

Stipulations - A Ranger's Comments

Quite often the river office gets calls requesting more specific information on the stipulations. The stipulations of your permit are more than just a list of things you have to do to go on a river trip. They are a standard for us all to live by, while on the river, that will ensure the quality of our experience, the experience of others, and the health of the ecosystem of the canyon. The hope in creating this commentary is to answer some of your questions and to educate the public on why we ask them to act the way the stipulations require.

Print in bold is the individual stipulation quoted directly from the sheet that accompanies your permit.

Indented print in italics is the comment of a river ranger.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RIVER USE STIPULATIONS FOR PRIVATE, NONCOMMERCIAL USE IN DESOLATION GRAY CANYONS

Trips may be delayed or permits invalidated if conditions in these stipulations are not met. Failure to comply with stipulations or launching without a permit may result in penalties under the Code of Federal Regulations 2932.57A2, or Utah law and regulations. Penalties may include criminal action, civil action, and denial of future permits.

- 1. The permit is not transferable without prior approval of the issuing office and must be in the possession of the permittee on the trip. Permittee must provide photo ID at permit inspection.**
- 2. The permittee must allow rangers to complete permit checks to determine the validity of the permit, ascertain that the group has all required equipment, and orient participants about river etiquette and safety.**

Keep in mind that we will try to look for things that make sense, so please pay particular attention to the word "adequate" in individual stipulations. Also, if you arrive and no ranger is present when you're ready to launch, please make an attempt to contact the ranger.

- 3. The permittee must have at the launch:
 - a. a group of 25 people or fewer and not greater than the number pre-paid for on the permit,****

This number was arrived at due to what most campsites within the corridor can handle so please be extra sensitive to trampling of vegetation in camps and scout trails when travelling with a large group.

b. a first aid kit with adequate materials for the size of the group and sufficient for treating serious injuries,

c. a repair kit or kits with adequate materials to repair the types of boats used on the trip,

d. an air pump or pumps adequate to inflate boats after repairs.

e. a washable, leak-proof, reusable toilet system that allows for the carry-out and disposal of solid human body waste in a responsible and lawful manner. The system must be adequate for the size of the group and length of the trip. Leaving solid human body waste on Public Land or dumping it into vault toilets or trash receptacles at BLM facilities is prohibited.

If you are using Wag-bags, or similar waste containment systems pay particular attention to the word "leak-proof" in this stipulation. Leak-proofing your wag bag system will be best accomplished using an ammo can or other hard sided container to prevent punctures to the bag. Whatever kind of toilet system you are using, please read the manufactures recommendation on suitable user day expectations.

f. a durable metal fire pan at least 12 inches wide with at least a 1.5 inch lip around its outer edge and sufficient to contain fire and remains. Fire pans must be carried on all trips, even if stoves are to be used for cooking. Fire blankets under fire pans are recommended to facilitate total ash removal.

If you are using a fire pan that rests directly on the ground please elevate it on rocks, to avoid scorching the sand beneath it.

g. a properly-sized Type I, III, or V PFD (approved on the label for paddling, whitewater, kayaking) for each member of the party.

This stipulation is defined by Utah State Boating Law and cannot be modified by the ranger at Sand Wash. Life jackets for kids are our biggest problem at Sand Wash. Although a type I, III, or V is important so is the manufacturers intended use and weight specific rating. When you're considering a lifejacket for yourself, or your child, think about not only the type but also the manufacturers intended use and

the weight specific rating.

Please keep the following things in mind when deciding what life jacket to throw in the truck.

-If the manufacturers intended use on the label is water skiing it's not designed for whitewater use, even though it's a class III.

-Using a boat strap to create a leg strap is considered a modification and cannot be accepted. (Life jackets for infants are manufactured with leg straps.)

-Patches, and homemade repairs, are considered modifications and will not pass.

-Worn out, or illegible labels make it so we cannot verify the points that we are required by Utah Law to verify.

-Life jackets that are not US Coast Guard approved. We've all seen Canadian life jackets that are every bit as good as US life jackets, but please understand that this is a state law and the ranger has no discretion in making this call.

-A spare lifejacket is not required by State Law, but it's a great idea to carry one.

4. Each raft, dory, or canoe must have at the launch:

a. an extra oar, paddle, or motor capable of maneuvering the vessel, and

b. a bail bucket or bilge pump (does not apply to self-baling boats, kayaks, and inflatable kayaks).

5. Parties using low capacity vessels (kayaks, inflatable kayaks, or canoes) must carry spare paddles as follows: 1-3 such craft require 1 spare paddle, 4-6 required 2 spare paddles. 7-9 required 3 spare paddles, etc.

6. Each boat 16 feet or longer must have a Type IV throwable device or a commercially made rescue rope with at least 40 feet of line.

State law makes this one. It's a great idea to carry a throw bag no matter how long your boat is.

7. The permittee must ensure that all trip participants:

a. carry all charcoal, fire ash, garbage (dishwater strainers recommended), solid human body and pet waste out of the river area,

As you are probably aware charcoal lasts for thousands of years. If we leave it on the ground it becomes a problem that is cumulative in nature. Although, the river may wash it away in the future it probably won't happen before it is unpleasant to one of our fellow boaters. In addition, we cannot rely on the river to come up every

year. Please think about what your plan will be to carry out charcoal from your fire. Most folks use a steel, military surplus, rocket box.

Carry out of all garbage, including organics, is also important. If we leave nut shells, orange peels, apple cores, etc. lying around they will be nasty to someone else before they decompose. Be especially careful when preparing food in windy conditions. Most trash left is the result of someone accidentally leaving it.

In a desert river corridor it is important to place our liquid waste (strained dishwater, urine, leftover beverages, toothpaste spit etc.) into the mainstream of the river where it will be diluted. Please be extra sensitive to this while camping on low water beaches. If urine does not end up all the way in the river the result is a nasty green algae stain on the sand. In a narrow river corridor we camp in concentrated areas so the result of throwing waste on the margins of these areas is an undesirable smell, to the next folks, because of the bacteria growth. Broadcasting, and burying of liquid waste will not work when we have such numbers of visitors (about 6000 per year) concentrating in small areas, all summer long.

Before your trip think about how you're going to manage food and trash during periods of frequent bear activity within the corridor. The objective is to prevent a bear from obtaining food or trash. How you accomplish this is not as important as making it happen. This is especially important right now because we don't have a huge problem yet. Most river trips have lots of resources to prevent bears from obtaining food. We carry coolers, rocket boxes, dry boxes, and ammo cans all with rubber gaskets to contain the odors that will attract the bear in the first place. We can hang trash. We can also wash things with lots of soap and water. If we, as a community, can be mindful of the potential then maybe we can avoid having a bigger problem in the future.

b. adhere to the Utah Boating Act (Title 73, Chapter 18), which includes the wearing of life jackets where required (children ages 12 and under must wear PFD's at all times when boating on the river, and all persons must wear a PFD from Jack Creek Rapid to the take out.), and registration of motorboats,

c. do not engage in commercial use as defined by 43 CFR 2932.5, i.e., 1) make a salary or profit or increase his or her financial standing as a result of the permitted trip, 2) charge other participants a fee or charge that is not strictly a sharing of trip costs, or 3) collect money or compensation in excess of actual expenses for the trip. Normally participants are not in a commercial use situation if they equally share the actual trip costs,

d. list any trip sponsor or affiliated organization, e.g., scout group, school, etc., associated with the trip on the permit application,

e. keep side canyon streams and springs free of soap and other contaminants,

When retrieving water from a spring source please use extra care not to trample the surrounding area. In recent years we've seen heavy impact from folks visiting springs.

f. not remove, damage or destroy archaeological, historical, or ecological resources, or cause unnecessary or undue damage to the natural and cultural resources of the public lands.

Most of Desolation Canyon is protected as a National Historic Landmark, designated in 1969. The rules for collecting are more controlled than other areas of public land. Please leave all the above listed items you find in place so that others may also enjoy the experience of discovery.

Please use extra care when visiting sites by staying on trails and not touching prehistoric sites. Avoid creating displays of items you have found by leaving things like you found them.

In the philosophy of Leave No Trace there is a phenomenon called "love it to death" In the river corridor there is an imprint of a turtle fossil. (The actual shell was stolen in the mid 90's.) Since then folks have been covering the fossil imprint with a rock, presumably to protect it. This is causing the edges of the imprint to erode

The river corridor is a wintering area for herds of elk. Elk antlers are a natural part of the landscape and belong in the canyon, not in our flower beds at home. Imagine finding something for the first time ever. A wonderful experience, however subjective it may be, is what a river trip through Desolation is all about.

g. not camp or build fires on Public Land within 1/2 mile of the mouth of Rock Creek.

h. make campfires only in fire pans and limit the use of gathered wood for campfires to driftwood found along river banks and beaches,

Please do not use saws or axes on driftwood piles as this activity leaves driftwood in

an unnatural state. Burn only driftwood because dead and down wood creates habitat for insects and rodents, which are important to a complete ecosystem.

i. not engage in upstream motorized travel except for emergency purposes, or engage in downstream motorized travel at other than a slow, wakeless speed

Please be extra sensitive to a wakeless speed because of wildlife that may not be visible to you.

j. launch, travel (stay within visual contact), and camp together as a group. No boats may be sent ahead to secure campsites. Groups launching separately may not camp together if such action would result in more than 25 persons occupying a campsite, and

Traveling together is important to preserve the wilderness integrity of other trips on the river, to reduce disturbance to wildlife during nesting and calving seasons, and for safety. Sending a boat ahead to secure a campsite will be aggressively enforced.

Campsites are first come – first served. We do not reserve campsites because weather delays on Desolation make keeping your proposed camp site itinerary unlikely, especially later in the trip.

k. boat tags issued by the river ranger must remain attached to boats for the entire trip.

Boat tags allow us to make a non-invasive compliance check while on the river.

8. Pets are prohibited on the Desolation and Gray Canyons section of the Green River year round.

*See Desolation and Gray Canyons website for a brief history of how this decision was arrived at.**

9. Minimum trip length is 3 calendar days. Maximum trip length is 9 calendar days.