

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN**

Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (referred to as the "Monument" throughout this document) was established on November 9, 2000, when President William J. Clinton issued Presidential Proclamation 7374 (Appendix A) under the Antiquities Act of 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 USC 431). The Monument was 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.

The designation of the Monument changed much of the management direction of the existing Arizona Strip District Resource Management Plan (RMP; Bureau of Land Management [BLM] 1992). An individual management plan was needed to protect Monument objects and the context that supports them, in a way that was consistent with Presidential Proclamation 7374. This management plan, the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument RMP (Approved Plan), is prepared by the Arizona Strip District of the BLM and is necessary to guide management actions for the Monument by providing a set of decisions outlining management and creating a framework for future planning and decision making.

Presidential Proclamation 7374 is the principal direction for managing the Monument. It clearly directs the BLM to manage the Monument for "the purposes of protecting the objects identified." All other considerations are secondary to that direction.

The Monument proclamation governs how the provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 will be applied within the Monument. Under FLPMA, the BLM is directed to manage public lands on the basis of multiple use and "in a manner that will protect the quality of scenic, historic, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resources, and archaeological values." The term "multiple use" refers to the "harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment." Multiple use involves managing an area for various benefits, recognizing that the establishment of land use priorities and exclusive uses in certain areas is necessary to ensure that multiple uses can occur harmoniously across a particular landscape.

The proclamation, FLPMA, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and other mandates provided the direction for preparation of a management plan for the Monument. Within this guidance, many decisions remain about how best to protect Monument resources and address the major issues surrounding Monument management. Presidential Proclamation 7374 directed the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a plan in order to begin making those decisions.

This Approved Plan fulfills that directive by guiding management activities within the Monument and providing for the protection of Monument resources. It proposes to do so in a manner that creates opportunities for public discovery and education, sets a precedent for progressive public land stewardship, incorporates input from the scientific community and the public at large, and reflects the national significance of these resources.

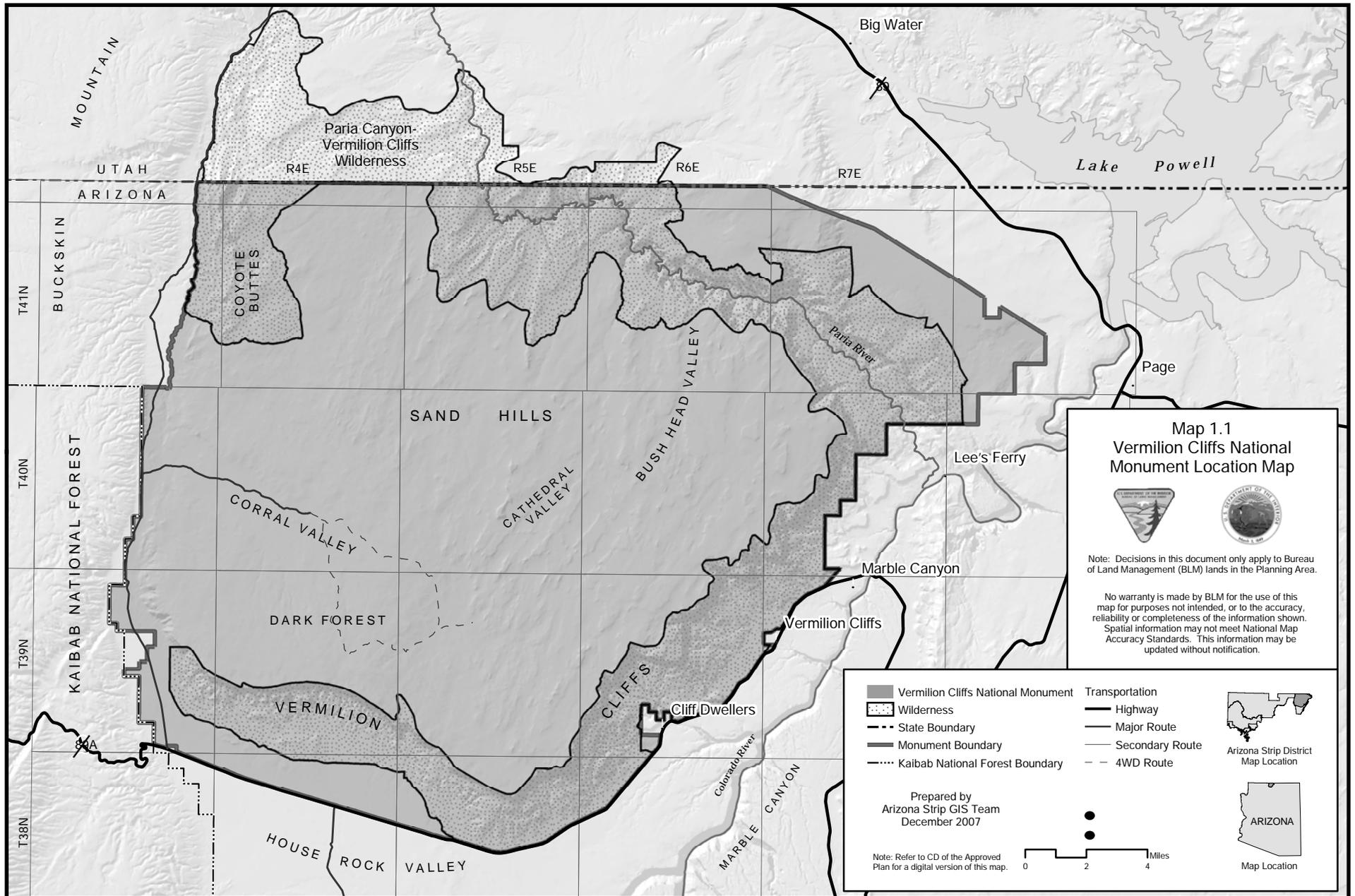
As mentioned above, the purpose of this Approved Plan is to provide both a set of decisions outlining management direction and to create a framework for future planning and decision making. Its scope is necessarily broad since it is a general framework document that will guide the overall management of activities within the Monument, as well as the use and protection of Monument resources. As in the case of any RMP, 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 this Approved Plan. In each subsequent activity plan and NEPA document, the BLM will include a description of the desired future conditions of the land, resources involved, an analysis of potential impacts, and an explanation regarding how the proposed activities, as well as reasonable alternatives, would contribute to attaining those conditions.

## **PLANNING AREA AND MAP**

The Monument 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. This Approved Plan includes decisions only for BLM-administered lands in the Monument, which are depicted on Map 1.1.

The Monument is adjacent to portions of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the Kanab Field Office of the BLM in Utah to the north, borders Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA) to the east and southeast, 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 boundary 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.



Map 1.1 Vermilion Cliffs National Monument Location Map

Congress designated approximately 89,598 acres within the Monument as the Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness in 1984. Another 22,365 acres of this designated wilderness are located outside the Monument in Utah. Portions of Glen Canyon NRA adjacent to the Monument are proposed for wilderness designation. The BLM has the administrative authority over livestock grazing and mineral exploration on Glen Canyon NRA lands, subject to Glen Canyon NRA policy and enabling legislation, as spelled out in interagency agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the BLM and the National Park Service (NPS).

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 the Monument, with approximately 50 condors currently residing in the region. The California Condor Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 1996) cites an ultimate goal of 150 Condors in the area, including 15 reproductive pairs.

## **ISSUES ADDRESSED**

Publication in the *Federal Register* of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a management plan and environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Monument on April 24, 2002, initiated a 90-day public scoping and comment period. Following this, the BLM published a newsletter and held 11 open houses in 2002 to encourage public input on the future management of the Monument. Ten cooperating agencies and a dozen other Federal and state agencies provided information and input into development of the Monument management plan. From all this input, the BLM developed four conceptual alternatives that were presented to the public via newsletters and five open houses. These preliminary alternative public meetings were held in 2003. A 90-day public comment period on the Draft Plan/EIS was initiated on December 16, 2005 followed by release of the Proposed Plan/Final EIS (FEIS) on March 2, 2007. Information from these meetings, the Cooperating Agencies and interested state and Federal agencies, and the public was then used to develop this Approved Plan.

## **ISSUES USED TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES**

One of the most important outcomes of the scoping process was the identification of significant issues to be addressed in the Approved Plan. 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 were made and analyzed in the Proposed Plan/FEIS.

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 planning effort, which were then addressed and analyzed in the associated EIS. All of these issues centered on the larger question of just how much human activity should be allowed while still providing the

mandated level of resource protection. The five issues are presented below, followed by a short description of why each is significant and the management decisions that they required.

**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. Some people believed closing a number of routes and limiting vehicular access would provide the best protection of Monument values. Others thought all existing routes should remain open for recreational and resource uses.

The Monument proclamation specifically calls for a transportation plan to address road and needed travel management to protect Monument resources. The information on travel management presented in this Approved Plan will be used to develop a transportation plan for the Monument within three to five years after the Record of Decision (ROD) accompanying this Approved Plan has been signed. Route inventories of the Monument were completed and used as baseline data for trail and travel management planning.

Travel management implementation decisions and associated maps can be found in Chapter 2 and in Appendix K.

**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 Monument. Many brought up the concept of additional wilderness designations during the public scoping period. Some felt that additional wilderness designations in the Monument 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 Monument, especially those that enjoy motorized forms of recreation. Such arguments, however, are outside the scope of the EIS for this Approved 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 wilderness study areas (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 in Arizona not included as part of a statutory wilderness by Congress were “released” by Congress from the IMP. The Monument 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 the 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 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 for areas managed for wilderness characteristics are discussed in Chapter 2.

### **Issue 3: How will Monument resources be protected?**

The proclamation designating the Monument identified an array of scientific, natural, and historic objects to be protected. There are various ways of achieving this mandate, including maintenance of acceptable existing conditions, educating visitors, restricting access, setting research priorities, and restoring degraded environmental conditions. Decisions about which approaches were used are detailed in Chapter 2.

### **Issue 4: How will livestock grazing on the Monument be addressed?**

The Monument proclamation states 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 Monument.

The scoping process identified livestock grazing as an issue for a number of people. Comments ranged from eliminating all livestock grazing in the Monument to supporting all grazing

activities. Those in the middle supported eliminating livestock grazing only in environmentally sensitive areas.

All land uses, including livestock grazing, were incorporated into the concept of overall environmental health. Modifications to current grazing are detailed in Chapter 2.

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

Lands in the Monument are used for a variety of recreational activities, including exploring, sightseeing, hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, off-highway vehicle use on designated routes, 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 lands. These possible effects, along with potential user conflicts, make appropriate management of these activities crucial to protecting Monument resources.

During the scoping process, the public frequently referred to the important relationship between the remoteness of the Monument and the quality of visitor experiences. The Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) and Recreation Management Zones (RMZs) in Chapter 2 of the Approved Plan detail how land managers decided where and what types of recreation-tourism markets should be targeted for more structured types of recreation opportunities. They also decided what kinds of custodial management are needed for unstructured, dispersed recreation found in the Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs).

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 includes more specific decisions for various recreation management zones that address maintaining or enhancing the public benefits, experiences, and activities and settings each zone provides.

### **ISSUES ADDRESSED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE EIS**

In addition to the five issues identified during public scoping, the planning team identified an additional management concern that also needed to be addressed to consider the local communities and human use in the Monument. This concern is presented below, and followed by a short description of why it is significant and the management decisions that support them.

**Management concern: How will the human factors in the Monument 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 uninhabited, a number of small homes and businesses are located along the Monument boundary at the base of the Vermilion Cliffs along U.S. Highway 89A in the vicinity of Marble Canyon. These homes and businesses depend upon public lands for deriving certain economic, personal, family, community, and environmental benefits. Other communities including Page and Fredonia, Arizona, and Kanab and Big Water, Utah, are also closely connected to the public lands in the Monument.

Public safety is also a concern. Sections in Chapter 2 on health and safety; recreation; and air, soil, and water detail 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 of the Monument. Decisions in Chapter 2 address actions necessary to maintain or protect the resources and uses in the Monument. Monitoring and adaptive management will assist the BLM in modifying some uses, if conditions exceed acceptable levels. Management approaches that will be used in the Monument to address rapid population growth are detailed in Chapter 2.

**ISSUES CONSIDERED BUT NOT FURTHER ANALYZED**

While all issues identified during the public scoping process were considered by the BLM, not all were further analyzed. These include issues that were beyond the scope of the EIS, mainly because they did not meet the purpose and need of the Approved Plan. Other issues were not further analyzed in this Approved Plan because they are addressed through administrative or policy action.

**Issues Beyond the Scope of the EIS**

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidelines for implementing NEPA require Federal agencies to analyze all "reasonable" alternatives that substantially meet the purpose and need for this Approved Plan. The purpose of the Approved Plan is to provide for management of Vermilion Cliffs National Monument to meet the requirements of FLPMA and other laws and regulations. Because the Monument proclamation states that certain uses will not continue and other uses will continue, consistent with Federal laws and regulations, actions not complying with the proclamation do not meet the purpose and need for this Approved Plan and were, therefore, not included in alternatives that were analyzed during the planning process.

The following specific alternatives, or actions that could be components of alternatives, were suggested but not analyzed or carried forward because they did not fulfill the requirements and needs of this Approved Plan.

### ***Recommendations for BLM Wilderness Study Areas***

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition and members of the public provided recommendations on WSAs in the Monument. In addition, the planning team was working toward making recommendations for WSAs early in the planning process. However, guidance clarified that the BLM's authority to designate WSAs expired in 1993, resulting in the termination in any attempts to designate new WSAs. The BLM has, however, assessed wilderness characteristics (naturalness, solitude, and primitive recreation) on BLM lands in the Monument and proposed management actions regarding where, how, and to what extent these characteristics may be managed (see Chapter 2 and previous discussion in this chapter on pages 1-5 and 1-6).

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition also provided comments and proposed management prescriptions on areas managed to maintain wilderness characteristics. Including this information for these prescriptions would be contrary to BLM policy as outlined in BLM IM 2003-274 and IM 2003-275 and more recent guidance in IM AZ-2005-007 (guidelines for achieving consistency in ongoing and future Arizona Land Use Planning efforts).

### ***No Livestock Grazing in the Monument***

Proclamation 7374 for the Monument states, "Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the BLM in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the Monument." Based on this proclamation provision, a no-livestock grazing alternative would not meet the purpose and need of this Approved Plan, nor would it meet BLM's principle of multiple use and sustained yield (FLPMA Sec. 302 (a), see also FLPMA Sec. 102(7)) or provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act.

### ***No Routes in the Monument***

Some public comments proposed closing all routes in the Monument to protect Monument objects; however, the proclamation noted, "outstanding biological objects have been preserved by remoteness and limited travel corridors." The Secretary of Interior was thus able to recommend the area for Monument designation because of the remoteness, lack of easy road access, and condition of the resources to be protected. Closing all routes in the Monuments is thus not vital to protect Monument resources. The Secretary also directed the BLM to prepare a transportation plan for the Monument, which presupposes the need for maintaining at least some open roads. The need for access by the public and those holding valid existing rights and other existing authorizations further made the decision to close all roads unreasonable.

## **PLANNING CRITERIA/LEGISLATIVE CONSTRAINTS**

Bureau of Land Management planning regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1610) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all RMPs. Planning criteria provide the principles that guide and direct the development of the Approved Plan and influence all aspects of the planning process, including inventory and data collection, alternative development, and impact analysis, as well as the selection of a preferred alternative, followed by the selection of the Proposed Plan and the final selection of the Approved Plan. 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 planning criteria used in developing the Approved Plan for the Monument are as follows:

- The Approved Plan was completed in compliance with FLPMA. Provisions of the Endangered Species Act, NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Clean Water Act, and other Federal laws and executive orders and management policy requirements were also met.
- The Approved Plan is consistent with Presidential Proclamation 7374, meeting the Monument's purpose, preserving its significance, and complementing its mission.
- This Approved Plan and associated ROD includes data and maps that provide information on the Monument.
- Valid existing management decisions from previous plans, if appropriate, were carried forward into this Approved Plan or will be carried forward into subsequent activity and/or implementation plans. Decisions from the following plans were considered and have been modified or amended, as appropriate: Arizona Strip RMP (BLM 1992) as amended, Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan (BLM 1986), Habitat Management Plans, and the Arizona Strip Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (BLM and Arizona Game and Fish Department [AGFD] 2001).
- The Approved Plan is consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans, policies, and programs of other Federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes so long as such plans, policies, and programs are consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of Federal laws and regulations.

- Incidental take and reasonable and prudent measures with terms and conditions and conservation recommendations from the Final Biological Opinion (November 7, 2007) will be implemented.
- Cooperating agency status was encouraged for affected Federal, state, and local governments and Indian tribes. The environmental analysis input and proposals of the ten Cooperating Agencies was used to the maximum extent possible consistent with BLM responsibilities (43 CFR 1501.6 (a) (2)).
- An adaptive management approach will be followed to achieve desired outcomes. Monitoring outlined in the Approved Plan will be used to determine if desired outcomes at the land use plan level are being achieved. If not, implementation actions and/or allowable uses will be modified to achieve land use plan objectives.
- The Approved Plan emphasizes ecological restoration and preservation of natural and cultural resources. It identifies opportunities and priorities for research and monitoring related to the key resource values of the Monument.
- The statewide land health standards, established by the Arizona Resource Advisory Council and approved by the Secretary of Interior, will be used to evaluate all surface disturbing activities on public lands where the BLM administers grazing privileges.
- The Approved Plan does not identify any public lands for designation as WSAs. However, the BLM has identified lands that will be managed to maintain wilderness characteristics so that such lands remain in a natural condition and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation activities.
- Route inventories were completed for the Monument and were used as baseline data for travel management planning. All lands within the Monument were designated as either “limited” or “closed” to motorized and mechanized vehicle uses. Decisions concerning specific routes in “limited” areas resulted in a designated travel management network for the Monument.
- This Approved Plan directly involved American Indian tribal governments by providing strategies for the protection of recognized sacred and traditional uses and sites.
- The lifestyles of area residents including the activities of grazing, hunting, other resource uses, and recreation are recognized in the Approved Plan. Much of the Monument's historic value is connected with ranching operations, both past and present.

- The Approved Plan does not address Monument or statutory wilderness boundary adjustments.
- Any new visitor centers considered will be located outside the Monument and generally within existing communities.
- This Approved Plan sets forth a framework for managing recreation and commercial activities in order to produce a variety of beneficial outcomes gained through safe and enjoyable visitor experiences and activities that require appropriate natural and community landscapes.
- The Approved Plan used the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management to ensure appropriate grazing practices are followed to protect Monument values, watershed integrity, and habitats for plant and wildlife species on public lands.
- The Approved Plan considered public input, interests, and values; past and present uses of public land and adjacent land; public benefits of providing goods and services; environmental impacts; social and economic values; public safety; and ecosystem restoration.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

This Approved Plan was developed in conjunction with the Approved Plan for Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and the Approved RMP for the Arizona Strip Field Office. The overall planning process began in February 2001 when the BLM formed an interdisciplinary planning team based in St. George, Utah (see Appendix L for the list of preparers). Since the NPS manages a portion of Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, the NPS acted as a joint-lead agency with the BLM in writing the Approved Plan for that Monument. While the history of the planning process involves the other two planning areas (Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and the Arizona Strip Field Office), the discussion here focuses solely on the development of the Approved Plan for Vermilion Cliffs National Monument.

The interdisciplinary planning team for the creation of this Approved Plan was comprised of BLM staff, resource specialists, and Monument and District managers. The planning team met numerous times beginning in 2001 to gather background information, identify goals and objectives, examine resource issues, develop alternatives, and write/review the Draft Plan/EIS and Proposed Plan/EIS for this Approved Plan. In addition, a series of Community Based Partnership and Stewardship courses were held in northern Arizona and southern Utah in which the public provided early information and communication regarding the Monument. The NOI to prepare an EIS on the management plan for the Monument (as well as the other two planning areas) was published in the *Federal Register* on April 24, 2002. Following this, the BLM hosted

a series of public open houses in 2002 and 2003 to solicit public comment on the scoping issues and preliminary alternatives for the Draft Plan/EIS.

The Draft Plan/EIS presented a No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and four action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, and E). Alternative E was BLM's Preferred Alternative because it balanced human use/influence with resource protection. The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft Plan/EIS was published on November 16, 2005, initiating a 90-day public review. The BLM also held a series of open house meetings to solicit public comment on the Draft Plan/EIS in January of 2006.

The Proposed Plan/FEIS, published in January 2007, responded to public comment and cooperative agency review of the Draft Plan/EIS through numerous revisions and modifications, as well as provided direct responses to comments. In this fashion, the agencies' Preferred Alternative in the Draft Plan/EIS was modified and presented as the Proposed Plan (Alternative E) in the Proposed Plan/FEIS. The NOA for the Proposed Plan/FEIS was published in the *Federal Register* on March 2, 2007, which opened the 30-day public protest period in accordance with 43 CFR Part 1610.5-2. The BLM received seven protest letters during this period. The BLM Director addressed all protests without making significant changes to the Proposed Plan; however, the protests received did lead to minor adjustments, corrections, and clarifications. This Approved Plan is one of three management plans that were developed from the Proposed Plan/FEIS that guides future management actions in their respective units.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO BLM AND NPS POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS**

This section describes the relationship of this Approved Plan to other BLM and NPS (Glen Canyon NRA) policies and programs, the role of collaboration efforts in the planning process, the consideration of related plans (state, local, and tribal), and policies and decisions that have affected the planning process.

Under NEPA, Federal agencies are mandated to prepare EISs for major Federal actions. This Approved Plan conforms to CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA requirements (40 CFR 1500-1508).

The BLM planning process, which is guided by NEPA, FLPMA, and the planning guidance contained in 43 CFR 1600, 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:

- a) Protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water, and cultural resources and values
- b) Where appropriate, preserves and protects certain public lands in their natural condition and provides food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals
- c) 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.

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 Approved Plan. These include the following:

#### Land Use Plans and Amendments

- Arizona Strip District RMP (BLM 1992)
- Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment (BLM 2003)

#### Legislative EIS

- Arizona Statewide Wild and Scenic Rivers Legislative EIS (BLM 1994, for the Paria River)

#### Activity (Implementation) Level Plans

- Vermilion Resource Area Implementation Plan for the Arizona Strip District Approved RMP (BLM 1992)
- Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan (BLM 1987)
- Arizona Strip Desert Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (BLM and AGFD 2001)
- Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) Final Recovery Plan (USFWS 2002)
- Recovery Plan for the California Condor (USFWS 1996)
- Glen Canyon NRA Grazing Management Plan (NPS 1999)
- Glen Canyon NRA Minerals Management Plan (NPS 1980)

#### Programmatic NEPA Documents

- BLM Vegetation Treatment FEIS (BLM 1991)

#### Policy and Rules

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

These documents were examined not only to assure appropriate integration and compliance, but also to identify information still appropriate for inclusion in the Approved Plan and/or decisions that are still valid and could be carried forward. Activity plans that have been tiered off these plans have also been considered in this planning effort.

## **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 Approved Plan.

### **Intergovernmental, interagency, and Tribal relationships**

The CEQ requirements contained in 40 CFR 1501.6 and 1508.5 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 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. 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 planning documents. Although they are time-limited documents, MOUs describe the roles and responsibilities of the BLM and the cooperating agencies during the planning process. Invitations to become formal cooperators were sent to more than 200 agencies, communities, and tribes.

Ten cooperating agencies worked with the BLM to provide verbal and/or written comments during the planning process, which helped to develop this Approved Plan. Six of the original ten cooperating agencies were concerned with the management of the resources and uses in the eastern Arizona Strip District, including Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, and provided planning information on various planning topics, including Geographic Information System data. The six entities that signed MOUs to be cooperating agencies with the BLM for this planning effort are listed below:

- Coconino County, Arizona
- Kane County, Utah
- Kaibab Paiute Tribe
- AGFD
- U.S. Federal Highway Administration
- Arizona Department of Transportation

In addition, representatives from other interested federal and state agencies and one tribe were provided planning information and were given the opportunity to comment on preliminary drafts of the FEIS and Approved Plan. Some attended the cooperating agency meetings and provided verbal and/or written comments. These entities were as follows:

- Arizona State Land Department
- NPS: Grand Canyon National Park, Glen Canyon NRA, Pipe Spring National Monument
- BLM: Kanab Field Office, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
- Department of Defense, Air Force Regional Environmental Office, San Francisco, California
- USFWS, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, Flagstaff and Phoenix, Arizona
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS); North Kaibab Ranger District, Kaibab National Forest
- Hopi Tribe

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

- Hopi Tribe
- Kaibab Band of Paiutes
- Navajo Nation (Cameron, Coppermine, Bodaway/Gap, Tuba City, LeChee, and Coalmine Chapters)
- Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah (Indian Peak, Cedar, Shivwits, Koosharem, and Kanosh Band of Paiutes)
- Pueblo of Zuni
- San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe

Tribal members expressed concern for the natural and cultural resources on the Monument, access to and use of these resources, and management of these resources on public lands.

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

The BLM administers livestock grazing and minerals on Glen Canyon NRA, subject to Glen Canyon NRA policy and enabling legislation (see discussion below on administration of livestock grazing within the NRA). The planning team met several times with Glen Canyon NRA staff and received input from them regarding the management of livestock grazing, minerals, other natural and cultural resources, and specific route designations near Glen Canyon NRA boundaries.

### **Other Stakeholder Relationships**

Various other groups also played a vital role in the planning process. Their participation was informal and infrequent. One of these groups, the Arizona Strip Alliance, was formed in the late 1990s in response to the early discussions regarding the establishment of the Monument on the Arizona Strip. Local communities, counties, and agency representatives from southern Utah and northern Arizona united in order to plan on a regional scale. Employees from BLM's planning team attended Alliance meetings and kept members up-to-date on current planning efforts.

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition, Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Grand Canyon Wildlands Council, and Grand Canyon Trust are other groups that played an important role in the planning process. Grand Canyon Trust acquired the Kane and Two Mile Ranches midway through the planning effort and provided recommendations on future management of livestock grazing and the natural and cultural resources in the Monument. These groups all provided major contributions in the development of this Approved Plan including public scoping comments recommending a transportation plan, additional WSAs, information on the effects of transportation systems on wildlife, and other planning and resource information and recommendations.

In order to address the specific needs of wildlife, fish, and special status plants and animals, a group of biologists and botanists met to develop specific guidance and direction to meet those needs for this Approved Plan. Team participants included staff from the AGFD, USFWS, North Kaibab Ranger District of the USFS, and Arizona Strip District BLM. Major contributions from this team included the development of a comprehensive resource assessment for wildlife and special status species, background information on the biology of a variety of species affected by the Approved Plan, and a set of proactive decisions. The team also provided comments and recommendations on the route designations, vegetation management, and other sections of the Approved Plan.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF GRAZING WITHIN GLEN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA**

Glen Canyon NRA was established on October 27, 1972, under Public Law (P.L.) 92–593. In establishing Glen Canyon NRA, Congress directed that, “The administration of... grazing leases within the recreation area shall be by the BLM. The same policies followed by the BLM in issuing and administering... grazing leases on other lands under its jurisdiction shall be followed in regard to lands within the boundaries of the recreation area, subject to provisions of Section 3(a) and 4 of this Act.” The BLM administers grazing on the NRA subject to this enabling legislation and in accordance with the NRA General Management Plan, Grazing Management Plan, and interagency agreements, and MOUs. The Monument administers livestock grazing on three allotments that occur on public lands and within Glen Canyon NRA: the Ferry Swale, Wahweap, and Bunting Well allotments.

## **RELATED 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. To accomplish these directives, the BLM has 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 (Coconino County 2003)
- Kane County, Utah, General Plan (Kane County 1998)
- Glen Canyon NRA RMP (NPS 1986)
- Glen Canyon NRA GMP (NPS 1979, reprinted 1991)
- Grand Canyon National Park GMP (NPS 1995)
- Colorado River Management Plan (NPS 2006)
- Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument Management Plan (BLM 2000)
- AGFD Strategic Plan (AGFD 2006)
- Paria Management Framework Plan (BLM 1981)

## **OVERALL 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 Monument is to retain, where it currently exists, the present natural and socially remote nature of the Monument while still allowing compatible human use to occur within “the place where the West stays wild.”

## **PURPOSE, SIGNIFICANCE AND MISSION STATEMENTS**

Purpose, significance, and mission statements clarify the intent of the Monument proclamation and are used to shape the development of this Approved Plan. Purpose statements clarify why the Monument was set aside for special management. Significance statements address what makes the area unique, and mission statements reflect ideal conditions that managers should strive to attain.

### **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**

The Monument is a model of land management for conserving natural, scientific, and historic resources within their broader ecological and social contexts. The goal of Monument 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.