



## Backcountry Management Plan Summer 2012 Update

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will analyze the impacts of visitor use and management actions on natural and cultural resources and visitor experience. The EIS will result in an updated Backcountry Management Plan that will fulfill resource protection and preservation goals while providing a variety of visitor opportunities.

The last newsletter for this planning process was distributed in spring 2011 during public scoping (April through June 2011) which was the first opportunity for public input. Since that time, the planning team has reviewed the 581 public comments received and, together with comments and issues identified by park staff, has started to develop alternatives for managing the park's backcountry and wilderness areas.

Comments focused on a variety of topics including

- Overall access to the park's backcountry and wilderness
- Protection of park natural and cultural resources and wilderness values
- Commercial services
- Visitor safety
- Recreation activities
- Permits
- Use areas and zoning
- Visitor experience
- Roads and trails maintenance
- Access to the park's backcountry across tribal lands

Numerous comments related to wilderness designation were received from the public. To clarify, the updated plan will not change the current wilderness status. However, potential impacts to wilderness character and values will be identified for each alternative and included in the EIS. Find more information about Grand Canyon wilderness on page 2.



Bighorn in Grand Canyon, NPS Photo by Brian Healy

### Stay Involved

- Visit the project planning website at [www.parkplanning.nps.gov/grcabmp](http://www.parkplanning.nps.gov/grcabmp)
- Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/GrandCanyonNPS](http://www.twitter.com/GrandCanyonNPS)
- Send an email with your contact information (name and email) to [grca\\_planning@nps.gov](mailto:grca_planning@nps.gov)
- Send your contact information to Grand Canyon National Park, Office of Planning and Compliance, PO Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

# Wilderness Management

As required by the Wilderness Act of 1964, the NPS completed a study to determine portions of Grand Canyon National Park suitable for wilderness designation. Based upon the criteria set forth in the Wilderness Act and after a wilderness study, NPS determined that 1.1 million acres (94% of the total park area) qualified for future wilderness designation.

The NPS Management Policies require national parks with areas that meet wilderness criteria (e.g. wilderness recommendations or proposals) be managed in the same manner as designated wilderness so that wilderness character and values are not degraded. In other words, 94% of Grand Canyon National Park must be managed as wilderness.

The updated Backcountry Management Plan will be consistent with wilderness policy and describe management actions to protect wilderness resources and provide visitor opportunities consistent with wilderness values.

Grand Canyon's wilderness areas include the inner canyon, rim forests and plateaus. The non-wilderness backcountry areas include the Cross-Canyon Corridor (Bright Angel, South Kaibab, and North Kaibab Trails) and the Tuweep area.

## Planning Team Contacts:

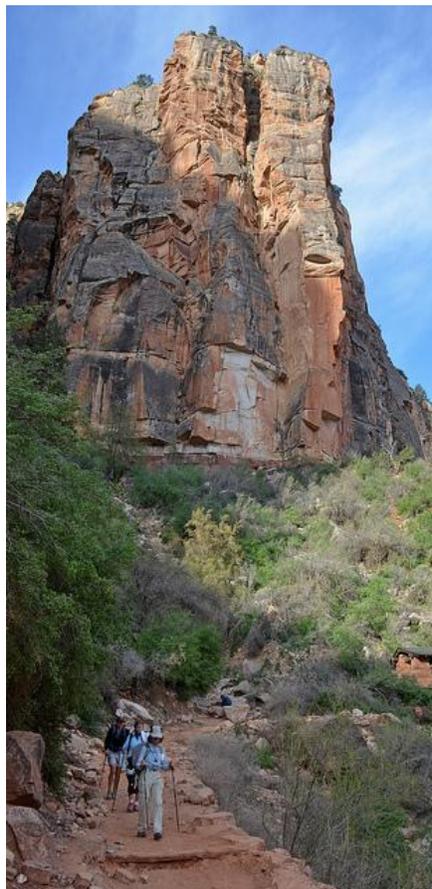
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# Consultation and Coordination

The NPS is coordinating the planning process with tribes and other Federal agencies that manage lands adjacent to the park.

Consultation with the park's eleven traditionally associated tribes was initiated in 2011. These tribes maintain special historic, cultural, and spiritual connections to Grand Canyon and have a deep interest in protecting park natural and cultural resources, including traditional cultural properties.

In 2011, initial meetings also occurred with the Bureau of Land Management, Kaibab National Forest, and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. The agencies identified mutual concerns and a range of visitor opportunities available on these federal lands.



Bright Angel Trail  
 NPS Photo by Mike Quinn

# Planning Schedule

