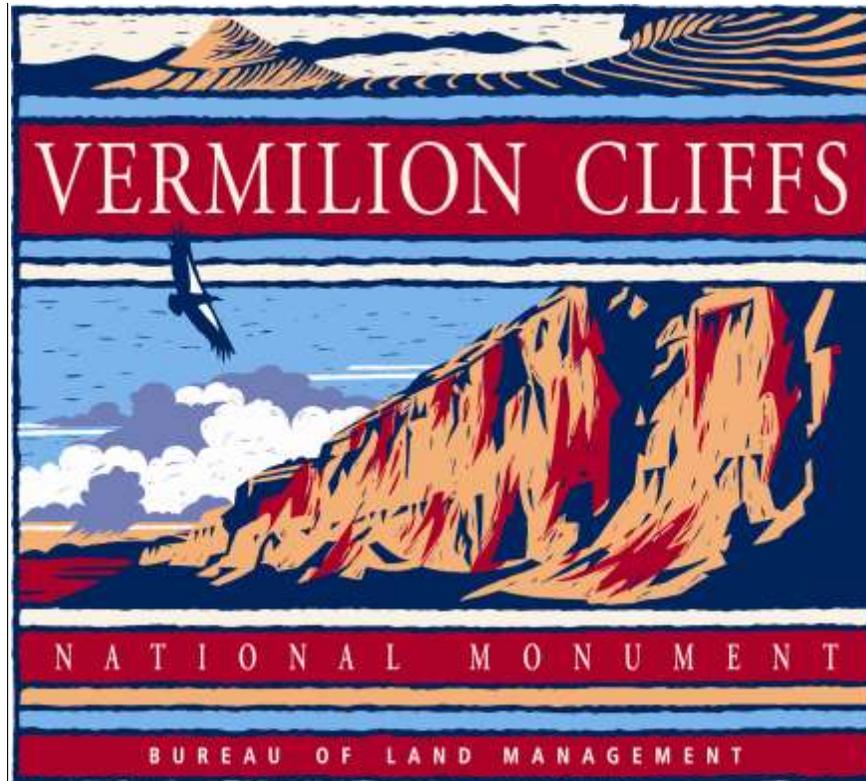




**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM**



**Vermilion Cliffs National Monument
FY 2009 Manager's Report**

- **Unit:** Vermilion Cliffs National Monument
Arizona Strip Field Office
Arizona Strip District Office
BLM Arizona State Office

- Contact Information:** 345 E. Riverside Drive
St. George, UT 84790
(435) 688-3200
www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/natmon/vermilion.html

- **Manager:** Linda Price, Monument Manager

- **Established:** Presidential Proclamation #7374, November 9, 2000

- **Acreage:** 279,658 BLM acres

- **Annual visitation:** 60,428

1. Natural and Heritage Resources Conditions

a. Natural resources trends.

- i. Describe overall upland, riparian, biological diversity, special status species, air and water, and other natural resources trends.

Based on vegetation monitoring data and rangeland health evaluations, vegetative condition at 63% of key areas remain static or in an upward trend. Seven of the twenty seven key areas were read for long term trend last year. Revealing a six percent increase over last year, in static and upward trend overall for the Monument.

- ii. Describe notable issues or trends involving invasive, non-native, or noxious weeds.

The tamarisk and Russian olive in Paria Canyon is an issue on the Monument. We are partnering with the Grand Canyon Trust in a multi-year invasive species removal project.

b. Heritage resources trends.

- i. Describe the overall condition of the unit's cultural and paleontological, wild and scenic rivers, national trails, and other heritage resources.

Without a significant sample, it is difficult to address of 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, and natural phenomena such as erosion and weathering. Overall the condition of the cultural and paleontological resources appears excellent to good.

c. Land Health Assessments.

- i. Report the percent of the unit's acreage that has been assessed using land health standards, and percent of assessed acreage meeting standards.

Four of the five allotments on the VCNM have been assessed (20% of the unit's acreage), and are meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health. The field work is complete on the remaining one; the assessment is still in draft.

- ii. Report annual accomplishments toward assessing and meeting land health standards.

Supporting the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, with projects like the Stateline Campground expansion, is the number one priority for BLM in the State of Arizona, as well as the VCNM. The Sandhills Allotment assessment will be finalized in FY10.

- d. Inventory. Describe work done to create and maintain natural and heritage resource inventories.

The Monument has a vigorous vegetative monitoring program, with 27 key areas on the monument. Certain data sets are collected every year and others are collected on a 3-5

year schedule. Seven key areas have been monitored for long term trend this past year. Another group of approximately seven will be monitored in FY10. Ecological Site Inventory (ESI) has been recorded at all 27 key areas and is monitored on a regular schedule.

A comprehensive route inventory was completed during the Resource Management Plan process, which ended in 2008. The Monument staff and partners continually refine and clarify data.

Inventory and monitoring of cultural resources would not be possible on the Monument if it were not for the Arizona Site Steward Program and The Kaibab-Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Alliance. Our site stewards monitored 14 sites in FY09. The Alliance, lead by a professional Archaeologist, completed the field work for cultural inventory of approximately 640 acres in and recorded or re-documented approximately 50 sites in the White Knolls area. Written documentation is taking place in FY10.

- e. Restoration. Describe notable restoration projects undertaken during the year including acres treated. Indicate whether restoration projects were initiated, continued, or completed. Restoration should be interpreted broadly to include removal of invasive species, stabilization of erosion-prone soils, replanting of native grasses, reintroduction of key species, rehabilitation of primary ecosystem processes, and watershed restoration.

The Monument and the Grand Canyon Trust have formed a partnership to remove non-native shrubs and trees from the Paria River Canyon. The project is being funded by grants from the Arizona Water Protection Fund. FY08 was the first year of the project, with inventory and baseline data collected in FY08, and treatments were accomplished in FY09 with seven miles of river cutting and herbicide treatment and five miles of burning. The treatment area includes Buckskin Gulch from the confluence with Paria Canyon to one mile up canyon in order to diminish non-native recruitment.



Slash Burning in Paria Canyon

2. Recreation Facilities, Roads, and Trails Conditions

a. Overview.

- i. Describe overall condition of physical facilities, including roads and trails.

BLM road 1065 connects Highway 89 (Utah) with Highway 89A (Arizona) and is the only road providing access to the interior of the Monument. It is a public road maintained by the BLM in Arizona and (historically) by Kane County in Utah. The Arizona portion was graded in spring 2009 and is currently in good condition; however, annual maintenance work is rare. The Utah portion is no longer being maintained by Kane County and thus has developed deep ruts and sections of the road wash out resulting in impassable roads during inclement weather.



1 BLM road #1065 crossing Buckskin Wash in Utah

Road conditions are our number one public complaint.

The intersection with Buckskin wash (in Utah) is by far the most troublesome spot on this road. It is along the route to the most popular site on the Monument (the Wave, in Arizona); it is frequently impassable and results in the highest number of visitor complaints.

Stateline Campground is just outside the Monument and is heavily used by Monument visitors. The campground is in excellent condition, maintained by a seasonal employee shared with Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument as part of the Paria Wilderness Partnership.

California Condor Viewing Site, listed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department as a Watchable Wildlife site, is the site of an extremely popular annual event releasing captive bred condors into the wild. Interpretive signs, a parking area and a shade structure have been installed in recent years and are still in excellent condition.

Dominguez-Escalante Interpretive site is in fairly good condition with some minor design flaws in need of resolution (bollards need to be installed to keep vehicles from driving through the center). The interpretive panels are weathering more rapidly than expected and the entry sign needs to be replaced.

Wilderness Barriers continue to maintain and repaired wilderness boundary signs and barriers due to vandalism and/or flood events in Coyote Buttes Wash, Coyote Buttes South and throughout the Ferry Swale and Paria Plateau areas.

- ii. Report percent of assets included in an Asset Business Plan. Please see the BLM Asset Management Plan (March 2009) for more information.

One hundred percent of the assets on the Monument are included in the Asset Business Plan.

- iii. Report percent of assets in each Asset Priority Index/Facility Condition Index quadrant.

83% of the assets on the Monument are in Quadrant 1, and 17% are in Quadrant 2. Quadrant 1 (Q1) consists of assets in adequate condition (good and fair) and of high priority. Quadrant 2 (Q2) consists of assets in poor condition and high priority.

- b. Construction. Describe any new or ongoing construction.

Stateline Campground (just outside VCNM, but heavily used by VCNM visitors) is in excellent condition, and being enlarged in FY10. A two stall horse corral has been installed as has a new road counter to replace the broken counter. Annual campground maintenance is excellent due to a seasonal position shared with Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

California Condor Site The site has been listed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department as a Watchable Wildlife site. In 2009, the vault toilet was installed.



2: A vault toilet was installed at the Condor Viewing Site in FY09

- c. Maintenance. Describe the unit's deferred maintenance backlog (as reflected in the 5 Year Plan), and whether annual maintenance is meeting the needs of the BLM and the unit's users.

The Monument currently has a deferred maintenance backlog of approximately \$45,000 with a current replacement value of \$1,806,000. Currently, annual maintenance is meeting the needs of the BLM and Monument visitors.

d. Signage.

- i. Briefly describe the unit's sign plan and whether it is approved, pending, initiated, or other.

The Monument has a formal sign plan "Interpretive & Information Sign Plan: GSENM/Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness/VCNM signed on January 20, 2002. The signs that were installed in 2008 were developed with the use of this sign plan. This document will be updated to include new Public Use sites identified in the RMP and interpretive needs at sites that have seen increased visitor use to include Ferry Swale, West Bench Pueblo, Sun Valley Mine and the Maze Rock Art Panel. The portion of the sign plan dealing with Travel Management is being incorporated into the Monument 2008-09 Travel Management Implementation Plan utilizing the 2004 BLM guidelines.

- ii. Discuss whether installed portal signs or kiosks meet BLM standards described in the 2004 BLM Sign Manual (Bureau Manual 9130).

All portal signs meet applicable standards. Because of weathering or vandalism a few need to be replaced as funding becomes available. All kiosks meet BLM standards.



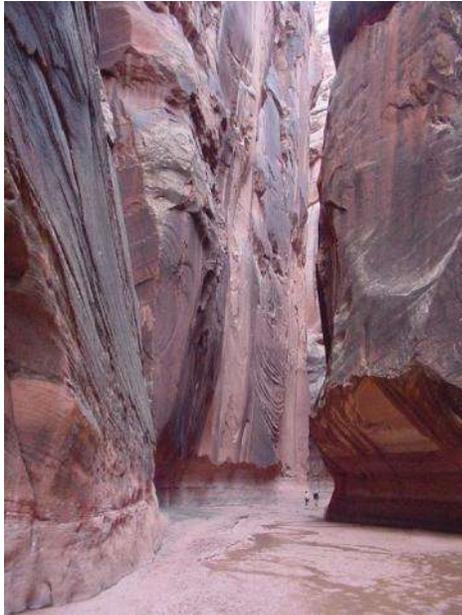
3: Portal sign near the intersection of BLM 1065 and Highway 89A

3. Outreach, Environmental Education, Interpretation, and Volunteers

- a. Outreach. Include a brief narrative about public contacts made in person and through print media, World Wide Web, facilities, signs, kiosks, and other modes of communication and interaction.

- The Paria website is the most visited BLM website with over 101,000 hits in the month of April 2009 alone.

- The majority of public contacts made are related to the Paria Canyon – Coyote Buttes special use areas (Paria project) although a trend is now developing for more information requests outside of the permit areas. Public contacts are made through three information centers, telephone calls, or e-mails through ASFOWEB AZ.



Above: “The Wave” in Coyote Butte North, Left: Paria Canyon

- The interpretive signs placed throughout the monument and the surrounding area in 2008-09 have received positive responses and therefore have not been vandalized as of yet. One of our partner agencies purchased additional condor signs for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.
- Outreach handouts, and factsheets have been provided to local hotels and lodges in the area, as well as other land management agencies. Increased communication between the partner agencies and other land management agencies in the area has created a more consistent message.
- Monument staff has been involved in the development of the Fredonia-Vermilion Cliffs Scenic Road Corridor Management Plan which has an anticipated completion date of 2010.
- Monument staff has been planning events celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the National Monument and the 10th Anniversary of NLCS.
- Monument staff presented our first “Meet and Greet” with Monument volunteers, staff and D/ASIA to incorporate a seasonal training session. Staff also presented VCNM topics at the GSENM seasonal training sessions.
- An outreach program was developed in FY09 to mitigate heat related illnesses brought about by a new trend of inexperienced hikers entering a desert environment for the first time. Current methods of environmental and interpretive education including brochures, presentations, universal signs, face to face contact with BLM

staff and volunteers at visitor centers, website information and trailhead signs have not prevented the rise in heat related issues within the region. This new outreach program incorporated a series of patrols in the field performed by staff from 5 different BLM units and one National Park Service unit, who provided interpretive education and water for hikers found in distress during the month of August in the Paria project area.

- The Grand Circle Field School is a non-profit association under Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The classes they provide feature “hands-on” experience in the field, followed by lectures, presentations and discussions at camp.

b. Visitor centers. Briefly describe activity at any visitor centers associated with the unit.

D/ASIA assists in the operation of the Interagency Information Center at the Arizona Strip District Office in St. George Utah in conjunction with the BLM, NPS and USFS. This center serves the St. George Field Office (Utah BLM); Arizona Strip District Office; Arizona Strip Field Office; Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument; and VCNM. It is open all year, from 7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and is closed on Federal holidays and is operated by the BLM with support from a large contingency of volunteers.

The Paria Ranger Station, which is located in Utah on Highway 89 between Page, Arizona and Kanab, Utah, serves the jointly managed Paria Project. It is open mid-March to mid-November seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. and is operated by the BLM with support from a large contingency of volunteers.

The Kanab Field Office, which is located in Kanab, Utah aids in the service of the jointly managed Paria Project. It is open all year, from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

The Grand Staircase – Escalante National Monument visitor centers in Kanab and Big Water Utah, have seen a increase in public inquiries about the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument. Other visitor centers that have asked for written materials are the Navajo Bridge Interpretive Center (NPS), Lee’s Ferry Historic Site (NPS), and the City of Page Office of Tourism. Monument staff is in the initial stages of developing partnerships and agreements with various entities in order to distribute visitor information to more people in more places. Currently, there is a limited supply of information materials in need of expansion.

c. Environmental education. Describe products and services being delivered (both off-site and on-site) for local and regional K-12 educational institutions. Include pictures of environmental education activities if available.

D/ASIA assists its BLM, Forest Service (FS) and National Park Service (NPS) partners in initiating education projects that promote interpretation and preservation of the

history, natural resources, and recreation opportunities of the Arizona Strip. Activities include school programs (both off-site and in office) for elementary and junior high students, and a teacher information day.

Monument staff provided environmental education services through:

- a brown bag program in St. George and through a new volunteer education program initiated in 2009 presenting VCNM topics of concern near the Paria Contact Station.
- aiding the Condor Release Program during the March public condor release event.
- A field trip in cooperation with the Heritage Alliance prior to the March 2009 public condor release.

d. Interpretation.

i. Provide a brief overview of the main messages being delivered.

- Safety
- Wilderness and Backcountry Ethics
- Cultural Resource Stewardship and Appreciation
- Environmental Stewardship
- Tread Lightly
- Leave No Trace
- Ecological Conservation and Management
- Endangered Species Recovery

ii. Provide an overview of participation by the visiting public in the unit's interpretive program.

The majority of the visitors to Monument obtain permits for one of the three special use areas (Paria Canyon, Coyote Buttes North and Coyote Buttes South). Permits are either delivered in person or through the mail. Interpretive materials, such as maps and outdoor ethics instructions, are included with each permit.

A presentation about the Monument is given at each annual public condor release. In FY09 approximately 90 people attended the release. Interpretive outreach was increased in 2009 to include more patrols into the wilderness and permit areas, development of informative handouts, and redevelopment of monument maps.

e. Volunteers. Describe volunteer projects and outcomes. Include number of volunteers, hours, and seasons of operation.

Visitor information about the Monument is offered in person by many volunteers in the Interagency Information Center in St. George, the Kanab Field Office in Kanab and the Paria Contact Station on Highway 89 near the Monument. In FY09 the Monument received 3200 hours of service, with a value of nearly \$65,000. There were 70 hours (\$14,000 value) donated by seven volunteers to build horse corrals at the Stateline Campground. The Grand Canyon Trust reports a \$70,875 contribution by volunteer hours in the Paria Canyon invasive plant removal project.

- f. Describe other outreach efforts, if applicable.

We are developing an outreach program to recruit multiple user groups for monument projects to include sign and road signage placement. The monument has also increased its presence within the permit areas by including our partners in patrolling specific areas during high use times or times when visitor use patterns show that increased education is needed, such as awareness of the need to carry adequate water in desert environments. We have implemented an effective outreach program designed keep the public informed of the progress in the Tamarisk Removal Project. Detailed handouts on the project for permit holders scheduled to be in the area during project timeframes; prescribed burn handouts and public announcements in local papers and through the on-line system; e-mail notification to potentially affected permit holders; the placement of informational signs describing the project at the trailheads and interpretive discussions given by fire crews during the burning activities and by the Tamarisk removal crews during active removal.

The River Management Society quarterly magazine published an article written by the Monument Outdoor Recreation Planner outlining the success of the Paria Tamarisk and Russian Olive Removal Project showcasing the Paria Canyon and Monument.

4. Science

- a. Provide a brief overview of the science activities on the NM or NCA. Describe any resources of significant scientific interest, primary research partners, and, if they have been identified, science goals and objectives. Note that the BLM defines science broadly. Science includes basic and applied research in natural and social science as well as inventory and monitoring.
- **Contorted Bedding in Navajo Sandstone**
A small radio controlled airplane gathers aerial photographs of the sandstone formations in the White Pockets area of the monument. Samples of sandstone are collected and micro structures analyzed. The information will be used as a basis for a Master's Thesis to explain the cause of the unique contorted beds. The initial hypothesis is the contortions were caused by a meteorite impact or large magnitude earthquake.
 - **Reduction of Lead Exposure in Condors**
Lead exposure causes the greatest mortality in the condor wild population. The Peregrine Fund is looking for ways to reduce the exposure.
 - **Impacts of Recreation**
Northern Arizona University is looking at new and innovative ways to document trends in recreation impacts.
- b. Include photographs of people involved in science projects, including employees, researchers, children, and visitors.

- c. On Table 1 of the attachment “2009.NM and NCA. ReportDATA.xlsx,” under the “Science” tab, list: unit name, project name, discipline, research contributor/collaborator/partner, project description, status, products, applications (i.e., when and how this information will be used), outreach options or story ideas, BLM contributions to date by year, and partner contributions to date by year. Include science partnerships only in the science table (Table 1); WO-171 will cross reference.

5. Partnerships

- a. Provide a brief overview of the partnership activities related to the NM or NCA. Briefly describe major partnerships, major partnership projects, and, where they have been identified, partnership goals and objectives. Include collaborative efforts with other government entities as well as non-government entities. The BLM defines partnerships as voluntary and mutually beneficial collaborative relationships between two or more partners, built on the contribution of each party, and formed to achieve or to assist in moving toward a common goal. A partnership may involve one partner utilizing another partner’s unique abilities, equipment, services, or resources. A partnership may also involve sharing of resources such as time, funds, knowledge, or equipment.

- **California Condor Re-introduction Project**

The Peregrine Fund conducts the condor releases and monitoring of condor behavior, movements, feeding, mortality, condor courtship and egg laying, nesting, etc. The Condor Working Group is an active team working on the success of the reintroduction. Partners include: The Peregrine Fund, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Boise State University, Norm Freeman Habitat, Meridian Veterinary Clinic, National Park Service, Phoenix Zoo, The Raptor Center, Maggie Sacher, Salt River Project, Southern Utah's Coalition of Resources and Economics, Tufts Center for Conservation Medicine, U.S. Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, University of Idaho, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Washington State University, and the Zoological Society of San Diego.

- **Recreation Impact Monitoring Project**

Northern Arizona University collects data documenting impacts from recreational activities taking place at various locations in VCNM. This information is used in setting and/or adjusting visitor use limits to protect natural and cultural resources (including wilderness values). This data is used to establish and evaluate the effectiveness or necessity of visitor use limits.

- **Paria Canyon Invasive Removal Project**

Grand Canyon Trust uses volunteers for the project. Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs wilderness objectives for this cooperative effort include the restoration of natural conditions in 17 miles the Paria Canyon and Buckskin Gulch canyons by eradicating non-native trees of tamarisk and Russian olive.

- **Kaibab Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Alliance**

The Kaibab Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Alliance (KVCHA) includes the Monument along with the Kaibab National Forest, Grand Canyon National Park, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA), Northern Arizona University (NAU), and the Grand Canyon Trust. The mission of KVCHA is to develop a deeper understanding of the cultural resources of the region and help preserve, protect, manage, and interpret those resources. In recognition of its innovative and cooperative approach, KVCHA received the Private/Non-profit Entity Award in public archaeology as part of the Arizona Governor's Heritage Preservation Honor Awards in 2009.

- **Paria Team**

The Monument, Kanab Field Office, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Northern Arizona University, and the National Weather Service partner in this project. The Special Management Area consists of four trailheads, 2 campgrounds, one ranger station and three visitor use limited permit areas and is almost entirely inside the Paria Canyon – Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness. This is a great example of long-term partnership in which boundaries between states and managing agencies have been blurred to create the most cohesive recreation experience for the user while providing resource protection and land management decision consistency within land managing agencies.

- b. Provide photographs of people involved in partnership projects, including employees, partners, children/youth, and volunteers.
- c. On Table 2 of the attachment “2009.NM and NCAReportDATA.xlsx,” under the “Partnerships” tab, list: unit name, project name, project partners, a brief description of the project (focus on accomplishments and activities rather than mission and history), status, outreach options, results, BLM contributions to date by year, and partner contributions to date by year. Include science partnerships only in the science table (Table 1); WO-171 will cross reference.

6. Planning and Business Practices

- a. Planning. Describe the status of the unit's land use plan as of 9/30/09, and the status of that land use plan's implementation strategy, including implementation strategy workshops, spreadsheets, and communications strategies. Refer to WO-IM-2008-041 for more information on implementation strategies. Also describe all activity level planning efforts, including travel and transportation plans.

The Land Use Plan for the Monument was signed on January 29, 2008. All implementation strategy workshops, spreadsheets and communication strategies have been completed. Route designations were included in the Land Use Plan, however the implementation of those designations will be detailed in FY10 plan.

- b. New units. Seven new national monuments, national conservation areas, and similar designations were added to the NLCS in 2008 and 2009. California, Colorado, Eastern States, New Mexico, and Utah must identify and submit the unique organizational codes to be established for each of these seven new units: Piedras Blancas Historic Light Station Outstanding Natural Area, Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area, Prehistoric Trackways National Monument, Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area, Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area, Red Cliffs National Conservation Area, and Beaver Dam Wash National Conservation Area.
- c. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. List projects undertaken with Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds and describe the status of these projects.

As stated in section 2.b. the expansion of the Stateline Campground is an ARRA project. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act is complete, a technical package for bidding a contract for construction is near completion. Ground breaking will take place in March of 2010.

- d. Budget. Include a brief narrative explaining the data below. Under the last two tabs of the attachment “2009.NM and NCAReportDATA.xlsx,” include:
 - i. Table 3. Work months and funding for the unit’s permanent staff, non-unit field office staff funded by the unit, and totals.
 - ii. Table 4: Staffing needs that have been identified for the unit (also under the “Staff” Tab)
 - iii. Table 5. Contributions including contributed funds, value of in-kind support, and totals. Include partnership and volunteer contributions, both cash and in-kind.

The Monument receives significant staff support from not only the Arizona Strip Field Office, but also the Kanab Field Office (UT BLM) and the Arizona Strip District office Staff. The Monument would not be successful in carrying out the Bureau’s mission without this support.

7. Manager’s Corner (OPTIONAL)

Include other major or unique items the unit’s manager deems worthy of discussion. Managers may include this section at their discretion to describe unique challenges faced, alternative management techniques employed, and synergistic outcomes achieved.

