

Grand Canyon-Parashant

Grand Canyon-Parashant
National Monument
Arizona

National Park Service
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

A spider web of tributaries flowing into Grand Canyon's Colorado River creates stunning scenery of vast proportions, as here in Parashant Canyon. The national monument protects a wealth of features, both natural and cultural, for scientific purposes and for the public to use and enjoy.

NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument is a scientific treasure. Its deep canyons, mountains, and lonely buttes testify to the power of geological forces and provide colorful vistas. Paleozoic and Mesozoic sedimentary rock layers—relatively undeformed and unobscured by vegetation—offer a clear view for understanding the Colorado Plateau's geologic history. Geologic, geographic, and biological transitions give rise to the monument's astonishing ecological diversity. Here two geologic provinces meet, the Basin and Range and the Colorado Plateau. Here also two ecoregions meet, the Mojave Desert and Colorado Plateau. Within these ecoregions three floristic provinces converge—Mojave Desert, Great Basin, and Colorado Plateau—creating diverse assemblages of plant and animal

communities. Geologic variations coupled with elevation changes, ranging from 1,400 feet above sea level near Grand Wash Bay to over 8,000 feet on Mt. Trumbull, result in a variety of desert, shrubland, and montane habitats. Cooler conditions found in higher-elevation ponderosa pine forests provide habitat for wild turkeys, northern goshawks, and Kaibab squirrels. Middle elevations feature pinyon-juniper forests and sagebrush that support pinyon jays, Great Basin rattlesnakes, and mule deer. Low-elevation Mojave Desert features creosote bush, Joshua trees, Gila monsters, Gambel's quail, and desert bighorn sheep. Rare springs with life-giving water are hotspots hosting distinctive plant and animal life.

It is hard to imagine how people survived in this harsh land, but the evidence of tenancy testifies to human perseverance. Occupation began 12,000 years ago with large-animal hunters followed by hunter/gatherers. About 3,000 years ago the introduction from Mexico of corn and, later, squash and beans allowed the people to settle into small villages. Each group left clues like pecked and painted rock images, home sites, tools, and quarries that give us some insight into their lives. Southern Paiutes living in this area at the time of Euro-American contact in 1776 still live in the Colorado Plateau region. Remnants of early homesteads punctuate the landscape, expanding its rich human history, a vital dimension of the area's character.

A pervading appearance of emptiness masks the monument's diverse plant and animal life. Four plant species and 29 animal species—including the Mojave desert tortoise—enjoy special protective status here.

A TRANSITIONAL LANDSCAPE

DESERT WASH

The Mojave, driest of all North American deserts, gets fewer than 10 inches of rain a year. Snaking across this arid landscape, scoured desert washes carry the runoff after monsoon rains. Desert tortoises actively forage after these refreshing storms. Deep-rooted plants grow along the edges and on islands in the washes, providing black-tailed jackrabbits with shady hiding places.

JOSHUA TREE FOREST

Joshua trees are characteristic Mojave Desert plants that grow up to 40 feet tall. Haphazard, prickly branches give many animals shelter, a food source, or nesting materials. As many as 25 bird species nest in Joshua trees: Scott's orioles hang nests from branches; other birds build nests in foliage; and northern flickers peck nest holes in the trunks. Toppled trunks house insects that provide a food source initiating a complex food web.

MOJAVE DESERT SCRUB

This community's spiny, succulent plants denote desert to most people. In rainy periods barrel cacti store water in their vault-like bodies, safe under myriad spines. Surviving long periods of no rain, they live up to 130 years. Rock-dwelling chuckwalla lizards also use their bodies as canteens—and as ladders—during wet periods. They can also wedge themselves into rocks and puff up so much that predators can't pull them out.

SAGEBRUSH STEPPE

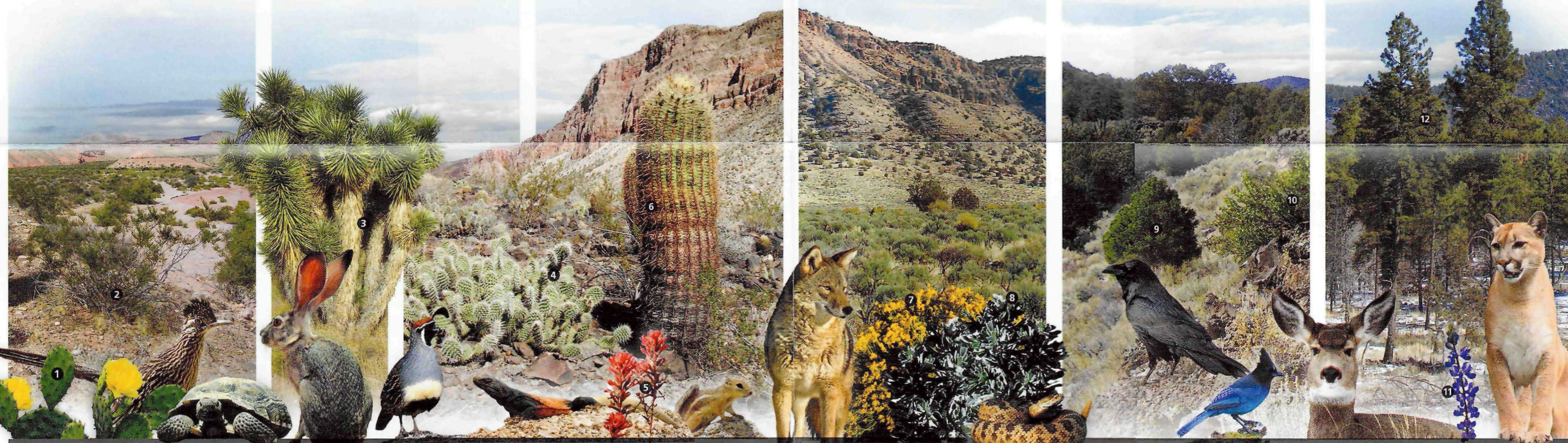
Typical Great Basin communities are sagebrush steppe—a semi-arid plain—and pinyon-juniper woodland (right) that cover much of the national monument. You will drive for miles through this multi-hued landscape of sagebrush, shrubs, and short grasses. Big sagebrush is most common, but there are several other species, too. The adaptable coyote hunts rabbits and other small animals that hide in the shrubs.

PINYON-JUNIPER WOODLAND

Pinyon pines and junipers grow on mountainsides and plateaus above the steppe. Although junipers can live 300 to 400 years, they only grow 20 or 30 feet tall. Slow-growing pinyon pines germinate beneath a nurse plant and when mature produce nutritious seeds that were once a vital food source for native people. Birds and rodents like these tasty pine-nut seeds and help to plant new trees when they cache them in the ground for winter food.

PONDEROSA PINE FOREST

Cooler, higher, and with more rain, the Colorado Plateau ecoregion supports ponderosa pines with associated Gambel oak, New Mexican locust, and serviceberry—home to turkeys, Kaibab squirrels, mule deer, and goshawks. Ponderosa pines live to 600 years and can grow over 90 feet tall. Their orange-brown bark smells like vanilla. Periodic burning is essential to maintaining the health and vigor of ponderosa pine forests.



Grand Wash between Pakoon Springs and Tassi Ranch
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

A Joshua tree in Pakoon Basin
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

Upper Whitmore Canyon
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

Steppe country east of Mount Trumbull
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

Pinyon-juniper growing on lava flow outcrops
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

Ponderosa pine forest on Mount Logan
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

- 1 **PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS**
DANIEL H. P. GRADONSKI
PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.
- 2 **CREOSOTE BUSH**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 3 **JOSHUA TREE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 4 **BEAVERTAIL CACTUS**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 5 **DESERT PAINTBRUSH**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 6 **BARREL CACTUS**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 7 **RABBITBRUSH**
TED CALLAERT PHOTOGRAPHY
- 8 **BIG SAGEBRUSH**
ROBERT J. EMMETT
PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.
- 9 **PINYON PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 10 **CLIFF ROSE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 11 **LUPINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 12 **PONDEROSA PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

- 3 **JOSHUA TREE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 4 **BEAVERTAIL CACTUS**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 5 **DESERT PAINTBRUSH**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 6 **BARREL CACTUS**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 7 **RABBITBRUSH**
TED CALLAERT PHOTOGRAPHY
- 8 **BIG SAGEBRUSH**
ROBERT J. EMMETT
PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.
- 9 **PINYON PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 10 **CLIFF ROSE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 11 **LUPINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 12 **PONDEROSA PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

- 4 **BEAVERTAIL CACTUS**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 5 **DESERT PAINTBRUSH**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 6 **BARREL CACTUS**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 7 **RABBITBRUSH**
TED CALLAERT PHOTOGRAPHY
- 8 **BIG SAGEBRUSH**
ROBERT J. EMMETT
PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.
- 9 **PINYON PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 10 **CLIFF ROSE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 11 **LUPINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 12 **PONDEROSA PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

- 5 **DESERT PAINTBRUSH**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 6 **BARREL CACTUS**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 7 **RABBITBRUSH**
TED CALLAERT PHOTOGRAPHY
- 8 **BIG SAGEBRUSH**
ROBERT J. EMMETT
PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.
- 9 **PINYON PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 10 **CLIFF ROSE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 11 **LUPINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 12 **PONDEROSA PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

- 6 **BARREL CACTUS**
NPS/PAULA BRANTNER
- 7 **RABBITBRUSH**
TED CALLAERT PHOTOGRAPHY
- 8 **BIG SAGEBRUSH**
ROBERT J. EMMETT
PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.
- 9 **PINYON PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 10 **CLIFF ROSE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 11 **LUPINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 12 **PONDEROSA PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

- 7 **RABBITBRUSH**
TED CALLAERT PHOTOGRAPHY
- 8 **BIG SAGEBRUSH**
ROBERT J. EMMETT
PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.
- 9 **PINYON PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 10 **CLIFF ROSE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 11 **LUPINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 12 **PONDEROSA PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

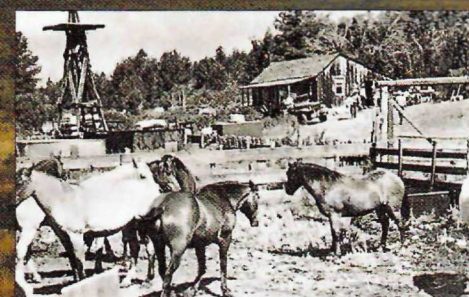
- 8 **BIG SAGEBRUSH**
ROBERT J. EMMETT
PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.
- 9 **PINYON PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 10 **CLIFF ROSE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 11 **LUPINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS
- 12 **PONDEROSA PINE**
NPS/DAVID R. HARRIS

INDIANS



The 1776 Escalante-Dominquez expedition found Southern Paiutes gardening, hunting, and gathering. In rabbit skin robes, this circle dance ceremonial group celebrates their ties to the land and animals.

SETTLERS



Beginning in the 1870s Mormon settlers, miners, loggers, and ranchers built homes here and struggled to raise families and survive in this remote country. Their descendants still ranch in the monument.

LOGGING



Local stands of ponderosa pine provided building materials for early settlers' cabins and homesteads and for Mormon building projects. No economically significant lumbering began until 1876.

COPPER MINING



After an abortive gold rush, copper mining took hold in 1873. Of several mines, the Grand Gulch was most important. Mules packed in tools and supplies until a wagon road opened to St. George, Utah, in the 1870s.

CATTLE RANCHING

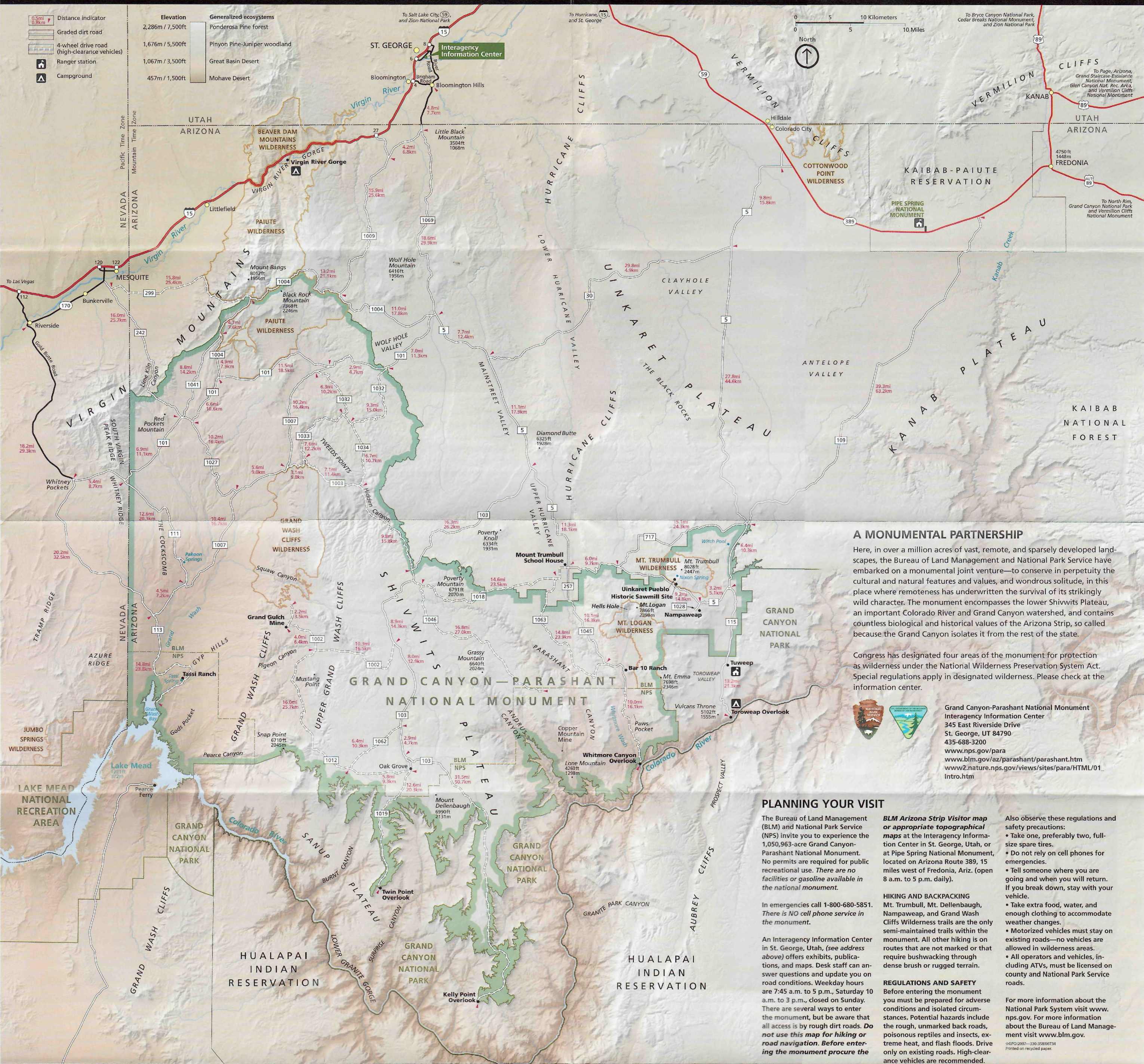


Livestock grazing has been part of Arizona Strip culture since the 1850s. It is still part of the monument's multiple-use management where authorized. Few full-time residents live in this remote area today.

PRESERVATION



Established by presidential proclamation in 2000, this remote national monument includes an array of scientific, natural, cultural, and historic features and opportunities to experience rugged recreation.



PAKOON SPRINGS



Springs or seeps are oases in arid landscapes. Wherever water flows, a green pocket sustains diverse and abundant collections of plants and animals. Impounded now, Pakoon is the monument's largest spring.

NPS/TOM PATTERSON

TASSI RANCH



Tucked in rocky hills beside a flowing spring, a rustic stone house and other ramshackle structures paint a vivid picture of life on a cattle ranch in the 1930s and 1940s.

NPS/TOM PATTERSON

GRAND GULCH MINE



An adobe smelter was built around 1878 to avoid hauling unprocessed ore to a distant railhead. Success was partial: slag was later shipped for more processing. In the early 1900s, 75 to 80 people lived on-site.

NPS/MAX RAMIREZ

WHITMORE OVERLOOK CANYON



A rough dirt road winds into a valley and ends at an area with spectacular views of Grand Canyon and the Colorado River.

NPS/DARLA SIDLES

HELLS HOLE



Hells Hole is an amphitheater eroded from reddish and white Moenkopi Formation rock.

NPS/TOM PATTERSON

NAMPAWEAP



A ½-mile trail takes you to one of the largest petroglyph sites on the Arizona Strip. Hundreds of images pecked into the surface of basalt boulders offer clues about the lives of early native residents.

NPS/KYLE VOYLES