WHEN A LANDSCAPE IS BIGGER THAN ITSELF: A STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS OF GRAND CANYON'S BACKCOUNTRY

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TECHNICAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grand Canyon National Park has a diversity of stakeholders that care about its backcountry and know parts of it well. These stakeholders value the backcountry for a variety of reasons. Their values for the park's backcountry are suggested in stories they tell of past trips, of places they visited, and memories of their experiences there. By asking them to recall places and situations of their backcountry travels, they enhance our capacity to understand their values for Grand Canyon.

The purpose of this study is to further understand stakeholders through an assessment of their place meanings. This report characterizes place meanings and values as told by various stakeholders, and done within contexts of conversations about pictures they took of places on their backcountry trips. Specifically, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify stakeholder meanings of special places in the backcountry,

2. To understand stakeholder values for Grand Canyon's backcountry, and

3. To share their place meanings and backcountry values with other stakeholders.

Fourteen stakeholders were issued a disposable camera and asked to take pictures of places in Grand Canyon's backcountry that are important to them. Conversations were held with stakeholders after their pictures were developed, and used as the centerpiece for dialogue. This method, referred to as photo-elicitation, has been applied effectively in many research contexts that involve sensitive issues, highly-charged emotions, or hard-to-define meanings. Both the photographs and text of interviews served as data for analysis. After the interviews were transcribed into text, stakeholders were asked to review the interview transcripts to check its ability to represent their view. In all cases, phone interviews were held to insure reliability and trustworthiness of the data and research process. All text and photographs in this report have been reviewed several times by each stakeholder to insure its ability to represent the viewpoint of the stakeholder and their respective organization.

A narrative analysis is provided here that focuses on participants' stories of their experiences in the backcountry. The participants in this study were all recognized as members of a larger organization. The narrative analysis starts with the mission of the organization of each respective stakeholder, and the photographs and interview transcripts are used to further explain and bring-to-life the mission statement. The narrative of each stakeholder concludes by highlighting the backcountry values emerging from the combination of mission statement and transcripts. The selected stakeholders represented the following organizations: air tour operators, Arizona Wilderness Coalition/Grand Canyon Wildlands Council, Sierra Club, Grand Canyon Hikers and Backpackers Association, Arizona State Horsemen's Association, Four Seasons Guides, Grand Canyon Field Institute staff, Director of the Grand Canyon Field Institute, the Grand Canyon Association, the NPS Trail Crew, the NPS Grand Canyon Science Center, the NPS Canyon District Rangers,

Canyon Trail Rides, the NPS North Rim Backcountry office and Preventative Search and Rescue rangers.

Each stakeholder had a distinct approach to their meanings of places in the backcountry. These approaches were often related to their purposes in the backcountry and the mission of their respective organizations. The values and place meanings attributed to any given backcountry locale could be characterized as complex and multi-layered.

The first conclusion recognizes the potential for convergence of values among the stakeholders of the park. The place meanings of the stakeholders represented in this report spanned a wide spectrum of backcountry values. They appreciated the backcountry in numerous ways that aligned with the park's own sense of itself. Both the *General Management Plan* (1995) and the *Backcountry Management Plan* (1988) identify the vision and goals for the park. These stated goals align with many of the place meanings and values of the stakeholders in this study. Recognizing overlap of values among stakeholders does not diminish the potential for conflict or disagreement. Nonetheless a convergence of values suggests a larger context for any given point of conflict, and would surround any disagreement as an exception to an otherwise broad set of values that converge to guide park management.

The second conclusion suggests that the park continue developing its dialogue with stakeholders including the further development of working relationships. The park already has a history of dialogue with most of its stakeholders, and working relationships with several. Such dialogue and relationships are built, as well as diminished, by issues of trust and respect for each other. The *General Management Plan* (1995) and the *First Annual Centennial Strategy for Grand Canyon National Park* (2007) assert a commitment for the development of working relationships between the park and its stakeholders. Fortunately, backcountry management and planning have a long history of constructive dialogue with stakeholders and mutually beneficial working relationships. The park should continue strengthening the connections already in place with its stakeholders.

The strength of this report lies in its ability to reflect an array of stakeholder values (albeit incomplete) for public sharing, dialogue, and learning from one another. By building upon its strong foundation of stakeholder relations, Grand Canyon National Park and its partners will increase their effectiveness in achieving their goals.

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INTRODUCTION

Grand Canyon National Park has a diversity of stakeholders that care about its backcountry and know parts of it well. These stakeholders value the backcountry for a variety of reasons. Their values for the park's backcountry are suggested in stories they tell of past trips, of places they visited, and memories of their experiences there. By asking them to recall places and situations of their backcountry travels, they enhance our capacity to understand their values for Grand Canyon. Be it spiritual renewal, learning about oneself, working to protect the park's heritage, or scouting a new route, to know the values of stakeholders is to know their meanings of places and backcountry trips they hold dear.

The purpose of this study is to further understand stakeholders through an assessment of their place meanings. Such information provides the park with contexts in which stakeholders create, maintain, and assert their values for the backcountry. Rather than a use zone, a trail, or a designated campsite, the locales of the backcountry are filled with meaning by stakeholders and become relevant to the mission of their organizations. It is these meanings that transform the backcountry *from spaces to places* (Proshansky et al., 1983; Puddifoot, 1996). A traditional forum to learn of stakeholder values is in public hearings or workshops removed from the backcountry and potentially adversarial in tone. Sometimes at these public forums stakeholders find themselves telling *what should be done* rather than *why a place is valued*. This report characterizes place meanings and values as told by various stakeholders, and done within contexts of conversations about pictures they took of places on their backcountry trips.

Specifically, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify stakeholder meanings of special places in the backcountry,

2. To understand stakeholder values for Grand Canyon's backcountry, and

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METHODS

Landscape values and place meanings are challenging to articulate (Kruger & Shannon, 2000). Several researchers have developed strategies to identify place meanings and values by asking participants to discuss their experiences in a place (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995; Cheng, Kruger, & Daniels, 2003). Sometimes called the "lived experience," landscape values are embedded in the re-living and re-telling of experiences of one's backcountry trip. Place meanings, although characterizing a locale, provide values that connect oneself to other places, people, and society. For example, in his analysis of special places of Michigan's Black River, Schroeder (1996) asked participants to tell about their favorite places along the Black River. In their depiction several participants' meanings were centered on its unique features to teach outdoor skills to their sons and daughters. He (and his participants) interpreted these stories in ways that explained the qualities of the Black River that functioned for this purpose and were highly valued. Other researchers have use photographs or other prompts to elicit stakeholder landscape values (Harper, 2002; Stewart, Leibert, Larkin, 2003).

To facilitate the identification of backcountry values at Grand Canyon, selected stakeholders were issued a disposable camera and asked to take pictures of places in Grand Canyon's backcountry that are important to them. Conversations were held with stakeholders after their pictures were developed, and used as the centerpiece for dialogue. Most stakeholders have numerous places in the backcountry that hold special meaning to them. However it was not necessary to capture an exhaustive collection of special places. The photographic documentation is instrumental in evoking a discussion about the meanings of special places, and used as a prompt for a general set of values for the backcountry. This method, referred to as photo-elicitation, has been applied effectively in many research contexts that involve sensitive issues, highly-charged emotions, or hard-to-define meanings (Harrison, 2002; Halbwachs, 1992; Banks, 2001).

Both the photographs and text of interviews served as data for analysis (Clark, 1999). After the interviews were transcribed into text, stakeholders were asked to review the interview transcripts to check its ability to represent their view. In all cases, at least one follow-up phone interview was held to insure reliability and trustworthiness of the data and research process. The photographs and texts presented herein have each gone through an iterative process with their respective stakeholders.

We anticipated some stakeholders may not be comfortable capturing their special places with photographic imagery, and alternate options for characterizing meaning of places were explored in a few cases. In addition, we were sensitive that some stakeholders would not want to identify, or have us make public, their respective place meanings. All text and photographs in this report has been reviewed several times by each stakeholder to insure its ability to represent the viewpoint of the stakeholder and their respective organization.

Participants in this study were issued 27-exposure Kodak™ Easy Flash One-Time-Use© cameras. Participants were also given written instructions to take pictures of 'important places' in the backcountry at Grand Canyon (see Appendix A). After either

taking pictures with the camera and/or choosing existing photos from past visits to the backcountry, the participants sat down with James Barkley of the University of Illinois to discuss their photographs. The conversations were recorded using both digital and analog (i.e., magnetic audio-tape) handheld recording devices simultaneously. The analog recording device used was a *Sony TCM-200DV Handheld Cassette Voice Recorder*. The digital recording device used was an *Olympus W-10 Handheld Digital Voice Recorder*. With a preference for the analog format due to superior sound quality, the audio recordings were uploaded into the 'the free, cross-platform sound editor,' *Audacity*® (available online at: http://audacity.sourceforge.net/) and converted to MP3 format. The MP3 files were then transcribed, and analyzed, by James Barkley at the Park Planning and Policy Laboratory. See appendix A for an image of the camera and recording equipment used in this study.

A narrative analysis is provided here that focuses on participants stories of their experiences in the backcountry. The participants in this study were all recognized as members of larger stakeholder organizations. The narrative analysis starts with the mission of the organization of each respective stakeholder, and the photographs and interview transcripts are used to further explain and bring-to-life the mission statement. The narrative of each stakeholder concludes by highlighting the backcountry values emerging from the combination of mission statement and transcripts.

Participants: Fourteen stakeholders

Participants in this study were selected after careful deliberation. It was not possible to include all stakeholders of the park's backcountry in this study. During a visit to the park in 2003, the authors and NPS staff identified a list of about 60 organizations considered stakeholders by the park's backcountry work group. To streamline this list to a feasible number to include as participants in this study, the following criteria were developed. The criteria for prioritizing stakeholders for inclusion in the study were: (1) The stakeholder organization has a history of an active relationship with the park's backcountry management issues. (2) The stakeholder organization will likely be represented in any upcoming reviews and comment periods of the backcountry management plan. (3) The stakeholder organization has a primary focus that cares about the park's backcountry.

During summer 2004, James Barkley resided in Flagstaff to become acquainted with a number of stakeholders, introduced the study, and sought their interest in participating in it. This on-the-ground experience provided a first-hand sense of the geographic context for park planning and insight regarding the strengths and limitations of the research approach. Fourteen stakeholders were invited and able to finish their role as a participant in this study. The 14 participants are characterized below using pseudonyms.

"Linda" represents the air tour operators and has been flying helicopters over Grand Canyon for two summers. The owner of an air tour company and his general manager chose Linda to represent their group's interest in this study.

"Kim" represents the Arizona Wilderness Coalition/Grand Canyon Wildlands Council. Kim has worked in and/or lived at Grand Canyon for approximately 35 years, and will likely represent himself and the group in any upcoming review of the backcountry management plan.

"Eric" represents the Sierra Club and has been hiking the backcountry at Grand Canyon for more than 30 years. Although Eric's group will be represented in any upcoming review of the backcountry management plan, Eric does not anticipate himself being actively involved in that representation.

"Norman" represents the Grand Canyon Hikers and Backpackers Association, and has been hiking in Grand Canyon for more than 35 years, beginning as a young boy. Norman will likely represent himself and the group in the upcoming review of the backcountry management plan.

"Jean" represents the Arizona State Horsemen's Association and has been making annual trips to Grand Canyon with other members for approximately 7 years to ride the Arizona Trail. Both Jean and another member of the ASHA were recommended by NPS staff as potential study participants. The second ASHA member recommended Jean, and she will likely represent the interests of the ASHA in any upcoming review of the backcountry management plan.

"Katie" represents the Four Seasons Guides, and did her first overnight backpack in Grand Canyon at age 10, more than 15 years ago, and has spent several summers in the park as a commercial backpacking working out of a Flagstaff base office. Katie was chosen by the commercial use permit holder represent himself, the outfitting, and the guiding business. Katie will not likely be representing her group in the upcoming planning process. The owner of the business was initially contacted and chose Katie to represent the group's interests in this study.

"Nick" represents the instructors of the Grand Canyon Field Institute (GCFI). Nick has been working and backpacking in Grand Canyon for approximately 12 years. The GCFI instructors will likely defer group representation to a superior in the upcoming review of the backcountry management plan.

"Mike" represents the Director of the Grand Canyon Field Institute. Mike has been living, working, and backpacking in GCNP for approximately 12 years. Mike will likely represent GCFI's interests in any upcoming review of the backcountry management plan.

"William" represents the Grand Canyon Association (GCA) and began backpacking in the backcountry within the last couple of years when he first moved to the area to work for the GCA. William was a recommendation from staff at the GCFI as someone who should participate in the study due to the nature of the GCA and its mission that is closely tied to the park's backcountry areas. William will represent the GCA in any upcoming review of the backcountry management plan.

"Patrick" represents the staff from the NPS Trail Crew. Patrick has worked on backcountry trails at Grand Canyon for 13 years. Patrick's NPS supervisor was initially contacted and chose Patrick to represent the group's interests in this study. The NPS Trail Crew will likely be represented by Patrick's superior in any upcoming review of the backcountry management plan.

"Dave" represents staff from the Grand Canyon Science Center who are interested in the backcountry. Dave has been backpacking in Grand Canyon for approximately 18 years; beginning as a pre-teen. Dave has served as a backpacking guide, a river guide/boatman, and was recommended by one of his superiors in the Science Center. Dave will likely defer representation of the Science Center to a superior in any upcoming review of the backcountry management plan.

"Oscar" represents staff from the Canyon District Rangers. Oscar has been backpacking in the Grand Canyon for approximately 16 years, and volunteered to participate in the study to reflect viewpoints of the backcountry rangers. Oscar has a history of backcountry search and rescue at Grand Canyon. Oscar will likely represent himself and the Canyon District rangers in any upcoming review of the backcountry management plan.

"Kitty" represents Canyon Trail Rides (CTR) and has been a mule wrangler on the North Rim for approximately 16 years. The majority of her rides into the Canyon have been down the North Kaibab Trail. Kitty was recommended by the CTR manager for participation in this study.

"Gary" represents the staff from the North Rim Backcountry office and Preventative Search and Rescue rangers. Gary has been living in northern Arizona and working as a seasonal employee on the north rim for approximately 6 years. Gary began backpacking in Grand Canyon around the same time he began working for Grand Canyon.

FINDINGS

The Arizona State Horsemen's Association: Jean

The Arizona State Horsemen's Association (ASHA) is an organization that is 'dedicated to the preservation, promotion and protection of the Arizona equestrian lifestyle' (ASHA [online] 2006). These stakeholders are interested in preserving, promoting and protecting the "Arizona Equestrian Lifestyle". The lived experience of a member and past president of the ASHA is examined here with a single question in mind: what is the Arizona equestrian lifestyle as it is experienced in and around Grand Canyon's backcountry?

The representative of ASHA who has taken part in this study is Jean, a past president and active member. Through our discussion of her photos, viewed together on a computer monitor at her office, Jean told stories of an organized ASHA trip to the north rim. While there, the group stayed at 'the old Teddy Roosevelt horse camp,' and the main focus was trail maintenance.

The Arizona equestrian lifestyle in and around the canyon's north rim area is a mixture of organization and ingenuity that characterizes a pioneer experience. According to Jean, the equestrian lifestyle at Grand Canyon is one in which individual and group organization is essential in mobilizing resources and establishing bases from which trail maintenance can be performed. First there is group organization that is evident in planning a group ride. This involves the coordination of schedules and amenities to accommodate group participation. Once the group's plan is laid each individual or sub-group, such as a couple or family, must begin another level of organization. This involves readying trucks, RV's, horse trailers, feed, gear, and other animal travelers such as dogs to be away from home for days, sometimes weeks at a time. This type of organization results in the establishment of a temporary residence, or camp (figure 1), which supports further activity in the area.

Figure 1: 'the old Teddy Roosevelt horse camp'

With camp set as a result of a great deal of organization there are several on-site issues that require salutary ingenuity. The issues experienced range from the pilfering of horse feed by resident wildlife to a horse with altitude sickness and many things in-between. Jean told an exemplary story of ingenuity in which bungee cords were used to strap a heavy saw to a saddle to make the four mile trek to clear fallen timber from trails that were not accessible by motorized vehicle (figure 2).

Figure 2: 'ingenuity'

This prevented the group from having to carry the saw, and ultimately allowed them to accomplish more in service to the NPS and fellow trail users. Ingenuity in problem solving is a source of pride and indicates a pioneering spirit at the core of the Arizona equestrian lifestyle as it is experienced at Grand Canyon.

The pioneering spirit that is the bedrock of the equestrian experience at the Grand Canyon is described as Jean drew upon historical reference(s) from the 1920's forward. The pioneering spirit is indicated in both a purely historical narrative and a narrative focused more on the recent lived experience. These narrative accounts describe progress in the area that is not without issue.

In a purely historical narrative beginning in the 1920's, Jean talked about Theodore Roosevelt and his people establishing the horse camp on the north rim where Jean's group stayed. The story further described the camp as a base for 'Roosevelt and his people' as they hunted in the area for a number of animals that no longer inhabit the area. These animals were thought to have been 'hunted out.' This was the beginning of a series of management blunders in populating and re-populating species in the area through selective introduction and/or removal. These management blunders are spoken of in historical terms, as the experiential narrative tells of rugged living and the aid of management in progress today.

Hard living and ruggedness, characteristic of the pioneer spirit, are symbolized by the 1920's era ranger uniform worn by a park ranger who visited camp and told stories of the era from the perspective of his 'alter ego' (figure 3).

Figure 3: ‘1920’s ranger uniform’

The uniform was ‘all wool,’ and, ‘will get you to death,’ according to Jean. More than the availability of comfortable attire, Jean pointed to the recent improvements that have been made to the horse camp as a story of progress. Since the group’s first stay at the horse camp in 2000, improvements include on-site access to water and toilets. While progress in the area is recognized and appreciated it has not alleviated hardship and ruggedness from the experience of the ASHA group.

The ruggedness of today’s ASHA experience is a product of the service-orientation that is central to the Arizona equestrian lifestyle in and around Grand Canyon’s backcountry. Jean often, if not mostly, refers to her experience in the area as ‘work.’ The primary activity for the group was clearing fallen timber from trails, requiring hard physical labor (figure 4).

Figure 4: ‘hard work’

This hard work and rugged experience bands the group together as modern-day pioneers living the Arizona equestrian lifestyle at the north rim of Grand Canyon’s backcountry.

One of the most valuable characteristics of the experience in and around Grand Canyon’s north rim backcountry, as indicated by Jean, is the fostering of relationships. Particularly Jean indicated the experience as being rich with intergenerational experience with young and old working together; teaching and learning. The familial bonds that are forged, affirmed, and/or re-affirmed are of central value to Jean and indeed characterize the Arizona equestrian lifestyle at Grand Canyon (figure 5).

Figure 5: ‘intergeneration experience’

It is concluded here that the Arizona equestrian lifestyle is that of the modern day pioneer. The experience of the modern-day pioneer is one that benefits from past progress and values making a contribution to ongoing progress through hard work, ingenuity, and strengthening family and group relationships. The Arizona equestrian lifestyle as it is manifest in the lived experience in and around Grand Canyon's backcountry is characterized by hard work and a sense of civic responsibility that bolsters camaraderie and facilitates intergenerational togetherness.

Grand Canyon Field Institute: Mike

The Grand Canyon Field Institute (GCFI) is the field seminar program for the Grand Canyon Association (GCA), a non-profit cooperating association that has been assisting Grand Canyon National Park in the areas of science, education, and research since 1932. GCFI was launched in 1993, and has shared the canyon's rich natural and cultural history with over ten thousand participants. Individual classes range from one to eighteen days in length. Each has an educational component that ties into one of the half dozen park-wide interpretive themes as identified by the National Park Service.

Mike Buchheit, director of GCFI, first experienced the Grand Canyon in the late 80s on a series of backpacks from his home in Phoenix. He relocated to Grand Canyon National Park in 1994, and has been with GCFI ever since. In addition to his administrative duties, Mike leads natural history and photography classes as a GCFI instructor.

As GCFI classes are more learning adventures than strict academic affairs, an emphasis on enjoyment and relaxation inevitably shares equal footing. Mike's approach to the backcountry, with or without students, is no exception to this rule. The photo of a happy couple below Mooney Falls begins to convey these priorities (figure 6).

Figure 6: 'relaxing and enjoying a poignant moment'

"These hikers are obviously grooving with the waterfall here. Facts and figures certainly have their place, but I'm not sure how one could improve on this moment by telling them the chemical composition of travertine rock or the role of mineralization in the hue of the water. Personally, my most poignant moments in the canyon have been when I've taken the time to sit, relax and quietly observe my surroundings."

The couple are relaxed and enjoying themselves. For Mike, moments like this, in places like this, are touching.

The importance of relaxation and enjoyment to the GCFI backcountry experience was further described when discussing a photo taken along the bank of the Little Colorado River (figure 7).

Figure 7: 'everyone needs to relax sometime'

"I took this shot after leaving behind sixteen frolicking river runners that are eating lunch during a recent GCFI river trip I was on. After talking all morning I definitely needed some time alone to recharge."

Mike believes it is beneficial for an instructor or guide to create relaxing places throughout a trip so they can find their own personal balance.

"You need to recharge and that's easily done by finding some quiet time, even if that means sneaking away from the group from time to time. It's impossible for anyone to be "on" for two weeks straight. When guides fail to take these kind of breaks during, and after their trips, it's a recipe for burnout."

In addition to GCFI students, relaxation and enjoyment are important to the GCFI staff experience. That GCFI staff finds time and/or creates places to relax is recognized as a key component of a fuller, more enriching experience.

For Mike, it is important that everyone have the opportunity to enjoy the backcountry experience in their own way, and that what works for one person, may not work for another. His shot of a group enjoying a geology lecture is an illustration of individualized appreciation and reflection on Grand Canyon's backcountry (figure 8).

Figure 8: 'individualized learning experience'

> *"I took this shot because everybody's seems to be doing their own thing while still engaged in a group experience. They're listening to the instructor but they're also taking in the views. In a way she is there to simply facilitate their individual experiences."*

With each person having different personal experiences, learning is enhanced through individualized connections with the landscape and the lecture material (i.e., geology).

Another reason Mike enjoys the backcountry in Grand Canyon is the evidence of overlapping civilizations, past ant present. His photo of Beamer's Cabin is an illustration of this (figure 9).

Figure 9: 'a history of overlapping civilizations'

This thousand-year-old cliff dwelling was re-inhabited in the late 1800's by Ben Beamer; an 'entrepreneur trying to eke out a living.' The structure was built under sandstone overhang to provide shelter.

> *"You find this cultural 'layering' all over the canyon. If you discover a really neat place to relax, beat the heat and have lunch, chances are that people have been drawing that same conclusion for thousands of years."*

This interconnectedness of cultures, past and present, is one of the underlying reasons Mike finds Grand Canyon so fascinating, and why after two thousand miles of backcountry travel he feels as if he is "just getting started."

According to Mike, the GCFI backcountry experience is a learning adventure. Relaxation and enjoyment are key components of the GCFI backcountry experience for both students and staff. Through individualized backcountry experiences, the adventure into the backcountry offers individuals the opportunity to relax, enjoy, and learn in their own way. The GCFI learning adventure is a personal experience in a fascinating historical landscape that is characterized in part by overlapping civilizations.

Grand Canyon Field Institute: Nick

Nick, a GCFI instructor/guide, presents a version of the GCFI backcountry experience compliments Mike's account by its focus on learning and personal exploration of the backcountry's geologic formations. Whereas Mike described a GCFI learning adventure characterized by relaxation, enjoyment, and individual learning experiences, Nick describes a learning experience in which the geologic history of the canyon is felt. For Nick, the GCFI backcountry experience is a rewarding exploration that is characterized by effort and rocks.

Effort is a consistent hallmark of the GCFI experience in the backcountry. Nick describes the investment of hiking in the backcountry as an integral part of the experience. With a keen focus on the geology of the canyon, Nick describes his experience with the rocks of the backcountry.

Nick's photo of a slot canyon, "on the north side down west," (figure 10) provides an alternative view to the more widely recognizable, 'wide open vistas of the canyon.' The experience of being in the, 'backcountry narrows,' is a result of an ongoing personal, physical investment that is characteristic of the backcountry experience.

Figure 10: 'backcountry narrows'

"These narrow canyons offer a more intimate personal experience. You expend a large amount of energy to get into them and then when you come around a corner you see a different view and then there's little obstacles to negotiate. Looking at these obstacles is fun and you know it allows you time out during your backpack to do something you don't normally do in Grand Canyon or normally do anywhere else I'd say."

For Nick, the backcountry's slot canyons are experienced as an investment of physical effort in getting to them initially, and then further hiking through them.

The investment in hiking through the narrows of the backcountry; the view and the experience of moving through the landscape, are characterized by the immediacy of the park's geology. This is a form of experiential geology in which the rocks of the canyon present 'an overpowering view that is tremendous to look at and offer some really interesting hiking'. The physical investment in hiking and the challenge of the canyon's geology are key components of the GCFI backcountry experience. This experiential geology is further characterized by an understanding of the canyon's rocks in relation to the ecosystem of the area.

Nick's photo of potholes in the esplanade sandstone, taken north of the river in the park's west end (Figure 11) reveals a unique aesthetic in which the landscape serves the inhabitants of the area.

Figure 11: 'esplanade sandstone and the ecosystem'

> *"This is what most of the area looks like, deep, broad expanse of esplanade sandstone; kind of a wide bench marked by pot holes, [offering a view that] doesn't look like classic Grand Canyon… The water is great and it sort of adds interest to the image [and] it's just so much water, not in a creek or spring… It's fun to look at, and I recall stopping and chatting about these too and their importance from an ecological point of view and their habitat values for the immediate as well as surrounding areas."*

The geology of this place offers the area's flora and fauna a vital source of water as well as a unique aesthetic.

The backcountry narrows and the water-filled potholes of the esplanade sandstone are described as 'unique sights.' In contrast, Nick presents "a classic Grand Canyon sight" in figure 12.

Figure 12: ‘a classic grand canyon sight’

“[This is a] classic Grand Canyon sight. Pretty cliffs, Ocotillo blooming, so it’s springtime…”

For Nick, a lively and colorful palate and a grand scale are characteristic of a classic Grand Canyon sight. Along with unique and classic sights of the backcountry, Nick presents a geologic version of human history in the canyon.

Having described the imposing geology of the 'backcountry narrows,' the unique watering holes of the esplanade sandstone, and the classic sight of cliffs and flowers-in-bloom, Nick goes on to show us a particularly human dimension of the canyon's geology. Photos of an *"[approximately] three to five thousand year old tool sitting on the ground"* (figure 13) elicits a history of human manipulation of Canyon rocks.

Figure 13: 'rocks as historic human tools: a bi-face point'

"The reason I find this great is that that's a large bi-face point from the image you see the scale, this thing is several centimeters long, and it's sitting on the ground next to a roasting feature."

These types of points were used for cutting while the adjacent roasting feature represents another way that humans historically used the canyon's rocks to their benefit. A picture of a roasting feature, like that adjacent to the 'bi-face point,' is seen in figure 14.

Figure 14: 'rocks as historic human tools: a roasting feature'

These roasting features are…

> "*typically one thousand years old piles of rocks that are roughly the same size. They were used to roast all sorts of stuff, as big as sheep, as small as reptiles and bunnies [and] agave plants.*"

The canyon's rocks have served humans as tools throughout history and these tools are geologic reminders of human history in the canyon.

For Nick, whether the view is unique or classic, the backcountry's important places are entwined with hiking effort, geology, and human history.

> *"So the exploration, when one invests time, is rewarded. A reward might be a big, fat point lying on the ground which is still there, it might be some potholes filled with water, it might be a blooming plant that I've not seen in awhile."*

These rewards are part of an experiential geology that is located in an ecosystem whose exploration requires a great deal of effort.

Grand Canyon Association: William

Grand Canyon Association (GCA) is represented by William. William serves as, among other things, a GCA photographer. While he was a relatively novice backpacker upon arrival at Grand Canyon, William's personal interest along with his photo assignments for GCA have taken him into the backcountry. For the purposes of this report, William's photos and the associated conversation are framed by the GCA mission.

The GCA mission statement is as follows: "It is the mission of the Grand Canyon Association to cultivate knowledge, discovery, and stewardship for the benefit of Grand Canyon National Park and its visitors." (GCA [online], 2007). The question to ask of GCA's mission statement with respect to William is: what is the GCA experience of discovering and learning about Grand Canyon's backcountry?

In this case, the photos that William selected to discuss were mostly taken while on GCA photo assignment(s) in the backcountry. As a GCA photographer William discussed the experience of discovery in the backcountry. Discovery and knowledge were cultivated through the many contrasts William found in the backcountry.

The experience of contrast in the backcountry is found in William's description(s) of 'life in really odd places.' William appreciates the backcountry as a place in which plants and humans are often positioned in contrast to the remote desert environment. The contrast of a plant growing out of a rock wall is appreciated as extraordinary and speaks to the fascinating character of the remote desert environment (figure 15).

Figure 15: ‘plants in really odd places – out of a rock wall’

This photo represents the amazing diversity of life…

> *“in really odd places. … This is right on a rock face and it’s growing out of whatever, some little dirt patch that has rotted out in the rock and that has been able to break down. [This is] just a fascinating thing about a desert environment. You don’t necessarily need Nebraska dirt or something like that to be able to grow things. Different things grow too.” ‘From the rim it looks like all stone, but on a closer level there’s a whole lot going on.’*

William appreciates the backcountry as a unique environment with fascinating finds like a plant growing out of a rock wall.

The contrast of plant life is further appreciated and understood when we look at a ‘gorgeous huge leafy flower growing in a relatively arid environment’ (figure 16).

Figure 16: ‘plants in really odd places – beautiful and deadly’

> *“[I]t’s a sacred datura plant. … They were all over the place and it was just gorgeous because this is such a huge leafy flower in a relatively arid area. The flower is also poisonous. It would be something that if you ate it, you probably wouldn’t recover.”*

The beauty of the flower contrasts with the other plant life in the environment. In addition to contrasting with other plant life, the flower represents a human contrast. The flower is both beautiful and deadly to humans. William’s knowledge of the sacred datura plant is centered on a human relationship with the environment. Along with plants in really odd places there is an appreciation of people [and their structures] in really odd places (figure 17).

Figure 17: ‘people in really odd places – Phantom Ranch’

> *“This is Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the canyon. It’s a lodging center as well as a restaurant that’s been there since 1922. … One thing that I think is really remarkably neat about this park is having something like that in such an odd location and you can [generally] only get to it by mule or by walking.”*

The type of human accommodation found at Phantom Ranch contrasts with anything one typically finds in such a remote, relatively inaccessible area.

William understands and further appreciates Phantom Ranch not just for its presence in such an odd place, but for the thoughtful actions of people that help to sustain such a unique place. “It’s an odd location and there are a lot of really neat stories about it. Everything that’s down there gets down there by mule. That kind of explains why there are only a couple of different dishes that they have in the restaurant every night. And they even do recycling down there and they send everything out sorted by mule. They compost all of their trash that can decompose down there and use it in the developed area … it’s almost like a self-sustaining little community down there.” A combination of minimalist accommodations and sustainable practices characterize Phantom Ranch.

To build and sustain a community at the bottom of Grand Canyon required crossing the Colorado River with supplies. The supply chain, however minimalist, to Phantom Ranch is made possible by two bridges across the river. While these bridges were made and used by people and pack animals, their contrast with the environment is indicative of the wilderness character of the backcountry. A picture of these bridges represents minimal impact on the wilderness by people (figure 18).

Figure 18: ‘people in really odd places – two bridges in the wilderness’

“You can actually see two bridges in this picture. One is the silver bridge in the foreground and one is called the black bridge or the Kaibab Bridge. These are the only two bridges that are between Navajo bridge [which is inside the national park, just a few miles south of the northwest boundary] and Needles, California. Even in 2005, or 2004 when this was taken, these are still the only two ways to get across the Colorado River for over 300 miles. To me, it’s a symbol of the incredible wilderness that’s here and how the wilderness has been protected really and not tried to make it live up to some sort of modern standard.”

Discovery and knowledge of the ways that plants and people characterize the park’s backcountry is central to the GCA experience. According to William the backcountry experience is one of contrast. The contrast of the backcountry is further characterized by plants and people, found together in odd places. Plants are found in seemingly inhospitable environments and their beauty is significant to people in unexpected ways. Phantom Ranch and the two bridges (i.e., black and silver) are hallmarks of people in the backcountry that stand in contrast to, and are reminders of, a relatively vast wilderness. In this case, the GCA backcountry experience is one in which knowledge is cultivated through discussion of human-environment contrast and discovery.

Grand Canyon National Park Science Center: Dave

The Grand Canyon National Park Science Center (i.e., Science Center) is focused on knowledge acquisition according to identified areas of informational need. These areas of informational need are identified in terms of academic disciplines and are also specified by ecosystem. The academic disciplines are: "(a) ecosystem management, (b) cultural sciences, anthropology, and archaeology, (c) natural resources, (d) social and recreation science, visitor use, and (e) administrative and legal topics." The specified ecosystmes for which information is needed are: "(f) Colorado River and riparian ecosystems, (g) forest ecosystems, and h. groundwater, cave, and karst ecosystems" (NPS Science Center [online] 1998). The mission of the Science Center is to serve the park's informational needs in these various disciplines and ecosystems.

The Science Center is represented by Dave, a staff member who has learned about and shared the backcountry as both a scientist and an educator. While involved in an array of research projects with the Science Center, Dave has also served as an instructor for a Northern Arizona University (NAU) field course held largely in the backcountry. As a scientist in the field, Dave's intense curiosity to see everything he can see is something that drives him, literally, to great heights. As an educator, Dave treasures the opportunity to share the experience of bonding with the canyon and its rich history.

When looking at a photo of his students enrolled in the NAU field course – titled 'Grand Canyon Semester,' Dave described the importance of sharing the Grand Canyon experience (figure 19).

Figure 19: ‘sharing in the Grand Canyon experience’

> *“I think one of the coolest things about Grand Canyon for me is getting to share it with other people. … [This is] a day hike with lessons along the way. …These students… get to spend, you know, 120 days learning everything they possibly can about the Grand Canyon; soaking up every little bit and piece about it, all of its history, geology, natural history, politics and the whole thing. So it’s just really cool to have all that with these students and experience that. And just watch them understand the Grand Canyon, and begin to put themselves in the picture of being part of Grand Canyon and understanding the place.”*

Dave further described how these relationships with the landscape grow through learning about the canyon.

> *“When you look at something and you don’t know anything about it and it’s completely, it doesn’t mean anything to you. But the more you learn about it, the more you understand it, it’s incredible, it grows.”*

To learn about a place provides it meaning. The student’s relationships with the landscape become more meaningful as they experience and learn more about the area. To watch the canyon grow in meaning for his students through their first-hand relationship with it means a lot to Dave.

The discussion of a Native American pictograph provides an example of how the backcountry has grown in meaning for Dave personally (figure 20).

Figure 20: ‘experiencing the artifacts of human history’

> *“Um, just incredible pictographs down there, and you know the association of artifacts and pictographs is, actually these are two pictographs right here, so the association of getting to learn about these from archaeologists over the past ten years and talk to people and being able to work with the archaeologists is, you know, some of these things are three-thousand years old, desert archaic culture. It’s really neat to see that sort of stuff. To think about the amazing associations that those folks [three thousand years ago] had with the Grand Canyon, that’s really cool.”*

Learning about backcountry rock art from archaeologists over the years has enriched Dave’s relationship with the landscape. As he pondered life in this place eons ago, he imagined what life might have been like for the person whose hand(s) made these marks.

A strong connection with the human history of the backcountry is one of the primary ways in which the meaning of the backcountry grows for Dave. Dave recognizes some plants as evidence of human history. For Dave, a photo of a rare agave plant is evidence of farmers in the area eons ago (figure 21).

Figure 21: ‘a rare agave plant; an agricultural artifact’

> *“that’s a very, very rare agave and you don’t find it in too many places. It’s near the river in about 4 places in Grand Canyon and you know there are so many agaves in Grand Canyon, but you see this thing and it’s totally different. … This agave is cultivated and it clones itself and this is probably the leftovers of what was an area where these agaves were being farmed. … So, the clone of that agave is, you know, probably, oh, 900 years old or so. ... This is a perfect coming together of people and the landscape. People and land.”*

By recognizing a rare type of agave plant, Dave identifies with the areas agricultural history. Farmers in this place grew this plant long ago. Accordingly, Dave feels situated in the area’s agricultural history though he himself is not a farmer.

Dave *is* an avid hiker and climber and his felt sense of human history is more fully articulated as he talks about maneuvering through the backcountry environment in the same manner as those people before him. When discussing a photo showing a van-sized boulder wedged high up in a large crevice, Dave talks about following in the footsteps of those that have passed through the area before him throughout history (figure 22).

Figure 22: ‘following historic footsteps through the backcountry’

“Oh, that’s the chock stone at White Creek. So there’s a great photo of the Kolb brothers right here in this spot; Emory and Ellsworth Kolb. And I, you know, I think the reason I took this spot is because that’s the depth and the layers of the history in Grand Canyon. And it’s, my favorite thing is climbing these buttes and thinking about who else was there before me, and sometimes people who I’ve never met, I’ve just heard stories about, and I think about them doing that butte for the very first time and what that experience was like for them and that I’m following on the same handholds, same footholds, and working the same sections that they were. And, you know, that whole idea that you’re following in somebody else’s footsteps. … You know, and it’s just kind of, it’s these passages through time we’re all doing these similar things and sharing a lot of these things.”

Dave recognizes this place as the site of an historic photo of two prominent figures associated with the park’s history; the Kolb brothers. This and other historic associations provide Dave a sense that he is sharing this experience with earlier explorers of the area. In this way, Dave connects with the human history of maneuvering in and through the backcountry.

In addition to connecting with explorers-past by following in their footsteps, the experience of backcountry travel is appreciated as a rewarding physical challenge (figure 23).

Figure 23: ‘a fun little scramble’

“That’s a fun butte to go up. It’s very close. Quick to get to. Fun little scramble. … when I look at that thing it feels like it’s a long ways down there and it’s a lot of effort to get to it. … There’s a scramble around the backside there but it’s really fun. It’s got some cool route finding on it and it’s got this great chimney and this kind of exposed traverse move towards the summit rock, so it’s a really fun climb and then there’s also several other routes on the face of it, the eastern face. …mostly you know it’s just getting up there and getting down that’s all the fun part. So, once I’m up there it’s like, ‘now we gotta get off this thing; better do it.’ [laughter].”

The different routes and requisite maneuvers to reach the top of this butte are an enjoyable challenge for Dave. While he recognizes that physical exertion is involved, reaching the top of this butte is thought of as a “fun little scramble” to test his skills and agility.

While appreciating the physical activity involved in ascending the pillars of the backcountry, it is a characteristic curiosity that drives Dave to great heights. As a researcher and educator, Dave is intensely curious. This curiosity and desire were exemplified as Dave discussed an afternoon solo hike to the summit of a large butte (figure 24).

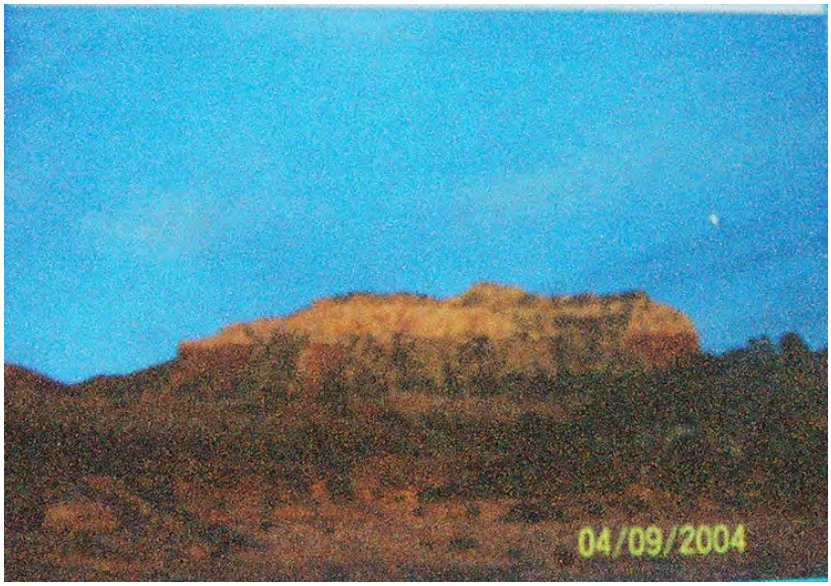

Figure 24: 'taken to the top by curiosity'

> *"I had gone up there to the top of that thing maybe three or four [in the afternoon] and it was in the middle of our work week coming down … and it was like 'hey does anybody want to go up there and hike?' And everyone was like, 'no,' you know, 'too tired to go,' and I was pretty tired too, but I knew I wanted to go up there and might not have the chance again. And so, had to do it. … I was too tired to do it, but you know, once I did it, it was more than worth it. It was incredible. It was really, really fun. I saw some pretty lizards on the hike, really nice pictographs, really fun summit."*

Dave's curiosity overcame his fatigue and experiencing the animals and artifacts of the area while reaching the highest height were rewarding. For Dave, discovering vaiours places and exploration of the limitless buttes and side canyons is inherent to the backcountry experience. He is driven by a desire to see the unseen in the backcountry at every opportunity.

Dave's discussion of his photos described a sense of bonding with human history in the backcountry. As Dave stated early in the conversation:

> *"the human environment and the history is really important to this place and I feel like it's a smooth bond, a great attachment."*

Dave experiences an historic bond with humans as he discovers relics from the past, including pictographs and rare plants leftover from Puebloan agriculture. Dave also experiences a bond with previous backcountry travelers as he hikes and climbs along the same routes. Driven by curiosity and desire to explore the landscape, Dave's maneuvering through the backcountry is enmeshed with the experience of bonding with human history. This experience is characteristic of the type of experience Dave loves to share with other people in the backcountry as he watches their relationships with the landscape grow.

Sierra Club: Eric

Eric is a hiker, backpacker, and Sierra Club member located in Flagstaff, AZ. The photos that were discussed were taken on an overnight backpacking trip with a friend. A review of the conversation about these photos in light of the Sierra Club's mission renders a dramatic backcountry exploration that appreciates contrast in the landscape, exploration of changes, and recognition of the areas stability.

The Sierra Club operates according to a basic four-part mission statement. The Sierra Club mission is to, "(1) Explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth; (2) Practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; (3) Educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; (4) Use all lawful means to carry out these objectives" (Sierra Club [online] 2006). The first directive of the mission gives structure to the narrative interpretation provided here. The question is: what is the experience of exploring and enjoying the backcountry at Grand Canyon?

Eric is a mellow traveler who likes to travel lightly and keep moving in the backcountry. During his exploration Eric made new footprints along an old path through the backcountry's natural architecture. Drama in the backcountry was central to Eric's experience as he hiked through the sand and rocks of the backcountry. During the conversation, pictures of wildflowers prompted an outline for a backcountry exploration characterized by a lived drama of contrasts; both of the senses and of survival in a harsh environment (figure 25).

Figure 25: ‘see and feel the contrast’

When discussing the image in figure 25, Eric stated:

> *“I think it’s a beautiful flower. I mean it has yellow centers and absolutely pure white petals against the background of the natural rocks, and it’s gorgeous. White on white is pretty boring, but this dramatic white against the very, you know, terra cotta colors with some dead grass or whatever in the background. It’s the contrast that makes the picture. The leaves of this plant; they don’t look very friendly, all spindly. The flowers in contrast to the leaves are just so delicate and almost feminine looking. … There’s a lot of contrast; the delicate flowers against the spiny leaves, and then there’s the contrast of the living flowers against the inert, non-living rock, and then the apparently dead grass in the background which isn’t really dead, it’s probably just gone to seed.”*

The drama of Eric’s backcountry exploration is initially characterized by sensory contrasts including the anticipated taste and feel along with the color differences between the wildflower and the earth from which it grows and it’s delicate appearance in rough terrain. In addition to these sensory contrasts, Eric begins to bring out the contrast of life in an apparently lifeless environment.

The contrast of survival in an inhospitable environment is further discussed when looking at a photo of another wildflower (figure 26).

Figure 26: ‘contrast of survival; life in an unlivable place’

“What’s interesting about this is that here’s a flower, this plant, just growing out of a crack. It looks like it’s compacted sand or silt, but even though it isn’t solid rock, it appears like solid rock and here’s this plant just stuck in the middle. And then there’s a little shadowy cave area back… so the background is black which makes the flower stick out more dramatically.”

The visual contrast mentioned here is overshadowed by the notion that this plant is alive at all. Seemingly growing out of a rock, this plant contrasts with the inert landscape by being alive.

In addition to the dramatic sensory contrasts and the contrast of survival, discussion about the following photo of wildflowers (figure 27) begins to explore the backcountry as a remote place where people rarely tread.

Figure 27: ‘wildflowers without footprints’

> *“[This photo shows] purple flowers with what looks like sandstone in the background. And this picture isn’t as dramatic [as the previous photo (figure 1)] but it’s kind of neat in that you’re getting, you’re starting to get down into the canyon. … You know, you don’t even see any footsteps or anything. It’s one of the reasons I like to go to the Grand Canyon; to get away from the built environment, you know, the city or whatever.”*

That there are no footprints is something Eric enjoyed as his exploration took him farther from the built environment. There’s no trace of other hikers and there are no human landmarks such as buildings. With no sign of other people in the area, Eric may have been the first person to see these wildflowers in bloom. Two more photos taken along Eric’s exploration describe a sandy hike through the natural architecture of the backcountry (figure 28 and 29).

Figure 28: ‘ephemeral footprints in the sands of the backcountry’

The sands of the backcountry were integral to Eric’s exploration and enjoyment of the backcountry.

> *“You really didn’t even see footsteps. There’s no trail. It’s basically all, just down, you’re walking on the wash, well there’s a few places where there’s trail but ninety percent of this you’re just walking on the sand, which, after the next storm, your footprints are gone. So you do have the feeling that you could’ve done this same hike 10,000 years ago and it wouldn’t have looked any different.”*

The shifting sands of the backcountry lend permanence to the backcountry experience. The area looks the same as it would’ve thousands of years ago. The continual wiping away of footprints in the sand provides each new explorer with a clean slate and a similar footprint-free experience. In this case, it is the shifting sands of the backcountry that wash away footprints; providing an unchanging backcountry experience.

While he appreciates an unchanging, footprint-free experience, Eric also appreciates change in the backcountry’s natural architecture. Eric likens the cliffs of the backcountry to the architecture of large buildings. The conversation stemming from a photo of backcountry cliffs contrasts the backcountry environment with the built environment and further acknowledges and appreciates the absence of people and their traces (figure 29).

Figure 29: ‘natural architecture of the backcountry’

“We’re getting pretty close to the Colorado and you know that’s the cliff on the other side of the river that you’re seeing in the middle. … It’s very dramatic and it has, sort of, interesting proportions. … it’s natural, no indications of development … That’s very dramatic. It almost feels like architecture; buildings; big, dramatic, like you can just imagine this being in Egypt or something; or big pyramids or whatever. But it’s all natural which is even better; and continually changing. … Where a building degrades gradually, this never degrades. It just changes. It keeps getting, maybe better, maybe the same, but always changing and always gorgeous.”

The dramatic cliffs of the backcountry are an example of nature’s architecture. The processes of change that affect natural and human architecture are contrasted here. Where human architecture degrades over time, natural architecture stays the same or gets better. For Eric, the natural architecture of the backcountry is getting better all the time.

In addition to drama and contrast among the backcountry’s natural architecture, natural quiet in the canyon is important to Eric.

“In the upper parts of the side canyon, there is essentially no sound. You can near the smallest thing, like the sound of an insect, or the sound of a bird gliding over. But as you get closer to the Colorado River, you hear and feel the power of the water flow. The contrast makes you appreciate the natural quiet and the natural sounds. Natural quiet is an important factor, giving the canyon a power of place.”

To Eric, the variation in natural sounds of the canyon is connected to understanding power in nature and allows anyone who travels to these places to sense it.

Eric's exploration was characterized by dramatic contrasts; both of the senses and of survival in a seemingly unlivable, but actually welcoming, environment. Discussing photos of wildflowers pointed to the contrasts of color, taste, and texture along with the contrast of survival in harsh environs. As his exploration led him through the natural architecture of the backcountry, the shifting sands at his feet provided him a footprint-free experience that Eric shared with eons of explorers before him. Eric's photos and discussion of his exploration - in accord with the Sierra Club mission - show how dramatic contrasts unfold among the natural architecture of the backcountry.

Grand Canyon Helicopters: Linda

The mission of Grand Canyon Helicopters (GCH) includes a characteristic focus on customer service. GCH recognizes part of their strength as being able to show the customer more of the park than they would be able to see with more traditional means of transport such as hiking, biking, mule riding, and driving (GCH [online], 2007). GCH is represented in this study by Linda, a GCH pilot. The photos discussed were taken along a popular air tour route. Linda's view from above provided a visual timeline of the earth's history dating back approximately one billion years to the oldest exposed rock in the backcountry [and the world].

The first view of the backcountry along the tour served to introduce a timeline of earth's history according to the rocks of the backcountry (figure 30).

Figure 30: 'first sight - the oldest exposed rock on earth'

> *"So I wanted to take the picture of the rock near the Colorado river because this is the, well one of the oldest kind of rock on the earth… this is the first view you can see when you enter the wider part and also the deepest opening of the Grand Canyon."*

As she discussed the photo, Linda pointed to the black rock near the river as being the oldest exposed rock on earth. That billion-year-old rock is the beginning of earth's geologic timeline as it is seen while flying over the backcountry.

The timeline became more detailed as a photo of two prominent landscape features - Confucius and Menscius temples – elicited conversation focused on historic processes of climate change that is indicated by the color of the rocks (figure 31).

Figure 31: ‘three hundred million years of climate change, and a mystery’

> *“This reddish brown layer anywhere you can see, this is the one you are looking at about 300 million years ago, and this was a time when the Grand Canyon was a swamp. ... The Coconino sand - this is the sand-based colored layer right above the reddish brown layer - this was formed about 270 million years ago and this layer was desert by that time. And one of the most interesting things [is that] it took only about five years to go from swamp to desert.”*

Linda describes the colored rock layers that represent varying Grand Canyon climates over the course of hundreds and thousands of years. An interesting thing happens along the timeline here. For roughly 30 million years, the Grand Canyon was swamp and in approximately five years it became desert. This anomaly is a mysterious shift that guides us along our timeline to the top of the canyon through the course of 270 million years. The identification of historical climate change according to the rock layers lends meaning and mystery to the colorful panorama.

A photo of Linda's favorite canyon wall provides a visual synopsis of earth's geologic timeline in the backcountry (figure 32).

Figure 32: 'one billion years of earth's history; a geologic snapshot'

> *"We are looking at south side and this is my favorite wall. … And so this can capture this wall, the south side of the canyon, you can see from a billion years ago or this is 300 million years ago and on the top is 250 million years ago. So this is a neat wall, we can see the history of this earth from a billion years ago."*

The geologic timeline from one-billion-year-old rock near the river to more recent rock at the rim is seen in this photo as evidence of climatic changes represented by the colorful rock layers. Linda appreciates this view as a geologic snapshot of geologic time, telling about one billion years of the earth's climate history.

Linda gave an account of earth's geologic history as it is experienced while flying over the backcountry. Experiencing the backcountry from above has provided an overview of the backcountry's geology that accounts for one billion years of earth's history and climate change. Linda's aerial tour of the backcountry was in the grand panorama of the many rock layers and witnessing their various hues and color changes from above. This vantage point provided a unique perspective of the Canyon's geologic history.

Four Seasons Guides: Katie

Four Seasons Guides (FSG) is one of several Commercial Use Authorizations (CUA) holders that conduct for-profit business within the park according to the terms specified by their permit. As an CUA holder, FSG conducts private, guided hikes in the backcountry. Katie, a former FSG guide with more than fifteen years of backpacking experience at Grand Canyon, represents FSG in this research.

FSG's mission reads as follows: "Four Season Guides strives to provide a quality experience in any adventure you choose to discover" (FSG [online], 2007) available online at: http://www.fsguides.com/; accessed, 7/23/07). In questioning this basic mission, the analysis of the conversation about Katie's photos is geared toward answering a single question: what is a quality guided-hike experience in the backcountry? The photos that were discussed were taken while Katie was guiding hikes in the Bright Angel Corridor (aka 'the Corridor'). As a result, Katie's stories were almost exclusively of guiding hikes in the Corridor.

Katie became a guide and did it as long as her body would allow because she enjoys sharing the canyon with people. Unfortunately, canyon hiking took a toll on her ankles and knees that required medical attention and physical therapy resulting in her 2003 retirement from guiding hikes. While guiding visitors through the Corridor, Katie described a number of things that contribute to a quality experience. Clean and convenient amenities along with good group dynamics were described as components of quality, guided backpacks in the Corridor. Katie also gave a number of examples of things she enjoyed sharing with her guests in the backcountry including rock formations, condors, mules, ideas of landscape change, and a leave no trace ethic.

Beginning with a backcountry toilet (figure 33), the cleanliness and convenience of the backcountry's kitchens and bathrooms (figures 33, 34, and 35) are identified as some of the nuts and bolts that comprise a quality backcountry experience.

Figure 33: ‘backcountry toilet’

> *“Toilets are very important to us. Especially dealing with the commercial sector where we deal with people who are experiencing the backcountry for the first time. Just the thought that they have a toilet is comforting to them. Even so, something like this is a really gross, hard reach for them. … It’s important to make that transition a little bit easier. If our toilets look gross and unappealing for people to use, that’s where we’ have people just using the trails and just outside of their camp instead of walking into the bathroom. They’re thinking, ‘oh, the toilet stinks worse than it does out here, why am I going to go into the bathroom.’ So, making the bathrooms cleaner promotes using them.”*

The cleaner the toilets are in the backcountry, the better the experience for Katie and her clients. Katie’s clients typically feel outside of their comfort zone in the backcountry and going to the bathroom in such a different environment can be challenging. If the toilet is clean, Katie’s clients are more likely to use the toilet instead of other areas in and around the campground. The comfort of a clean toilet enhances the experience of novice hikers and backpackers tremendously and in turn keeps the campground(s) and surrounding area(s) clean for everyone.

Moving from the bathroom(s) to the kitchen(s) of the Corridor, Katie described the convenience and safety provided by a small concrete ‘cook stand’ at Bright Angel Campground (figure 34).

Figure 34: 'backcountry cook stand'

"I love this. This is at Bright Angel campground… the little cook stands for you to put your stove on. It's level, it's safe, and it's so easy. … I don't want my stove to be uneven so that I risk the chance of dumping boiling water on somebody. … I love that it says, 'cook.' It means people are cooking in one area so if we have spills and things like that, it's a little more confined. … I love having a level base where I can toss my stove and I know I'm not going to have an issue. … Most people on a private trip aren't trying to cook for everybody in their group and get it done now because the group is hungry now. … These things just make it easier and that's what's nice."

As a guide, Katie's concerns included timely, safe, and low-impact food preparation for her customers. With backcountry cooking it is extremely important that the stove/burner has a sturdy level base to reduce the possibility of cooking-related injury. In addition, by spelling out the word 'cook' this cook stand further directs people to set up their stoves there. By offering a convenient, safe, and well-marked place to cook, the cook stand speeds up food prep, reduces the possibility of injury, and confines the overall area that is impacted by cooking leftovers such as food scraps.

The importance of convenience and cleanliness in the kitchen(s) of the Corridor was further indicated as Katie discussed a photo of the sinks at Indian Gardens (figure 35).

Figure 35: 'the kitchen sink'

> *"This is the sinks and water source at Indian Gardens. …It's easy in the sense that the water is close to you wherever you're at in that campground. … When you're guiding, you're cooking everybody's food, you're cleaning everybody's food and to have that quick access is really nice. To have this big sink that makes it easy to wash dishes and not worry about food particles going anywhere else."*

The central location of the sinks at Indian Gardens makes them accessible from anywhere in the campground. The large, contained area for washing dishes is appreciated for its easy access and the ability it affords the dishwasher/guide in getting the dishes clean while minimizing impact from food scraps.

Katie's clear concern for proper food scrap disposal (see figures 34 and 35) is couched in a personal 'leave no trace' ethic.

> *"A huge thing I like about taking people into the canyon is teaching a balance of tourism versus leave no trace. I'm a big leave no trace fan. Explaining to people, you know… food scraps lead to red ants, red ants lead to scorpions, scorpions lead to mice, and mice lead to rattlesnakes. They say things like, 'wow, I've never thought about it.' Teaching people about how you can be in an area and not impact it is important."*

Katie's deep concern with properly disposing of food scraps is driven by an understanding that the area will be impacted according to a predatory food chain that will, among other things, lead poisonous animals to the area. Sharing her leave no trace ethic with people is something that Katie enjoys as a personal contribution to keeping the backcountry clean and safe.

Along with the cleanliness, convenience, and safety of Corridor amenities, Katie pointed to group dynamics as an important factor in determining the quality of the experience. In particular Katie discussed the importance of a positive mental attitude and commitment to the experience (figure 36).

Figure 36: ‘positive mental attitude’

“This was probably my favorite trip of the season. These guys were phenomenal. … There are four of them. You don’t see the fourth guy. The fourth guy, he was about sixty-eight [years old] and he biked entirely across the United States. He’s in super phenomenal shape. This was his wife. This was her dream. She’d been training for a year with a pack and then these two guys from Ohio, who were just hilarious; brother-in-laws, had wanted to hike the canyon and we just had the best group dynamics. They were mules. They were total packhorses willing to do anything. This was my first five-day trip of the season that year … and these guys were in it and made it really easy.”

The willingness of this group to try new things and their commitment to the work involved enhanced their experience, and Katie’s too. Their physical conditioning is a testament to their commitment and positive mental attitude. In turn, Katie enjoyed sharing the canyon with her fellow travelers as the group embraced the challenge of backcountry travel.

It is sharing the canyon with her guests that Katie enjoys most of all.

“I love sharing the canyon with people. One of the highlights of guiding, and why I did it for so long, was that I never got bored hiking the same trail everyday because every trip was new… you’re experiencing it with somebody new for the first time. … Everybody shows you something you didn’t see before. I love that about the Canyon; I’ll never see it all. I’ll never experience it all and it will just constantly amaze me.”

Katie loves sharing the canyon with her guests and learning from them as well. The experience of hiking with different people along the same trails has provided a variety of new learning opportunities and chances to share different aspects of the canyon.

Katie gave a number of examples of things she enjoys sharing with visitors in the Corridor.

> *"Getting to show people Plateau Point at sunset is phenomenal. … It amazes them and we sit out there and we talk about all the points, we talk about all the layers. Some of the best times out there have been when there's storms over the north rim. All the clouds make the colors just blow up. … I love taking people down to boat beach and we talk about the Colorado River. People don't understand the evolution of the Colorado River and how it is now versus how it was before the Glen Canyon Dam was erected. … It's great seeing condors, getting to point them out, and showing people how to identify a condor. If there's a big bird in the sky and you don't see it flap its wings for a long, long time, you know it's a condor. I love getting people to see those things."*

Showing people the canyon's rock formations and colors; discussing landscape change along the river; and teaching people about the area's wildlife such as Condors, are a few of the many things Katie enjoys sharing with her guests in the Corridor. While Katie enjoys these things and in turn wants to share them with people, there are other things she enjoys sharing with visitors.

While discussing a photo of a popular destination along the South Kaibab trail, Katie described characteristics of the backcountry that her guests look forward to in anticipation of their experience (figure 37).

Figure 37: 'an ideal [quick] introduction to the backcountry'

> *"I take pretty much any guests that are visiting from out of town on the South Kaibab to Cedar Ridge. Specifically why I like this mile and a half hike down is that you're on a ridgeline hike so your views are a lot better. … This is what people who want to experience the Grand Canyon want to see. They want to see the mules. They want to get their picture taken by a mule. … [While] you can't call anyplace in the Grand Canyon a bad view … it's just your expanse that you can see the panorama … you can see all the cloisters, all the temples. It's a cool hike. It's a good hike. You have a bathroom. You know, good things."*

Katie described the panoramic vista(s) that overlooks myriad rock formations along with the presence of mules and a sanitary facility as reasons she takes out of town guests to Cedar Ridge. The view and the mules are things people look forward to experiencing while the toilet provides a sense of comfort for the inexperienced Canyon hiker. This is a place that concisely and comfortably fulfills and exceeds the basic expectations of Katie's guests.

As a backcountry host of sorts, the amenities offered and their respective conditions are important to Katie as they contribute to a quality guided-hike experience in the backcountry. The cleanliness of Corridor toilets is important in easing people into an environment that is outside of their comfort zone. Cook stands offer convenience of use and safety in setting up and using backcountry stoves; providing food to hungry backpackers fast. Conveniently located sinks provide easy access and allow contained clean up of dishes. All of these amenities are ultimately thought to aid in 'leaving no trace.'

Perhaps more important than the availability and condition of the Corridor amenities in determining the quality of the backcountry experience is the positive mental attitude of the group. By being committed to the experience and staying positive, the group as a whole benefits tremendously. The positive attitude of the group along with the convenience, cleanliness, and safety of the Corridor's kitchen(s) and bathroom(s) are all determinants of a quality guided-hike experience.

Arizona Wilderness Coalition/Grand Canyon Wildlands Council: Kim

The Grand Canyon Wildlands Council (GCWC) is a member of a consortium of organizations - the Arizona Wilderness Coalition (AWC) – dedicated to wilderness protection in Arizona. The AWC organizes state wilderness issues according to their geographic locale. The GCWC is focused on wilderness issues in northwestern Arizona and largely directs its energies on wilderness issues in and surrounding GCNP.

The AWC/GCWC is represented here by Kim. Kim selected his photographs initially to bring some pertinent wilderness issues to light in our conversation. However, after an initial conversation about Kim's photos on river running, the topic turned toward Kim's personal backcountry hiking experiences. Through this conversation the beauty and tragedy of the backcountry and of life took shape.

Kim has completed graduate work in outdoor recreation, *"worked as a river guide for a little over ten years,"* and, *"a river ranger and wilderness manager in Grand Canyon for twelve."* As a former guide, ranger, and wilderness manager with a history of graduate work in outdoor recreation, Kim entered our conversation with a uniquely honed preference for management action. Kim's history with wilderness issues and management has provided a personal outlook aligned with the AWC mission.

> *"The Arizona Wilderness Coalition's (AWC) mission is to permanently protect and restore Wilderness and other wild lands and waters in Arizona for the enjoyment of all citizens and to ensure that Arizona's native plants and animals have a lasting home in wild nature."* (AWC [online], 2007)

While remembering his favorite places in the backcountry, Kim told the story of *"an essential Grand Canyon hike."* He began by describing the physical characteristics that comprised the beauty of Tapeats Creek:

> *"I just love, well it has some bad memories too, but I just love the narrows, you know the mouth, when you're hiking above there and looking in and then looking down through the river, hiking up toward where Thunder River comes in. But the hike from Tapeats Creek up to Thunder River itself, as you start looking at where you're going you're in this immense canyon but you also have this spectacular gorge below you. It's just always kind of an essential Grand Canyon hike."*

The hike to Thunder River is an exploration that Kim *"would hate to pass up"* if he were in the area. Kim describes the beautiful combination of the size of the surrounding canyon along with dramatic vistas at his feet. Along the way, the walls of the narrows directs your sight and provides close-ups of the canyon. At times new views are discovered along the way, and with these vistas are new destinations to explore. Along this essential hike, particularly from Tapeats Creek up to Thunder River, the physical beauty of the area provides a sense of discovery as even-more spectacular sights come into focus.

In addition to discovering the area's beauty, Kim also recounts a sad event that took place there.

> *"A friend of mine was killed there. We had a trail project and it was snowing down at the bottom there, and he got hit with a rock and we had to deal with that and it took all day to get him out and he died; the military came in and got him, but we were doing the CPR on him*

and I mean, he was gone, when came to a little bit, couldn't move he had broken his neck. So that's just, there's that's one section of trail that's a real narrow place where you start to climb up and then two of my friends were right there and neither one of them could've gotten picked off too so, and that comes back. … I've had a lot of friends, you know when I was in Vietnam twice and I had a lot of friends who got shot and stuff like that. You know, but this, this one kind of evokes pretty strong feelings."

Kim was visibly saddened as he recounted the loss of his friend in this place. The landscape evokes memories of his younger life and the friends with whom he hiked and worked. These memories have not faded for him, and the landscape features of Tapeats Creek and its trails are markers for the events and people of his life. Kim recognizes the majestic beauty of Tapeats Creek and values it for many things – its wilderness qualities, the sense of discovery it provides, and the friends he has come to know in sharing his life experiences.

"It's just life. You know, a lot of things happen and lot of it is good some of it's bad. And, um, but it's just a beautiful place with all that, good stories and some bad stories."

Kim's able to put the risks of wilderness experiences and events in a larger context of his life. He understands that Grand Canyon's backcountry is not just about good things and positive experiences. Kim realizes that the natural beauty of Grand Canyon does not protect people from harm and allows for both 'good stories' and 'bad stories' to unfold.

The ups and downs of the backcountry are at the core of Kim's experience. When discussing two of his favorite, most memorable places Kim does not forget the good or bad. When describing a trans-river hike in December Kim spoke of the beauty along with the misery.

"The first time we did it we swam across the river and we had stored some wet suits and thought we'd swim across the river. It took us three times to get all our crap across. This is like in December, but we probably won't do that again. Then hiked down the Bounty ridge which is just upstream from Nankoweap to Phantom and that was probably, along the Butte fault, that's probably the most memorable hike. But I'll never do it again. It took us ten days, just a long slug, and I mean an incredible hike but just, by the time I got through with that I was tired … You kind of wonder if you're going to live through this one or not, but it's really, talk about a lot of variety; just absolutely gorgeous."

While remembering this once-in-a-lifetime hike, Kim accounted for both the beauty and the difficulty. The misery of this "*absolutely gorgeous"* hike was enough to elicit a degree of mortal contemplation. As Kim continued to recount his memorable experiences, the good and bad characteristics both framed his narrative.

Kim didn't forget to mention the pros and cons of his experience as he described hiking in to one of his favorite places in the world – Nankoweap beach.

"[It's] just the vistas, you know, coming out, you've got to hike out of House Rock Valley and you go to the saddle and then Grand Canyon, and hike along the Esplanade along the esplanade sandstone to the Supai spectacular looking into the Chuar valley, the Nankoweap valley and Chuar it's just really strikingly different, really wild. And then getting down to Nankoweap creek and Nankoweap beach is one of my favorite spots in the world. Huge massive walls right across the river, so everything about it is marvelous…going in. Going

out is just a long hard trail. It's another thousand feet of elevation so. I mean, I don't like hiking out. I'll do it, because I've got to, but it's one of those things you don't look forward to but I love hiking in. …"

Kim describes a wilderness whose beauty shines through a variety of its landscapes, and the rugged journey that is a prerequisite to knowing its multifaceted beauty. For Kim, appreciating the wilderness of Grand Canyon's backcountry is intimately connected to physical labor and the work endured to get inside the canyon. Even the Hermit Loop requires physical conditioning and mental fortitude.

"I do enjoy like the Hermit's loop… and I always dread hiking out. I've probably done a hundred, certainly more than a hundred hikes coming out of the canyon, and it's just always there and you know as I walk along the rim I think you know I don't want to go back down, because then I have to try and stay in some kind of physical condition to endure that five hours it's going to take to get out of there. So that's sort of always there with Grand Canyon."

While appreciating the experience as enjoyable, Kim described the lasting consequences of the hike out. With so many hikes out of the canyon, Kim always has the return to the rim in mind as he contemplates his past experience(s). Kim's thoughts on hiking out are succinct in his statement: *"I'll tolerate the hike out, but I don't enjoy it."*

In discussing the good and bad of hiking in the backcountry, Kim once again draws a life metaphor of personal growth.

"It's sort of part of life's experience, you know you're young you make certain assumptions, but when you get to the hard reality of growing up which is turning around and hiking out again. By the time you get back out you'll have a pretty good perspective of what it's all about."

In this case, the hike into the canyon is likened to youthful exuberance; full of innocence and naiveté about the upcoming journey. The hike out is associated with the difficult experience of growing older, learning the lessons of life and providing one with a fuller meaning of the journey. Although not explicit, Kim suggests that wilderness travel is a learning experience, that for better or worse, one comes away a changed person.

It is these types of experiences that comprise the quality of wilderness in Grand Canyon's backcountry desirable to Kim and GCWC. He clearly regrets the death of his friend and most likely other bad stories from his experiences over the years. However, wilderness should not be a sheltered experience. Its beauty and opportunities to explore and discover are part of the same package as the risks, dangers, and physical pain. Kims stories help define his notion of the meaning of a 'quality' wilderness experience. 'Quality experience' doesn't always mean 'enjoyable experience.' Kim's experience in important backcountry places is, like life itself, comprised of both beauty and tragedy. Even the best experiences in the backcountry come with one caveat: the hike out. In the end, Kim's quality backcountry experience at Grand Canyon has been challenging and enlightening and through it all the beauty of the backcountry's important places persists.

NPS Trail Crew: Patrick

The NPS trail crew is an interesting stakeholder group with regard to their governing policy. As an internal unit of the NPS, the trail crew's operational directives are found spread across documents including the 1988 BMP (pp. 32, 38-39) and the 1995 GMP (pp. 13, 14, 16-7). The 1988 BMP goes into some detail about how backcountry trails are to be maintained, including a sample trail log for work done on the Grandview Trail on June 28, 1988 (pp. 42-45). The philosophy of minimal impact is clear in both of these documents and they seem to point to a simple, basic mission [prone to complex interpretation]: to build and maintain trails with minimal impact on the landscape while providing travelers with the degree of stability and guidance required by the trail location/use-zone. With their general mission so defined, the question of interest for NPS trail crew in this report is: what is the experience of building and/or fixing backcountry trails?

The NPS trail crew is represented here by Patrick. The photos discussed were all taken by Patrick while on assignment with the trail crew. While Patrick took these photos over the course of a few years, the discussion of these photos is represented here according to the passage of time in a typical work day. When one thinks of a typical work day they may likely think of some familiar landmarks and/or hallmarks that characterize the experience such as the commute, the work itself, and break-time. Patrick recognizes his work-day experience on trail crew as far from ordinary, and begins with experiencing the sunrise.

The summer sunrise on the way to work is one of the hallmarks of Patrick's backcountry experience on the trail crew (figure 38).

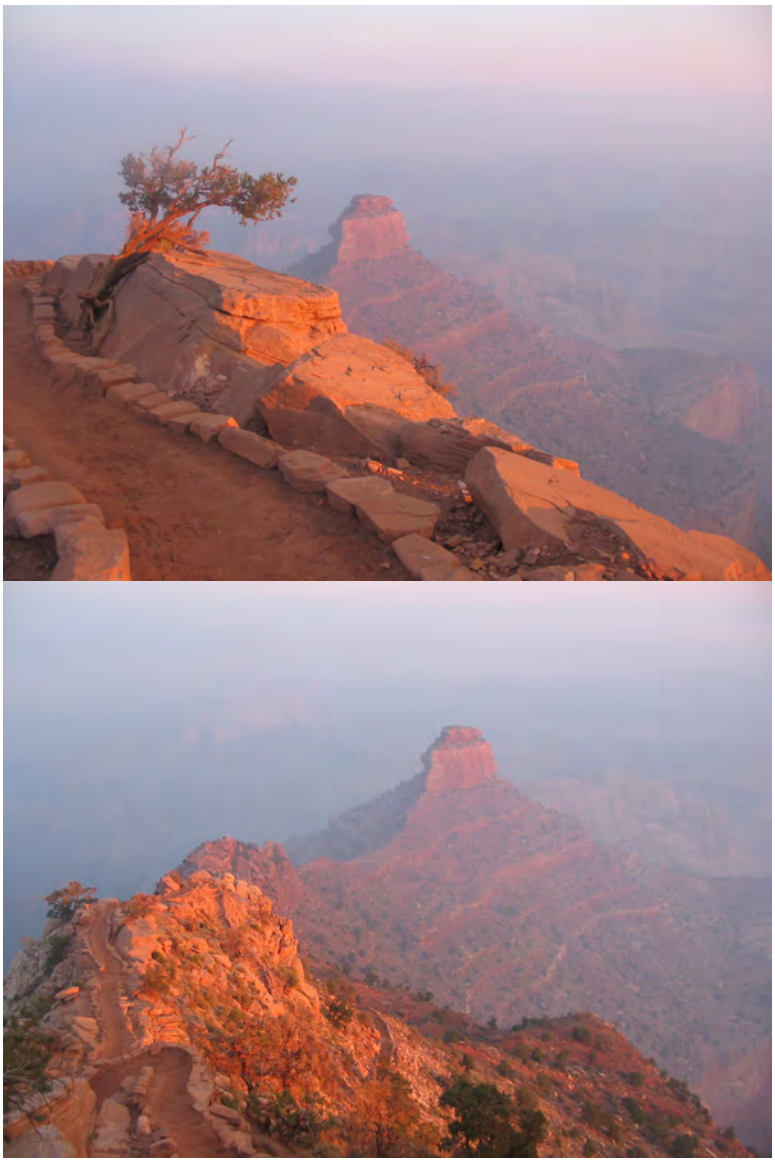

Figure 38: 'summer sunrise on the way to work'

"This was our commute to work every day. A mile and a half, though it just depends on where we're working on the trail. While most people sit in traffic, we're hiking down to our work site. It's really cool looking. It looks surreal with all the smoke and you can see the trail winding down to where we're working. And you can see the trail right here also, switching back. …this is an example of something that we see in the morning when we're commuting to our job site, especially in the summer, it's usually early enough that we watch the sunrise as we're hiking to work. We normally start at seven, in the summer we'll start at six and so we still catch that sunrise. Depending on where we're at and the time of year, it's different every time."

Patrick recognizes his commute to work as unique and spectacular. Patrick's commute to work is different than most peoples in that it changes from place to place and across the seasons. In this case - along with the early start in summertime - smoke from area forest fires offers a unique, surreal experience along an oft-traveled route to work for Patrick.

In figure 38 we saw a regularly-used route to work made surreal by smoke from forest fires early on a summer morning. In figure 39 we see another common morning commute transformed by the seasons.

Figure 39: 'morning commute in the wintertime'

"This is the next morning after a huge snowstorm. Here's the tunnel, Bright Angel Trail, and the trail switches back right here. We're just leaving the rim and we're hiking down the trail to work. We obviously can't work in these conditions. It's unsafe and everything's buried, so we ended up going down below the snowline to start work. … I've seen this view thousands of times from this spot walking down trail. It's different depending on what time of year you're hiking it. … I probably am wearing crampons right now and I have hiking poles and I'm just bundled up. … it's like a sheet of ice on some of these spots … it's definitely treacherous conditions going down."

The snow and ice of winter have presented an element of danger and excitement along one of Patrick's standard morning commutes. Being the park's primary trail into the backcountry, Patrick has taken this particular route routinely for twelve years. Although Patrick has twelve years of trail crew experience, each day brings a new adventure to him, particularly as weather and seasonal changes bring on different sets of challenges.

While the commute to work may be transformed by the seasons, once at the job site it is hard work year round (figure 40).

Figure 40: 'working the canyon's rocks - connecting with American history'

On the job site, the work itself is hard physical labor.

> *"We came through and we built this log cribbing with checks in it and all these checks are anchored into the bedrock. We drilled into the rock. We drilled through the logs. Then we matched the holes and pinned it with rebar. We took this rock and crushed it; all by hand. This is serious physical labor. You're doing all this by hand: crushing the rock to fist size or smaller and then taking this Pionjar gas powered drill, putting a tamper bit on it, and really tamping down and compacting that rock before coming back through and covering it with dirt. … The rock was broken using single and double jack sledgehammers that weigh anywhere from six to twelve pounds. You use a double jack to work it down to a certain size and then use a single jack to work it down further. We've learned that it's a tedious process but it's what's working and that's what we like to do."*

Patrick becomes intimately familiar with the nature of Grand Canyon's landscape by working the rocks with his hands. While these trails provide recreation experiences for most users, Patrick understands from first-hand knowledge the human effort that supports these experiences.

The hard, tedious work on the job site was further appreciated as a reflection of American history.

> *"It's the only way to do it. This is the type of work our country was built on is the way we build these trails. This is how they used to do it, with these primitive tools. The only thing that's different now is we've got gas powered equipment and it starts to kind of automate that process a little bit but we still run into difficulties."*

By working the canyon's rocks, Patrick connects with American history. The hard work of the trail crew - made difficult in part by relatively primitive work conditions – is similar to the work of America's early pioneers. As a result, Patrick feels a part of American history.

As he remembered a photo he took during a break (figure 41) while working below the snowline, Patrick described an important place of profound beauty.

Figure 41: 'wintertime break room below the snowline'

> *"…This is what it was like every day taking a break and just looking down river and enjoying the views. … It's just a beautiful view and it was something that we would see every day when we were working at that spot as we took our breaks and our lunch. …I think I've been to this spot over the last ten years probably over ten to fifteen times and I think I've taken a picture of it every time. …it's hard for me to figure out what my favorite spots are, but generally, I can say that a lot of these places that I continuously come back to bring back memories."*

Patrick points to the beauty of the place initially as he describes taking a photo from the exact same spot over the course of ten years. This place is etched in Patrick's memory as well as his photo album. However, this place is more than beautiful.

Beyond the visual appeal and beauty, the landscape is a sight that evokes profound personal reflection. This place, and other important places, all elicit memories for Patrick.

> *"The ones that bring back memories, I think that's the most important to me … just of being there before. Of my younger years and maybe my mentality then and my experience then, as opposed to now, or when I took that photo. … So, it's kind of just a flood of memories coming back. It's mostly memories and a time, the short time that I've been here and the significant amount of time that the Grand Canyon has existed. I feel so insignificant, being surrounded by massive cliffs, and just the forces of the Grand Canyon. But being a part of it and coming back to these same places*

again, there's never any change there, it's just change with me. So, the spot's the same every time I go there. Nothing changes about it, except I'm a little older."

Within a place that is stable and unchanging, Patrick senses a personalized passage of time. Patrick's profound thoughts are nested in the recognition of time passing and his own sense of aging. This wintertime "break room" is an important place of timeless beauty.

As our workday moves on, thoughts of personal growth and change shift to the uniqueness of a return trip from the job site in the springtime (figure 42).

Figure 42: 'marking the change of seasons'

Along one of the most traveled homeward commutes out of the backcountry, Patrick took a photo of a cluster of cottonwoods and redbuds that provide striking color on the relatively drab palate of early spring on the Tonto Plateau.

"This is kind of a neat event that occurs down at Indian Gardens, which is five miles down the Bright Angel trail off the south rim. … It's springtime, and all these cottonwoods start to get their leaves back. It's just starting to get really lush back down there again and for the redbud it is like this two-week window all year long that you'll experience this green and purple vegetation down there. It's really neat. Everything around is kind of dull and then all of a sudden it's just these bright colors. Being able to hike through there when that is going on is a special, rare occasion. I don't make it every year."

Patrick recognizes the temporal beauty that marks the changing seasons along the return commute. In this case, seasonal variation enriches Patrick's experience by providing rare beauty along the return trip.

Having enjoyed the travel and travails of this work day, we return to summer as the sun sets on this trail crew experience in the backcountry (figure 43).

Figure 43: ‘summer sunset’

As the sun sets on the return commute and on the workday, we revisit the initial question posed here: what is the backcountry experience of building and fixing trails? The building and fixing of backcountry trails has been characterized here as a trail crew experience comprised of extraordinary commutes, pioneer-style hard work, and timeless beauty. The commute may bring a beautiful sunrise and a clear trail, an icy wintertime adventure, or beautiful colors that are unique to a small window of time each year. The hard work on the job site involves crushing rock with sledgehammers and is a conduit to America’s pioneering history. The timeless beauty of the break room evokes a felt sense of time and personal growth. In summary, the experience of working on the trail crew is no typical day at the office.

Canyon Trail Rides: Kitty

Canyon Trail Rides (CTR) operates horse and mule rides in three different National Parks: Grand Canyon, Zion, and Bryce Canyon. CTR offers mule rides into the backcountry from the North Rim along the North Kaibab trail. With the thought that, "everyone needs to experience the Grand Canyon through the ears of a sure footed mule," (CTR [online], 2007a), the CTR wranglers "…want to share it with you" (CTR [online], 2007b).

Kitty, a long-time wrangler at the North Rim, represents CTR in this study. As a wrangler, it is Kitty's job to lead teams of mules and their passengers down the North Kaibab Trail [as far as the Supai Tunnel or Roaring Springs] and back. While discussing photos taken in *"the best office in the world,"* Kitty described the experience of riding a mule in the backcountry while sharing important, defining aspects of the landscape while traveling into another world, and back.

Kitty's days at the North Rim have mostly begun at the corral. The corral - that is the beginning and ending spot for CTR's mule rides - is located next to the North Kaibab Trailhead. Since 1991, Kitty has been arriving at the corral to begin work at sunrise. This treasured scene is pictured in figure 44.

Figure 44: 'sunrise solitude at the corral'

"This is … on the north rim… just in between our mule barn and the corral where the guests get on the mules. It's first thing in the morning. There's nobody around. You don't hear car noises. All you see is the aspen and the pine trees, and the sun coming up in the morning. I see this every morning that I go to work. To me this is the best part of the day because it's just quiet and there's nobody around and it's kind of like you're the only one there. … I just think it's pretty. It's been my favorite view for fifteen years … up on the top anyway. … People ask me, 'do you ever get tired of this?' Nooo. You know, there are good days and bad days in any job you do, but you just can't beat the office when you work here. … It's the best office in the world."

Kitty describes this area as part of her 'backcountry office' that offers solitude in the first light of morning. Without distraction, among the aspen and pine trees, sunrise solitude at the trailhead corral has been a defining characteristic of Kitty's backcountry experience.

Her years of experience and daily presence along the North Kaibab trail have honed Kitty's awareness of the plants along the trail. When a new plant shows up, particularly if it is colorful, Kitty takes notice (figure 45).

Figure 45: 'discovering plant life along the trail'

> *"It just seems like you go along year after year and you see the same plants and then all of a sudden you'll notice a different plant you never saw before. … It's strange because you go down the same trail every day, five days a week, and you're used to seeing plants and all of a sudden there's a plant there you never saw before and you know that you've never seen that plant there before. It took me awhile to find out what this plant was. … I kept asking and we were looking through books and we couldn't find it. … It had these little tiny reddish/pink flowers. I found out later that it's a snowberry … because later it came on with … little white berries. I mean white-white berries; … no more flowers, now it had berries and I didn't know what it was. … That was neat because … it takes a change like flowers or berries to make you notice what was there all along."*

The plants along the trail are a source of discovery as new plants grow and/or change through the seasons. In this case, the snowberry was discovered as it displayed its small reddish/pink flowers and inspired Kitty to learn more about canyon plants when she returned home. The plant itself embodied a sense of discovery as it changed in appearance by losing its flowers and sprouting vivid white berries. Kitty appreciates the sense of discovery that the changing flora along this oft-traveled route offers.

While the plants alongside the trail offer a sense of discovery as they grow and change over time, the Supai tunnel constantly serves as a portal to another world (figure 46).

Figure 46: 'Supai tunnel – portal to a whole new world'

"this is the main view … as you go through the … Supai tunnel on the North Kaibab. … It opens up in a whole new world. … From the tunnel up you see lots of trees, lots of shrubs, lots of different kinds of vegetation and things are kind of secure. … Then you go through the tunnel and it just opens up in a different world. … You just step into a different world and you can see clear across the canyon. … you can see all the way down and you see all the rock layers. … Everybody is just amazed by the difference from one side of the tunnel to the other. … A lot of it is because there's not so much green. You're going into … a different [growing] zone. [When you're] higher in elevation you have more of the trees and the shrubs and the bushes and everything. And when you go down through here, that's not there. … It's like walking through a door into another world. And that awes so many people. I just think that's neat."

The passage through the Supai tunnel has left it's mark with Kitty. She enjoys how the vista opens up and the vegetation below the tunnel contrasts dramatically with that above the tunnel. Kitty enjoys sharing the poignancy of this place with her guests as they take in the view and are awed by it. To Kitty, the Supai Tunnel is a threshold into the vastness of the canyon's backcountry.

While a distant, other-worldly view has opened up through the Supai tunnel, a mark left by it's construction served as host to a plant growing in an improbable place (figure 47).

Figure 47: 'unique conditions and resilient plants'

"Do you see these holes in the rocks; these nice round holes? You don't see those up high. You just see them down low below the tunnel where they have drilled. … This is a live oak. … It's a member of the oak family. … This plant is growing out of one of the drill holes that they drilled to put the dynamite in when they blasted out the trail. … It was either '91 or '92 when you could see it start growing out of there and that's as big as it's gotten and I'm going to say it's probably about … two feet. … That's all the bigger it's going to get from where it's growing out of. … But it grew out of that drill hole … and it's still living. It is amazing what plants can grow. I mean, you see trees growing out of rocks, which is odd enough but it's growing out of the cracks, and it manages to get its roots down in the crack. … It's amazing how that thing grows in there. … It will be sad when that plant dies because it's struggled for so long. … Fourteen years it's been growing. And it's just amazing that it can do that out of manmade hole. So it's just unique. The oddest things can happen in the Grand Canyon. … And they do."

Kitty appreciates the unique circumstances that have sustained this plant. The oddity of a manmade drill hole combined with the plant's struggle for life meant a great deal to Kitty. Kitty has witnessed the life story of this particular live oak plant; it's development has been unfolding for a decade-and-a-half. When its struggle for life is overcome by circumstance, Kitty will watch with a heavy heart.

Kitty described the experience of riding a mule as one of trust; trust in a smart, hard working animal. Having ridden a mule on all of her trips down the North Kaibab trail and back, Kitty's relationship with these animals has been a defining characteristic of her backcountry vision and experience (figure 48).

Figure 48: 'riding a mule - fifteen years of ears'

> *"That was my mule's ears. … Just that, my mule's ears. … That mule is a part of me. He's a part of what I do. … So this is basically my vehicle and this is my office. … I just took that because that's what I've seen for the last fifteen years, are ears, and you have to respect the mules because they're so giving. They pack you down and they pack you back out every day … mules are very tough and they'll try for you and you can trust them. … So they're just kind of a really unique animal that I've learned to appreciate. … There's my mule and there's my office, and you just can't beat working in something like that everyday."*

Although the mule is the vehicle from which Kitty has experienced the backcountry, she also respects the mule and the trusting relationship she's built with it. Kitty and Jasper [the mule] move as a single unit, bonded by trust and guided by the mule's gracious effort. Kitty is grateful to have the relationships she does with the mules and especially for all their effort and support.

As these *"four-hoof drive"* vehicles push back uphill, the view is often directed back up toward the North Rim. As she and her mule made their way back to the trailhead, Kitty looked up to find a spectacular paint job in her backcountry office along the North Kaibab (figure 49).

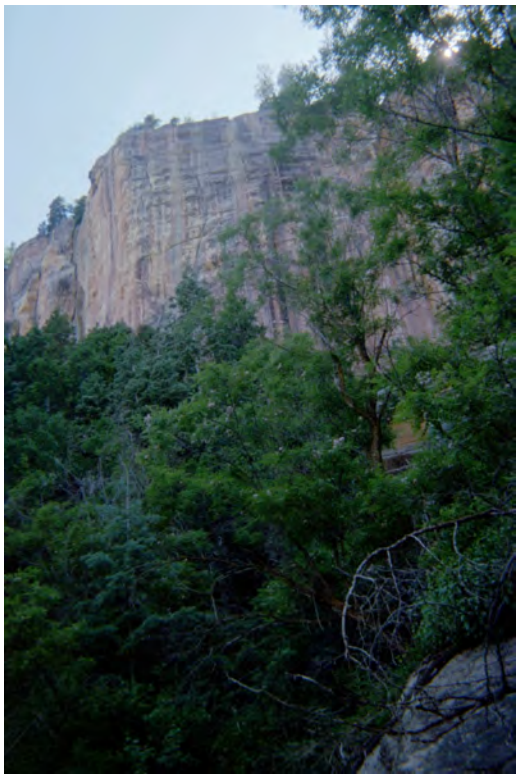

Figure 49: 'spectacular paint job - the look and feel of erosion'

> *"It doesn't show very well but you have the different streaks. This is … above the tunnel and this is looking up at the sandstone just coming out of the tunnel. … The reason I took this is because you get a bunch of colors. You get … black and yellow and orange and grays … you find it in the smoother parts of the sandstone. It's from when the water runs over the edge of the rock … it brings some of the minerals from the limestone and also minerals from the water [itself] running over this rock layer. You get all these colors that are embedded in the rock and so many people are awed by that. … It's on these real flat smooth surfaces that you get the colors and they're, they're just really cool. [laughter] Somebody painted the walls of my office [laughter] … They've done a really spectacular job*."

The colors of the canyon wall are more than brilliant; they are a sign of natural processes of erosion and Kitty takes pride in explaining the coloration of the canyon's walls. The smooth black, yellow, orange, and gray streaks seen here are a result of erosion and mineral deposition caused by water runoff into the canyon. Water from area rainfall polishes the rock as it runs over the edge and down the canyon walls. The water gives color to the rock over

time as it deposits - along with it's own minerals - the minerals from the limestone over which it passes. Kitty enjoys this place as the colorful display brings a sense of wonder to her fellow riders as they share in the experience.

A spot along the trail, just before the trailhead comes into view, has provided Kitty and her fellow riders a look back at the canyon framed by the trees of the North Rim (figure 50).

Figure 50: 'framing the canyon – symbolizing the backcountry experience'

> *"This is almost at the top. It's that last turn before you turn and go straight up and hit the trailhead. And I just like it because it's framed. You see the canyon, you see the colors and the layers and you've got the pine trees on one side and you've got the aspen on the other and it's like you're getting everything. You're getting this awesome framed view of the canyon itself along with the different trees and even though you see the pine trees as you go down further you go down very, not very far, and you lose the aspen. They don't grow down further. … There's so much of a variety in the plant life in the canyon."*

A final look out through the aspen at the end of the ride framed everything from aspen to pine trees to colorful rock layers. For Kitty, this photo symbolizes Grand Canyon. Her experience in the park's backcountry has been characterized by diverse, resilient plant life and colorful erosion. For Kitty, the morning's solitude has preceded mule rides to another world and back along the North Kaibab Trail for more than fifteen years. Along the way, new and changing plants have offered colorful and dramatic displays while erosion from water runoff has painted the walls of her 'backcountry office.' Over the years, from a combination of first-hand experience and reading on her own, she has developed a unique set of knowledge about Grand Canyon's backcountry. A look back at the canyon symbolized [among other things] these important places and their meanings that are, and have been, a part of Kitty's backcountry experience "…through the ears of a sure footed mule."

NPS Canyon District Rangers: Oscar

The Canyon District Rangers (CDRs) - represented here by Oscar - are a group of individuals that fill multiple roles for the NPS primarily directed at the safety and well being of park visitors. One role of the Canyon District Rangers is patrolling the backcountry to give aid and instruction to hikers in need. Oscar - a decade-plus CDR veteran - discussed photos and corresponding journal entries from some of his early experiences in the backcountry. This conversation shed light on a backcountry of striking beauty and people in which youthful lessons have been learned. Oscar first discussed a photo he took while at the backpackers' camp along the Nankoweap Delta in 1993 (figure 51):

Figure 51: 'relaxing at Nankoweap – effort for solitude, landscape change, and big sky'

> *"This picture is from the backpacker's camp on the Nankoweap Delta …most backpackers when they hike into the Delta they are tired. The first place they want to go is right to the river - the closest place possible - and that's to an area that's at the downstream side of this. It's where all the river trips camp. So despite the fact that they are in a very remote portion of the canyon, in the Eastern part of the canyon, they gravitate to the same place that boaters go to. With the exception of this spot. This is called the backpacker's camp, and it's location is specifically at the confluence of Nankoweap creek and the Colorado River. It's very rare that backpacker's actually get there."*

Due primarily to fatigue after a long hike into Nankoweap Delta, most backpackers take the fastest route to the river and camp at a beach shared with river runners. However, if the weary backpacker pushes on just a little farther they are rewarded with a degree of solitude not found at the first-available river camp. Possessing this detailed knowledge of backcountry geography allows CDRs to have accurate expectations for their trip and to have a relatively clear sense of their upcoming experiences.

Tired from their own fourteen mile trek, Oscar and his friend took a day at the backpacker's camp to recoup:

> *"…on the second day we got down there we were pretty tired from the hike down. … We spent the whole day at this camp. We slept in that morning, we had a late breakfast, we stretched, we relaxed, we took a nap, and we enjoyed the sunset."*

Their relaxing day at camp was punctuated by the unique landscape of the area. Oscar described the geology that colored the cliff face across the River from the camp [not pictured].

> *"You can't see it in this photo but on the opposite side of the river is just this magnificent façade of all the layers of the canyon just in a sheer drop from the Navajo reservation right down to the river. So essentially from the Kaibab into the Muav and it's very, very abrupt."*

The canyons rock layers, stacked one on top of the other and demarcated in a colorful display, provided a striking backdrop for Oscar's relaxing day at the Nankoweap backpacker's camp.

The colorful cliffs behind Oscar were part of an impressive landscape that also included a wide-open vista. The 'vertical terrain' pictured in figure 51 is set back from the backpacker's camp as Nankoweap Creek flows toward its confluence with the Colorado River. The unique erosion of the delta has provided a big sky along the typically narrow River corridor.

> *"You have the largest [river] delta in the Grand Canyon. A huge delta affords a very open perspective, yet there are tall cliffs around. … It's a wide-open area with huge cliffs on all sides yet there's lots and lots of sky. … Most of the time your vision of the sky is limited by the vertical terrain, but in this case it's just so open and that's not necessarily displayed in this photo."*

The openness of this area is appealing in contrast to a narrower view that is typically offered by the cliffs nearest the river. At the same time the cliffs on the other side of the River offer a bold display of the earth's historic colors. The experience of this landscape is one of a magnificent geologic façade mixed with big sky, and Frank's able to place this in the context of many other river campsites at Grand Canyon.

In addition to the visual appeal of the experience, the photo in figure 51 documents evidence of relatively recent ecological change in the area. The lush green vegetation signifies a landscape transformed.

> "*Directly behind me is a river … Here's the creek right here. … And the historical high water mark is actually above the vegetation you see in the image. That vegetation you see in the image is tamarisk. That tamarisk has become established since 1963."*

Glen Canyon Dam altered the flow of the Colorado River substantially in 1963. Since then the landscape of the backcountry near the river has changed. Specifically, larger areas of riparian vegetation have established themselves since the succession of the pre-dam high water mark. Tamarisk is one of the most aggressive plants to make its home in these areas where the ecosystem has changed since 1963.

The topic of human's ecological impacts on the landscape; symbolized by post-dam riparian Tamarisk, gave way to an insightful recollection of Oscar's first backcountry patrol for the NPS as a volunteer in 1991. While looking at a photo from his inaugural patrol into the Clear Creek use area, Oscar read and remarked about journal entries he had written on the trip. Oscar told stories of a youthful quest characterized by naiveté, lots of social interaction, and Cathy the turkey (figure 52).

Figure 52: 'Clear Creek – naiveté, social interaction, and Cathy the Turkey'

"This was a shot that I took on the Clear Creek trail, looking downstream at the black bridge at Phantom Ranch … what's unique about this photo was this was one of the first backcountry patrols I did for the Park Service, and I did this as a volunteer. …this was probably day two because I had gone down the night before and camped at Phantom, got up early in the morning and started hiking. … I hung out [at Clear Creek] for probably three or four nights, and I went to Shiva Falls."

Along his first journey to Clear Creek use area, Oscar stressed the central role that social interaction played in his backcountry experience. With a basic description of his patrol route given, Oscar referred as much to the people he met along the way as he did to the physical landscape. In part, the roles of CDRs are on'es that anticipate backcountry visitors with goals to insure visitor safety and ecological protection of the backcountry. For Frank, the backcountry is in large part a social place, as was documented in his journal:

"I ran into a group of four that were backpacking there at Clear Creek. … One of them was a guide on the river, and another one was visiting that guide from Montana, and they had spent some time in the canyon. All of them had spent time in the canyon. As we were sitting around one night … we were talking about Grand Canyon experiences. I didn't have that many experiences and I had never been on the River so this woman was telling me a little bit about the River."

Oscar went on to tell a funny story that the river guide shared with him about a well-known person's drunken follies on a river trip. The journal entry presented here exemplifies one of many social interactions Oscar has enjoyed in the backcountry. He went on to remark:

> *"…you know I always talk to people when I backpack. And I enjoy talking to people when they are at camp."*

The retelling of past experiences resounded in Oscar as he enjoyed the company of others in the backcountry.

People are not the only characters that comprise the social fabric of the backcountry for Oscar. Inspired by his journal, Oscar told a story of Cathy the Turkey. Oscar read from his journal:

> *"Later, talking to John while he's checking permits, I see a turkey, a wild one roaming around."* He went on to comment: *"It surprised me, the first turkey I've seen in the wild and such an odd place to see one. She came off the north rim in 1982 and has been hanging out ever since. Have you ever heard of Cathy the turkey? … This turkey lived there nearly 15 years. … She got blown down in a storm. I've actually seen them in Clear Creek and North Bass trail, so it's not unheard of to have a turkey end up down there. I found her body when she died a few years later. She died up at Indian Gardens.*"

Seeing Cathy over the years became a staple of Oscar's backcountry experience while on patrol in the Corridor area. Cathy was a part of Oscar's social scene in the backcountry, and it was he who found her body after she died. Cathy's celebrity was, and is, further remembered with good spirits:

> "*have you ever seen the beers they sell down at Phantom Ranch? … on the label it says Phantom Ranch beer, you see the Phantom Ranch lobby, and down to the lower right there's a little turkey."*

His relationship with Cathy the turkey was important to Oscar, as are his relationships with his fellow humans in the backcountry.

As he perused his journal for more trip information the places in the backcountry elicited memories of people (and turkeys) he has come to know. Oscar remarked that he had documented how long it took him to make his way down to Phantom Ranch from the rim along the South Kaibab trail. In discussing his speedy descent, Oscar attributes his haste to a general youthful naiveté:

> *"I was young and ignorant because you should take your time when you are descending. That will save your knees. But I was, what, thirty-five, thirty-six, something like that."*

This racing-style hiking was spurred on by the exuberance of his early experiences in the backcountry at a younger age. Two more journal entries from his trip documented the pain in his knee that came on hikes following his initial descent into the backcountry:

(1) "*On the hike back [from Shiva Falls to Clear Creek campground] my left knee went out. … Pain from sharp to dull every time I moved it, unusual. Rested it a bit while taking refuge under a ledge during a brief thunderstorm."*

(2) *"On April 8th I set off downstream and immediately began to feel some pain in my left knee. … at this point my knee is very painful. I tape it tight with my Ace bandage."*

With a bum knee, Oscar felt the pains associated with 'beat-the-clock' hiking. With nearly fifteen years passed since this early sojourn, Oscar has grown to realize that this approach to hiking in the backcountry can be physically deleterious.

The physical pain in Oscar's knee contributed to an evening of exhaustion that was poetically described in his journal:

> "*The wind blows hard through the thin air and little disasters befall me. The nipple on my water filter is busted, rendering it virtually useless, and I resort to iodine. The zipper on one of my pack pockets is blown out, evidently by the same [expletive] squirrel that chewed a hole in my pack and ate my sunflower seeds. Then I used the last of my coffee in too much water. Too diluted I go to bed early."*

This cool, windy April night at Clear Creek delivered Oscar to bed early. The immediate problems of his situation – pain in the knee, ripped pack, and a useless water filter – were driven home by the crisp April breezes. At the urging of the wind, and having ruined his coffee, Oscar bid adieu to the day's exhausting experience.

The next day, Oscar's perspective was rejuvenated by more social interaction. *"The next day I was hiking by 5:35 a.m. and near Phantom Ranch by 9:30."* With the early morning hike from Clear Creek to Phantom Ranch behind him, Oscar spent the day socializing with other visitors at the Ranch. He describes a final evening spent socializing before racing to the rim the following morning:

> *"Meet Barbara from Tucson, visiting the ranch with her son. She gives me some food. In exchange I buy her a beer during beer hour. A little buzz going while walking back to the campground under a full moon. April 10th, out of the Bright Angel at 5:00 a.m. and I haul butt to the rim, all for the sake of timing myself. And it took me exactly four hours to hike out."*

Having shared a kind exchange of food and spirits with a backcountry visitor, Oscar enjoyed the moonlight on an evening stroll back to camp, then woke-up early for a morning dash to the rim.

On his way out along the South Kaibab Trail, Oscar stopped briefly for a look back at the peopled environment along the confluence of Bright Angel Creek and the Colorado River (figure 53).

Figure 53: 'Bright Angel Creek meets the Colorado River: a social environment'

"…this is another photo from the same trip. … We are looking at Phantom Ranch. … from Panorama Point ... down the Kaibab trail below the tip off. You go out there and then you look straight down, and what you see is Bright Angel creek flowing into the river, you see the round Corral, you see the heli spot, and you see the cottonwoods. And what is so odd about that is the first time you do it it's just like wow look at all that development. And you look and you see the mouth of the schist, the mouth of that canyon. …This is very important for people hiking out there, it's like you start seeing manmade objects. You see components of civilization, you know, essential infrastructure. … It gives people a good feeling to think that there are people in this remote stark area. … I enjoy that view looking down at the river, looking down at Phantom Ranch, over the mouth of Bright Angel canyon."

The presence of humans in the backcountry, and signs thereof, are comforting to Oscar and to others. The view looking down at the confluence of the Bright Angel creek and the Colorado River is symbolic of contemporary human presence in the backcountry; and for Oscar it is an invigorating social existence that is a central part of Frank's trips. However, only part of the social scene Oscar has experienced in the backcountry has been described.

As one might expect of a position focused on visitor safety and well-being; social encounters in the backcountry are not always as leisurely as those described thus far. One of Oscar's current roles with the Canyon District Rangers is that of search and rescue specialist. Accordingly, Oscar's experience one January day was anything but a typical Super Bowl Sunday (figure 54).

Figure 54: ‘backcountry rescue – not a typical Super Bowl Sunday’

“These photos we’ve looked at so far were taken at the beginning of my tenure in Grand Canyon. … I don’t carry a camera very often anymore, but I do on certain backcountry rescues. If I have a camera available I’ll grab it to get shots. … This person broke their leg on the ice. And that was Super Bowl Sunday, probably 2001, 2000, maybe. … That’s on the Bright Angel Trail.”

The potential need for a search and rescue of backcountry visitors is a visible portion of Oscar’s job, and one that leaves an indelible mark on the specifics of the rescue and the meaning of the place. Among the specifics of the rescue, Oscar appreciates working together with his fellow CDRs, volunteers, and others in these search and rescue operations. Search and rescue operations are people working together for a common cause and these experiences are embodied in Oscar’s place meanings.

The social landscapes of the backcountry, along with other important aspects, were brought out by discussing photos from Oscar’s youthful quests into the backcountry. Among these important aspects are the reward of knowing the backcountry well and putting forth the extra effort to attain a degree of solitude. Oscar and his companion pushing on past the easier campsite option at Nankoweap – which would later be crowded with river trips – to get to the backpackers camp, exemplified this. While appreciative of solitude, Oscar enjoys the social aspect of the backcountry. For Oscar, the social landscape of the backcountry is as important as the physical landscape of the backcountry. Sharing stories with new acquaintances and visiting old friends – turkeys included – are an important part of the backcountry environment for Oscar. Signs of people, like manmade objects found in the Phantom Ranch area, offer hikers a sense of comfort. For Oscar, areas like this symbolize a social environment whose less-leisurely characteristics include the teamwork involved in search and rescue operations like those pictured in figure 54. Oscar and other Canyon District Rangers experience a backcountry filled with memories of past visitors, their stories, and in some spots, efforts to rescue visitors in need.

NPS North Rim Backcountry Office: Gary

At the time of our conversation Gary – who represents the North Rim Backcountry Office (NRBCO) in this report - had been living in Flagstaff for six years and worked four summers as a seasonal NPS employee in the NRBCO. The NRBCO is a place where people come to talk about hiking; whether to get information, a permit, or just to share stories of hiking in the area. Gary is an avid hiker who enjoys exploring the backcountry and has learned from his experiences with the NRBCO.

In his fourth year on the job someone came into the NRBCO and told of a trail that Gary had not encountered personally or in any of the literature he had read on the area's trails (figure 55).

Figure 55: 'local stories and human history'

> *"This is… down the trail. They actually somehow made a concrete watering trough, and there's a pipe running in there, and I don't know if they had a little pump and a spring to pipe the water up, but it's dry as can be now. … It's pretty amazing that they would build something like this where it definitely wasn't easy to build, down in the canyon … maybe half an hour, 15 minutes down. But you know back when they built it there were probably not even cars to bring all the cement and stuff in, it's pretty wild. … For all the different people who have been through the Arizona strip and the north Kaibab back when they were here, probably in the late 1800's, just getting to the rim would have been an adventure, let alone doing stuff down there. … And hardly anyone ever sees this, it's just a trail that you don't know about."*

The effort of the people who built this trough, and likely used it to water their stock, is embodied in this place. The trough is a testament to the adventuresome spirit and hard work of the people who came to this area in the late 1800's. Not too many people used to visit this place of historic significance because it was not prominently listed in the hiking literature of the area.

Gary only found out about this place after four seasons at the NRBCO when a long-time employee came in one day and shared a story with him.

> *"I've been here for four years, I've read every bit of literature on hiking. I've never even read about this or heard about it. One day some old timer came in and told me about it and I went out there with a friend and there was this trail, you know a real trail."*

Learning about this trail through the sharing of stories at the NRBCO added a sense of discovery to Gary's experience in this place.

However, Gary was quick to point out that things are changing regarding visitors knowledge of the backcountry and this trail in particular. Gary remarked that knowledge of lesser known trails, once reserved for conversation among excited backpackers and park staff and often shared at the NRBCO, is being increasingly disseminated through different forms of mass media.

> *"Some friends came out and they told me they found this trail. I couldn't believe they found it. Besides us [locals] no one knows about it. She knew right off the bat because a lot of the trails here have been on the cover of Backpacker. … There's not many secrets left with the Internet and magazines."*

With mass media giving local lore an increasingly high profile, visitors today can experience these places found, *"off the beaten path."*

As he made his way down the trail, humans from another civilization were commemorated in rock art (figure 56).

Figure 56: 'marks of prehistoric human effort'

> *"Here, this is along the trail where there is a lot of rock art, prehistoric times, so maybe this trail was something found by the ranchers. There's a couple of places like this. … Since there is water they probably used that trail to come down to the plateaus. … The Anasazi*

farmed down there. Along creeks they farmed, some of it up on the plateaus so this might have been one of the routes."

Native Americans have historically farmed in water-rich areas of the backcountry. With the availability of water, Native Americans farmed this area and this rock art stands in commemoration of their experiences in the area.

From prehistoric rock art to the 'cowboys' watering trough the historic efforts of people are evidenced along this trail to water. As Gary put it:

"it's interesting the people who have been through this one trail, Anasazi to probably mormon cowboys, to you know, hikers now."

The significance of this trail - whose existence spans the breadth of human history in Grand Canyon - is exemplified in a photo taken near a spring (figure 57).

Figure 57: 'hiking through geology on a trail to water'

"The spring is basically coming down through vegetation and it's real nice, it shows different Kaibab, Coconino, Hermit layers. It took me awhile [to get to know the geology], because it's not something that excited me at first, but after hiking through it all, it took about four years. … I know the layers because some are easier to get through than others. Some are barriers to a hike and others aren't. [For example] the Coconino is always real sheer and white, the second layer."

This photo symbolizes the areas attractiveness and difficulties. Focusing on the vegetation this photo signifies the areas water. The presence of water in this place is why people have beaten a path here through millennia. Gary further remembered the rock layers in the picture as they related to his experience of hiking through them. While hiking through the Coconino sandstone Gary experiences the brilliant white color along with the steep slope of the rock.

Gary knows that the Coconino is the second sheer white wall of rock from the top because he remembers, and anticipates, negotiating the areas challenging terrain.

This rocky landscape has challenged humans through history, and continues to challenge hikers today. In discussing this historic trail, Gary recognized its significance to hikers today.

> *"I just love this trail. When you get down there there's also water, so if you wanted to go down just over night and be down there in two hours, and have a perfect place to relax, or explore further down."*

Above all, this trail offers hikers water just as it did the cowboys, Native Americans, and all other humans following the same or similar route. *"Available water is always a big fact of canyon hiking."* Whether it's farmers, ranchers, spectators, or hikers, everyone needs water and the location of water has determined people's footsteps in the backcountry for millennia.

The primary difference between hikers in the canyon in the twenty-first century and those of centuries past is that today's hiker does not live in the backcountry – they visit. Like Gary, today's hiker may experience a human history of sustenance in the backcountry. A photo of an historic camp exemplifies this experience (figure 58).

Figure 58: 'living in the backcountry'

> *"William Wallace Bass was an early, early kind of settler from the south rim who had a work camp up on the far west south end. … [At the time]it was like settler's kind of battling it out for themselves and the government. … You can imagine them having a huge dinner here."*

Gary enjoys this place as it elicits imagery of physically and socially embattled pioneers lifting their spirits with a big meal. Sustenance for today's hiker, Gary went on to explain, is different.

While discussing a picture of a couple celebrating their wedding anniversary in the backcountry, Gary describes a less conditional situation where big meals come between long periods of free time (figure 59).

Figure 59: 'relaxing and eating on a backcountry visit'

> *"It's their anniversary. … They packed kind of heavy and they were really worried about how they were going to manage their way out of the canyon. But they had a lot of time. They had four or five nights down there so they had time to eat the stuff they brought down, so they just kind of hung around camp."*

With no specific task, and concern regarding their hike back up to the rim, this couple took off their packs and enjoyed the area, and plenty of food, with relatively little effort.

From prehistoric farming to ranching of the late 1800's to hikers today, the availability of water has served people in this area well. When water gives way to rock, the human experience old and new can be difficult. Gary learned the rock layers in the area by hiking through them. Some of the layers present more or less of a vertical challenge to the hiker. While the layers are indicators of geologic time, to Gary they also demarcate levels of effort for the hiker. While the backcountry's experiential geology has challenged hikers for millennia, hikers today enjoy a unique experience in the human history of the canyon.

Gary appreciated the powerful imagery of past groups of people sustaining themselves and each other in this landscape. This type of effort is a central characteristic of human history in the backcountry. Today's hiker however - while perhaps appreciating this history of human effort – may opt to enjoy a less conditional experience in which meals-a-plenty are enjoyed among days of free time.

In addition to a wealth of personal hiking experience in the backcountry, Gary has spent four summers talking with other hikers about hiking in the backcountry at the NRBCO. From this experience, Gary describes a backcountry that bears evidence of a history of humans working and living in the backcountry. Some of this evidence was once found only

according to local lore. Today, specialized publications like *Backpacker Magazine* along with the Internet are making local haunts more popular to a larger spectrum of people. Along with enhanced access to information, Gary recognizes the contemporary experience of hikers today as voyeurs of a hard-working past that may enjoy their free time with relatively short-stays with plenty of sustenance.

Grand Canyon Hikers and Backpackers Association: Norman

The Grand Canyon Hikers and Backpackers Association (GCHBA) is primarily directed at 'promoting, encouraging and advocating the interests of the hiking and backpacking community in the regions of Grand Canyon' (GCHBA [online] 2007). GCHBA is represented by Norman who began backpacking in Grand Canyon as a child. With more than thirty-five years of experience hiking and backpacking in Grand Canyon, Norman continues to frequent the backcountry, traveling from his home in Flagstaff.

According to Norman, hiking and backpacking in Grand Canyon's backcountry is an exploration into a wilderness that touches the core of our being. While discussing a photo taken on New Year 's Day, Norman described the intrigue and imposition of the Canyon's redwall, what lay below, and the importance of human cooperation in the backcountry (figure 60).

Figure 60: 'Parashant Canyon - looking down at the heart of Grand Canyon'

"It is the mouth of Parashant Canyon looking south. … You can see the redwall in this area … is all busted down. You say, 'gee well if I could get up this little cone right here, well I could walk right up through the redwall here.' The redwall is one of the definitive obstacles to get from point A to point B – certainly in elevation, in a vertical kind of journey of the canyon."

The redwall is a steep portion of the inner canyon walls that presents a challenge for hikers and backpackers. The erosion of the redwall in western GCNP invites the explorer to find routes to the top. After ringing in the New Year at the heart of Grand Canyon, route finding and napping were the order of the day along Norman's vertical exploration of the redwall.

> *"This is new years day 2002 and all the smart people are still back on the beach sleeping, but I wanted to go for a walk. I wasn't feeling very well from the libations the night before. So I walked up river a little bit and there was a little break in the redwall so I crawled up a little bit and took a doze, and then crawled up a little farther and took a doze, and I crawled up a little farther and took a doze and by mid-afternoon, why I was at the top of the redwall."*

The redwall as a natural obstacle, as well as a facilitator of ascension, intrigued Norman. By identifying a way up, Norman's vertical journey began. Once at the top of the redwall, the heart of Grand Canyon pulsed below.

> *"I looked down and realized that the river is the heart of Grand Canyon. Here is this incredible picture of the river winding it's way through this incredibly rugged terrain. It carved out this little, tight little canyon through all these thousands of feet of rock."*

After a morning spent hiking and napping, Norman found himself at the top of the redwall with a view that served as a striking reminder of the river's power as a catalyst for erosion on a massive scale.

Viewing him and other humans as natural elements in the wilderness, Norman described a technologized state of society that constrains us from becoming attuned to others and ourselves.

> *"We are animals and we are part of our wilderness world. We are a part of the environment of this planet. … What does it mean to us as a species when we live in little houses now in cities that are packed full of people with emails and cell phones and cars and automobiles and planes and we all complain and we come over to another city or we travel across a big ocean that we were pretty much confined to never travel across in the last couple hundred thousand years?. What does that mean to us as a species, and how can we touch our roots? How can we, as a species, still touch what is genetically – DNA – hard wired in us to resonate like when you hit a tuning fork? … That's one of the things that I think that Grand Canyon still has to offer us as a species, is a refuge to our past, to our being, to our core."*

To extend the tuning fork analogy: the resonance of our beings becomes attuned to and is reflected by the park's backcountry environment. The way that we move and communicate in our daily lives is often contrary to our beings. The backcountry is a place to reconnect with one's self and with others.

A connection with fellow hikers and backpackers is something Norman appreciated about the backcountry experience.

> *"We learn our skills. It's a skill building sort of deal as well. Where, that kind of harkens back a little bit to our American heritage, where the elders are teaching the youngers, the youngers are trying to learn responsibility and take responsibility for their actions. Where a, what seems to be a fairly minor mistake could have fairly major consequences. And that's important. I think that helps us to become strong individuals; strong members of our society."*

Backpacking with a small group of people involves teamwork so that potentially dire consequences are not met. While survival depends on teamwork among the group, the passing of knowledge through generations is a key element of Norman's group backpacking experience in Grand Canyon.

Hiking and backpacking in Grand Canyon's backcountry facilitates important and meaningful intergenerational exchange. The elders are teaching the younger members of the 'human tribe' how to survive in primitive and unconfined conditions.

Norman went on to describe part of the connection with others and with one's self as a result of a single backcountry condition: we are all dwarfed by the vast landscape. As he told of a 'star party' with friends, Norman drew on the idea of cosmic immensity to describe the extent of the backcountry.

> *"The other night we went out to the star party out on the rim and you know, you look at M26 or some kind of spiral galaxy that's a couple hundred million light years away and realize, 'wow, we really are small.' And without looking through a telescope, Grand Canyon offers us that vision as well; is how small we are in a big landscape. And again, we just don't get a chance to see that. We're in our houses, we get in our cars, go to work, go home. The world seems like a pretty small place, so when you get into 1.2 million acres of primitive and unconfined area then we can touch something that I think which, only until the recent past, we were pretty well connected into. … that's something I personally find very inspiring about the Grand Canyon is it has the ability to touch those buttons; to touch those synapses of us as a tribe."*

From an interplanetary scale to an earthly scale, humans are dwarfed in space. Where the vastness of the universe is contemplated in the stars, the vastness of Grand Canyon is found in the space that lies among and within its massive earthly walls. The size of the backcountry is a condition for hikers and backpackers in that it is undeniable.

Getting in touch with ourselves and each other in such a vast place is not always a smooth or comfortable experience. Norman discusses the rigors of hiking in such a vast landscape while looking at a photo of small people in a big place (figure 61).

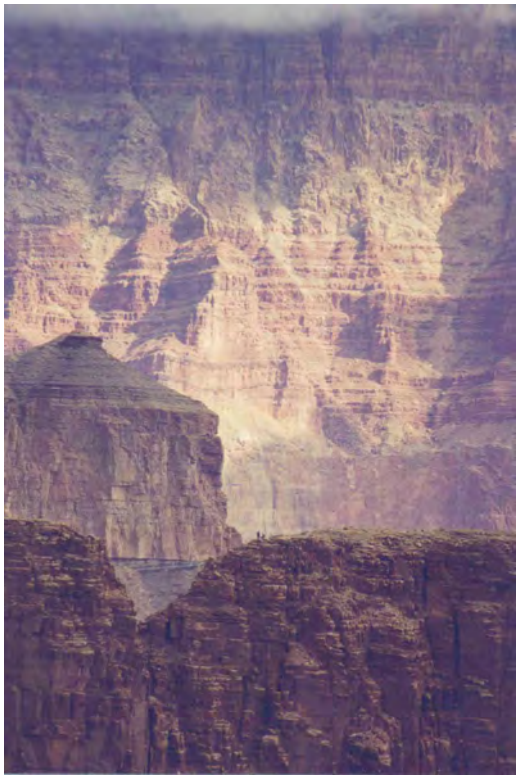

Figure 61: ‘Basalt cliffs - small people in a big place’

“These guys … decide that they’re going to top down into basalt canyon. … It’s about nine at night and we see their headlights coming along the river. Well … once you drop into the basalt drainage there’s a big cliff of Cardenas basalt which aces you out. You’re either on top of them or at the bottom of them and the only way to get around them easily is to go way to the east … to get around these cliffs. They dropped in on top of these cliffs and they had spent a good chunk of the afternoon trying to get through them. So they were way late coming back into camp.”

The challenge of route-finding on such a large scale is that each setback can be a large scale setback. In this case the group returned to camp in darkness. But what if they hadn’t? Norman went on to tell a story that further illuminated the anxiety of hiking in a huge place where the unknown provides countless possibilities.

The small people in the center of this photo, standing atop the nearest cliff, are beginning adventure that would find them ‘aced out’ by the vertical terrain. The idea of small people in a big place was re-conceptualized as Norman told stories of wracked nerves and humble resolve in the face of the unknown. As a friend with a track record of laissez faire hiking disappeared Norman felt helpless as the day’s events unfolded and passed into darkness.

“We get up to the north side of Isis and it’s taken us a good chunk of the day to get up there and we start walking around Isis on top of the redwall looking for breaks to get up into the Supai. At this point [Darren] says, ‘that’s it, I’m going back to camp.’ Fine. He knows how to get there. He’s on his way. We have seen some fresh mountain lion tracks on our way up there. So this other fella’ and I, we’re hiking around; we work up through the supai and we

don't make it to the top of Isis. It's getting way late, and we bail off of this thing … and it's dark by the time we get into camp … Darren's not there. Okay, now, we left this guy about noon, there's some mountain lion tracks out there and he said he was going back to the boats. … I wigged out. I wolfed down some food and I'm going to get my flashlight and I'm going to march right back there and go look for this guy. And everybody else in camp was like, 'but we've already gone through this. The guy's already gone missing once and he turned up just fine the next day. Relax, he knows how to take care of himself. Everything will be alright.' I realized these people have just gone through this already and everything will be alright, and what can I do anyway?. It's dark, I'm going to eat, I'm going to go to sleep, I'm going to get up in the morning and start looking for the guy; figuring he's mountain lion bait. And so we have dinner and we're getting ready to go to bed and sure enough, here comes Darren stumbling into camp. He had stopped to take a nap. We had walked right past him on our way back. He woke up at sundown and went, 'uh oh,' and started heading back to camp. So what I realized about this, 'what happens when…' So experiences like this have taught me, 'hey, relax, have a good time because chances are, ninety-nine point nine percent is, if it doesn't look good it's going to work out alright."

With his friend missing in the vastness and with thoughts of mountain lion attacks, Norman realized that all he could do is give it time. After being reminded to relax, everything worked out fine, as it does nearly every time. This knowledge still cannot quell the survivalist angst Norman feels before he travels into the backcountry.

"…it's a very interesting issue; our ability to survive in a place like this. Our ability to comfortably have a good time and the angst that goes with journeying in Grand Canyon whether it's river angst or whether it's backpacking angst. You know that little butterflies in my stomach the day before I'm supposed to hike in somewhere, 'what's this going to be like?' Is it going to be good or is it going to be bad? A lot of that angst is because we live in these houses. We are so disconnected from this type of experience."

The angst of journeying into the backcountry manifests itself as pre-trip butterflies in the stomach. The angst comes from our modern-day removal from ourselves as a species. To begin a backpack in the backcountry is to begin an adventure of human survival. The immense and intriguing backcountry environment is common to, and telling of, a shared human experience of survival.

The scale of time, in addition to the physical scale of the environment, reinforces the notion that we, as people, are very small in the presence of such a massive and enduring landscape. Our transient existence is illuminated by the shadows of this photograph. The shadow of the hiker in figure 62 makes visual the metaphor that we are shadows on the land.

Figure 62: 'backcountry transience - people as shadows on the land'

> *"…what this is all about for me is the Grand Canyon. It isn't about me and the Grand Canyon. It isn't about people in the Grand Canyon, and if it is you just get a sense. You get a shadow. You get a little image of, 'I think I can recognize, isn't that somebody there, isn't that a person. … We're here but we're only transitory. We come and go and the amount of time in this place is pretty small. But this place is here for the long haul and it will outlive us happily."*

Our shadows will come and go, as will our footsteps, while the experience of hiking and backpacking in Grand Canyon continually serves as an essential tuning fork for people fragmented by technologized modes of living and communicating in today's society.

The deep meanings associated with hiking and backpacking in Grand Canyon were accompanied by naps. Norman's photograph of a backcountry nap along with his description of the experience both captured and summed up it up succinctly (figure 63).

Figure 63: 'backcountry napping'

"Yeah. Get comfortable. You bet. Got some water there and we've got a pillow and a fanny pack and camera gear and backpack in the corner and again, a lot of air. We're just right on top of the redwall. It's dropping off to the river below us."

Norman's photo of his companion napping on the edge of the top of the redwall with the heart of Grand Canyon pulsing below is perhaps the most succinct symbol of his experience hiking and backpacking experience in Grand Canyon. When making mention of this photograph Norman focuses on the comfort of being on the edge. Napping comfortably on the edge may be thought of as a mark of personal attunement with the landscape as survivalist angst is no longer part of the experience.

As an avid Grand Canyon hiker and backpacker, Norman's interests lie in an exploration of the backcountry wilderness. His adventures are marked by attunement to the backcountry and to one's self, and done with the accompaniment of his travel companions.

Hiking and backpacking in the backcountry offer opportunities to share and learn from each other. An important experience for GCHBA to foster is to adapt ourselves to the experience of moving and communicating in the vast backcountry landscape. Backcountry travel facilitates important and meaningful intergenerational exchange. The elders are

teaching the younger members of the 'human tribe' survival techniques under the primitive conditions of Grand Canyon's backcountry. The backcountry experience is one that leads to personal growth, and recognizes the immense size and timeliness of Grand Canyon.

The backcountry at Grand Canyon provides a setting in which the relationship between humans and the earth are in tune. The computers, cell phones, planes, trains, and automobiles of our everyday lives disrupt this synchronicity. Stepping outside of our technological boxes, out of our contrived comfort zones, allows hikers and backpackers the opportunity to retune themselves at their core. It is one of life's essential tune-ups.

The resonance between humans and the landscape becomes unintelligible as signs of technology disappear and harmony with a central human chord is felt. Viewed scientifically, it is thought by Norman that our historical beings – our living DNA contribute to a commonly felt oneness with the landscape. While other hikers and backpackers will have different experiences and/or ways of describing their experiences, by drawing on Norman's wealth of experience we may conclude that the GCHBA community 'promotes encourages and advocates' the ability of the backcountry to touch the essence of our being.

DISCUSSION

Each stakeholder had a distinct approach to their meanings of places in the backcountry. These approaches were often related to their purposes in the backcountry and the mission of their respective organizations. Even though each stakeholder held distinctive stories and personalized experiences, there were some general themes that could be identified. These general themes do not diminish the values of individualized places meanings nor are they meant to represent any one stakeholder. To the contrary, interpretation of some general themes provides a context to understand them as a collective set of meanings and values. There are five inter-dependent themes described below that provide an interpretation of the places meanings and backcountry values depicted by the 14 stakeholders of this study.

Appreciation of backcountry places

Without exception, participants in this study cared deeply about places in Grand Canyon's backcountry. Although diverse in the places they discussed and the specific meanings provided, they each indicated a deep level of attachment and strong appreciation for places in the backcountry. Their appreciation varied along several lines, and included some of the following connections:

They appreciated connections between places and strengthening bonds with family and friends. They characterized inter-generational teaching and learning, and developing close ties with their loved ones in the backcountry. Others appreciated connections between places and spending time with friends, as well as some who made new friends and acquaintances in the backcountry.

Their place meanings appreciated the need for team work. Some characterized the backcountry as a rugged place, and the need to involve others with their activities. They characterized backcountry places in ways that brought-out memories of hard work to clear trails, provide them with a sense of civic duty and responsibility, and inspired them with national pride of an American work ethic. For some, their appreciation for team work was also directed at places where others needed help or assistance to complete their backcountry journey.

Several sets of place meanings appreciated localized ecology of plants, animals, and physical environment. The diversity of ecosystems within the backcountry were well-noticed and understood by many stakeholders. From the forests on the rims to the lifespan of a particular plant; from the esplanades and buttes that beautify the Canyon to a small rock keeping company of a cactus; from the smallest seep of a side canyon to the main stem of the Colorado; from experiential geology to a personal relationship with a wayward turkey – appreciation of the Canyon's plants, animals, and their inter-relationships elicited a variety of human and ecology values.

Teaching, learning, and sharing the Canyon

The place meanings of many participants characterized the backcountry as a place to grow. Through backcountry trips, participants learned about themselves, about their friends and family and other travel companions, and they learned about the Canyon. For some these were learning experiences, for others they were teaching experiences. However whether teaching or learning, places meanings invariably depicted personal growth and enhancement of their knowledge about the world. Many participants explicitly told of sharing their knowledge with others and spreading opportunities for personal growth and development.

Some of the place meanings depicted learning about geologic time and coming to terms with some of the oldest rocks on Earth. Others learned from the many cultural and archaeological sites in the backcountry. It was clear that the layers of humanity within the Canyon had a lasting impact on several participants, and that such sites taught a profound sense of one's own humanity. For others, each new trip in the backcountry was an adventure in which the Canyon taught them something. The exploration and discovery of new places in the backcountry were adventures waiting to be learned and shared with others.

Feelings of awe

Many places meanings were about feelings that caused one to reflect on life within a spiritual context. Some participants explicitly talked about backcountry experiences as spiritual renewal, full of awe, and encounters with the power of nature. Others depicted the sheer size of the Canyon and its cliffs, and told of their experiences of solitude, inner peace, and feeling dwarfed by the landscape. These hard-to-explain experiences were sometimes just that – and a picture of mists at sunrise or a backlit butte at sunset sufficed for a portrayal of their feelings. For anyone who has seen the mists of a side canyon at sunrise, such a picture would vividly capture the feeling of a "sunrise moment."

Place meanings that marked the passing of time were part of the feelings of awe. Several participants' place meanings identified the passage of time in various features of backcountry landscapes. They interpreted many cultural and archaeological sites as giving them a distinct perspective of time. Some interpreted the cliffs along their favorite route as providing a sense of stability in an otherwise fast-pace world. Others discussed the visual changes from season to season within contexts of getting close to the pulse of nature within their backcountry trips.

Personalized history of specific places

Most participants were intensely engaged in developing their relationship with the Canyon's backcountry. They did not go to every place in the backcountry, but the places they went, they knew well. The meanings of many places elicited their personalized history of it, and would characterize the values and place meanings attributed to any given backcountry locale as being complex and multi-layered.

Several participants spoke about specific plants, rocks or animals they came to know through their backcountry trips. They told the "birth story" of the plant, animal or rock; they followed it through their own course of life; and they provided details about their relationship

with the specific plant, animal or rock. Several participants who had personal relationships with backcountry features also enjoyed sharing their stories with others. It was as if sharing their unique story of the plant, animal or rock would lead others to appreciate it and take care of it too.

The personalized history of some participants was linked to public services they provided and the mission of their organization. Some built trails, cleared brush from campgrounds, mended specific segments of a wash-out, searched for lost hikers, or depended on primitive facilities to support their trips. In each of these cases, the meanings of place were affected by the building, clearing, mending, or searching. Through their own activities related to the missions of their organizations, participants developed knowledge of places they otherwise would not have. The knowledge was situated in the unique adventure of any given backcountry trip. Grand Canyon allowed for uniqueness in adventure and the personalization of places.

Working the Canyon

Backcountry trips are often working trips. For many participants, they are "at work" in the Canyon's backcountry due to employment with the NPS or some organization. However for those who were "at work," their place meanings appreciated their work environment in ways that do not compare to traditional office or built environments. The term "work" surfaced not because of economic values, but due to the sweat and blood spent on hiking, blasting, hammering, clearing, and so forth. Their work was framed as hard but rewarding, as public service for park visitors, as pride in being a member of a team, and indicative of a can-do American spirit – to name a few meanings that emerged in contexts of working the Canyon

Work also was suggested as being an essential part of any backcountry trip. Hiking in and hiking out, forging creeks, and scrambling-up routes all involved physically challenging tasks with inherent risks. Some place meanings characterized these risks as naturally occurring and part of the unforgiving nature of the Canyon. In this sense, backcountry trips were adventures involving new dangers each day. Working towards a safe and accessible journey for oneself and others is an ever-present goal for many stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS

The motivations behind this report are directed at further enhancing relationships between Grand Canyon National Park and its stakeholders. There are many organizations and people who would identify themselves as stakeholders of the park. This report identifies the values and place meanings of a handful of the park's stakeholders – all of whom care deeply about the park. The conclusions first recognize the potential for convergence of values among the stakeholders of the park. Secondly, we suggest that the park continue developing its dialogue with stakeholders including the further development of working relationships.

Convergence of values

The place meanings of the stakeholders represented in this report span a wide spectrum of backcountry values. They appreciated the backcountry in numerous ways that aligned with the park's own sense of itself. The "vision of the future" from the 1995 General Management Plan states several visions that reflect the thoughts of stakeholders herein. As some examples, the GMP espouses the following:

> *Grand Canyon National Park is a place of tremendous beauty, peace, and scenic grandeur, as well as a place of vast natural and cultural interest….*
>
> *In order to protect this magnificent place, the park should be managed to ensure the preservation of its ecological processes and its historical and archeological resources. Proposed wilderness areas both in and adjacent to the park should be managed as wilderness, and appropriate adaptive reuse of historic resources should be encouraged, while the historical integrity of the cultural landscape is preserved.*
>
> *Visitor use should be carefully managed in ways that ensure diverse opportunities are provided – from solitary wilderness experiences where one feels far from development, to social experiences where a variety of visitor services and conveniences are offered.* (p. 4)

The 1988 Backcountry Management Plan states its goals and, although succinct and written at a high level of abstraction, they too would be compatible with many stakeholders represented herein:

> *The long-range goals of backcountry management at Grand Canyon National Park are: (1) to maintain and perpetuate the natural ecosystem processes within the park, (2) to protect and preserve historic and prehistoric cultural resources, and (3) to provide and promote a variety of backcountry recreational opportunities for visitors compatible with resource protection and visitor safety.* (p. 2)

There is substantial overlap between the vision and goals of the park and of those stakeholders who participated in this study. No doubt, the stakeholder values represented emerged from a distinct method and describe specific contexts for understanding their values. Yet many of their specific contexts for values and place meanings seem compatible with the general values espoused in the park's planning documents. This level of compatibility does not often emerge from planning processes or forums.

Recognizing overlap of values among stakeholders does not diminish the potential for conflict or disagreement. In addition, it is one thing to converge on values, goals, or place meanings, but another to agree upon ways to manage and implement the values. Nonetheless a convergence of values suggests a larger context for any given point of conflict, and would surround any disagreement as an exception to an otherwise broad set of values that converge to guide park management.

Working relationships with stakeholders

The park already has a history of dialogue with most of its stakeholders, and working relationships with several. Such dialogue and relationships are built, as well as diminished, by issues of trust and respect for each other. The park's vision for itself is to further develop its partnerships with various organizations and community members. From the 1995 General Management Plan, the vision states:

> *…The park should work cooperatively with surrounding entities to encourage planning and management actions outside the park's boundaries that are compatible with those inside the park. Planning should be done regionally so concepts developed in the park can be linked to adjacent surrounding areas.*
> (p. 4)

The vision recognizes the need to work cooperatively with other organizations, and to plan within a regional context to promote its mission and encourage others to embrace its values. The GMP (1995) also identifies regional issues that include needs to:

> *Understand, assess, and consider the effects of park decisions outside the park as well as inside…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.* (pp. 8-9)

The park holds earnest concerns for understanding effects of park decisions on its stakeholders, and the need to further develop working relationships with its stakeholders.

In addition, with the August 2007 publication of the *First Annual Centennial Strategy for Grand Canyon National Park*, a stronger and more detailed commitment is asserted for the development of working relationships between the park and its stakeholders. In the context of a "model [for] what it means to work in partnership," the park's strategy is to:

> *Foster a shared vision with the local community, businesses, non-profits, individuals, organizations and federal and state agencies that represent a model for conservation, resource protection and exceptional visitor experiences. Collaborate on ideas and projects that enhance park opportunities or operations and work together to send a message that reflects a commitment by all parties. Develop partnerships that work with Grand Canyon staff to protect the park's resources and provide opportunities for visitors to connect with the canyon.* (p. 12).

Fortunately, backcountry management and planning have a long history of constructive dialogue with stakeholders and mutually beneficial working

relationships. The park should continue strengthening the connections already in place with its stakeholders.

Many of the stakeholders represented herein would likely view partnerships with the NPS as being a positive value added to their lives. Most of the stakeholders participating in this study already were in some context of cooperation, and further strengthening the nature of the cooperation with the NPS would likely enhance their service capacity and competence to implement a mutual set of values. The strength of this report lies in its ability to reflect an array of stakeholder values (albeit incomplete) for public sharing, dialogue, and learning from one another. By building upon its strong foundation of stakeholder relations, Grand Canyon National Park and its partners will increase their effectiveness in achieving their goals.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Important Places of Grand Canyon

Grand Canyon has a diversity of people who care about its backcountry. These people, referred to as stakeholders, identify with the backcountry for different reasons connected to their purposes in using the backcountry, their cultural heritage, and/or their value system. This study is directed at planning for the park's backcountry in ways that protect important places of Grand Canyon. An important aspect of the study is to understand the meanings of places in and around Grand Canyon through the eyes of its stakeholders. With such an assessment, the park will have a deeper knowledge of stakeholders and the values they hold for Grand Canyon's backcountry. Rather than a use area, a trail, or a designated campsite, the locales of the backcountry are filled with meaning by stakeholders; it's these meanings and the sharing of the meanings that transform backcountry spaces into personal places.

It is our hope that you'll enjoy participating in the study. With your camera, take pictures of some places in Grand Canyon's backcountry that are important to you. It is not expected that your important places will be the same as another persons places. The places you choose to take pictures of could be as "simple" as a rim overlook, a shady spot on the trail, a close-up view of plants, or whatever areas have importance for you. The places you take pictures of could be related to positive feelings (of areas you like) and negative feelings (of areas that you don't like or are source of bother and trouble). There is no need to take all the pictures in the camera (24 exposures). If you have just a handful of important places to you, then just take enough pictures to cover your sense of meaningful locales. After you are finished taking pictures, send the camera back to us. We will develop the film and schedule a time to talk about your special places. During our follow-up discussion, we will ask about the places in your pictures and their importance to you.

We'll give you a set of pictures and also keep a set for ourselves. We may like to share some of your important places with other people in the study and with the National Park Service staff. If you take photographs of places that you would not like to share with others, please let us know and we will respect your privacy. If you are not comfortable using the camera, other options for characterizing meaning of places could be explored.

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James Barkley is a graduate student in Leisure Studies at the University of Illinois and interested in research related to park planning. He spent the summer of 2004 living in Flagstaff and getting to know people and places connected to Grand Canyon's backcountry. His phone is 217-244-7747 or email: jbarkley@uiuc.edu.

Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: 16 U.S.C. 1a-7 authorizes collection of this information. This information will be used by park managers to better serve the public. Response requested is voluntary. No action may be taken against you for refusing to supply the information requested. When analysis of the questionnaires is complete, all name and address files will be destroyed. Thus, permanent data will be anonymous. Please do not put your name or that of any member of your group on the questionnaire. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Burden estimate statement:

Public reporting burden for participation in this study is estimated to average 3 hours per participant. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this form can be made to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, WASO Administrative Program Center, National Park Service, 1849 C Street N.W., Washington D.C. 20240.

For information on the rights of human subjects in University of Illinois research, contact the Institutional Review Board at (217) 333-2670 or irb@uiuc.edu

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH MATERIALS