



Insider's Look at Grand Canyon

Webisode #1 – Interview with park Superintendent Steve Martin Transcript

Patrick: Welcome to the very first webisode of Insider's look at Grand Canyon. I'm ranger Patrick Gamman, and every week from now on we will be having a webisode about all sorts of different things at Grand Canyon. Our first guest is actually Park Superintendent Steve Martin. Steve, welcome to the show.

Steve: It's really great to be here and we are excited about this new media communication with our visitors in webland.

Patrick: Steve, I was wondering if you would share with the public a few things. The first I am curious about is; what projects do we have going on right now here at the park?

Steve: These are exciting times I do believe here at Grand Canyon National Park. We have many projects that I think the public will find interesting and will really contribute to their experience. One of the big ones and one of my favorites, being a hiker, is everything we are doing on trails. We have new trails on the rim. The new Hermit rim trail, for summertime when it is hot, is beautiful. It has incredible views, it's right on the edge of the canyon, and it is in great shape. We are also working on trails in within the canyon. We have hundreds of miles of trails, but we are really emphasizing the corridor trails and getting those up and to the best shape we can. We have work going on to improve parking, and exhibits, and a new film at the visitor center. Lots of resource projects, too, that the average visitor may not see first hand, but things that we are taking care of (*like*) exotic plants in the park to keep it more natural, and programs with condors and other wildlife. There is just a lot going on and it is a great time to be in the park.

Patrick: Sounds like we are pretty busy here. Well, what are the challenges that Grand Canyon faces in the upcoming year?

Steve: I think, like many programs in one of the things we jokingly say is; "that we do not want to be the GM of parks and environmental programs."...that is, we have to stay relevant. We have to make sure that we are taking care of this park for future generations. We are reaching out to visitors from all over the world to make sure they have the most special experience that they possibly can. It has to be one that wraps history, and the environment, and also is contemporary that reaches out to people. I think that other challenges are always related to our budgets and making sure that we maintain the park like we want to. We have, like the cities of the United States; over \$250,000,000 in deferred maintenance. A lot of that is things that people do not think about. Maintaining a water system here, where the water comes from inside the canyon to taking care of roads and facilities. It is going to be challenge, but with our staff I think we are really up for it. With the support of our incredible visitors we have challenges, but we think we are up for those.

Patrick: Over all, how do you think the park is doing?

Steve: Well, I think we are doing excellent! Our job here is to provide for visitors and to protect the park for future generations. I think with some of the challenges that we just talked about, none of those are easy, but we have gotten some funding through the stimulus package. We have an incredibly innovative staff working on Interpretation that is reaching out to youth, we have incredible science programs. So I think, over all, we are doing good but we cannot rest on our laurels. We have to advocate for park protection and we have to ensure that we have the resources to manage the park. We have to make sure that we are taking care of our employees because it's really the employees that make all of the things function here at Grand Canyon.

Patrick: Steve, I have one more question for you and this about you being Superintendent here at Grand Canyon. So far, do you feel that you have accomplished the goals that you have set out for yourself since you have arrived here?

Steve: Yes, I think that we are beginning to, when you come in and are responsible for leading this staff here and managing Grand Canyon I think it is important to set those goals high. I mean this is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. By my estimation, one of the most fantastic parks, not just in the United States, but anywhere in the world. So, it is important to set those goals high and that we do everything we can to reach them. I think that we are well on our way. I have only been here a couple of years and I am looking forward to continuing to step up to meeting those challenges and working with our staff to make sure we have accomplished it. One of my goals has been to try to hike across the canyon, rim to rim, in every season. I am pleased to say, this last year I actually met that goal, doing a winter hike across the canyon too. I just really recommend, to people, that when you come to Grand Canyon take some kind of short hike, or ranger hike, or get out and see, even if it is just a few hundred yards, into the canyon. It is a remarkable experience. We really look forward to having people come here and sharing this wonderful place.

Patrick: So, for our very first webisode we had Park Superintendent Steve Martin and I want to thank you again for being here Steve.

Steve: Well, thank you so much. It is an honor to be the first.

Patrick: We hope that you join us week after week for so many different topics about Grand Canyon. We'll catch you later.