Foundation Document Overview
Grand Canyon National Park
Arizona

Contact Information
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### Purpose

Grand Canyon National Park preserves and protects the natural and cultural resources and ecological and physical processes of the Grand Canyon along with its scenic, aesthetic, and scientific values for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.

### Significance

Significance statements express why Grand Canyon National Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Grand Canyon, with its immense size, dramatic color, and extensive geologic record exposures, is one of the planet’s most iconic landscapes.

- Grand Canyon National Park includes 277 miles of the Colorado River, which flows through and helped create the Grand Canyon. The Colorado River and its tributaries have shaped the complex natural and cultural histories of the park and surrounding region.

- More than 1.1 million acres, or 94%, of Grand Canyon National Park is managed as wilderness and, when combined with contiguous public lands, represents one of the largest undeveloped areas in the United States.

- The park’s dramatic topography and range in elevations provide diverse habitats for a vast array of life, including rare, endangered, and endemic species.

- The human–Grand Canyon relationship has existed for at least 12,000 years, and the park contains thousands of cultural resources that reflect the long-term human use and occupation of the area.

- Eleven federally recognized tribes maintain strong historical, cultural, and spiritual connections to the area in and around the park.
Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- Inspirational Scenic Landscapes
- Geologic Features and Processes
- Biodiversity and Natural Processes
- Diverse Recreational and Experiential Opportunities
- Water Resources
- Cultural Resources and Tribal Values

Grand Canyon National Park contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- Research
- Partnerships
- Wilderness

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Inspiration
- American Indian Connections
- Pioneer History and Park Development
- Water
- Geology
- Biology
- Stewardship and Preservation
Canyon National Park.

lands to the existing Grand Recreational Areas, and
parts of Glen Canyon national monuments, which added two adjacent
Park Enlargement Act, Grand Canyon National
was enlarged. In 1975, and, in 1927, the park
Canyon National established
Monument. In 1919,
National
aside 818,560 acres as
proclamation setting
Roosevelt issued a
Grand Canyon is one of the earliest additions to the national
and Hualapai reservations share a boundary with the park.

Canyon’s landscape. Of these tribes, the Navajo, Havasupai,
River, and various sites and resources within Grand
canyons home to early European explorers, and modern-day
National Park. From the native peoples who have called these
truly dark night skies in the backcountry of Grand Canyon

Grand Canyon is recognized as a place of universal value containing
superlative natural and cultural features that should be
preserved as part of the heritage of all the world’s peoples.

Grand Canyon’s spectacular scenery attracts visitors from all
over the world. Visitation to the park has averaged around
4.5 million people per year and was 6 million people in
2016. Grand Canyon provides opportunities for a range
of recreational experiences, from a paved-path walk to a
strenuous hike, backcountry expedition, or technical river
trip. The park also provides a broad spectrum of activities
including rafting, hiking, sightseeing, and bicycling, to name a
few. Boundless opportunities exist to experience solitude and
truly dark night skies in the backcountry of Grand Canyon
National Park. From the native peoples who have called these
canyons home to early European explorers, and modern-day
outdoor enthusiasts, philosophers, artists, poets, musicians,
and photographers, the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River
is spoken of as a sublime place of wonder, inspiration, and
spiritual power.