



---

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

---

**For Immediate Release**  
**Date: August 17, 2008**

**Contact: Gerry Blair (928) 226-5089**  
**Maureen Oltrogge (928) 638-7779**  
**Grand Canyon National Park**

---

### ***Significant Flooding Results in the Evacuation of in Excess of 400 Residents and Campers in Supai Canyon***

Flagstaff: Officers, Deputies and Rescuers from 8 public safety agencies are working together to evacuate more than 400 campers and residents from Supai Canyon which is located approximately 75 air miles west of the Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park. The evacuation is a direct result of significant flooding after heavy rainfall and the breach of an earthen dam in the area.

On Saturday, August 16, 2008, in the late afternoon and evening, the Northern Arizona high country received heavy rainfall that resulted in partial flooding of Supai Canyon. Supai Canyon is a popular destination for hikers and campers due to the presence of majestic water falls in the area. Supai Village is the home of approximately 400 year round residents.

At 6:00 am this morning, Coconino County Officials learned that the Redlands Earthen Dam broke, allowing a high volume of water to rush down Cataract Canyon in a westerly direction eventually feeding into Supai Canyon. Heavy flooding in Supai Canyon and the potential for additional flooding has necessitated the evacuation of an undetermined number of campers and approximately 400 full time residents.

Rescuers are attempting to locate visitors who were staying at the Supai Camp Ground located above Havasu Falls and escort them to a safe landing zone in Supai Village. Campers and full time residents will be flown to Hilltop by Arizona Department of Public Safety Helicopters and Arizona National Guard Black Hawk Helicopters. Evacuees will be bussed to an American Red Cross shelter located at the Hualapai Tribal Gymnasium in Peach Springs Arizona.

The road into Havasupai is closed at Route 66 and Indian Road 18 leading into Hualapai Hilltop. Residents and campers will not be able to access Supai Village and the Havasupai Indian Reservation at this time.

On Saturday, August 16, 2008, the Grand Canyon Regional Communications Center received information from Western Rivers Adventures that five unmanned rafts were observed floating down the Colorado River with personal floatation devices and other supplies still onboard. National Park Service employees believed the crafts belonged to a private boating party of 16



## *Coconino County Sheriff's Office*

*Bill Pribil, Sheriff*

individuals. The entire party was located uninjured and stranded on a ledge at the confluence of Havasu Creek and the Colorado River.

The current priority of the National Park Service is moving the 16 stranded people to an area where rescuers can reach them. Members of the party will be flown one at a time via a Short Haul Rescue Technique to the other side of the Colorado River where they will board a helicopter and be flown to the Hualapai Hilltop. Those evacuees will also be bussed to the American Red Cross shelter in Peach Springs, Arizona. National Park Service employees are in the process of contacting members of rafting parties who have not yet reached the confluence, which is located at about river mile 157, in an effort to inform them of the flooding that has occurred in that area.

Public safety agencies that are responding to this emergency include: Grand Canyon National Park, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Coconino County Sheriff's Office, Coconino County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, Coconino County Emergency Services, the Arizona National Guard and American Red Cross.