National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Grand Canyon National Park

Grand Canyon National Park Strategic Plan

2020 - 2025

Introduction

Dear Park Team Members and Partners,

Grand Canyon National Park is an international icon, preserving over 10,000 years of human history and revealing nearly two billion years of earth's history. The nation is celebrating the park's 100th anniversary in 2019 and America's love for its national parks has proved enduring. This strategic plan is meant to position the park to be able to use the centennial milestone as a clear moment to invest in the future.

We have selected six strategic emphasis areas on which to focus special attention over the next five years. These areas are not meant to account for all the work that we do, but rather to identify where a focused effort by the National Park Service and its partners will result in important key changes. Our core values, coupled with the goals, can achieve the desired changes.

We have worked side-by-side, staff and managers from every Division, to evaluate the many directions we can take for the future. We thank you for participating in surveys, attending briefings, working in focus teams, and reviewing your own program's priorities and future directions. We are building on the work of many who have come before us, achieving so much over the past century. Put together, this work provides us with a blue print for the future – positioning Grand Canyon National Park to achieve more together than any of us could do separately.

Most importantly, we recognize and honor the eleven traditionally associated tribes whose ancestors were here long before the United States took form. Their relationships with this special place must guide our future, and we commit to a new chapter of collaboration, coordination, and reconciliation with the tribal governments and people of the Hualapai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, Havasupai Tribe, Navajo Nation, Yavapai-Apache Nation, San Juan Southern Pauite Tribe, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, and the Moapa Band of Paiute Indians. By working together, our vision is that Grand Canyon can be a source for inspiration and conservation for the nation, while providing greater community, access, and economic benefit to the canyon's first peoples.

Sincerely,

Park Senior Executive Team
Grand Canyon National Park

Core Values

The fundamental beliefs of our organization and the guiding principles that dictate behavior for our actions.

Safety and Well Being

We value and treat employees as whole persons, ensuring they are safe, secure, and supported. We believe employees, partners, and visitors can go home feeling even better in mind and body than when they arrived.

Diversity, Respect, and Inclusion

All park employees, inclusive of all backgrounds and positions, are equally valued, respected, and supported as critical team members who contribute to our shared mission.

Teamwork

We believe we are stronger when we include others in problem solving through collaboration, embrace open communication, and promote understanding between divisions, programs, work teams, individuals, and NPS offices. We are greater than the sum of our parts.

Integrity

We are professionals who conduct our jobs with honesty, integrity, and accountability to ourselves, our colleagues, and Grand Canyon National Park.

Accountability

We are accountable to ourselves and our team. We value establishing clear goals and expectations, addressing performance issues as they arise, and celebrating the success of individual and team efforts.

Empowerment

We believe we are the most effective when employees at all levels of the organization are prepared, supported, and empowered to serve as leaders within Grand Canyon National Park.

Leadership

We act with courage, wisdom, and a shared commitment to fulfill the mission of the NPS.

Sustainability

We demonstrate environmental leadership by pursuing sustainable practices in all aspects of our operations of the park.

Resilience

Innovation, adaptability, and a deep commitment to each other and the mission of the NPS prepare us to overcome and thrive in the midst of current and emerging challenges.

Community

We value the broader Grand Canyon community and believe its health and well-being are intertwined with our own.

STRATEGIC EMPHASIS AREAS

Areas of focus and change to address today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.

Skilled and Developed Workforce

Grand Canyon National Park's workforce is professional, diverse, supported, and robust enough to accomplish the park's core operations and priority projects.

GOAL 1

Build a safe and healthy workforce

Update the park's safety system, incorporating new health and wellness offerings.

ACTIONS

- Complete an updated assessment of the park's safety and wellness system using the National Park Service (NPS) self-assessment web tool by 2020.
- Develop and implement a five year safety, health, and wellness strategy that addresses actions from the National Safety Strategy and strives to achieve intermittent green ratings in all Tier I elements by 2021, and intermittent green ratings in all Tier I and Tier II elements by 2023 through effective employee engagement.
- Formalize the Employee Health and Wellness Committee in 2020, including finalizing the charter, annual budget, and senior champion role.

GOAL 2

Hire and develop our workforce

Eliminate the backlog in filling positions and significantly reduce the timeline for hiring. Strengthen and support our workforce through professional development.

ACTIONS

- Work with the Intermountain Region and the Arizona Servicing Human Resource Office (SHRO) to strategically manage processes at the park and the SHRO to improve hiring efficiency, reducing the substantial hiring backlog to zero by 2022.
- Develop a parkwide Position Management Plan by 2021 that focuses on sufficient staffing to accomplish the park's core operations and priority projects.
- Implement a Recruitment Strategy by 2022 with new tools to recruit a skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of our surrounding communities, working with partners and outside groups such as technical and community colleges and community development organizations.
- Create a Career Development Planning Workgroup to provide a recommendation to the superintendent by 2021 on strategies for cross-training, collateral duties, job shadowing, mentoring, development assignments, and other career development opportunities for employees.

"I have met so many wonderful people during the years I have worked for and been associated with the National Park Service. Helping people feel involved, challenged, and validated is vital to recruiting and retaining the best employees available."

"By building a stronger sense of community, we are more able to pitch in when another division needs help and ask for help when we need it. Also, I feel like leadership must be fostered at all levels of the organization. Employees are excited to come to work when they feel empowered in their decision-making and they can make lasting contributions in their work groups and the park as a whole."

Thriving Workplace, Thriving Community

The community within the greater Grand Canyon area is safe, diverse, and welcoming – providing essential resources, and access to those resources, for personal and professional well-being.

GOAL 1

Create supportive work environments

Commit resources to foster a thriving work environment where employees are physically and emotionally safe. Employees must be provided with a modern workplace; appropriate tools, technology, and training for their jobs; and programs to help them feel valued and supported as a member of the Grand Canyon community.

ACTIONS

- Develop consistent reporting structures for employees to discuss and find support to address workplace issues without fear of retaliation.
- Empower employees to make and implement well-informed and transparent decisions at all levels of the organization.
- Improve cell phone and Internet connectivity to meet work goals and to ensure that employees have access to the level of connectivity necessary for a 21st century lifestyle.
- Complete a parkwide Office Space Plan by 2021, with specific improvements prioritized by park location, and funding set aside for building improvements and relocations to be implemented from 2022-2024.
- Establish a Geographic Leadership Team (GLT) in each park location by 2021, including North Rim (including Tuweep), Desert View, South Rim, Inner Canyon, and the Flagstaff Office with employee representatives empowered to identify, develop, and implement activities and improvements necessary to support employees. Each GLT will be allocated starting at $15,000 annually to accomplish activities and improvements.

GOAL 2

Grow community opportunity

Collaborate with partners to ensure that employees of the park and all local park partners earn a living wage, build wealth, have access to affordable and healthy foods, live in safe housing and work in safe spaces, can receive robust health services and participate in wellness programs.

ACTIONS

- Create a Community Council in 2020 that has the capacity to collaborate and communicate across organizational and jurisdictional lines, to provide community wide services and information. Determine if senior managers of local park partners can create a community investment fund to provide support and services to community members.
- Ensure that the park's official business partners (e.g. concessioners and commercial use authorization (CUA) holders) comply with requirements to provide employee services such as meals, housing, and compensation are of sufficient quality to enhance employee wellbeing.
- Pursue local hiring authority, youth employment development programs (e.g. SOAR), tribal hiring preferences, dual career opportunities, cross-training with other employers, transportation services, and other new activities to increase job opportunities within local and nearby communities.

Resource Stewardship for Grand Canyon's Second Century

Grand Canyon National Park protects and stewards natural, cultural, and wilderness resources and makes management decisions utilizing the best available scientific information.

GOAL 1

Focus on stewardship actions

Manage natural and cultural resources for improvement, restoration and long term resilience.

ACTIONS

- Achieve International Dark Sky Park status by meeting the requirements of 60% compliance with lighting standards in 2019 and 90% compliance with lighting standards by 2022.
- Reduce the bison population density on the North Rim to fewer than 200 animals by 2023.
- Implement a strategy for preserving the park's most historic assets by completing an adaptive reuse plan for the Powerhouse Area as a visitor campus by 2022, and completing public/private partnership agreements for funding by 2024.
- Implement new and innovative preservation and mitigation treatments for vegetation, wildlife, fish, and cultural sites to achieve the goals of the Long Term Experimental Management Plan for Glen Canyon Dam to address threatened resources along the heavily utilized Colorado River corridor.

GOAL 2

Expand science and data gathering

Develop and execute a research agenda in order to make informed decisions for park resource management.

ACTIONS

- Identify natural and cultural resources at risk, and expand data collection and analysis efforts needed to further establish resource condition baselines and to maintain monitoring for potential changes in resource integrity (e.g. Wilderness Character Study).
- Inventory and assess resource conditions on the North Rim related to bison population movement and distribution, emphasizing vegetation and soil conditions, water resources, and archeological resources.
- Create a research prospectus that identifies critical research needs and promotes opportunities for academic institutions and partners to address information gaps.

"I would like to find a way for more community buy-in on the overall environmental health of the Canyon, including the heavily disturbed residential areas and heavily impacted trails (especially those in the corridor). I would like to continue to see an emphasis on sustainability and efficiency of resources such as single stream recycling and perhaps a community composting effort."

"I am interested in the process of protecting our facilities and creating more sustainable systems for the future."

Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure

Grand Canyon National Park's assets, particularly utility systems and historic structures, are sustainably maintained and developed to support stewardship and park visitation. These goals will contribute substantially to the reduction of Grand Canyon's nearly $300 million deferred maintenance backlog.

GOAL 1

Address water and wastewater

Modernize water and wastewater infrastructure and maximize water conservation practices.

ACTIONS

- Develop a ten year program of projects to modernize the park's water and wastewater systems, with a focus on four key areas:
  - potable water and the transcanyon waterline replacement;
  - noncompliant wastewater systems and inner canyon human waste disposal systems;
  - water distribution and collection systems; and
  - water conservation, efficiency, and sustainability.
- Evaluate options for water/wastewater operations to determine the right mix of skilled NPS staff and contractor support to best manage an updated portfolio of infrastructure.

GOAL 2

Protect important historic features

Leverage partnerships to steward and adaptively reuse historic buildings.

ACTIONS

- Strengthen partnerships with concessioners to prevent future deferred maintenance and improve oversight of concessions contracts to preserve and better maintain historic structures, emphasizing infrastructure safety in multi-occupancy buildings (hotels and employee housing).
- Expand partnership opportunities to maintain significant historic buildings that are open to the public including the Watchtower, Kolb Studio, Verkamp's Visitor Center, and Yavapai Observation Station.

Effective and Efficient Operations

Operational, business, and budget processes are efficient, effective, clear, and transparent in order to inform sound decision-making and support the implementation of park priorities and goals.

GOAL 1

Update business practices

Align budget with financial resources to unlock existing capacity to perform park operations.

ACTIONS

- Realign soft funding sources with their highest and best use including leveraging existing fund sources to support essential staffing.
- Revamp the annual budget formulation and execution processes for Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) funds beginning with the 2020 budget.
- Build a credible and accountable administrative river operations program that supports the work of the park.

GOAL 2

Prepare for increased revenue

Financial projections for the next five years indicate substantial additional revenue from multiple sources including due to the leasehold surrender interest (LSI) loan pay down, increased entrance fees from increasing visitation, and increased concessions franchise fees from increasing visitor services.

ACTIONS

- Develop and document standard operating procedures for budget and hiring processes and decision making, including improvements in transparently sharing information with employees.
- Develop a comprehensive five-year parkwide spending plan for 2020-2024 that includes all soft fund sources as well as ONPS, to ensure each fund source aligns with park priorities and Servicewide Comprehensive Call budget criteria.

"We have opportunities to develop relationships and enlist the community in protecting this place that they love."

Collaborative Partnerships

Grand Canyon National Park fosters strong and diverse partnerships to achieve both NPS and partner goals.

GOAL 1

Strengthen tribal relationships

Substantially increase collaboration, coordination, and reconciliation with associated tribes, exceeding our commitments under our government-to-government relationship. Recognize tribal members' deep cultural and spiritual ties to the canyon and develop new economic, educational, and youth opportunities that can meet the needs of both the park and the associated tribes.

ACTIONS

- Utilize the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act, Grand Canyon Enlargement Act, and other authorities to partner with tribes and surrounding tribal communities to expand tourism and other economic opportunities within the park and on tribal land.
- Implement the Desert View Intertribal Heritage Site plan together with the park's associated tribes in a manner that ensures long term success. Develop a case study that promotes tribal partnership projects.
- Recognize the unique relationship that the Havasupai Tribes has with Grand Canyon National Park and work together on priority issues (e.g. protection of shared resources, Supai Camp improvements, etc.).

GOAL 2

Expand public-private partnerships

Grow opportunities for partners to help the park meet the mission of the NPS, address park priorities, and alleviate pressure on park financial and human resources.

ACTIONS

- Sustain and grow the relationship with the Grand Canyon Conservancy (GCC). As the park's primary and preeminent partner, GCC provides education services, promotes stewardship, and conducts philanthropy. Beginning in 2020, advance the opportunity for GCC to augment parkwide staffing in strategic areas.
- Elevate, expand, and manage partnerships, strategic communication, and intergovernmental relationships. Provide parkwide training and develop organizational capacity by consolidating functions into the Superintendent's Office.
- Recognize the interdependency between Grand Canyon National Park and local communities and work together to explore and implement partnership opportunities.

Preparing for the Next Century of Park Visitors

The 70 million people who are projected to visit Grand Canyon National Park over the next decade have meaningful and enjoyable experiences and leave the park unimpaired for future generations.

GOAL 1

Understand park visitation and associated impacts

Analyze existing data and utilize modern social science, visitor use, and resource impact studies to develop a comprehensive understanding of Grand Canyon visitation in order to make informed management decisions.

ACTIONS

- Conduct a comprehensive Visitor Study that includes existing and new information to understand current visitor uses and distribution, visitor experience perceptions, and the current and potential future impacts of increasing visitation to park resources and values.

GOAL 2

Provide diverse opportunities for exceptional visitor experiences

Adaptively align staffing and facility and operational capacity in response to changing visitation patterns ensuring efficient operations and enjoyable visitor experiences.

ACTIONS

- Provide modernized information to help visitors plan safe experiences that align with their goals, expectations, and abilities (e.g. implement visitor app, intelligent parking and transportation system).
- Utilize visitor use and real-time data to adaptively align services and staff presence in places and times where visitation is increasing; concurrently consider crowding and area limitations to shift or redistribute visitation as appropriate.
- Engage partners, concessioners, contractors, and volunteers to develop a consistent and effective messaging strategy related to resource stewardship and visitor information.

Thank You!

Staff

Over the course of 2018, an overwhelming number of staff from all divisions in Grand Canyon National Park provided input and information on the Strategic Plan through two park-wide surveys and ten facilitated workshops. This plan is based on their collective knowledge, focus, and energy.

Park Senior Executive Team

Chris Lehnertz, Superintendent (2016–April 2019)
Sarah Creachbaum, Acting Superintendent (April–June, 2019)
Woody Smeck, Acting Superintendent (December 2018–February 2019 and July–September 2019)
Mary Risser, Acting Superintendent (September 2019–May 2020)
Ed Keable, Superintendent
Lisa Carrico, Deputy Superintendent
Brian Drapeaux, Deputy Superintendent
Jan Balsom, Senior Adviser, Stewardship and Tribal Programs
Jeanne Calhoun, Chief of Science and Resource Management
Michael Collins, Employee and Organizational Development
Doug Lentz, Chief of Commercial Services
Robin Martin, Chief of Planning, Environment, and Projects (former)
Donna Richardson, Chief of Maintenance
Todd Stoeberl, Chief of Education and Interpretation
Elston Stephenson, Safety Officer
Matt Vandzura, Chief of Visitor and Resource Protection

Planning Team

Park Senior Executive Team
Rachel Bennett, Deputy Chief of Planning, Environment and Projects
Elly Boerke, Planning, Environment and Projects
Rachel Grabenstein, Planning, Environment and Projects
Angie Moline, Moline Creative
Raquel Romero, High Ridge Leadership

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BRIGHT ANGEL TRAIL
Welcome to Bright Angel Trail