

**Chapter Three: Low Impact Camping**

Grand Canyon National Park and Round House Productions: <http://www.rhpmedia.com/>

After you beach the boats at the end of the day, camps along the river offer a chance to relax with friends and get a better understanding of the canyon.

As roughly 29,000 people camp in the inner canyon each year the impact on the camping beaches can be severe. There's nothing better than arriving on a pristine beach after a day on the river and nothing worse than finding that inconsiderate groups before you have left the beach covered in trash, which has attracted unwanted animals and insects, and the smell of human waste.

A few simple protocols will help preserve the beaches for the next person.

GC Ranger, Pam Cox

*"Where you camp on any beach helps determine how long that beach will remain undamaged. Choose a site within the post dam era flood zone, where you find willows and Tamarisk. This area recovers faster than the area above where you will find Mesquite and other native plants. If the groups before you have done their job you'll find a pristine beach with no evidence of previous camping."*

This beach is pristine because everyone's required to remove all organic waste including garbage, human waste and even ashes. This waste is to be carried out and disposed of outside of the Grand Canyon. There is no provision for trash pick up at either Phantom Ranch, Diamond Creek, or Lake Mead. Just remember to remove everything you bring with you.

Since not everyone cares as much as you about the canyon you'll occasionally find trash on the beach. If you have an extra garbage bag and room please carry it out.

Large pieces of trash are of course an obvious eyesore but even small pieces of micro trash can create a major impact if allowed to accumulate on the edges. Candy wrappers, napkins, paper towels and cigarette butts, all impact the look of a beach. It can also create a serious nuisance.

Normally red ants live in the bushes and eat vegetation but over time have been habituated to human food and have moved down onto the beaches. While the ants are a problem for you when cooking and eating, they also deliver a vicious bite that will hurt for days. You will find the cleaner the beach the fewer ants are attracted.

A tarp located under your kitchen, and dishwashing station will catch any food that might fall off the table. Simply removing the tarp when you break camp, putting large food chunks in the garbage then shaking what is left into the river. Less food equals fewer pests.

The glow and warmth of a campfire blazing then dying away as your group wanders off to sleep is a fond memory of most camping experiences.

Campfires are allowed in the canyon but only in a fire pan. By raising the fire pan off the beach with legs or cans you'll avoid scarring the beach, leaving it in good shape for the next group.

In the summer season, the collecting of any wood is prohibited. You may bring your own if you wish.

In the winter season driftwood may be burned but only driftwood. Dead and down wood in the bushes is off limits, this wood is left to rot naturally to provide nutrients for the soils.