

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RECREATION FEE PROGRAM SUMMARY FY09 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NAME OF FEE PROJECT: AZ01 PARIA CANYON/ COYOTE BUTTES
SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

STATE: AZ

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AREA DESCRIPTION:

Paria Canyon, its tributaries Buckskin Gulch and Wire Pass, and the Coyote Buttes area are part of the larger Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness, designated in August 1984. The Special Management Area (SMA) consists of three smaller portions of the larger Wilderness; they are distinct units both geographically and managerially: Paria Canyon, Coyote Buttes North, and Coyote Buttes South. The SMA consists of 8 trailheads, 2 campgrounds, and 27,741 acres of land, including 1,413 acres in the Arizona Strip Field Office. The Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area is co-managed with the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the Kanab Field Office, and the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument. Management goals include providing for the long-term protection and preservation of the area's wilderness character while managing the area for the use and enjoyment of visitors in a manner that will leave the area unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as a wilderness.

Paria Canyon, Buckskin Gulch, and Wire Pass are widely recognized as one of the longest and most stunning slot canyon combinations in the world. Accessed from four trailheads, these narrow canyons wind their way sinuously downward through seven geologic layers, eventually ending at the Colorado River just below Glen Canyon Dam. The SMA area receives over 21,045 visitors per year.

In the Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area, Individual Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) are issued for day hiking and overnight backpacking, and a limited number of permits are issued for each day. The issuing of permits/collecting fees is managed through the use of an automated, online permit authorization system which is funded separately from the permit fees.

Expanded Amenity Fees are collected through a self-pay system for overnight camping at the White House Campground. Stateline Campground currently does not collect any Amenity Fees. Additionally, the SMA's SRP fee program includes accepting and processing commercial applications, issuing and administering permits; inspecting and monitoring operations; and preparing the proposed action for the NEPA Analysis for 40 Commercial Special Recreation Permits.

FEE SCHEDULE:

Coyote Buttes North: \$7 per person per day
Paria Canyon Day-Use: \$6 per person per day

SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY09:

Visitor Services, Interpretation:

An interpretive project was continued that includes regulatory, informational, directional, and interpretive panels for all trailheads, upgrades to the website, updates to the permit handouts, and development of handouts for the Paria and Coyote Buttes Permit areas. A combination of permit fees and Federal appropriations paid for the projects. Recreation revenue funds pay for interpretive and permit printing, contract, patrols, volunteer support services, etc.

Major volunteer support, in combination with four months of labor provided by Paria Contact Station staff, provide excellent visitor service support at the Paria Contact Station and site visits to the Paria Canyon-Coyote Buttes permit area trailheads. The volunteers donated 3,200 hours of volunteer services.

Repair, Maintenance, and Facility Enhancement:

Recreational fees paid for four months of labor to repair and maintain current facilities, including cleaning restrooms, trailheads, and road networks by the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Recreation Aid.

Facility enhancement included the placement of porta potties outside of the Paria Contact Station for the heavy use days that exceed the restroom capacities of the Paria Contact Station. New rustic wooden signs were created for the backcountry trailheads associated with the Coyote Buttes South Permit Area and placed at three trailheads. A sign register was also placed at the main trailhead entrance for Coyote Buttes South onto the Paria Plateau.

Facility repairs included adding an additional volunteer RV site at the Paria Contact Station to aid in the support of visitor services.

Wildlife Habitat Restoration, Resource Protection:

Recreation fees provided funding for a Northern Arizona University partnership that manages a wilderness monitoring program. Site monitoring in Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes is conducted annually by professors and graduate students in the Department of Geography, Planning, and Recreation. Monitoring is conducted to document visitor use impacts and the resultant data is part of the information used to assist managers in making informed land use decisions. In addition to the NAU project, trail and road counters have been placed at strategic locations to more accurately reflect the number of visitors entering and exiting the Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area. Additionally, recreation fees helped support the a Paria Canyon Tamarisk 5-year removal project which began in 2008 and is a partnership between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Grand Canyon Trust to aid in the restoration of the ecological integrity of the Paria River system within Paria Canyon. In 2009, the Grand Canyon Trust donated approximately 2,500 hours of volunteer time to continue the treatment and removal of Tamarisk and Russian Olive in over 7 miles of river corridor. The Arizona Strip, in conjunction with Cedar District fire crews, completed two burns in the Paria Canyon, one in the

spring and one in the fall, to burn over 130 brush piles spread out over 5 miles of river corridor. The burn project was funded by Federal appropriations not recreation fee revenues.



Paria Canyon Fall RX 2009

Law Enforcement, Public Use, and Recreation:

A Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) was placed with the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument. Three of the LEOs months of work are paid by fee program funds. In addition to the LEOs placement, and without using fee revenues, a Memorandum of Understanding was established with the Glen Canyon National Monument law enforcement staff to patrol common boundaries within the monuments and NPS unit. This, in combination with the aid of the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Arizona Strip LEOs, has resulted in increased patrols of the fee area and increased compliance of the commercial and private SRP users.

PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR FY10:

In conjunction with the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the Kanab Field Office, Utah, interpretation enhancements will include:

1. Completion of trailhead maps depicting the 3 individual permit area boundaries contained in the permit area.
2. Completion of an additional portion of the Coyote Buttes North handout.
3. Creating a Leave No Trace video to be shown at the Paria Contact Station or the Kanab Field Office during the walk-in lottery permit processing.

In conjunction with the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the Kanab Field Office, Utah, facility enhancements will include:

1. The replacement of shingles on the storage shed roof and the well shed roof, which were damaged during a 2009 wind event.
2. Expansion of the Stateline Campground from 4 to 8 campsites-should be completed in March/April of 2010 using AARA funds.
3. Preparation of a NEPA plan for the Wire Pass parking lot expansion to include a plan for adding a second restroom and more parking spaces.

In conjunction with the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the Kanab Field Office, Utah, Wildlife Habitat Restoration, Resource Protection enhancements will include: five Paria Canyon Tamarisk Removal Project trips with the goal of completing 5 miles of Tamarisk and Russian Olive Eradication and the development and production of a BLM brochure on the partnership project.