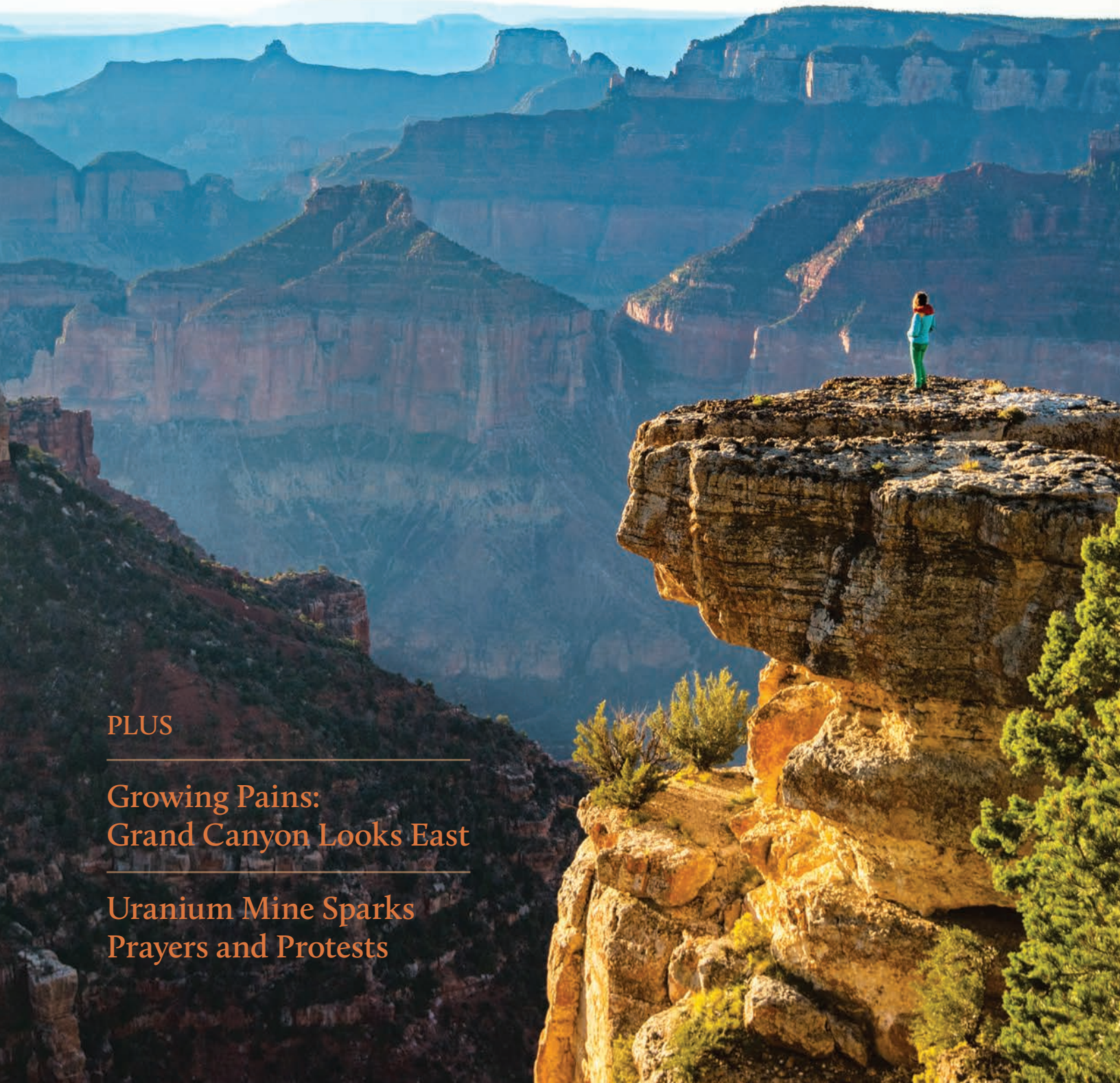
GRAND CANYON TRUST *COLORADO PLATEAU*

FALL/WINTER 2017

Advocate

GRAND CANYON ISSUE

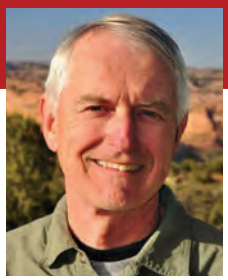
THE 800-MILE HIKE



PLUS

Growing Pains:
Grand Canyon Looks East

Uranium Mine Sparks
Prayers and Protests



LETTER from the Executive Director

BILL HEDDEN

In December 2016, the Johnson family from Las Vegas made their first trip to the Grand Canyon. As their car entered the park, they were heralded as the 6 millionth visitors for the year. Although that milestone turned out to be slightly off—there were 5,969,811 visitors to the park in 2016—the number is still noteworthy because visitation had passed the 5 million mark for the first time in history just the year before, an increase of over 25 percent in those two years alone.

Imagine that you had Grand Canyon Superintendent Chris Lehnertz's job, tasked with accommodating the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations of Johnson families while preserving the natural and cultural resources unimpaired. And imagine doing all that as the flow of pilgrims to the canyon turns into a cataract and budgets stay flat. This is the daunting challenge faced by managers throughout the National Park Service and other land management agencies.

The surprise of our anthill lives in the modern technological world seems to be that natural wonders, like the Grand Canyon, or humbler urban parks, are ever more important for respite and inspiration. We need more such protected places, with adequate budgets, as investments in our sanity.

Seen in this context, President Trump's action ordering a review of 27 national monuments for potential diminishment or outright rescission is exactly the wrong thing to do. Instead, we should be reconsidering our parks and monuments to ask whether they will still be manageable and still be serviceable arks for the native wildlife when visitation is far higher than today and when they are truly islands within lands given over to other uses. Many politically compromised boundaries doubtless should be expanded to encompass entire watersheds or other functional geographic units.

This issue of *The Advocate* considers the way these issues are playing out at the Grand Canyon. President Obama considered and rejected the idea of creating a monument to encompass the watersheds around the canyon, kicking the can down the road. The integrity of this utterly priceless treasure is threatened from nearly every side. Some questions, like whether we should mine uranium on the brink of the canyon, ought to be no-brainers. Others, like how we will accommodate the legitimate desire of millions and millions of humans to experience the place without ruining it, are deep posers that take us to further questions about what kind of a people we want to be and what kind of world we want to live in.

Sincerely,

Bill Hedden

Bill Hedden

ON THE COVER

Point Imperial, North Rim, Grand Canyon National Park.

BLAKE MCCORD, BLAKEMCCORDPHOTO.COM

EDITOR'S NOTE

The views expressed by the contributors in this issue are solely their own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Grand Canyon Trust.

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PLUS

Is Grand Canyon ESCALADE the Next "SAVIOR"?

By Sarana Riggs

The confluence of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers, site of the proposed Escalade resort and tram.
JACK DYKINGA

The Grand Canyon Escalade has been a heated debate since it first made its appearance in 2012. This 420-acre resort would include restaurants, retail stores, an RV park, a gas station, hotels, and, of course, the main attraction: a gondola to the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

Sarana Riggs stands on the rim where developers want to build the Escalade.

The proposal has divided the Navajo Nation and the local community of Bodaway-Gap, Arizona, near the east rim of the Grand Canyon. I've been helping out Save the Confluence, a group of Navajo families who oppose the project, since 2012. The Grand Canyon Trust supports the families in their efforts to protect the canyon and their traditional ways of life. But as a Navajo woman and a mother of two boys, my connection to fighting this proposal is personal.

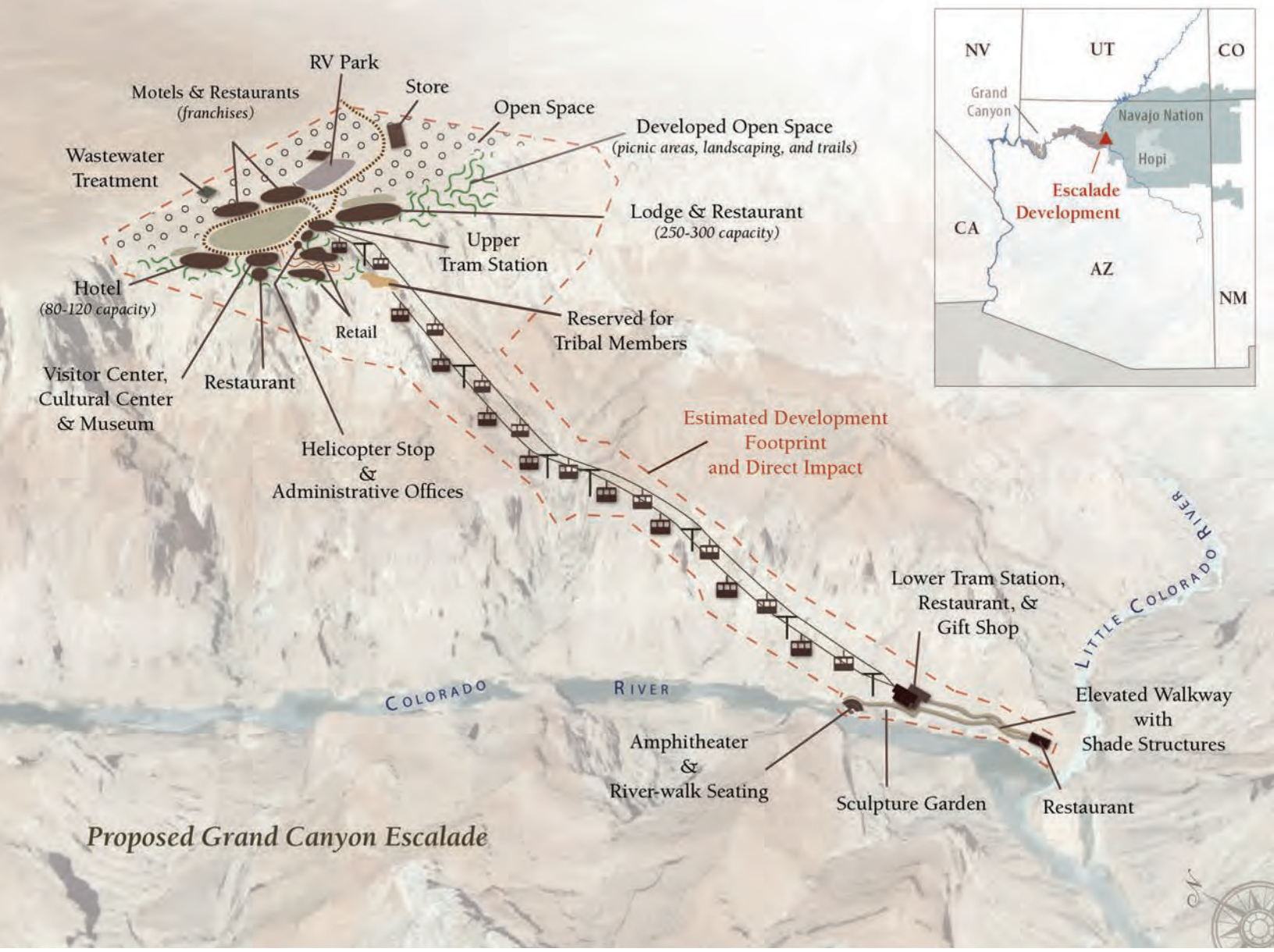
Escalade's principal partner and biggest advocate is Scottsdale developer R. Lamar Whitmer. Speaking to National Geographic about the planned resort in 2016, Whitmer promised, "We're going to employ an awful lot of people in an impoverished area and help them save their culture. What's better than that?" In July 2017, he shared his high hopes with the Navajo Times, the tribe's largest newspaper, saying, "Not just Navajos, but other people who will come here. They'll be inspired, they'll hear the stories, and they'll be better people."

It's hard not to be swayed by the promise of jobs, revenue, and much-needed infrastructure. These are hot topics at local chapter meetings all across the Navajo Nation, with employment being one of the top priorities. For some, the resort is a tangible option for individuals who want to support their families and stay closer to home where they can care for elders and be nearer to their culture. With the resort comes the promise of running water and electricity, luxuries for many in the Bodaway-Gap area, where people drive at least 30 miles one-way to get water. And supposedly, revenues from the project would save the Navajo Nation from the loss of royalties from Navajo Generating Station after the coal-fired power plant closes in 2019. But the nation would receive only a small percentage of the profits, not nearly enough once divided among 110 chapters and many government departments.

The idea of saving our culture, which Whitmer brings up, is very much on our minds. We are a sovereign tribe known as Diné. Since first contact, there have been people trying to "save our souls," lift us out of poverty, and, in the process, take away our identity and our sense of who we are, mostly by force.

It has been nearly 150 years since the Navajo people were released from Bosque Redondo in New Mexico. Only a few generations ago, our Diné ancestors were forcibly removed from their homeland, known as Dinétah, and marched to Fort Sumner, New Mexico, which operated much like a concentration camp. In exchange for being allowed to return home, our ancestors signed a treaty that gave up their freedom and our rights as Diné and promised to live within an assigned boundary imposed by the United States government. In 1868, our ancestors returned home. As a people, we have been trying to heal from this trauma ever since.

Within the treaty came a mandate that all Navajo children be educated. Old forts were converted into schools, housing children from all corners of



the Navajo Nation. This system of boarding schools took its cues from Richard Pratt's view on indoctrination in the late 19th century: "kill the Indian, and save the man." All Diné children were forced to speak English and punished if they were caught speaking their native tongue, including traditional prayers. The legacy of assimilation into mainstream society lives on in our youth today. The loss of cultural identity and language are of great concern for all Diné families.

After the Long Walk, the Navajo Nation Council was created in the 1920s to negotiate deals on natural resources that lay underneath Dinétah. Corporations moved in to stake claims on oil, uranium, coal, and natural gas, and with them came promises: jobs, water lines, electricity, and revenue for the Navajo Nation. The newly established government gave up lands, water, valuable resources, and our identity in exchange for these promises. Decades later, we are facing the heavy burdens of hundreds of abandoned uranium mines, drought, and mismanaged funds. And many of our people have yet to see water or electric lines to our homes. Those who were relocated so that companies could get to the mineral wealth beneath their homes now have no place to return.

It's hard not to be swayed by the promise of jobs, revenue, and much-needed infrastructure. These are hot topics at local chapter meetings all across the Navajo Nation, with employment being one of the top priorities.

This Escalade resort is like all the other quick-money schemes we've seen,

A resort is not a temple; it does nothing to save our heritage, culture, or our identity as human beings. Exactly the opposite; it would show how money and man have once again attacked our culture in the name of prosperity, tourism, and the American dream.

The turquoise waters of the Little Colorado River are sacred to several Southwestern tribes. JACK DYKINGA

lining the developers' pockets at our expense. But its promise comes at a very different price. Whitmer says that he will help save our culture. Which begs the question: How can you save culture by destroying culture? How is he saving our culture by building a resort at the western edge of Dinétah that would deface a sacred place?

Whitmer will never understand what this western boundary at the canyon means to us poor, underprivileged, third-world Indians. He does not understand the songs, prayers, and meaning behind our offerings. He does not speak or understand the languages of the many tribes he will be hurting. Our connection to this land and what our ancestors have gone through to preserve and protect it for our children is something we feel in our hearts and in our spirits. For us, the Grand Canyon is and forever remains a place of reverence and of spirituality. Blasting away at canyon walls to anchor a tramway here at the western edge of our nation and erecting buildings on the canyon's rim will not symbolize and show its sacredness. A resort is not a temple; it does nothing to save our heritage, culture, or our identity as human beings. Exactly the opposite; it would show how money and man have once again attacked our culture in the name of prosperity, tourism, and the American dream. And try as he might to understand our religion by visiting and hiring a medicine man to perform a ceremony, Whitmer remains another ignorant outsider. He will never understand what it means to be Diné, Hopi, Havasupai, Hualapai, or any of the many other tribes who regard the Grand Canyon as home, a place of emergence, or a final resting place.

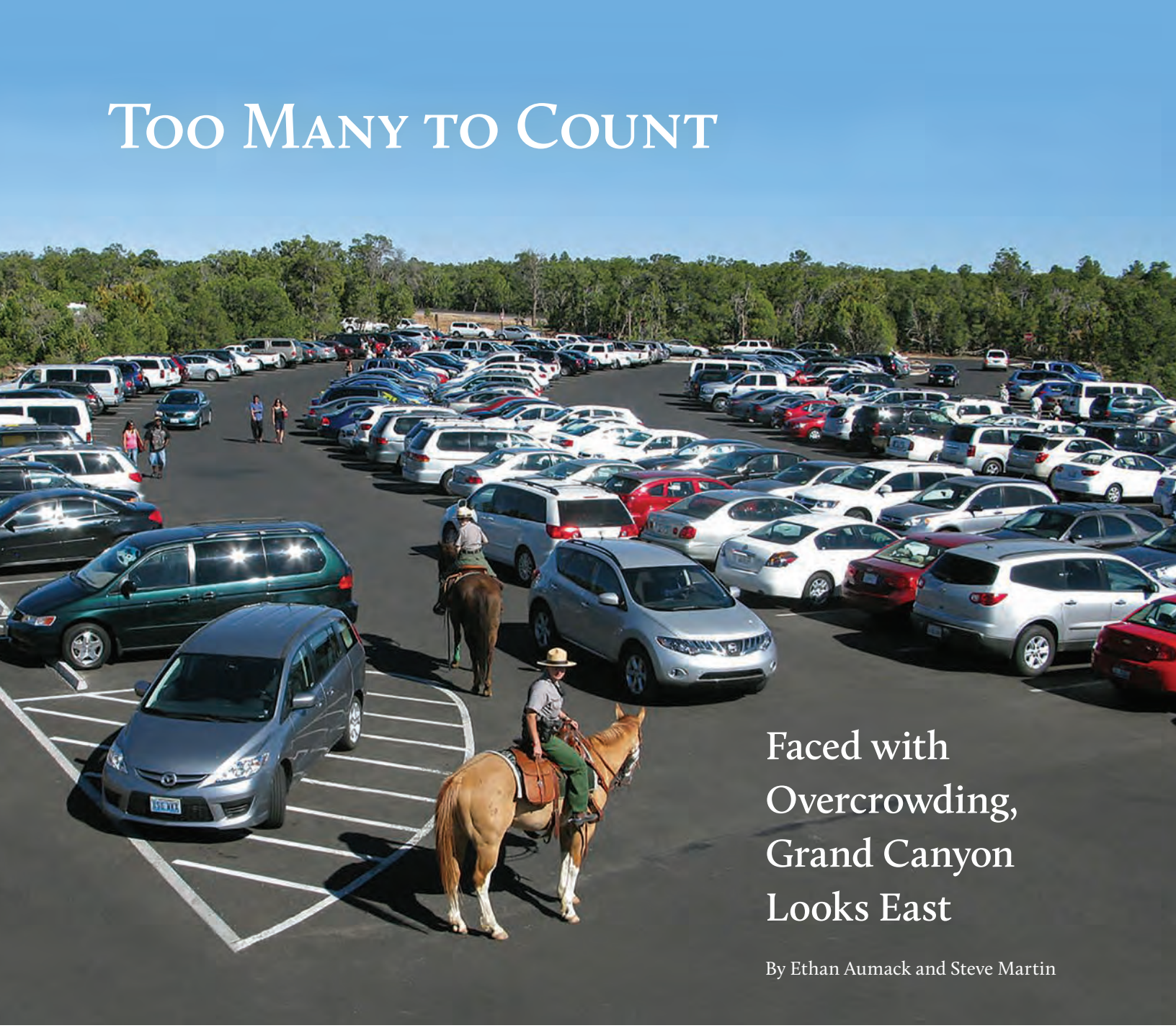
Escalade is one of many monsters we are fighting around the Grand Canyon. All tribes who have ancestral rights to the Grand Canyon are facing threats from uranium mining, contamination, exploitation, water shortages, overgrazing, and relocation to make room for developments, mining, and resource extraction. The truth in this whole matter is that commercialism and the shortsighted quest for prosperity are destroying our homelands. When our homelands are destroyed by resorts, pipelines, mines, and wells, and overrun with people, what will then happen to the people of the land? What will happen to our environment, our history, and all that we have worked to protect for future generations? The balance of life is shifting, and we are not paying attention to the signs of climate change, movements of Mother Earth, and

living beings disappearing from this world. The world has already tried to erase us from existence. It did not work, so the new strategy is to have our own people consent to erasure. We must stand up and fight for what is ours using every tool in our reach, from the laws already in place, to laws that must be created to further protect and preserve our ancestral lands, to, if need be, resistance. As long as there is breath in our bodies, we will honor and uphold what was taught to us by our elders.

Sarana Riggs is Chishi Diné from Big Mountain, Arizona. Since 2012, she has worked with Save the Confluence (savetheconfluence.com) to oppose Escalade. In 2015, she joined the Grand Canyon Trust where she works on Native America volunteer and Grand Canyon projects.

(Top) Larry Foster of Save the Confluence explains how the Escalade legislation's sponsor pulled the bill rather than have it voted down in the summer session of the Navajo Nation Council.
(Bottom) Students gaze at the confluence while learning about the proposed Escalade development.

Too Many to Count



Faced with Overcrowding, Grand Canyon Looks East

By Ethan Aumack and Steve Martin

WHEN JAMES AND ABIGAIL JOHNSON set out with their children, Sophia and Elijah, to visit Grand Canyon National Park for the first time in December 2016, they had no idea of the welcome that awaited them.

As they passed the park gates, the Johnson kids were crowned. The family met the park's superintendent, Chris Lehnertz, and posed for photos, told they'd nudged the number of annual visitors to the Grand Canyon up over the 6 million mark, a far cry from the 37,745 the park welcomed in 1919, the year it opened. But with millions of visitors arriving each year and aging infrastructure groaning in protest, some

(Left) Park rangers patrol an overly crowded parking lot on the South Rim. MICHAEL QUINN, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
(Below Left) Meet the Johnson Family. MICHAEL QUINN, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
(Right) Desert Watchtower, South Rim, Grand Canyon National Park. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

are asking: How many more can the Grand Canyon take? Simply counting them is a challenge. When the final numbers were tallied, it turned out 2016 visitation to the Grand Canyon was actually just shy of 6 million—still a park record—enough people to join hands and form a human chain between Los Angeles and New York City and back. The Johnsons, one link in that chain, were also part of a huge uptick in visits to national parks.

Millions answered the call to "find your park" in 2016, the National Park Service's centennial year. This type of marketing push dates back to the 1950s, when the park service rode the post-World War II outdoor recreation wave. And it works. Over 88 million people visited national parks and preserves in 2016, almost 10 percent more than the year before. Some of this can be attributed to centennial marketing, but there has also been a dramatic increase in international visitation; over one-third of visitors are estimated to come from abroad. At Grand Canyon National Park, the spike was even bigger. Grand Canyon visits have jumped more than 25 percent over the last two years alone.

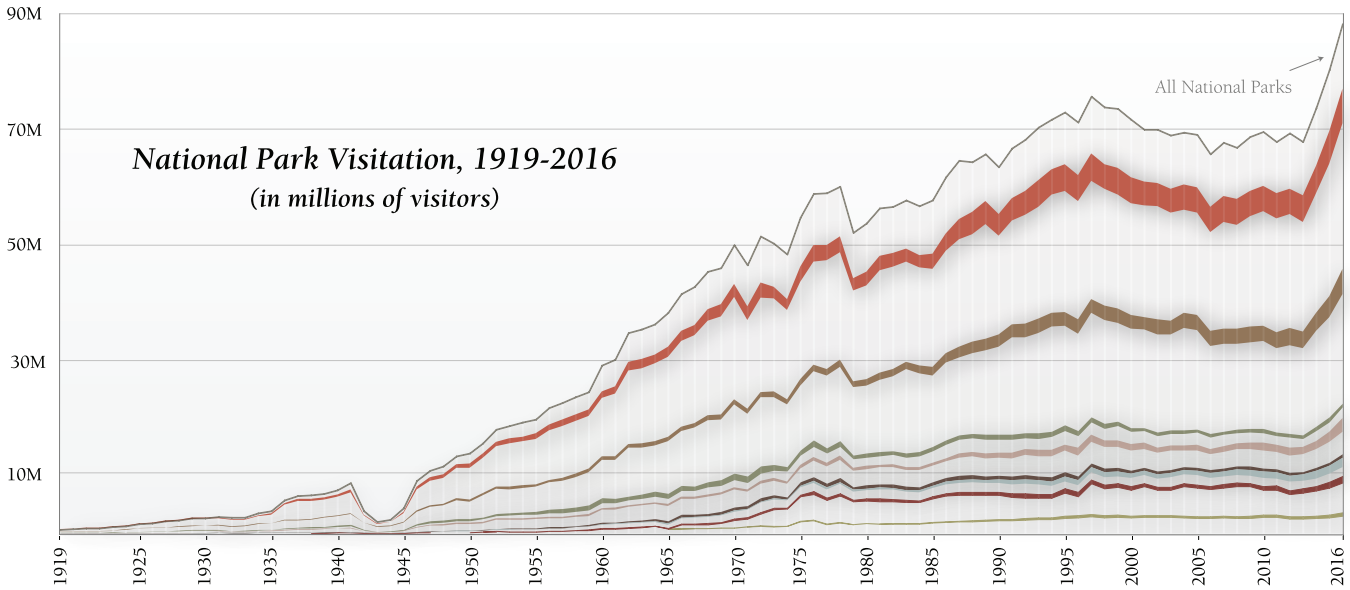
But while the marketing message is tried and true—call Americans to their national parks and they will come—at least one thing has changed. In the 1950s, the federal government invested billions in today's dollars to support increased visitation. Unfortunately, the National Park Service's 100th anniversary saw no comparable budget increase. This leaves the park service in the difficult position of having to do more with less.

The centennial brought a flood of new visitors to parks already struggling to juggle too many visitors on too little funding, while slapping Band-Aids on crumbling infrastructure. Across the Colorado Plateau, parks, including

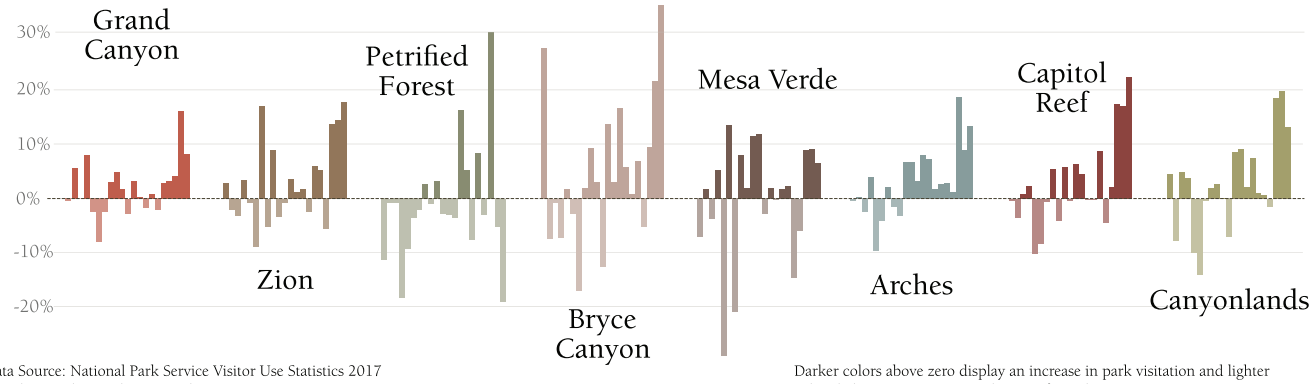
Millions answered the call to "find your park" in 2016, the National Park Service's centennial year.

Arches, Zion, Bryce, and Grand Canyon, are facing record numbers of visitors. On Memorial Day 2015, the Utah Highway Patrol closed the entrance to Arches National Park. The line of cars waiting to get in was over a mile long, creating a traffic hazard as it backed out onto U.S. Highway 191. At the Devils Garden Trailhead, 300 cars were wedged into 190 spaces, and on the road to Delicate Arch, the state of Utah's unofficial symbol, parked cars lined both sides of the road for half a mile leading up to the parking area. Zion National Park is considering a year-round online reservation system for its popular trails and attractions in response to a massive surge in visitation. The same overcrowding exists at the Grand Canyon, where the current transportation plan was designed to accommodate 5.48 million people by 2020, but visitation blew past that number in 2015, a full five years early. No plan exists to handle the current crush. If nothing is done, massive resort developments, like the proposed Grand Canyon Escalade gondola and the 3 million square feet of commercial space Italian developer Stilo proposes for the park gateway community of Tusayan, may rush in to fill the void.

In 2019, Grand Canyon National Park will turn 100. Let's put that in context. Humans have called the Grand Canyon home, and a sacred place, for thousands of years. For most of that time, human impacts on the canyon were minimal. Over the course of the last 100 years, however, we have changed the canyon at an astounding rate. Visitation has skyrocketed. Uranium mining has contaminated land and water. Glen Canyon Dam has degraded the Colorado River corridor. Helicopters throng to noisy flight corridors over the park, like Quartermaster Canyon in western Grand Canyon. Climate change creeps into even the wildest, most remote reaches of the park. And to top it all off, developers cook up massive tourism ventures, threatening the sacred confluence with a gondola tramway resort and angling to drill more wells in the already crowded Tusayan area, where they could suck Grand Canyon springs dry.



Percent Change in Visitation, 1996-2016



Data Source: National Park Service Visitor Use Statistics 2017
Visualization by Stephanie Smith

Darker colors above zero display an increase in park visitation and lighter colors below zero represent a decrease from the prior year.

Most visitors to the canyon cluster around the South Rim, but the Grand Canyon snakes along 277 sinuous miles.

The park is hard-pressed to respond to these threats when it's already facing hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure backlog, including everything from the failing transcanyon water pipeline to trails and visitor facilities badly in need of maintenance and repair. There is no indication that the Trump administration will ride to the rescue. The president's 2018 budget request would likely cut over 1,000 park service jobs. Remaining employees—already overloaded—would face heavier workloads. Park lands would suffer.

As we look to the second century of Grand Canyon National Park's life, the list of threats is long, but the challenge of ever-increasing visitation is near the top. There's no cap on the number of people who can visit the Grand Canyon in a year. Should there be? Should we be thinking about a Grand Canyon lottery? A waiting list or an online reservation system? It's hard to think of an idea less popular than closing the gates at the Grand Canyon. Just ask business owners. Though estimates vary, studies suggest the Grand Canyon drives almost a billion dollars in revenue for the region each year. Local, state, tribal, and national leaders should push President Trump and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to celebrate the park's centennial by making sure it has the funding it needs to continue as an economic engine.

Sunset at Mather Point, South Rim, Grand Canyon National Park. MICHAEL QUINN, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Support from Washington, D.C. isn't the only answer. Most visitors to the canyon cluster around the South Rim, but the Grand Canyon snakes along 277 sinuous miles. Dispersing increasing numbers of visitors, especially to the east, could alleviate stress on overburdened infrastructure and create more opportunity for Grand Canyon tribes. While visitation numbers cannot be managed sustainably if they grow endlessly, environmentally and culturally sensitive ecotourism dispersed to the east could be profitable for tribes, better for the long-term health of the canyon, and enriching for visitors.

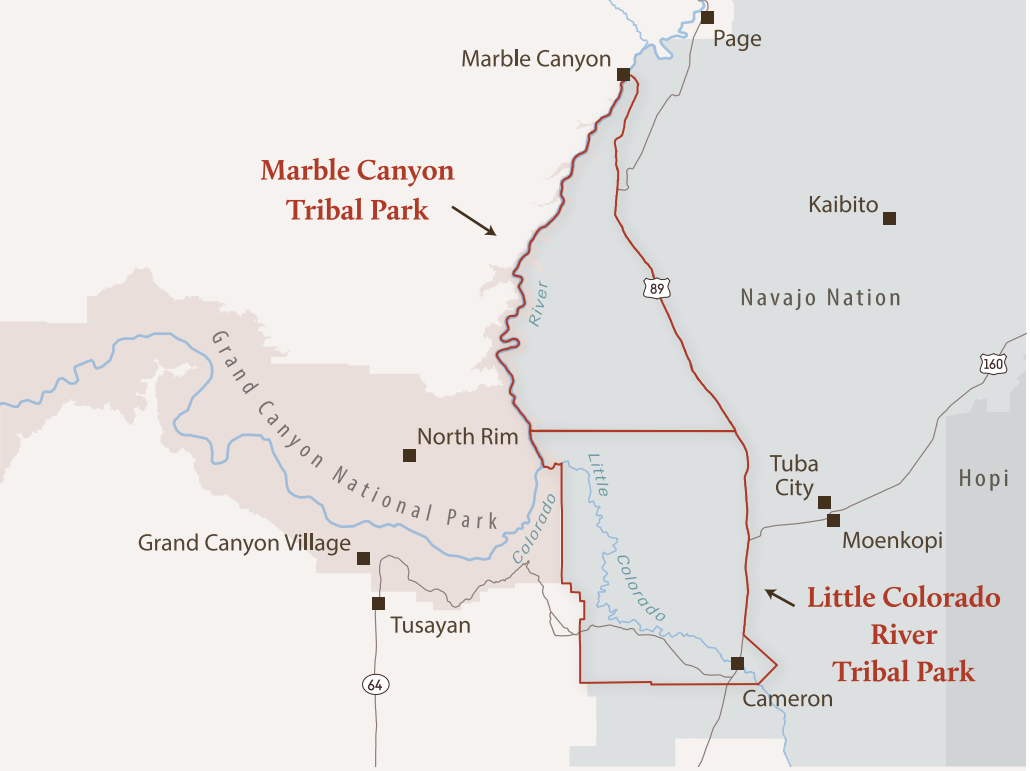
The Navajo community of Cameron, with support from the Diné hózhó L3C and the Grand Canyon Trust Native America Program, is working on a tourism plan for the western Navajo region, along the border with the national park. This includes Marble Canyon and the corridor that runs from the Grand Canyon to Cameron along the Little Colorado River, a breathtaking landscape with sweeping views.

The National Park Service plan for Desert View envisions ways to manage growing tourism, including a Desert View orientation and transit center that could serve as the transportation hub for the East Rim. There, visitors could park and board buses to all South Rim destinations, rent bicycles, or meander along pedestrian rim trails. The Desert View area has been a gathering place for native people for thousands of years and today serves as a cultural heritage site inside the park; it's a natural and cultural gateway to the Navajo and Hopi reservations. The park service should work with the tribes on other ways to ease the overcrowding. The law already provides a pathway for this kind of partnership.

The Grand Canyon Enlargement Act of 1975 encourages the secretary of the interior to enter into cooperative agreements with interested Indian tribes to provide for "the protection and interpretation of the Grand Canyon in its entirety."

At the invitation of the Navajo Nation, the park service could partner with the tribe on well-planned developments outside of the park. Of course, for a partnership like this to succeed, the park service must recognize the sovereignty of the tribes to control and develop their lands while protecting their natural and cultural resources.

New economic opportunities like this—especially for the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe—are important. The tribes will bear the brunt of Navajo Generating Station closing; the coal-fired power plant, a major source of revenue for both tribes, is expected to shut its doors in 2019. The need for jobs and revenue in the western part of the Navajo Nation is one of the factors currently driving the Grand Canyon Escalade tramway proposal. The



The Navajo Grand Canyon Experience

By Tony Skrelunas

Along with incredible views, the eastern edge of the Grand Canyon offers something extra: places where visitors can walk up to the rim to hear and feel the great river and canyon up close. The mostly traditional Diné families who live here are not keen to see large numbers of visitors debark in this quiet, rugged, and remote region of the Navajo Nation. They want to protect their land, water, and traditional ways of life.

The Navajo Parks and Recreation Department has the complex and delicate task of managing the sprawling Little Colorado River Gorge and Marble Canyon Navajo tribal parks that encompass much of this eastern rim. In addition to operating on a limited budget, the department has to navigate jurisdictional grey areas, since the parks overlap with lands overseen by the local Cameron and Bodaway-Gap chapter governments, and respect the lifestyles and culture of traditional people who herd sheep, farm, and live inside the tribal park boundaries. And then there's the historic boundary dispute with the National Park Service.

Given these challenges, two years ago, the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department decided to line out a plan to strengthen the Navajo park system by developing these two East Rim tribal parks as pilots of what could be done with other iconic areas across Navajo land. The Grand Canyon Trust serves as an adviser to the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department planning team, supporting its work to gather stories from local elders and seek community input to help determine what places should be open to visitors, how they should be experienced, and by how many people. The department is also working to identify lands that could be better managed by the local Navajo chapter communities as well as shared management zones with Grand Canyon National Park. By giving locals a voice and an opportunity to reap some of the rewards of attracting visitors to the tribal parks, the department is setting a precedent for future park and visitor planning that respects the Navajo way of life.

Tony Skrelunas directs the Grand Canyon Trust's Native America Program.

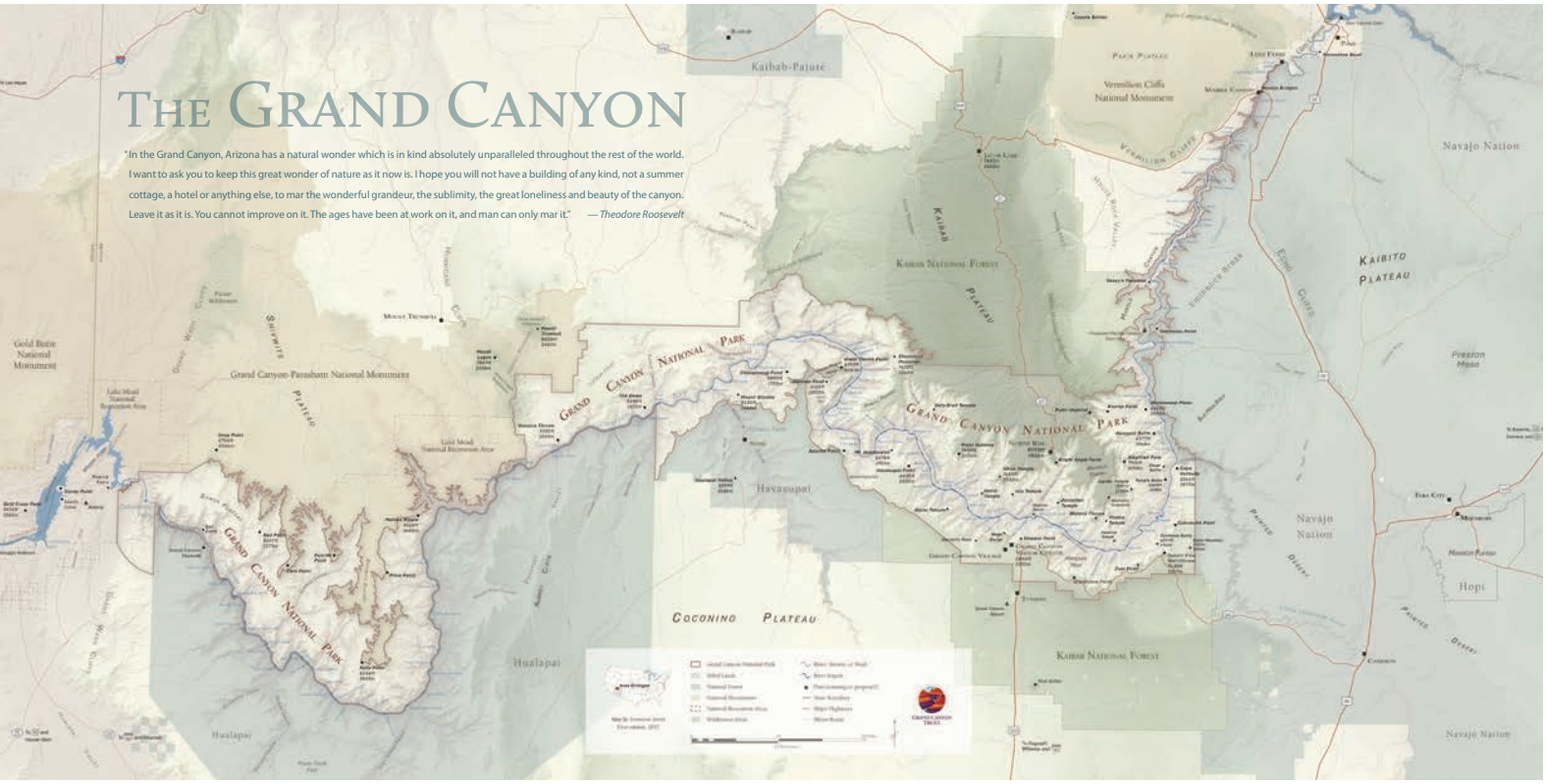
Traffic jam at the South Rim entrance station.
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

continued from page 13

Navajo Nation and other Grand Canyon tribes deserve to benefit from the lucrative tourism market in northern Arizona. Much of the Grand Canyon landscape is tribal land, and the millions of dollars of new tourist revenue flowing in should also support and benefit the tribes. Sitting down at the planning table together to find ways to welcome an ever-increasing number of visitors while protecting the entire natural and cultural landscape of the Grand Canyon is the best way to begin addressing the demand responsibly. If the park service and tribes don't step up to the plate, private developers will.

Big birthdays offer a chance to reflect. Grand Canyon National Park's upcoming centennial is that rare opportunity to plan for the next 100 years and to work together to make room for the millions of people from all over the world who will make the same trek the Johnsons did, to stand at the edge of the canyon and marvel.

Grand Canyon Trust Board Member Steve Martin served as superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park from 2007 to 2011 and has been a loyal park visitor, spending more than two years of his life below the rim. Grand Canyon Trust Conservation Director Ethan Aumack is also a repeat offender when it comes to visiting the Grand Canyon; he grew up hiking and boating in the park.



The Grand Canyon

"In the Grand Canyon, Arizona has a natural wonder which is in kind absolutely unparalleled throughout the rest of the world. I want to ask you to keep this great wonder of nature as it now is. I hope you will not have a building of any kind, not a summer cottage, a hotel or anything else, to mar the wonderful grandeur, the sublimity, the great loneliness and beauty of the canyon. Leave it as it is. You cannot improve on it. The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it." — *Theodore Roosevelt*

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BLAKE MCCORD

Holy Wind

By Emily Thompson

The Diné word for it is nilch'i. At 2 a.m. it tore me out of my sleep in the bed of the pickup truck. It ripped off my Pendleton blanket, which flew through the air like a Frisbee. The kitchen table crashed. Pots and pans clanged against the ground. If you've ever been out on the Navajo reservation in the spring, you know 60 mph winds are not uncommon. Hardly able to keep my feet on the ground, I chased down my blanket and ran over to make sure the wind hadn't carried our students off into the Little Colorado River Gorge, tents and all. I discovered a pile of crumpled tents, broken tent poles, and half the group wide-eyed and laughing, taking shelter in their 12-passenger van, where they spent the rest of the night.

My coworker Sarana and I were leading a volunteer trip of mostly Navajo students and their teachers from Summit High School, an alternative school for at-risk students. RaeAnn Wanland, who sponsors the school's Outdoor Service Club, had been searching for learning opportunities on the Navajo Nation, and a Grand Canyon Trust volunteer trip seemed like a good fit, getting students out of the classroom to get their hands dirty and learn by doing. Most of the students hadn't spent much time camping and were new to conservation. Even the word was new. Several were originally from the rez and were now living in Flagstaff, removed from their native culture.

After shaking the sand out of our ears and recovering most of our kitchen, the wind died down long enough to cook breakfast, break camp, and get ready for the workday. Sleep or no sleep, spirits were high.

Our project that week was to help several local Navajo artists repair their vendor booths at the Little Colorado River Gorge Tribal Park, known as "Second Overlook," near the east entrance to Grand Canyon National Park. The wind that had dismantled our camp the night before had taken its toll on their booths over the years, and it was time for a face-lift.

Navajo artists were once a fixture in Grand Canyon National Park, selling crafts and jewelry. However, with the emergence of concessionaires—private businesses with contracts to sell goods or services within park boundaries—native artists were pushed out. In the 1960s, they got permission from the Navajo Nation to set up vending booths along Highway 64, but vendors continue to face challenges from the tribal government, and there is much uncertainty about their future in Navajo tribal parks.

Second Overlook consists of a poorly signed pullout and parking area for around 20 cars, a short hiking trail leading to several viewpoints of the spectacular Little Colorado River Gorge, complete with newly installed native plant and wildlife signs, and several cobbled-together vendor booths where artists sell jewelry and other authentic Navajo crafts.

(Opposite) Students rebuild vendor booths on the east rim of the Grand Canyon. (Above) Sarana Riggs talks with students about the proposed Escalade development.

We were there to support Tony Skrelunas, who directs the Grand Canyon Trust's Native America Program, in his work with the DinéHózhó L3C, a project that aims to develop tourism, agriculture, renewable energy, and retail to keep revenue on the Navajo Nation.

As the wind picked back up, it was easy to understand how Mother Nature had nearly completely destroyed the booths. Tony and the L3C had hired a popular local Navajo contractor named Elmer to rebuild them. Our student volunteers were there to help take down old lumber, build new booths, move rocks, improve the eroded parking areas, and pick up trash.

But first, we spent some time at Desert View, soaking up the magic of the Grand Canyon. Several of our students had never seen the canyon before, so this was a treat. As we huddled together on the rim, the spring winds robbing the warmth from our cores, my colleague Sarana described threats to the canyon, including uranium mining, recreation, and a controversial resort proposal known as Escalade, complete with a tram that would take up to 10,000 people a day down to the confluence of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers, a site sacred to the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, and others. The Trust has worked with the Navajo families of Save the Confluence for the last six years to prevent Escalade from moving forward. It's one thing to learn about these issues in a classroom, but discussing them at the edge of the canyon is much more powerful.

Nilch'i is present here. The canyon breathes. Million-year-old grains of sand are transported from the bottom of the canyon through time and find

Stella Lewis has been selling jewelry at Second Overlook her whole life.

their way into our eyes. Yet we see everything more clearly here.

Back at Second Overlook, Tony explained how the work with the vendors had begun: "A few years ago, the Trust wanted to offer an alternative to the Escalade proposal. We work with communities to plan carefully, looking at culture, local values, the environment, letting them take the lead but providing much-needed support." Building off the success of previous projects, such as the Monument Valley Resort and Visitor Center and businesses on the Hopi reservation, Tony worked with chapter officials from Cameron, Tolani Lake, Coalmine, and Leupp to design a business plan and helped create a limited profit company, DinéHózhó L3C. The L3C pairs investors who want to make a positive social impact and don't need large profits with local businesses on native lands. As an intermediary between the investor and the business owner, DinéHózhó provides guidance to Navajo Nation chapters and supports local entrepreneurs.

Nilch'i is present here.

The canyon breathes.

Million-year-old grains of sand

are transported from the

bottom of the canyon through

time and find their way into

our eyes. Yet we see

everything more clearly here.

With the impending closure of Navajo Generating Station and destructive development proposals like Escalade looming, sustainable economic development on the Navajo Nation is more important than ever. "DinéHózhó is about preserving our culture, our lifeway, and the old economy, and helping to build that capacity for entrepreneurs," Tony explained. Supporting local artists and vendors is at the top of the L3C's list.

Stella, Kenneth, and Curt—the family of artists whose booths needed repair—have been selling their handmade crafts most of their lives. The remnants of the house Stella once lived

in lie just beyond her booth. I stood with Stella in her booth one quiet, windless morning, and she showed me her jewelry with a sort of shy confidence. "I've been doing this since I was in high school, when I started silversmithing. I eventually went back to school, and worked in health care for many years, but now we are back in this business. We come out here nearly every day when we can, selling dreamcatchers, tomahawks, necklaces, and other jewelry. A lot of people don't have jobs, and many young people don't have the opportunity to go to college, so this work is important for people to make money and support themselves," Stella said. "I enjoy being out here and talking to people from all over the world—I learn something new every day!"

With thousands of tourists headed to the east entrance of Grand Canyon National Park along Highway 64 every day, this corridor has great potential for Navajo entrepreneurs. Tony envisions a tribal park of the future that provides an authentic cultural experience: a corral with sheepherding demonstrations, a vending area—complete with wind buffers—where tourists can taste blue-corn mush and mutton stew, and a traditional hogan bed-and-breakfast, powered by renewable energy. The possibility is real, and, as the project takes shape, professional volunteers such as architects, web designers, and business people will be needed to bring a level of expertise to this project that high school students can't.

After several of the local families fed us Navajo tacos, we loaded our tools and gear back into the truck. Visible progress had been made: we'd removed the old, rotten lumber, helped construct a new frame for the booths, pulled invasive weeds, filled potholes in the parking area with gravel, and stuffed five large garbage bags with trash.

Attempting to escape the wind our last night, we camped at Sunset Crater, nestled in the comfort of the wind-breaking ponderosa pines. There we traded wind for another wetter, colder element. In the morning, a student emerged from his snow-covered tent.

"If I was with my family, I'd be complaining," he joked.

Living outdoors takes us away from the comforts of home and reminds us that we are tougher than we think. Back at Trust headquarters, we circled up on the barn patio. Several young men expressed admiration for Elmer and excitement about their newfound construction skills. A Navajo student who hadn't spent any time on the reservation before shared his appreciation for the opportunity to be home on Navajo land, and contemplated a return to his roots after graduation. The wind came up again and again as a shared frustration of the week.

In Navajo, nilch'i can be translated as "wind," or "holy wind." But as happens with attempting to translate many Navajo words into English, it doesn't really capture the full meaning of the word. Nilch'i is more than just wind. It is breath, air, "the source of the means of life."

Perhaps the wind isn't just a force of nature that blows roofs off vendor booths and students out of their tents at night. Perhaps nilch'i is breathing new life into places like Second Overlook. And into projects like DinéHózhó, that will support and preserve centuries-old traditions for centuries to come.

Emily Thompson directs the Grand Canyon Trust's Volunteer Program. She can hold her own in most windstorms.

Ready to volunteer? Find your calling at grandcanyontrust.org/volunteer

Volunteer Spotlight

Denise Hudson

HOMETOWN: Flagstaff, AZ
PROFESSION: Retired mail carrier for the U.S. Postal Service
MEMBER SINCE: 1999
VOLUNTEER SINCE: 2007

Total Hours Donated: 800

WHY I VOLUNTEER

Before I moved out West, conservation wasn't something I really ever thought about. When I moved here, I fell in love. I really got into hiking and backpacking, particularly in the Grand Canyon, and when I retired I needed something to do. I heard about Trust volunteer trips and thought, well, that's right up my alley, so I signed up.

FAVORITE VOLUNTEER MOMENT

It's hard to pick. In 2008, I was on a Warm Fire vegetation monitoring trip on the Kaibab Plateau. It was August, and a huge storm rolled in—it was the same storm that flooded Havasu Canyon that summer. We were camped out in the forest, and the storm sat over us the entire night. The thunder and lightning—it was incredible—and frightening as hell. We were all in our own tents thinking we should get in our cars but were too scared to get out of our tents and run. We got up the next morning—everyone was shell-shocked! I had never experienced anything like that in my life! The funniest part was that the camp "groover" was floating in a pool of water. Thank goodness someone closed the lid!

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED?

In today's political climate, and with underfunded agencies, volunteers can really make a difference. I don't have a science background, but I feel like I understand scientific research methods from being on so many different trips and love to collect and enter data that will actually be used.

Thank you, Denise!

Where Prayers Meet the Sky

A Uranium Mine, a Sacred Mountain, and a Tribe's Struggle to Protect its Drinking Water

By Ellen Heyn

UNDERNEATH A WHITE BIG-TOP TENT on the Kaibab National Forest, Rex Tilousi, a respected Havasupai elder, uses a walker to make his way up to the stage. The former tribal chairman moves more slowly these days compared to when he led the Havasupai Tribe in the fight against Grand Canyon uranium mining in the 1980s, but his devotion is the same.

Red Butte stands in the background, volcanic rocks topping its crimson bulk. He speaks into the mic, addressing the crowd of mostly Havasupai tribal members.

"Welcome to our gathering. This gathering not only involves the Havasu Baaja. It involves a lot of people that have connections to the canyon."

He continues. "What you see behind me is red because it's part of our Grandmother Canyon. This is the lung of our Mother Earth."

Red Butte is the birthplace of the Havasupai people, their place of emergence and traditional winter camp for hunting and gathering before the U.S. government relegated them to Havasu Canyon in the late 1800s. Now a uranium mine sits in a sagebrush-studded meadow less than five miles from their sacred site and about 10 miles from the south rim of Grand Canyon National Park. Tribal members have organized this four-day prayer gathering in opposition, rising each morning before dawn to walk 3.6 miles in peaceful protest to the security gates at Canyon Mine.

Richard Watahomigie, a Havasupai tribal councilman, hopes their message is being heard.

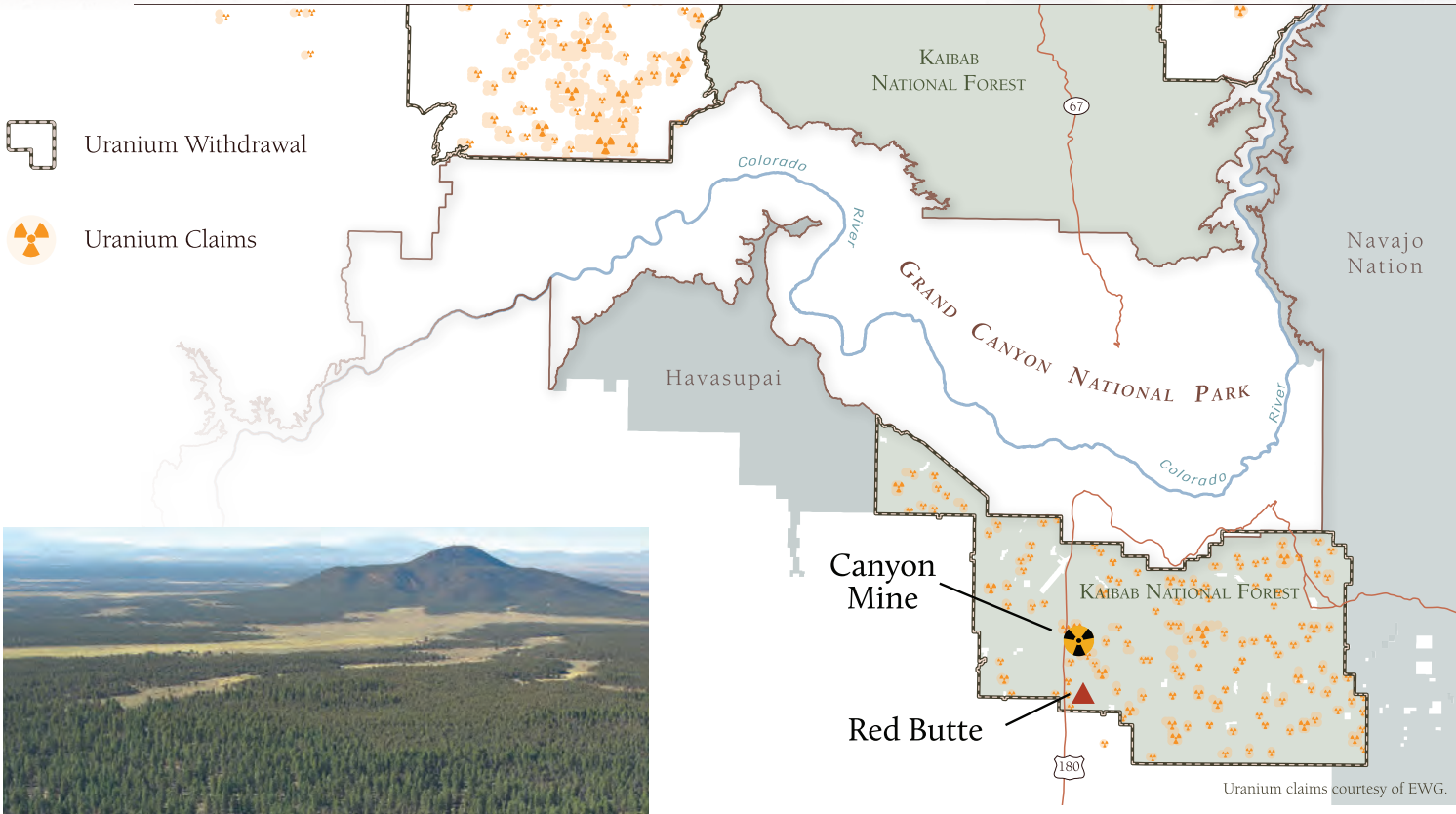
"Our words are our prayers, our sound is our song, and our power is the drumbeat. When we do all that, the wind carries that everywhere, all over the world."

And here, at Red Butte, is where the Havasupai believe their prayers meet the sky. The clouds hovering above the San Francisco Peaks, Tilousi says, are "us blowing our sickness, our prayers, up to the highest crater, to the Great Spirit."

With billows of clouds obscuring the highest point in the state this hot June morning, it certainly seems as though the air is swirling with Havasupai prayers.

(Opposite) James Uqualla, Havasupai cultural leader. JAKE HOYUNGOWA (Above) Signs like this adorn the big-top tent at the June 2017 gathering. BLAKE MCCORD (Below) Havasupai children listen to their elders talk about uranium mining. JAKE HOYUNGOWA Havasupai dancers in front of Red Butte. BLAKE MCCORD

The Havasupai are worried, given the toxic legacy of uranium mining on the Colorado Plateau, that the mine could contaminate their sole source of drinking water.



(Above) Havasupai tribal members and others march in peaceful protest from Red Butte to Canyon Mine. BLAKE MCCORD
(Below) Canyon Mine, with Red Butte rising in the background. BLAKE MCCORD

THE WATERS BELOW

Canyon Mine sits on top of the deep Redwall-Muav Aquifer and shallower "perched" aquifers, which feed the seeps and springs in Havasu Canyon.

Coleen Kaska, a tribal councilwoman, says the beautiful turquoise water in Havasu Canyon is a blessing. Her ancestors have told her that while you don't see the water on the surface near Red Butte, it runs under the earth to their village.

"That's what we're here protecting—the water that we don't see but know is here."

The Havasupai are worried, given the toxic legacy of uranium mining on the Colorado Plateau, that the mine could contaminate their sole source of drinking water.

Watahomigie says of Canyon Mine, "It's too close for comfort. It's scary. It's threatening my life, my people's life, and the waters underneath."

THEN AND NOW

This is not the first time the Havasupai have prayed, danced, and drummed at the base of Red Butte in opposition to uranium mining. The tribe has been actively fighting Canyon Mine since the 1980s, when they first learned of plans to extract uranium ore from their aboriginal lands.

Tilousi said by the time they got word of the mine decades ago, the company had already scraped clean the ground where their ancestors once lived.

The tribe challenged the Kaibab National Forest's decision to approve Canyon Mine in 1986, but they lost their appeal in federal court in 1991. The volatile uranium market, though, would prevent the company from drilling the mine shaft and hauling ore.

When the uranium market finally rebounded in the late 2000s, a frenzy of new uranium claims popped up in the greater Grand Canyon region.

"Once we were shown a map, and it was just dotted with yellow spots, which was for mining claims," says Kaska. "When I think about that—if the water is contaminated, how it will affect our people—it makes me sad."

Canyon Mine threatened to reopen in 2009, prompting the Havasupai to gather at the base of Red Butte to conduct prayer ceremonies and raise awareness of uranium mining around the Grand Canyon.

Now, eight years later, gathered in the same spot in the shadow of Red Butte, the Havasupai are again praying for their sacred mountain, water, and future generations who will inherit this fight.

"It's just the same as it was then. Every time they [the mine owners] bring the issue up, or make a new development, we're not going to let it happen. We're not going to give up," says Watahomigie.

While the persistence and stance of the Havasupai Tribe have not wavered in the eight years between gatherings, a lot has changed in the intervening years. Red Butte became a traditional cultural property, a designation that requires tribal consultation for any federal development that could impact the site (uranium mining, for example). The U.S. Geological Survey found that 15 springs and five wells near uranium mines in Grand Canyon watersheds have dissolved uranium concentrations that exceed safe drinking-water standards. And, in 2012, then Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar issued a 20-year mineral withdrawal, banning all new uranium mines around the Grand Canyon.

The U.S. Geological Survey found that 15 springs and five wells near uranium mines in Grand Canyon watersheds have dissolved uranium concentrations that exceed safe drinking-water standards.

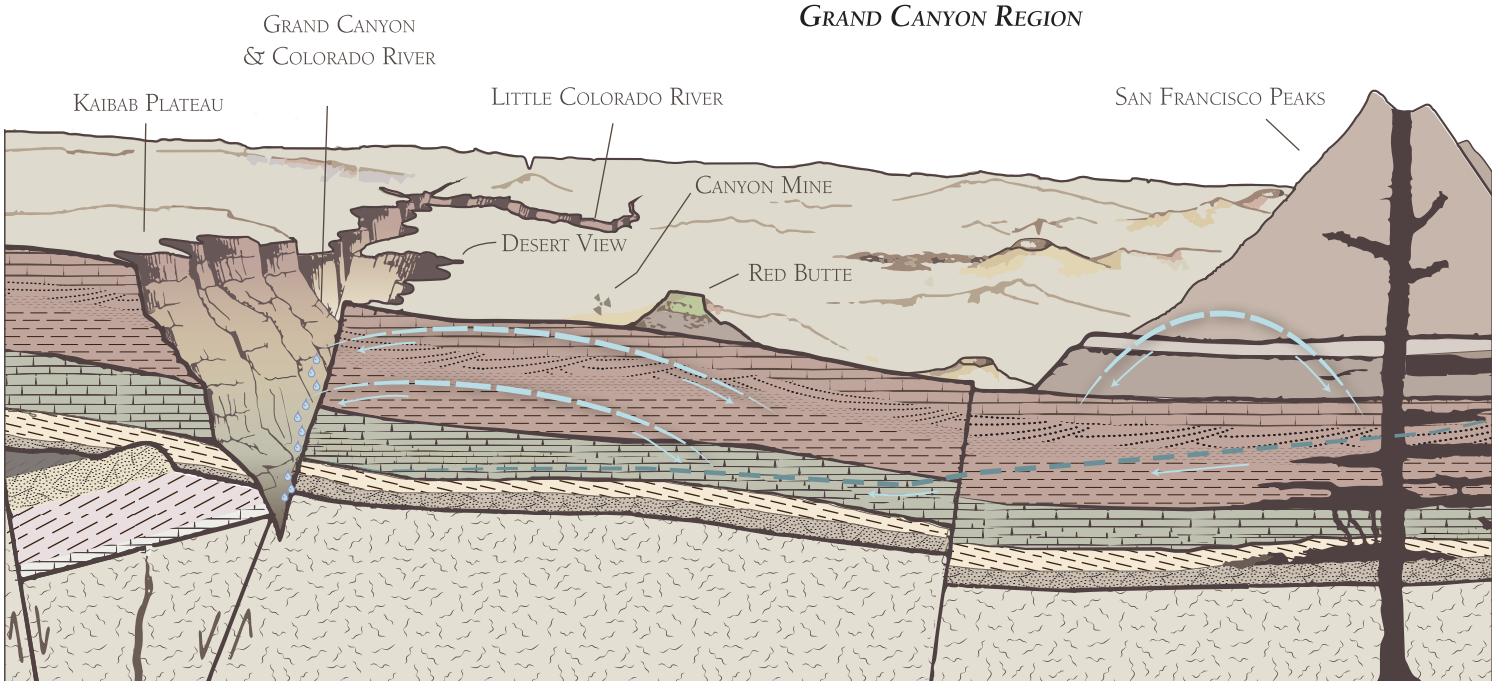
Despite these advancements, the Forest Service has allowed Canyon Mine to resume operations more than 30 years after its original approval without a single revision or update to its 1986 plan of operations.

"We were given the responsibility to protect and preserve for those who are yet to come. We have a job to do," says Tilousi. "The rock writing tells us: protect this place, guard this place, this is your home."

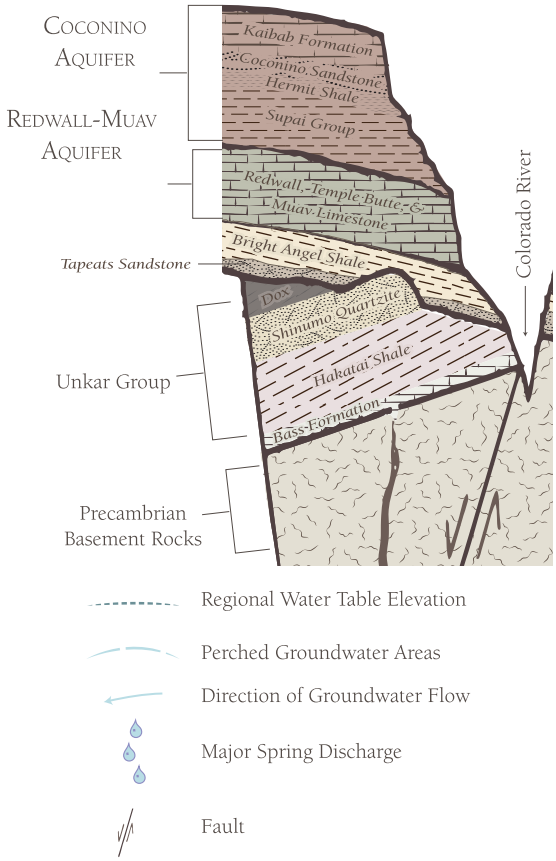
The Havasupai Tribe, the Grand Canyon Trust, and others are challenging the Forest Service's decision in court, asking for tribal consultation and a new environmental impact statement evaluating the mine. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in the case in December 2016, and the final ruling is expected any day.

In the meantime, operators at Canyon Mine have perforated many of the

Hydrogeologic Cross Section of the Grand Canyon Region



Source: Generalized and modified from Flynn and Bills, 2002 and Zion Natural History Association, *Cross Section of the Grand Canyon -San Francisco Peaks - Verde Valley Region*, 1975
Graphic by Stephanie Smith



shallow aquifers in the final stages of drilling the mine shaft. An already-full containment pond meant the owners needed to find some place to put water that had filled the shaft. So, water cannons shot sprays of radioactive mist into the air this April—an attempt to speed up evaporation. Tests of the pond water show a dissolved uranium concentration more than four times the federal drinking-water standard.

"The water that we're trying to protect is not just for our benefit. It's for everyone's benefit," says Kaska.

Over 26 million people across the Southwest depend on the Colorado River for drinking water, and while the aforementioned lawsuit might not stop Energy Fuels Resources from extracting uranium ore at Canyon Mine, it could force the Forest Service to take a fresh look at the mine and acknowledge a quarter-century of new information, requiring monitoring wells to be put in place.

Currently, the best protection against uranium mining around the Grand Canyon is the 20-year ban on new claims. But it's temporary, and at risk of being overturned.

One of President Trump's executive orders calls for a review of Obama- era energy regulations, and it's possible that a reversal of the uranium ban could make it onto the final list of recommendations coming out of the Department of the Interior. In eastern Arizona's Mohave County, the board of supervisors wrote a letter asking Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to lift the ban. And not surprisingly, the National Mining Association and others are fighting to get it tossed in court. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals should issue a ruling at any time.

Kaska, though, sees a disconnect between lawmakers and her people in Supai village.

"It's hard to convince them, the decision-makers, because they don't come see this area. They're in a cool office, sitting with their telephones in air-conditioning. Sitting at their desks, making decisions for my people."

FIGHT OF A LIFETIME

Decades have passed since the Havasupai first started fighting Canyon Mine, the mark of time showing in the greying hair of early activists like Tilousi and Kaska's father, Daniel, who sits in a wheelchair in the audience now, but eight years ago was on stage leading songs and dances.

A changing of the guard is happening here at Red Butte, as new leaders prepare to take on the tribe's challenge. The fight is far from over.

Leota Watahomigie, who helped organize the gathering, says, "I just want my grandchildren to stand up and fight for the land. Stand up to that power. Continue the fight, even when I'm not there."

Some kids are giggling and running around the tent when James Uqualla, a cultural leader, calls them up front. They stand at attention and later join hands with elders in a circle dance, shuffling clockwise, in unison, to the steady beat of Tilousi's drum.

Kaska leads the call-and-response:

"What do we want?"

"No uranium."

"When do we want it?"

"Now!"

As the dance continues, a few young girls chant "leave it in the ground" an octave higher than the other rally calls.

Old and young alike, the Havasupai are committed to protecting Red Butte and the waters underneath it. Kaska's father once told her that it's going to be hard, and it's going to take years.

"We're still in the fight, we're still in the struggle, and we will continue to do so as long as the water runs through our village," she says.

When she's not writing, Communications & Outreach Associate Ellen Heyn is hitting the trails for the Colorado Plateau Explorer. Find some of Ellen's favorite hikes at grandcanyontrust.org/hikes

(Below) Water cannons shoot sprays of radioactive mist into the air at Canyon Mine in April 2017. BLAKE MCCORD (Right) Protest march to Canyon Mine. BLAKE MCCORD

UPDATE: Bears Ears National Monument

"Sacred prayers have been answered with the designation of Bears Ears National Monument, and what is sacred cannot be reversed."

—James Adakai, Diné, Bears Ears commissioner and Navajo Nation Oljato Chapter president.

BACKGROUND

On April 26, 2017, in a ceremony flanked by Utah Governor Gary Herbert and Senator Orrin Hatch, President Trump issued Executive Order 13792. The order called for Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to review 27 national monuments designated since 1996, a list bookended by two southern Utah monuments: Grand Staircase-Escalante (1996) and Bears Ears (2016).

In May, Secretary Zinke took a whirlwind tour of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase. By air, car, horseback, and on foot, Secretary Zinke let his trip be guided by Governor Herbert's and Senator Hatch's offices. He spent nearly all his time with anti-monument politicians and vocal monument opponents, meeting with monument backers for less than two hours during his four days in Utah. He did not visit the pro-monument town of Bluff or any Native American communities, and refused to take a single meeting with supporters of Grand Staircase, including the Boulder-Escalante Chamber of Commerce. His only interface with the public was a daily 20-minute media availability, and a short stop at an anti-monument rally in Blanding, Utah.

Still, there were some surprises in store for the secretary, including the crowd of monument defenders who showed up at his first media availability—where his motorcade idled for five minutes before he exited his vehicle—and some notable PR embarrassments. Secretary Zinke shook his finger at a young Diné monument advocate, scolding her to "Be nice! Don't be rude!" On the runway at the Kanab airport, his parting words to a crowd of Grand Staircase supporters chanting "talk to us" from behind the security fence were: "If I missed talking to someone, that's the breaks."

THE LATEST

Since Zinke's Utah visit, millions of public comments in support of keeping our monuments as they are have been submitted, with 88 percent of self-described Utahns writing in favor of leaving Bears Ears alone. Secretary Zinke issued an interim report in June calling for significant reductions to Bears Ears, but failed to identify a strategy or any specifics.

By the time you're reading this, Secretary Zinke will have made his final recommendation, and perhaps President Trump will have attempted to take action. Perhaps Secretary Zinke will have asked a dysfunctional Congress to reduce Bears Ears. At press time, we just don't know. But with the overwhelming support of tribes, businesses, and the public, we're prepared to meet the administration in court and in the halls of Congress, and we'll be asking for your help.

Tim Peterson directs the Grand Canyon Trust's Utah Wildlands Program.

Secretary Zinke arrives in Blanding, Utah while touring the Bears Ears region this summer. TIM PETERSON

Thousands marched from the convention center to the steps of the state capitol on the last day of the Outdoor Retailer show this July. TIM PETERSON

NOTES from the FIELD

UTAH WILDLANDS

Utah loses outdoor retailers

This summer, Salt Lake City's hospitality industry bid farewell to the twice-yearly Outdoor Retailer trade shows. After 22 years in Utah, the Outdoor Industry Association, whose shows had infused $45 million annually into the capital city, carried through on its promise to leave the state after Governor Gary Herbert refused to back off on his openly hostile policies to public lands and national monuments, including Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears.

The Outdoor Industry Association is moving its shows to Denver, Colorado, which, unlike Utah, has recognized the economic importance of public lands. At least two other outdoor trade shows have declined to consider staging in Utah. Outdoor business is not trivial, accounting for 110,000 direct jobs and $12.3 billion in spending annually in Utah, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. We hope Utah voters will remember the intransigence of their elected officials come election day, and send a message that protecting public lands is not only popular, it means business.

NATIVE AMERICA

Building up a Navajo tourism corridor

A 20-mile stretch of Highway 64 connects the Navajo community of Cameron to the east entrance of Grand Canyon National Park. It's along this scenic tourist corridor that the DinéHózhó L3C is gearing up to support a suite of projects, including making small loans to over 50 Native American vendors to improve their plywood booths, ramp up marketing, and increase their inventory of turquoise, silver, and beaded jewelry, pottery, and other souvenirs. The DinéHózhó L3C is also getting ready to invest in traditional food vendors selling blue-corn and sumac-berry mushes, healthy tortillas, Navajo tea, and other snacks, and in visitor attractions, like cultural dances, storytelling, and short interpretive trails, as well as several eco-lodges and a hogan visitor center at Second Overlook, with its breathtaking views of the Little Colorado River Gorge. At a time when nearly 6 million visitors must be spread out around the Grand Canyon, this corridor is poised to offer the western Navajo Nation a pathway to economic independence.

UTAH FORESTS

Goats eat everything

One of only three alpine areas on the Colorado Plateau rises to 12,800 feet in the La Sal Mountains above Moab, in southern Utah. As a population of 35 exotic mountain goats helicoptered in from the goat-overpopulated Tushar Mountains by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources inches up toward the division's goal of 200, damage to the delicate Mount Peale Research Natural Area is becoming more and more obvious. Unsure whether the courts will reverse the Forest Service's decision to ignore its own regulations requiring all national forests to remove exotic species from research natural areas, we are revisiting plots the Forest Service surveyed in 2015 to document dusty goat wallows and other damage. It's a climb to 12,500 feet, but there are pikas squeaking, butterflies visiting the rare Abajo daisy, and a 360-degree view. One day we hope to see cushion plants and other fragile, high-altitude plants return to areas depleted by the goats.

LYNN CHAMBERLAIN, UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Pronghorn caught on camera on the North Rim Ranches.

NORTH RIM RANCHES

Pronghorn, this way

Livestock fences help ranchers manage herds and let pastures rest, but they can be dangerous barriers for wild animals that should be allowed to roam freely. Fences stop American pronghorn, one of the fastest land animals on the continent, in their tracks. Unlike deer, which often leap over, pronghorn won't jump fences; instead, they crawl underneath them. If the bottom strand of a wire fence is barbed or too close to the ground, pronghorn can find themselves cut off from food and water on the other side. Over the last decade, we've been working with volunteers to fix hazardous fences. Thanks to the help of volunteers from the Arizona Antelope Foundation this spring, we made another 1.6 miles of fence pronghorn-friendly, bringing our total to nearly 20 miles of improvements across the ranches on the north rim of the Grand Canyon.

ENERGY

Oil shale giant wants more time

Along with partner organizations, we're appealing a decision by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to give Enefit American Oil, an Estonian company, five more years to work toward commercial-scale oil shale production in northeastern Utah. The company has already spent the last decade failing to prove the economic viability of its technologies on a 160-acre research tract. The Estonian company seeks eventually to expand exceptionally dirty oil shale mining onto public and private land that's more than 30 times the size of its current research operations. If it succeeds, the foreign company would hold the first-ever right to commercially mine oil shale, and American taxpayers would effectively subsidize the company's profits. That's a big deal. The BLM should reconsider the burden such a destructive operation would undoubtedly place on the shoulders of the American public.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Taking a hard look at coal

Growing up, Jack Pongyesva made many trips to visit family on the Hopi reservation, where coal royalties have made up as much as 80 percent of the Hopi Tribe's budget, and where coal heats the stove, provides jobs, and casts a long shadow on air and water quality. So when, as an intern in the Trust's Energy Program, Jack found himself researching the future of coal on the Colorado Plateau, he also began reflecting on coal's presence in his family's life. Like Jack, many of the young people starting out careers in conservation through the Trust's new internship program come from communities that are vulnerable to a changing political and ecological climate. Working side-by-side with Trust staff, the voices and contributions of interns like Jack help the Trust consider new angles and work smarter to protect and conserve the Colorado Plateau.

GRAND CANYON

Navajo Council fails to approve tramway

The Navajo families of Save the Confluence are winning their fight against the plan to build a tourist resort and tramway into the Grand Canyon. Earlene Reid runs cattle where the 420-acre development would be built on the canyon's east rim, near where the tram would carry up to 10,000 tourists a day down to the confluence of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers. Four committees of the Navajo Nation Council have reviewed the tramway bill since it was introduced in August 2016. After the bill lost the final committee vote 14 to two, the bill's sponsor pulled it from the agenda before it could move on to the full Navajo Nation Council for a final up-or-down vote. Earlene, her Save the Confluence relatives, and residents opposed to the project were pleased to stop—at least temporarily—something which their political leaders said in 2012 "could not be stopped." The bill is now expected to be brought before the 24-member Navajo Nation Council for a final vote in October 2017.

BLAKE MCCORD

ARIZONA FORESTS

Giving forests room to breathe

With forests overly dense and wildfires growing by the year, the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (known as 4FRI) aims to protect wildlife and fish habitat. That requires selectively thinning trees to starve wildfires of the fuel they need to grow out of control. So, in June, counties, cities, the Forest Service, the Grand Canyon Trust, and other 4FRI players sat down to figure out how to move things along faster. The result was a new strategic plan that will keep the public up-to-date and bring in small timber companies to restore forests. The end goal: ramp up thinning from 15,000 to 50,000 acres per year.

Earlene Reid, immediately right of brick corner, listening to Save the Confluence discussion after learning that the tram bill would not receive a final up-or-down vote during the summer session of the Navajo Nation Council. ROGER CLARK

Wild Friends

An 800-mile trek inside the Grand Canyon

PETE MCBRIDE

In 2015, photographer Pete McBride (left) and author Kevin Fedarko (right) set out on assignment for National Geographic to hike the length of the Grand Canyon in sections. Now that they've finished their trek, they're hitting the road on tour to talk about the threats to the canyon they discovered along the way. Here, we catch up with the duo about trail life, cactus encounters, and photography tips.

How did you find routes through the trailless sections of the canyon?

Pete: A lot of the time we just used sheep poop. If you could find sheep poop, you knew there was a way to get through the cliff bands. We followed mountain lion tracks, and they would never get you pinned on a cliff or trapped. We also followed some wild burro trails. They have a tendency to live in the Redwall layer. And then there's wild mustangs, and they live on the Esplanade. They seem to have an agreement—they don't leave their layer. We learned to depend on our wild friends.

When you're hiking all day, every day, what do you think about on the trail?

Pete: Staying alive. I can't emphasize that enough. If you don't find water, and it's 95 degrees out, you're not going to last very long. Other than that we thought a lot about what happens above the rim and the effects below. Indirectly you start thinking about the fragility of the place.

Kevin: Dinner. I'm sure Pete was engaging in all sorts of highbrow thinking about conservation, and the aesthetic wonder of the canyon, and the navigational challenges of getting through whatever section we were on. I was mostly thinking about dinner. From breakfast, all the way up until dinner.

See Pete and Kevin in a city near you!

National Geographic Tour Dates

Lone Tree, CO
Nov 17, 2017

Portland, OR
Feb 19, 2018

Seattle, WA
Feb 25 – 27, 2018

Mesa, AZ
March 1, 2018

Los Angeles, CA
March 15 – 16, 2018

Santa Barbara, CA
April 4, 2018

Thousand Oaks, CA
May 4, 2018

Kansas City, MO
June 5, 2018

Every balloon that anyone ever lets go of in Disneyland seems to end up in the canyon. . .

Over the 800 miles you hiked, how did your impression of the Grand Canyon change?

Kevin: I sort of started the hike with the impression that the wildest piece of terrain inside the Grand Canyon was the Colorado River. And over the course of the hike, I came to appreciate the fact that the river, for all of its wildness, is basically plumbing. And it's also a highway that is traveled by up to 26,000 people per year who run the river. So I came to appreciate, over the course of the walk, that the truest wilderness inside the Grand Canyon starts at the edges of the river and extends up to the rims on either side.

What did you see impacting the canyon that surprised you?

Pete: Balloons. Every balloon that anyone ever lets go of in Disneyland seems to end up in the canyon, and when you're walking through the place, you see a lot of Mickey Mouse. You see a lot of graduation party balloons, a lot of Disney. I guess balloons all have to go somewhere to die, and it seems like a good portion die in Grand Canyon.

Any mishaps along the way?

Kevin: Our feet basically fell apart during the first leg. My feet looked like a continuous blister—it looked like someone had taken a belt sander to the bottoms. Pete developed hyponatremia and he really struggled with ankle problems and tendinitis throughout most of the winter. I fell inside of a slot canyon one night and broke a finger. A couple days later, I fell and basically plunged my forearm in the center of a barrel cactus. We both had infections develop as a result of cactus needles embedding themselves, usually in our feet.

What's your favorite place in the canyon?

Pete: It's a time, not a place. It's a time when the light starts to drop, usually right after the sun goes down. People call it the magic hour, or the hour of the pearl, and it happens every day roughly. As you pay attention, it's pretty magical in every spot in the canyon. It's that time of day right after the first crack of light where the bats come out. You might hear an owl. The temperature is cool. And the stillness is profound.

Most people only see a sliver of the Grand Canyon, and you've seen a whole lot more. What's different about the canyon the more you see of it?

Kevin: I think the premise of that question cuts against the grain of what the walk taught me. I don't think you need to do a 14-month, 800-mile transect of the Grand Canyon to touch or be touched by its marvels and its magic. The entire canyon offers tastes of the remoteness and beauty we experienced. And those attributes of the canyon are freely available to anyone who wants to take the trouble to walk 15 minutes down the Bright Angel Trail, or drive to Lees Ferry and stand at the edge of the Colorado River watching it flow past. It's all there, it's all open, it's all available to anyone who wants to taste it.

Any photography tips for capturing the perfect shot of the Grand Canyon?

Pete: Less is more. In the Grand Canyon, if you get too fancy with all your equipment or have too much equipment, it can be distracting. One system will be easier. And patience. Grand Canyon is a place of time and humility, and you have to respect that.

Interview by Ellen Heyn

GRAND CANYON TRUST

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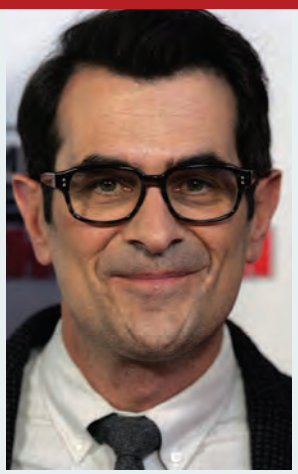
Protecting the wild heart of the West

Members Make Our Work Possible



EVA RINALDI

MEET TY BURRELL

MEMBER SINCE: **2008**

BEST PLACE ON THE COLORADO PLATEAU TO LIVE OUT OF A VAN:
The C section of the Green River. I just came off of four days of camping out of my van there, and, in addition to being beautiful, the fly fishing is spectacular. Also, when you start to pass your odor expiration date, the river is there to wash you off. Always important in van living...

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY:
See answer A. Camping and fly fishing are pretty much all I need in life (in addition to my lovely family, obviously). The combination of a simplified day, the joy of standing in the water, and no ability to use a cell phone make for my perfect experience.

BEST PLACE ON THE COLORADO PLATEAU TO TAKE KIDS:
Zion. Though the crowds can get a little nutty, the rangers do a good job of gearing their programming for the little ones and the paths are kid-friendly for most of the lower hikes. Go in the off-season, and the earlier you can get out in the canyon the better.

WHY GIVE TO THE GRAND CANYON TRUST:
The Grand Canyon Trust has been working for a long time to preserve the majesty of this unique place on Earth for all the peoples of the plateau, and for visitors now and in the future. They're in even greater need with this current administration's openly hostile stance to protected lands, so please give generously.

Thank you, Ty!

MAKE A LASTING CONTRIBUTION FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Discover how you can help meet your financial goals and maximize your philanthropic giving through gift planning with the Grand Canyon Trust.

Learn more at **grandcanyontrust.org/legacy** or contact our legacy team at **928-774-7488**.