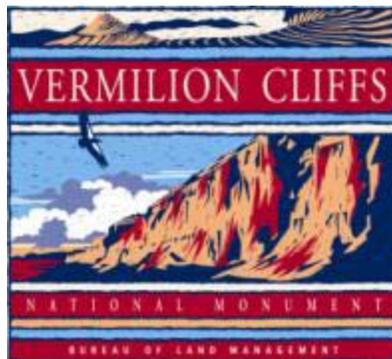




Vermilion Cliffs National Monument

National Landscape Conservation System

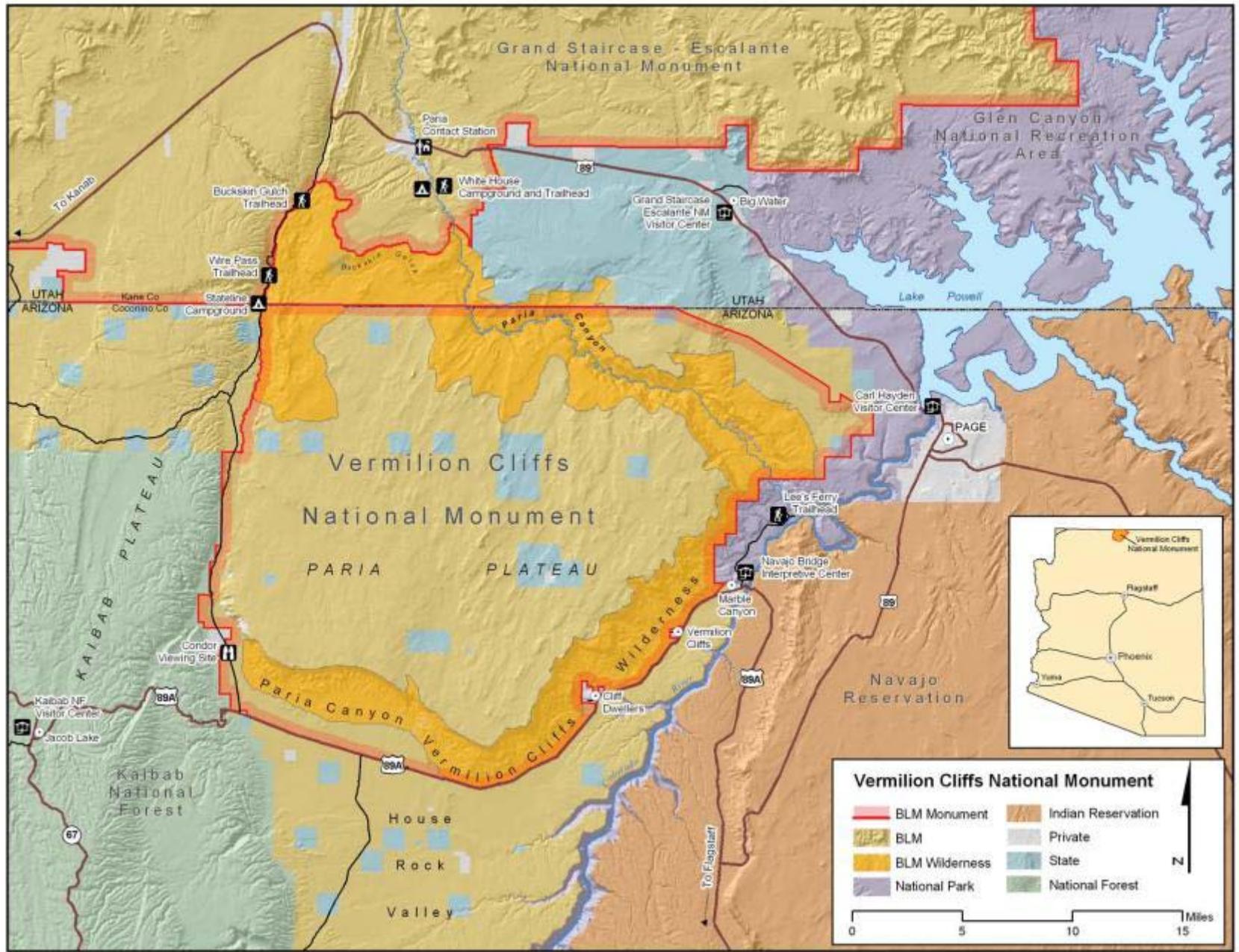
FY 2010 Manager's Report



I. Introduction

- a. This report includes Monument efforts from October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010.
- b. Unit: Vermilion Cliffs National Monument
Address: 345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, UT 84790
Phone: (435) 688-3200
E-mail: ASOWEB_AZ@blm.gov
Website: www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/natmon/vermilion.html
- c. Manager's name: Linda Price.
- d. The Monument is part of the Arizona Strip Field Office, inside the Arizona Strip District reporting to the Arizona State Office.
- e. The Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation #7374 on November 9, 2000.
- f. Resources, values, and/or objects: Geologic and Landscape features, including Paria Canyon, Coyote Buttes, White Pockets, White Knolls, dinosaur tracks, and "remoteness and limited travel corridors"; Cultural resources, including ancestral puebloan sites, standing walls, fieldhouses, granaries, burials, camps, and "remnants of historic ranch structures". Cold desert flora, warm desert grassland, Welsh's milkweed, California condors, Desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn, mountain lion, muledeer and sensitive native fish.
- g. There are 279,566 acres of BLM administered land inside the Monument boundaries.
- h. Annual visitation is estimated at 47,000 people.





II. Land Use Planning

- a. The Vermilion Cliffs National Monument Resource Management Plan (including travel management route designations) was completed and approved on January 29, 2008.

b. Implementation-Level Planning

Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area Business Plan, December 2009.

Sandhills Allotment Management Plan, 1991

Paria Canyon Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan, 1986

Arizona Strip Desert Big Horn Sheep Management Plan, as amended, May 2001

Arizona Strip District Fire Management Plan, updated annually.

c. Land Use Plan Implementation

All LUP implementation efforts are covered in other sections of the report.

III. Protecting America's Natural Resources

a. Notable Natural Resources

- i. The two most recognized natural resources on the VCNM are California Condors and "The Wave".

The Wave



California Condor

The geologic resources of Coyote Buttes and the Paria Canyon are world famous and the high level of visitation has led to the institution of visitor use limits. Two species of special status plants occur on the Monument, *Sclerocactus sileri* (House Rock Fishhook Cactus) and *Asclepias welshii* (Welsh's Milkweed).

California condors were originally released at the VCNM in 1996, prior to designation. Birds are released multiple times each year with the public invited each September on National Public Lands Day to witness. Currently there are 73 free flying condors in the Arizona population, with 4 wild chicks hatched on the Monument.

- ii. The primary challenge in protecting natural resources in the area is public demand. Visitor use limits have been set and recreation impacts are monitored to determine the effectiveness of the limits. Presently the monitoring data indicate that the current limits are appropriate for the protection of resources. However, demand for the limited number of access permits increases each year, consequently the number of disappointed publics increases each year.

Some damage has occurred to the *Sclerocactus sileri* monitoring plot due to recreational activities but measures have been taken to prevent further issues, including stacking rocks alongside the road and posting signs for the restriction of off road vehicle and ATV use in this area.

b. Land Health Assessments

- i. There were no additional acres assessed during the fiscal year. Four out of the five grazing allotments in the Monument were assessed prior to FY2010, and all were found to be meeting or progressing towards meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health. The assessment report for the fifth allotment is still in draft.
- ii. During the fiscal year condition and trend data were collected at 19 of the 27 key area study sites.

c. Inventory Efforts

No new resource inventories were conducted in the last fiscal year.

d. Restoration Efforts

The Paria Canyon Tamarisk 5-year Removal Project was begun in 2008 and is a partnership between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Grand Canyon Trust to aid in the restoration of the ecological integrity of the Paria River system within Paria Canyon. In 2010 the Grand Canyon Trust donated approximately 674 hours of volunteer time and 274 hours of staff time to continue the treatment and removal of Tamarisk and Russian olive in the river corridor.

IV. Protecting America’s Heritage Resources

a. Notable Heritage Resources

- i. The “long and rich human history” of the Monument is covered in more detail in the proclamation, making the cultural resources of the Monument a primary reason the Monument was created. The majority of the sites are Ancestral Puebloan (600 BC – 1300 AD), however no scientific investigations of cultural resources have thus far occurred in the Monument. There are currently three public use sites in the Monument: West Bench Pueblo, Honeymoon Trail, and Dominguez/Escalante Trail. The Honeymoon Trail/Old Arizona Road Public Use Site occurs in the southern portion of the Monument paralleling Highway 89A and up House Rock Valley. The Honeymoon Trail/Old Arizona Road and the Paria Plateau Archaeological District have both been determined as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



Paleontological resources are known to exist on the Monument and are occasionally discovered, though no sites have been recorded. Inventories are needed



- ii. Without a significant sample, it is difficult to address the status of heritage resources with much accuracy. The condition trend appears relatively flat with only a minor decrease in the condition due to vandalism, human visitation, and natural phenomena such as erosion and weathering. Overall the condition of the cultural and paleontological resources appears good to excellent.

b. Inventory Efforts

About 1,312 acres in all were inventoried for archaeology this year through volunteer partnerships, and scientific research. An additional 540 acres will be completed in 2011 due to additional funding made available for cultural resources at risk.

c. Restoration Efforts

There are no cultural resource restoration efforts on the Monument.

d. Other Accomplishments

Arizona State Parks Site Stewards monitored 14 archaeology sites, and performed several area wide patrols for potential adverse impacts, and other concerns.

V. Providing Recreation and Visitor Experiences

a. Overview

- i. The Monument's rugged, open, sparsely developed area and engaging scenery provides a wide array of dispersed recreation opportunities for moderately regulated recreation. Backcountry exploration, driving for pleasure, recreation aviation, hiking, backpacking, camping, picnicking, big and small game hunting, and wildlife observation are the most common activity types. Motorized or mechanized vehicle, small aircraft, walking, or equestrian are typical modes of travel. The Recreation Management Information System reports 39,886 visits with 83,525 visitor days for fiscal year 2010.

b. Facilities, Construction, and Maintenance

- i. There is no formal sign plan for the Monument though the majority of signage is directly related to travel management.
- ii. Many of the visitors access the monument through physical facilities in Utah. For example, three of the four trailheads accessing Paria Canyon are in Utah. The Paria Contact Station, where the walk-in lottery is held, is also in Utah. The Condor viewing site is the only significant physical facility for outdoor recreation located on the Monument and is in excellent condition.



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

Emergency installation of a sump pump in the crawl space to prevent flooding at the Paria Contact Station from multiple flood events in 2010.

Expansion of the Stateline Campground from 4 to 8 campsites, an additional toilet and rehabilitation work on the Arizona Trail to the overlook in addition to making the facility ADA compliant-completed November 2010 using AARA funds.

- iv. 3.6 work months were utilized to repair and maintain current facilities to include cleaning restrooms, trailheads and road networks. These work months were supplied by the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Recreation Aid (Utah).
- v. The Monument currently has a deferred maintenance backlog of approximately \$37,000 with a current replacement value of \$91,000. Currently, annual maintenance is meeting the needs of the BLM and visitors.

c. Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management

- i. The primary modes of recreational travel on the Monument are off-highway vehicles such as ATVs and full size 4 wheel drive vehicles.

- ii. All routes on the Monument were designated in the Resource Management Plan, they are: 374 miles as Open, 116 miles as Closed, 6 miles as Non-Motorized, and 74 miles as Administrative.

Implementation accomplishments in FY10 are as follows:

107 signs and barriers were installed closing 85 routes, totaling 35 miles.

26 routes were signed as administrative only, totaling 21 miles.

7 closed routes were naturally rehabed totaling 6 miles. (we were unable to find them)

Approximately 250 road # signs have been installed on 120 open routes totaling 306 miles.



- iii. A volunteer from Page, AZ is dedicated solely to aiding implementation of our travel management plan. The greatest challenge relating to travel management is the enforcement of road closures and preventing off road travel. Implementing a program similar to the “OHV Ambassadors” is an opportunity we are planning to pursue.

d. Recreation Fee Program

- i. There are three fee areas on the Monument: Coyote Buttes North, Coyote Buttes South and Paria Canyon.
- ii. In each Coyote Buttes area, 20 Individual Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) are issued for day hiking. Twenty multiple day permits per day are issued in Paria Canyon. Day-use hiking permits are offered at self-serve stations at four trailheads, and is currently not limited. The issuing of permits/collecting fees is completed through the Arizona Recreation Online Permit System (AROLPS), live “walk-in” lotteries and self pay envelopes at trailheads. The SRMA area receives over 22,000 visitors per year.

12 commercial SRPs have been issued on the monument. 2 additional SRPs are currently being analyzed through the NEPA and 10 more are awaiting the results of the Programmatic EA before processing begins.

VCNM has been preparing a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) to disclose and analyze the environmental consequences of authorizing Commercial Motorized Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) on designated routes within Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (VCNM) and the Arizona Strip Field Office within the Arizona Strip District. The proposed action would allow

for resource protection and proactive resource management to allow for the enhancement of outdoor recreational opportunities as long as the intensity of use does not harm monument objects and natural and cultural values.

- iii. The Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Business Plan.
- iv. \$131,048.00 was collected via the on-line and lottery permit systems, while \$36,513.74 (Utah) through trailhead self-pay fee.
- v. The priorities for expenditure of recreation fees is facility maintenance and visitor information.

VI. Your Recovery Dollars At Work

The Stateline Campground Expansion ARRA Project began November 7, 2010. The aptly named Stateline Campground is under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Strip Field Office on the Arizona portion of the campground and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument on the Utah side of the campground. The expansion project doubled the size of the existing campground, providing equestrian facilities and improving accessibility to comply with ADA federal standards. In addition to the two stall horse corral completed by volunteers, the project included installing four additional campsites (1 equestrian/trailer pull through site, and 3 walk-in sites), adding a second vault toilet, implementing ADA accessibility improvements and improving the original sites (4). The total cost of the project was \$125,000.

The trailhead for the recently designated Arizona National Scenic Trail, a system of connected trails that stretches the length of Arizona, approximately 800 miles from the Mexican border to the Utah border, is located within the campground. The campground also serves as base for accessing other highly popular recreation sites, including the internationally acclaimed North Coyote Buttes (aka “the Wave”) and Paria Canyon in Vermilion Cliffs National Monument.

VII. Engaging Youth in America’s Great Outdoors

a. Youth Engagement

2010 marked the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Monument. The NPS and BLM celebrated the anniversary on January 8 at Dixie State College. The BLM’s Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument and the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) also celebrated its 10th year of operations. BLM National Landscape Conservation System Director Carl Rountree, BLM Arizona State Director Jim Kenna, NPS Pacific



West Acting Regional Director Rory Westberg, Lake Mead Superintendent Bill Dickinson and Southern Paiute Elder Eleanor Tom were guest speakers. A round-table panel discussion of all past and present managers was also featured. Presentations highlighted both natural and cultural resource management topics, featuring speakers from NPS, BLM, Northern Arizona University, Kaibab Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Alliance and The Peregrine Fund. A variety of poster presentations were also on display. A highlight of the celebration in January was the Junior Ranger swearing in ceremony for 125 local fourth grade students and Kaibab Paiute tribal youth.

Monument staff also participated in the first ever fall Junior Ranger Evening at the Tonaquint Nature Center in St. George on September 24. Approximately 200 youth participated in the event centered on helping families and youth (ages 5 -14) gain a greater appreciation for public lands by engaging them in educational activities. The event included a stargazing program geared to families and each partner staffed a station to provide age appropriate interpretive talks and educational materials. Activities included a vegetation identification scavenger hunt, leaf rubbing, artists' corner, tree and shrub identification, tree ring lab, geology yoga, recycling game, water cycle game, fire prevention and many others. David Hullum, of VCNM, presented a live flash-flood demonstration. Partners included Dixie Arizona Strip Interpretive Association, Dixie National Forest, Pipe Spring National Monument, Washington County Recycling Committee and Water Conservancy District, Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, BLM Arizona Strip and St. George Field Offices and Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument.



b. Youth Employment

No youth were employed by the monument in FY 2010.

VIII. Partnership and Volunteer Efforts

a. Overview

In the cultural program the use of volunteers from support groups such as the Arizona State Parks Site Steward Program, Kiabab Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Alliance (KVCHA), Northern Arizona University (NAU), and professional Archaeologists from both Arizona and Utah is extremely important in managing for cultural resources on the Monument. The Monument offers challenges in this area because it does not have dedicated cultural staff and is some distance from its managing agencies physical location in Saint George, Utah.



The Northern Arizona University partnership consists of a wilderness monitoring program. Site monitoring in Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes is conducted annually by professors and graduate students in the Department of Geography, Planning, and Recreation. Monitoring is conducted to document visitor use impacts and the resultant data is part of the information used to assist managers in making informed land use decisions. In addition to the NAU project, trail and road counters have been placed at strategic locations to more accurately reflect the number of visitors entering and exiting the Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area.

We are currently working on establishing a friends group.

We also have established gateway visitor information sites with three lodging locations, in and, near Marble Canyon.

b. Volunteer Accomplishments

Significant volunteer support subsidizes the four work months provided by Paria Contact Station staff to provide excellent visitor service support at the Paria Contact Station and site visits or patrols within the at the Paria Canyon-Coyote Buttes permit area. Paria Contact Station 10 volunteers donated 2,380 hours of volunteer services.

c. Partnership Accomplishments

**Vermilion Cliffs National Monument/National Conservation Area Fiscal Year 2010
Partnership Accomplishments**

Partner(s)	Project Name and Description	Accomplishments	Monetary and In-Kind Contributions	
			BLM	Partner
Arizona State Parks Site Steward Program	Archaeological site monitoring, and general area wide patrol	14 Archaeological sites monitored and several area wide patrols	\$410	\$5,824
Doug McFadden /Arizona Site Stewards/KVCHA	White knolls and Pinnacle Ridge Archaeological Section 110 inventory	1200 acres of inventory 90 site records	\$500	\$27,840
Michael O'Hara /NAU/KVCHA	Two Mile Ranch, and West Bench Pueblo Archaeological inventory and site sampling.	112 acres of inventory 31 site records	\$500	\$2,390
Back Country Horsemen of Utah	Stateline Campground Expansion	Built a 2 stall corral	\$3,414	\$1,251
NAU	Recreation Impact Monitoring Program		\$4,000	\$4,000
Peregrine Fund	California Condor Re-introduction Project	73 free flying Condors and 5 wild hatched chicks in VCNM	\$1.5M	\$40,000
Arizona Game and Fish Department	Environmental Lead Reduction Program	85% participation in a lead free ammunition program	\$100,000	\$20,000
Totals			\$1,608,824	\$101,305



IX. Science

a. Overview

All of the Archaeological and Paleontological sites on the Monument are of significant scientific interest due to the lack of professional scientific research and study of the Arizona Strip. As information about resources is compiled it provides the data to make better land management decisions.

b. Science Efforts

Vermilion Cliffs National Monument/National Conservation Area Fiscal Year 2010 Science Efforts

Project Name and Description	Scientific Discipline	Research Contributor/Collaborator	Land Management Applications	Products	Monetary and In-Kind Contributions	
					BLM	Partner
White knolls and Pinnacle Ridge NHPA Section 110 Archaeological inventory	Archaeology	Doug McFadden /Arizona Site Stewards/KVCHA	Baseline cultural resource data	1200 acres of inventory 90 site records	\$500	\$27,840
Two Mile Ranch and West Bench Pueblo Archaeological inventory and site sampling	Archaeology	Michael O'Hara /NAU/KVCHA	Baseline cultural resource data	112 acres of inventory 31 site records Site Specific artifact data	\$500	\$2,390
Totals (\$)					\$1,000	\$30,230

X. Outreach, Environmental Education, and Interpretation Efforts

a. Overview

The location of the Monument directly on the Utah/Arizona stateline makes it difficult for many visitors to determine who to contact for visitor information. The Interagency Information Center in St. George serves as the primary point of contact for the city of St. George. However, a number of visitor information centers attached to other offices and other agencies are also used by the public to obtain information on VCNM. These other centers include the Kanab Field Office, the Bigwater and Kanab visitor centers of the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, Lee's Ferry and Marble Canyon visitor's center (NPS) and the Paria Contact Station.

b. Visitor Centers

- i. D/ASIA enhances visitors' understanding of VCNM and the rest of the Arizona Strip by operating the Interagency Visitor Center in St. George, providing a wide range of materials and services to assist the public, including hosting environmental education programs, answering questions about the local area, and issuing permits - mineral, woodcutting, and Christmas trees. D/ASIA maintains a sales area that offers a variety of maps and publications on local history and resources, and gifts.

The Grand Staircase – Escalante National Monument (Utah) visitor centers in Big Water and Kanab Utah are also used as satellite information centers providing a wide range of materials and services to assist the public, including hosting environmental education programs, hosting a bi-annual Commercial SRP meeting in Kanab, Utah in which VCNM participates, answering questions about the local area, and patrolling and reporting weather and road conditions.

The Kanab Field Office (Utah) visitor center provides a wide range of materials, books, maps, phone and on-line services for Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness and VCNM. They also hold the Coyote Buttes North and South lotteries and issues permits from November 14 to March 14 of each year.

The Paria Contact Station (Utah) from March 15-November 15 provides up to date Paria Canyon weather conditions, road conditions in the area, patrols to the permit areas, emergency services and basic visitor information. They hold the Coyote Buttes North lottery in which as many as 100 people participate every day, and issued walk-in permits for Coyote Buttes South and Paria Canyon.

- ii. The visitation at the Interagency Information Center in St. George, UT is estimated at 54,000. Utah BLM offices report visitation numbers at the Utah visitor centers.

c. Environmental Education

See section VII a. for a description of the environmental education activities of the VCNM.

d. Interpretation

- i. The main messages delivered by Monument staff and volunteers are BLM and NLCS aim to:

Protect resources including, spectacular vistas, open spaces and significant cultural, ecological and scientific resources.

Sustain cultures by maintaining historical uses and relationships, communicating scientific findings and providing opportunities for outdoor education and enjoyment.

Sustain economies by maintaining traditional uses in balance with long-term conservation, providing opportunities for recreation and maximizing community participation in tourism and visitor services.

- ii. We currently have 3 fact sheets and a Paria Canyon Hiker's Guide specifically for the VCNM. We also have a district visitor map and the NLCS brochure used for education. We also have a popular website for visitors wishing to visit Coyote Butte or the Paria Canyon.

In conjunction with the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the Kanab Field Office, Utah, interpretation enhancements included:

Completion of trailhead maps depicting the 3 individual permit area boundaries contained in the permit area.

Completion the Coyote Buttes North handout which is now distributed through the BLM, its partners and community interface locations (outdoor stores and lodging businesses).

Completion of Paria Project Area external website updates.

XI. Manager's Corner

A film crew from the Tokyo Broadcast System visited the Paria Contact Station in March to film the live walk-in lottery for hiking permits to the Wave. After obtaining a permit for themselves they captured still photos of Coyote Buttes North. They used the footage and stills for the production of a travel piece for their network.

Secretary Salazar bestowed the Valor Award to seven members of a wildland fire crew from the BLM-Arizona Strip District for their actions while working on the VCNM. The award was presented to Brian Williams, Corey Wood, Jason Bray, Rick Hilsmann with the BLM-Arizona Strip District and Shane McCormick, Mark Atwood and Rob Schill with the Color Country Fire Team for courage and valor in the medical rescue of an ill hiker in the Paria Canyon Wilderness in the fall of 2009. On October 24, 2009, the crew was burning slash piles in the canyon and was contacted by a hiking group with an ill companion. The





crew's emergency medical technician evaluated the patient and correctly identified the hiker's deteriorating condition. The crew sprung into action, creating a make-shift litter with branches and two nomax shirts. For several hours, the crew carried the patient over a very steep and rocky route, approximately 700 feet up the canyon to meet a medevac helicopter. The patient was hospitalized overnight in Page, Arizona and discharged the

following morning. The patient had suffered a mild heart attack, and the crew's training and quick medical response added up to a lifesaving rescue. A note from one of the hikers summarized this heroic act by saying, "Thank God that you were burning that weekend. You were all so professional and didn't flinch at the thought of what needed to be done and just doing it. . . . You might not realize it, but you are all angels." The Secretary personally recognized the fire crew and presented them with the prestigious Department of the Interior Valor Award in May of 2010.