

## Grand Canyon National Park Colorado River Management and Planning

CRMP NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 1988

This newsletter will address concerns surrounding some of the preferred alternatives presented in the last CRMP Newsletter and Preferred Alternatives Booklets in an attempt to clear up some areas of misunderstanding. Included is a statistical breakdown of the public input received to date on the various preferred alternatives and policy proposals; revised alternatives; an updated review process schedule; and an explanation of the remainder of the review process.

N1623(GRCA)

October 1988

Dear Friends of the Grand Canyon:

Although the Preferred Alternatives Booklet and the August 1988 CRMP newsletter have been generally well received, certain proposed revisions are unacceptable to a majority of concerned individuals who have written to the park. While the old adage still holds true that it is impossible to please all of the people all of the time, we feel that additional information and actions responsive to suggestions will go far in allaying many of those concerns.

At the beginning of the revision process, many comments were received expressing concern over the length of the noncommercial waiting list. It has been discovered through the record-keeping process in the River Permits Office that individuals wishing to take a noncommercial trip together put all their names on the waiting list at the same time. In addition, many applicants are only casually interested in or are simply not ready or qualified to take a noncommercial trip, as indicated by the relatively high deferral rate and the failure to submit continuing interest cards. A \$ 100 waiting list application charge was proposed in an attempt to reduce the length of the waiting list by eliminating artificial inflation of the list. This alternative resulted in considerable objection. It is clear that of those individuals commenting on the revision of the CRMP, a majority would be opposed to a charge of that amount or one that would be collected so potentially far in advance of an actual trip launch.



Many of the written comments raised the concern that the initial proposal of the trip leader having to pay \$ 100 for what could be a several year wait for a permit would be prohibitive and unfair. Several other comments have been recorded to the effect that this proposal has no precedent on any other public access river. In some respects this is true, although some Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service areas do charge per person user fees on recreational rivers.

Information inadvertently left out of the initial rationale for an application fee was an explanation of the use of the funds. All monies collected would be utilized directly by Grand Canyon National Park River Subdistrict/River Permits Office, either in the administration of the noncommercial permit system or to augment the NPS River Resource Rehabilitation Program in the river corridor.

As described in the revised proposal below, a charge of \$ 25 will still serve the purpose of discouraging less than serious trip leaders from applying to the list without unduly inconveniencing any one individual. An additional charge of \$ 50 upon return of the permit applications will allow the majority of the cost to be evenly distributed amongst trip participants, which at this time are more solidly committed. The monies charged are not intended to be user fees. Rather, they are funds that will be utilized primarily to defray the costs of administering the noncommercial system and, to a lesser extent, provide support to the Park's ongoing river corridor rehabilitation program. Commercial users contribute in a similar way through franchise fees collected from commercial river outfitters.

The preferred alternative for the noncommercial waiting list has been modified in response to the input received. The primary points of the new proposal are as follows:

- 1) All new applicants to the noncommercial waiting list will be required to include a non-refundable, non-transferrable deposit of \$ 25 with their request to be included on the list. Anyone with their name on the list at the time of implementation of this policy will be remain on the list without charge.
- 2) Fifty dollars will be charged to all noncommercial permittees upon return of their application for a noncommercial trip (application must be received no later then 30 days in advance of an accepted launch date). This administrative charge will be non-refundable.
- 3) A modified continuing interest requirement will be retained. In order to remain on the noncommercial waiting list, the River Permits Office must be contacted in writing each year between December 15 and January 31. Following implementation of the new plan, applicants will have a grace period of 1 missed continuing interest deadline during the time they are on the waiting list.
- 4) The rule prohibiting participation on another noncommercial trip while remaining on the waiting list will be modified to allow applicants to participate in 1 noncommercial trip while waiting for a noncommercial permit as a trip leader. In order to facilitate this rule and to aid in identifying trip participants,

all noncommercial trip participants and permit waiting list applicants will be required to provide adequate identification and social security number upon launch and/or placement or renewal on the waiting list.

- 5) Upon return of a completed noncommercial river trip application, a \$ 50 administrative fee will be required.
- 6) Noncommercial launch dates will be scheduled on a two-year revolving scale, as originally proposed in the initial preferred alternative.

Over 300 Preferred Alternatives booklets were mailed out, and as of September 27, 1988, the following comments have been received:

TOTAL LETTERS RECEIVED - 78

ISSUE: NONCOMMERCIAL WAITING LIST

1.	\$ 100 Application Fee	Total Comments:	56
		Oppose:	45
		Support:	4
		Other:	5
2.	Trip Participant Rule	Total Comments:	17
		Support Existing Policy:	9
		Abolish as Proposed:	8
3.	Continuing Interest	Total Comments:	21
		Support Existing Policy:	16
		Abolish as Proposed:	5
4.	Two Year Scheduling	Total Comments:	20
		Oppose:	18
		Support:	2
5.	Deferral System	Total Comments:	13
		Oppose:	10
		Support:	3
6.	Call-in System	Total Comments:	8
		Support Proposal:	8
7.	User Day Pool	Total Comments:	6
		Support Proposal:	6

ISSUE:	COMMERCIAL FISHING	Total Comments:	11
		Support Current Policy:	7
		Allow Commercial Fishing:	4

ISSUE:	WINTER USE	Total Comments:	8
		Support Proposal:	4
		Oppose Proposal:	4
ISSUE:	RESEARCH TRIPS	Total Comments:	10
		(non-specific comments)	
ISSUE:	CROWDING AND CONGESTION	Total Comments:	21
		(non-specific comments)	
ISSUE:	EQUITY OF ALLOCATION	Total Comments:	27
		Oppose Current Policy:	24
		Support Current Policy:	3

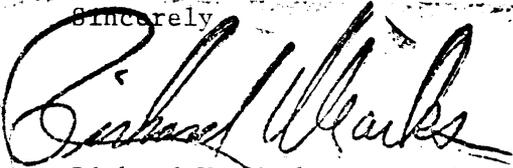
Due to the positive response received last year, NPS staff members from Grand Canyon National Park attended the Sixth Annual River Rendezvous in Telluride, Colorado again this year to answer questions and address concerns on a one-to-one basis with concerned individuals. Although the overall attendance was down from last year, contacts were made with about 30 people interested in Colorado River issues. The revised proposal is generally in agreement with the input received at the Rendezvous.

Due to the volume of input received and the resultant modifications of proposed policy changes, the timetable for completion of the CRMP has been adjusted somewhat. The Draft Revised Colorado River Management Plan is expected to be available to all concerned individuals and groups in late November. The Draft Plan will be initially mailed to all individuals who have commented in writing during the revision process, those who have attended public meetings, and those who have requested a draft copy. Those wishing to receive the draft may contact the CRMP Planning Office (602-638-7825 or P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023). A Draft CRMP will be mailed as soon as they are available.

The draft Colorado River Management Plan will be open to comment for 30 days. At the conclusion of this period, all input will again be considered for inclusion into the final plan. Following the incorporation of public and agency input, the plan is expected to be finalized by February 1989.

As the revision process draws to a close, it is important to remind everyone that the new Colorado River Management Plan is designed to be a dynamic and changing document, responsive to the protection of the resource as well as the demands of the public. In keeping with this intent, changes to the plan will be reviewed yearly in order to achieve this goal. To facilitate this, a comprehensive monitoring program is being developed to track and evaluate impacts resulting from river use. In addition, various wilderness simulation computer models are being explored as to their effectiveness in mitigating crowding and congestion problems. As the plan progresses, we welcome future input from all those concerned and interested in the management of the Colorado River in Grand Canyon National Park.

Sincerely,



Richard W. Marks  
Superintendent