Integral to this landscape are the animals, plants, and minerals traditionally used and valued by American Indians. Today, tribes with traditional links to the Grand Canyon are concerned about the impact on these resources by Glen Canyon Dam operations and recreational river use. As part of an effort to protect culturally sensitive plants, several groups, including the Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, and Southern Paiute Consortium, have conducted ethnobotanical studies along the river in Grand Canyon to determine where such plants are located. A list of the plants identified by all these groups except the Pueblo of Zuni is on file at the park; the Pueblo of Zuni list is considered confidential.

### **3.3.2 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD**

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For cultural resources, the types and conditions discussed are similar to those described for the river corridor from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek; however, differences do exist in the types and distribution of resources along the mainstem and the side canyons. The Hualapai Tribe, acting as their own Tribal Historic Preservation Office, inventories and monitors historic properties within the Hualapai Reservation. This work is done by the Hualapai Department of Cultural Resources. Some of the cultural resources in this portion of the Colorado River are located within the Area of Cooperation, and the tribe and the park service work cooperatively on the management of these resources.

#### **3.3.2.1 ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Archeological resources are less abundant in the Lower Gorge, in part due to the limited geomorphic conditions that would allow for prehistoric and historic uses. An additional factor is the limited archeological inventory, although inventory of the mainstem was conducted as part of

the Glen Canyon Dam Environmental Studies (Fairly et al. 1994) and some side canyon inventory was conducted in the late 1980s as part of a research project with Wilderness Studies. The lower granite gorge precludes the existence of large, side canyon delta development, and access is from side canyons with narrow junctions at the river. Inventory surveys have documented 16 mainstem sites and 53 side canyon sites. Sites in this area of the canyon are a mix of habitation and special use locations, characterized by rock shelters, artifact scatters, and roasting pit complexes. Few architectural sites exist, and human occupation spans the Archaic to the historic periods.

### **3.3.2.2 HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Historic resources in this portion of the canyon primarily relate to the Bridge Canyon dam explorations. Bridge Canyon City and associated facilities are probably the most well-known historic site in the area. During the late 1950s scores of men occupied the area as part of the construction camp established for building Bridge Canyon Dam. Although the dam was never built, the encampment remains. Trails leading to and from the camp also exist.

The Bat Towers, leading to the Bat Cave, are well known remnants of a 1950s mining operation tram that connected the South Rim with the cave site on the north side of the Colorado River. Bat guano removed from the cave was marketed and sold as household plant fertilizer by the U.S. Guano Corporation.

### **3.3.2.3 TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTIES AND ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES**

Traditional cultural properties and ethnographic resources exist in this portion of the canyon. The Hualapai Tribe has documented 22 properties within the Lower Gorge (Glassco 2003b; NPS 2003C). There are only six traditional cultural properties in this section that are regularly monitored for impacts by HDCR, but they are all located at heavily visited areas (i.e., Diamond Creek, Bridge Canyon, Spencer Canyon, Travertine Canyon, Travertine Falls, and Burnt Springs) (Jackson, Kennedy, and Phillips 2002; Glassco 2003b).

### **3.3.2.4 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES**

For the most part, the camp site at Bridge Canyon could be considered a historic vernacular landscape, although it has not been formally evaluated. The entire river corridor is thought of as an ethnographic landscape.

## 3.4 VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE

### 3.4.1 RECREATION VALUES

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The Colorado River in Grand Canyon offers unique multi-day river trips that are eloquently described in diverse guidebooks, travelogues, and other publications. Based primarily on boater responses to a survey question about the qualities that make the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon unique, “motor, oar, and private boaters agreed that the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon is better than other rivers they have run in its scenic views, sense of challenge, quality of the whitewater, length of time one can travel through an undisturbed environment, geological formations, and ability to have a life-changing experience” (Hall and Shelby 2000). The following summarizes key recreational attributes of Grand Canyon river trips (Hall and Shelby 2000), although only those with an asterisk can be measured:

- **Geological Formations**—The geological wonders of the Grand Canyon are well-documented (Breed and Roat 1974; Collier 1980; Beus and Morales 2003) and are uniquely experienced on trips that travel through the succession of rock layers on the river that carved the canyon.
- **Scenic Views**—The Grand Canyon has attractive beaches, side canyons, and riparian areas, including seeps, springs, and other water-enhanced micro-environments, that provide unique landscapes and scenic diversity.
- **Length of Trip through an Undeveloped Environment\***—Grand Canyon river trips, particularly two- to three-week-long oar trips, offer unique opportunities to spend extended time in a backcountry, wilderness-like setting. The canyon is 226 miles from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek, and boaters interested in longer trips can travel over 280 miles to takeouts on Lake Mead.
- **Quality of the Whitewater**—The Grand Canyon is famous for “big water” rapids. There are over 60 major (Class III/IV) rapids on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, and many have large waves and powerful hydraulics that rival any of the commonly boated rapids in the country.
- **Ability to Explore**—Most Grand Canyon trips offer extensive opportunities for recreationists to spend time at attraction sites or side canyons to explore natural, archeological, or historic features. There are several guides for hiking, natural history, archeology, and historical features that enhance exploration in the canyon (Powell 1961; Belknap 1969; Hughes 1967; Crumbo 1981; Butterfield, et al. 1981; Miller and Young 1981; Whitney 1982; Brown, Carothers, and Johnson 1987; Stevens 2002).
- **Sense of Challenge**—Whitewater, hiking, and camping trips offer challenges and require outdoor skills from at least some members of every group. Interested visitors have extensive opportunities to develop new skills or hone existing ones, often through interaction with commercial guides or noncommercial trip leaders and boat operators.
- **Sense of Freedom**—Many authors have written about achieving this cognitive and emotional state in wilderness-like areas, such as the Grand Canyon (Muir 1918; Abbey 1968, 1982).

- **Level of Naturalness\***—Aside from launch and takeout facilities, a few corridor trails, and the rustic facilities at Phantom Ranch, the Grand Canyon as seen by river runners has little evidence of human development. Although there are human-caused impacts associated with Glen Canyon Dam, upstream water development, and invasive exotic vegetation, the canyon’s environment appears largely shaped by the forces of nature, not humans.
- **Peace and Quiet\***—With low levels of development, the Grand Canyon offers outstanding opportunities to experience “peace and quiet” and natural sounds, especially for nonmotorized rafts during the no-motor season. Exceptions include non-natural sounds from motorized craft, fixed-wing overflights, *generators*, and helicopters.
- **Opportunities to Experience Solitude\***—Opportunities for solitude (minimal contact with people outside one’s own group) are plentiful on most Grand Canyon river trips, although complete solitude is rare except on winter trips. Due to user-day limits since 1972, most trips camp out of sight and sound of other groups on 80% of their nights in the canyon, average fewer than five on-river contacts per day, and encounter other groups at about half of the attraction sites they visit (Hall and Shelby, 2000). Solitude and an undeveloped environment are two fundamental issues defining a wilderness river experience (as defined in Chapter 1) associated with Grand Canyon river trips.
- **Ability to Have a Life-Changing Experience**—Attributes such as long trips, unscheduled days, opportunities for solitude, and the expansive setting of the Grand Canyon may facilitate self-transforming, experiences that contribute to life changing experiences.
- **Opportunities to See Wildlife**—Mule deer and desert bighorn sheep are common mammals seen on river trips, as well as several common rodent and bat species. Coyote, ring-tailed cats, and mountain lions are more rarely encountered. There are also several amphibian and many lizard and snake species in the canyon. Seasonal birding opportunities can be exceptional on a river trip. Over 200 bird species have been identified by river users, although most birds are non-breeding migrants or transients. Prominent species include several teal, mergansers, and other ducks; hawks and other raptors, including peregrine falcons and bald eagles; and a diversity of songbirds, including swifts, hummingbirds, kingfishers, swallows, canyon wrens, warblers, tanagers, and sparrows.

Recreation researchers and managers recognize a spectrum of recreational opportunities available in outdoor settings, ranging from “pristine” to “paved” (Buist and Hoots 1982; Driver et al. 1987). This concept has been institutionalized in several federal and state land managing agencies, and it is a fundamental concept in most recreation planning frameworks (Shelby and Heberlien 1986; Stankey et al. 1985; Graefe, Kuss, and Vaske 1990; Crystal and Harris 1997; Manning 1999). It suggests that settings vary on a continuum for biophysical variables (pristine/natural to more developed/unnatural), social variables (low densities/interaction to high densities/interaction), and managerial variables (few regulations/minimal onsite presence to many regulations and greater onsite presence).

## 3.4.2 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK (ZONE 1)

### 3.4.2.1 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

River-running opportunities from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek on the Colorado River are in Zone 1, which is on the “primitive” end of the recreational opportunity spectrum (ROS). Zone 1 has relatively low use densities, opportunities for solitude both on the river and at many camps and attraction sites, and low levels of development. The Lower Gorge section below Diamond Creek is in Zones 2 and 3 and is described later in this Chapter.

Some elements of Grand Canyon river trips may seem to contradict a “primitive” label, including motorized boating use during most of the year, the use of helicopters at Whitmore; the use of helicopters or motorized boats for rescues and research, large group sizes (up to 44 people) on some commercial trips, and crowding or congestion at launches, takeouts, and some attractions. Use on the river is relatively highly managed. There are off-site permits and user-day limits primarily designed to reduce social impacts, as well as regulations and educational efforts designed to mitigate biophysical and other resource-based impacts. The following information describes the recreational opportunities available in Zone 1.

#### 3.4.2.1.1 Trip Types

Visitors may go with one of the 16 commercially guided trips (outfitters) or plan one of their own trips (noncommercial). Based on current user-day allocations and 1999–2002 data, 84% of visitors take commercial river trips and 16% noncommercial trips.

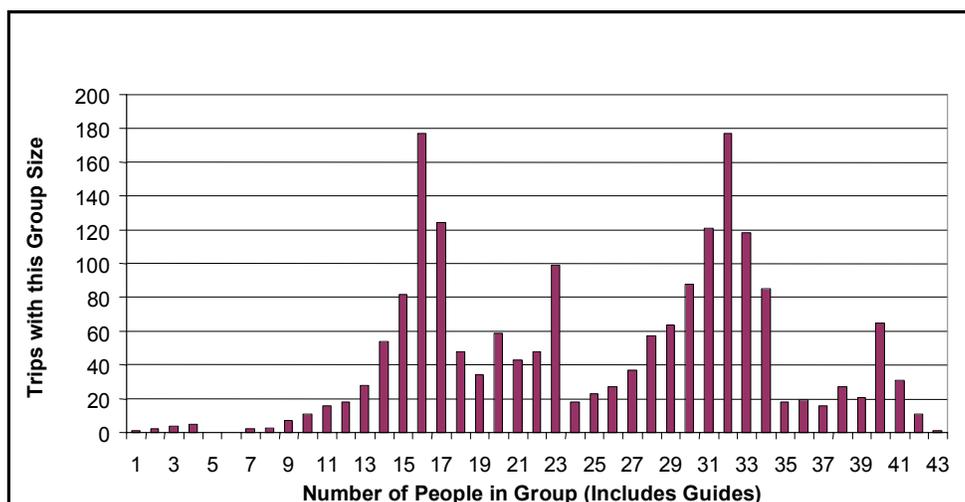
*People take a diversity of Colorado River trips through the Grand Canyon. Specific opportunities available to individual boaters depend on their choice of craft, type of trip, trip duration, season, group size, and other variables. Analyses in Volume II describe patterns of existing use and impact levels that help define the range of recreation opportunities available under existing management (Alternative A) and through other management strategies (Alternatives B- Modified H).*

##### 3.4.2.1.1.1 Commercial River Trips and Group Size

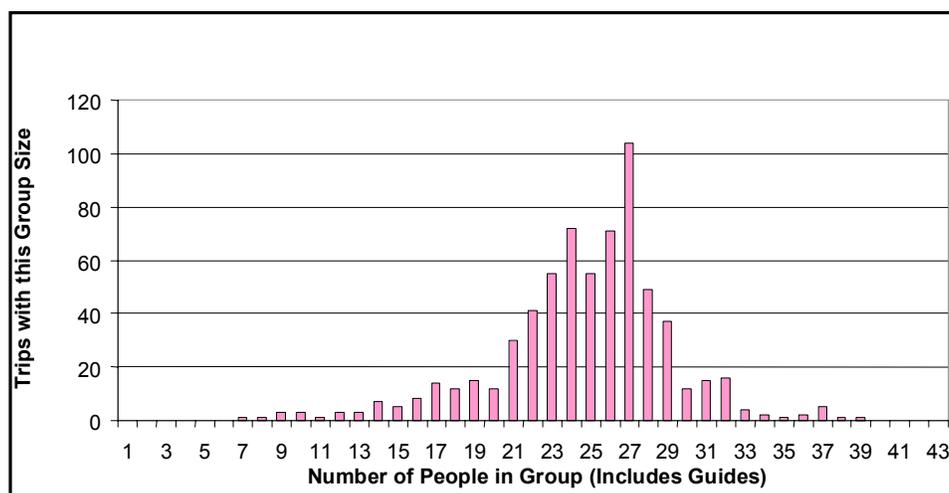
Under current crew-to-passenger ratio regulations, commercial motorized trip sizes can conceivably be as high as 44. Of those taking commercial trips, 77% take motorized trips rather than nonmotorized trips. Figure 3-3 illustrates the distribution of group sizes on one- and two-boat commercial motor trips (including guides). On one-boat commercial motor trips, group sizes average about 15 passengers plus crew (a total of 18); on two-boat trips, they average 28 plus crew (a total of 34). Approximately 10% of all motorized trips reach the limit of 36 plus crew (a total of 42+).

Figure 3-4 illustrates the distribution of group sizes for nonmotorized commercial trips (including guides). Nonmotorized commercial trips are generally smaller, averaging 18 passengers plus crew (a total of 24). These trips usually travel in four to six rafts. Nonmotorized commercial trips seldom exceed 25 passengers plus crew (a total of 32).

**FIGURE 3- 3: COMMERCIAL MOTOR TRIP GROUP SIZE DISTRIBUTION CHART, 1999–2002**



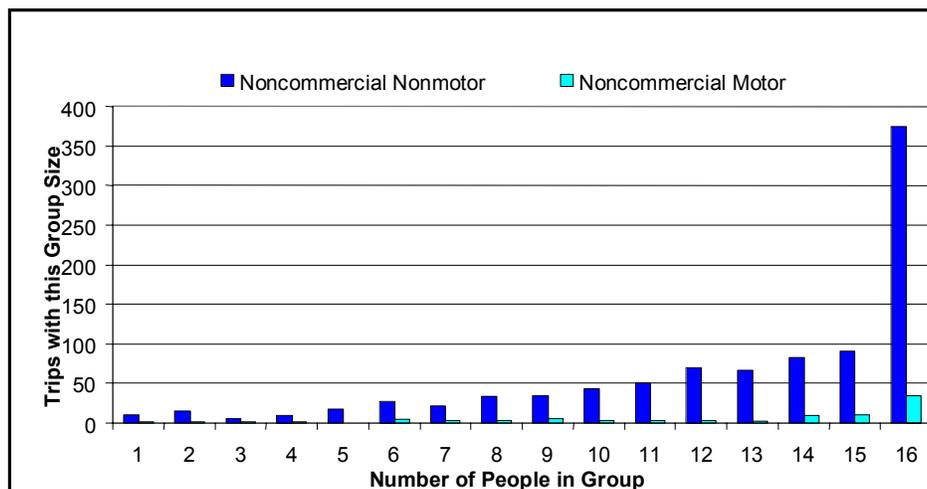
**FIGURE 3- 4: COMMERCIAL NONMOTOR GROUP SIZE DISTRIBUTION CHART, 1999–2002**



### 3.4.2.1.1.2 Noncommercial River Trips and Group Size

Noncommercial river trips are restricted to a maximum of 16 participants, and about half reach that limit. Figure 3-5 illustrates the distribution of noncommercial motorized and nonmotorized trips. The average group size for both motorized and nonmotorized noncommercial trips is 13, although winter and shoulder season trips tend to be smaller. Noncommercial trips tend to have fewer people per raft, but seldom have more than eight rafts per trip.

FIGURE 3- 5: NONCOMMERCIAL GROUP DISTRIBUTION CHART, 1999–2002



### 3.4.2.1.2 Type of Craft and Trip Length

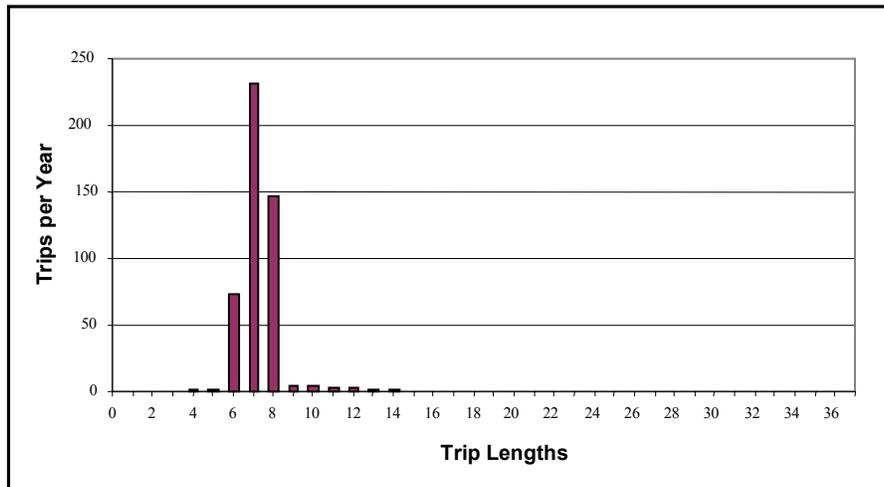
The average number of miles traveled each day varies by type of trip, takeout location, and type of craft. Based on current user-day allocations and 1999–2002 data, 63% of visitors take motorized river trips and 37% nonmotorized trips.

#### 3.4.2.1.2.1 Motorized Trips

Motorized rafts are currently allowed for three-quarters of the year (December 15 through September 15). They range in size from 22 to 39 feet, with most commercial rigs ranging 33 to 37 feet. They are commonly powered by 35-horsepower, four-stroke engines, although up to 55-horsepower engines are currently allowed. Large commercial motorized rafts typically have capacities of 17 to 23, and smaller motorized boats generally 8 to 15 people.

Motorized trips typically are shorter than nonmotorized trips. Current regulations restrict motorized craft from traveling more than 50 miles in one day or averaging more than 40 miles per day for the entire trip. This allows most motorized trips to travel from Lees Ferry to Whitmore in six days, or Lees Ferry to Lake Mead in seven, although some trips vary. Lees Ferry to Phantom Ranch usually takes three days on motorized trips; Phantom Ranch to Whitmore takes another three days, with one more day to Lake Mead. Figure 3- 6 Figure 3-6 illustrates the distribution of commercial motorized trip lengths; the most common trip length is seven days.

**FIGURE 3- 6: COMMERCIAL MOTORIZED TRIP LENGTH DISTRIBUTION CHART, 1999–2002**

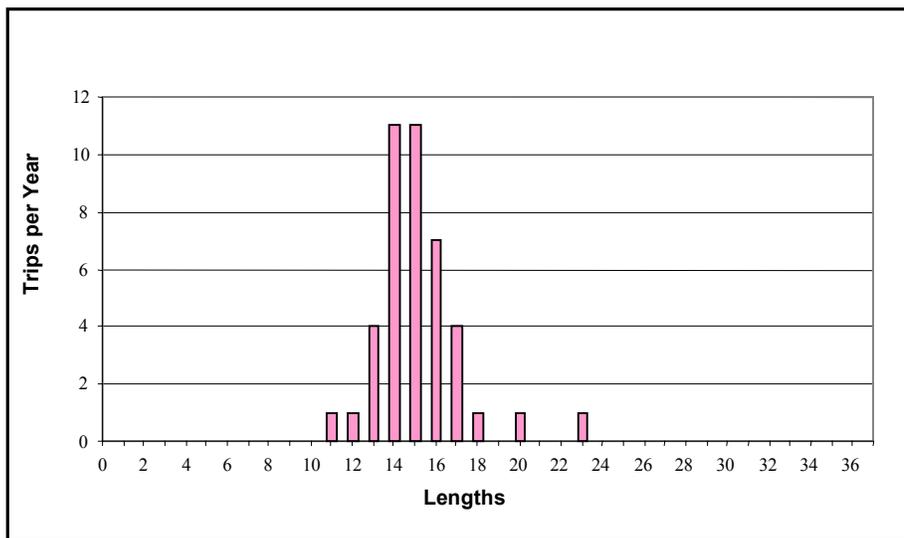


**3.4.2.1.2.2 Nonmotorized Trips**

Nonmotorized rafts are common on the river; they range from 14 to 20 feet long and carry one to six people plus gear. Most rafts are propelled by oars, although some are rigged for paddlers. Other common nonmotorized craft include dories, kayaks, and catarafts.

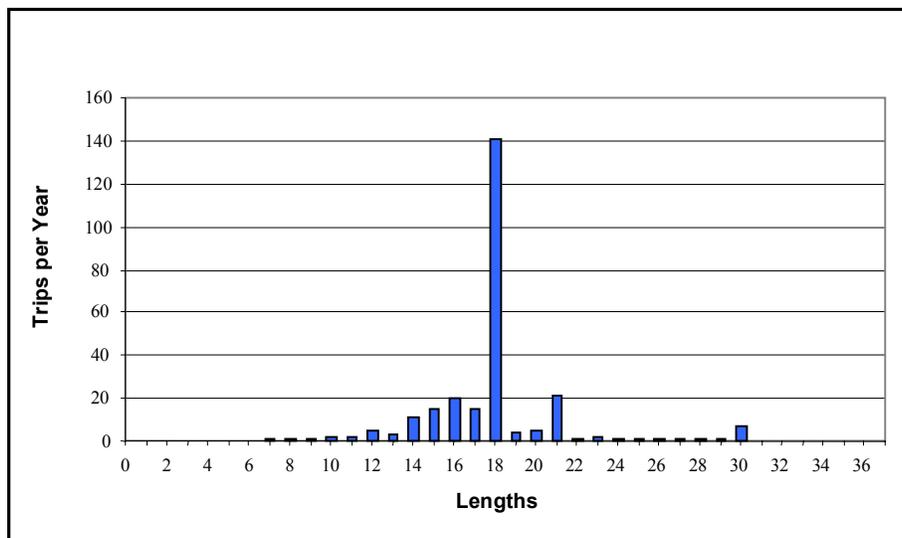
Nonmotorized trips from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek generally run 12 to 18 days; partial canyon nonmotorized trips from Lees Ferry to Phantom Ranch are usually 6 to 7 days, with the partial canyon trip from Phantom Ranch to Whitmore/Diamond Creek taking slightly longer. Figure 3-7 illustrates the distribution of commercial, nonmotorized trip lengths. Most commercial oar trips are 14 to 15 days long and tend to be shorter than noncommercial trips.

**FIGURE 3- 7: COMMERCIAL NONMOTORIZED TRIP LENGTH DISTRIBUTION CHART, 1999–2002**



As illustrated in Figure 3-8 most noncommercial nonmotorized trips are 18 days in length. In the shoulder and winter seasons, maximum trip length restrictions are relaxed to 21 days and 30 days respectively. These longer trips (which are usually noncommercial) average fewer miles per day or more layovers, where they stay at a single camp for more than one night. Commercial oar trips rarely lay over.

**FIGURE 3- 8: NONCOMMERCIAL TRIP LENGTH DISTRIBUTION CHART, 1999–2002**



**3.4.2.1.3 Seasonality**

Different types of river trips are offered during different times of the year due to the current user-day allocation system, which allocates user-days by primary and secondary seasons separately for each sector. As shown in Table 3-11, commercial motor trips occur primarily in the four summer months (with the highest numbers in June and July); commercial oar trips also primarily occur in the four summer months, but some are also taken in the early fall (the first part of the nonmotorized season).

**TABLE 3-11: COMMERCIAL AND NONCOMMERCIAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SEASONS**

Sector	Primary Season	Secondary Season
Commercial	May 1–September 30	October 1–April 30
Noncommercial	April 16–October 15	October 16–April 15

Due to current launch limits, noncommercial trips are evenly spread through the spring, summer, and fall, with infrequent use in the winter. Trips outside the primary summer months are distinguished by their longer duration, allowing boaters to make better use of the shorter daylight hours. On long winter trips, boaters may hurry through colder, more shaded parts of the canyon and take layovers in places where there is sunlight.

### 3.4.2.1.4 Passenger Exchanges

Most Grand Canyon river trips begin at Lees Ferry (RM 0) and take out at Diamond Creek (RM 226) or South Cove on Lake Mead (RM 295). (When lake levels on Lake Mead were high, lake travel began at Separation Canyon and the closest takeout on Lake Mead was Pearce Ferry [RM 280]. This facility is currently unusable because siltation and mudflats have made it inaccessible, and the closest lake takeout is now at South Cove. Lake Mead levels are predicted to remain low through the rest of this decade and for the duration of this plan.) Shorter trips are possible for boaters who join or leave existing trips at places other than the standard launches, such as Phantom Ranch or Whitmore. These are commonly known as “exchanges.” People who travel from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek or Lake Mead are said to have taken a “full canyon trip,” while people who use one or more of the exchange locations have taken “partial canyon trips.”

About 60% of all boaters in recent years have taken full canyon trips, although the proportion is higher among noncommercial boaters (about 80%). The largest proportion of exchanges occur at Phantom Ranch (RM 88; boaters typically hike in or out from the South Rim) or by helicopter *through Hualapai tribal land* at Whitmore (RM 187). Other hike in and hike out exchange locations for noncommercial boaters include Soap Creek, South Canyon, Nankoweap, Tanner, Hance, Hermit, Boucher, Lower Bass, Tapeats, Deer Creek, and Havasu.

*As Figures 3-9 and 3-10 illustrate, most commercial passengers join Grand Canyon river trips at Lees Ferry and leave trips at Whitmore, where nearly all boaters shuttle in or out via helicopter (although some visitors hike in on the Whitmore Trail). Some visitors, however, hike in or out via the 1.3 mile Whitmore Trail. Additionally, some passengers use the jetboat service from Separation Canyon to Lake Mead.*

FIGURE 3- 9: WHERE COMMERCIAL PASSENGERS JOINED RIVER TRIPS (2002)

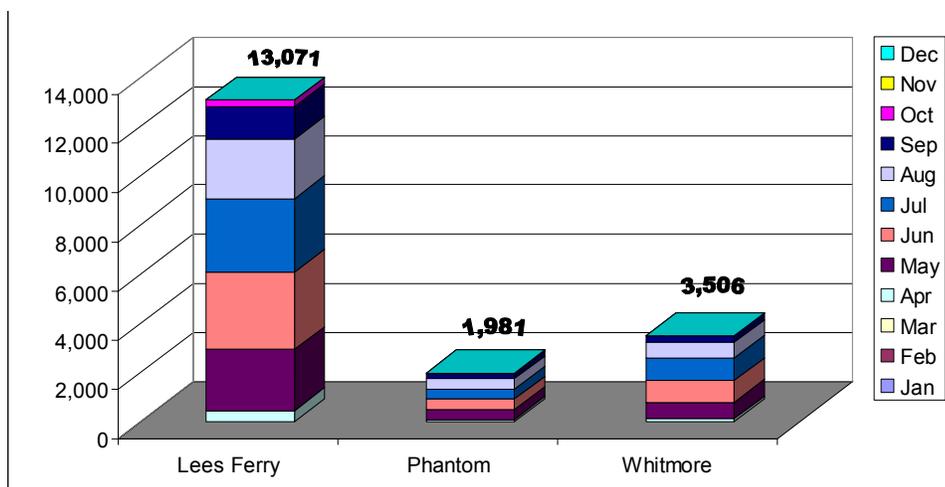
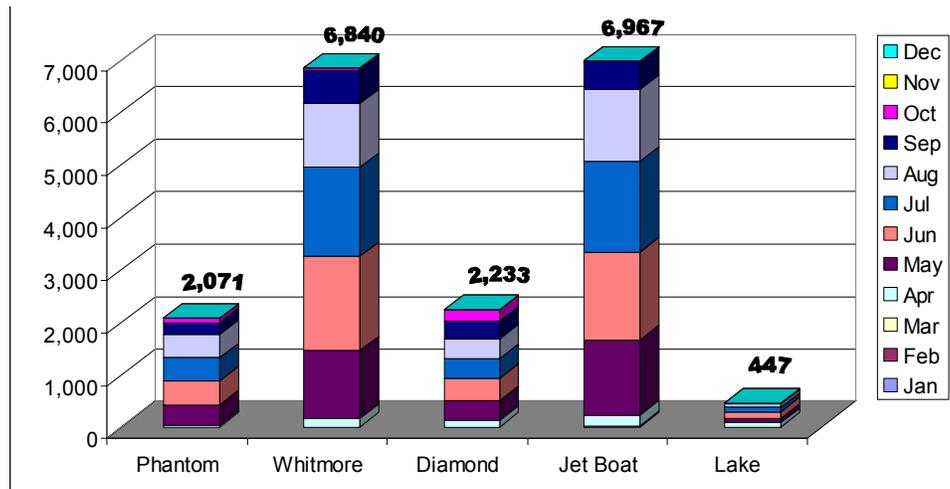


FIGURE 3- 10: WHERE COMMERCIAL PASSENGERS LEFT RIVER TRIPS (2002)



### 3.4.2.2 RIVER TRIP CHARACTERISTICS

#### 3.4.2.2.1 Within-Group Social Interaction

Trips create extended time for participants to be together, providing numerous opportunities for social interaction to share challenges, develop skills, and feel exhilarated. Commercial guides and noncommercial trip leaders have the potential to facilitate social interactions, as well as provide opportunities for people to develop outdoor skills and learn about the canyon. Group dynamics also require sharing a diversity of chores and logistics on Grand Canyon river trips.

#### 3.4.2.2.2 Daily Logistics and River Practices

Boaters carry in and prepare all meals on their trips; they also carry out all their refuse and solid human waste. Relatively elaborate systems and equipment have been developed to improve menus, increase efficiency, or minimize impacts. Researchers and commercial trips pioneered many of the systems that have become increasingly used by noncommercial boaters as well, since similar equipment can be rented.

#### 3.4.2.2.3 Swimming

Due to cold temperatures of 48°F, river runners only spend brief periods of time swimming in the mainstem of the Colorado River. In contrast, tributaries such as the Little Colorado River, which have much warmer water temperatures, are especially inviting to swimmers. Swimming also occurs at other popular attraction sites, such as Elves Chasm, Deer Creek, and Havasu.

#### **3.4.2.2.4 Fishing and Birding Opportunities**

Fishing opportunities (with an Arizona state non-native fishing license and a trout stamp) for non-native species (e.g., rainbow and brown trout) may occur throughout the Colorado River corridor, with most success above the Little Colorado River. Birding enthusiasts have opportunities throughout the entire length of the river corridor because the dense margin of riparian vegetation provides habitat for resident and tropical migrant populations.

#### **3.4.2.2.5 Day Hikes**

Day hikes from camps or attraction sites are highlights of many Grand Canyon river trips. Many boaters take hikes every day of their trip, and nearly all boaters do at least some hiking. Several guidebooks list numerous hikes that are available along the river corridor.

#### **3.4.2.2.6 Sightseeing and Attraction Sites**

Most trips stop at one to two attractions each day. These sites tend to offer good hiking, swimming, scenery, or natural, historical, or archeological features. About 30 to 40 well-known sites are regularly visited. The most popular are Redwall Cavern, Little Colorado River, Elves Chasm, Deer Creek, and Havasu; and they tend to become crowded (over 150 people at one time) during the summer. At least another 100 sites are used less frequently. The average stay across all attraction sites is about an hour, although some sites average stays of two to three hours, and some trips stay at some sites for the better part of a day. Guidebooks offer extensive descriptions of potential attraction sites and their features.

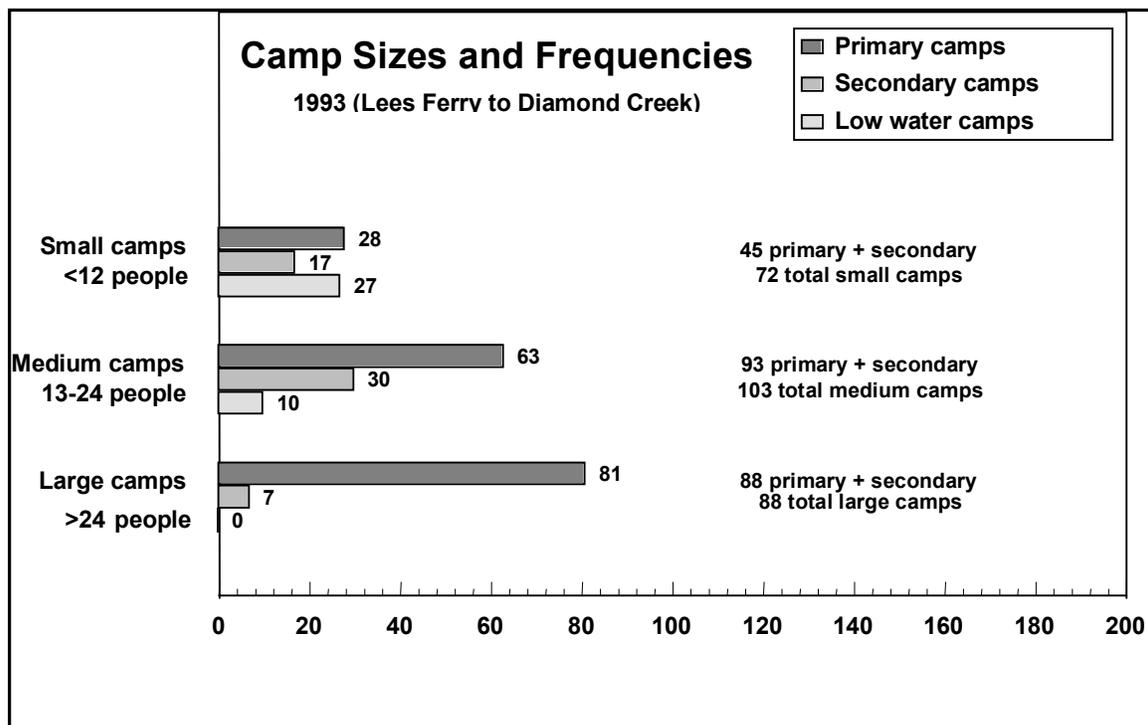
#### **3.4.2.2.7 Camping**

Camping occurs on undeveloped beaches. Although the number and size of beaches have decreased since Glen Canyon Dam was built in 1963, there are currently over 200 consistently identifiable beaches in Zone 1. The precise number varies from year-to-year and may depend on recent water level regimes (including experimental floods to maintain or rebuild beaches); vegetation changes; erosion from tributary flooding, wind, or recreation use; or regulations that prevent use of some camps with sensitive cultural and natural resources. Most campsites have sandy areas for “kitchens” and sleeping pads. Highly desirable sites are those with large open areas, shade, and space to moor boats (see “Campsite Distribution Poster”).

Not all camps can handle the range of group sizes that currently travel the river corridor. Recent campsite inventories and researchers (Kearsley and Warren 1993; Kearsley, Schmidt, and Warren 1994; Kearsley 1995; Kearsley and Quartaroli 1997; Kaplinski et al. 2002; Thompson 2002; and Brown and Jalbert 2003) have developed three general categories—small camps (1 to 12 people); medium camps (13 to 24 people); and large camps (25 or more people). The 1993 inventory further divided camps into “primary,” “secondary,” and “low-water” camps (Kearsley and Warren 1993). Using a list of qualitative criteria (e.g., proximity to attraction sites, availability of shade, boat mooring qualities), primary camps were defined as having more positive than negative attributes and were used more consistently than secondary sites (defined

as those with more negative than positive attributes). Low-water camps are available only at flows below 15,000 cfs. *For example, Figure 3-11 illustrates the number of small, medium, and large sites by primary and secondary classifications, as well as the number of low-water camps in 1993.*

FIGURE 3- 11: NUMBER OF CAMPS BY SIZE AND TYPE —LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

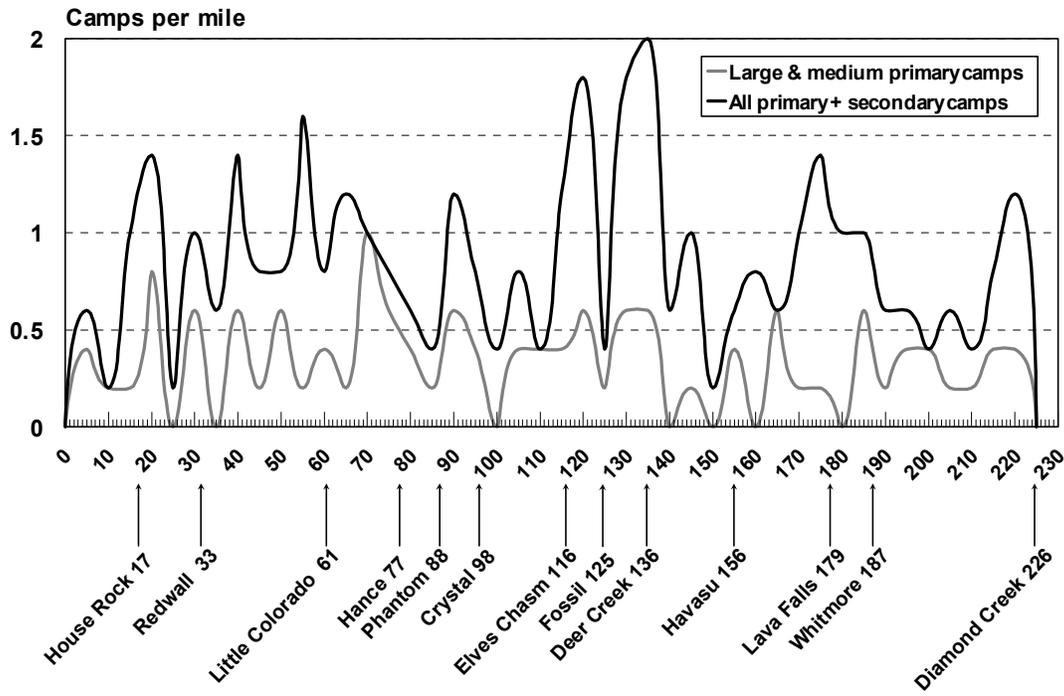


Source: Kearsley and Warren 1993.

### 3.4.2.2.8 Camp Distribution, Critical Reaches, and Bottlenecks

Over three-quarters of the camps available at all water levels are primary sites, but these campsites are not distributed uniformly throughout the canyon. Figure 3-12 illustrates the number of camps per mile from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek (the densities were calculated for 5-mile increments for large and medium primary camps, and all primary plus secondary camps together). The figure also shows there are some reaches of the river where campsite densities are relatively lower, and where large and medium-sized primary camps are particularly scarce. These have been identified as “critical reaches,” which typically correspond to narrower, gorge-like segments that have higher velocities during floods (Kearsley, Schmidt, and Warren 1994; Kaplinski et al. 2003).

FIGURE 3- 12: NUMBER OF CAMP TYPES PER MILE —LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK

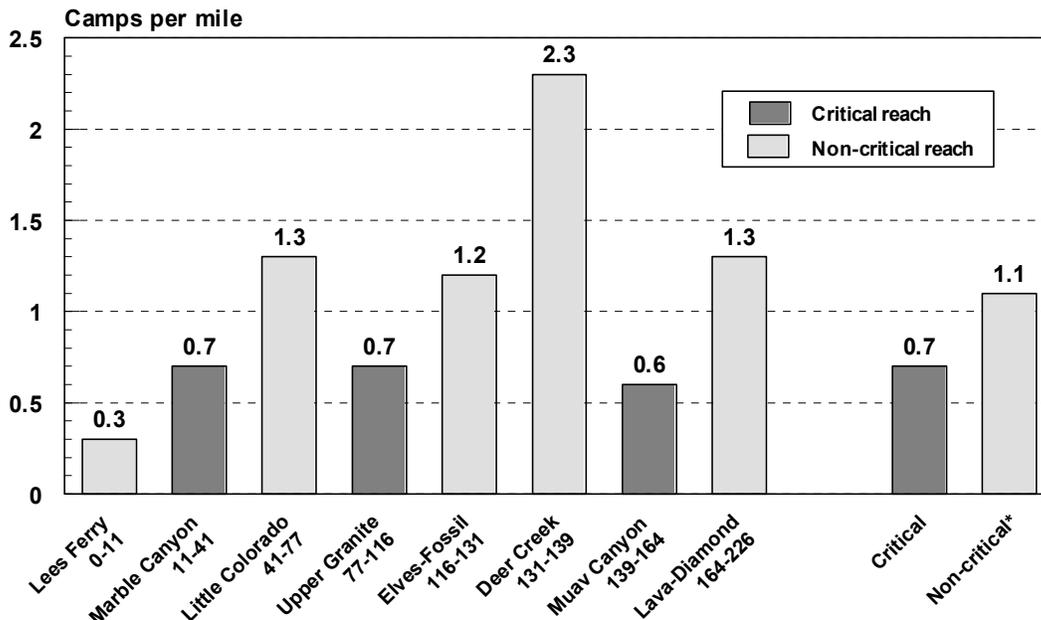


SOURCE: Adapted from Kearsley and Warren 1993, by summing camps per 5-mile increments.

Figure 3-13 illustrates campsite densities (camps per mile) in critical and non-critical reaches from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek. For example, in non-critical reaches, there may be an average of five or six camps per 5 miles (about an hour's float), and over half of those are likely to be medium or large primary sites. In critical reaches, there may be three sites in 5 miles, with only one that can handle larger groups.

In these critical reaches, which are 25 to 40 miles long, competition for the few high-quality camps is sometimes a source of visitor conflict. No low-water camps are large enough to accommodate groups over 24, and only 10 can accommodate groups larger than 12. Brown and Jalbert's data (2003) showed that some critical reaches contain only one or two large beaches. These are Reach 2 (RM 11.3–RM 22.6), which contains only two large beaches, and Reach 9 (RM 139.9–RM 159.9), which contains only one large beach. Most of these camps are small sandbars with little shade or other positive attributes. Trip scheduling and the position of specific attraction sites further exacerbate camp competition in these reaches, creating "campsite bottlenecks." Bottleneck issues occur at specific, well-known campsites adjacent to major attraction sites, such as the Little Colorado River, Phantom Ranch (especially for trips involving exchanges), Elves Chasm, Deer Creek, Havasu, and Lava Falls. Trips prefer to be upriver of these locations for early morning arrivals, to allow exchanges to begin hiking before the heat of the day, or to maximize time at the attraction site and be able to find a new camp shortly after leaving.

FIGURE 3- 13: NUMBER OF CAMPS BY TYPE PER MILE —LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK



\* Excludes Deer Creek reach.

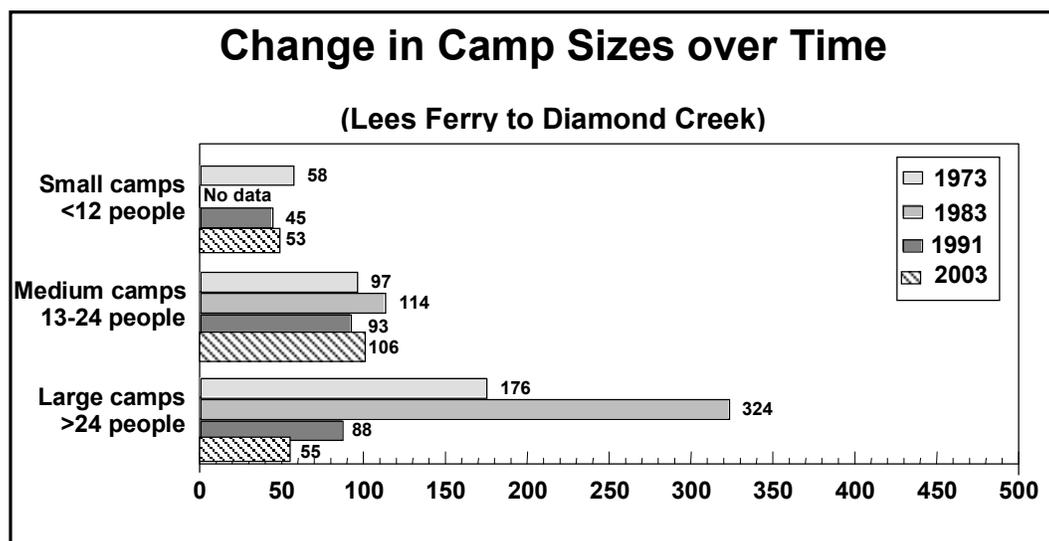
SOURCE: Adapted from Kearsley and Warren 1993.

### 3.4.2.2.9 Trends in Numbers and Sizes of Camps

The most important finding regarding beaches and camps in Grand Canyon is that they are getting smaller and less abundant. Glen Canyon Dam has depleted the canyon of important sediment sources; limited the frequency, duration, and regression of high flow events that periodically created, maintained, and cleaned beaches of encroaching vegetation; and increased erosion through daily peaking (Figure 3-14). The highest number of camps (particularly large camps) existed during the inventory conducted immediately following the 1983 flood. By contrast, the 1991 inventory shows 75% fewer large camps than in 1983 *and the 2003 inventory shows an even further reduction than in 1991 (Brown and Jalbert 2003)*. Compared to 1973, there are about *a third* as many large camps and a third less total camps.

More specific studies of flow regime effects on individual beaches suggest complex relationships between flows and erosion, beach building, maintenance, or cleaning (Kearsley and Warren 1993; Kearsley and Quartaroli 1997; Kearsley, Quartaroli, and Kearsley 1999). Depending on the timing, size, duration, and regression of high flow events (as well as sediment inputs from tributaries), some camps erode while others are built or replenished (at least for a short time). Studies also generally suggest that camps in critical reaches are more likely to contract or disappear because of erosion, while camps in non-critical reaches are diminished by a combination of erosion and encroaching vegetation. Research has also shown that long-term campsite loss has been most acute in critical reaches (Kearsley, Schmidt, and Warren 1994; Brian and Thomas 1984).

FIGURE 3- 14: NUMBER OF CAMPS OF DIFFERENT SIZES IN 1973, 1983, 1991, AND 2003



SOURCE: Weeden et al. 1975; Brian and Thomas 1984; Kearsley and Warren 1993; *Brown and Jalbert 2003*.

Several experimental beach maintenance, beach-building, and modified peak flow regimes have been implemented to slow or reverse the diminishing beach problem (BOR 1995, 1996), so far without long-term success (Kearsley and Quartaroli 1997; Kearsley, Quartaroli, and Kearsley 1997; Kaplinsky et al. 2001). While some experimental high flows have re-created new beaches, they have also eroded others (often in critical reaches) or simply replenished beaches with new sand without substantially changing their size or usable area. Many of the gains in campable area from these flow events were eroded within a year by peaking regimes.

Future beach-building or maintenance events are planned to coincide with times when tributaries are providing higher sediment loads (through the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program). Even if these prove more successful than past efforts, Grand Canyon beaches are unlikely to become as frequent or as large as they were before Glen Canyon Dam or shortly after the 1983 flood. Campsite capacities and availability are a major issue for recreational users, who have been adapting to smaller, less frequent, or less inviting beaches and camps since the last high water event in 1983.

### 3.4.2.3 FACILITIES

There are few facilities in Zone 1 of the Colorado River corridor, except for major launch areas *and Phantom Ranch*. Brief descriptions of these facilities are provided below.

#### 3.4.2.3.1 Lees Ferry

Lees Ferry (RM 0), the primary put-in at the start of a Grand Canyon river trip, has a large ramp, parking, a nearby camping area, and an information kiosk where pre-trip logistics and information sessions are conducted. The area can become congested at high use periods (up to nine launches or 166 people launching per day).

### **3.4.2.3.2 Phantom Ranch**

Phantom Ranch (RM 88) is a collection of cabins, a small store, an NPS ranger station, and campground on river right. Cabin rentals and campground sites are made by reservation. River trips are prohibited from camping at Phantom Ranch, but it is a popular exchange location. Boaters also have the option of leaving from or arriving at Phantom Ranch (or having their personal gear hauled out) by mule trains. Phantom Ranch is accessible by the Kaibab and Bright Angel trails and associated footbridges across the river. These trails offer access to the developed areas of the park on the North and South Rims. The 7-mile 5,000 vertical feet walk up the Kaibab Trail to the South Rim takes the average hiker at least 5 to 6 hours; the walk down takes about 3 to 4 hours. The 9-mile Bright Angel Trail to the South Rim usually takes the average hiker slightly longer, but has a milder gradient. During hot summer days, fatigue or heat-related conditions can affect boaters hiking out of the canyon, often requiring search-and-rescue responses from NPS rangers.

### **3.4.2.3.3 Whitmore**

*The Whitmore exchange point (RM 187) consists of a helicopter landing pad on Hualapai tribal land and a boat tie-up and camping area on river left. The Whitmore area is used by commercial trips as an exchange point for passengers to begin or end their river trip; nearly all of those passengers arrive at or depart from the area via a six-minute helicopter flight between the Hualapai Reservation and the Bar-10 Ranch. (As described under “Socioeconomic Conditions,” the Bar-10 Ranch provides river runners with a pre- and post-trip base for helicopter transport in and out of the canyon.) Passengers also have the option of exchanging on river right via the Whitmore Trail, which is a 1.3-mile, 1,200 vertical foot park trail to the rim. The hike up Whitmore takes the average hiker less than an hour (less than 30-minutes coming down), but is generally hot because of the surrounding lava rock and lack of shade. This trail offers access to the Bar-10 Ranch via a 9-mile, unimproved road. The drive from the rim to the ranch takes less than an hour, but no vehicle or mule shuttle currently exists (helicopter shuttles started in 1985, replacing a mule and bus ride concession that had existed since the mid-1970s).*

### **3.4.2.3.4 Diamond Creek**

The Diamond Creek takeout (RM 226) is located in the Area of Cooperation and is operated by both the NPS and the Hualapai Tribe. There is a gravel ramp area and a limited parking lot. The Hualapai Tribe owns and maintains the rough 18-mile road that traverses *Hualapai tribal land from* Diamond Creek to U.S. Highway 66 at Peach Springs. Occasional wash-outs along the road can cause delays, and it typically takes about 1 to 1.5 hours to drive out of the canyon.

Diamond Creek is also the launch site for commercial trips through the Lower Gorge offered by HRR. Because of launch and takeout congestion, the tribe has recently requested that all commercial and noncommercial trips not use the ramp between 7 A.M. and 9 A.M. so that HRR may use the ramp to launch their trips.

### 3.4.2.4 VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS

It is difficult to profile the “average” Colorado River runner. Research has examined differences between the three boater groups (commercial oar passengers, commercial motor passengers, and noncommercial users), finding some useful distinctions summarized below. Within these categories, however, individuals may vary from the group profile, and some boaters take more than one type of trip over the course of their river running history. (More detailed information is available in Shelby and Neilson 1976; Bishop et al. 1987; Hall and Shelby 2000; Stewart et al. 2000, *and* Jonas 2002.)

- **Gender, Age, and Marital Status**—In general, about 60% of Grand Canyon boaters are male, with slightly higher male-to-female ratios on noncommercial trips. About 25% of all boaters are single. There is some evidence that these ratios are becoming equalized over time. The average age of boaters has slightly increased over the past three decades from about 30 to the low 40s, probably mirroring the nation’s aging population trend. Grand Canyon trips are taken by people of all ages, from young children to elderly adults, although most are between the ages of 20 and 50. There are few statistical age differences between the three boating groups (commercial oar passengers, commercial motor passengers, and noncommercial users).
- **Education**—Grand Canyon boaters tend to be better educated than the national average; about three-quarters have college degrees; and over one-third have advanced degrees. Educational differences between boater groups are generally small.
- **Income**—Grand Canyon boaters as a whole tend to have higher household incomes than the national average, with some substantial differences between groups. While only about 25% of the national population has income greater than \$70,000, multiple studies show 66% to 75% of commercial passengers are in this category. In contrast, 43% of noncommercial boaters have incomes over \$70,000.
- **Previous Boating Experience**—There are substantial differences between commercial passengers and noncommercial boaters regarding river-running experience. In recent years, 86% to 96% of noncommercial boaters have taken more than three previous trips on other rivers compared to 24% to 44% of commercial passengers. About 24% to 33% of commercial boaters have never taken a previous river trip; this is true for less than 6% of noncommercial boaters. About 81% of commercial passengers have never taken a Grand Canyon trip, compared to 39% of noncommercial boaters (Hall and Shelby 2000). Experience levels on other rivers and in Grand Canyon have been increasing in the past three decades. In 1975, 70% of noncommercial boaters were on their first Grand Canyon trip, compared to 39% in 1998. Among commercial passengers, this change has been less dramatic. About 90% of commercial passengers were on their first Grand Canyon trip in 1975 compared to 80% in 1998.
- **Residency**—Grand Canyon boaters come from across the country, with higher proportions of commercial passengers living farther away. Over 75% of noncommercial boaters live within 1,000 miles of the river, compared to about 45% of commercial passengers. Less than 5% of commercial motor passengers reside outside the United States, compared to less than 1% of commercial oar or noncommercial boaters.
- **Recreation Preferences**—In general, Grand Canyon boaters prefer to recreate in backcountry areas with fewer facilities and services (Hall and Shelby 2000). However, there are some interesting differences between boater types. For example, noncommercial boaters report more interest in activities such as mountain climbing, backpacking, and hiking steep

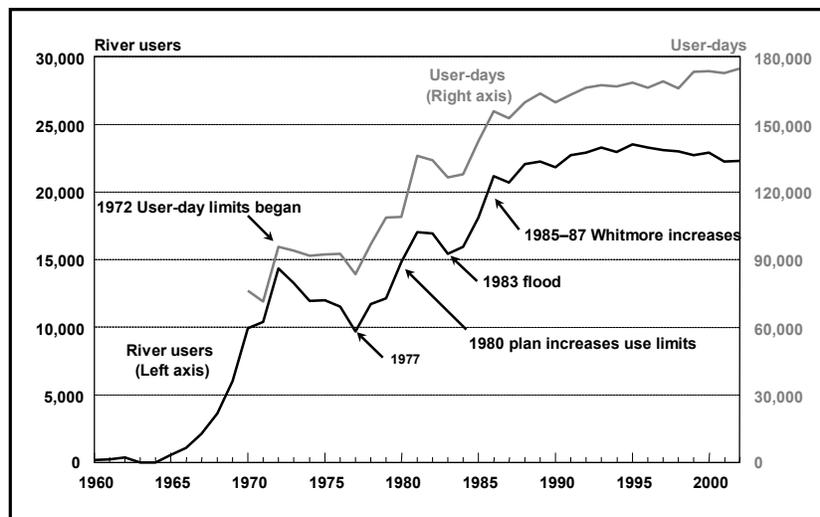
trails than do commercial passengers. Commercial motor passengers report more interest in resorts, cruises, and hiking easier trails than oar passengers, while noncommercial boaters report considerably less interest in these activities.

- Reasons for Taking Grand Canyon River Trips**—Boaters’ reasons for taking Grand Canyon river trips are related to the unique attributes of Grand Canyon (as listed above in the “Recreation Values” section of this Chapter). The most important reasons for all groups were “to see the canyon from the river” and “running exciting whitewater” (over 80% reported that these were very important). “Being in a wilderness setting” was very important to more noncommercial boaters (80%) than commercial passengers (59% to 64%). Just over half of all boaters thought “being with friends and family” was very important, while over a third thought “escaping the pressures of work or family” was very important. “Meeting new people” was very important for less than 20% of all boaters.
- Reasons for Choosing Commercial Trips**—Most commercial passengers considered only one concessioner before selecting their trip. The most important factors considered were the length of trip, the time of trips, the type of boat, and the number of opportunities to hike or explore. The type of boat and availability of hiking were more important to oar than motor commercial passengers. Less important factors for all commercial passengers included food menus, equipment, quality of the guides, and availability of “special interest” features (possibly because people consider these similar among different companies).

### 3.4.2.5 HISTORY OF USE AND RECREATIONAL DEMAND

Prior to the implementation of user-day limits in the early 1970s, river use in the Grand Canyon was growing at an exponential rate (Figure 3-15). After user-day limits were implemented, concessioners and noncommercial boaters took advantage of new exchange opportunities (at Phantom Ranch or Whitmore Wash) and generally increased the speed of their trips. This allowed them to accommodate more trips and users with the limited user-day allocations. Following increases in user-day limits from planning and legislative actions around 1980, the annual number of users increased.

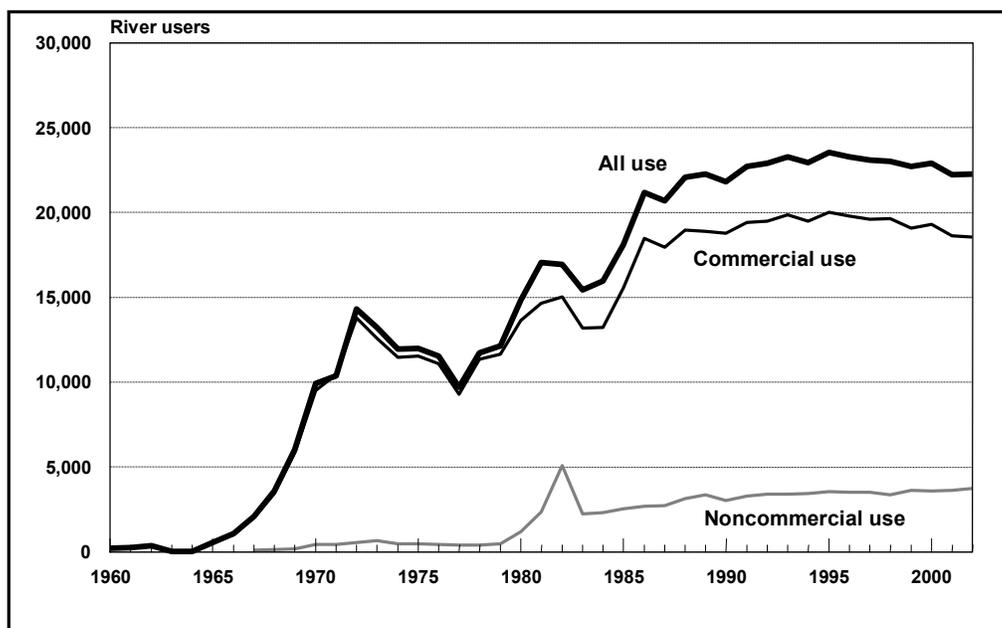
FIGURE 3- 15: TOTAL RIVER USERS AND USER-DAYS BY YEAR SINCE 1960



Note: 1960–1972 data includes all river users; 1972–2002 includes recreation use only (no crew, research, or administrative use).

As shown in Figure 3-16 the annual number of river users has not been static within the commercial and noncommercial sectors. However, since the late 1980s the number of river users has been relatively static for both sectors—17,000 to 20,000 people per year for the commercial sector, and about 3,000 to 4,000 people per year for the noncommercial sector.

**FIGURE 3- 16: RIVER USERS BY COMMERCIAL AND NONCOMMERCIAL SECTORS SINCE 1960**



Note: 1972–1979 data only includes people leaving Lees Ferry and no exchange information. 1960–72 data includes all river users; 1972–2002.

#### 3.4.2.5.1 Phantom Ranch Exchanges

Based on anecdotal information, small numbers of visitors joined or left river trips at Phantom Ranch when the river running boom began in the late 1960s. Substantial numbers of people were not involved in Phantom Ranch exchanges until the late 1970s, and exchanges grew to current levels in the late 1980s. The number of Phantom Ranch exchanges has been relatively stable since 1987, when the NPS began keeping systematic records. In general, about 2,500 passengers join trips at Phantom Ranch each year, and a similar number exit there (1:1 exchange ratio in which only one user-day is counted against an outfitters' allocation). Prior to 1992, relatively fewer people hiked out than hiked in (e.g., as few as 1,067 in 1989). In recent years, most Phantom Ranch exchanges have involved commercial passengers (about 4,500 people per year) compared to about 600 noncommercial boaters; this accounts for about 20% to 25% of all commercial passengers, but less than 10% of noncommercial boaters.

#### 3.4.2.5.2 Helicopter Exchanges

Since the early 1970s commercial passengers have entered and/or left river trips at three different locations: (1) Lava Falls (RM 179), which was used in the early 1970s; (2) a few miles

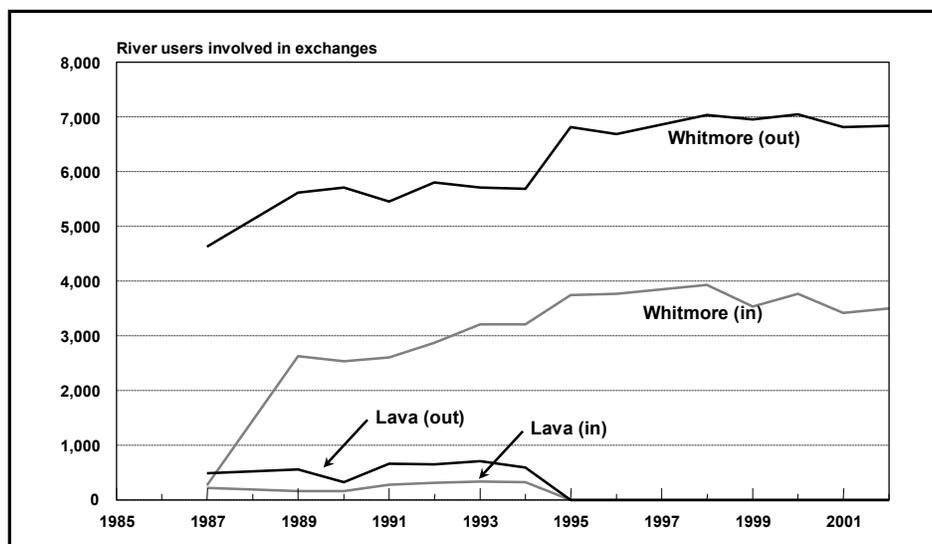
downstream from Lava Falls (about RM 183), which was active from the late 1970s through 1994; and (3) Whitmore (RM 187) through Hualapai tribal land, which is still active. A mule concession operated by the Bar-10 Ranch since the mid 1970s shifted to helicopter shuttles in 1985. Specific numbers of passengers who left the canyon at Whitmore by mule are not available, although information from the Bar-10 Ranch website suggests it was about 1,000 people per year.

Figure 3-17 illustrates the number of passengers using the Lava Falls area and Whitmore helipads from 1987 to 2002. Helicopter use from the Lava Falls area was always relatively low (less than 500 people leaving and less than 300 entering per year), but Whitmore use was substantial from the start of the “helicopter era” in the early 1970s. Nearly 5,000 commercial passengers took-out at Whitmore in 1987; in recent years close to 7,000 commercial passengers per year take out there, which is over half of all commercial passengers putting in at Lees Ferry. Unlike Phantom Ranch exchanges, fewer passengers join trips than leave them at Whitmore. *(Similar to helicopter flights in the Quartermaster area in the Lower Gorge, the NPS has no authority over transportation outside the park boundary.)*

### 3.4.2.5.3 General Demand for River Trips

Multiple sources indicate that demand exceeds supply for both commercial and noncommercial trips in the Grand Canyon. Concessioners report that they turn away prospective users because their trips are full, and some maintain informal waiting lists for those interested in future trips. Pricing also helps balance supply and demand for commercial permits, although concession contracts impose some constraints on trip prices (see Section 3.5 Socioeconomic Conditions for more information).

FIGURE 3- 17: HELICOPTER USE IN LAVA/WHITMORE AREA, 1987–2002



NOTE: No data available for 1988.

On the noncommercial side, the long waitlist clearly indicates demand exceeds supply, but for several reasons, it does not provide an accurate or reliable indicator of exact demand:

- Since huge lists, long wait times, fees, and restrictive rules tend to discourage interested applicants from applying, it is reasonable to assume true demand for noncommercial trips may include many who are not on the waitlist.
- Huge lists and long wait times also encourage some people who may want to go in the future to apply. This category typically would include babies and very young children added to the list by their parents.
- It makes sense to define wait times as the time between when an individual decides he or she wants to go and when he or she actually gets to go. The current waitlist, however, is a trip leader waitlist and does not track other participants. Studies have not surveyed those who have gone on recent trips to determine how long they waited.
- Over the last few years reports from the park's River Office have shown that a high percentage of waitlist participants who get the chance to participate in initial scheduling choose not to schedule and opt to wait one or more additional years. Thus, the unanswered question is how many want to go in any one year or shorter time frame.
- The current waitlist represents trip leaders who at least may want to go sometime in the future. This could mean right away, in the next few years, in 10 years, or sometime in the next two to three decades.

Despite all the difficulties and challenges, prospective trip leaders have steadily joined a waitlist for permits for over the last two decades. When new additions were frozen in the fall of 2003, there were over 8,200 names on the list. Since 1986, an average of about 1,000 people joined each year (as few as 458 in 1998 when fees increased and as many as 1,380 in 1995).

Even in winter there is considerable demand for noncommercial trips. For the four winters from 1998–99 through 2001–02, the park operated a winter launch test program that allowed waiting list members to use supplemental launches (without counting against user-day allocations). These launches were released in winter months when less than three regular launches per week were scheduled. Over 90% of the 153 launches offered through the program were used, and 100% were used when the park provided at least a six-month planning horizon. The cancellation rate for these launches was lower (14%) than for the regular permit system (42% in 2002).

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### **3.4.3 LOWER GORGE (ZONES 2 AND 3)**

#### **3.4.3.1 RECREATIONAL VALUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The 51-mile Lower Gorge offers substantially different recreation trips than upstream. While the first 14 miles are similar to the upper Grand Canyon, Lake Mead has influenced the river below Separation Canyon, presenting an unusual hybrid river and lake environment for the remaining 38 miles in the park. From the park boundary (RM 277) it is 18 miles to takeouts at Pearce Ferry (RM 280) or South Cove (RM 295) in Lake Mead.

When Lake Mead levels are high, the start of green water where sediment first drops out of suspension is near Separation Canyon. The lake is currently about 90 feet below full pool and 70 to 80 feet below normal high levels because of drought since 1999. This has moved the green-water line nearly 50 miles downriver to Iceberg Canyon (about 5 miles from South Cove). Lowered lake levels have also changed the gradient of the river in this section, creating a moving current that is absent at high lake levels. Lowered lake levels have not re-exposed historical river rapids, which have been covered in silt from years of lake inundation.

The Grand Canyon and the geologic features of the Lower Gorge remain spectacular downriver of Separation Canyon, but the riparian environment is dramatically altered. The current is sluggish, beaches are fewer and smaller, and hiking opportunities are more limited. Tamarisk and arrowweed have invaded the sandy uplands (making most uncampable), and the river is currently cutting through huge silt deposits exposed by receding reservoir levels, with many former beach areas 5 to 20 feet above the water surface and difficult to reach because of steep cut banks.

There are different use patterns in the Lower Gorge. While some trips are continuations of trips that start at Lees Ferry, other trips start at Whitmore (RM 187) or Diamond Creek (RM 226) and are much shorter. Most commercial continuation trips end at Separation Canyon, where jetboats take passengers through the rest of the Lower Gorge at higher speed (while guides deadhead the rafts). Other commercial motor trips, *run exclusively by the Hualapai Tribe*, start at Diamond Creek and run the entire reach in a day (dropping or exchanging passengers near Quartermaster where they use helicopter shuttles).

Parts of the Lower Gorge are also used by people coming from the rim by helicopter or upriver from Lake Mead. When lake levels are high, powerboats commonly run to Separation Canyon (the current legal limit of upriver travel). At lower lake levels, shifting sandbars and some faster currents make it more difficult for larger boats or less skilled operators to navigate.

The Lower Gorge has “node” development and very high use levels in the Quartermaster area (RM 262), dramatically changing the sense of solitude and primitive nature of the canyon. Several helicopter operations offer tours from Grand Canyon West into the area, with some 200 flights per day in summer. Helicopters transport people into the canyon to connect with 20-minute motorized pontoon boat tours of the immediate area. People who have traveled from Diamond Creek on commercial motor day trips fly out on the same helicopters flights. Still others *fly through tribal land into the canyon*, stay a short while and then fly out.

Taken together, different recreational opportunities are offered in the Lower Gorge than in the upper canyon. In general, the Lower Gorge has shorter, less primitive trips, with a focus on scenery rather than whitewater, camping, or hiking. Still, the Lower Gorge offers some good hiking and camping, as well as opportunities for solitude in the off-summer months and shorter trips for people who want to get a sense of the canyon, but may lack time or resources for a full canyon trip.

### 3.4.3.1.1 Trip Types

Several trip types are available in the Lower Gorge (see Table 3-12), although use is not well documented compared to the upper canyon. Information is based on NPS ranger reports, limited use data, Hualapai Tribe or Lower Gorge concession operators, and field reconnaissance.

**TABLE 3-12: SUMMARY OF TRIP TYPES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE LOWER GORGE**

Type of Trip or Activity	Zones	Description
Continuation Trips Commercial Noncommercial	1,2,3,4	Trips launching from Lees Ferry and taking out at Lake Mead.
Trips from Diamond Creek Down Noncommercial Educational HRR Day Use Trips HRR overnight trips	2,3,4	Trips launching from Diamond Creek.
Jetboat Services	2,3,4	Commercial trip passenger transportation from Separation Canyon to Lake Mead.
Lake users	2,3,4	Power boaters, kayakers, etc., traveling from Lake Mead into the Lower Gorge.
Scenic helicopter tours	3	Tours originating at Grand Canyon West and landing on Hualapai tribal lands adjacent to river.
Pontoon boat tours	3	Short river tours originating near the Quartermaster area; passenger access is by helicopter.

### 3.4.3.1.2 Continuation Trips

**Commercial Trips.** Commercial trips start at Lees Ferry, but may pick up passengers from exchanges at Phantom Ranch or Whitmore; about 85% of the trips are motorized. About 80% of commercial trips (and nearly all oar trips) transfer passengers to jetboats at Separation Canyon; about 5% take passengers to South Cove, and 10% are deadhead trips that leave their passengers at Whitmore or Diamond Creek. More information about jetboat takeout services is given below.

Most continuation trips appear to spend one night in the Lower Gorge, although those not meeting jetboats may spend more. One-night trips tend to stay just below Diamond Creek, while additional nights on longer trips are generally spent below Separation Canyon. Once relieved of passengers, guides deadhead to the lake using motors.

**Noncommercial Trips.** About 15% of Lees Ferry noncommercial trips continue past Diamond Creek. Boaters appear to take these trips to lengthen their time in the canyon, run the additional 14 miles of river before Separation Canyon, see the full geological and historical sites in the canyon, or avoid fees associated with Diamond Creek. In rare cases, boaters take continuation trips when Diamond Creek becomes closed due to a road washout. In general, these trips appear to spend one to two nights between Diamond Creek and Separation Canyon, and (more rarely) additional nights below Separation. Most of these trips use small kicker motors or tow-out services, starting between Lake Mead and Separation Canyon.

#### 3.4.3.1.2.1 Trips from Diamond Creek Down

**Noncommercial or Educational Trips.** Noncommercial or educational trips focus on the Lower Gorge, making them distinct from continuation trips because they are short in terms of days and

miles. The NPS allows two launches per day from Diamond Creek year-round. In 2002, there were 100 trips (82 noncommercial and 18 educational). Group size limits are 16 for noncommercial trips and 24 for educational trips.

These trips offer a taste of the Grand Canyon for noncommercial boaters unable to secure a permit for a full canyon trip, and they provide educational groups (boy scouts, college programs, etc.) with shorter trip options. They may be particularly attractive in shoulder or winter seasons, because the Lower Gorge is generally the warmest part of the Grand Canyon. They are probably less attractive in mid-summer, with hotter weather and less solitude due to more continuation trips and helicopter activity.

The more attractive parts of trips are upriver of Separation Canyon and some groups spend multiple nights or layover in this short reach. Most trips appear to spend less than three nights total in the Lower Gorge, although it is possible to spend more if boaters are interested in lake travel or off-river hiking (backcountry permits are required to camp off the river, and Hualapai tribal permits are required for access to land above the high-water mark on the left side of the river). Most trips from Diamond Creek down use kicker motors or tow-out services for travel on the lake.

**HRR Commercial Motorized Day Trips.** Hualapai River Runners (*owned and operated by the Hualapai Tribe*) offer commercial motorized day trips from Diamond Creek on 22-foot snout rigs powered by twin 25-horsepower outboards. With a capacity of 10, generally eight passengers plus two crew, these boats can get “on step” and travel 15 to 20 miles per hour (noticeably faster than typical Grand Canyon motorized rafts). These trips drop passengers at RM 262 and increasingly exchange passengers rather than deadhead empty boats to South Cove. HRR sometimes deadhead boats from Diamond Creek to meet groups arriving by helicopter for a lake trip to South Cove. HRR currently runs eight to 10 boats per day in summer, usually traveling together as a single launch (although spread out more than other motorized groups, which rarely exceed two boats).

**HRR Commercial Motor Overnight Trips.** An average of three overnight trips per month are launched from Diamond Creek. These trips, which use 10-person capacity, 22-foot snout rigs, generally spend one to two nights in the Lower Gorge and take out via helicopter in the Quartermaster area. Group sizes are unregulated and vary somewhat but average 24 passengers.

**Commercial Jetboat Services.** Many commercial continuation trips meet commercial jetboats at Separation Canyon to avoid having their passengers travel the slower river/lake miles on rafts. Jetboats displace 17–19 tons and carry between 20 and 54 passengers per trip (usually one to two raft trips per jetboat). The current jetboat concession, Canyon Jetboat Services, has four boats. The trip from Separation Canyon to South Cove takes about two hours.

#### **3.4.3.1.2.2 Trips Originating from Lake Mead**

When lake levels were high, it was common for boaters to travel upriver from Lake Mead access points (Pearce Ferry, South Cove) by means of powerboats or even sea kayaks. In recent years, only very skilled powerboat operators (usually in jetboats) appear willing to negotiate the shifting sand bars in the reach between Pearce Ferry and Separation Canyon. Limited camps

below Separation Canyon discourage overnight use by these trips, but competition between upriver and downriver groups could occur if lake levels rise again. Powerboats have greater flexibility to choose sites for multi-day camps on the lake.

#### **3.4.3.1.2.3 Helicopter Tours and Pontoon Boat Operations**

These scenery-oriented trips take visitors from the canyon rim to the river by helicopter in the Quartermaster (RM 262) area. Aside from Whitmore helicopter passenger exchanges, these trips, which land and take off on sovereign tribal land above the high-water mark, are the only helicopter tours in the Grand Canyon that land near the river. The short flights originate from Grand Canyon West, but visitors come to the area from as far as Phoenix or Las Vegas by fixed-wing aircraft (half day tours) or vehicle (full day tours). Tours are often packaged with other sightseeing features, including rim overlooks, Hoover Dam visits, or aerial “flight-seeing” of the lake and Rainbow Wash. Visitors appear to spend less than an hour in the bottom of the canyon, and many also take short tours on motorized pontoon boats docked at RM 262 *and* RM 263. There are shade structures at one landing site with stairs leading down to the boat docks.

The pontoon boats are 21 to 24 feet long and carry up to 12 passengers plus crew (usually one operator/guide); they are powered by 50–60 horsepower, four-stroke engines. When lake levels are low, they typically motor upriver less than 1 mile, then return to the dock about 20 minutes later. At higher lake levels (when there is less current), they travel 1–2 miles farther. Oriental Tours, Inc. currently operates five to six pontoon boats in the Quartermaster area.

#### **3.4.3.1.2.4 Seasonality**

Currently, river trips launching from Diamond Creek are not seasonally regulated. HRR trips run from March through October. Although two noncommercial and educational trips are allowed to launch each day, these types of trips are more common in the shoulder months due to more favorable temperatures in the Lower Gorge. Pontoon tours are conducted year-round. Currently Lower Gorge trip lengths are not limited, although a typical noncommercial trip is three to six days from Diamond Creek to Lake Mead.

#### **3.4.3.1.2.5 Passenger Exchanges**

Passengers on HRR day and overnight trips currently exit the Lower Gorge by helicopter at RM 262. Very few trips conduct passenger exchanges where people fly in and take a flat-water river trip from RM 262 to Lake Mead.

### **3.4.3.2 RIVER TRIP CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **3.4.3.2.1 Within-Group Social Interaction**

Little is known about the social dynamics of Lower Gorge trips as compared to full-canyon trips. Trips are shorter and provide few opportunities for social interactions, especially one-day trips.

### **3.4.3.2.2 Daily Logistics and River Practices**

Similar to upper canyon trips, boaters carry in and prepare all meals, and carry out all their refuse and solid human waste. Day use trips use the composting toilet at Spencer Canyon.

### **3.4.3.2.3 Swimming**

Water temperatures above Separation Canyon remain too cool for leisurely swimming, but as the water transitions into Lake Mead, it becomes more inviting. At the green water boundary where the current slows enough for silt to drop out suspension the water is generally quite warm and less turbid.

### **3.4.3.2.4 Day Hikes**

Day hikes are conducted from some camps and attraction sites. Many of the side canyons in the Lower Gorge were once inundated by Lake Mead. As the lake levels receded, these delta areas became overgrown with tamarisk and willows, making access to side canyon hikes difficult. Additionally, high temperatures in the Lower Gorge in summer are not conducive to hiking.

### **3.4.3.2.5 Attraction Sites**

There are fewer attraction sites in the Lower Gorge than the main canyon, although three appear to receive regular use (Travertine Canyon, Travertine Falls, and Separation Canyon). Several other side canyons have hiking opportunities, but these are less well known, and vegetation encroachment makes access from the river difficult. Guidebooks offer more detailed descriptions of attraction sites and their features.

### **3.4.3.2.6 Camping**

Camps in the Lower Gorge are limited at present, with dropping lake levels and vegetation encroachment likely to degrade the quality of existing sites in the future. Table 3-13 shows camps identified in various inventories, with currently usable camps shown in bold. Although there may have been as many as 30 identifiable camps from Diamond Creek to the park boundary in the past (including 20 below Separation), there are currently only six commonly used camps from Diamond to Separation, with another six below Separation. Depending on lake and river levels, some additional small, low-water camps may emerge on sand bars as reservoir levels drop, but these appear to become invaded by vegetation within a season or two of their appearance.

Below the park boundary, there are currently more large camps on the silt bars exposed by receding lake levels. Many of these are also suffering from rapid vegetation encroachment, but they are more expansive than those in the park, and Lake Mead rangers estimate that most will remain usable for the next few years.

**TABLE 3-13: LOWER GORGE CAMPS, ATTRACTION SITES, AND FACILITIES**

Camp	Zone	River Mile	Comments
Below Diamond	2	226 R	Large campsite; low use
Travertine Canyon	2	229 L	Small, rocky campsite; attraction site
Travertine Falls	2	230.5 L	Small campsite; low to moderate use; attraction site
Bridge Canyon	2	235 L	Small campsite; low use
Gneiss Canyon	2	236 R	Medium campsite; moderate to low use
Fairchild	2	236.5 L	Medium campsite; moderate use
Bridge City	2	238.5 L	Large campsite; high use (most popular camp)
Separation Canyon	2	239.6 R	Small campsite; moderate use; attraction site
RM 241 Left	2	241.5 L	Medium campsite; low use
RM 241 Right	2	241.5 R	Medium campsite; low use
RM 243 Right	2	243.1 R	Large campsite; high use
Spencer Canyon	2	246 L	Medium campsite; low use; attraction site; compost toilet
Surprise Canyon	2	248.2 R	Large sandbar at flows below 8,000 cfs
RM 253	2	253 R	Small campsite; moderate use
Burnt Springs Canyon	2	259.5 R	Medium campsite; moderate use
Quartermaster Area	3	260-263 L	High use area; helipads, shade structures, toilets, and dock
Bat Cave	3	266	Attraction site; restricted entry
Columbine Falls	3	274.3	Attraction site
Mouth of Pearce Bay	3	279	Large campsite; low use
Pearce Bay to Iceberg Canyon	3	Lake Mead	Large sand bars at current lake levels

### 3.4.3.3 FACILITIES

#### 3.4.3.3.1 Diamond Creek

The Diamond Creek launch and takeout area is at RM 226, at the confluence of Diamond Creek and the Colorado River. It has a gravel ramp area, limited parking, and a rough 18-mile road through the reservation to U.S. Highway 66. The road has occasional wash-outs where it crosses Diamond Creek. It typically takes about 1 to 1.5 hours to drive from the river to the highway. From there it is about 110 miles to Flagstaff, 230 miles to Lees Ferry, or 150 miles to Las Vegas. Takeout and launch operations are managed by HRR. The tribe charges fees to use Diamond Creek. Diamond Creek is also the put-in for Diamond down HRR commercial trips.

#### 3.4.3.3.2 Quartermaster (RM 262) Area

There are 15 helipads in the Quartermaster area. While all of the pads offer access for look-and-leave flights, the pads at RM 262 and RM 263 are also used to transport HRR and pontoon trip passengers. Facilities associated with recreation in the Quartermaster area are detailed in Table 3-14.

**TABLE 3-14: DEVELOPMENT AT THE QUARTERMASTER AREA**

River Mile	Helipads	Ramadas	Toilets	Docks	Comments
259	2	0	0	0	"Look-and-leave" only; less than 40 flights per day to these two sets of helipads
260	4	2	0	0	
262	2	1	0	1	Pontoon boats; "look-and-leave;" gas storage; engine repair
263	7	3	2	1	Pontoon boats; "look-and-leave"
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	

### **3.4.3.3 Lake Mead Takeouts**

There are two relevant takeouts on Lake Mead. In previous years the majority of river trips used Pearce Ferry at RM 280, but low lake levels have made this access site unusable. When accessible, Pearce Ferry has a large boat ramp, parking, information kiosks, campground, and vault toilets.

Currently, the first usable takeout is at South Cove (RM 295). South Cove has a two large ramps (one is reserved for river runner use), parking, and restrooms. The Lake Mead takeouts are part of Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

### **3.4.3.4 RIVER VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS:**

Little information about Lower Gorge visitors is available, but visitors on Lees Ferry continuation trips are similar to main canyon users. Some visitors on noncommercial continuation trips may seek the longest trip possible. Passengers starting at Whitmore are typically recruited out of Las Vegas for short two- and three-day trips.

Little information is available about HRR day trip passengers or Lower Gorge helicopter users, but visitor characteristics are probably more like general tourists than main canyon river runners. Recruited from area tourist destinations and larger gateway cities such as Las Vegas and Phoenix, they are probably less likely to have river running and backcountry experience, or interest in longer wilderness trips.

#### **3.4.3.4.1 Visitation Levels and Recreational Demand**

Recreation use levels are not as closely monitored in the Lower Gorge than from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek. Use patterns associated with HRR day trips and Quartermaster helicopter use are only approximations.

##### **3.4.3.4.1.1 Continuation Trip Use**

Data for the main canyon can be used to characterize use levels for Lower Gorge continuation trips (although the upper canyon focus is on user-days rather than trips or passengers). Figure 3-18 shows the distinct seasonality of commercial trips. Commercial use in the Lower Gorge is heaviest in summer, mirroring national vacation trends. Noncommercial use appears more evenly spread through the year, in part because the upper canyon noncommercial permit system more evenly distributes noncommercial continuation trips through the seasons and through the week.

**FIGURE 3- 18: MONTHLY USER-DAYS IN THE LOWER GORGE  
BASED ON CONTINUATION TRIP INFORMATION**

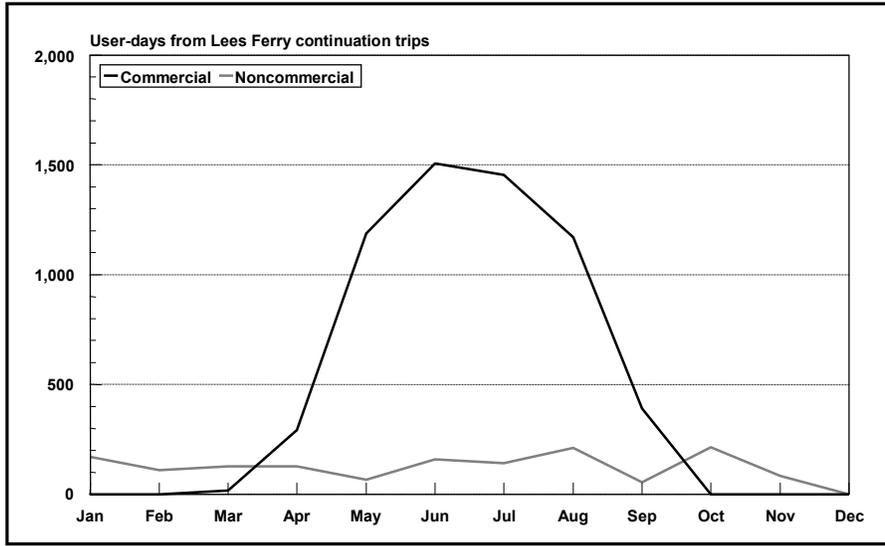
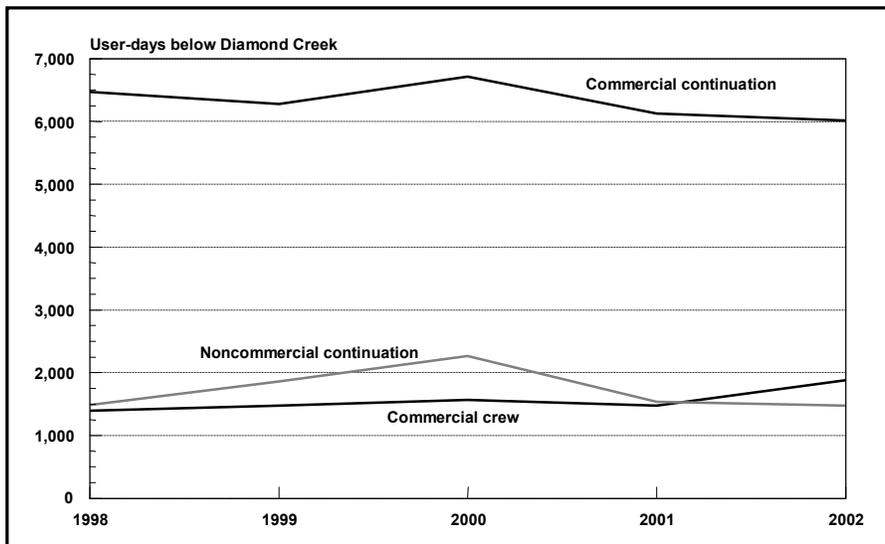


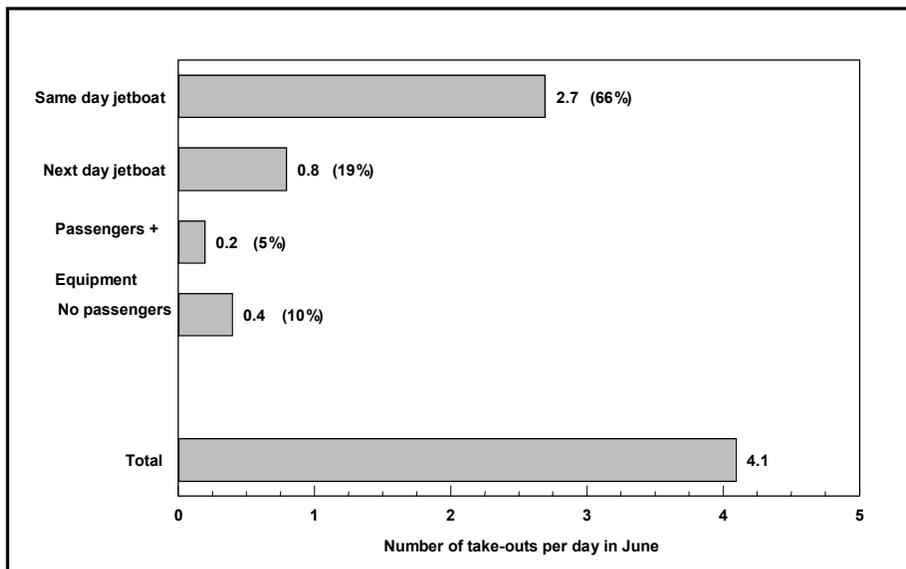
Figure 3-19 shows annual user-days below Diamond Creek for commercial passengers, crew, and noncommercial users from 1998 to 2002, when continuation trips were relatively static.

**FIGURE 3- 19: ANNUAL USER-DAYS BELOW DIAMOND CREEK FOR CONTINUATION TRIPS**



Continuation trip takeout information for June 2002 shows average daily use levels during the peak season (Figure 3-20). Data suggest about four trips take out on the lake per day, although only 5% involve passengers and rafts at the same time. Passengers on most trips travel out by jetboat from Separation Canyon, and rafts arrive at South Cove later. Having passengers and rafts arrive at South Cove at different times may distribute use enough to help avoid congestion problems. However, uneven takeout patterns may cause congestion on some days (e.g., Saturdays in June 2002 averaged 7.4 trip takeouts at South Cove, and Fridays only 1.5).

**FIGURE 3- 20: CONTINUATION TRIP TAKEOUTS ON LAKE MEAD, JUNE 2002**



**3.4.3.4.1.2 Noncommercial and Educational Trips Launching at Diamond Creek**

About 100 noncommercial and educational trips (about 80% noncommercial and 20% educational) launch at Diamond Creek. These trips appear slightly more popular in shoulder and winter seasons when the Lower Gorge is not as hot and commercial use is lower. They may add to Lake Mead takeout congestion, particularly if they occur on a busy summer day along with commercial continuation trips (Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays).

**3.4.3.4.1.3 HRR Day Use**

More than 7,000 people take HRR day trips each year, and more than 500 people take overnight trips. The great majority of trips go from Diamond Creek to RM 262, and just a few begin at RM 262. More than 80% of the usage occurs from May through September. During the summer daily usage can exceed 80 passengers, but it averages approximately 30 passengers during the entire season (currently, from mid-March through October).

#### 3.4.3.4.1.4 Helicopter Use and Pontoon Boat Activity

Based on available estimates, more than 56,000 tourists flew to the Quartermaster (RM 262) helipads in 2003 to board pontoon boats for quick jaunts down the river. Look-and-leave tour visitation *is* believed to exceed 80,000 people per year. Usage is high throughout the summer and shoulder seasons. Table 3-15 lists HRR *and OTI* visitation estimates.

**TABLE 3-15: HRR, PONTOON TOUR, AND LOOK-AND-LEAVE TOUR VISITATION ESTIMATES**

Trip Type	People per Year	Helicopter Flights per Year	Percentage of Total Helicopter Activity	Comments
HRR trips	<b>7,000</b>	1,700	5%	Higher in summer.
Pontoon tours	56,500	12,600	40%	Higher in summer and shoulder seasons.
Look-and-leave tours	84,000	19,000	55%	Higher in shoulder seasons.
Total	148,000	33,300	100%	May exceed 120 flights on some days.

#### 3.4.3.4.1.5 Upriver Lake Travel

Upriver travel into Grand Canyon National Park (aside from jetboats involved with commercial continuation takeouts) has been relatively rare since the fall in Lake Mead levels. Normal high lake levels were last seen in summer 1999.

#### 3.4.3.4.2 Demand for Lower Gorge River Trips

The demand for pontoon tours *has increased over the years*, and the National Park Service believes that HRR trips and look-and-leave tours are also becoming more popular. These short, accessible trips allow casual tourists (many of whom fly in from Las Vegas) to see the Grand Canyon from river level for a relatively small investment of time, money, and effort. Despite its short length, modified environment, and logistical challenges due to lake level impacts, the Lower Gorge is likely to see increased use in the future as it becomes better known as a trip option.

Similarly, HRR day trips and Quartermaster helicopter tours are also likely to see increasing demand. These accessible, short trips allow casual tourists to see the Grand Canyon from river level for a relatively small investment of time, money, or effort, and the population interested in such a trip is larger compared to those who would consider a longer trip.

## 3.5 SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

This section describes the socioeconomic conditions of the area impacted by the recreational use on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park.

### 3.5.1 AREA OF ANALYSIS AND AFFECTED POPULATIONS

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The affected environment includes three distinct economies and populations: (1) regional and local, (2) river runners, and (3) river tour operators. The affected areas consist of Grand Canyon National Park (primarily in Coconino County and partly within Mohave County, Arizona) and the primary gateway communities within 80 miles (or about an hour and a half driving time from the park). This section focuses on the economy generated by the river rafting industry in the Grand Canyon and places it within the context of the region's economy.

The affected environment includes the primary gateway communities to Grand Canyon National Park: Flagstaff, Williams, Cameron, Page, Marble Canyon, Fredonia, Jacob Lake, Bodaway/Gap, and Havasupai Tribe (all in Coconino County, Arizona) and the bordering communities of Peach Springs, Arizona (Mohave County), Seligman, Arizona (Yavapai County), and Kanab, Utah (Hjerpe and Kim 2003).

The total population of the affected region in 2000 was 126,546 (Table 3-16). The affected region experienced a population increase of 25% from 1990 to 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990, 2000). The increase in population for the affected region is higher than the national population increase of 13% for the same time period, yet lower than the increase of 40% recorded by the entire state of Arizona from 1990 to 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Individually, the population of Coconino County increased by 24% from 1990 to 2000, the town of Kanab, Utah, by 8%, and the population of Peach Springs, Arizona, decreased by 25%. The decrease in population for Peach Springs can be attributed to residents searching for improved economic opportunities outside the Hualapai Reservation.

#### 3.5.1.1 REGIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIES

Employment figures available for the affected region include all waged, salaried, and self-employed positions (Table 3-17). Total employment in 1999 was about 57% of the population. Of the total employment of 71,558, retail trade accounts for the largest share (21%). Local unemployment rates ran higher than the national average. While the national unemployment rate was 4%, the comparable rate in Flagstaff was 4.5%, Coconino County and Kanab ran between 5% and 6%, and the unemployment rate was highest in the Peach Springs area, at 7.7% (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000).

Table 3-17 shows the total personal income for the region. Total personal income is from employee compensation, proprietor income, other property income, and indirect business tax. Retail trade and real estate each account for approximately 14% of the total income for the region. Economic output of the region by industrial sector is also shown in this table. Construction, retail trade, and real estate are the sectors with the largest outputs.

**TABLE 3-16: POPULATION OF MAJOR COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE GRAND CANYON AFFECTED REGION**

Community	1990	2000	Percentage of Total (2000)
Bodaway/Gap	NA	2,125	1.7
Cameron	495	978	0.8
Flagstaff	45,857	52,894	41.8
Fredonia	1,197	1,036	0.8
Supai	433	503	0.4
Leupp	954	970	0.8
Page	6,598	6,809	5.4
Tuba City	7,323	8,225	6.5
Williams	2,461	2,842	2.3
Unincorporated	31,273	43,544	34.4
<b>Coconino County Total</b>	<b>96,591</b>	<b>119,926</b>	<b>94.8</b>
Peach Springs, Arizona	801	600	0.5
Seligman, Arizona	300	456	0.4
Meadview, Arizona	NA	2,000	1.6
Kanab, Utah	3,289	3,564	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,981</b>	<b>126,546</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sources: 1990 data—U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990.

2000 data—U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000.

NA = not available.

**TABLE 3-17: EMPLOYMENT, INCOME, AND OUTPUT BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR FOR THE GRAND CANYON AFFECTED REGION**

Aggregated Industrial Sector	Total Employment	Total Income (Millions of Dollars)	Total Output (Millions of Dollars)
Retail Trade	15,260	\$445.3	\$606.0
Education	8,012	\$277.5	\$277.5
Real Estate	2,083	\$437.3	\$596.6
Health Services	5,985	\$279.8	\$438.8
Construction	5,124	\$198.8	\$638.6
Hotels and Lodging Places	5,014	\$173.6	\$257.5
Federal non-military	4,840	\$260.9	\$266.5
State and Local Government (non-education)	3,729	\$196.2	\$228.8
Other Sectors	21,511	\$846.4	\$1,847.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,558</b>	<b>\$3,115.8</b>	<b>\$5,157.3</b>

Source: IMPLAN Professional Analysis Guide (1999) for Coconino County, Arizona; Peach Springs, Arizona; and Kanab, Utah.

Notes: 1999 figures adjusted to 2003 dollar terms using "Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers" (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2003).

### 3.5.1.2 COMMUNITIES

The communities most likely affected by alternatives presented in this document include Marble Canyon, Flagstaff, and Peach Springs/Hualapai Reservation. Other communities such as Page and Seligman, Arizona; Kanab, Utah/Fredonia, Arizona; and Las Vegas, Nevada, receive more indirect social and economic impacts from river rafting in the Grand Canyon. Based on prior analysis by Hjerpe and Kim (2003), Las Vegas was not included because the direct economic spending from river runners is considered too small (especially compared with other local economic activities) to have any discernible influence on the city's economy of more than \$2.4 billion. Along with the surrounding communities, the Bar 10 Ranch and its operations are also

discussed. The following provides a brief overview of the local communities within the affected region and their key relationships with river rafting in the Grand Canyon.

#### **3.5.1.2.1 Flagstaff, Arizona**

Flagstaff (population approximately 53,000) is the largest city in the region. It is a major transportation hub and a residential and commercial center for the area. As a result, many Grand Canyon boating groups gather in Flagstaff before the start of their river trip. Five of the Grand Canyon river rafting concessioners are based in the Flagstaff area, while others have operational warehouses located in the vicinity (Hjerpe and Kim 2003). In addition, noncommercial boating parties rent equipment and purchase food from local vendors and outfitting companies. Flagstaff is also the place of residence for many of the commercial guides.

#### **3.5.1.2.2 Hualapai Indian Reservation and Peach Springs**

The Hualapai Reservation is on the south side of the Colorado River to the west of the main portion of Grand Canyon National Park. The population of the Hualapai Tribe was 1,542 in 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Tribal, public school, and state and federal governmental services provide the bulk of current full-time employment. The tribe's principal economic activities include tourism, cattle ranching, timber sales, and arts and crafts. Peach Springs, the tribal capital, is a rural community of 600 people located on the Diamond Creek road and historic U.S. Route 66. The Diamond Creek road is the first road access to the Colorado River below Lees Ferry, making it important for river trips both leaving and entering the Grand Canyon.

The median income on the reservation is less than half the comparable figure for Coconino County, its poverty level is approximately double and its unemployment rate is approximately 60% higher than for Coconino County. Peach Springs, the reservation's single town, fares only slightly better than the reservation as a whole in a similar statistical comparison (Table 3-18).

Economic activity tied to the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River is vital to the economy of the Hualapai Tribe and its members. Based on economic data from the tribe, Lower Gorge activities (ponton trips, HRR trips, and helicopter land-and-leave tours from Grand Canyon West) accounted for more than 90% of the tribe's river-related revenue in 2003, while Upper Gorge activities (Whitmore helicopter exchange fees and lease fees and Diamond Creek access fees) accounted for less than 10%.

The landing at Diamond Creek is a prime takeout for river rafters. Approximately 85% of noncommercial river rafting trips and a large percentage of commercial trips end at Diamond Creek (Hjerpe and Kim 2003). Diamond Creek is also the starting point for Hualapai Tribe-guided trips through the lower Grand Canyon and a few noncommercial trips. The Hualapai Tribe maintains Diamond Creek road, a rough, graded gravel road subject to periodic flash flooding, and charges a fee of \$37.45 per person for tourists and river runners exiting or entering the river. HRR river rafting is the only tribally owned and operated river rafting company on the river. The tribe, through its Grand Canyon Resort Corporation, is also responsible for managing the Hualapai Lodge near Peach Springs. HRR offers one- and two-day motorized river rafting trips through the Lower Gorge from Diamond Creek to Lake Mead. Although these trips are

**TABLE 3-18: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON THE TOWN OF PEACH SPRINGS, THE HUALAPAI RESERVATION, THE HAVASUPAI RESERVATION, AND COCONINO COUNTY**

	Population	Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate	Percentage of Families/ Individuals below Poverty Level	Employment			
					Occupation	%	Industry	%
Peach Springs	600	\$18,194	7.7%	38.2%/36.6%	Management/professional	22.5%	Public administration	18.5%
					Service	28.7%	Education, health, social service	32.0%
					Sales/office	23.6%	Recreation, arts, entertainment	17.4%
Hualapai Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land	1,353	\$19,833	8.2%	35.8%/35.8%	Management/professional	25.0%	Public administration	26.9%
					Service	25.0%	Education, health, social service	26.3%
					Sales/office	26.9%	Recreation, arts, entertainment	16.6%
Havasupai Reservation	503	\$20,114	5.2%	46.1%/50.2%	Management/professional	13.6%	Public administration	23.5%
					Service	33.3%	Education, health, social service	8.6%
					Sales/office	27.2%	Recreation, arts, entertainment	17.3%
Coconino County	116,320	\$38,256	4.8%	13.1%/18.1%	Management/professional	34.8%	Public administration	6.8%
					Service	19.1%	Education, health, social service	26.9%

conducted within the park, user-days are not counted by the park below Diamond Creek. During the 2003 season, the price for the one-day trip was *an average of* \$265 per person and included a helicopter ride from Quartermaster to Grand Canyon West. HRR is not licensed or regulated by the NPS. Farther down the river, at RM 262 *and* RM 263, helicopters operating for the tribe carry people to the river for a quick pontoon boat ride and then a helicopter trip out at the same point. The tribe currently earns *an average of* \$48.50 per passenger (including helicopter pad leasing fees) from the tour operator that runs the trips under a concession arrangement with the tribe.

The tribe receives revenue from helicopter landing pads both above and below Diamond Creek. The pad near Whitmore (RM 187) is used to take in and bring out passengers from commercial river trips. The tribe receives \$15 per person for each exchange by helicopter at Whitmore. The helicopter pads at RM 261 are used for day trips that do not involve on-river activities. Helicopter pads at RM 262 and RM 263 are leased to helicopter companies serving HRR river trips, pontoon trips, and trips not involving on-river activities. Noncommercial river rafting passengers do not exchange at these pads.

### 3.5.1.2.3 Havasupai Indian Reservation and Supai Village

The Havasupai Reservation and the community of Supai are located off the South Rim of the Grand Canyon in Havasupai Canyon. The river is approximately 10 miles and 1,300 feet below Supai Village. Approximately 500 residents live in Supai. The median household income on the reservation is approximately 53% of the comparable Coconino County figure, and the percentage

of families with incomes below poverty level is over 350% of the Coconino County figure. One-third of the occupations on the reservation are in the service sector, and public administration is the largest industry (Table 3-18).

Tourism is the main economic basis for the tribe. However, there is no road access to Supai, so tourists visit by hiking an 8-mile trail, by riding horseback or mule, or taking a helicopter. Supai has campgrounds, a lodge, a general store, a cafe, and a post office. Horses are also available for rent. Visitors are charged an entry fee of \$20 and a camping fee of \$10 per night. No data are available on how much is collected on a yearly basis. The tribe has indicated that the number of river runners who access the reservation without paying the appropriate fees is a major issue.

#### **3.5.1.2.4 Marble Canyon, Arizona**

Marble Canyon, including Cliff Dwellers and Vermillion Cliffs, is a rural community of approximately 500 people near the Lees Ferry crossing of the river. Prior to the construction of Glen Canyon Dam, Lees Ferry was the only river crossing for many miles. The construction of the dam has created a thriving rainbow trout fishery, which has become a major tourist draw and contributor to the local economy. Two of the Grand Canyon river-running concessioners base their operations out of the Marble Canyon area. Lees Ferry is the starting point for virtually all Grand Canyon boating trips. Many boaters purchase fuel, food, refreshments, and equipment in Marble Canyon. The major economic activity for the *community* is providing guide services to the rainbow trout fishery.

#### **3.5.1.2.5 Kanab, Utah**

Kanab, Utah, is a city of about 3,600 people just north of the Arizona/Utah border and is the county seat for Kane County. Tourism is the leading industry for Kanab due to its close proximity to Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon, and Zion National Parks. Grand Canyon tourists journeying to and from the remote North Rim heavily influence Kanab. Kanab is home to 1 of the 16 river concessioners and is a recognized stopping point for river runners approaching Lees Ferry from the north.

#### **3.5.1.2.6 Fredonia, Arizona**

Fredonia, Arizona, is a sister community to Kanab and is immediately across the state line. In 2000 Fredonia had a population of 1,036; its economy is based primarily on tourism and agriculture (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Two outfitters maintain warehouses in Fredonia.

#### **3.5.1.2.7 Seligman, Arizona**

Seligman, Arizona, is in Yavapai County on I-40 and Route 66. Tourists, hunters, and recreationists purchasing food, supplies, and services provide the main sources of income to this town of approximately 500 people. Its proximity to the Grand Canyon, Havasupai Canyon, and Grand Canyon Caverns, as well as its location on Route 66, attracts tourists. Grand Canyon

boaters exiting at Diamond Creek and returning to Flagstaff typically stop in Seligman for food. The percentage of Seligman's income specifically attributable to Grand Canyon river runners is not known.

#### **3.5.1.2.8 Bar 10 Ranch**

The Bar 10 Ranch is a privately owned working cattle ranch and tourist destination about 9 miles from the *north boundary with Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument* up the side canyon of Whitmore Wash, just west of the Mt. Logan Wilderness Area. The ranch can be accessed by a rugged and primitive dirt road from St. George, Utah, but most visitors fly in and out by way of a local airstrip. The ranch offers food and lodging, helicopter tours, ATV tours, horseback riding, pack trips, and entertainment. However, the majority of visitors are river runners finishing or beginning a Grand Canyon river rafting trip. The ranch has partnered with many of the river concessioners to offer package trips that include helicopter transportation to and from the Whitmore helipad, including an afternoon visit and meal at the ranch.

Approximately 80% of the ranch's 10,000 annual guests are Grand Canyon river runners visiting mainly from May through September. Approximately 30% of river runners stay overnight. According to the owners, the charge for day-use rafters is approximately \$75, while overnight rafting guests pay approximately \$165 for additional lodging, entertainment, and meals. An estimated \$25 of the charge is paid to the helicopter shuttle operator (Papillon Airways, Inc.) for the helicopter shuttle trip to or from Whitmore.

Helicopters currently carry river-runners from the Whitmore exchange to the ranch. Without helicopter access, the route from the river to the ranch requires a 1.3-mile hike on an unmaintained trail, followed by a 9-mile drive on a primitively maintained dirt road. Prior to 1985, the ranch used mules to bring customers up the trail.

#### **3.5.1.2.9 Meadview, Arizona**

According to the Chamber of Commerce, Meadview is largely a retirement community; of its 2,000 residents, approximately 70 are employed either full- or part-time. Places of employment include three restaurants, three motels, two RV parks, a grocery store, and a post office. A tile designer employs about 25 to 28 people. Tourism is generally from RV or other road-based visitors who stay in the RV parks or motels. The contribution by river rafters to the local economy is very small (Newell 2004). River rafters frequent local restaurants and grocery stores and gas stations during the main season. Noncommercial rafters also use the local vehicle shuttle service company to shuttle cars between Lees Ferry, Diamond Creek, and South Cove throughout the year.

#### **3.5.1.2.10 Page, Arizona**

Page is a planned community near the Arizona/Utah border, near Glen Canyon Dam. The principal contributors to its economy are tourism, Lake Powell, the Navajo Generating Station, and the federal government (Arizona Department of Commerce 2003). Recreational properties

and public utilities provide substantial employment to the city's population of 6,809 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). According to the Arizona Department of Commerce and NPS estimates, the Page/Lake Powell area hosted 3.1 million visitors in 1997. *Two of the Grand Canyon river concessioners are based in Page.*

#### **3.5.1.2.11 Navajo Nation and the Communities of Cameron and Bodaway/Gap**

The Navajo Nation and off-reservation trust lands are located in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, with a combined population of 180,462 people (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Navajo Nation lands border Grand Canyon National Park to the east and are adjacent to the Colorado River between RM 0 and RM 61 (the confluence of the Colorado and Little Colorado Rivers). *These lands include two tribal parks (Marble Canyon and Little Colorado) adjacent to the Park along the eastern boundary of Grand Canyon National Park (on the western Navajo boundary).* Hiking trails leading into the national park, such as Jackass Canyon, Salt Trail Canyon, and Totahatso Point, are on Navajo Nation land and require backcountry use permits and \$5 per night camping fees. These permits are available through Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation, Window Rock, Arizona. As the Navajo Nation collects fees for access and spends resources on environmental protection and search-and-rescue operations, trespass on Navajo Nation lands by river runners creates the possibility of an economic impact.

The Navajo communities nearest the Grand Canyon are Bodaway/Gap and Cameron. These communities are on U.S. Highway 89, the main road between Flagstaff and Lees Ferry. Gas, food, and lodging are available in Cameron, while Bodaway/Gap offers Indian crafts and souvenirs to passing tourists. These communities are small and remote, and neither the U.S. Bureau of the Census nor the Arizona Department of Commerce provides detailed statistics on them. In estimating the regional economic impacts of Grand Canyon river runners, Hjerpe and Kim (2003) found that commercial rafters spent approximately \$5,000 in Cameron in 2001 for souvenirs and food, while noncommercial boaters spent perhaps \$200 in Cameron annually.

#### **3.5.1.2.12 Tusayan, Arizona**

*Tusayan is a gateway community of about 500 permanent residents (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000) located on route U.S. 180 just outside of the park's south entrance. This village has seven motels, six restaurants, and a half dozen other establishments offering tourism related goods and services. The local economy is dependent upon the tourists that come to visit Grand Canyon National Park. However, with more than four million recreation visits to the park's South Rim each year (most of which go through Tusayan), and no commercial river outfitters based in Tusayan, any change in the numbers of river-related visitors (or their spending patterns) due to any alternative is not likely to have any detectable economic impact on the local Tusayan economy.*

### **3.5.2 RIVER-RUNNER GENERATED ECONOMY**

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In 2003 commercial rafters alone paid more than \$28 million to commercial outfitters for guided trips. In addition, both commercial and noncommercial rafters purchased equipment, supplies,

and services. Hjerpe and Kim (2003) estimated that 87% of the commercial rafters' expenditures and 74% of noncommercial rafters spending remained in the region. The direct regional expenditure of \$26.6 million and creation of 461 jobs resulted in the indirect and induced effects of \$34.6 million in regional output and the creation of an estimated 582 jobs. This represents approximately 0.7% of the region's total economic output.

### **3.5.2.1 COMMERCIAL RIVER RUNNERS**

Concession operators are permitted to run commercial river rafting trips down the Colorado River under concession contracts with the NPS. These contracts set parameters by which river rafting trip prices are controlled.

Commercial boaters paid almost \$250 per day on average for their trips in 2003. On average, motorized trips are more expensive than nonmotorized trips (\$255 vs. \$241 per day), but that is mainly because motor trips tend to be shorter (7.3 days vs. 13.6 days on average), and commercial outfitters charge more per day on shorter trips. For trips of the same length, those using motors typically charge a lower price per day than those using oars. Grand Canyon river rafting trip prices are comparable to those charged for rafting other rivers within the United States. Prices per day vary substantially depending on the outfitter and the trip configuration chosen.

The primary economic sectors affected by commercial river-runners are food service; lodging, amusement and recreation services; recreational equipment; and passenger transportation. Most of the spending in the amusement and recreation services sector is in the form of wage and benefits payments to commercial trip guides and staff. The passenger transportation sector for commercial river runner expenditures includes shuttle transportation to and from the canyon (including helicopter transport), but not individual transportation to the region. Based on Hjerpe and Kim (2003), it is estimated that commercial passengers generate \$214 per person per day for the Grand Canyon region's economy from their river rafting trip purchases and other trip-related spending. This Grand Canyon regional spending consists of that portion of commercial river rafter's goods or services purchases (such as outfitter trips) that occurs within the Grand Canyon region's economy. Commercial river rafters' spending outside the Grand Canyon region are not counted in this analysis.

### **3.5.2.2 NONCOMMERCIAL RIVER RUNNERS**

Noncommercial river rafters spend significantly less per day than commercial rafters to run the Colorado River because they do not purchase the services of commercial operators to do so. Hjerpe and Kim (2003) estimate that noncommercial boaters spend an average of \$47 per person per day in the region.

Noncommercial boaters spend money on river rafting equipment, food, fuel, transportation, park fees, and tribal land access fees. The largest portion of noncommercial boaters' regional expenditures is on food and beverage supplies for their river trips (33%) followed closely by equipment rentals and purchases (25%). About 15% of noncommercial boaters' regional spending goes to pay park fees. The transportation sector for noncommercial boaters

expenditures includes shuttles to and from the canyon (8%), as well as individual air transportation to northern Arizona. Hotels also benefit from business with noncommercial boaters. Increasingly, noncommercial boaters are choosing to use the services of local outfitting companies to provide noncommercial trips with the necessary equipment and supplies for their entire trip.

It appears that noncommercial rafters spend less than commercial rafters for several reasons. They do not purchase commercial guide services, and they may bring most of their equipment and supplies from outside the region. Noncommercial rafters typically spend longer on the river than commercial rafters and, as a result, their average daily spending for off-river expenses are spread out over a longer trip length. Additionally, the data for this analysis were obtained from two different sources of information—commercial operators' reported data, and survey information obtained from individual river runners.

### **3.5.2.3 COMMERCIAL OPERATORS**

There are 16 licensed outfitters offering river trips on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park. The NPS issues concession contracts (formerly operating permits), which are scheduled for resolicitation in 2005. It is expected that the 16 current concessioners will be regarded as guides and outfitters within the meaning of 36 CFR 51.38 and that they therefore will have the right of preference over other bidders for any new concession contracts for river running.

The number of user-days allocated to each concessioner varies widely. The largest commercial operators are allocated approximately 14,000 user-days per year, while the smallest operators have less than 3,000 user-days. The six largest operators manage approximately 70,000 user-days, or more than 60% of the total user-day allotment for commercial operators. Of the 16 Grand Canyon river concessioners, 10 conduct supplemental operations not involving Grand Canyon river rafting. Most of these additional operations involve guided raft trips on other sections of the river and other rivers throughout the west, such as the San Juan and Green. Other operations conducted by Grand Canyon river concessioners include lodging and camping concessions in Kaibab National Forest, lodging and food facilities in other national parks, and horseback and Jeep tours. In addition to the commercial operators operating above Diamond Creek, HRR also runs commercial trips downriver from Diamond Creek.

A wide variety of trip configurations are offered by the Grand Canyon river concessioners. Many of the commercial operators have the operational and scheduling flexibility to adjust and tailor their trip lengths, destination, passenger exchanges, and equipment to meet their customers' preferences. Table 3-19 presents the most popular trip configurations offered from 1998 to 2001.

Passenger exchanges at Phantom Ranch and Whitmore currently offer important operational and financial opportunities for the commercial operators. The exchanges enable operators to offer shorter trips and provide more scheduling opportunities for users who have limited time for running the river. The convenience and time savings associated with helicopter exchanges increase the customer base for river trips. In addition, the helicopter rides in and out of the canyon offer another income source for the companies. On their arrival or departure day at an exchange, user-days are only counted as the larger number of those going in, or coming out, thus

there is no double counting of the commercial operator's user-day allocation. However, most commercial passengers pay a full day for these exchange days. As a result, the concessioner can earn two days of revenues for the one user-day spent by the two passengers leaving or joining a trip. This incentive favors short trips.

#### **3.5.2.4 REVENUES AND EXPENSES**

In 2003 commercial operators had total annual revenues of approximately \$28.8 million and generated approximately \$250 per user-day. The operators' profits vary. Typically smaller operators (i.e., those allocated fewer user-days) have higher operating costs because their fixed costs cannot be spread over as much revenue. On average, direct labor costs are estimated to represent 15.4% of commercial operators' revenues, and they are typically higher for nonmotorized trips (18.4%) than for motorized ones (13.7%) because of the higher guide-to-client ratio on nonmotorized trips.

River rafting operators' costs can be separated into four categories: (1) direct operating expenses, (2) indirect operating expenses, (3) fixed expenses, and (4) franchise fees. Direct operating expenses represent varying costs associated with providing services to customers, such as guide salaries, food, and other supplies. Indirect expenses consist of officer salaries and in some cases, management fees. In general, fixed expenses consist of business costs such as rent, insurance, taxes, and depreciation costs, which do not vary significantly as the level of service changes. Franchise fees are a percentage of gross revenue, paid directly to the NPS by the concessioners.

For the typical river rafting operator, fixed expenses are a relatively minor component of their total costs. While commercial river rafting does require equipment expenditures (rafts, motors, tents, and kitchen and other camping equipment), it is a labor-intensive business where a considerable proportion of the value to customers is associated with managerial and staff expertise and experience. Many direct operating costs are variable and can be readily adjusted to different operating conditions, trip configurations, or service requirements.

The NPS collects franchise and Colorado River Fund fees from commercial operators to make improvements along the Colorado River. According to Grand Canyon National Park, in 2003 the total franchise and Colorado River Fund fees paid by Grand Canyon river rafting concessioners were \$2.6 million. This represents an 8.9% franchise fee on revenues.

Capital expenses of commercial river-rafting companies are relatively low compared with many other concession operations or service industries. Furthermore, the useful life of most of the operators' capital items are short (e.g., five to seven years for rafts and motors), and most operators have been able to depreciate a majority of their investment over the length of their ongoing concession agreements. Any necessary phasing out of existing equipment and purchases of new equipment could be readily amortized over the length of these concession agreements.

**TABLE 3-19: MOST POPULAR COMMERCIAL OPERATORS TRIP CONFIGURATIONS FROM 1998–2001**

Commercial Operators	Most Popular Trip Configurations			
	Boat Type	Trip Length	Trip End	% of Trips
Arizona Raft Adventures	Hybrid*	13 day	Diamond	37%
	Motor	8 day	Diamond	30%
Arizona River Runners	Motor	6 day	Whitmore	51%
	Motor	7 day	Lake	32%
Canyon Expeditions	Hybrid	15 day	Diamond	30%
	Hybrid	12 day	Diamond	23%
	Hybrid	14day	Diamond	17%
Canyon Explorations	Hybrid	15 day	Diamond	51%
	Hybrid	16 day	Diamond	24%
Canyoneers	Motor	7 day	Lake	99%
Colorado River and Trail Expeditions	Motor	8 day	Lake	47%
	Motor	9 day	Lake	19%
Diamond River Adventures	Motor	8 day	Diamond	42%
	Motor	7 day	Whitmore	36%
Grand Canyon Expeditions Company	Motor	8 day	Lake	94%
Hatch River Expeditions	Motor	7 day	Whitmore	72%
High Desert Adventures**	Motor	8 day	Lake	59%
	Oar	12 day	Whitmore	22%
Moki Mac River Expeditions	Oar	14 day	Lake	44%
	Motor	8 day	Lake	40%
O.A.R.S	Dory	16 day	Lake	19%
	Oar	15 day	Lake	17%
	Oar	13 day	Diamond	15%
Outdoors Unlimited	Hybrid	12 day	Lake	42%
	Hybrid	13 day	Lake	27%
Tour West	Motor	6 day	Lake	45%
	Motor	6 day	Whitmore	16%
	Oar	12 day	Whitmore	14%
Western River Expeditions	Motor	6 day	Lake	99%
Wilderness River Adventures	Motor	8 day	Whitmore	52%
	Motor	7 day	Whitmore	28%

Source: Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association (2003).

\* Hybrid = oar trip with motor support.

\*\* Outfitter no longer exists; was purchased by Arizona Raft Adventures.

## 3.6 PARK MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

### 3.6.1 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK (ZONE 1)

Recreational and administrative use of the Colorado River in Grand Canyon National Park *currently* is managed in accordance with the 1989 *Colorado River Management Plan*, the 1995 *General Management Plan*, and applicable NPS laws, policies, and regulations. Table 3-20 summarizes the park's river management programs and operations.

**TABLE 3-20: CURRENT RIVER MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBLE PARK DIVISIONS**

Park Division	River Management Responsibilities	Staff/FTE*
Visitor and Resource Protection	Ranger activities: river patrols, concession evaluations and visitor education, search and rescue, Lees Ferry and Meadview operations; river permits	10.0
Science Center	Research, resource management, inventory and monitoring, planning and compliance, rehabilitation/restoration, research permits	4.0
Concessions	Commercial activities	1.0
Interpretation	Education and interpretation	0.5
Maintenance	Trail and facility maintenance	1.0

\* This column indicates the staff time associated with river management activities. These are measured in FTE or full-time equivalents (100% time allocated). With the exception of river rangers and some permit staff, very few staff are 100% allocated to river management activities. The FTEs at the Science Center do not include planning and compliance.

#### 3.6.1.1 RIVER PERMITS PROGRAM

The Backcountry Information Center manages the permit programs for noncommercial river users, backcountry visitors, and other short-term special uses (e.g., special events, public assembly, first amendment activities, and weddings).

The river permits operation includes maintaining the noncommercial waitlist (over 8,000 names), issuing and tracking noncommercial river permits, handling cancellations, and answering public information phone lines. The River Permits Office oversees and evaluates waiver requests through the "On-line Launch Calendar" used by the park and commercial operators to schedule, track, and report actual commercial river use. Tens of thousands of telephone calls, e-mails, and letters related to the river program are received and/or sent out by this operation each year.

#### 3.6.1.2 RANGER ACTIVITIES

The River Patrol rangers are responsible for operations that include visitor education, law enforcement, concession operation evaluations, and support for maintenance, education, and resource management activities. Park rangers conduct patrols primarily during the high use period. Search-and-rescue operations are managed by the NPS Emergency Services Branch, and river patrol rangers typically support these operations from the river. All NPS river trips are coordinated through an operations and equipment manager. The NPS fleet consists of 12 fully equipped oar-powered rafts, two 22-foot motorized rafts, and two rigid hull inflatable jet drive boats for Lake Mead and Lees Ferry rangers.

Under a partnership with Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Grand Canyon river rangers manage river trip activities. The primary function of the Lees Ferry rangers is to ensure that commercial outfitters and noncommercial boaters comply with environmental and safety regulations. Specifically, park rangers conduct an orientation for noncommercial boaters that include equipment check and an educational program. Rangers periodically inspect commercial trips to ensure compliance with safety and environmental regulations. Lees Ferry rangers administer the Grand Canyon guides licensing program, and they have responsibility for search-and-rescue programs and law enforcement in the upper Marble Canyon area.

### **3.6.1.3 RESEARCH, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, PLANNING, COMPLIANCE, REHABILITATION/RESTORATION**

The Grand Canyon Science Center conducts, coordinates, and contracts for resource management and research activities for Grand Canyon National Park, often in close cooperation with other park divisions, cooperators, and tribes. The Science Center is comprised of resource management specialists (cultural, wildlife, vegetation, water, earth resources, and social sciences), planners, NEPA compliance specialists, and research program managers. The Science Center has primary responsibility for inventory, monitoring, and mitigation for cultural resources, wildlife, threatened/endangered species, campsites, other park resources, and visitor experiences. In cooperation with park rangers, trail crew, and other park staff, Science Center staff design and implement projects to address resource concerns and impacts, including visitor impacts on vegetation, archeological sites, wildlife habitat, water quality, and campsite condition.

All research conducted along the river within the park is reviewed and authorized through the Science Center. This includes the extensive and long-term research and monitoring undertaken through the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (primarily through the USGS Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center). Research must meet park goals and objectives, and it is reviewed to ensure consistency with wilderness management objectives.

The Science Center also provides compliance and planning services. Routine and non-routine management activities require written documentation for environmental compliance (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and Endangered Species Act) and for the minimum tool requirements as required by NPS wilderness management policy.

### **3.6.1.4 COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES**

The Concessions Division manages the park's concessions contracts for commercial river trips operating in the park. To do this, the division develops contracts, administers fees, oversees operations, and sets rates for services provided under the contracts. The Concessions Division also issues incidental business permits for river trip support services (e.g., equipment rental and shuttles), although the level of oversight for this type of permit is much lower than that for contracts.

### 3.6.1.5 TRAIL AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE

The park's trail crew in the Maintenance Division maintains all designated trails and routes, including those accessible from the river to popular destination sites and rapid scouting areas. The trail crew conducts routine maintenance and rehabilitation of trails and routes, and they assist in some types of rehabilitation/restoration projects. In addition, they are responsible for maintaining primitive toilets in the backcountry.

### 3.6.1.6 INTERPRETATION AND RESOURCE EDUCATION

The Division of Interpretation and Resource Education cooperates with other park divisions, universities, nonprofit organizations, and other educational groups to provide educational opportunities on the river, to develop curricula and written interpretive materials, and to conduct service projects tied to park Science Center projects along the river corridor.

Additionally, the division provides staff to assist other park divisions in conducting their activities on the river. Interpretive staff members also provide interpretive training for licensed guides, outfitters, and other groups.

### 3.6.1.7 PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Table 3-21 summarizes NPS river trips from 2000 to 2003. NPS resource management, research and educational trips have been supported through partnerships, cooperative agreements, and grant-funded programs. The Cooperative Resource Conservation Program, for example, included 14 outfitter-sponsored trips in support of inventory and monitoring, trail and campsite maintenance, archeological site mitigation, and exotic plant management. Educational trips have also been conducted under partnerships or agreements with universities, colleges, and other agencies.

**TABLE 3-21: SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE USE, 2000–2003**

Purpose	Total Trips	Motorized Trips	Nonmotorized Trips	Sponsor
Patrol	14	3	9	NPS
Trails	6	0	6	NPS
Cooperative Resource Program*	12	2	10	NPS/Outfitters
Educational	3	0	3	GC Youth
Educational	1	0	1	Project Watershed
Education/Monitoring	3	0	3	NAU/NPS
Guide Training	4	Mixed/Both	Mixed/Both	Guides/NPS
Education/Research	1	0	1	Prescott College/NPS
Research	17	0	17	NPS**
Research	164	105	59	GCMRC

\*\* NPS research: Most resource specialist hold research permits for natural and cultural resource data collection and mitigation.

### **3.6.2 LOWER GORGE (ZONES 2, 3 AND 4)**

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Similar to the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the river, park river management programs in the Lower Gorge are directed by resource management plans and applicable regulations and policies. Compared to management in Zone 1, park management presence is reduced and Hualapai tribal management activities are increased.

#### **3.6.2.1 RIVER PERMITS PROGRAM**

Permits for river trips launching from Diamond Creek are issued by Grand Canyon National Park and the Hualapai Tribe. The park's River Permits Office sends a copy of the approved permit application to the Hualapai Tribe, which in turn issues a permit and collects the appropriate access fees.

#### **3.6.2.2 RANGER ACTIVITIES**

The Grand Canyon river patrols typically take out at Diamond Creek, although at least one patrol per year (2000–2003) has continued to Lake Mead. River patrols in Zones 2, 3, and 4 are the primary responsibility of the park's Meadview ranger. Meadview is adjacent to Lake Mead National Recreation Area (*NRA*), near the upper end of Lake Mead. Grand Canyon National Park ranger patrols launch from the South Cove landing and travel upriver to Separation Canyon. They perform permit and safety inspections, and also provide information, search-and-rescue, law enforcement, and various resource management activities. In cooperation with Lake Mead *NRA*, the Grand Canyon rangers manage takeout activities at South Cove (and Pearce Ferry when lake levels are high).

#### **3.6.2.3 RESEARCH, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, PLANNING, COMPLIANCE, REHABILITATION/RESTORATION**

In cooperation with the Hualapai Tribe, the Grand Canyon Science Center conducts resource management activities and coordinates research in the Area of Cooperation (RM 165 to RM 273). Similar to Zone 1, the Science Center conducts inventory, monitoring, and mitigation for cultural resources, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, campsites, other park resources, and visitor experiences. However, these activities are infrequent compared to resource management trips in Zone 1. The Meadview ranger conducts campsite monitoring and maintenance (trash collection, fire pit clean-up, etc.).

Research conducted along the Colorado River in the Lower Gorge is reviewed and authorized through the Science Center in coordination with the Hualapai Tribe. This includes extensive and long-term research and monitoring undertaken through the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (primarily through the USGS Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center). Research must meet park goals and objectives and Hualapai tribal regulations.

#### **3.6.2.4 COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES**

HRR trips are managed through the *Grand Canyon Resort Corporation, which is owned by the Hualapai Tribe. HRR is not currently licensed or regulated by the NPS.* Under the Memorandum of Understanding between the Hualapai Tribe and the NPS, HRR trips are subject to operational standards required of all NPS river concessioners.

#### **3.6.2.5 TRAIL AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE**

The park's trail crew does not currently conduct trail or facility maintenance in Zone 2, 3, or 4. The Hualapai Tribe maintains the Diamond Creek road and facilities at Diamond Creek, Spencer Canyon, and the Quartermaster Area.

#### **3.6.2.6 INTERPRETATION AND RESOURCE EDUCATION**

Some of the activities developed through the park's Division of Interpretation and Resource Education are applicable in the Lower Gorge zones. Educational specialists are involved in cooperative youth trips. NPS and tribal educational materials are available from the Meadview ranger station.

## 3.7 ADJACENT LANDS AND JURISDICTIONS

As noted in the 1979 *Colorado River Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement*, the river corridor and its recreational use are influenced to varying degrees by agencies that administer or manage lands and resources adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park. River running, in turn, has the potential to affect management of these lands and resources.

### 3.7.1 U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

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The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) has responsibility for the management of Glen Canyon and Hoover Dams, including water storage and releases. Monthly releases are identified in an annual operating plan. Daily and hourly releases within those monthly constraints are determined by the Western Area Power Administration in response to power demand. Current dam and reservoir operations and their effects on river running in the Grand Canyon are summarized at the beginning of this Chapter. Coordination between the NPS and BOR is necessary to keep river runners informed about water release schedules from Glen Canyon Dam and the level of Lake Mead.

As part of the Secretary of the Interior's responsibilities for management of both the water resources held behind Glen Canyon Dam and the provisions of the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-575), the BOR, along with 26 other stakeholders, work cooperatively on the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program. This federal, multi-stakeholder program was initiated in 1996 to comply with provisions of the Grand Canyon Protection Act and the *Operation of Glen Canyon Dam Final Environmental Impact Statement* (BOR 1995). Its purpose is to provide an organization and process for cooperatively integrating dam operations, downstream resource protection and management, and monitoring and research information.

### 3.7.2 U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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Research and monitoring of the operations of Glen Canyon Dam are undertaken through a branch of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) entitled the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC), which was created to fulfill legal obligations of the Secretary of the Interior after the signing of the *Record of Decision* for Glen Canyon Dam operations. The GCMRC oversees flow experiments and monitors the impact of dam operations on downstream resources, including water quality, sediment transport and deposition, fish and other aquatic resources, the riparian ecosystem, cultural sites, and recreational activities. River recreation-related efforts have focused on changes in the area; the number, location, and quality of campsite beaches; recreational safety; methods for and enhancement of the wilderness experience; changing user preferences; and angler satisfaction. The GCMRC sponsors research and monitoring activities on the river, which require research permits from the national park; the park requires a minimum requirement analysis on proposed operations (See Section 2.3.2).

### 3.7.3 OTHER NPS ENTITIES

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#### 3.7.3.1 GLEN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Most Grand Canyon river trips launch at Lees Ferry within Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Glen Canyon encompasses 1,254,306 acres upstream of the Grand Canyon, most of which encompasses Lake Powell above Glen Canyon Dam, but also includes approximately 15 miles of the Colorado River below the dam. Attractions in this 15-mile river reach include a rainbow trout fishery, historic ranch and ferry properties at Lees Ferry, hiking trails, and spectacular scenery. Private boating is popular, and daily, concession-operated, flat-water raft trips are available from the dam to the Lees Ferry dock. In FY 2002, 34,849 passengers participated in these half-day motorized trips. Several professional fishing guides operate out of Lees Ferry. The concessioner-operated flat-water trips and commercial fishing guides are overseen by Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

Management guidance for Glen Canyon is provided by the 1979 *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area General Management Plan* (NPS 2000e) and the *Strategic Plan for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Rainbow Bridge National Monument* (NPS 2005). The recreation area is also preparing a Colorado River recreation report that will provide information to help determine the types and amounts of use that are appropriate on the river. Glen Canyon staff manages most of the Lees Ferry area, but activities associated with downstream river running are the responsibility of Grand Canyon National Park. Standard operating procedures and a memorandum of understanding govern coordination between the two park units.

Glen Canyon maintains a launch ramp, dock, campground, ranger station, patrol boats, and supporting infrastructure at Lees Ferry. Grand Canyon maintains a patrol boat, as well as an orientation trailer and information kiosk near the ramp. Permanently assigned Grand Canyon rangers provide information, give formal orientation talks to noncommercial parties, check noncommercial permits, inspect rigs to ensure compliance with NPS regulations, assist Glen Canyon personnel with upriver use, and administer the guide-licensing program.

Approximately 900 downriver trips are launched annually from Lees Ferry, with the majority leaving May–September. Five or six trips launch on a typical summer day, and the ramp area is filled with boats, commercial passengers and guides, noncommercial river runners, and logistical personnel who drive shuttle cars, buses, or trucks and help assemble and launch boats. Upriver boaters use a separate, paved ramp and the dock. The area can become congested during the summer months.

#### 3.7.3.2 LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Lake Mead National Recreation Area encompasses 1,495,664 acres, mostly downstream of Grand Canyon National Park. Former Lake Mead lands north of Grand Canyon have been incorporated into Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. River runners cross the boundary into Lake Mead at RM 277. At capacity Lake Mead waters back up over 40 miles into the Grand Canyon, and boat traffic from the lake is allowed to proceed upstream as far as Separation Canyon (RM 240). Many river trips originating at Lees Ferry and all trips originating

at Diamond Creek terminate in Lake Mead. Until 2001 most of these trips took out at Pearce Ferry (RM 280), but now that this ramp is inaccessible due to low lake levels, trips must travel an additional 18 miles to South Cove. Use of boat ramps and facilities in Lake Mead by river runners, and upriver travel into Grand Canyon from Lake Mead, require close coordination between both park units. In an arrangement similar to the one at Lees Ferry, Lake Mead and Grand Canyon have standard operating procedures and a memorandum of understanding in place to facilitate coordination. A ranger from Grand Canyon's River District resides at Meadview, Arizona, and assumes responsibility for the 52 miles of river from Diamond Creek to the Lake Mead boundary. The emphasis of patrols in this area is monitoring commercial and private river runner activity. The Grand Canyon ranger also assists Lake Mead personnel with boat ramp management at Pearce Ferry and South Cove. Lake Mead personnel participate with Grand Canyon and Hualapai Tribe representatives in Core Team meetings to facilitate management of the lower Grand Canyon and upper Lake Mead area.

Guidance for managing Lake Mead is provided by the 1986 *Lake Mead National Recreation Area General Management Plan* (NPS 1986a) and the 2002 *Lake Management Plan* (NPS 2002b). According to the *Lake Management Plan*, the Colorado River delta area of Lake Mead (from Paiute Point to the Grand Canyon boundary) is to be managed as a rural natural area as long as Grand Canyon continues to allow motorized river craft from Lake Mead to enter the park. Personal watercraft use, waterskiing, and wakeboarding are permitted in rural natural areas of Lake Mead. If Grand Canyon disallows upriver motorized travel from Lake Mead, the delta area will be considered semi-primitive, and personal watercraft use, waterskiing, and wakeboarding will not be permitted. Regardless of regulations governing Lake Mead, these activities are not permitted within Grand Canyon. Lake Mead's *Lake Management Plan* also calls for the prohibition of two-stroke carbureted engines within the recreation area after 2012. This will reduce noise and air pollution resulting from upriver boat traffic in the Grand Canyon. Current planning at Lake Mead includes a proposed amendment to the *General Management Plan* to evaluate the public launch ramps and marinas on Lake Mead in relation to the effects of the dropping reservoir levels. Grand Canyon is cooperating with Lake Mead in addressing related problems at the launch ramps used by river runners.

### **3.7.4 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

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The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Arizona Strip Field Office manages, or in the case of Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, co-manages approximately 2.8 million acres of land north and west of the Colorado River in Arizona. Included in this vast region are two national monuments and eight wilderness areas. BLM-administered land currently affected by river running in the Grand Canyon is limited to Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, which borders the western portion of the park between the Grand Wash Cliffs and the Toroweap Valley area. The primary issue is the use of BLM roads to access facilities and trails used by Grand Canyon river passengers exchanging in the Whitmore area.

Currently, the BLM and NPS through Lake Mead National Recreation Area are cooperating in a planning process that includes a revision of the 1992 *Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan*, the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument *Management Plan*, and the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument *Management Plan*. Grand Canyon staff members are participating in the

planning process to address issues that involve both the park and subject lands. Until the revisions are complete, the 1992 *Resource Management Plan* remains in effect.

Of the BLM-administered lands adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park, the most affected by NPS management of the Colorado River is Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. Created in 2000, the 1,014,000-acre national monument lies north of western Grand Canyon and is managed jointly by the BLM and Lake Mead National Recreation Area. This remote area has no paved roads or facilities (other than Bar 10 Ranch), and it receives relatively few visitors.

Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument could potentially be affected by the updated *Colorado River Management Plan* primarily because of potential changes to helicopter passenger exchanges in the Whitmore area. The passengers are currently ferried between the Colorado River and Bar 10 Ranch (see description under Section 3.5 Socioeconomic Conditions). The site is relatively isolated, accessible only by air and an 80-mile-long dirt road to St. George, Utah. River trip passengers generally travel to and from the ranch by twin-engine, fixed-wing aircraft, which use a 4,200-foot airstrip on ranch property. All Bar 10 air traffic passes over Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, with most flights originating and ending in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The river is also accessible in the Whitmore area by an approximately 1.3-mile-long trail that ascends the north wall of the canyon in Grand Canyon National Park. The trailhead on the rim is on the boundary between the park and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. Before 1985, when the helicopter ferry service was initiated, the owners of Bar 10 Ranch transported river trip passengers by mule on this trail, and then bussed them to the airstrip at the ranch. Some river trips still offer passengers the option of hiking out on the trail rather than using the helicopter. The Bar 10 Ranch is approximately 9 miles from the trailhead via a four-wheel-drive road across monument land. Beyond the ranch, the unpaved roads to St. George and communities along Arizona Highway 389 cross-monument, BLM, state, and private lands.

Currently, park personnel are working closely with BLM and Lake Mead personnel in preparing a management plan for Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. The purpose is to coordinate planning on issues surrounding use of the Whitmore area, passenger exchanges, overflights, and use of monument roads.

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### **3.7.5 U.S. FOREST SERVICE —KAIBAB NATIONAL FOREST**

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Two units of the Kaibab National Forest border Grand Canyon National Park—the Tusayan ranger district on the South Rim (approximately 326,000 acres) and the North Kaibab ranger district on the North Rim (approximately 646,400 acres). A few rim-to-river trails occasionally used by river runners require crossing national forest land to reach the trailhead. One such trail, Nankoweap, crosses the Saddle Mountain Wilderness in the North Kaibab ranger district. No statistics are available on the number of river-related hikers using national forest trails, but it is likely a very small proportion of total use. Compared to several other routes in and out of the canyon, these trails are long and difficult, and lengthy drives over primitive roads are required to reach the trailheads. Use is predominantly by backpackers. The principal management document is the 1987 *Kaibab National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan*.

### 3.7.6 NAVAJO NATION

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The 12.5 million-acre Navajo Nation borders Grand Canyon National Park along the eastern bank of the river from RM 0 near Lees Ferry to RM 61.5 at the confluence of the Little Colorado River. *The Department of the Interior and Navajo Nation disagree on the location of the boundary.* The Department of the Interior has determined that the *eastern boundary of Grand Canyon National Park and the western boundary of the Navajo Nation generally lies 0.25 mile east of the historic high waterline on the Colorado River's eastern bank.* The Navajo Nation *asserts that the boundary lies either in the middle of the river or the eastern/southeastern bank of the river. The NPS/Navajo Nation boundary continues midstream in the Little Colorado for approximately two miles, where the NPS boundary turns south to the rim land near Cape Solitude. Navajo Nation lands include two tribal parks (Marble Canyon and Little Colorado) adjacent to the Park along the eastern boundary of Grand Canyon National Park (on the western Navajo boundary).* Relatively few campsites and attraction sites are located on the Navajo Nation within the canyon, but river runners do explore some side canyons, and some may venture more than 0.25 mile from the river. A limited number of noncommercial river runners also use river-to-rim trails that cross Navajo lands (e.g., Eminence Break, Salt Trail). Grand Canyon rangers at Lees Ferry inform boaters that if they travel 0.25 mile above the pre-dam high water line between Lees Ferry and the Little Colorado River they are on Navajo Nation lands, and hiking and camping on Navajo land requires a permit from the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department. Given the remoteness of the area and the shortage of enforcement personnel, noncompliance appears to be common. Non-permitted use of tribal lands is considered trespassing by the Navajo Nation and is a concern to local residents. Where the river is accessible from the rim (e.g., Jackass Canyon), anglers and hikers are frequent visitors to the river, sometimes competing with river runners for campsites. *At some time in the future, the Navajo Nation may choose to develop reservation lands adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park, including recreational opportunities.*

### 3.7.7 HAVASUPAI RESERVATION

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The 188,077-acre Havasupai Reservation is located within and along the rim of Grand Canyon, south of the national park. The reservation is reached from the river by hiking up Havasu Canyon approximately 4 miles. Day hikers often venture onto tribal land to enjoy Havasu Creek's spectacular waterfalls, although the hike is a relatively long one: 8 miles round-trip to Beaver Falls, 12 miles round-trip to Mooney Falls, 14 miles round-trip to Havasu Falls, and 18 miles round-trip to Supai village. Some river runners are known to leave or join river trips by way of the reservation. A fee is required for entering Havasupai tribal property, but people approaching from the river have often ignored this. As resources allow, the tribe stations personnel at the reservation boundary to ensure compliance, and NPS personnel inform commercial and noncommercial trips of this required fee. Camping within the reservation is permitted only in designated campgrounds.

### 3.7.8 HUALAPAI RESERVATION

The Hualapai Tribe occupies a 992,463-acre reservation south of the Colorado River. According to the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Hualapai Tribe, Grand Canyon National Park, and Lake Mead National Recreation Area,” signed in September 2000:

The Hualapai Tribe and the DOI [U.S. Department of the Interior] disagree on the location of the boundary between the Hualapai Indian Reservation and GRCA... Accordingly, both the Hualapai Tribe and DOI claim jurisdictional authority from about River Mile 164.5 to about River Mile 273.5 from the center of the river to the highwater [sic] mark on river left... To reduce further conflict on this issue, and to work towards a productive relationship, the parties have committed themselves to mutual management of an Area of Cooperation [AOC] to minimize the practical and operational impact of the boundary dispute... The initial AOC as mutually agreed upon by the parties includes the area from the high water mark to high water mark from about River Mile 164.5 to River Mile 277 and that part of Lake Mead from River Mile 277 to Pearce Ferry. (Hualapai Tribe, Grand Canyon National Park, and Lake Mead National Recreation Area 2000, 2)

Management issues pertaining to the Area of Cooperation are addressed in meetings of a standing federal-tribal Core Team, which includes representatives of the tribe, the park, and Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Procedural steps for facilitating negotiation and consensus building among the parties are outlined in the MOU. ***The MOU establishing the Area of Cooperation is still in effect, although the Core Team meetings were suspended in October 2004. Access to lands above the historic high-water mark between RM 165 and RM 273.5 on the southern side of the river requires a Hualapai tribal permit.*** River parties launching at Lees Ferry are informed of this restriction by the NPS rangers; however, enforcement is difficult because of the remoteness and size of the area. Infractions in side canyon locations except Diamond Creek are likely commonplace.

An 18-mile-long, unpaved road on tribal land from Peach Springs, Arizona, to the mouth Diamond Creek (RM 226) provides the first vehicle access to the river below Lees Ferry. Diamond Creek, therefore, is used as the primary takeout point by river trips, especially nonmotorized parties. Trips bypassing Diamond Creek must travel an additional 54 miles to the next takeout opportunity at Pearce Ferry (now closed due to low water) or more than 70 miles to South Cove. Diamond Creek is also a launching point for trips running just the Lower Gorge. The permit system for noncommercial trips starting at Diamond Creek is handled cooperatively by the tribe and the park and is entirely separate from the permit system for launches at Lees Ferry. HRR operates the only commercial trips launched at Diamond Creek.

Several problems are associated with the heavy dependence of river users on Diamond Creek. Occasional road washouts, particularly during the summer rainy season when use is heaviest, can make it unreliable for takeouts. Crowding is a growing problem. Space at Diamond Creek is extremely limited both for boats and vehicles, and the closure of Pearce Ferry and the expansion of Hualapai Tribe operations have increased demand for the use of this site. Non-tribal use can interfere with the launching of Hualapai Tribe river trips and may diminish opportunities for tribal members to use the beach. Other issues of concern to the tribe include road damage from heavy vehicles; costs associated with road repair, trash pick-up, and rescuing disabled vehicles; noise, pollution, and safety problems associated with traffic passing through Peach Springs; and

potential harm to culturally sensitive sites. The tribe charges fees for all non-tribal use of Diamond Creek facilities.

Several commercial outfitters exchange passengers at the Whitmore helipad, south of the river *through* tribal land. Since 1995, approximately 10,000 passengers have been exchanged annually at this location during the commercial primary season (May through mid-September). Individuals leaving trips are flown to the airstrip at the Bar 10 Ranch as described above. Additional helipads are located on Hualapai tribal land downstream of Diamond Creek in the Quartermaster area. It is estimated that 600–800 helicopter flights a week land and take off from 15 helipads at this mile-long site near the river. Tour flights to the Quartermaster area originate from Las Vegas, Nevada and from Grand Canyon West, a Hualapai Tribe resort facility on tribal land on the South Rim of the canyon. The helicopters fly tourists into Grand Canyon for picnics and Hualapai-operated pontoon boat rides, and shuttle HRR passengers out of the canyon. The Hualapai Tribe maintain two floating docks (at RM 262 and RM 263) and several boats in the Quartermaster area. Neither the helicopter operations nor the boat operations are *currently* licensed or regulated by the NPS. (See the “Socioeconomic Conditions” and “Visitor Use and Experience” sections of this Chapter for more information about river-related operations of the tribe.)

## 3.8 WILDERNESS CHARACTER

### 3.8.1 HISTORY OF GRCA WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATION

*Over 90% of Grand Canyon National Park has been recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Wilderness Act of 1964 required the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to evaluate land under their jurisdiction for possible wilderness classification. The Grand Canyon National Park Enlargement Act of January 3, 1975, as amended by the Act of June 10, 1975, required the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a wilderness recommendation. In 1976, the NPS prepared a draft environmental statement and preliminary wilderness proposal that was reviewed by the public. In 1977, a wilderness recommendation that included the Colorado River corridor was sent to the department's Legislative Counsel, where it was held in abeyance pending the completion of the park's first comprehensive River Management Plan. Upon completion of the 1980 Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP), the park submitted to the Department of Interior a proposal to designate 980,088 acres within Grand Canyon National Park as wilderness. That proposal also identified an additional 131,814 acres within the park including the Colorado River corridor as potential wilderness. The river corridor would become wilderness upon the phase-out of the use of motors, as called for by the 1980 CRMP. After the 1980 CRMP was finalized, Congress enacted as title I, § 112 of the Appropriations Act for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies for Fiscal Year 1981, Public Law 96-514, 94 Stat. 2957, 2972, a provision prohibiting the use of appropriated funds to implement any management plan for the river within the park "which reduces the number of user-days or passenger-launches for commercial motorized watercraft excursions." As a result of that provision, the park revised the 1980 CRMP and motor use on the river continued.*

*In 1993, the park conducted an internal review and update of the 1980 Wilderness Recommendation. Recent acquisition of grazing, mineral and other leases and completion of land use studies necessitated a revision of the recommendation. The update is based upon changes in the land status of recommended potential wilderness and refinements in acreage estimates determined by Geographical Information Systems (GIS). All modifications were consistent with the intent of the 1980 recommendation. In 1993, the Park Superintendent transmitted this recommendation to the Director of the NPS. Action on this recommendation is still pending.*

*The 1993 Final Wilderness Recommendation includes two units totaling 1,139,077 acres. Of this total, 1,109,257 are recommended for immediate wilderness designation; and 29,820 are recommended for designation as potential wilderness. Potential wilderness areas include those places that do not qualify for immediate designation as wilderness due to temporary, non-conforming or incompatible conditions.*

*The Colorado River was identified as potential wilderness due to the existing motorized raft use. The area of the river corridor in the eastern park (0.1 miles downstream of Navajo Bridge to river mile 87.1 or 82.6 miles) is approximately 4,300 acres. The river corridor in the western Park extends from 0.1 miles west of the Silver Bridge near Phantom Ranch (river mile 88) to Separation Canyon (river mile 239.5), approximately 151.5 miles or approximately 7,890*

*acres. Total acres for the river corridor is approximately 12,190 acres. Below Separation Canyon, the recommended wilderness boundary is on the north bank of the river and extends to the boundary with Lake Mead National Recreation Area.*

### **3.8.2 LAW AND POLICY**

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*Section 4 of the Wilderness Act describes authorized uses of wilderness areas. Subsection 4(a) declares, with specific legislative references, that the Wilderness Act shall be supplemental to the purposes for which the national forests, parks, and refuges have been established.*

*Subsection 4(b) states in part, “Except as otherwise provided in this Act, each agency administering any area designated as wilderness shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area and shall so administer such area for such other purposes for which it may have been established as also to preserve its wilderness character.” Thus, except for specified provisions in the legislation, wilderness areas shall be devoted to recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical uses.*

*Subsection 4(c) prohibits certain uses (unless specifically provided elsewhere in the Act) that are inconsistent with wilderness preservation. With the exception of the minimum actions needed for administrative duties and emergency health and safety procedures, the Act prohibits temporary roads, motor vehicle use, motorized equipment or motorboats, landing of aircraft, mechanical transport, structures, and installations.*

*Section 4 also addresses special provisions for certain wilderness uses. Subsection 4(d)(1) states in part: “Within wilderness areas designated by this Act the use of aircraft or motorboats, where these uses have already become established, may be permitted to continue...” These uses are subject to such restrictions as the administering federal official deems desirable. Subsection 4(d)(5) permits the performance of commercial services within wilderness “to the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of this act.”*

*Until Congress acts on the Grand Canyon National Park Wilderness Recommendation, this section of the Colorado River will be managed as potential wilderness in accordance with NPS Management Policies and the Grand Canyon National Park Wilderness Recommendation as updated in 1993. Chapter 6 of the NPS Management Policies 2001 states in part: “The National Park Service will take no action that would diminish the wilderness suitability of an area possessing wilderness characteristics until the legislative process of wilderness designation has been completed. Until that time, management decision pertaining to lands qualifying as wilderness will be made in expectation of eventual wilderness designation. This policy also applies to potential wilderness, requiring it to be managed as wilderness to the extent that existing non-conforming conditions allow. The National Park Service will seek to remove from potential wilderness the temporary, non-conforming conditions that preclude wilderness designation.”*

*As discussed in Section 1.6: Interrelationship with Other Plans and Projects, the continued use of motorboats does not preclude wilderness designation because this use is only a temporary or transient disturbance of wilderness values on the river, and it does not permanently impact wilderness resources or permanently denigrate wilderness values. Furthermore, the elimination of motorboats is not a legal prerequisite to wilderness designation. First, subsection 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act indicates that Congress does not view the continued use of motorboats (where that use has already become established) as incompatible with wilderness designation. Second, in an act designating the river corridor as wilderness, Congress may choose to expressly permit the continued use of motors (as it did, for example, on certain lakes in the act designating the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota).*

*NPS wilderness management policy requires that management decisions be consistent with a minimum requirement concept. When determining the minimum requirement, the potential disruptions of wilderness character and resources will be considered. The minimum requirement concept applies to all administrative activities. The park has established minimum requirement protocols to document decisions related to administrative activities. NPS policy also states that commercial recreational services are subject to the minimum requirement concept. This analysis is incorporated into the analysis of impacts to wilderness character in Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences.*

### **3.8.3 DEFINING WILDERNESS CHARACTER**

*According to the Grand Canyon National Park's General Management Plan (GMP), areas proposed for wilderness offer visitors opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. An important provision in the GMP states: "The management of these areas should preserve the wilderness values and character. Non-wilderness undeveloped areas should continue to serve primarily as primitive thresholds to wilderness. Visitors traveling through the canyon on the Colorado River should have the opportunity for a variety of personal outdoor experiences, ranging from solitary to social. Visitors should be able to continue to experience the river corridor with as little influence from the modern world as possible. The river experience should help visitors to intimately relate to the majesty of the canyon." (NPS 1995C) Visitor experience goals and objectives are discussed in other sections of this document.*

*Subsection 2(c) of the Wilderness Act defines wilderness as follows:*

*A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.*

*The same subsection 2(c) further defines wilderness as having the following characteristics:*

- *Undeveloped land retaining its primeval character in influence without permanent improvements or human habitation*
- *Generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable*

- *Has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation*
- *May contain ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value*

*This FEIS adopts the definitions and concepts developed through an interagency process to establish a framework for monitoring conditions related to wilderness character (Landres, et. al 2005). All wilderness areas, regardless of size, location, or any other feature, are unified by the statutory definition. These four qualities of wilderness are:*

**Untrammeled**—*wilderness is essentially unhindered and free from modern human control or manipulation. This quality pertains to actions that manipulate or control ecological systems. The relationship between this quality and impacts related to Glen Canyon Dam operations are discussed in Chapter 4.*

**Natural**—*wilderness ecological systems are substantially free from the effects of modern civilization. In the context of managing visitor use on the Colorado River, this quality pertains to the intended and unintended human-caused effects on natural and cultural resources conditions.*

**Undeveloped**—*wilderness is essentially without permanent improvements or modern human occupation. This quality pertains to the presence and development level of trails, campsites and structures and facilities within the river corridor and areas visited by river users.*

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation**—*wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for people to experience solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, including the values of inspiration and physical and mental challenge. This quality pertains to visitor opportunities to experience a primitive setting that may include solitude and adventure.*

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#### **3.8.4 LEES FERRY TO DIAMOND CREEK**

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*As described in Chapter 2, Zone 1 is characterized as a primitive setting within the recommended potential wilderness river corridor from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek. Management Objectives for natural and cultural resources, and visitor use and experience are described elsewhere in this document. Approximately 220 miles of the Colorado River in Zone 1 are within the recommended potential wilderness.*

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#### **3.8.5 DIAMOND CREEK TO LAKE MEAD**

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As described in Chapter 2, the Lower Gorge zones provide a transition from the primitive setting to an increasing social setting as a result of increased use and activity. Approximately 13 miles of the river corridor are within the recommended potential wilderness, and an additional 38 miles of the river's north bank of the Colorado River are within the park's recommended wilderness.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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