



HELP PROTECT THE COLORADO RIVER

Defending the Planet One Beat at a Time

BACKGROUND

The Colorado River courses through some of the most spectacular scenery in North America. As a scientific resource, the Grand Canyon is a mecca for geologists, geographers, and biologists throughout the world. It is also a place of tremendous natural and historic interest; a place of beauty, peace, quiet or exciting adventure.



The Colorado River within the Grand Canyon National Park ("GCNP") is the longest stretch of recreational white-water in the world and offers one of the most sought-after river trips in the United States as well. The desire of the American public to experience this unique area has dramatically increased over the last 20 years. In 1967, 2,100 people traveled the river through GCNP. By 1972, that number rose to 16,500. While exponential growth of visitors wishing to make recreational use of the river has had an impact on river resources, far more damaging have been the effects from the Glen Canyon Dam.

ISSUE

Based on over thirty years of scientific, technical and anecdotal evidence, it is clear that the past and current Colorado River Management policies and actions have caused impairment, and continue to degrade the resource and value of the Park and the Colorado River. A change in the Colorado River Management Plan ("CRMP") is needed to remedy these problems and prevent further degradation of the Colorado River as a valuable resource. It is critical that the new Plan include consideration of alternatives that will undo the harm of past and current management practices and policies.

R+E POSITION

The Colorado River is not being managed in accordance law. The data warrants the consideration of substantial modifications to the way that the Colorado River is currently managed. We recommend that the Park Service and U.S. Department of the Interior should consider altering management of the Colorado River so as to implement policies and corrective actions that remedy the current problems that protect against further impairment to park resources and values.

Alternatives that should be considered must include: a restoration of natural flows to the Colorado River; the elimination of motorized river transport on the Colorado River (except as is necessary for park and river management); and the equalization of access to the river that does not favor commercial interests over others.

This position is based on a wealth of data, including past Management Plans and Environmental Impact Statements ("EIS"), as well as scientific, technical and anecdotal data, observations and reports, all indicating that the current Management Plan adversely impacts endangered species and wildlife, diminishes visitors' experiences, and results in inequitable access to the river. These adverse impacts are due in part to: (1) the way water flow is regulated at the Glen Canyon Dam; (2) allowing the use of motorized river transport in an area recommended for wilderness by the National Park Service (NPS); and (3) a disparate system favoring those who can afford to pay commercial river trip guides over individuals and other non-commercial interests.

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Park Service mandates, policies and directives, support our position that natural flows need to be restored to the Colorado River and that motorized river transport needs to be eliminated, in order to stop any further impairment to both the Colorado River and Grand Canyon National Park.

ROCK THE EARTH SUES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

On March 24, 2006, the NPS released a Record of Decision ("2006 ROD") addressing how the stretch of the Colorado River which travels through Grand Canyon National Park will be managed.

The 2006 ROD does not adequately address these concerns, ignores the deleterious impact of the Glen Canyon Dam on species and biota in and along the river, continues to allow for motorized transport through the canyon, maintains access discrimination against private boaters in favor of commercial interests and recommends changes that actually increases the number of people who may travel the river, thereby increasing the damage to the environment.

On March 28, 2006, Rock the Earth along with a coalition of wilderness advocate groups including River Runners for Wilderness, Living Rivers and Wilderness Watch, challenged the ROD in the Federal District Court of Arizona. The primary purpose of the litigation will be to force the NPS to honor the wilderness characteristics of the River by eliminating motorized transport and equitably adjust use of the River between commercial tour concessionaires and the public do-it-yourself boaters.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- ▶ Support RtE's effort to hold the NPS accountable for the mismanagement of the Colorado by joining RtE!
- ▶ Write to the National Park Service and let them know that you disapprove of the 2006 Colorado River Management Plan and are in favor of a plan that maintains the wilderness characteristics of Grand Canyon National Park by removing motorized boats and helicopter access.
You can send your letter to:

Ms. Linda Jalbert
Colorado River Management Plan
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

- ▶ For more information on this issue, go to
http://www.rocktheearth.org/projects/project_crmp.html