1995

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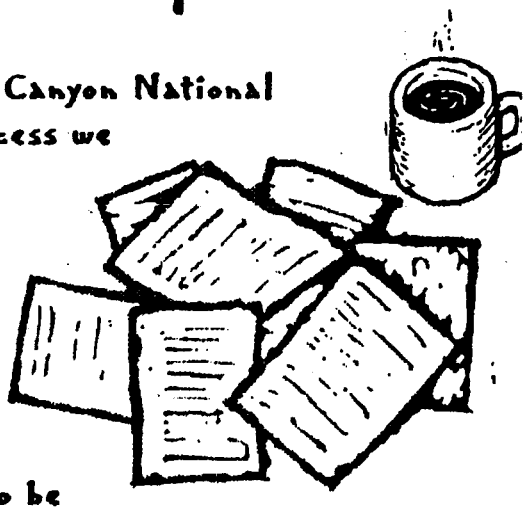
grand canyon national park

backcountry management plan

The Backcountry Management Plan for Grand Canyon National Park is being updated. As a part of this process we are seeking your comments and assistance.



Listed below are situations the Park has identified as issues. Your comments and ideas for solutions would be appreciated. Please take some time to send us your thoughts.

Please also add any situations you perceive as issues to be addressed in the Backcountry Management Plan, but which are not listed here.

Thank you for your help with this effort.

Please note that the issues are not listed in any particular order.

We anticipate having a draft Backcountry Management Plan available by the end of the year. Please indicate here if you would like to receive a copy.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a copy.

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Please fold this brochure so that the Grand Canyon address is apparent, afix first class postage and return by July 31, 1995.

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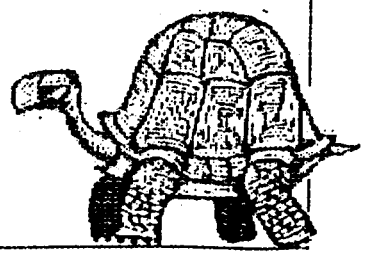
ISSUE: COST RECOVERY FOR BACKCOUNTRY PERMIT SERVICES

The National Park Service has identified the need to increase staffing and upgrade the computerized permit system in order to effectively serve the public. The Backcountry Office issues over 16,000 permits annually. The costs of administering the permit system and improving visitor services may be recovered by charging for permit services. If so, in what way should visitor services be improved? If we do not charge for permits, is the current or a reduced level of services acceptable? What other options do you suggest?

ISSUE: PRIVATE STOCK USE (Horses and Mules)

Currently, stock use is allowed on 40 miles of corridor and rim trails which are maintained to stock standards. Overnight camping for private stock users is provided at three inner canyon and two rim locations. Some stock groups would like expanded use including a separate permit allocation system, more facilities, and the opening of additional use areas to stock. Should these requests be accommodated? What other options do you suggest?



ISSUE: CORRIDOR DAY USE

Nearly 20% (800,000) of the Park's visitors use the three corridor trails (North and South Kaibab, Bright Angel) for day hikes which is resulting in increased resource impacts. Further, during the summer months, medical emergencies consume substantial staff time. This prevents Park staff from accomplishing resource protection functions such as wildlife management, archaeological site protection, and visitor education. Should day use restrictions be considered? What other options would you suggest?

ISSUE: USE AREA BOUNDARIES

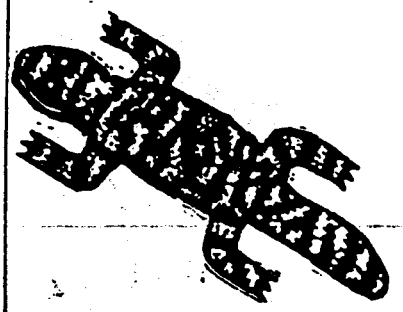
In certain use areas, camping is concentrated near popular sites such as creeks and springs. Monitoring shows that camping-related impacts such as multiple trailing, soil compaction, and vegetation damage exceed the limits defined in the current management plan. Research shows that as encounters with other people at campsites increases, the quality of visitor experience diminishes. Changes in use area boundaries are being considered to disperse use, and thus reduce impacts in Boucher, Tanner, Clear Creek, and North Bass use areas. What other options would you suggest?

ISSUE: GROUP SIZE LIMITS

In 1993 the group size limit was reduced from 16 to 11. Research conducted at Grand Canyon and other wilderness areas shows that as group size increases so do negative impacts, such as multiple trailing and increased barren areas around campsites. Results of sociological studies also show that contacts with larger groups have a negative affect on visitor experience. Organized groups would like group size limits to increase. Should these requests be accommodated? What other options do you suggest?

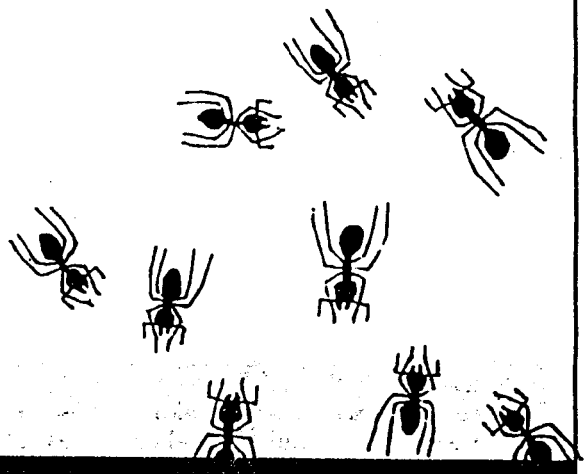
ISSUE: HIKER–RIVER RUNNER ENCOUNTERS AT BACKCOUNTRY CAMPS ALONG THE COLORADO RIVER

Hikers commonly encounter large river parties at popular beaches and attraction sites, especially during the primary river running season. Different expectations from each user group has resulted in conflict and a decreased wilderness experience for hikers. How would you suggest these two different user groups be accommodated?



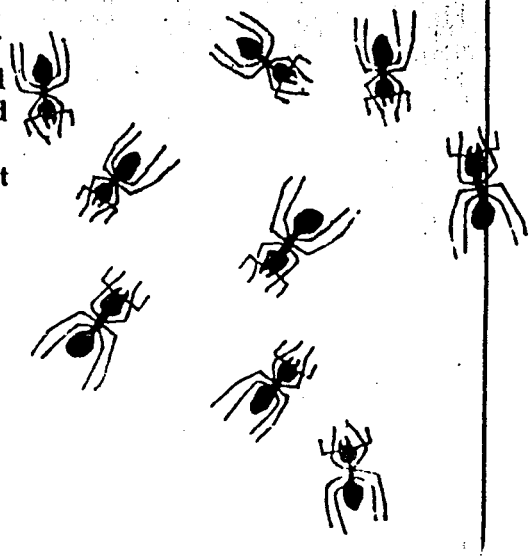
ISSUE: JACKASS USE AREA

Current visitation by day users, overnight campers, and river runners at Jackass use area (Marble Canyon) is having a detrimental effect on resources and visitor experience (garbage, firepits, human waste, conflict between user groups, damage to vegetation, soil, etc.). What options would you suggest to resolve these problems?



ISSUE: BACKCOUNTRY TOILETS

The improper disposal of human waste in popular backcountry camping and day-use areas is an aesthetic problem and potential health hazard. Burning of toilet paper has caused extensive wildland fires which have severely damaged natural and archaeological resources. Backcountry toilets provide one method of dealing with this problem. Backcountry toilets are perceived as intrusive by some visitors, and are expensive to maintain. What options do you suggest to solve this problem?



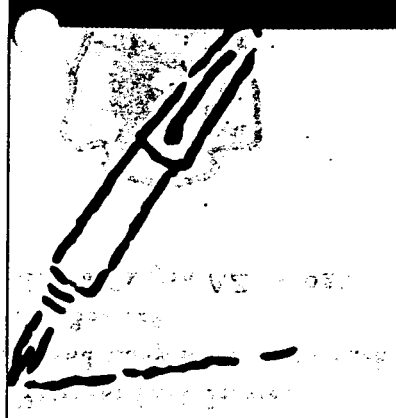
ISSUE: DAMAGE TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Backcountry use can cause negative impacts to archaeological sites. In some cases, hikers inadvertantly select camps on or near archaeological sites. Camping activities can severly damage these sensitive areas. Intentional acts such as vandalism and theft of artifacts have also been documented. What solutions do you suggest for this problem?

ISSUE: HIKER EDUCATION

Damage to natural and cultural resources; the accumulation of human waste and litter; lost, ill-prepared hikers; and backcountry users who venture on to Tribal land without permission; are some of the more common problems related to backcountry use. What are the most effective ways to educate hikers?

ISSUES: IDENTIFIED BY YOU



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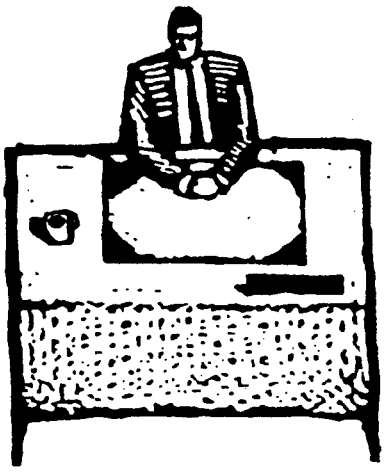

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