

Summary of Key Information on Grand Canyon National Park

August 9, 2004

Since 2001, record levels of funds have been invested in America's National Parks. The National Park Service's operating budget of \$1.8 billion in 2004 has more funds per employee, per acre, and per visitor than at any time in its history. This is a 20% increase in National Park funding from 2001.

Grand Canyon National Park and its visitors are benefiting from this major investment

- Grand Canyon welcomes over 4.5 million visitors annually. Located in Arizona, the park encompasses 277 miles of the Colorado River and 1.2 million acres.
- Since FY 2002, the Bush Administration has invested nearly \$38 million for 92 improvement projects at Grand Canyon, which are completed, underway or proposed.
- Grand Canyon's operating budget itself for FY 2004 is over \$18 million, an 8% increase since FY 2000.
- The Park is currently developing an environmentally friendly, lower-cost transportation alternative that will address traffic congestion, visitor safety and other improvements for visitors. A detailed report will be sent to Congress this fall.
- Grand Canyon National Park enjoys some of the best air quality in the United States, with visibility that averages 106 miles. The Bush Administration, through the Clear Skies Initiative, is continuing to improve air quality nationwide, with estimated reductions in power plant emissions of 70 percent or greater.
- Protecting natural resources in Grand Canyon, and all parks, is a priority of the Bush Administration through its tripling of funding for resource programs.
- The Park is implementing the National Fire Plan that identifies strategic areas for treatment to reduce wildland fire risks. During 2003, Grand Canyon National Park managed over 20,000 acres with prescribed fire and wildland fire managed for resource benefits.

Highlights of maintenance and upgrade projects at the Grand Canyon include:

- Construct South Rim emergency facilities and install/repair fences- \$3.4 million
- Design complete to rehabilitate Yavapai observation station - \$215,000
- Deactivate North Rim landfills, \$1.2 million; repair campground - \$780,000
- Rehabilitated Mather Campground - \$550,000
- Mather Amphitheater for ranger evening programs - \$175,000
- Rehabilitate historic ranger operations building for \$1.3 million
- Relocate substation and stabilize powerhouse - \$ 8 million
- Repair Bright Angel Trail, North and South Kaibab Trails - \$477,000 franchise fees.

Improving Grand Canyon National Parks Facilities and Maintenance

Since FY 2002, the Bush Administration has invested more than \$104 million in more than 300 projects to preserve and protect Arizona's national treasures alone. These projects are completed, underway, or being planned. Once FY 2005 funds are allocated, national parks in Arizona could receive an additional \$33 million. In the last four years, rehabilitation funds have increased by 94% in parks.

Grand Canyon National Park has 92 of these projects with an investment total of more than \$37.6 million. These projects include:

- \$494,000 in Repair & Rehabilitation funds to rehabilitate the heavily traveled North Bass Trail.
- \$175,000 in Repair & Rehabilitation funds to rehabilitate the Mather amphitheater, which hosts evening Ranger programs. The audio/visual building had become rodent infested from rotted exterior siding. This was particularly dangerous since rodents in this region carry Hantavirus, a disease that can be fatal.
- \$500,000 in repairs and replacements in restroom facilities around the park
- The park will use Recreation Fee Demonstration funds to completely rehabilitate the back country Phantom Ranch Ranger station.
- \$460,000 in concessions franchise fees will repair and rehabilitate Bright Angel trail used by 500,000 hikers and mule packers.
- The road leading to the Desert View entrance was realigned, parking was reconfigured and a new entrance station was built to provide better views of the spectacular canyon rim view.

Preserving Grand Canyon National Park's Magnificent Natural Resources and Spectacular Views

This is a priority of the Bush Administration as reflected in the decision to nearly triple funding for the Natural Resource Challenge program, create and fund the Cooperative Conservation Initiative program, to make air in areas around national parks cleaner and to invest record funding to make national parks and other public lands less susceptible to catastrophic wildfires. Investments made at Grand Canyon National Park reflect these priorities as follows:

Natural Resource Challenge is a systematic effort to provide park managers, researchers, and scientists with the information, expertise, and tools needed to protect our natural resource heritage. Funding for this program has nearly tripled since President Bush took

office. Since FY 2001, the President has proposed cumulative funding increases totaling \$149.5 million.

- Grand Canyon is one of 270 national parks in the Vital Signs Monitoring Network. Vital Signs Monitoring funding allows Grand Canyon to conduct long-term monitoring of key indicators of the ecological health of the park, and allows the park to understand, track, and better protect park resources.
- Grand Canyon National Park has received Natural Resources Protection Program funds to inventory and study the ecology of Mexican Spotted Owls, to inventory Golden Eagles, and to control ten high priority exotic plants within the park's boundaries.

Cooperative Conservation Initiative. This initiative, launched by President Bush in 2003, provides grants to match partner contributions and fund projects to restore habitats important to fish and wildlife and accomplish other on-the-ground conservation projects. CCI projects at Grand Canyon include:

- A \$139,500 grant to reduce risks to endangered California condor chicks and fledglings was awarded to the Peregrine Fund, the Grand Canyon National Park Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Grand Canyon Trust. On November 5, 2003, the first successful fledging of a California condor took place in Grand Canyon National Park. There are now 37 birds flying free in the wild in the southwest.
- Federal funding of \$213,958 has been matched with \$557,000 from the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program, \$10,000 from Arizona Game and Fish, and \$10,000 from the Navajo Nation will help restore native fish habitat to protect the endangered humpback chub.
- A \$95,400 CCI grant was matched dollar for dollar by the Grand Canyon National Park Foundation, the Arizona Water Protection Fund, and that uses volunteer labor will control tamarisk and monitor vegetation at backcountry seeps, springs, and tributaries.
- A \$173,000 project split between a CCI grant and contributions from the American Conservation Experience, the Nature Conservancy, and the Grand Canyon National Trust is evaluating and treating invasive species encroachments within spruce-fir ecotypes.
- In conjunction with the Grand Canyon National Park Foundation and the Grand Canyon Community Volunteers, \$53,600 was awarded to assess distribution and abundance of mountain lions

- A \$76,900 project done in partnership with volunteers and the Arizona Water Protection Fund is controlling invasive plants and restoring disturbed lands in tributaries and along the Colorado River corridor.
- A \$74,000 CCI grant, which was matched by the American Conservation Experience is establishing cooperative partnerships for volunteer experiences.
- A \$62,000 project evenly divided between the Grand Canyon National Park Foundation and the National Park Service is locating and eradicating invasive species to restore native vegetation in backcountry areas.
- A \$23,190 grant was matched dollar for dollar so that Student Conservation Association and Alien Invaders Program volunteers could eradicate non-native/invasive plant species in the park.
- A \$23,608 grant, matched dollar for dollar is eliminating trail erosion and native vegetation at Mather Point viewing area. This project involves partnership assistance from the Student Conservation Association and involves the help of volunteers from the Grand Canyon Unified School District.
- An \$18,325 grant was matched dollar for dollar to help control invasive exotic plant species and restore disturbed lands in tributaries and along the Colorado River corridor.

Improving Air Around Grand Canyon National Park . Grand Canyon National Park enjoys some of the best air quality in the United States, with visibility that averages 106 miles, and exceeds 160 miles on the clearest days. The Bush Administration, through the Clear Skies Initiative, will improve air quality in the Grand Canyon, with estimated reductions in power plant emissions of 70% or greater. Grand Canyon began monitoring air quality in 1959, and continues to do so today. The monitoring program allows Grand Canyon to track trends in air quality, identify park resources affected by air quality, and collect the scientific data needed to manage the park's resources.

Grand Canyon National Park is also a participant in the Western Regional Air Partnership. A collaborative effort of 13 tribal and 13 state governments and various federal agencies, the Western Regional Air Partnership works to improve visibility in western Parks and wilderness areas. Grand Canyon is also represented in stakeholder meetings with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) regarding air quality issues and regulations.

Healthy Forests Initiative. The National Park Service is an active partner along with other federal agencies in implementing the National Fire Plan and President Bush's Healthy Forests Initiative. Through these efforts, fire management planning will help identify strategic areas for treatment to reduce wildland fire risks to both adjacent properties and developed areas in our nation's parks.

- During 2003 Grand Canyon National Park performed a number of prescribed burns and worked on several hundred acres of fuels breaks in an effort to reduce the impacts of wildfire on the South Rim Village area.

Grand Canyon National Park Budget

Funds committed to improve facilities at Grand Canyon National Park are one part of the overall park budget. Appropriations funding for Grand Canyon National Park for FY 2004 is more than \$18 million, an 8% increase since FY 2000. In addition, and consistent with the President's commitment to improve maintenance and repair and rehabilitation of national parks, these accounts at Grand Canyon National Park have doubled in four years. In FY 2001, \$405,000 was spent at Grand Canyon for maintenance and repair and rehabilitation. This year, \$1,021,000 will be spent. An additional \$987,000 was committed in construction funds in FY 2002.

Largely because park visits declined during the economic slump following September 11, 2001 recreation fees paid by visitors have declined. In FY 2001, \$42 million of recreation fees were collected. With Grand Canyon visitation up 7.2% this year, over last year, a conservative estimate of \$37,861,000 is projected for FY 2004 and FY2005 in fee collections.

Eighty percent of these fees remain in the park to improve facilities.

The financial picture of Grand Canyon is even better than these numbers suggest. Grand Canyon currently has more than \$20 million of recreation fee dollars available to invest in the park. Establishing its own priorities, close to an additional 100 full and part-time employees have been hired at the park over the past five years.

Improving Park Management

The Intermountain Region of the National Park Service several months ago selected Grand Canyon National Park to receive a complete management review of all park operations. This management review is designed to assist the park management team in developing a target organization, vision priorities and objectives. This review is currently underway.

In addition, and to address some of the major resource protection and visitor needs in the park, comprehensive public planning has been initiated at Grand Canyon.

- A major Colorado River Management Plan, due for public release this fall, will address long term visitor issues and river management for this popular destination in the park.

- A transportation plan will examine alternatives for improving visitor use and circulation at the popular South Rim of the Canyon where more than 5 million visitors come annually to enjoy the magnificent canyon resources.

Working With Local Supporters and Friends of Grand Canyon National Park.

Local friends groups of national parks are vital partners in improving national parks. For example, over the last four years, the Grand Canyon Foundation raised \$11 million for Grand Canyon National Park. These funds have been used to:

- Build 73 miles of new rim-side trails on both sides of the Canyon. The trails are wheel chair accessible and when complete, Grand Canyon will have the longest wheel chair accessible trail in the park system.
- Restore historic buildings and structures, such as the Old Community Building, at a cost of \$1.3 million.
- Conserve the historic boats of the Grand Canyon and build a museum to tell the stories of the first Grand Canyon river runners.
- In July of 2003, the "Save our Boats" project began. Grand Canyon National Park, in conjunction with the Grand Canyon National Park Foundation and the river community, joined forces to begin the process of removing historic boats from the courtyard area of Headquarters to clean, conserve and store until they can be publicly displayed again out of the weather.
- Grand Canyon's main concessionaire, Xanterra Corporation, is investing several million dollars to renovate and improve the historic structures and other visitor facilities in the park.