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**From:** Staszak, Cynthia  
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[02-14-2013 GSENM Draft Issue Paper.docx](#)  
[FY16-17 VC Business plan-Updated.docx](#)  
[FY17 VC Budget REV 1.docx](#)  
[GSENM Visitor Svcs Staff Plan Feb 2013.docx](#)  
[GSENM VC Staffing.xlsx](#)

All:

As discussed in the MLT, we need to develop a proposal for operating our VCs that shows significant savings....not only for the short term, but for the long term. We have submitted proposals to the UELT on a yearly basis, requesting additional funding to operate our visitor centers. Every year, we are anywhere between \$180,000 - \$230,000 short on funding just to operate/staff the VCs. We have had varying levels of success at getting this extra funding.

Today, it is a different story. We have a (b)(5) deficit that we need to plan for this year. The UTISO is indicating that we need to have a long term plan for absorbing this much of a deficit for the long term. The (b)(5) deficit is what we have if there is no overhead taken out of the 1711 allocation. That is not a given, as reducing or eliminating this overhead has big impacts on the other funding sources/subactivities. We have to create a proposal to get the rest of the UELT to reduce or eliminate ( on a 1 time/ short term basis) the overhead. That proposal needs to show how we are going to address this shortfall in the long term. This includes major cut-backs including hours and seasons of operation of our visitor centers, and significant staffing reductions.

This long term prognosis of reductions is not even based on any proposals that may come out of the Monument review. It is based on the overall, anticipated reductions in the federal budget, the particular focus on reducing the 1711 budget, the the challenge of the 1711 budget to fund not only the original Monuments involved in the reprogramming, but also all of the additional Monuments added since 2009. (b)(5) DPP

I have attached some of our previous proposals on VC funding requests below.

This new proposal needs to take quite a different approach. Instead of showing what we need to operate at full capacity, we need to show what we will save in operating at reduced capacity. We can also show the pros and cons of the reduced operations, but the bottom line is we will reduce operations.

Gaye & I will work at the overall budget projections this AM. Then we (Travis, Craig, Matt, Gaye & I) can tackle this VC proposal....which is just one part of what we are trying to achieve.

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## Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument FY 2013 Visitor Services Funding Strategy

### Introduction

This strategy offers a rationale for funding Visitor Services operations at Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument as a priority for recreation budgets. Without the requested monies, the Monument will be forced to scale back hours of operation. Funding is needed to insure an adequate level of operating hours during the busy season at four Monument Visitor Centers. Currently, there are one or two BLM permanent or career seasonal (WAE) employees assigned to each visitor center. This is not adequate to operate 7 days/week 8-10 hour day level of operations or to provide education, safety, and interpretive programs. Historically, funding for seasonal staffing for visitor centers has been from lapse and one-time monies. In 2012, these monies were not available and visitor centers were forced to operate at reduced hours until early summer when partial funds were secured from UTSO. Funds allocated for permanent and career seasonal visitor services staff from base budget in FY13 are \$330,300 plus \$196,000 in fixed building costs. Projected total cost of staffing operations is nearly \$500,000 leaving a deficit of about \$170,000.

The need for continued operation of monument visitor centers is also directly tied to promoting visitor spending in local communities and provides indirect benefits due to the employment of local citizens to work in visitor centers in spring through fall months. In the past, limited operations at visitor centers have brought numerous complaints from the communities (citizens, mayors and MAC) and traveling public about the lack of access and information.

The successful operation of the visitor centers enables BLM at the monument to achieve the guiding principles of the establishing legislation by meeting the following visitor service objectives:

- ***Provide for the health and safety of visitors and staff*** by insuring the timely availability, accuracy and consistency of information to the recreation public;
- ***Minimize the potential for damage to the monument's natural and cultural resources*** by encouraging compliance with land ethics and emphasizing stewardship messages through programs such as Site Stewards, Tread Lightly, Leave No Trace and Ride Right;
- ***Provide excellent customer service in a heavily visited, highly visible location*** for BLM and NLCS;
- ***Serve as a bridge to the local community*** to insure the influx of travelers that are drawn to the monument and nearby NLCS sites have a successful visit, potentially extend their length of stay and by offering quality customer service.

### Background on the Role of Visitor Services (Interpretation, Information and Education)

The resources of Utah BLM at Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument and within the NLCS are shared with the public at four BLM visitor centers in the communities of Kanab, Escalante, Big Water and Cannonville, a BLM desk at a state park in Boulder and an unstaffed contact station in Glendale. Centers received approximately 134,000 visitors in FY 2012.

Visitor center staff serves as front-line ambassadors for BLM and NLCS, providing visitors and local residents with various permits and orientation information in state-of-the-art interpretive facilities

situated for easy access in local community settings. Information includes critical messages in how to safely visit the vast and rugged landscape of the monument and surrounding BLM lands. Orientation by BLM staff at visitor centers plays a critical role in a successful visit and in preventative visitor safety. Many visitors travelling to BLM sites between National Parks are unprepared for the rigors of the Southern Utah backcountry setting of public lands.

A 2006 study of front-country visitors (*Utah State University, 2006*) revealed slightly more than 60% as first-time visitors. First-time visitors encounter rugged roads and unexpected terrain, often creating situations they are not prepared for which threatens their health and safety as well as the staff who attempt to rescue them. This ranges from heat-related backcountry injuries to auto incidents on impassible roads during summer monsoon season.

In addition, a diversity of visitor center education programs attract local teachers, students and adults who become immersed in culture, geology, ecology and paleontology through fun and educational programs and events. Residents utilize the easily accessible location to bring visiting guests to view the natural and cultural exhibits, stories and objects displayed in attractive colorful venues. Talks feature scientists and specialists who share the latest discoveries, drawing enthusiastic crowds to the centers. Since establishment, monument visitor centers have slowly evolved to become a part of the cultural fabric of neighboring rural communities.

### **Background on Funding Issues**

Generally with full staffing, all Monument visitor centers are open 7 days per week from March through November. It is anticipated that without additional funding, operations will institute shortened hours and days of operations and seasonal closures. Creative staffing solutions and partnerships have scrambled to meet spiraling budget short-falls yet continue to offer superior customer service using skilled and knowledgeable staff. We have and continue to utilize volunteers, but in past years unpredictable closures resulted without minimum BLM staff present.

Reduced funding for visitor center operations in 2013 creates a looming crisis in the ability of visitor centers to remain fully open with a basic level of operation and service. Visitation numbers continue to increase with peak periods showing high density concentrations of visitors. In September of 2012, Escalante Visitor Center received 11,000 visitors. Staff contacted roughly 20 visitors per hour in a 10 hour day of operation. The focus was trip planning and permits.

Hosted Workers are hired through existing assistance agreements with Glen Canyon Natural History Association (GCNHA) and American Conservation Experience (ACE). This agreement allows GSENM to fully staff and operate the visitor, and provide a continued GSENM presence in Anasazi State Park in Boulder.

A cooperative agreement with the US Forest Service and the National Park Service helps provide joint coverage of the Escalante Interagency Visitor Center. NPS coverage for 2013 is anticipated to be zero; USFS anticipates providing one staff person. Given all of these factors with existing base budget, all visitor centers will not be able to remain open, resulting in shortened hours, closures and a lack of education and safety programs during the busy tourist season.

### **Relationship to the Role of Tourism in Local Communities**

As stated in the *National Travel and Tourism Strategy* developed by the President's Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness, travel and tourism are poised to be one of the six economic drivers for the US economy within the decade. The influx of travelers into the rural communities of Southern Utah is expected to continue, as thousands of both national and international visitors are drawn to visit numerous geologic and cultural showcase sites concentrated on public lands within driving distance in the southern part of Utah and Northern Arizona.



Big Water GSENM Visitor Center

Cannonville GSENM Visitor Center

Kanab GSENM Visitor Center

Escalante Interagency Visitor Center

## Visitor Center Staffing

### 1 Existing Staffing + Minimal Seasonal Help: 5 days/week 8 hrs/day

<i>Staff for VC's</i>	<i>Kanab</i>	<i>Big Water</i>	<i>Cannonville</i>	<i>Escalante</i>	<i>Boulder (State Park)</i>	<i>Total in current Base</i>	<i>Total Needed one-time</i>
Hosted Workers (local hires) @ \$2045.00/mo.	1 @ 9 mo.						1 person 9 months = \$18,405.00
BLM Seasonal 1039 (local hire) @ \$2800.00/mo (min. to maintain rehire)				1@ 2 mo			1 person 2 months= \$5,600.00
BLM Career Seasonal (WAE) GS/5 @ \$3800/mo	1 @ 9 mo	1@ 11.5 mo	2@ 9 mo	2@ 10 mo		6 people Total of 58.5 months = \$222,300.00	
PFT GS/5 @ \$4500/mo		1@ 12 mo			1@ 12 mo	2 people Total 24 mo = \$108,000.00	
Annual Cost						330,300.00	24,005.00
Days/Hours Open	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8		

### 2 Proposed Mid-level staffing: 7 days/week 10 hrs/day

<i>Staff for VC's</i>	<i>Kanab</i>	<i>Big Water</i>	<i>Cannonville</i>	<i>Escalante</i>	<i>Boulder (State Park)</i>	<i>Total in current base</i>	<i>Total needed one-time</i>
Hosted Workers (local hires) @ \$2045.00/mo.	3@ 9 mo	2@ 9 mo	2@ 9 mo	1@ 9 mo			8 people Total 72 mo = \$147,240.00
BLM Seasonal 1039 (local hire)GS/5 @ \$2800.00/mo.				1@ 6 mo			1 person 6 month = \$16,800.00
BLM Career Seasonal (WAE) GS/5 @ \$3800/mo	1 @ 9 mos	1@ 11.5 mos	2 @ 9 mos	2@ 10 mos		6 people Total of 58.5 mo=\$222,300.00	
PFT GS/5 @ \$4500/mo		1@ 12 mo			1@ 12 mo	2 people Total of 24 mo = \$108,000.00	
Annual Cost						330,300.00	164,040.00
Days/Hours Open	10/7	10/7	10/7	10/7	5/8		

**3 Fully functional staffing Plan: 10 days/week 7 hrs/day**

<b>Staff for VC's</b>	<i>Kanab</i>	<i>Big Water</i>	<i>Cannonville</i>	<i>Escalante</i>	<i>Boulder (State Park)</i>	<i>Total in current base</i>	<i>Total needed in new base</i>
BLM Career Seasonal (WAE) GS/3 @ \$2500.00/mo	3 new @ 9 mo	2 new @ 9 mo	2 new @ 9 mo	2 new @ 9 mo			9 people 81 mo = 202,500.00
BLM Career Seasonal (WAE) GS-4/5 @ \$3800.00/mo	1 @ 9 mo	1 @ 9 mo	2 @ 9 mo	2 @ 9 mo		6 people Total of 54 mo = \$205,200.00	
PFT GS/5 @ \$4500.00/mo		1 @ 12 mo			1 @ 12 mo	2 People Total of 24 mo = \$108,000.00	
Annual Cost						\$313,200.00	202,500.00
Days/Hours Open	7/10	7/10	7/10	7/10	5/8		

## ISSUE PAPER

Subject: Staffing Concerns GSENM Visitor Centers

Issue: GSENM does not have adequate funding in base to staff the Monument Visitor Centers:

Background: The Monument Management Plan (MMP) mandated that GSENM construct four Visitor Centers in neighboring gateway communities to foster economic development. When Functional Area L1711 (National Monuments and National Conservation Areas) was created in FY 2009 funds were not allocated to staff the Monument Visitor Centers.

1) From FY 2009 – FY 2011 GSENM Visitor Center staffing was funded through lapse and one time monies. GSENM submitted requests for one time funding to WO NLCS every year and received some one time dollars in 2009, 2010, 2011 to augment Visitor Center staffing. In FY 2012 GSENM was slated to receive \$350,000 in one time dollars which was anticipated to become a part of future base funding for its Visitor Centers but this money was never received.

2) In FY 2012 Functional Area L1711 was over allocated and at the same time GSENM lost traditional funding streams in L1220 (Recreation) and L1610 (Planning) due to overall constriction of budgets in Utah BLM. The subsequent UTSO rescissions (L1711 lapse taken of \$149,400 and L1711 rescission of \$137,600) resulted in a staffing crisis in the Monument Visitor Centers that was only mitigated by the reallocation of L1711 funding from the State Office.

3) In compliance with the FY 2010 NLCS Washington Office Assessment Report GSENM filled their vacant science positions in FY 2010 and FY 2011. The Table of Organization for GSENM has not grown since FY 2009 and is currently encumbered.

Four possible scenarios exist to fund Visitor Center staffing in FY 2013 and beyond:

1) WO NLCS provides more funding in future out years in Functional Area L1711 to staff the GSENM Visitor Centers.

2) Utah BLM reallocates other funding streams to GSENM in future out years to free up L1711 dollars to staff its Visitor Centers.

3) GSENM cuts permanent science positions on the Table of Organization as they become vacant to staff seasonal Visitor Center operations. Such a measure would:

a) Significantly diminish research and mission capabilities on GSENM. The management of GSENM remains a highly focal point of contention for a varied, diverse and vocal group of constituents and interested publics.

b) Require a change to the current Utah BLM Cost Target Allocation. Under the current budget allocation, if a position is abolished the correlating funding streams are reallocated within Utah BLM.



4) Reduce Visitor Center operational hours commensurate with existing funding streams.

Given the uncertainties associated with the FY 2013 budget cycle and the looming specter of a debt ceiling crisis and possible sequestration, GSENM will reduce Visitor Center operational hours commensurate with existing funding streams. Reallocating funds internally, GSENM will be able to staff the four Visitor Centers 8 hours a day and 5 days a week. To expand Visitor Center hours beyond that would require an infusion of additional dollars.

Recommendation: (b)(5) DPP

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A position paper articulating the need to staff the GSENM Visitor Centers is enclosed.

René C. Berkhoudt  
Monument Manager  
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

## Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument FY 2017 Visitor Center Funding Request

This strategy offers a rationale for funding Visitor Center operations at Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. Without the requested funds, the Monument will be forced to scale back operations or close during busy months. Funding is needed to insure an adequate level of operating hours at four Monument Visitor Centers in order to fulfill the public mission of GSENM and insure it continues to operate as a national showcase site for the National Landscape Conservation System.

The need for increased funding for operation of Monument Visitor Centers is directly tied to:

**Staff Security and Safety:** 2015-2016 has brought increased tension regionally and nationally regarding management of public lands and increased concerns for staff safety. Numerous facility upgrades have been conducted to reduce threats to BLM staff. Historically, visitor centers were able to operate with one staff position for a 5 day operation but new security concerns now require two people minimum in each center. VC operations need a minimum of 2.5 staff to remain open 5 days per week and allow for annual and sick leave. A seven day per week operation requires three people to rotate leave and lieu days and maintain a two person presence. Winter week end closures occur due to only one permanent staff being available and no other staff working in the offices of each building. Increased staffing is critical to insure VC operations continue as one staff person is not allowed to be alone in staffing Visitor Centers when other offices are vacant. Reducing hours or closure will also impact VC radio dispatch functions for Monument staff who are working in the backcountry. This VC dispatch function offers a critical safety back up for field staff in the busy season. An increase in career seasonal and 1039 seasonal positions is needed to provide a secure level of coverage and allow for 7 days per week operations during the busy season. This would also allow for week end operations during the winter season. An adequate level of coverage would also require less overtime funds needed who now work overtime on lieu days when two person coverage is not available.

**Visitor health and safety in the backcountry:** Inadequate staffing of visitor centers results in poor visitor orientation and preparation to encounter rugged terrain with changing roads and weather. This results in an increased risk level of fatalities and search and rescue incidents which then also involve BLM staff and volunteers. In FY 2016, key trailheads in the Escalante Canyons received 3,000 more visitors at trailheads. Dry Fork received 6,000 more visitors for a total of 27,647 visitors. In FY 2013 five fatalities occurred on BLM in southern Utah (1 on GSENM, 4 associated with VCNM "the Wave."). This was a year of reduced staffing levels in Visitor Centers. Visitation increases will continue to require a strong VC staffing presence.

**Visitation Increases:** In 2016, Visitor Center visitation skyrocketed to contact more than 192,690 visitors. This is attributed primarily due to the UT tourism "Mighty Five" and "Road to Mighty" campaigns and the 100th centennial of the National Park Service which increased visitation by more by 50% during April, May and September. Spring and fall months continue to show the greatest increases effectively expanding the busy season to 9 ½-10 months. This severely impacted visitor centers which did not have adequate staffing. The current base budget funding of two permanent and four career seasonal staff is inadequate to keep three visitor centers open, five days per week, year round. Traditionally, Cannonville Visitor Center closes November through March.

GSENM Visitor Center 2016	Visitors
B g Water V s tor Center	33,097
Kanab V s tor Center	45,479
Cannonv e V s tor Center	35,796
Esca ante V s tor Center	76,179
<b>Tota :</b>	<b>192,690</b>

Public appreciation and understanding of GSENM and NLCS: Visitor Center operations pay a key role in promoting visitor spending in local communities, insuring positive impacts of travel and tourism on the economies of towns adjacent to the public lands of Southern Utah. Visitor Center staff contribute to a positive image of BLM, NLCS, and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument within the local community, fostering good dialogue and a jointly shared mission between BLM and local rural businesses. In the past, when limited VC funds were available; visitor centers were forced to operate at reduced hours and days. In the past, limited operations at visitor centers have brought numerous complaints from communities (citizens, businesses, mayors and MAC, State Parks) and traveling public about lack of access and information. Visitor Centers provide indirect benefits by employing local citizens to work in visitor centers spring through fall months.

#### Budget Requested

	Allocation for increasing labor-base budget 4 career seasonal (8 months)	Allocation for 4 1039 seasonal staff (6 months)	Overtime (75% less)	Total Funding Needed	Deficit/Amount needed for labor \$122,900* funded
FY2017	\$148,000 (37,000 ea)	\$76,000 (19,000 ea)	\$5,000	\$229,000	-106,100

#### Summary

\$230K will fund basic staffing to be able to operate 7 days/week for 9 months (March-November) with two staff present at a four visitor centers; \$122,900K funds us 7 days/week for 6 months (May-October) with reduced daily hours of operation. Exactly which months we stay open depends upon staffing levels as well as when we receive the funds; thereafter in the year, the more difficult it is to hire staff. All VCs stay open 5 days/week the remainder of the year, except Cannonville closes in winter (Nov-March). Visitation shows considerably in December and January, particularly in Cannonville and Escalante. The VC in Kanab now has a BLM career seasonal position funded by the KFO who operates the lottery and provides a presence for 8 months of the year. Our funding request reflects this increased staffing help.

Successful operation of Visitor Centers enables BLM at the Monument to continue to achieve the guiding principles of the establishing legislation by meeting the following visitor service objectives:

- *Provide for the health and safety of visitors and staff by insuring the timely availability, accuracy and consistency of information to the recreation public;*

(b)(5) DPP

- *Minimize the potential for damage to the monument's natural and cultural resources by encouraging compliance with land ethics and emphasizing stewardship messages through programs such as Site Stewards, Tread Lightly, Leave No Trace and Ride Right;*
- *Provide excellent customer service in a heavily visited, highly visible location for BLM and NLCS;*
- *Serve as a bridge to the local community to insure the influx of travelers that are drawn to the monument and nearby NLCS sites have a successful visit, potentially extend their length of stay and by offering quality customer service.*

**Full Operation Proposal 2016 (and staffing prior to 2012):**

Visitor Center	Open	Closed	Schedule	# of Months Open	Months Closed
Escalante Interagency VC	7:30A	17:00P	7 Days a Week	9	
Kanab Visitor Center	8 00	16:30	7 Days a Week	9	
Cannonville Visitor Center	8 00	6:30	7 Days a Week	9	5: Nov Mar
Big Water Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	7 Days a Week	9	
Anasazi State Park in Boulder	8:00	16:30	5 Days a Week	12	

(b)(5) DPP

Description	Cost	WM's	Location	Total Cost	Funding Source (1711 unless noted)
VC Park Ranger GS 0025 05	3,700	6	Escalante Interagency VC	22,200.00	
BC Park Ranger GS 0025 05	3,700	6	North GSENM (slots)	22,200.00	
RecTech Maintenance GS3 Equiv	3,000	9	Recreation sites north GSENM	27,000.00	232
Calf Creek Campground Host	1,000	6	Calf Creek Campground	6 000 00	1232
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Kanab Visitor Center (\$9K o be paid by KFO to GCNHA)	24,300.00	\$9K KFO 1232
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Kanab Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Cannonville Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Cannonville Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Big Water Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equi	2,700	9	Big Water Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Escalante Interagency Visitor Center	24,300.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>				\$247,500	

Note: FY2014 full operational cost was estimated at \$297,900 because we had two GS 5 park ranger vacancies (and requested seasonals in their place) in Escalante; they are now filled.

**Additional costs:**

1. Utilities are paid through Denver, not borne by GSENM budget

2. Janitorial

Big Water VC \$13,050  
Escalante VC \$31,704  
Cannonville VC \$16,870

Kanab is part of the (20 year) lease fee, which is \$120,000/year. Due to expire on April 30, 2023.

Glendale Contact Station	\$11,000
Uniforms	\$4,000
Travel & per diem	\$4,000

Other fixed costs, including equipment copiers, supplies, and vehicles are not included

### 2013 Staffing History

Visitor Center	Open	Closed	Schedule	# Months Open	Months Closed
Escalante Interagency VC	7:30A	17:00P	7 Days a Week/5 days remainder of year	2.5 m: July mid Sept	
Kanab Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	7 Days a Week/5 days remainder of year	5m:May Sept	
Cannonville Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	5 Days a Week	6	6: Nov Mar
Big Water Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	5 Days a Week	12	
Anasazi State Park in Boulder	8:00	16:30	5 Days a Week	12	

Description	Cost	WM's	Location	Total Cost	Funding Source (1711 unless noted)
VC Park Ranger GS 0025 05	\$3,700	3	Escalante Interagency VC	11,100.00	\$6K 1232
RecTech Maintenance Hosted Worker GS 3 Equivalent	3,000	2	Recreation Sites north GSENM	6,000.00	
Calf Creek Campground Host	1,000	6	Calf Creek Campground	6,000.00	1232
Hosted Worker GS 2 Equivalent	\$2,700	5	Kanab Visitor Center	13,500.00	\$9K KFO 1232
BLM STEP GS 2 Equivalent	\$2,700	3.5	Kanab Visitor Center	9,450.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	\$2,700	5	Cannonville Visitor Center	13,500.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	\$2,700	3.5	Escalante Interagency VC	9,450.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	\$2,700	1	Escalante Interagency VC	2,700.00	
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	



Big Water GSENM Visitor Center



Cannonville GSENM Visitor Center



Kanab GSENM Visitor Center



Escalante Interagency Visitor Center

## Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument FY 2016/17 Visitor Services Funding Strategy

### Introduction

This strategy offers a rationale for funding Visitor Services operations at Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument as a priority for the NLCS discretionary recreation budget. Without the request monies, the Monument is forced to scale back operations or close during busy months. Funding is needed to insure an adequate level of operating hours at four Monument Visitor Centers + one Utah State Park in order to fulfill the public mission of GSENM and insure it continues to operate as a national showcase site for the National Landscape Conservation System.

In 2015 and 2016, VC visits and recreational use on the Monument skyrocketed due to the UT tourism Mighty Five campaign increasing visitation by more by 50% during April, May and September extending the busiest season to 9 months. This severely tested visitor centers which did not have adequate staffing. Even without the stressors of increased visitation, the current situation with two permanent and four career seasonal staff is inadequate to keep three visitor centers open five days per week year round. Cannonville VC closes November through March.

GSENM Visitor Center 2016	Visitors
Big Water Visitor Center	33,097
Kanab Visitor Center	45,479
Cannonville Visitor Center	35,796
Escalante Visitor Center	76,179

Historically, visitor centers opened with one staff position for a 5 day operation but today's security concerns require two people minimum in each building. VC operations need a minimum of 2.5 staff to remain open 5 days per week and allow for annual and sick leave. A seven day per week operation requires three people to rotate lieu days and maintain a two person presence. Winter week end closures occur due to only one permanent staff being available and no other staff working in the back offices of each building. An increase in career seasonal and 1039 seasonal positions is needed to provide a secure level of coverage and allow for 7 days per week operations during the busy season. This would also allow for winter week end operations. An adequate level of coverage would also require less overtime funds are needed to pay staff who currently work overtime on lieu days when coverage is not available.

	Allocation for increasing labor- base budget 4 career seasonal (8 months)	Allocation for 4 1039 seasonal staff (6 months)	Overtime (75% less)	Total Funding Needed	Deficit/Amount needed for labor \$122,900* funded
FY2017	\$148,000	\$76,000	\$5,000	\$229,000	-106,100
	(37,000 ea)	(19,000 ea)			



n summary, \$230K will fund basic staffing to be able to operate 7 days/week for 9 months (March-November) with two staff present at a four visitor centers; \$122,900K funds us 7 days/week for 6 months (May-October) with reduced daily hours of operation. Exact y which months we stay open depends upon staffing events as well as when we receive the funds; the latter in the year, the more difficult it is to hire staff. A VCs stay open 5 days/week the remainder of the year, except Cannonville closes in winter (Nov- March). Visitation shows considerably in December and January, particularly in Cannonville and Escalante. The VC in Kanab now has a BLM career seasonal position funded by the KFO who operates the lottery and provides a presence for 8 months of the year. Our funding request reflects this increased staffing help.

(b)(5) DPP

### Need

The need for increased funding for operation of Monument Visitor Centers is directly tied to

1) Staff Security and Safety 2015-2016 has brought increased tension regionally and nationally regarding management of public lands and increased concerns for staff safety. Numerous facility upgrades have been conducted to reduce threats to BLM staff. Increased staffing is critical to insure VC operations continue as one staff person is not allowed to be a one in staffing Visitor Centers. Reducing hours or closure will also impact VC radio dispatch functions for Monument staff who are working in the backcountry. This VC dispatch function offers a critical safety back-up for field staff in the busy season.

2) Visitor Health and Safety in the backcountry. Inadequate staffing of visitor centers results in poor visitor orientation and preparation to encounter rugged terrain with changing roads and weather. This results in an increased risk event fatalities and search and rescue incidents which then also involve BLM staff and volunteers. In FY 2016, key trail heads in the Escalante Canyons received 3,000 more visitors at trail heads. Dry Fork received 6,000 more visitors for a total of 27,647 visitors. In FY 2013 five fatalities occurred on BLM in southern Utah (1 on GSENM, 4 associated with VCNM "the Wave"). This was a year of reduced staffing events in Visitor Centers.

3) Fostering public appreciation and understanding of GSENM and NLCS. Visitor Centers provide indirect benefits by employing local citizens to work in visitor centers spring through fall. Months Visitor Center operations pay a key role in promoting visitor spending in local communities, insuring positive impacts of travel and tourism on the economies of towns adjacent to the public lands of Southern Utah. Visitor Center staffs contribute to a positive image of BLM, NLCS, and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument within the local community, fostering good dialogue and a jointly shared mission between BLM and local businesses. In the past, when limited VC funds were available, visitor centers were forced to operate at reduced hours and days. In the past, limited operations at visitor centers have brought numerous complaints from communities (citizens, businesses, mayors and MAC, State Parks) and traveling public about lack of access and information.

Successful operation of Visitor Centers enables BLM at the Monument to achieve the guiding principles of the establishing legislation by meeting the following visitor service objectives:

- *Provide for the health and safety of visitors and staff by insuring the timely availability, accuracy and consistency of information to the recreation public;*
- *Minimize the potential for damage to the monument's natural and cultural resources by encouraging compliance with land ethics and emphasizing stewardship messages through programs such as Site Stewards, Tread Lightly, Leave No Trace and Ride Right;*

- *Provide excellent customer service in a heavily visited, highly visible location for BLM and NLCS;*
- *Serve as a bridge to the local community to insure the influx of travelers that are drawn to the monument and nearby NLCS sites have a successful visit, potentially extend their length of stay and by offering quality customer service.*

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## Background

### The Role of Visitor Services (Interpretation, Information and Education)

The resources of Utah BLM at Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument and within the NLCS are shared with the public at four BLM visitor centers in the communities of Kanab, Escalante, Big Water and Cannonville, a BLM desk at a state park in Boulder and an unstaffed contact station in Glendale. Visitor Centers received approximately 125,000 visitors in FY 2013.

Visitor center staffs serve as front line ambassadors for BLM and NLCS, providing visitors and local residents with various permits and orientation information in state of the art interpretive facilities situated for easy access in local community settings. Information includes critical messages in how to safely visit the vast and rugged landscape of the monument and surrounding BLM lands. Orientation by BLM staff at visitor centers plays a critical role in a successful visit and in preventative visitor safety. Many visitors travelling to BLM sites between National Parks are unprepared for the rigors of the Southern Utah backcountry setting of public lands.

A 2006 study of front country visitors (*Utah State University, 2006*) revealed slightly more than 60% as first time visitors. First time visitors encounter rugged roads and unexpected terrain, often creating situations they are not prepared for which threatens their health and safety as well as the staff who attempt to rescue them. This ranges from heat related backcountry injuries to auto incidents on impassible roads during summer monsoon season.

In addition, a diversity of visitor center education programs attract local teachers, students and adults who become immersed in culture, geology, ecology and paleontology through fun and educational programs and events. Residents utilize the easily accessible location to bring visiting guests to view the natural and cultural exhibits, stories and objects displayed in attractive colorful venues. Talks feature scientists and specialists who share the latest discoveries, drawing enthusiastic crowds to the centers. Since establishment, monument visitor centers have slowly evolved to become a part of the cultural fabric of neighboring rural communities.

### Background on Funding Issues

Generally with full staffing, all visitor centers are open 7 days per week from mid March through mid November. Without additional funding, operations will institute shortened hours and days of operations and seasonal and daily closures. Creative staffing solutions and partnerships have scrambled to meet spiraling budget short falls yet continue to offer superior customer service using skilled and knowledgeable staff. However, reduced funding for visitor center operations in 2014 continues to create a looming crisis in the ability of visitor centers to remain fully open. Visitation numbers continue to increase with peak periods showing high density concentrations of visitors. In September of 2012 & 2013, Escalante Visitor Center received approximately 11,000 visitors. Staff contacted roughly 20 visitors per hour in a 10 hour day of operation. The focus was trip planning and permits.

In FY 13, two Career Seasonal (WAE) BLM staff took jobs elsewhere. Due to the hiring freeze, we have not been able to hire behind them. We are requesting authorization to hire these positions on our TO or BLM seasonals as a temporary fix. In total, GSENM is requesting to hire 7 Hosted Workers and four seasonal 1039 positions. Hosted Workers are hired through existing assistance agreements with Glen





Canyon Natural History Association (GCNHA). This agreement allows GSENM to staff their visitor centers 7 days a week and provide a continued GSENM presence in the Anasazi State Park in Boulder, 5 days a week.

A cooperative agreement with the US Forest Service and the National Park Service helps provide joint coverage of the Escalante Interagency Visitor Center. NPS coverage for 2014 is anticipated at zero level. USFS coverage for FY 14 is anticipated at one PFT and one seasonal for 3 months. Regarding the VC in Kanab, Regarding the VC in Kanab, an MOU between the BLM Kanab Field Office and Arizona Strip Office was signed in FY2013. A business plan is being developed in FY2014. It is anticipated that KFO will provide some staffing monies for one BLM WAE to keep this VC open five days in winter and to fund and to fund ½ of a hosted worker. The KVC primarily serves the recent influx of visitors attracted to the daily permit lottery for the Coyote Buttes area (KFO & AZ Strip). Given all of these factors with existing base budget, all visitor centers will see shortened hours, closures and a lack of education program offerings during busy tourist seasons.

#### **Relationship to the Role of Tourism in Local Communities**

As stated in the *National Travel and Tourism Strategy* developed by the President's Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness, travel and tourism are poised to be one of the six economic drivers for the US economy within the decade. The influx of travelers into the rural communities of Southern Utah is expected to continue, as thousands of both national and international visitors are drawn to visit numerous geologic and cultural showcase sites concentrated on public lands within driving distance in the southern part of Utah and Northern Arizona.

#### **GSENM Visitor Centers**

Summary of primary visitor contacts in each GSENM Visitor Center. All GSENM Visitor Centers house a specialty book/gift store operated by Glen Canyon Natural History Association. GCNHA is a private non profit partner serving under a BLM assistance agreement. GCNHA provides visitor center front desk hosted workers in our visitor centers when they receive grants from BLM for this purpose. GSENM provides annual 2 day spring training to all visitor center staff permanent, career seasonal, and hosted workers.

##### *Big Water (Theme: Paleontology)*

- Orientation to region maps & info in UT or AZ
- Time change (UT vs AZ)
- Specifics on GSENM history, purpose, emphasis on science, particularly paleontology
- People seeing the UDOT sign that says "dinosaur exhibits" stop and want to see them; we share our paleo research and discoveries with visitors
- Mornings: clarify this is not the Paria Contact Station; re route people seeking Wave permits to 9 am lottery drawing at GSENM VC in Kanab
- Roads questions about taking 2WD cars on remote GSENM roads; very little on "road issues/RS2477 debate" any longer

##### *Kanab (Theme: Geology & Archaeology)*

- Primary messages and questions (in person and phone) are related to Vermilion Cliffs NM (The Wave permits & lottery) probably 99%.
- GSENM and other regional roads and hiking routes are discussed as an alternative to those people not getting Wave permits

##### *Cannonville (Human History Paiutes & Pioneers)*

- Road conditions on Cottonwood Road and distance to Kodachrome State Park
- Recommendations for backcountry day and overnight hikes on GSENM

*Escalante Interagency Center*

- Road conditions, particularly for Hole in the Rock Road
- How to find the slot canyons (Peek a boo, Spooky, Zebra) off Hole in the Rock Road
- Questions about Calf Creek Falls trail
- Questions about (GCNRA/NPS) Coyote Gulch hike

*Anasazi State Park GSENM Desk*

- Information about GSENM, Calf Creek Falls Trail, and road conditions

**Full Operation Proposal 2014 (and staffing prior to 2012):**

Visitor Center	Open	Closed	Schedule	# of Months Open	Months Closed
Escalante Interagency VC	7:30A	17:00P	7 Days a Week	9	
Kanab Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	7 Days a Week	9	
Cannonville Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	7 Days a Week	9	5: Nov Mar
Big Water Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	7 Days a Week	9	
Anasazi State Park in Boulder	8:00	16:30	5 Days a Week	12	

Description	Cost	WM's	Location	Total Cost	Funding Source (1711 unless noted)
VC Park Ranger GS 0025 05	3,700	6	Escalante Interagency VC	22,200.00	
BC Park Ranger GS 0025 05	3,700	6	North GSENM (slots)	22,200.00	
RecTech Maintenance GS3 Equiv	3,000	9	Recreation sites north GSENM	27,000.00	1232
Calf Creek Campground Host	1,000	6	Calf Creek Campground	6,000.00	1232
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Kanab Visitor Center (\$9K to be paid by KFO to GCNHA)	24,300.00	\$9K KFO 1232
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Kanab Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Cannonville Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Cannonville Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Big Water Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Big Water Visitor Center	24,300.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	2,700	9	Escalante Interagency Visitor Center	24,300.00	
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$247,500</b>	

Note: FY2014 full operational cost was estimated at \$297,900 because we had two GS 5 park ranger vacancies (and requested seasonals in their place) in Escalante; they are now filled.

**Additional costs:**

1. Utilities are paid through Denver, not borne by GSENM budget

2. Janitorial

Big Water VC \$13,050

Escalante VC \$31,704

Cannonville VC \$16,870

Kanab is part of the (20 year) lease fee, which is \$120,000/year. Due to expire on April 30, 2023.

Glendale Contact Station \$11,000

Uniforms \$4,000

Travel & per diem \$4,000

Other fixed costs, including equipment copiers, supplies, and vehicles are not included

**2013 Staffing History**

Visitor Center	Open	Closed	Schedule	# Months Open	Months Closed
Escalante Interagency VC	7:30A	17:00P	7 Days a Week/5 days remainder of year	2.5 m: July mid Sept	
Kanab Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	7 Days a Week/5 days remainder of year	5m:May Sept	
Cannonville Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	5 Days a Week	6	6: Nov Mar
Big Water Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	5 Days a Week	12	
Anasazi State Park in Boulder	8:00	16:30	5 Days a Week	12	

Description	Cost	WM's	Location	Total Cost	Funding Source (1711 unless noted)
VC Park Ranger GS 0025 05	\$3,700	3	Escalante Interagency VC	11,100.00	\$6K 1232
RecTech Maintenance					
Hosted Worker GS 3 Equivalent	3,000	2	Recreation Sites north GSENM	6,000.00	
Calf Creek Campground Host	1,000	6	Calf Creek Campground	6,000.00	1232
Hosted Worker GS 2 Equivalent	\$2,700	5	Kanab Visitor Center	13,500.00	\$9K KFO 1232
BLM STEP GS 2 Equivalent	\$2,700	3.5	Kanab Visitor Center	9,450.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	\$2,700	5	Cannonville Visitor Center	13,500.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	\$2,700	3.5	Escalante Interagency VC	9,450.00	
VC Hosted Worker GS 2 Equiv	\$2,700	1	Escalante Interagency VC	2,700.00	
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	



Big Water GSENM Visitor Center



Cannonville GSENM Visitor Center



Kanab GSENM Visitor Center



Escalante Interagency Visitor Center

## GSENM Visitor Center Staffing Requirements

Description	Name	Cost	Workmonths	Location	Tota Cost
Park Ranger - GS-0025-05	Dixie Mitchell	\$2,800	1	Escalante Interagency Visitor Center	\$2,800.00
Hosted Worker - GS-3 Equivalent	Terry Glover	\$2,500	6	Kanab Visitor Center	\$15,000.00
Hosted Worker - GS-2 Equivalent	TBD	\$2,200	6	Kanab Visitor Center	\$13,200.00
Hosted Worker - GS-2 Equivalent	TBD	\$2,200	6	Cannonville Visitor Center	\$13,200.00
Hosted Worker - GS-2 Equivalent	TBD	\$2,200	6	Cannonville Visitor Center	\$13,200.00
Hosted Worker - GS-2 Equivalent	TBD	\$2,200	6	Big Water Visitor Center	\$13,200.00
Hosted Worker - GS-2 Equivalent	TBD	\$2,200	6	Big Water Visitor Center	\$13,200.00
Hosted Worker - GS-2 Equivalent	TBD	\$2,200	6	Escalante Interagency Visitor Center	\$13,200.00
				<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$97,000.00</b>

We are using Hosted Worker through the Glen Canyon Natural History Association as they are not as expensive as 1039 Seasonal GS workers

Hosted Workers are hired through an existing Assistance Agreement

Bringing on these Hosted Workers will allow GSENM to staff their Visitor Centers 7 days a week and provide a continued GSENM presence in the Anasazi State Park in Boulder 5 days a week

Vistor Center	Open	Closed	Schedule
Escalante Interagency Visitor Center	7:30	17:00	7 Days a Week
Kanab Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	7 Days a Week
Cannonville Visitor Center	8:00	16:30	7 Days a Week
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