

Chapter 1

Introduction



Arizona Strip: Where the West Stays Wild

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLANS

Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument (Parashant) was established on January 11, 2000, when President William J. Clinton issued Presidential Proclamation 7265 (Appendix 1.A) under the Antiquities Act of 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431). On November 9, 2000, Presidential Proclamation 7374 (Appendix 1.B) established Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (Vermilion). The two Monuments were created to protect an array of scientific, biological, geological, hydrological, cultural, and historical objects. These objects, both individually and collectively, in the context of the natural environments that support and protect them, are referred to as “Monument objects,” “Monument resources,” or “Monument values” throughout this document.

Parashant is located on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Park Service (NPS), while Vermilion is wholly located on BLM-administered public lands (BLM lands; see Table 1.1). Local jurisdiction for BLM lands in the Monuments resides with the Arizona Strip District of the BLM, while local jurisdiction for the NPS portion of Parashant resides with Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NRA). The proclamations keep the Monuments under existing BLM and NPS management and authorities, but subject them to the primary purpose of protecting the Monument objects as described in the proclamations.

The designation of Parashant and Vermilion as National Monuments changed much of the management direction of the existing Arizona Strip District Resource Management Plan (RMP; BLM 1992) and the Shivwits Plateau portion of the Lake Mead General Management Plan (GMP; NPS 1986). Individual management plans are needed for each Monument to protect Monument objects and the context that supports them, in a way that is consistent with the proclamations. Additionally, due to Parashant proclamation’s cooperative administration mandate, the BLM and NPS will jointly develop a single management plan for that Monument.

A revised management plan is needed for the remaining 1.68 million acres of non-monument public lands administered by the Arizona Strip Field Office (Arizona Strip FO) of the BLM. This management plan will revise the current Arizona Strip District RMP (1992, as amended).

This plan, the Proposed Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Arizona Strip FO, Vermilion, and BLM Portion of Parashant, and a Proposed GMP/Final EIS for the NPS Portion of Parashant (Proposed Plan/FEIS), will be used to develop the Arizona Strip FO management plan revision as well as the two new management plans necessary to guide management actions for Parashant and Vermilion. Thus, this Proposed Plan/FEIS covers three planning areas: Parashant, Vermilion, and the Arizona Strip FO. For purposes of this document, these three planning areas, combined, will be referred to as the Planning Area or Arizona Strip District. The Arizona Strip District of the BLM is taking the lead in developing this Proposed

Plan/FEIS since most of the Planning Area involves BLM lands. The NPS is a joint lead agency with the BLM in writing the management plan for Parashant.

This Proposed Plan/FEIS has also been prepared with the assistance of Cooperating Agencies, other federal and state agencies, communities, tribes, groups, and by members of the public. See Appendix 1.C for the results of scoping and collaborative working relationships.

PLANNING AREA AND MAP

The Planning Area consists of 2,768,206 acres of BLM lands and 208,447 acres of NPS lands within the area known as the “Arizona Strip,” which is located in the northern portions of Coconino and Mohave counties, Arizona, north and west of the Colorado River (Map 1.1). The Arizona Strip also includes state, local, and private lands that are concentrated mostly around small communities in extreme northern Arizona, including Fredonia, Marble Canyon, Colorado City, Centennial, Littlefield, Beaver Dam, and Scenic. Adjoining communities include Page, Arizona; Kanab, Big Water, Hurricane, Washington, and St. George, Utah; and Mesquite and Bunkerville, Nevada. There is one other large block of mostly uninhabited private land at Mt. Trumbull/Bundyville, about 40 miles south of St. George.

This Proposed Plan/FEIS covers decisions only for BLM and NPS lands, with the exception of small areas of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands, either included or excluded, as may be described in Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) or other management agreements within the Planning Area. Table 1.1 shows land surface ownership for the geographic region of the Arizona Strip and the Planning Area portion of the Arizona Strip. All acres and mileage in this Proposed Plan/FEIS are generated by Geographic Information System (GIS) unless otherwise noted. Map 2.7 illustrates land surface ownership.

Land Ownership	Arizona Strip Region	Planning Area	Parashant	Vermilion	Arizona Strip FO
BLM, Arizona Strip District Office	2,768,206	2,768,206	808,744	279,566	1,679,896
USFS, North Kaibab Ranger District	655,629	41	--	--	41
NPS, Glen Canyon NRA**	41,566	--	--	--	--
NPS, Lake Mead NRA	213,857	208,447	208,447		--
NPS, Grand Canyon National Park	889,239	--	--	--	--
NPS, Pipe Springs National Monument	40	--	--	--	--
Kaibab-Paiute Indian Tribe	120,842	--	--	--	--
State of Arizona	206,889	206,808	23,205	13,438	170,165
Private	151,547	139,565	7,920	683	130,962
Total Acres	5,047,815	3,323,067	1,048,316	293,687	1,981,064

*Management actions proposed in this Proposed Plan/FEIS only apply to BLM and NPS lands within the Planning Area (Parashant, Vermilion, and Arizona Strip FO). Source: Arizona Strip District Office files
 **Except for grazing administration which is covered under this Proposed Plan/FEIS

Map 1.1: Arizona Strip Location Map

Rugged and isolated, the Planning Area is one of the largest, unfragmented stretches of sparsely developed lands in the contiguous United States. The deep canyons of the Colorado River separate the area from the rest of Arizona. Except for U.S. Highway 89A, which crosses Marble Canyon at the extreme east end of the Planning Area and runs along the southern boundary of Vermilion, ground vehicle travel from the south is impossible due to the Grand Canyon. Three highways cross the northern boundary of the Planning Area. Paved roads cross the extreme northern periphery of the Planning Area, while only a few higher standard unpaved roads extend from the north into the remote southern regions of the Planning Area. The remainder is a network of unpaved roads and primitive roads of varying conditions extending into Parashant and other interior sections of the Planning Area.

A number of major tributaries of the Colorado River, including the Paria River, Kanab Creek, and Virgin River, flow through the Planning Area and contribute to a wide variety of scenic and important geological features. A number of springs and potholes are also scattered across the area. However, water is scarce in most places.

The Planning Area sits at the junction of two physiographic provinces, the Colorado Plateau and the Basin and Range, which contribute to the diversity of the region. The Colorado Plateau province is rough, ranging in elevation from 2,745 feet above sea level along the lower Hurricane Valley and southern St. George Basin to 8,029 feet above sea level at Mt. Trumbull. West of the lower Grand Wash Cliffs, typical Basin and Range topography dominates, with irregular, elongated valleys bordered by ridges and escarpments. Elevations in this area range from 1,247 feet above sea level within the extreme southwest part of Parashant to 6,758 feet above sea level along the Grand Wash Cliffs. The two highest points in the Planning Area are Mt. Trumbull near the north rim of the Grand Canyon at 8,029 feet and Mt. Bangs in the Virgin Mountains at 8,012 feet.

Much of the Planning Area consists of large expanses of sagebrush and pinyon-juniper communities typical of the Basin and Range and Colorado Plateau provinces. There are also approximately 42,406 acres of ponderosa pine forests in the Mt. Trumbull, Black Rock, and Parashant areas. The western edge of the Planning Area is characterized by Mojave Desert plant communities including species such as blackbrush, creosote bush, and Joshua trees in the lower elevations. Other common vegetation types include grasslands, salt desert shrub, and mountain brush. The Planning Area contains eight “ecological zones,” each characterized by specific plant and animal communities. There are also important geological, mineral, archaeological, cultural, historic, wildlife, wilderness, scenic, recreation, and grazing values within the Planning Area.

The generally low standard of motorized travel routes, the remote nature of much of the area, and the low human population are a large part of the Planning Area’s appeal for visitors. The rugged environment with countless mesas, canyons, mountains, and plateaus offers visitors a wide array of dispersed and structured recreation opportunities in backcountry and near-community settings. This produces benefits to individuals, households, communities, local economies, and the

environment. Visitors enjoy outdoor experiences while engaged in activities such as sightseeing, wilderness backpacking, off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel on designated routes, camping, and hunting.

In addition to tourism and recreation, ranching is also an important industry for local and regional economies. Livestock grazing has been a part of the Arizona Strip since the 1860s. Today, 118 permittees graze cattle on 150 allotments in the Planning Area. Approximately 20,000 cattle and 300 horses are authorized to use about 183,000 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) of forage annually. The Arizona Strip has also been important to local and regional economies by providing natural resources such as sand and gravel, uranium, gypsum, picture stone, vegetation products, and hunting and guiding opportunities.

PARASHANT

Parashant encompasses 1,048,316 acres within the Planning Area in Mohave County: 808,744 acres of BLM lands, 208,447 acres of NPS lands, 23,205 acres of Arizona State Trust lands, and 7,920 acres of private lands. There are no communities within the Monument, with the nearest being Littlefield, Beaver Dam, Scenic, Fredonia, Colorado City, and Centennial, Arizona; Mesquite and Bunkerville, Nevada; and St. George, Utah.

The vast chasm of the Grand Canyon essentially prevents travel to Parashant from the south, and only unpaved roads provide entry from the north, west, and northeast. The Monument offers spectacular scenic vistas, numerous rough canyons, and isolated stands of ponderosa pines. Within these environs, visitors can participate in a wide array of dispersed recreation activities that offer opportunities for experiencing remoteness and solitude, a sense of discovery, learning, and adventure.

Congress designated 95,150 acres of BLM lands within the Monument as wilderness in 1984. In addition, 190,478 acres of NPS lands are proposed as wilderness areas. Most of Grand Canyon National Park and contiguous portions of Lake Mead NRA outside Parashant are also proposed or suitable for wilderness designation.

VERMILION

Vermilion lies in northern Coconino County and encompasses 279,566 acres of BLM lands, 13,438 acres of Arizona State Trust lands, and 683 acres of private lands. It is adjacent to a portion of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the Kanab Field Office of the BLM in Utah to the north, borders Glen Canyon NRA to the east, and borders Kaibab National Forest to the west. No communities exist within the Monument, although several small residential/commercial areas lie along the Monument boundary at the foot of the Vermilion Cliffs along U.S. Highway 89A in the vicinity of Marble Canyon. Other close communities include Page and Fredonia, Arizona, and Kanab and Big Water, Utah.

While U.S. Highway 89A provides excellent passage along the southern boundary of the Monument, much of the Monument's landscape of steep cliffs, deep canyons, and loose sand make vehicular entry deep into its boundaries challenging. Spectacular scenic vistas are common from the rims of the Paria Plateau and visitors are offered a sense of isolation and remoteness in much of the area.

Congress designated approximately 89,825 acres within Vermilion as the Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness in 1984. Another 22,365 acres of the same statutory area are located outside the Monument in Utah. Portions of Glen Canyon NRA adjacent to Vermilion are proposed for wilderness designation. The BLM has the administrative authority over livestock grazing and mineral exploration on Glen Canyon NRA lands.

California Condors, last observed wild in Arizona in 1924, were reintroduced to Arizona at a release site on top of the Vermilion Cliffs in 1996. Condor releases continue in Vermilion, with approximately 50 Condors currently flying in the region. The California Condor Recovery Plan (USFWS 1996) cites an ultimate goal of 150 Condors in the area, including 15 reproductive pairs.

ARIZONA STRIP FIELD OFFICE

The Arizona Strip FO encompasses roughly 1.98 million acres located between the two Monuments in both Coconino and Mohave Counties: 1,679,896 acres of BLM lands, 170,165 acres of Arizona State Trust lands, and 130,962 acres of private lands. The Arizona Strip FO also contains 41 acres of USFS lands that make up the Tanglefoot Work Area. The communities of Fredonia, Littlefield, Beaver Dam, Scenic, Colorado City, and Centennial are located on enclaves of private lands within the Arizona Strip FO, with the larger communities of St. George, Washington, Big Water, Hurricane, and Kanab, Utah and Mesquite, Nevada directly across state lines. Since the Arizona Strip FO includes several communities within the Planning Area that are linked via U.S. 89A, Arizona 389, and Interstate 15, together with large portions of the area being easily accessible via a number of unpaved county roads, it receives the most human use. In addition to recreation and ranching, the Arizona Strip FO also supports the mining of gypsum, sand and gravel, picture stone, and flagstone.

In 1984, Congress designated 80,765 acres of BLM lands within the Arizona Strip FO as wilderness. These wilderness areas include Cottonwood Point, Beaver Dam Mountains, the northern unit of the Paiute, and a portion of Kanab Creek. Another 3,652 acres of the Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness exists directly across the state line in Utah. Most of Kanab Creek Wilderness is administered by the USFS. The southern half of Paiute Wilderness is in Parashant. Adjoining Cottonwood Point Wilderness to the north is the Canaan Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA) in Utah. Most of Grand Canyon National Park that is contiguous to the Arizona Strip FO is proposed for wilderness designation, while some portions of the St. George Field Office of the BLM are also recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

PLANNING GUIDANCE

PLANNING AREA VISION

A vision, as used in this context, is an ideal to strive for which is not quantifiable or set to a specific time frame. A goal is a statement of a desired outcome that often has quantifiable measures and established time frames for achievement.

The vision for the Planning Area is to retain, where it currently exists, the present natural and socially remote nature of the Planning Area while still allowing compatible human use to occur within “the place where the West stays wild.”

Goals for the Planning Area include:

1. The variety of remote natural and social settings will be managed to preserve essentially natural appearing landscapes. Visitors will have the opportunity to experience adventure, beautiful vistas, retreat from the pressures of modern life, and a sense of discovery through a variety of appropriate and sustainable outdoor recreation activities and travel modes.
2. Proclamations for Parashant and Vermilion and their purpose, significance, and mission statements will guide management of these Monuments. The National Monument is the dominant reservation for the public lands within the Monuments.
3. The Arizona Strip FO lands will be managed to balance protection of the natural and cultural resources with recreational, community, commercial, scientific, and social interests and needs.
4. The BLM and NPS will manage Monument lands for the benefit of local, regional, national, and international publics to provide recreational, scientific, commercial, social, and traditional uses while protecting the objects and context that supports them as required under the Antiquities Act and the proclamations.
5. The BLM and NPS will provide long-term protection and sustain the health and diversity of the public lands and resources that they manage for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.
6. The BLM and NPS will work cooperatively with local, regional, state, county, and federal agencies; tribes; communities; user groups; universities; researchers; and the interested public to achieve the above goals.

PURPOSE, SIGNIFICANCE, AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Purpose, significance, and mission statements clarify the intent of the Monument proclamations and are used to shape the development of this Proposed Plan/FEIS. Purpose statements clarify why the Monuments were set aside as units for special management, significance statements address what makes the areas unique, and mission statements reflect ideal conditions which managers should strive to attain. The BLM also developed significance and mission statements for the Arizona Strip FO based on management principals identified by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended.

Parashant Purpose, Significance, and Mission Statements

Purpose: To retain, for public interest (scientific inquiry, long-term preservation, and public use and enjoyment for present and future generations), well-preserved examples of scientific and historic objects of interest and to protect those objects from unauthorized location or settlement and from unauthorized appropriation, injury, destruction, or removal of any features. Those objects include:

- The exposed Paleozoic and Mesozoic sedimentary strata on the boundary between two major geologic provinces: the Basin and Range and the Colorado Plateau.
- The abundant fossil record.
- The ecological diversity resulting from the junction of two physiographic ecoregions, the Basin and Range and Colorado Plateau, and three floristic provinces, the Mojave Desert, Great Basin, and Colorado Plateau, including a diversity of wildlife.
- The undisturbed archaeological evidence, displaying the long and rich human history spanning more than 12,000 years.
- Areas of importance to existing Indian tribes.
- The colorful and engaging scenery, natural splendor, and a setting that provides for rugged recreation opportunities.
- The historic resources, including evidence of early European exploration, Mormon settlements, historic ranches, sawmills, and old mining sites.
- Remote and unspoiled landscapes with limited travel corridors.

Significance: The Monument contains relatively intact ecosystems and spring/water sources in public ownership that can provide sites for restoration and re-introduction of species.

The Monument's engaging scenery and inspirational landscape provides for rugged recreation opportunities.

The ponderosa pine ecosystem in the Mt. Trumbull area is a biological resource of scientific interest, which has been studied to gain important insights regarding tree-ring climatic reconstruction, fire history, forest structure change, and the long-term persistence and stability of pine communities.

The vastness and isolated location of the Monument provides for solitude, natural quiet, dark night skies, and wilderness characteristics.

The Monument is one of the larger sparsely developed, isolated land areas in the contiguous 48 states.

The exposed rock layers from the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic eras provide an unobscured view of the geology of the Colorado Plateau and Basin and Range physiographic provinces.

The Monument is an important watershed for the Colorado River.

Historic remnants of Euro-American exploration and settlement exist in nearly their original context, relatively undisturbed by vandalism and development, and are connected with contemporary uses.

The Monument has irreplaceable archaeological resources primarily of the Archaic, Ancestral Puebloan, and Southern Paiute occupations. These resources are significant because of their good condition, their connection with contemporary American Indians, and their location adjacent to the Grand Canyon – a place sacred to past and present peoples.

A dramatic elevation change (1,200 – 8,000 feet) in a relatively compact area creates rich ecological diversity where the Colorado Plateau and Mojave Desert merge.

The vastness of the Monument allows for large-scale ecological processes, combined with low levels of resource conflicts providing unprecedented opportunity for ecological research.

Mission: Parashant is a model of land management for the BLM and NPS that conserves the natural, scientific, and historic resources and includes ecological restoration and protection in a broad ecosystem context, while honoring the history and living traditions of the people who came before us: “The place where the West stays wild.” The goal of Parashant management is to achieve the following:

1. Natural and cultural resources and associated values of Parashant are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context. The protection of cultural, biological, and physical resources and human values for which the Monument was created receives the highest priority in planning and management.
2. Management decisions about resources and visitors are based on scientific information. The Monument is a model of scientifically based ecological restoration, research, and investigative studies that guide the restoration of healthy native ecosystems, natural fire regimes, and cultural landscapes.
3. The variety of natural and social settings are managed to preserve the remote and essentially unspoiled landscape character while providing opportunities for people, communities, and the environment to benefit from visitors experiencing adventure, beautiful vistas, a retreat from the pressures of modern life, and a sense of discovery through a variety of appropriate and sustainable backcountry activities. The public receives the information they need to have a safe and enjoyable experience.
4. New planning direction (developed through a collaborative process) and an accumulation of valid existing decisions provide clear direction for the management of Parashant.
5. The infrastructure footprint is the minimum necessary and is of consistent quality to provide for visual enjoyment, public safety, and protection of Monument values.
6. Sustainable, traditional ranching operations and associated interpretive activities showcase the Monument's historical lifestyles and enhance visitor experience.
7. Conservation and restoration of habitats that support sustainable populations of a full range of native species, including predators, are emphasized. Recovery and protection of special status species are a primary focus.
8. A variety of backcountry driving experiences are provided to key destinations and features via a system of designated roads while protecting Monument objects, the context that supports them, and other natural and cultural resources.
9. The preservation of natural quiet is emphasized in wilderness areas and other remote settings.
10. The public understands and appreciates the purposes and significance of the Monument and its resources for this and future generations.

11. Contemporary management practices, systems, and technologies are used to effectively accomplish the joint mission.
12. The Monument serves as a model of efficient interagency coordination, incorporating the strengths of each agency. The Monument increases its managerial resources through initiatives and support from other agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Vermilion Purpose, Significance, and Mission Statements

Purpose: The Monument was set aside to retain for scientific inquiry, long-term preservation, and public use and enjoyment for present and future generations, well-preserved examples of scientific and historic objects of interest and to protect those objects from location or settlement and from unauthorized appropriation, injury, destruction, or removal. Those objects include:

- Sandstone slick rock, rolling plateaus, and brilliant cliffs with arches, amphitheaters, and massive walls.
- Archaeological evidence displaying a long and rich human history spanning more than 12,000 years.
- Historic resources, including evidence of early European exploration, ranches, homesteads, mines, and roads.
- Remote and unspoiled landscape with limited travel corridors.
- Cold desert flora and warm desert grassland.
- Wildlife including California Condors, bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, mountain lions, raptors, and fish.
- The Paria River and widely scattered ephemeral water sources and springs.

Significance: The geologic structure, stratigraphy, and erosional processes within the Monument have combined to create unique landforms of incredible shape, color, and beauty, which draw visitors from around the world.

The Monument contains irreplaceable archaeological resources of Archaic, Ancestral Puebloan, and Southern Paiute origin. These resources are significant because of their abundance, good condition, and scientific potential.

Historic resources, such as ranch structures and corrals, fences, water tanks, mines, and historic routes, exist in nearly their original context. They provide a unique opportunity for public interpretation and education of the historical and social significance of these early lifestyles.

The Monument is a remote and sparsely developed landscape. It supports ecological processes that provide opportunities to study functioning physical and natural systems.

The Monument provides a sense of solitude in natural settings that provide for rugged recreation opportunities.

Mission: Vermilion is a model of land management for conserving natural, scientific, and historic resources within their broader ecological and social contexts. The goal of Vermilion management is to achieve the following:

1. Management decisions about resources and visitors are based on scientific information and monitoring.
2. The variety of natural and social settings are managed to preserve the remote and essentially unspoiled character of the landscape while providing opportunities for people, communities, and the environment to benefit from visitors experiencing adventure, beautiful vistas, retreat from the pressures of modern life, and a sense of discovery through a variety of appropriate and sustainable backcountry activities.
3. The public receives the information they need to have a safe and enjoyable experience.
4. A new, collaborative process provides clear direction for management.
5. Sustainable ranching operations and associated activities showcase the Monument's traditional lifestyles and enhance visitor experience.
6. New infrastructure is the minimum necessary and is of consistent quality to provide for visual enjoyment, public safety, and the protection of Monument values.
7. Management of habitats that support sustainable levels of a full range of native species, including predators, is emphasized. Recovery and protection of special status species is a primary focus.
8. The public understands and appreciates the purposes and significance of the Monument.

Arizona Strip FO Significance and Mission Statements

Significance: A variety of resources on the Arizona Strip FO lands is significant from a regional and national perspective.

The Arizona Strip FO contains a long and rich human history spanning at least 12,000 years. These lands contain irreplaceable archaeological resources that are significant because of their good condition, scientific potential, and historic and cultural importance. Opportunities exist for study, preservation, and interpretation of these resources.

Arizona Strip FO lands are rich in historic resources from the past 150 years such as ranch structures and corrals, fences, water tanks, mines, and historic routes. These structures exist in nearly their original context. They provide a unique opportunity for public interpretation, appreciation, and education of the historical and social significance of these early lifestyles.

These lands contain remote, wide-open landscapes of incredible beauty, with unique geologic features that have remained essentially unchanged through time.

The Arizona Strip FO is located at the junction of two physiographic units, Basin and Range and Colorado Plateau, and three floristic provinces: the Colorado Plateau, Mojave Desert, and Great Basin.

The area includes fragile and healthy ecosystems ranging from the Mojave Desert to pinyon-juniper and ponderosa pine forests. Opportunities exist to restore vital habitats and study ecosystems.

Much of the area includes broad expanses of pinyon-juniper woodlands that provide opportunities for harvest of woodland products such as firewood, posts, and Christmas trees. Opportunities also exist for collection of native seeds and plants.

The area supports sustainable populations of a full range of native wildlife and plant species. The majority of the special status species in the Arizona Strip FO is on the edge of their geographic range and surviving in one of the largest remaining blocks of relatively undisturbed habitat available to them.

Recreation opportunities abound that produce a variety of personal, familial, community, economic, and environmental benefits from visitors enjoying outdoor experiences while engaged in activities such as hiking, biking, backpacking, camping, sightseeing, driving for pleasure, hunting, wildlife viewing, geo-caching, and OHV driving and exploring .

Livestock grazing and related ranching activities occur over most of Arizona Strip FO lands. Traditional ways of life are preserved, as well as economic benefits to local communities.

The area contains broad expanses of pinyon-juniper- and sage-covered plateaus and tributary canyons leading to the north rim of the Grand Canyon.

Much of the Arizona Strip FO is open to mineral development. Uranium deposits are found in breccia pipe features across the Arizona Strip. The lands are also suitable for gypsum, sand and gravel, picture stone, and flagstone collection.

High quality, night sky viewsapes occur across the Arizona Strip FO.

Unique desert riparian areas offer places of high biological diversity and a rich variety of native wildlife species. Other ecosystems also offer a rich variety of native wildlife species.

These lands support ecological processes that provide opportunities to study physical and natural systems.

The Arizona Strip FO offers opportunities for community expansion and other development in and adjacent to local communities.

The lands contain remote landscapes, much of which remain essentially unchanged through time and exemplify “the place where the West stays wild.”

Mission: The goal of Arizona Strip FO management is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands and resources for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations, with multiple uses being the primary emphasis of management. This will be accomplished in a cooperative and cost-effective manner by working jointly with state, county, local and federal agencies and with tribes, communities, universities, researchers, and the interested public.

Remote natural and social settings are managed to preserve unspoiled landscapes, where they exist, while providing opportunities for people, communities, and the environment to benefit from visitors experiencing adventure, beautiful vistas, retreat from the pressures of modern life, and a sense of discovery through a variety of appropriate and sustainable backcountry activities.

Another goal is to serve the needs of the American people under principles of multiple use and sustained yield (FLPMA Sec. 302(a), also see FLPMA Sec. 102(7)). Management balances recreational, community, commercial, scientific, historical, and cultural interests with long-term protection of renewable and nonrenewable resources. These resources include diverse vegetative communities and unique habitats with timber, minerals, watersheds, fish, wildlife, and wilderness areas encompassing a host of natural, scenic, scientific, recreational, and cultural values. In managing and protecting these resources, the BLM also recognizes public needs for energy, defense, minerals, food, communication, wood products, rights-of-way, community

lands, forage, and fiber. Appendix 1.D contains a listing of other relevant federal laws, regulations, and policies relating to the use and management of public lands.

The Arizona Strip FO's "Blueprint for the Future" consists of six goals:

1. Maintain healthy ecosystems, with emphasis on recovery and protection of special status species and preservation of cultural values, providing for economic and social benefits.
2. Serve current and future publics in their use and enjoyment of the Arizona Strip FO.
3. Promote collaboration with agencies, communities, tribes, and groups.
4. Invite and support open dialogue with the public.
5. Inform and educate the public about resources and wise uses of such resources.
6. Assist the public in benefiting from safe, enjoyable experiences and activities on public lands.

PLANNING CRITERIA

BLM planning regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1610) and NPS directives (Director's Order 2; 2000) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all plans. Planning criteria provide the principles that guide and direct the development of the plan and influence all aspects of the planning process, including inventory and data collection, alternative development, impact analysis, and ultimately the selection of a preferred alternative. In effect, planning criteria ensure the tailoring of plans to the identified issues and the avoidance of unnecessary data collection and analysis. The basis of determining planning criteria includes applicable laws, agency guidance, public comment, data analysis, professional judgment, and coordination with other federal, state, and local governments and American Indian tribes.

The BLM developed the majority of the planning criteria for this planning effort since most of the Planning Area lies within its jurisdiction. The BLM and NPS jointly developed planning criteria specific to Parashant, although each agency's authorities have their origin in separate and different enabling legislation. As a result, some planning criteria are specific only to one agency and not the other.

Appendix 1.E provides the planning criteria for this planning effort and identifies the laws, regulations, and policies that form the basis for these criteria and are relevant to each of the issue topics discussed in this Proposed Plan/FEIS.

RELATED LAWS, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, mandates that federal agencies prepare EISs for major federal actions. This Proposed Plan/FEIS conforms to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA requirements (40 CFR 1500-1508).

NEPA, FLPMA, and the planning guidance contained in 43 CFR 1600 guide the BLM planning process. The Organic Act of 1916, as amended, is the legal authority for the NPS planning process while Directors Order 2 (NPS 2000) provides planning guidance. The planning process for both agencies involves an interdisciplinary approach and provides opportunities for public involvement and interagency coordination.

Management plans ensure that the BLM manages public lands in accordance with the intent of Congress as stated in FLPMA, under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. As required by FLPMA, public lands must be managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water, and cultural resources and values; that, where appropriate, preserves and protects certain public lands in their natural condition and provides food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that provides for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use by encouraging collaboration and public participation through the planning process. In addition, public lands must be managed in a manner that recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources for minerals, food, timber, and fiber from public lands.

The Organic Act directs the NPS to manage units "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 is the legal authority requiring each national park unit to complete a GMP in conformance with park enabling legislation and the Organic Act of 1916. Director's Order 2 (NPS 2000) provides planning guidance.

In addition to the federal mandates and guidelines mentioned above, the planning team considered a number of existing management plans, programmatic documents, and standards and guidelines in the preparation of this Proposed Plan/FEIS including:

Land Use Plans and Amendments

- Proposed Arizona Strip District RMP and FEIS (BLM 1992)
- Lake Mead GMP and FEIS (NPS 1986)
- Arizona Strip RMP Mojave Desert Amendment (BLM 1998)
- Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Environmental Assessment (BLM 2003)

Legislative EIS

- Arizona Statewide Wild and Scenic Rivers Legislative EIS (BLM 1994)

Activity (Implementation) Level Plans

- Shivwits Resource Area Implementation Plan for the Arizona Strip District Approved RMP (BLM 1992)
- Vermilion Resource Area Implementation Plan for the Arizona Strip District Approved RMP (BLM 1992)
- Parashant Interdisciplinary Management Plan (BLM and NPS 1997)
- Mt. Trumbull Resource Conservation Area Plan (1995)
- Land Protection Plan for Lake Mead NRA (NPS 1987)
- Lake Mead NRA Burro Management Plan and Final EIS (1995)
- Lake Mead NRA Minerals Management Plan (1986)
- Lake Mead NRA Wilderness Proposal (1979)
- Lake Management Plan: Lake Mead NRA (2003)
- Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan (1986)
- Paiute and Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness Management Plan (1990)
- Mt. Trumbull and Mt. Logan Wilderness Management Plan (1990)
- Grand Wash Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan (1990)
- Cottonwood Point Wilderness Management Plan (1991)
- Arizona Strip Desert Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (BLM and AGFD 2001)
- Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) Final Recovery Plan (USFWS 2002)
- Virgin River Resource Management and Recovery Program (USFWS 2000)
- Biological Opinion for the Arizona Strip RMP-Mojave Amendment (USFWS 1998)
- Recovery Plan for the California Condor (USFWS 1996)
- Virgin River Fishes Recovery Plan (USFWS 1995)
- Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Recovery Plan (USFWS 1994)
- Glen Canyon NRA Grazing Management Plan (1999)
- Glen Canyon NRA Minerals Management Plan (1980)

Programmatic NEPA Documents

- BLM Vegetation Treatment FEIS (1991)

Policy and Rules

- Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (BLM 1997)

These documents have been examined not only to assure appropriate integration and compliance, but also to identify information that is still appropriate for inclusion in the management plans and/or decisions that are still valid and can be carried forward into the documents being prepared. Activity plans that have been tiered off these plans have also been considered in this planning effort, but may require revision to be consistent with the new management plans.

National Park Service Carrying Capacity

The NPS will identify implementation commitments for visitor carrying capacities for NPS lands within Parashant (NPS Management Policies, National Historic Preservation Act, NPS Organic Act, Director's Order 22, Title 36 of the CFR, and the 1978 National Parks and Recreation Act).

The laws, regulations, and policies leave considerable room for judgment about the best mix of types and levels of visitor use activities. For this reason, most decisions relating to visitor experience and use are addressed in the Recreation and Travel Management sections of this Proposed Plan/FEIS.

The NPS will take the following kinds of actions to meet legal and policy requirements related to visitor experience and use of the NPS portion of Parashant:

- Provide visitors the opportunity to understand, appreciate, and enjoy the Monument (management directions within this broad policy are discussed in the alternatives).
- Continue to enforce the regulations governing visitor use and activities in 36 CFR.
- Following approval of the Final Management Plan, the NPS will undertake detailed planning to establish carrying capacities, as part of the development of the Undeveloped Special Recreation Management Area Plan and the Wilderness Management Plan.

NPS Boundary Adjustments

The NPS does not address boundary adjustments in this Plan. The NPS portion of Parashant is bounded on the south and east by Grand Canyon National Park, on the west by Lake Mead NRA, and on the north by the BLM portion of the Monument.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

Title II, Section 202 of FLPMA provides guidance for the BLM's planning process to coordinate planning efforts with American Indian tribes, other federal departments and agencies, and agencies of state and local governments. NPS is also guided to do the same under NPS Management Policies (NPS 2001). To accomplish these directives, the BLM and NPS have kept abreast of state and local plans, assured that consideration is given to such plans, and worked with these other entities to avoid inconsistencies among their various plans. Section 202 of FLPMA goes on to state in Subsection (c)(9) that "[L]and use plans of the Secretary under this section shall be consistent with state and local plans to the maximum extent he [sic] finds consistent with federal law and the purposes of this Act."

In keeping with the above mandates, members of the planning team reviewed the federal, county, and municipal plans listed below for consistency:

- Coconino County, Arizona, Comprehensive Plan (2003)
- Kane County, Utah, General Plan (1998)
- Mohave County, Arizona, Comprehensive Plan (2003)
- Washington County, Utah, General Plan (1994)
- Glen Canyon NRA RMP (1986)
- Glen Canyon NRA GMP (1979, reprinted 1991)
- Grand Canyon National Park GMP (1995)
- Draft Colorado River Management Plan (2004)
- Kaibab National Forest Land Management Plan (1996)
- Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument Management Plan (2000)
- Las Vegas BLM RMP (1998)
- Dixie Resource Area RMP (1998)
- Town of Colorado City, Arizona, General Plan (HDR 2002)
- St. George, Utah, General Plan (2002)
- Fredonia, Arizona, General Plan (1994)
- Mesquite, Nevada, General Plan (2003)
- Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) Strategic Plan (2006)
- Paria Management Framework Plan (1981)

PLANNING PROCESS

The target date for completion of the three management plans is summer 2007. To meet this objective and begin this inclusive planning process, the BLM and NPS formed an interdisciplinary/interagency planning team in February 2001, based in St. George, Utah. The team is comprised of Monument managers, resource specialists, and staff from both the BLM and NPS. The planning team met numerous times from 2001 to 2005 to gather background information, identify goals and objectives, examine resource issues, develop alternatives, and write/review the various sections of the Draft Plan/DEIS. The Notice of Intent (NOI) to begin planning was published in the Federal Register on April 24, 2002 (see Appendix 1.F).

The Draft Plan/DEIS presented a No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and four action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, and E). Alternative E was the agencies' (BLM and NPS) Preferred Alternative due to its attempt to balance human use/influence with resource protection. The Draft Plan/DEIS was completed in November 2006 and was subject to a 90-day public review. This Proposed Plan/FEIS responds to public comment and cooperative agency review of the Draft Plan/DEIS through numerous revisions and modifications, as well as direct responses to comments, which can be found in Chapter 5. The agencies Preferred Alternative has thus been modified and is now presented in this document as the Proposed Plan (Alternative E).

The three management plans to be developed from this Proposed Plan/FEIS will guide future management actions in their respective units. The purpose of these plans is to provide a set of

decisions outlining management and to create a framework for future planning and decision-making. It is expected that there will be a future need for subsequent and more detailed planning, which will focus on specific geographic areas or management issues. Further NEPA documents will be written to analyze and implement decisions that are not fully addressed in the three original management plans. In each subsequent activity plan and NEPA document, the BLM and/or NPS will include a description of the desired future conditions (DFCs) of the land, resources involved, and an explanation regarding how the proposed activities, as well as reasonable alternatives, would contribute to attaining those conditions.

In addition to the planning team, other parties were also crucial in the planning process and development of this Proposed Plan/FEIS. Through collaborative efforts, the BLM and NPS solicited participation from cooperating agencies; special interest groups and stakeholders; other federal, state, and local agencies; and tribal governments. Public scoping efforts and public responses to planning bulletins provided information from the general public. These participants and their roles and impact on the planning process are briefly described below. A more detailed discussion of the collaboration and scoping process is presented in Chapter 5.

COLLABORATION

A variety of federal, state, county, local, and tribal groups played a vital role in this planning process by attending meetings, providing databases and general information, conducting peer reviews, and assisting with the development of the management alternatives presented in this Proposed Plan/FEIS. A brief discussion of two collaborating groups, cooperating agencies and tribal governments, is presented below. A more detailed list of these groups, along with other special interest groups and stakeholders involved in the planning process, are presented in Chapter 5. Appendix 1.C describes the results of scoping.

Cooperating Agencies

CEQ requirements contained in 40 CFR 1501.6 and 1508.5 implement the NEPA mandate that federal agencies responsible for preparing NEPA analysis and documentation do so “in cooperation with state and local governments” and other agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise (42 USC 4331(a), 4332(2)). In support of this mandate, the BLM and NPS planning team invited a broad range of local, county, state, tribal, and federal agencies to attend a series of meetings to develop MOUs that would establish cooperating agency status with the BLM and NPS. Cooperating Agency status offers the opportunity for interested agencies to assume additional roles and responsibilities beyond the collaborative planning processes of attending public meetings and reviewing and commenting on plan documents. MOUs are time-limited documents that describe the roles and responsibilities of the BLM, NPS, and the Cooperating Agencies during the planning process for these particular management plans. Invitations to become formal cooperators were sent to more than 200 agencies, communities, and tribes. Ten accepted the invitations to become formal cooperating agencies in developing these

plans, and include Coconino and Mohave counties in Arizona; Kane and Washington counties in Utah; AGFD; Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians; Colorado City and Fredonia, Arizona; Federal Highway Administration; and Arizona Department of Transportation. Nine federal agencies, one state agency, and the Hopi Tribe are also working with the cooperating agencies, and include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); Grand Canyon National Park; Kanab Field Office of the BLM; Glen Canyon NRA; Department of Defense, Air Force Regional Environmental Office, San Francisco; St. George Field Office of the BLM; Las Vegas Field Office of the BLM; Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument; North Ranger District of Kaibab National Forest; and the Federal Highway Administration.

Tribal Governments

The planning team initiated consultation with American Indian tribes and bands who have oral traditions and historical or cultural concerns relating to the Planning Area, or who are documented as having occupied or used portions of the Planning Area during prehistoric or historic times. In January 2002, the BLM initiated consultation with 14 tribes or bands, including five bands within the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, and six chapters within the Navajo Nation. All of the consulted tribes or bands currently live on or near the Planning Area and have historic ties to the area. Some continue to use the resources in the Planning Area. These tribes and bands include:

- Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
- Colorado River Indian Tribe
- Havasupai Indian Tribe
- Hopi Tribe
- Hualapai Indian Tribe
- Kaibab Band of Paiutes
- Las Vegas Indian Center
- Las Vegas Paiute Tribe
- Moapa Band of Paiutes
- Navajo Nation (Cameron, Coppermine, Bodaway/Gap, Tuba City, LeChee, and Coalmine Chapters)
- Pahrump Band of Paiutes
- Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah (Indian Peak, Cedar, Shivwits, Koosharem, and Kanosh Band of Paiutes)
- Pueblo of Zuni
- San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe

Tribal or band members expressed concern for the natural and cultural resources on the Arizona Strip, access to and use of these resources, opportunities to expand reservation boundaries onto public lands, and management of these resources on the public lands. Kaibab Paiute band

members expressed concern about access and subsequent vandalism on the reservation from public lands.

The Bureau of Applied Research and Anthropology at the University of Arizona in Tucson is conducting a Southern Paiute ethnographic and place name study on the Arizona Strip in conjunction with this planning effort (Stoffle et al. 2004, 2005).

PUBLIC SCOPING

In addition to soliciting input from cooperating agencies, American Indian tribes, federal agencies, and other special interest and stakeholder groups, inviting input from the general public is also a crucial first step in the planning process. Public input is generated through a formal public scoping process, which began with publication of the NOI to produce the management plans, appearing in the Federal Register on April 24, 2002 (see Chapter 5 and Appendix 1.F). This public scoping process generated a wide range of public comments that were used to focus the planning process, develop the significant issues, and formulate alternatives.

The public was invited to provide input on the planning process through questionnaires, e-mails, the Internet, and public open-house meetings. Eleven open-house meetings were held in three states between May 28 and July 22, 2002, and four planning bulletins were released. More than 2,000 comments were received from across the U.S. as well as 10 other countries. In addition, five open house meetings were held during the first week of June 2003 and an additional planning bulletin was released to update the public and provide them the opportunity to comment on the preliminary alternatives. Over 6,000 public comments were received from that effort. A complete outline of the scoping process and public input is found in Appendix 1.C.

Issues and Management Concerns Addressed by this Proposed Plan/FEIS

One of the most important outcomes of the scoping process was the identification of significant issues to be addressed in this Proposed Plan/FEIS. For planning purposes, an “issue” is defined as a matter of controversy, dispute, or general concern over resource management activities, the environment, or land uses. In essence, issues help determine what decisions will be made in the management plans and what the FEIS must address as required by NEPA.

Based on the scoping comments received and their subsequent analysis and evaluation, five major planning issues were identified as being within the scope of this Proposed Plan/FEIS. All of these issues, particularly as they relate to the Monuments, center on the larger question of just how much human activity should be allowed, while still providing the mandated level of resource protection.

In addition to the five issues identified during public scoping, the planning team identified two management concerns that also need to be addressed regarding restoration of degraded

ecosystems and consideration of the local communities and human use in the Planning Area. The five issues and two management concerns are presented below, followed by a short description of why each is significant and the management decisions that they require.

Issue 1: How will transportation and access be managed?

Transportation and access (i.e., travel management) emerged from the scoping process as the primary issue for the public, and is closely tied to the other issues addressed. A network of routes currently exists throughout the Planning Area. Some people believe closing a number of routes and limiting vehicular access would provide the best protection of Monument values. Others think all existing routes should remain open for recreational and resource uses.

The Vermilion proclamation specifically calls for a transportation plan to address road closures and needed travel restrictions to protect Monument resources. The information on travel management presented in this FEIS will be used to develop a transportation plan for Vermilion following completion of the EIS. A similar approach is being taken for BLM lands in Parashant. An authorized road system for NPS lands in Parashant was designated in the Lake Mead NRA GMP (1986) and is not readdressed in this Proposed Plan/FEIS, except to attend to inconsistencies in existing plans and to provide for resource protection. Route inventories of the two Monuments and portions of the Arizona Strip FO were completed and used as baseline data for trail and travel management planning. The route inventory and subsequent route evaluation will not be completed for the Arizona Strip FO prior to the completion of this planning effort. Those routes not able to be designated within the timeframes of this EIS will, following inventory, go through an evaluation and designation process with public participation within five years of the signing of the Record of Decision (ROD).

Proposed decisions about restricting or improving access are addressed under each management alternative presented in Chapter 2. Proposed travel management implementation decisions and associated maps for the Monuments are also detailed in Chapter 2.

Issue 2: How will areas with wilderness characteristics be managed?

A number of individuals and groups voiced their concern for protecting areas with wilderness characteristics in the Planning Area, specifically in the Monuments. Many brought up the concept of additional wilderness designations during the public scoping period. Some felt that additional wilderness designations in the Planning Area would be the best way to protect resources, particularly those identified in the Monument proclamations. Others were not in favor of additional wilderness designations because they felt such actions would prevent the majority of visitors from accessing the remote sections of the Planning Area, especially those that enjoy motorized forms of recreation. However, such arguments are outside the scope of this Plan as only Congress has the authority to designate new wilderness areas.

The BLM historically has had the authority to inventory, assess, and recommend suitable public lands as WSAs; however, recent guidance clarified that this authority expired in 1991. With the passage of FLPMA in 1976, the BLM had 15 years to inventory and identify lands suitable for designation as wilderness by Congress. That inventory and review was completed in 1991 and submitted to Congress in 1993. Many of the WSAs identified Bureau-wide are still managed today under an Interim Management Policy (IMP). With the passage of the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984, any WSAs not included as part of a statutory wilderness by Congress were “released” by Congress from the IMP. The Planning Area contains no WSAs from that 15-year period.

In 2001, the BLM issued new policies in the Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedure Handbook (H-6310-1). The handbook reiterated the BLM’s authority to inventory, assess, and designate public lands as WSAs. These lands would then be available at any time for Congress to consider for designation as wilderness areas. The state of Utah and others challenged the authority of the Department of the Interior (DOI)/BLM to designate and manage new (post 1993) WSAs as wildernesses, arguing that BLM completed the wilderness suitability process for public lands with the submission of recommendations to Congress in 1993. In the ensuing Utah Wilderness Settlement (April 2003), the DOI/BLM agreed that FLPMA does not allow identification or protection of new WSAs after 1993. In 2003, the BLM formally rescinded the Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedures Handbook. Therefore, in this planning process, additional BLM lands cannot be considered or recommended for designation as WSAs.

In September 2003, the BLM provided new guidance in Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2003-274 and IM 2003-275, Change 1. Specifically, IM 2003-274, Implementation of the Settlement of Utah v. Norton Regarding Wilderness Study, applied the terms of the Utah Wilderness Settlement Bureau-wide. Additionally, IM 2003-275, Change 1, Consideration of Wilderness Characteristics in Land Use Plans, provides current guidance for planners and the public for assessing areas that may exist in essentially natural condition, or landscapes where the opportunities to experience solitude or engage in primitive and unconfined recreation may be outstanding. IM 2003-275, Change 1, also provides guidance for making decisions about maintaining these values where they are reasonably present or have sufficient value and need, and are practical to manage. The “non-impairment standard” of FLPMA Section 603 and the BLM IMP for WSAs are not applied as measures to protect naturalness, solitude, and primitive recreation. Such decisions are discussed under the management alternatives in Chapter 2.

This new guidance for BLM wilderness does not affect NPS proposed wilderness within Parashant. For those lands, the 1979 Lake Mead NRA wilderness proposal was brought forward as the decision of record and was not readdressed in this Plan. However, NPS has adopted the BLM’s approach to assess additional areas on NPS lands within Parashant that exist in essentially natural condition and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation (outside of proposed wilderness).

For NPS lands, those areas identified to maintain wilderness characteristics would be managed as backcountry areas to protect their natural condition consistent with approved cultural and natural resource management activities and NPS backcountry management policy. “Areas identified to maintain wilderness characteristics” is derived from BLM planning guidance (WO IM 2003-275). On NPS lands, this designation was used for interagency consistency in this particular jointly developed land use plan. NPS Planning Guidelines (Director’s Order 2) zones equivalent areas as “backcountry.” By NPS policy (2001), “backcountry” refers to primitive, undeveloped portions of parks. The NPS lands identified to maintain wilderness characteristics are adjacent to either BLM lands maintained for wilderness characteristics or lands previously proposed for wilderness designation by NPS. As such, they constitute a logical management unit with these adjacent areas and recognize the need for consistent classification, terminology, and management of Monument resources across agency boundaries.

Issue 3: How will Monument and Arizona Strip FO resources be protected?

The proclamations designating the Monuments identified an array of scientific and historic objects to be protected. There are various ways of achieving this goal and legal mandate, including maintenance of acceptable existing conditions, educating visitors, restricting access, setting research priorities, and restoring degraded environmental conditions. Decisions about which approaches will be used are detailed under each management alternative in Chapter 2. There are also valuable natural and cultural resources within the Arizona Strip FO in need of protection. Options for protecting both Monument and Arizona Strip FO resources are identified and assessed in this document. Additional Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) for protecting natural and cultural resources in the Arizona Strip FO are also presented in this Proposed Plan/FEIS.

Issue 4: How will livestock grazing be addressed, particularly on the Monuments?

The Monument proclamations state that laws, regulations, and policies followed by the BLM in issuing and administering livestock grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the Monuments. The Parashant proclamation also states that BLM shall continue to issue and administer grazing leases within the NPS portion of the Monument, consistent with the Lake Mead NRA enabling legislation.

The scoping process identified livestock grazing as an issue for a number of people. Comments ranged from eliminating all livestock grazing in the Monuments to supporting all grazing activities in the Planning Area. Those in the middle supported eliminating livestock grazing only in environmentally sensitive areas.

All land uses, including livestock grazing, need to be incorporated into the concept of overall environmental health. Possible modifications to current grazing are detailed in Chapter 2 under the management alternatives.

Issue 5: How will people's recreation activities be managed?

Lands in the Planning Area are used for a variety of recreational activities, including exploring, sightseeing, hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, OHV use on designated routes or “open OHV areas,” and mountain bike riding. Given growth projections for communities in the southwestern U.S. and the increased participation of people in recreation pursuits on public lands over time, ineffective management of visitor activities is recognized as potentially having profound environmental effects on Monument and Arizona Strip FO lands. These possible effects, along with potential user conflicts, make appropriate management of these activities crucial to protecting Monument and Arizona Strip FO resources.

During the scoping process, the public frequently referred to the important relationship between the remoteness of the Planning Area and the quality of visitor experiences. Land managers must decide how to best manage recreation by deciding where and what types of recreation-tourism markets should be targeted for more structured types of recreation opportunities. They must also decide what kind of custodial management is needed for unstructured, dispersed recreation.

Decisions, such as where and what kind of interpretation and signage to provide, how to minimize potential user conflicts, and what types of recreation settings should be maintained in specific areas, are important elements addressed in Chapter 2. For identified markets, Chapter 2 must address more specific decisions for various recreation management zones that address maintaining or enhancing the public benefits, experiences, and activities and settings each zone provides.

Management concern 1: How will degraded ecosystems be restored?

Restoration of degraded ecosystems is an important management concern. Disruption of the natural fire regime has caused the degradation of ecosystems within the Planning Area (e.g., grasslands are being overrun by shrubs and ponderosa pine forests are unnaturally dense). The use of such techniques as mechanized thinning and prescribed fire can help restore degraded ecosystems. The range of options is detailed in Chapter 2 and proposed vegetation treatment tools and methods are described in Appendix 2.E.

Management concern 2: How will the human factors in the Planning Area be considered?

While the focus of management plans is on the area's natural and cultural resources and on the uses of these resources, the human or social factors must also be considered. While largely uninhabited, the Planning Area surrounds some small communities dependent upon public lands for deriving certain economic, personal, family, community, and environmental benefits. These communities include Beaver Dam, Colorado City, Fredonia, Littlefield, and Scenic, Arizona. Other small and mid-sized communities and one urban area located just outside the Planning Area's boundaries are also closely connected to the public lands in Arizona. These include Page,

Kaibab Village, and Moccasin, Arizona; Mesquite, Nevada; and Big Water, Hildale, Hurricane, Washington, Kanab, and St. George, Utah.

Public safety is also a concern. Sections in Chapter 2 on health and safety, recreation, and air, soil, and water detail proposed management approaches to assist with public safety.

Rapid population growth on private lands in the region will also affect the natural and cultural resources and future uses on the Arizona Strip. Decisions proposed in Chapter 2 address actions necessary to maintain or protect the resources and uses in the Planning Area. Monitoring and adaptive management will assist the BLM and NPS in modifying some uses, if conditions exceed acceptable levels. Decisions about which management approaches will be used in the Arizona Strip FO and the Monuments are detailed under each management alternative in Chapter 2.