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For additional information, contact Larry Crutchfield, 435-691-4310

Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Recreation Study to Kick Off

By Allysia Angus

KANAB, Utah – The public is invited to join a conversation about recreation management on BLM public lands. The areas to be discussed include public lands accessed by HWY 89 between Kanab and Page as well as landscapes in Paria Canyon and Vermilion Cliffs. The first of three rounds of local area focus groups will be hosted by Colorado Mesa University's Natural Resource Center (NRC), Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, and the Kanab Field Office. The focus groups are scheduled for March 6 and 7 in Kanab, Page and Marble Canyon.

These sessions are the third phase of the Recreation Experience Baseline Study being conducted by CMU to help BLM better respond to the public's desires and expectations for how recreation is managed on public lands in this region. The first phase of the project was conducted in 2013 and studied the western Escalante Canyons region, and the second phase was conducted in 2014 and focused on the Grand Staircase region.

This research seeks to engage local leaders, business owners, residents, and visitors that either participate in recreational activities in this region, or have a stake in the quality of the experience of those that do. A focus group is a form of research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, preferences, and attitudes towards, in this case, recreational use on public lands in this region. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members.

The idea behind the focus groups is to open dialogue between BLM land managers and the public on recreation issues, to provide information for future planning efforts and project assessments, and to gather data needed to better understand the public's desired outcomes for recreation management in the Monument.

The focus groups will be facilitated by Dr. Tim Casey, Professor of Political Science at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, Colorado. Dr. Casey is a lead researcher and field coordinator at NRC who has extensive experience working with BLM on similar social science projects on the Colorado Plateau. He has been responsible for facilitation of public meetings and focus groups regarding public lands since 2006.

Each focus group session will last approximately 90 minutes. The dates, times, and locations are noted below:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	ADDRESS
FRIDAY - March 6	7:00 PM	GSENM Kanab Visitor Center	745 HWY 89 East, Kanab, UT
SATURDAY - March 7	10:00 AM	Lee's Ferry Lodge (Marble Canyon)	MP 541.5 HY 89A, Vermilion Cliffs, AZ
SATURDAY - March 7	3:00 PM	Page Public Library	479 S. Lake Powell Blvd., Page, AZ

Those not available to participate in the March sessions will have other opportunities to have their voices heard. Two more rounds of focus groups will be scheduled in the local area later this year. Additionally, live web-based sessions will also be utilized as part of the study. In these sessions participants from far and wide can join the conversation from the comfort of their homes using a phone and computer. The dates for the web-based sessions have not been set, but are planned for the summer months.

This third phase of the Recreation Experience Baseline Study has been funded by a National Landscape Conservation System Science Grant and Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act fees. If funding allows, additional BLM public lands in the region will be studied in subsequent years.

For more information about this project, please contact Allysia Angus, GSENM Landscape Architect at 435-826-5615 or aangus@blm.gov. Or if you have questions about the research, please contact Dr. Tim Casey at 970-248-1095 or tcasey@coloradomesa.edu.

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Coyote Buttes
Photo by BLM/Bob Wick



Paria Movie and Town Site landscape
Photo by BLM/Allysia Angus