

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

GRAND CANYON – PARASHANT NATIONAL MONUMENT

RECORD OF DECISION

INTRODUCTION:

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Part 1500), the Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS) prepared this Record of Decision (ROD) concerning the Proposed General Management Plan (GMP)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for NPS lands within Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, published January 2007 (henceforth, Proposed Plan/FEIS). The Monument is jointly managed by the NPS and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which have coordinated extensively throughout the conservation planning and environmental impact analysis process to produce the Proposed Plan/FEIS.

This ROD records the decisions made by the NPS for managing 208,447 acres in Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument (Monument), as detailed in the Approved GMP. Many of the decisions contained in the Approved GMP apply to both NPS- and BLM-administered lands within the Monument, which will be managed collaboratively by the NPS and BLM. The BLM will produce a separate ROD to record BLM-specific decisions for the Monument. Following the announcement of approval and release of the NPS and BLM RODs, a joint presentation document containing the Approved GMP (NPS) and Approved Plan (BLM) will be prepared (the FEIS will not be reproduced but will be retained as the final record of NEPA compliance completed).

On January 11, 2000, Presidential Proclamation 7265 created Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. The President signed the proclamation to ensure protection of a wide variety of scientific, biological, hydrological, and geological resources and a long and rich human history, which have been preserved by remoteness and limited travel corridors. The Monument is a vast landscape, full of natural splendor, where a sense of solitude can be enjoyed. The Monument is located in Mohave County, Arizona, immediately north of Grand Canyon National Park and east of the state of Nevada, and encompasses 1,048,316

acres (208,447 acres of NPS-administered federal land, 808,744 acres of BLM-administered federal land, 23,205 acres of state-administered land, and 7,920 acres of private land). The decisions made in this planning process apply only to the federal land (NPS and BLM) within the Monument boundary.

The Approved GMP was described as Alternative E in the Proposed Plan/FEIS, which was initially presented in the Draft Plan/EIS released in November 2005. This ROD provides the background on development of the GMP and the decision rationale for approving the proposed actions contained in Alternative E, and describes the clarifications made to resolve subsequent agency and public comments. This ROD also includes a statement of the decisions made, synopses of other alternatives considered and a description of the environmentally preferable alternative, a summary of actions designed to minimize environmental harm, and an overview of public involvement in the decision-making process.

THE DECISION:

The decision of the NPS is to implement Alternative E as the new GMP for NPS-administered lands located in the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument (see Map 1.1 in the FEIS). The NPS-administered lands within the Monument are part of Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NRA). The Approved GMP carries forward relevant decisions from the Lake Mead NRA GMP (1986) with limited modifications to clarify current conditions, remedy recently occurring issues, and/or enhance protection of resource values.

The Approved GMP was prepared in accord with the NPS planning policies contained in Director's Order 2 pertaining to GMPs, the National Park and Recreation Act of 1978, and the NPS Organic Act of 1916. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared in accordance with NEPA and Director's Order 12, Conservation Planning and Environmental Impact Analysis. The Approved GMP is nearly identical to Alternative E presented in the Proposed Plan/FEIS published in February 2007. Minor modifications are noted below.

The Approved GMP emphasizes protection and restoration of natural and cultural resources while still providing for visitor use and enjoyment of the Monument. Where appropriate, it combines various management actions to allow natural processes to continue, applies hands-on treatment methods for restoring degraded resources, and protects remote settings and wilderness character that currently exist in the Monument. All decisions in the Approved GMP fulfill the purpose and significance of the Monument and comply with Presidential Proclamation 7265.

In a comprehensive manner, the Approved GMP is designed to respond to each of the issues and management concerns recognized during the planning process. The NPS determined that the actions presented under Alternative E in the Proposed Plan provide an optimal balance between appropriate and authorized resource use, visitor use and inspiration, and the protection and long-term sustainability of resources/Monument objects and values.

The Approved GMP is comprised of a set of decisions for land management tiered from goal-driven desired future conditions (DFCs), to land use allocations, and on to management actions. These decisions provide management direction at a broad scale and guide future actions to govern the protection and use of the resources on NPS-administered lands of the Monument. Decisions related to the principle planning issues, major resources, and related management addressed by the NPS in the Approved GMP include the following:

Travel management: On the NPS portion of the Monument, decisions regarding the road network approved through the 1986 Lake Mead GMP are carried forward in the Approved GMP. Minor changes were made via the Draft and Proposed Plans and finalized in the Approved GMP to address inconsistencies among earlier plans and to provide enhanced resource protection where needed. Routes open to motorized public use total 121 miles, while routes open for administrative-only motorized use total 27 miles. Routes open for non-motorized public use increased from 5 miles in the Proposed Plan to 8 miles in the Approved GMP due to inclusion of a previously unclassified route in the Andrus Point area.

Proposed wilderness and wilderness characteristics areas: Wilderness proposals and management decisions on NPS lands, established in the 1986 Lake Mead GMP and 1979 Lake Mead Wilderness Proposal, are incorporated in the Approved GMP. While 188,121 acres are, and will continue to be, managed as proposed wilderness, at this time, no Congressionally established wilderness is located on NPS lands. An additional 5,473 acres were inventoried as exhibiting wilderness characteristics during the planning process. Through the Approved GMP, these NPS lands will be managed to retain these characteristics and values by designing any management activities, if necessary to protect resource values of these areas, to be substantially unnoticeable. The “minimum tool” necessary for required projects or actions will be determined in advance, consistent with NPS Management Policies (2006) and Director’s Order 41.

Cultural resources and cultural landscapes: Through a program of inventory, monitoring, and research, the NPS will identify, conserve, protect, stabilize or restore, and maintain cultural resources in good (or better) condition to ensure they are conserved and available for appropriate use and enjoyment by present and future generations. Proactive research, protection, and inventories with universities, advocate and service groups, site stewards, tribes, and communities will be used to gain a better understanding of cultural resources for management and protection. Cooperative management agreements may be developed with neighboring federal agencies, local and regional American Indian tribes and communities, institutions of higher learning, and/or other agencies or groups to improve the efficiency and quality of cultural site management.

Imminent threats from deterioration and potential conflicts with other resource uses on NPS lands will be reduced, mitigated, or eliminated. All actions potentially impacting cultural resources will be assessed via compliance with §106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Director’s Order 28. All implementation actions will be

contingent upon the outcome of §106 consultation with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and will not proceed until that process is completed.

Tassi Ranch and Waring Ranch will continue to be managed as public use sites. The following implementation actions will occur at Tassi Ranch and Tassi Springs:

- The historic irrigation ditch system will be maintained to allow for conservation of Grand Wash Spring snail, an endemic species.
- Historic landscapes will be managed to maintain historic and ecological integrity.
- The Tassi Ranch cultural landscape will be nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
- A cultural resource cyclic maintenance program will continue.

The following implementation actions will occur at Waring Ranch and Regional Cultural Landscape:

- The Waring Ranch NRHP listing will be broadened to encompass the entire Kelly Point ranching landscape.
- Other features associated with the Kelly Point ranching landscape will be examined and assessed for future stabilizing efforts.
- Condition assessment and stabilization of outlying cultural resources will continue to be conducted.

Traditional cultural properties associated with American Indians whose cultural memory, traditions, and lives are closely associated with the Monument will be protected and potentially nominated to the NRHP. American Indians with cultural and historic ties to the Monument will have access to and use of sites allocated to traditional use, consistent with laws, regulations, and authorities. Tribes with cultural and historic ties to the Monument would be consulted, according to the provisions specified in the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act, Archaeological Resources Protection Act, NHPA, and pertinent Executive Orders. Mutually acceptable methods of protecting and preserving areas of sacred and traditional importance will be adopted.

Geologic resources: Geologic resources, including cave and paleontological resources, will be protected as Monument objects and managed for their scientific, educational, and recreational values. The collection of any objects in the Monument, including geological, paleontological, cave resources, or rock specimens will not be authorized, except by permit for scientific research. All caves on NPS land are classified as significant under the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act. Inventories for cave and karst resources will continue. Cave and karst resources will be evaluated to determine proper and needed protective measures to ensure their continued viability. Protective measures for geologic resources could include restricting surface disturbing activities, limiting some fire suppression techniques, controlling visitor use, and restricting other management actions. NPS lands within the Monument are closed to mineral entry via Proclamation 7265, subject to valid existing rights.

Recreation: Information needed to plan, prepare, and choose safe, enjoyable, and appropriate uses of the Monument will be available to the public. The NPS and BLM will endeavor to provide seamless service to the public and use their resources accordingly. Dispersed, unstructured recreation opportunities predominate on NPS lands and management will focus on visitor safety and resource protection. Opportunities associated with motorized travel for sightseeing, hunting, and other recreation opportunities on NPS lands will be maintained via the network of approved roads. Access to lands with sensitive resources could be closed or limited, where determined necessary through monitoring of resource conditions. Beyond approved roads/road corridors, NPS lands will be managed for wilderness values and wilderness-associated recreation opportunities.

Recreational collecting of Monument resources, such as rocks, mineral specimens, petrified wood, fossils, shed antlers, other animal parts, or plants is prohibited. Recreational shooting is not allowed on NPS lands. Hunting is authorized in accordance with hunting seasons and license requirements established by the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

BLM and NPS permitting processes will be consolidated to provide outfitters and guides with a simplified procedure for obtaining Commercial Use Authorizations/Special Recreation Permits. Annual training will be provided to permit holders concerning appropriate land use ethics, such as *Leave No Trace* and *Tread Lightly*.

A *Limits of Acceptable Change* (LAC) framework will be used to establish acceptable resource, social, and managerial settings/conditions using appropriate indicators and standards. Management responses to unacceptable resource and/or social conditions would range from least restrictive methods (e.g., information and education) to more restrictive (e.g., visitor limits, supplemental rules). Where feasible, the least restrictive methods will be utilized first.

Geocache sites are prohibited in traditional cultural properties, archaeological sites, alcoves, caves, rock shelters, or where identified Monument objects would be at risk; in threatened and endangered species habitat and raptor nesting sites; or where unacceptable impacts may occur. Where geocaches are allowed as an appropriate use by NPS policy, they may remain only so long as acceptable resource and social conditions are maintained.

Environmental education and interpretation: The Monument's interpretation and environmental education program will be grounded in natural and cultural resource themes related to the Monument's purpose, significance, and mission statements as well as NPS and BLM missions and goals. The public will be provided the opportunity to understand and appreciate the purposes and significance of the Monument and its resources for this and future generations.

A Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) to be completed, creating a long-range vision and basis for decision-making related to interpretation and education for the Monument, will address:

- Interpretive goals, objectives, and associated management actions necessary for interpreting themes to target audiences.
- Interpretive publications that need to be developed for public use, education, and enjoyment.
- Outreach environmental education programs (interactive computer, workshop, and classroom) to be developed to enhance knowledge of natural and cultural resources and promote their stewardship.
- Partnerships with other state agencies, national parks, educational institutions, and other organizations to enrich interpretation and environmental education opportunities.

Information regarding recreation opportunities, interpretation of natural and human history, and specific rules and regulations pertaining to their use of NPS lands, would be provided to visitors. The Interagency Information Center and partnerships with cooperating associations will continue to be used to distribute visitor information to the public. A website will be maintained for on-line inquiries.

Signing in the Monument will be the minimum necessary to provide for public safety, reduce user conflicts, and protect resources; materials and design will be unobtrusive in order to blend with local landscape settings and retain the natural and/or historic integrity of the site. Recreational facility development will feature sustainable designs, and will be limited in sensitive habitats. Any future visitor center or contact stations will be collaborative efforts within nearby communities and will not be located within the Monument. Sensitive areas where increased visitation could create unacceptable changes or impacts to natural or cultural resources will not be publicly promoted. Public information will be provided only for those cultural sites designated for public use.

The Tassi Spring area will be identified, nominated, and managed as a Watchable Wildlife area. The public will be well informed about special status species and their needs for conservation through signs, educational media, and other outreach efforts.

Visual resources: All visual resources identified in the Monument proclamation (e.g., natural splendor; impressive landscapes; engaging scenery; natural splendor; colorful vistas; rugged canyons; colorful, lava-capped strata; and spectacular escarpments) will be protected. A system using four visual resource management (VRM) classes was applied in the planning process for NPS and BLM lands. From analysis in the Proposed Plan/FEIS, all NPS lands in the Monument are categorized in Class 1 (192,194 acres) or Class 2 (16,899 acres) in order to provide a very high level of visual resource protection. These classes establish the following objectives, which also provide visual management standards for the design and development of future management activities and projects on NPS lands in the Monument:

- **Class 1** - The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change of the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.
- **Class 2** - The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of a casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Dark night sky: Overnight conditions as influenced primarily by natural light sources will be maintained. Permanent outdoor lighting in VRM Class I areas will not be allowed. Any facilities authorized will use the best technology available to minimize light emissions and power consumption. Impacts to dark night skies will be prevented or reduced through the application of specific mitigation measures identified in activity level planning, with the appropriate level of NEPA compliance to be approved by the NPS. To provide the minimum, safe illumination necessary, these measures may include directing all light downward, as well as using shielded lights, lamp types such as sodium lamps (less prone to atmospheric scattering), circuit timers, and motion sensors, among other techniques.

Soundscapes: Natural quiet and sounds will be preserved or restored on NPS lands, where practicable. A Soundscape Management Plan will be developed and include baseline inventories and subsequent monitoring. In Air Tour Management planning and other §4(f) consultations with the Federal Aviation Administration, the NPS will recommend the protection and/or restoration of natural quiet. The NPS will continue to evaluate use of motorized equipment on NPS land. When motorized equipment is necessary and appropriate (and traditional skills are impractical to accomplish the necessary work), the least impacting equipment, alternatives, and/or mitigation will be employed.

Vegetation management: Native vegetative communities and species will be protected and managed as Monument objects. A mosaic of native perennial and non-invasive annual vegetative communities will be present across the landscape with a diversity of species, canopy, density, and age class reflecting its local ecological site potential and naturally occurring habitat conditions. Vegetative communities will be managed to provide sufficient plant cover and litter accumulation to protect soils from wind and water erosion and enhance nutrient cycling and productivity, even during drought years. Ecological processes and functions will be protected, enhanced, and/or restored by allowing tools that are necessary and appropriate to mitigate adverse impacts of allowable uses and undesirable disturbances, and contribute to meeting NPS Vital Signs and enhance Monument objects and values.

On NPS lands, vegetation management objectives will be developed through Vital Signs monitoring. Monitoring vegetation communities will demonstrate retention of ecological integrity where natural processes maintain native plants and plant communities and are the

principal influence on vegetation community and population fluctuation. When natural processes have been disrupted, Desired Plant Community (DPC) objectives will be achieved through vegetation treatments and managing resource uses, as appropriate. Seasonal restrictions, temporary reductions, or elimination of authorized activities will be implemented in conjunction with vegetation treatment projects to protect sensitive resources and/or ensure attainment of DPC objectives or Vital Sign standards. Fire is recognized as a natural process in fire-adapted ecosystems and prescribed fire/wildland fire use may be used to achieve objectives for vegetation and other resources.

On NPS lands, individual restoration plans would be developed to meet DPCs, NPS Vital Signs standards, and related ecological objectives. Mitigation measures will be implemented for reducing impacts such as soil erosion or non-native plant encroachment, and minimum requirements analysis will be used in proposed wilderness. Authorization of non-native seed use must be consistent with NPS policy, which states that revegetation efforts will use seeds, cuttings, or transplants representing species and gene pools native to the ecological portion of the park in which the restoration project is occurring. Where a natural area has become so degraded that restoration with native gene pools has proven unsuccessful, NPS policy allows for improved varieties or closely related native species to be used.

The collection or use of vegetative materials from NPS lands will only be authorized in conjunction with documented research or restoration programs in accordance with NPS regulations and policy. The sale of vegetative materials will not be authorized. Salvaged plant materials may be used in areas with similar ecological conditions requiring restoration or rehabilitation. Salvage and use may require a permit from the State of Arizona and will be allowed in the following priority:

- Removal and maintenance for replanting during rehabilitation of the site being disturbed
- Removal and transplanting out of the area to be disturbed to an area needing rehabilitation

On NPS lands, all acres can be considered for Wildland Fire Use, prescribed fire, fire suppression, and mechanical and chemical treatment to achieve resource objectives, consistent with land use allocations in the GMP, in order to protect Monument resource values and wilderness character, except that all Mojave Desert Ecological Zone acres would be managed as Fire Suppression as designated in the Lake Mead Fire Management Plan/EA (NPS 2004). All acres in the Mojave Desert Ecological Zone are available for restoration, involving the strategic application of mechanical and chemical treatment for invasive plant control, endangered species habitat restoration/protection, or to restore more natural fire regimes and fire frequency. All treatments will be consistent with land use allocations and minimum-tool requirements for proposed wilderness. In addition, hazard fuel reduction treatments will be implemented to protect Monument values, infrastructure, personnel, and visitors where appropriate.

Control of non-native invasive species: Implementation of ongoing noxious weed and invasive species control actions will be continued, consistent with NPS policy and the Weed Management Area Plan. Integrated weed management will continue using available tools to control noxious weeds consistent with vegetation management decisions for each

ecological zone to protect resources and Monument values. Certified weed-free feed, mulch, and seed may be required for all permitted uses to limit the spread of noxious weeds and other undesirable species. Construction equipment, fire vehicles, and/or vehicles from outside the Arizona Strip planning area used to implement authorized projects and/or uses will be required to be cleaned (using air, low pressure/high volume, or high pressure water) prior to initiating the project (and will also be cleaned after being used within any infested area).

Wild horses and burros will not be permitted on NPS lands. Exotic and/or non-native wildlife species and/or feral or non-permitted livestock will be immediately eliminated or controlled upon discovery within nine miles of desert bighorn sheep habitat areas to minimize the threat of bighorn exposure to disease. Agents authorized to eliminate exotics/non-natives include NPS and BLM rangers, as well as officials working for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, USDA Wildlife Services, and county and local law enforcement agencies.

Livestock grazing: Livestock use and associated management practices throughout the Monument would be conducted only in a manner consistent with other resource needs and objectives, to ensure that the health of rangeland resources are maintained or improved, and to ensure they are productive for all resource values. Sensitive resources on NPS lands shall not be degraded by livestock grazing and associated management techniques. On NPS lands, livestock grazing is administered within NPS policy, the Monument proclamation, and Lake Mead NRA enabling legislation, and evaluated through the Vital Signs monitoring program. On NPS lands, when appropriate, the implementation of BLM standards and guides may be modified by incorporating NPS Vital Signs standards and monitoring results. Any land health standards applied on NPS lands must be in compliance with NPS Management Policies (2006) to avoid unacceptable impacts.

Grazing on NPS lands continues on six allotments (75,949 acres) under existing permits. Authority for grazing decisions is retained by NPS, with allotment management conducted through an agreement with BLM. One allotment completely on NPS land and the NPS-portion of two others, closed via previous decisions, are reaffirmed in the Approved GMP to be retired in perpetuity (129,853 acres):

- Grazing on the NPS portion of the Parashant Allotment was made unavailable in perpetuity. The allotment boundaries are modified to include only BLM lands.
- The Tassi Allotment on NPS lands was made unavailable in perpetuity for grazing. The allotment boundaries are modified to include only BLM lands.
- Livestock grazing on the Home Ranch Allotment was terminated based on a 1967 written agreement between NPS and the grazing permittee and is therefore unavailable in perpetuity. The allotment no longer exists.

Only cattle and horse grazing, where permitted, will be authorized on NPS lands.

Special status species: The Monument contains a block of remote, contiguous habitat that serves as refugia for populations of special status species, and as such, a goal of no net loss

in the quality or quantity of special status species habitat throughout the Monument is established. Management of discretionary activities in the Monument will be conducted so as to avoid any need to list proposed, candidate, state, NPS or BLM sensitive species, and will include conservation measures and stipulations benefiting special status plant and animal species. Management emphasis and priority will be given to special status species and habitats in conflict resolution. Special status plant and animal species include those that are federally listed, proposed, or candidate species; species for which there is a signed conservation agreement or strategy; all species referenced in AGFD's "Wildlife Species of Concern in Arizona"; and species included on NPS or the Arizona BLM sensitive species lists.

The NPS will continue to cooperate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), AGFD, and BLM to ensure all actions comply with the Endangered Species Act. The NPS will continue to undertake active management programs to inventory, monitor, restore, and maintain listed species, control detrimental non-native species, control any deleterious public use, and re-establish extirpated populations as necessary to maintain the species and their habitats.

On NPS lands, management of special status species, as needed, will be implemented through specific action plans tiered to the Lake Mead Resources Stewardship Plan or the Approved GMP. Planning and implementation will be conducted in collaboration with USFWS, AGFD, BLM, and/or other partners with required expertise, with appropriate NEPA compliance approved by the NPS.

Reintroductions, transplants, and augmentations of special status species populations could be carried out in conformance with NPS policy, and in collaboration with the BLM, AGFD, and the USFWS to:

- Maintain current native species populations, distributions, and genetic diversity;
- Conserve or recover threatened or endangered species; and/or
- Restore or enhance native populations, diversity, or distribution of special status species.

Animal species that may be reintroduced, transplanted, or augmented in historic habitat may include but would not be limited to desert tortoise, chuckwalla, banded Gila monster, relict leopard frog, endemic spring snail, California condor, yellow-billed cuckoo, southwest willow flycatcher, ferruginous hawk, northern goshawk, or western burrowing owl. Any such actions would be based on the best available scientific information and with appropriate advance planning and NEPA compliance, with opportunity for public review, and approved by the NPS.

The NPS will continue to monitor known locations, and inventory and map potential habitat for special status plant and animal populations to ensure protection of these populations and associated habitat or their restoration, as necessary.

No new facilities will be authorized or constructed in listed or proposed special status species habitat. The NPS will further limit or restrict any recreation activity or other use that degrades any special status species habitat or may cause disturbance, injury, or mortality to the species.

Wildlife management: The natural biological diversity of wildlife species will be maintained or, where feasible, restored. Habitats will be managed on an ecosystem basis, ensuring that all parts of the ecosystem and natural processes are functional. Native wildlife communities, species, and habitats are protected as Monument objects. Habitat connectivity and wildlife movement between ecological zones is maintained or enhanced where feasible. Vegetation treatments may be authorized to meet conservation objectives, with appropriate NEPA and minimum tool analyses (if applicable), and approved by the NPS following public review. Predators are recognized as an important component of plant and animal communities. On NPS lands, predator control will only take place in accord with 2006 NPS Management Policies, ensuring that proposed animal removals do not interfere with natural habitats, abundances, distribution of native species, or processes.

On NPS lands, wildlife management will be consistent with AGFD Strategic Plans, to the extent it is compatible with 2006 NPS Management Policies. Reintroductions and transplants of native wildlife species into historic habitats will be authorized where consistent with achieving DFCs, protection of Monument objects, and when compatible with applicable NPS policies.

New water developments for wildlife are not authorized on NPS lands. Existing water developments may be maintained, repaired, or replaced in-kind within NPS policies, but increased development (size, scope, or disturbance) is not permitted. All management actions require compliance with the Monument proclamation and other applicable laws, regulations, and NPS policies, with appropriate NEPA compliance approved by the NPS.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Five alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, were analyzed in detail in the Draft Plan/EIS (BLM and NPS 2005). The alternatives were developed to address major planning issues identified through public scoping and to provide direction for resource programs. Each alternative was comprised of a set of potential decisions representing a distinct concept for land management tiered from goal-driven DFCs, to land use allocations, and to management actions. These decisions provide management direction at a broad scale and guide future actions to govern the protection and use of the resources on NPS-administered lands on the Monument.

Alternative A - This “no action” alternative provided the baseline against which to compare the other alternatives and continued management provided by the Lake Mead NRA GMP (NPS 1986), the overall tenets of Presidential Proclamation 7265, and the BLM/NPS interim management agreement, which provided temporary direction until the GMP could

be approved. Under **this** alternative, current management practices would have continued, as funding allowed, and as modified with creation of the Monument to **fulfill** the direction provided in Proclamation 7265.

Alternative B – This alternative emphasized minimal human use/influence and proposed the fewest miles of open roads and trails. Alternative B focused on natural processes and other unobtrusive methods for ecosystem restoration, resource management, and scientific research; more protection and enhancement of remoteness and dispersed recreation; unstructured recreation opportunities; and the least amount of motorized recreation opportunities.

Alternative C – This alternative represented an attempt to balance resource protection and human use/influence. Alternative C proposed a moderate amount of open roads and trails; a mix of natural processes and “hands-on” techniques for ecosystem restoration, resource management, and scientific research; and a mix of motorized, non-motorized, dispersed, and structured recreation opportunities.

Alternative D – This alternative emphasized maximum appropriate human use/influence and the widest array of visitor experiences and opportunities. Alternative D focused on “hands-on” techniques for ecosystem restoration, resource management, and scientific research. As such, it offered fewer remote settings and the most motorized and structured recreation opportunities compared to the other alternatives.

Alternative E – This alternative emphasized minimal human influence and use in the more remote sections of the Monument and more human use/influence in the areas adjacent to local communities or in areas presently receiving such use/influence. It attempts to balance human use/influence with resource protection. Where appropriate, it proposed the use of a combination of management actions including allowing natural processes to continue, applying more hands-on treatment methods, and protecting the remote settings that currently exist in the Monument.

BASIS FOR DECISION:

Information derived from the initial scoping phase informed development of the alternatives presented in the Draft Plan/EIS. The subsequent public comment and feedback provided through review of the Draft Plan/EIS was duly considered in preparing the Proposed Plan/FEIS. The Proposed Plan/FEIS depicted a combination of decisions from the five alternatives considered in the Draft Plan/EIS, emphasizing the Preferred Alternative (Alternative E).

The course of actions for managing the NPS lands of the Monument encompassed in Alternative E was chosen because it (a) most effectively accomplishes the overall objectives of protecting Monument resources and values and facilitates appropriate management and research; (b) best addresses the diverse stakeholder concerns in a fair and equitable manner; and (c) provides the most workable framework for future management of the Monument. Among the attributes that led to this determination are

provisions for protecting Monument resources (archaeological, historic, paleontological, geological, biological) including special features such as special status species, wilderness character, riparian areas, and cultural landscapes, and provides for visitor use in a manner consistent with protecting Monument resources and values from any potential impairment.

The Approved GMP responds to increasing demands for recreation on NPS-administered lands while adhering to NPS Organic Act mandates for resource protection and visitor use management. The Approved GMP is very similar to the Proposed Plan with minor revisions and clarifications stemming from public and agency comment and internal review.

The Approved GMP responds to travel management and access issues by designating routes as open, closed, or for administrative use only. A Travel Management Plan for the Monument, including NPS and BLM lands, will be completed within three years from the date of this ROD.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE:

Alternative E of the Proposed Plan/FEIS was identified by the NPS as the environmentally preferred alternative when taking into consideration the human (social and economic) environment as well as the natural environment. The CEQ has defined the environmentally preferable alternative as the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in §101 of NEPA. The six broad policy goals for all Federal plans, programs, and policies are listed below:

1. Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.
2. Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.
3. Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.
4. Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice.
5. Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities.
6. Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

In comparison with the other alternatives analyzed in the Proposed Plan/FEIS, Alternative E best meets the above NEPA goals for the future management of the Monument. It provides a high level of protection of natural and cultural resources, while providing for a

wide range of beneficial uses of the environment. Alternative A (No Action) would have allowed unmanaged visitor use increases, thereby causing potential negative impacts on the visitor experience and resource conditions. This alternative also did not identify additional lands managed to maintain wilderness characteristics. For these reasons, the No Action alternative is not preferable from an environmental perspective.

Alternative B encompassed the most “hands off” management. It has the fewest miles of open motorized routes, more acres of NPS lands managed to maintain wilderness characteristics than Alternatives A, C and D, and the least aggressive forms of treatment for noxious and invasive species. Though this alternative is the most “natural” management alternative, it does not provide for proactive visitor or resource management. This alternative was not deemed the environmentally preferable alternative because it does not achieve a balance between visitor use/access and protection of resources, nor does it involve restoration of natural processes and conditions.

Alternative C most balanced visitor use and resource conditions, but did not recognize the unique nature of the Monument in terms of its accessibility and opportunities to provide a range of appropriate recreational experiences to Monument visitors. This alternative does not attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation.

Alternative D encompassed the most “hands-on” management, maximum human use/influence, most recreation opportunities, and among the “action” alternatives the fewest acres managed to maintain wilderness characteristics. This alternative proposed extensive proactive restoration of species, which meant fewer acres restored via natural means, and more significant alterations to the primitive landscape. It provided a high range of visitor access and recreation opportunities, but fewer opportunities for primitive and remote experiences. For these reasons, this alternative did not achieve the balance between resource protection and resource use that permitted enhancement of resource conditions and visitor experience.

Alternative E (now the Approved GMP) combines the best components of each of the above “action” alternatives to ensure protection of Monument resources and values while providing a wide range of beneficial uses. This alternative acknowledges that the more isolated areas of the Monument will be managed to preserve their remoteness and contains the most acres of NPS lands managed to maintain wilderness characteristics. At the same time, it provides appropriate access to areas of higher use and along major travel corridors to ensure that a range of appropriate outdoor recreation is available. Overall, Alternative E best meets the requirements of §101 of NEPA and was thus identified as the environmentally preferable alternative by the NPS.

FINDING ON IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES AND VALUES:

In addition to determining the foreseeable environmental consequences of the alternatives, NPS policy (NPS 2006 Management Policies, §1.4) requires that potential effects be analyzed by the NPS manager to determine if a proposed action could impair the resources or values of the NPS unit, “*including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for*

the enjoyment of those resources or values.” Impairment analysis is required only for the NPS portion of the Monument, and is determined only by NPS managers. When there is a potential for impairment, it must be disclosed, and the components of any such alternative leading to the impairment must be modified or eliminated before a decision can be made.

The fundamental purpose of the NPS, established by the NPS Organic Act and reaffirmed by the NPS General Authorities Act, as amended, begins with a mandate to conserve resources and values. NPS managers always must seek ways to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the resources and values to the greatest degree practicable. However, the laws do give the NPS manager discretion to allow impacts on the resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a unit (in this case, a National Monument), as long as the impact does not constitute impairment of the affected resources and values. Although Congress has given the NPS this management discretion, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement that the NPS must leave the resources and values unimpaired unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise.

Impairment prohibited by the Organic Act and the General Authorities Act is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS manager, would harm the integrity of park resources or values, including opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values. Whether an impact meets this definition depends on the particular resources and values that would be affected; the severity, duration, and timing of the impacts; the direct and indirect effects of the impacts; and the cumulative effects of the impact in question and other impacts. An impact on any resource or value may constitute an impairment, and would be most likely to constitute an impairment if it affects a resource or value whose conservation is:

- a) Necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or Monument proclamation,
- b) Key to the natural or cultural integrity of the Monument or to opportunities for enjoyment of the Monument, or
- c) Identified as a goal in the Monument’s GMP or other relevant NPS planning documents.

An impact would be less likely to constitute an impairment to the extent that it is an unavoidable result, which cannot be reasonably further mitigated, or an action necessary to preserve or restore the integrity of Monument resources or values. Impairment could result from visitor activities, park management activities or activities undertaken by permittees, contractors, or others operating in the park, as well as from external actions. Impairment can occur from inaction as well as action. For example, failure to prevent the spread of seriously disruptive invasive species may impair park resources.

The NPS has determined that implementing Alternative E as the Approved GMP will not result in impairment of Monument resources and values, nor are any unacceptable impacts expected to occur. In reaching this determination, Monument Proclamation 7625, Lake Mead NRA enabling legislation (Public Law 88-639), and the 1986 Lake Mead NRA GMP were reviewed to ascertain the Monument’s purpose and significance, resource values,

resource management goals, and DFCs. In addition, the management objectives specific to resource protection goals on NPS lands of the Monument were identified; thresholds were established for each resource of concern to determine the context, intensity, and duration of impacts; and an analysis was conducted to determine if the magnitude of the impact reached the level of impairment defined in NPS Management Policies (2006).

Based on a thorough analysis of the environmental impacts described in the Proposed Plan/FEIS, the public and agency comments received, and the application of the provisions of the 2006 NPS Management Policies, the NPS has concluded that the implementation of the Proposed Plan (Alternative E) would not result in impairment of any of the resources and values on NPS lands of Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument.

MONITORING AND MEASURES TO MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL HARM:

Mitigation measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm that could result from implementing the selected action are described and analyzed in the Proposed Plan/FEIS, and are incorporated into the Approved GMP. Measures to minimize environmental harm include, but are not limited to openings/closures of motorized routes; ranger law enforcement patrols; commercial use authorization stipulations; visitor education regarding appropriate use/activities; grazing permit requirements; erosion control measures; restoration of habitats using native species; exotic plant and animal control; use of minimum tool and traditional skills as necessary to protect wilderness character; erecting barriers or signs to reduce or prevent impacts; use of weed free materials and equipment; monitoring visitor use patterns; monitoring changes in condition of natural and cultural resources; and consulting with the Arizona SHPO, USFWS, other state and federal agencies, and interested Tribes when appropriate.

During the anticipated 15-20 year life of the Approved GMP, the NPS expects that new information gathered from field inventories and assessments, research, suitable agency studies, and other sources will update baseline data or support new management techniques and scientific principles. To the extent that such new information or actions address issues covered in the GMP, the NPS will integrate the data into project management and activity planning. Monitoring, which is the repeated measurement of activities and conditions over time with the implied purpose to use this information to adjust management, if necessary, will be used to achieve or maintain resource objectives. Director's Order 12 (and CEQ regulations implementing NEPA) provides that the NPS will ensure appropriate monitoring is undertaken to ensure approved actions and mitigation strategies are carried out and achieve desired outcomes.

Monitoring information facilitates an adaptive management strategy. As part of this process, the NPS will review management actions periodically to determine whether the objectives of the Approved GMP are being met (a detailed discussion of implementation and use of adaptive management are included in the Approved GMP).

The NPS will monitor the effectiveness of the Approved GMP to determine whether the DFCs, goals, and objectives set forth in this document are being met (see the discussion entitled "Monitoring" in Chapter 3 of the Approved GMP). Monitoring for each program area is outlined in Table 3.1 of the Approved GMP. If monitoring shows current resource management actions or visitor management practices are not effective, the NPS may modify or adjust management without amending or revising the GMP as long as assumptions and impacts disclosed in the analysis remain valid and broad scale DFCs, goals, and objectives are not changed (see the discussion entitled "Adaptive Management" in Chapter 3 of the Approved GMP). Where the NPS considers taking or approving actions that will alter or not conform to overall direction of the GMP, the NPS will prepare a plan amendment or revision and complete NEPA compliance, as appropriate.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION:

The conservation planning and environmental impact analysis process was formally initiated when the NPS published the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for a GMP in the *Federal Register* on April 24, 2002. Subsequently the NPS and BLM facilitated a series of public open houses in 2002 and 2003. Before the NOI was published, a series of Community Based Partnership and Stewardship courses were held in northern Arizona and southern Utah in which the public provided early information and communicated issues regarding the Monument.

The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft Plan/EIS was published on November 25, 2005 and the jointly prepared document was available for a 90-day public review period. Another series of open house meetings were held in St. George, Utah; Beaver Dam, Kingman, Flagstaff, Marble Canyon, Kaibab Village, Page, and Phoenix, Arizona; and Las Vegas, Nevada, to discuss the Draft Plan/EIS and solicit public comment.

The NOA for the Proposed Plan/FEIS was published on March 2, 2007. Throughout the preparation of the Approved GMP, the NPS maintained an extensive public participation process aimed at providing frequent opportunities for interaction with the public through a variety of media. The general public; representatives of Indian Tribes; organizations; public interest groups; and Federal, state, and local government agencies were invited to participate throughout the planning process. This participation included review of proposed planning criteria, issues, preliminary alternatives, the Draft Plan/EIS, and the Proposed Plan/FEIS. These groups and individuals were kept informed through public meetings; planning bulletins; web information; Federal Register notices; and distribution of preliminary alternatives, the Draft Plan/EIS, and the Proposed Plan/FEIS. The NPS responded to comment letters on the Draft Plan/EIS and carefully considered public comment when preparing the Proposed Plan/FEIS. The NPS also considered comments on the Proposed Plan/FEIS when developing the Approved GMP and this ROD.

Ten agencies, tribes, and communities requested cooperating agency status and assisted with the planning effort and included Coconino and Mohave counties, Arizona; Kane and Washington counties, Utah; the towns of Fredonia and Colorado City, Arizona; the Kaibab

Paiute Tribe; Arizona Department of Transportation; AGFD; and the Federal Highway Administration.

A national mailing list of approximately 10,500 individuals, agencies, interest groups, and Tribes who expressed interest in the planning process was maintained throughout the planning process. In order to keep the public informed of planning status and to solicit reviews and information, planning bulletins were issued to those on the mailing list via direct mail, or if preferred via e-mail notification (when information was available on the website). Public meetings were announced at least 15 days prior to the event in local news media and on the website. The NPS and BLM conducted numerous meetings with cooperating agencies, other Federal agencies, Indian Tribes, state and local governments, and interested individuals and groups.

CONCLUSION:

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative E) of the Proposed Plan/FEIS, which was selected as the Approved General Management Plan, provides the most comprehensive and proactive strategy among the full range of alternatives considered for meeting the National Park Service's purposes, goals, and criteria for managing NPS lands in Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument in accordance with Proclamation 7265, federal laws, and 2006 NPS Management Policies. As noted, the Approved GMP has been finalized based on public comment and agency consultations. The selection of Alternative E, as reflected by the analysis contained in the Proposed Plan/FEIS, will not result in the impairment of Monument resources and allows the NPS to conserve such resources while providing for their enjoyment by visitors.

Approved: Jonathan B. Jarvis
Jonathan B. Jarvis, Regional Director
Pacific West Region, National Park Service

Date: 1/31/2008