

GRAND CANYON WILDERNESS ALLIANCE

Alaska Wilderness League ☼ Arizona Wilderness Coalition ☼ Bluewater Network
Californians for Western Wilderness

☼ Great Old Broads for Wilderness ☼ Kettle Range Conservation Group
Living Rivers ☼ Natural Resources Defense Council

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance ☼ The National Organization for Rivers
REP America ☼ The Rewilding Institute ☼ River Runners for Wilderness
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance ☼ Wilderness Watch

Joseph F. Alston, Superintendent
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

January 31, 2005

Dear Superintendent Alston:

The Grand Canyon Wilderness Alliance (GCWA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP). The members of the Alliance represent a broad spectrum of conservation and recreational organizations that are dedicated to preserving the wilderness values of Grand Canyon National Park, particularly the wilderness character of the Colorado River as it transverses the park. Our organizations collectively represent over a million American citizens who have a deep concern for the future of the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon.

The National Park Service (NPS) recommended the exceptional wilderness characteristics of the park for designation to the National Wilderness Preservation System in 1977 and current Park Service policies require that this landscape must be managed for the preservation of its wilderness values. The wilderness recommendation for the region creates a critical obligation for the NPS to frame the CRMP within the context of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

NPS is responsible for managing more wilderness than any other federal land management agency and has been given the task of protecting the most remarkable examples of our natural and cultural heritage. National Park classification was intended to provide the highest standard of protection for our nation's most treasured landscapes. National Park wilderness therefore should set the gold standard for wilderness protection in our nation and certainly within the Colorado River corridor, perhaps the finest river wilderness setting in the continental United States.

The Grand Canyon Wilderness Alliance believes that the **“Preferred Alternative H”** is **unacceptable** because it fails to restore the Grand Canyon wilderness experience on the Colorado River. It also fails to conform to applicable law and policy, including, but not limited to the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), the National Park Service Organic Act, the

Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. We urge the Park Service to develop and select an alternative that combines the positive aspects of the non-motorized alternatives B and C plus additional critical changes necessary to protect the river's wilderness character. Our comments present several crucial issues that must be resolved in the CRMP in accordance with the Wilderness Act, NPS wilderness mandates, and other legal mandates.

Sincerely,

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