

*Grand Canyon National Park
Colorado River Management
and Planning*

CRMP NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 1989

N1623(GRCA)

Dear Friends of the Grand Canyon:

The Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP) is finalized and has been posted in the Federal Register for 30 days. A copy of the Finding of No Significant Impact signed by the Regional Director and the Synopsis of Public Comment to the draft CRMP are enclosed.

Grand Canyon National Park has determined that the cost of mailing the final plan is prohibitive. The mailing cost of the draft CRMP was \$4,000. The National Technical Information Service will print and distribute the final plan for approximately 15 dollars and should be available December 15. The address is:

United States Department of Commerce
National Technical Information Service
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, Virginia 22161

The Colorado River Management Plan is available for review at Grand Canyon National Park. Copies of the plan are also located in the main branch of public libraries in Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson, Salt Lake City, Cedar City, Denver, Reno, San Francisco, and Sacramento.

The Colorado River Management Plan will be responsive, on an annual basis, to results of research, monitoring programs, and public and constituent group input. Interested persons are encouraged to submit comments to the Superintendent for consideration at any time for use in the annual review.

The Glen Canyon Environmental Studies (GCES) began in December 1982 to determine the impact of operations of the Glen Canyon Dam on the downstream ecological and environmental resources within the Grand Canyon National Park and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. In 1988, the first GCES report indicated that the operation of Glen Canyon Dam has substantial adverse effects on downstream environmental and recreational resources. However, due to the fact that the studies were conducted during years of record high runoff of the Colorado River, it was determined that additional studies concerning the impact of low and fluctuating flows were needed. These studies will now be encompassed in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement requested on July 27, 1989 by Secretary of the Interior, Manuel Lujan. Grand Canyon National Park will incorporate results of these studies in the future management of the Colorado River.



5. LOWER GORGE MANAGEMENT:

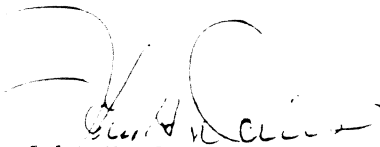
Interim guidelines have been designed to regulate use coming upriver from Lake Mead during development of a comprehensive Colorado River Lower Gorge Management Plan.

6. RIVER TRIPS CONDUCTED FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES:

A method was defined for application of river trips conducted for research purposes.

Grand Canyon National Park thanks all who contributed in the review of the Colorado River Management Plan.

Sincerely,



John H. Davis
Superintendent

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR
1989 REVISION - COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, ARIZONA
JULY, 1989

NATURE OF THE PROPOSAL AND ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

In 1987, Grand Canyon National Park began review of the Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP), through a public process that resulted in development of a draft (revised) plan and environmental assessment. The environmental assessment evaluated only two alternatives: continued management under the 1981 plan; and, the initiation of management under the revised plan (the preferred alternative).

In evaluating the proposal, the environmental assessment considered the effects of changes proposed by the revised plan, comparing its impacts to those of the 1981 plan. The 1981 plan assumed that the 1979 CRMP Environmental Impact Statement was still valid and combined provisions of several of the alternatives evaluated in the 1979 EIS; thus, the environmental assessment for the revised (1989) plan tiered off the 1979 EIS. In assessing cumulative impacts, the environmental assessment for the current proposal concludes that the revised plan consists of operational refinements and does not appear to establish actions and incremental impacts adversely affecting natural and cultural resources beyond those levels resulting under the 1981 plan.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC REVIEW:

In March of 1987, CRMP review was initiated with the mailing of 4000 notifications to individuals, media, interest groups, congressional delegations and cooperating agencies; over 1000 planning guides were requested by those interested in contributing to the identification of major issues. In July of 1987, the park began revision of the Colorado River Management Plan with a workshop to discuss Colorado River management issues with researchers, concessioners and public constituents. In March 1988, an issue workbook was mailed to approximately 400 individuals, agencies and institutions for their review and input (over 50 were returned); public meetings were held in Flagstaff, AZ, Denver, CO, and Reno, NV, during April and May (with approximately eighty-four individuals attending). Following evaluation of comments, Draft Preferred Alternatives were developed and presented in meetings held in mid-July with the Grand Canyon Concessioner's Steering Committee and the Constituent Advisory Committee (made up of natural and social science researchers, noncommercial user groups, commercial river guides and environmental organizations). In August, the Preferred Alternatives were mailed out, with comments received from the public for a 30 day period. On November 10, 1988, a Draft Colorado River Management Plan/Environmental Assessment was distributed to over 500 individuals, agencies and institutions; the 30-day review period was announced in the Federal Register in November, 1988. On December 20, 1988, the public review period was extended an additional thirty days, for those needing additional time to formulate comments. One hundred and thirty written responses were received during the entire public review period, twenty four of which were received during the extension period. A summary of public comments was prepared. Both a draft of this FINDING and the summary of public comments were made available for a 30-day public review period, as announced in the Federal Register, dated July 24, 1989, on page 30800. Twelve copies of the FINDING were requested and distributed; no comments were received.

SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES:

The plan provides for improved management and monitoring through its adoption of limits of acceptable change and a defined research and monitoring program; seasonal contact/crowding levels are specified, and acceptable influence of recreational use on natural and cultural resources, trail development and water quality are defined.

The National Park Service conducted an informal section 7 consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The primary impacts on listed species, in particular: the humpback chub, bald eagle and peregrine falcon are, more likely than not, due to the direct result of the operations of Glen Canyon Dam. Any changes in visitor use due to the implementation of the Revised CRMP would be minor and incremental to existing impacts. To the best of our knowledge, past river use by visitors has had no discernible impact on these species. This is not to say, categorically, that impacts do not exist.

The CRMP is a dynamic document. The intent of the National Park Service is to revise the CRMP, especially with respect to the aforementioned species, as soon as the current research associated with

IMPACT / MITIGATION MATRIX

PARK: Grand Canyon National Park
 PROJECT: 1989 Colorado River Management Plan Revision

IMPACT	PRESCRIBED MITIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY
<p>1. Counting of Commercial deadhead trips, traveling downriver with empty boats to Phantom Ranch, against the launch limit for the day of launch is intended to reduce congestion and crowding downriver, as resulted under the 1981 plan where deadheads could launch along with a full schedule of 166 persons launching. Though unlikely, this action could actually result in increased crowding, or it may be possible that additional crowding could be mitigated through an alternative launch scenario.</p>	<p>1. Monitoring will be necessary to determine if the action accomplishes its desired objective, of reducing contacts and crowding downstream of Phantom Ranch. The objective of the monitoring will be to assess the launch days of those groups with which the deadhead trips make contacts, following its taking on passengers at Phantom Ranch. Other monitoring programs should indicate normal contact/crowding levels in the absence of deadheading trips. Comparison of the two may indicate need to refine the deadhead scheduling procedure. Responsibility: Resources Management.</p>
<p>2. Supplemental launches intended to provide private users equitable access to the user-day allocation may result in sociological impacts to the groups that double-launch together; these groups may compete for campsites or spend periods of time in sight of each other that are unacceptable to one or both of the groups.</p>	<p>2. Monitoring will be necessary to assess whether sociological impacts will occur for those groups double launching together. Assessing such impact will require sociological science methodology, which must be undertaken through sociologists; this work cannot be undertaken earlier than FY-90. Funding has been requested. Possible mitigations, if indicated by monitoring, may include: allowing double launches, but with groups with different itineraries only; double launches on high launch days, so that downstream contacts are with faster boats that launched on low density launch dates; and reduction of launches from both the commercial and noncommercial sectors. Responsibility: Resources Management.</p>
<p>3. Defined management objectives, in the form of Limits of Acceptable Change are included in the plan.</p>	<p>3. Monitoring programs necessary to support these management objectives are specified in the matrices outlining the Limits of Acceptable Change. If impacts/influence/change occurs, as indicated by monitoring, above those levels specified as acceptable, the prescribed means of assuring accomplishment will be implemented; some actions may best be accomplished following an action specific environmental assessment, in order to assure adequate public involvement in</p>