



Safety Alert – High River Flows

The Bureau of Reclamation has proposed a High Flow Event (HFE) from Glen Canyon Dam in early March of 2008. Releases from Glen Canyon Dam during the proposed HFE would reach a maximum of 41,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) which would be sustained for 60 hours. The environmental review process as required by the National Environmental Policy Act must be completed prior to the approval of the HFE. A final decision is anticipated in late February.

The proposed high flow event will affect river and backcountry users throughout lower Glen Canyon (below the dam) and the river corridor in Grand Canyon National Park as far as Lake Mead.



Background

During the wet years of the mid- 1980s, river users routinely experienced river flows greater than 30,000 cfs, with flows exceeding 41,000 cfs in some years. More recently, however, flows of 41,000 cfs have been unusual with typical daily flows of 8,000 – 20,000 cfs.

The increase to 41,000 cfs will change conditions on and along the river during the 60- hour

duration of the high- flow event. Some normally challenging rapids decrease in their technical difficulty at higher flows, while normally straightforward rapids may become more difficult. The volume of water at 41,000 cfs will change the size and availability of campsites. These changes will occur at different days and times along the river corridor as the volume increases and moves downstream.

Precautions to take

Although these flows require no special equipment, boaters need to be aware of their ability to navigate during these higher flow conditions. Boaters should:

- use all required safety equipment,
- be prepared to deal with emergencies, and
- know what to do in case of an emergency.

If you have questions regarding required emergency equipment and procedures, check your private permit information, watch the National Park Service river orientation video, or contact the NPS. Hikers and boaters should adjust their campsites according to the high flow conditions.

For more information

The U.S. Geological Survey Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center's website, www.gcmrc.gov, features information regarding the High Flow Event. Comparing expected flows to your planned itinerary will enable you to anticipate any needed adjustments to your trip.

River and backcountry users are encouraged to contact the National Park Service's River Permit Office at

1-800-959-9164

for further information.