



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

PO Box 129  
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

928 638-7779 phone  
928 638-7609 fax

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## Grand Canyon News Release

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**Contact(s):** Pamela Walls

**Phone number:** 928-638-7958

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### Havasupai dancers to perform at Grand Canyon National Park

**Grand Canyon, Ariz.** – The *Guardians of the Grand Canyon*, a 12-person Havasupai dance group, will perform in front of the Hopi House on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. Saturday, October 20, 2007. The Grand Canyon Association (GCA) is hosting this special event, which is free and open to the public. Grand Canyon National Park’s Superintendent Steve Martin will welcome the dancers.

The *Guardians of the Grand Canyon* will be performing a variety of dances for the public including the Ram Dance. The bighorn ram is an integral figure to the Havasupai, who have lived in the Grand Canyon for hundreds of years. Through the Ram Dance, this animal, which is a protector to all who inhabit the canyon, is honored as a part of the Havasupai’s legacy. During this dance, the ram calls to the people, trees, animals - to everything. The dance was created out of respect for humans and it encourages people to watch and listen.

“This particular dance has not often been seen by the public,” said Dianna Sue Uqualla, Museum Director of the Havasupai Tribal Museum and leader of *Guardians of the Grand Canyon*. “This dance provides a rare opportunity for the public to listen and learn and to better understand where the Havasupai are coming from.”

“I welcome the opportunity to go back to my homeland and perform ceremonial dances,” Uqualla added. “I want to make connections with all the entities who are currently part of the Grand Canyon community.”

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The Havasupai dancers are performing at the Grand Canyon as part of the current Kolb Studio art exhibit, *I am the Grand Canyon: The Story of the Havasupai People*, which was developed by GCA. This art show, which runs through October 31, is a first-time look at the Havasupai people in exhibit format. It tells the story of the Havasupai through their origins, history, art and culture, and where they are today. This exhibit contains historic and contemporary photographs, some never before shown, various Havasupai arts and crafts, and examples of their music and language, which is one of the oldest and most actively used indigenous languages of North America.

“This exhibit gives the Havasupai an opportunity to tell their story in their own words – who they are, their relation to the canyon and their struggles with the federal government,” said Jan Balsom, Grand Canyon National Park's chief of cultural resources. “The dancers are an integral part of this exhibit because they bring the Havasupai alive for the general public today. They are a living culture, not an artifact from the past.”

The Havasupai exhibit is an extension of the book with the same title. The book, *I am the Grand Canyon*, was originally published in 1976 under the title *Life in a Narrow Place* by Stephen Hirst. Hirst and his wife lived on the Havasupai reservation for 11 years starting in 1967 and developed a close relationship with the Havasupai, which still exists until this day.

“The tribe greatly trusts this man,” said Pam Frazier, who until recently was deputy director and publisher for GCA and along with the Hirsts, was instrumental in the development of the Kolb Studio exhibit. “He has earned their trust over many decades of friendship.”

*Life in a Narrow Place* was the result of research Hirst did while living on the reservation and as the Havasupai tried to regain some of their ancestral homelands. In 1976, it was the first book that looked at life from their point of view. A second edition of the book was published in 1984 by the Havasupai and was called *Havsuw`Baja*. The third and current edition was revised by Hirst and published in 2006 by GCA.

“The current edition was completely revised and updated to reflect current conditions,” said Frazier. “A lot has changed for the Havasupai since the original book was published, including their relationship with the National Park Service.”

The Havasupai have inhabited the Grand Canyon for at least 700 years. They are one of 14 ancestral bands of the Pai, who have lived on the Colorado Plateau since approximately A.D.

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1300. In 1863, the Havasupai Reservation was established by the U.S. government at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. They were given 500 acres in Havasu Canyon, which only represented a small portion of their ancestral lands, which not only encompassed the inner canyon, but also the South Rim from what is today Grand Canyon Village west to beyond Supai Canyon and south to Williams and the San Francisco Peaks. During the 1920s, the National Park Service (NPS) removed the last remaining Havasupai from Indian Gardens.

Although the NPS established a small camp for the Havasupai just west of the Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim in the 1930s, the Havasupai continued to fight to regain their ancestral plateau lands. It was not until the Grand Canyon Enlargement Act of 1975 that some of the Havasupai ancestral lands were returned to them. One hundred and eighty-five thousand acres, which included some of their traditional plateau lands, were added to the Havasupai reservation along with 95,000 acres of traditional-use lands within Grand Canyon National Park. Over the past couple of decades, the NPS has worked to improve their relationship with the Havasupai through open dialogue and tribal consultation on various park issues.

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