

Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area Business Plan

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Arizona Strip Field Office,
Vermilion Cliffs National Monument
Kanab Field Office
Grand Staircase – Escalante National Monument
Arizona Strip Interpretive Association
Northern Arizona University

July 2008



The famous "Wave" in Coyote Buttes



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This business plan has been prepared to meet the criteria defined in the “Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, 2004” (FLREA), and replaces, in its entirety, the existing business plan (Sept. 1997), for the Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area (BLM Project No. AZ01). The area was initially managed under Section 315 of the “Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996,” commonly known as the “Recreation Fee Demonstration Program,” and management continued under annual reauthorizations of this legislation. The Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Project was selected as a Fee Demonstration Pilot Project in May, 1996 and the BLM began collecting fees in May, 1997.

Under FLREA, Congress has authorized the BLM to collect two types of recreation fees that may be used to repair, maintain, and upgrade recreational facilities and services to meet public demand: Amenity Recreation Fees and Special Recreation Permit Fees. FLREA authorizes the BLM to collect and locally retain Amenity Recreation Fees from the public’s use of developed sites which meet specific criteria set forth in the Act. Fees collected at these sites can then be used locally—in a more cost efficient manner—for such things as facility repair, maintenance, enhancement, interpretation, visitor information, visitor services, visitor needs assessments, signs, habitat restoration directly related to wildlife-dependent recreation that is limited to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, or photography, law enforcement related to public use and recreation, and direct operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program. FLREA also recognizes that agencies have the authority to issue Special Recreation Permits, and includes the fees from those permits as part of the recreation revenues an agency is allowed to retain locally. The Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, also known as the BLM’s “organic act,” originally outlined the agency’s roles and responsibilities in the management of the public lands. Subsequent Federal authorizations tiered from FLPMA enable the BLM to charge Special Recreation Permit (SRP) fees for organized group events, commercial activities, and individual use of special management areas. The BLM offices involved in management of the Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area utilize both amenity recreation fees and special recreation permitting authorities to manage regulatory and managerial policy compliance requirements and enhance visitor services and experiences.

Because amenity recreation fee revenues collected under the authority of FLREA are accountable to the public separately than Special Recreation Permit Fees collected under FLPMA, this document attempts to clearly delineate between the two within one business plan. The majority of this business plan pertains to Special Recreation Permit fees collected under the authority of FLPMA. There is only one small site in the Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area where the Amenity Recreation Fee authority is utilized, and it will become clear that it was not cost effective to prepare a separate business plan for that small site. However, the actual fee revenues collected under each program are segregated from each other into different accounts and managed by separate BLM offices: the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument Office (Arizona) for the SRP fees and the Kanab Field Office (Utah) for the Amenity Recreation Fees. The monies are solely reinvested back into each respective program.

In the Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area, Individual Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) are issued for day hiking and overnight backpacking, and a limited number of permits are issued for each day. Expanded Amenity Fees are collected through a self-pay system for overnight camping at the White House Campground.

In the ten years since the project began, Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes have become international adventure tourism destinations. Visitors have come from all 50 states and from 47 countries. External publicity is at an all time high, with numerous articles appearing in major national magazines over the past four years, including Sunset, Outside, Arizona Highways, Reader's Digest, and National Geographic ADVENTURE. Buckskin Gulch, a Paria Canyon tributary and a part of the special management area, were mentioned recently published travel books as one of the 20 greatest hikes on earth the continued publicity generates increased interest in the area, but the overall number of visits remained static until 2006. This can be partially attributed to the visitor use limits in place, but bad weather years and a department-wide internet shutdown also played a role. 2007 was a record year for visits at over 21,010 visitors in the permit areas and as of July 1, 2008 we have the same number of permits issued as in the entirety of 2006. This does not include the increased number of visitors exploring the newly reknown White Pocket and Paria Plateau locations due to world-wide advertisements and publications that contain specific GPS location data within Coyote Buttes North and South to the dinosaur tracks, petroglyphs, arches and other "Wave" like features.

The special management area has a fully automated online system for issuing individual SRPs, and because of this, a wealth of visitor use data is available. In addition, two detailed visitor surveys have been conducted since the project began. These surveys collected identical information and they reflect changes over a seven year period in both user preferences and demographics. Detailed visitor preferences and demographics can be found in Section III.

Project spending in the Special Management Area, for all projects that are either underway or proposed, is based on a combination of prioritized visitor preferences and management concerns. The spending of fee receipts and annual appropriations is described in Section IV.

No permit fee increases are proposed until fiscal year 2009 (FY 2009 begins October 1, 2008), and the proposed FY09 increase would be based on public input and the market analysis shown in Section XI.

A lottery application fee was instituted on August 1, 2007 to manage a new visitor service. A lottery permit application process was added to the first-come, first-served online permit system. This conversion made the system more equitable for all users and has been successful at relieving the overwhelming internet traffic that the government server experienced prior to the lottery process being implemented. The previous system for issuing permits is described in Section II, and the 2007 lottery system is described in Section IV. Flow charts showing the details of both processes can be found on pages 36-38.

Sections V through IX describe key components, operational spending, and describe how fees are collected, handled, and deposited.

Section X provides tables and discussion of future revenue projections, and Section XI describes the market analysis used to determine the future fee structure. Section XII gives an overview of all proposed changes to current business practices. This section also includes information on non-monetary adjustments to administrative and managerial practices. Section XIII shows the proposed future fee schedule for the permit areas, and finally, Section XIV provides details on current customer feedback mechanisms.

For ease of use, throughout this document, the Special Management Area is referred to as the “permit area.”

Overall, the Paria Canyon / Coyote Buttes Recreation Fee Project is healthy, efficient, and responsive to customers. Fee receipts have been, and continue to be, spent on tangible projects that provide for visitor safety and satisfaction, and a positive account balance is available for current and future projects.



Wind and water have carved fantastic formations in Coyote Buttes.

II. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA DESCRIPTION

A. Physical Description

The Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area lies on public lands along the Arizona-Utah border. It is entirely within the Paria Canyon – Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness, which lies within the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument in Arizona and the BLM Kanab Field Office in Utah. It is bordered by the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area to the east and the Grand Staircase - Escalante National Monument and Kaibab National Forest to the west and northwest. The North Rim of the Grand Canyon is due south and other notable recreation destinations like Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks are within a few hours drive (Figure 1). It is within the region commonly known in the tourism industry as the Grand Circle, which is an international outdoor recreation destination.

B. Administration

All lands within the area are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the area is jointly administered by the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, which is part of the Arizona Strip District Office; the Kanab Field Office, which is part of the Cedar City Support Area; and the Grand Staircase – Escalante National Monument, which is also part of the Cedar City Support Area. The area lies within the 1st Congressional District in Arizona and the 2nd Congressional District in Utah.

C. Area Features

Paria Canyon, its tributaries Buckskin Gulch and Wire Pass, and the Coyote Buttes area are part of the larger Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness, designated in August, 1984. The special management area is divided into three distinct units both geographically and managerially: Paria Canyon, Coyote Buttes North, and Coyote Buttes South.

Paria Canyon, Buckskin Gulch, and Wire Pass are widely recognized as one of the longest and most stunning slot canyon combinations in the world. Accessed from four trailheads, these narrow canyons wind their way sinuously downward through seven geologic layers, eventually ending at the Colorado River just below Glen Canyon Dam (Figure 2). The longest route through the entire system is 47 miles in length and takes the average backpacker 4-5 days to complete. What makes a trip through Paria Canyon so unique is the availability of fresh, silt-free water. A series of springs interspersed the length of the canyon allow for a multi-day, non-technical, canyoneering experience. This is unique in the Southwest, as most canyons with an adequate water supply are either too short for a lengthy trip, or too technical for the average backcountry enthusiast (Figure 3 and throughout this document).

Coyote Buttes North has become an international destination and approximately 45% of the visitors to this area are from Europe. On a recent hike into the “Wave” only two people out of 16 were from the United States. Visitors from every state in the Union have visited this site. The main attraction is “The Wave,” an area of lithified, wind-deposited sandstone that is frozen into a whirling mass of stunning color (Figure 4 and throughout this document). In recent months, a proliferation of on-line detailed maps and GPS locations to the “second and third Wave”, dinosaur

tracks and arches within Coyotes Buttes North have increased the visitation requests to the area and has broadened the geographical location of the impacts associated with visitor usage to a larger area then.

Coyote Buttes South has many geologic features that are as unique as The Wave, but the area, was less popular than the North unit because access is more difficult and until recently had received less publicity. The recent publication of photographs and detailed maps has drastically increased the use in Coyote Buttes South by more than 50% since 2005. Getting to the access points at Coyote Buttes South requires a four-wheel drive vehicle to navigate through the deep sand that is prevalent throughout the area. Despite these difficulties, this area is showing a steady increase in popularity. This increase can be attributed to the intense competition for Coyote Buttes North permits and the increase or notoriety (Figure 4 and throughout this document).



A serrated series of sandstone “fins” lies hidden in Coyote Buttes South

Figure 1 – Regional Map

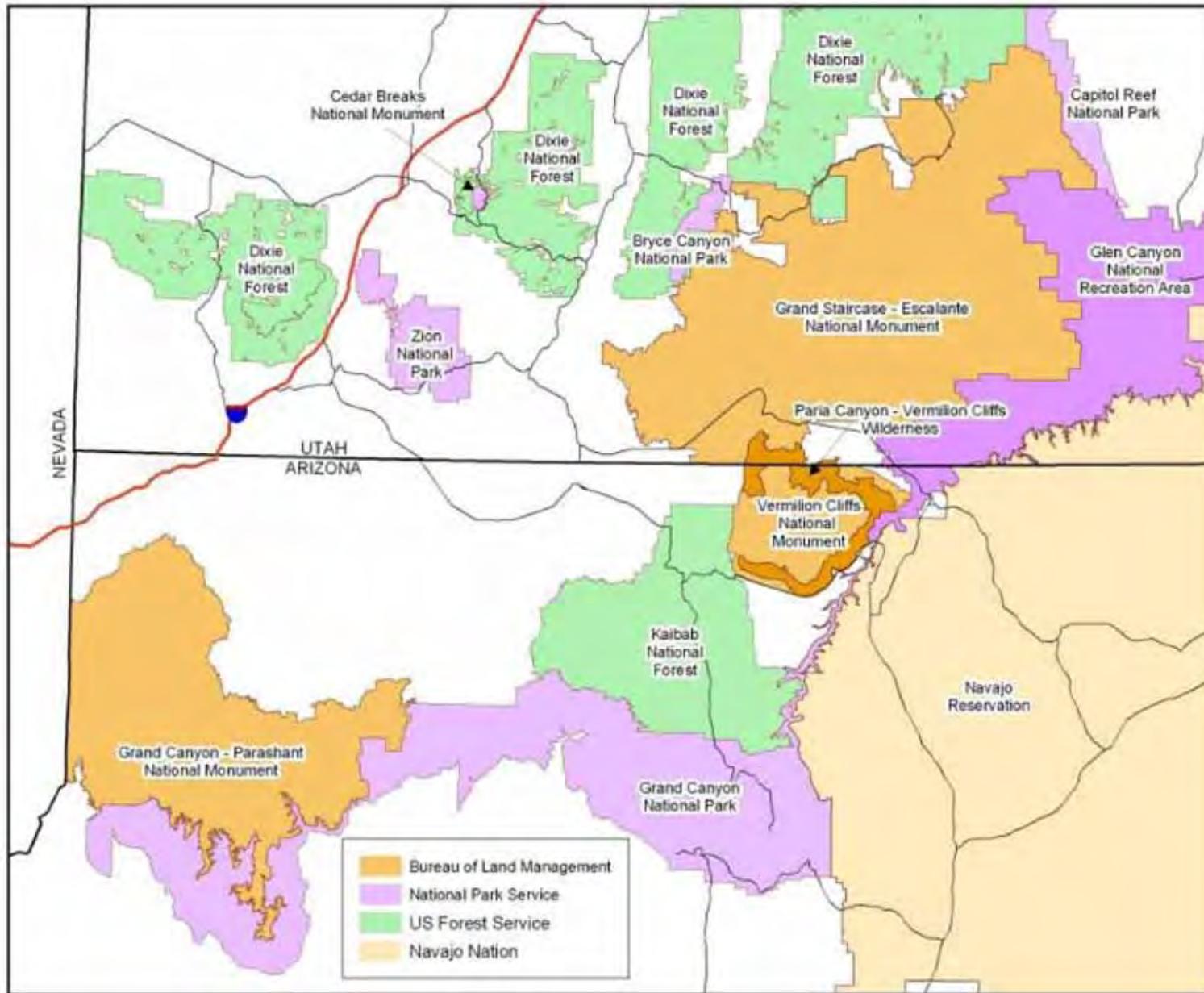


Figure 2 – Detail Map

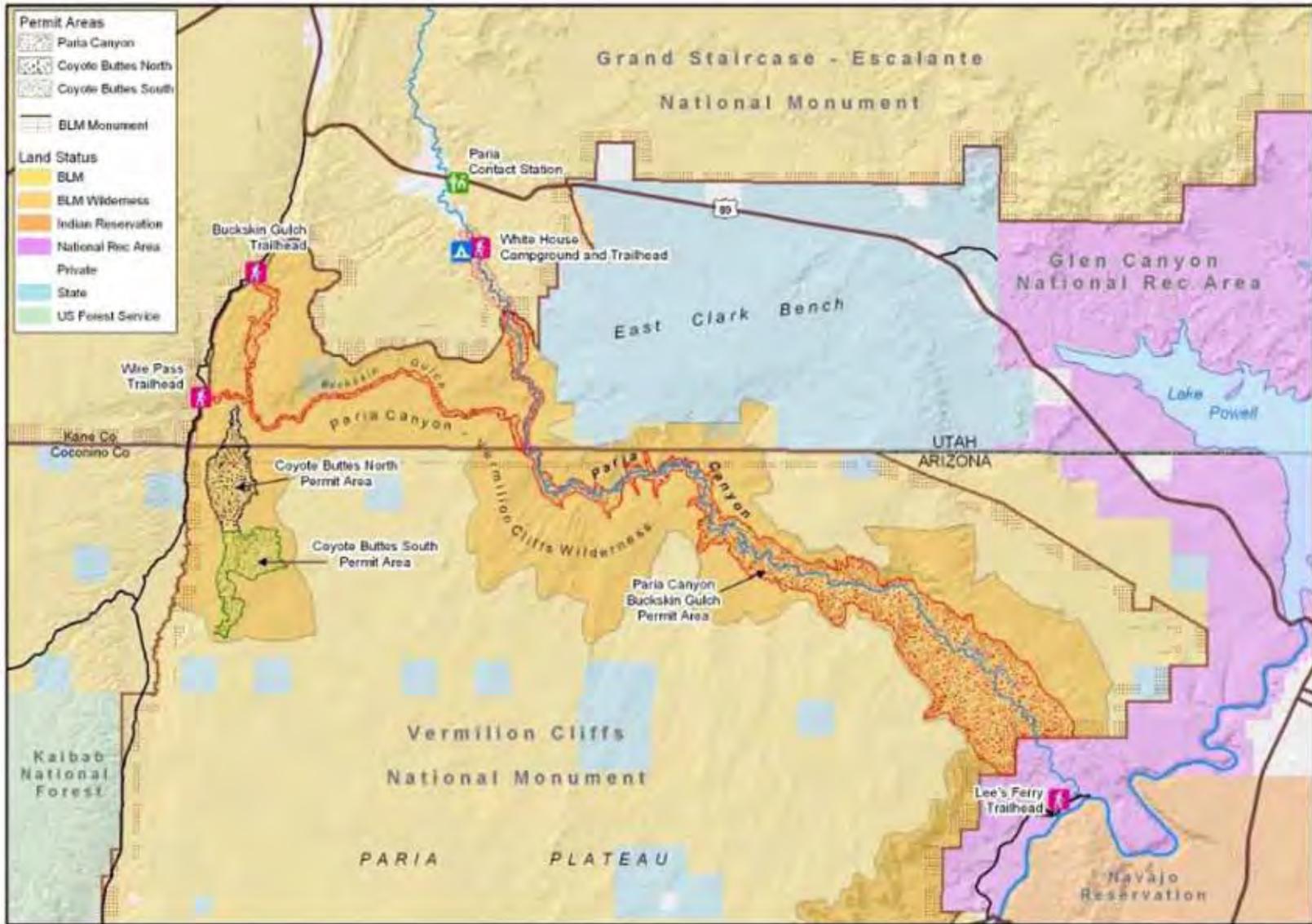


Figure 3 – Photographs of Paria Canyon, Buckskin Gulch, and Wire Pass



Flood evidence in Buckskin Gulch



Two hikers in the Paria Canyon narrows



A hiker navigates through the narrow and sinuous Wire Pass

Figure 4 – Photographs of Coyote Buttes North and South



Bizarre sandstone formations can be found throughout Coyote Buttes South



The "Wave" in Coyote Buttes North is one of the most photographed features in the desert southwest.

D. Area Management

Non-commercial, individual, Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) are issued for day-hiking and overnight backpacking in the permit area. Expanded Amenity Recreation Fees are collected for overnight camping at the White House Campground, which is within the permit area. Several commercial outfitters are permitted for guiding operations in the permit area but there are no allocations for commercial use.

The permit area is divided into three distinct geographic units:

1. Paria Canyon and its tributaries; Buckskin Gulch and Wire Pass.
2. Coyote Buttes North.
3. Coyote Buttes South.

Each of these units has its own business rules (Tables 1, 2). These rules have been written to ensure compliance with the goals defined in the Paria Canyon – Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan:

1. Provide for the long-term protection and preservation of the area's wilderness character.
2. Manage the area for the use and enjoyment of visitors in a manner that will leave the area unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.
3. Manage the area using the minimum tool, equipment, or structure necessary to successfully, safely, and economically accomplish the objective.

These goals are achieved through the implementation of visitor use limits, which are achieved by the issuance of a limited number of both advance and self-pay SRP's as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Permits are issued online for all three areas four months prior to the trip date and at the Paria Contact Station one day in advance. Online permits can be obtained at:
<https://www.blm.gov/az/arolrsmain.htm>.

Walk-in permits are available at the Paria Contact Station which is staffed seven days per week from March 15th through November 15th, and the Kanab Field Office from November 16th through March 14th excluding weekends and holidays.

The fee collection process for these permits is described in Section VII. The total number of permits issued is tied to the pre-defined visitor use limits shown in Table 2. These limits are determined by a recreational impacts monitoring program that is described in Section IV.

The maximum group size for individual parties is limited to ten in Paria Canyon, Buckskin Gulch and Wire Pass. This limit applies to both day-use and overnight visitors. In Coyote Buttes North and South, group size is limited to six. Group size restrictions are in place to preserve solitude and provide a wilderness experience for all visitors.

Table 1

| Type of Use and Payment Method | Permit Type Required by Area | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Paria Canyon, Buckskin Gulch and Wire Pass | Coyote Buttes North | Coyote Buttes South |
| Day Use Self pay at trailhead | Yes | No | No |
| Day Use Advance permit required | No | Yes | Yes |
| Overnight Use Advance permit required | Yes | No overnight use allowed | No overnight use allowed |

Table 2

| Type of Use and Payment Method | Number of Total Visitors Permitted per Day | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Paria Canyon, Buckskin Gulch and Wire Pass | Coyote Buttes North | Coyote Buttes South |
| Day Use Number of advance permits issued up to four months in advance | N/A | 10 | 10 |
| Day Use Number of walk-in permits issued one day in advance | N/A | 10 | 10 |
| Day Use Self pay at trailhead | No visitor limits for day use | N/A | N/A |
| Overnight Use Number of advance permits issued up to four months in advance | 20 | No overnight use allowed | No overnight use allowed |
| Total Daily Visitor Use Limits | 20 overnight / unlimited day use | 20 | 20 |

E. Commercial Use

Commercial use is not allocated separately from private use. All visitors compete for available permits on an equal basis. Several commercial guiding services are permitted to operate in the fee area, and there are two ways for these companies to legally operate:

1. Speculatively buy permits in advance and use them on the proposed date if they were able to attract enough clients for the trip. While this may appear to be a lucrative option for such a desirable destination, it is rarely employed. The profitability margin for guiding operations is very thin, and purchasing a non-refundable advance permit with a pre-set group size is risky. Failure to sell them would leave the commercial operator with an unused permit. Under this option: the guide is counted toward the group's authorized party size.
2. Wait for a visitor who has already purchased a permit to contact the commercial operator. This happens quite frequently when visitors purchase permits then get cold feet after

learning about the dangers inherent in backcountry travel and the lack of signed trails on the slickrock surfaces that dominate the area. The addition of a single guide to a group is not counted as part of the group's authorized party size.

F. Fee Demonstration History

Visitor use in Paria Canyon, Buckskin Gulch, and Coyote Buttes jumped from 2,400 visits in FY86 to 10,200 visits in FY96. The increased use, combined with the narrow nature of the canyons and the fragile sandstone features of Coyote Buttes had a severe impact on the wilderness character of these areas. Human waste, overcrowding, and public safety quickly became significant resource, health and safety issues.

New visitor use limits were explored to solve these issues and it was determined that a permit system was the optimum solution. It was further determined that the new Fee Demonstration Program was a viable mechanism to enforce the new limitations and to fund new services associated with managing the area. Planning for the permitting process and other services began in early Fiscal Year 1996.

1. Fee Demonstration Project Chronology

- 05/96 Site selected as a pilot project
- 11/96 News Release requesting public input
- 03/97 Plan of Operation developed
- 05/97 AZ Strip Communications Plan implemented
- 05/97 MOU among BLM, NAU, and ASIA signed
- 05/97 BLM begins collecting fees
- 06/97 NAU begins fee collections/permit issuance
- 07/97 1st informational web site launched
- 07/97 1st Policy and Procedures Manual drafted
- 09/97 Business Plan signed
- 01/98 Implement new visitor use limits
- 02/99 Current automated permit system launched online
- 08/07 Implement new lottery process for Coyote Buttes North

G. Partnerships

The Paria Canyon / Coyote Buttes Fee Program has four business partners: the Arizona Strip Interpretive Association (ASIA); Northern Arizona University, Department of Geography, Planning, and Recreation (NAU); the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, which is managed by the National Park Service (NPS); and the National Weather Service (NWS).

Permit fees fund portions of 3 seasonal employees: 8 work months for a Visitor Information Assistant at the Paria Contact Station, 4 work months for a Public Information Assistant at the Kanab Field Office, who is directly responsible for customer service. These duties include:

answering telephone and e-mail queries; printing and mailing hiking permits; issuing rain checks and vouchers; issuing walk-in permits; collecting self-pay trailhead fees; collecting Expanded Amenity Fees at the White House Campground; and responding to requests for information. Permit fees fund 4 work months for a Recreation Technician based out of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument who is responsible for cleaning and maintaining facilities collecting self-pay trailhead fees; and collecting Expanded Amenity Fees at the White House Campground. Permit fees will also fund 8 work months for a Recreation Assistant at the Arizona Strip Field Office who will be directly responsible for the daily permitting processes.

Permit fees also fund a wilderness monitoring program through Northern Arizona University. Site monitoring in Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes is conducted annually by professors and graduate students in the Department of Geography, Planning, and Recreation. Monitoring is conducted to document visitor use impacts and the resultant data is used to determine acceptable visitor use limits. The monitoring program is described in more detail in Section IV.

Visitors who day-hike into Paria Canyon from the Lee's Ferry Trailhead in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area is not charged a BLM fee. In a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the BLM and the National Park Service (NPS), visitors who enter Glen Canyon NRA already pay an NPS entrance fee, so they are not charged for day hikes in lower Paria Canyon. In return, the NPS allows Paria Canyon through-hikers to leave their vehicles in the 14-day parking lot at no charge. After parking their vehicles through-hikers are normally picked up at the 14-day parking lot by an approved shuttle provider and taken to one of the trailheads in the upper canyon. A Paria Canyon overnight permit on the dashboard is the only requirement for entrance to the area allowing visitors to park their vehicle for the duration of their stay in Paria Canyon.

A partnership with the National Weather Service was recently developed. They provide online links to updated weather forecasts, and site specific flash flood advisories up to 48 hours in advance. This project is under development and is described in more detail in Section IV.

H. General Management Concerns

There are four primary concerns with managing the area: increasing external publicity, visitor safety, reliability of online access, and the complexity of multi-agency management.

The first two concerns, external publicity and safety, are synonymous, because when external publicity increases, visitors use also increases, and the risk of a backcountry incident rises. This increased risk could be considered exponential because many new visitors, attracted to the area by stunning magazine photographs, often lack the requisite backcountry skills needed for safe travel in a rugged wilderness environment.

Increasing numbers of visitors also means an additional strain on website resources. This was evidenced by large server loads on the first of the month when permits were issued on a first-come, first-served basis. For example, all available online permits for popular months to visit Coyote Buttes North were often issued during the 15 minutes the application period opens for the month. There were so many visitors trying to access the server simultaneously that the National Information Resources Management Center (NIRMC) in Denver, where the server is located, was often unable to cope with the online traffic volume. This frequently resulted in angry customers

and a large number of phone calls to the Arizona Strip District and Kanab Field Offices, even though those offices had no control over internet server connections.

During events when the server load was manageable, as large numbers of potential visitors simultaneously applied for a small number of permits, those potential visitors with the fastest internet connections had an advantage.

Another functional concern for the previous system was permit applicants who are computer savvy (multiple windows open, high-speed connections, etc) could tie up multiple permits, thus denying others the opportunity to benefit from the service.

In one past incident, an individual received five Coyote Buttes North permits in less than 40 seconds. This turned out to be a computer technician who was obtaining permits for the owner of a large marketing firm. The technician wrote a script to automate the application process. While this was not illegal, it meant that permits were effectively taken away from other potential visitors.

These concerns have been successfully alleviated by the implementation of the 2007 lottery process. Coyote Buttes South and Paria Canyon permits can still fill up rapidly during the first few days of the month, but at this time the potential for server overloads has been nullified. The implementation of the 2007 lottery process and the continued upgrade of the permit website have diminished the phone calls to a manageable level with high call rates still experienced on the last few days of the month and the first few days of the new month. We also see increased caller volumes with the first few weeks of any new external publication. During recent years the Bureau's web access has been turned off by several court orders due to an unrelated lawsuit. This has had a detrimental effect on revenue, business partnerships, and employee morale as well as intensifying the frustrations of potential visitors attempting to apply for a permit.

E-commerce has the potential to make management of the area efficient, adaptive, and transparent, but continuing this success will require a reliable internet connection and responsive network support at the state and national levels. The current lack of reliability has degraded the BLM's reputation for quality customer service.

Another concern is the creation of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The (GSENM) has introduced a third agency into the management of the area. Prior to the creation of the GSENM, the area was jointly managed by the BLM Kanab Field Office (KFO) and the BLM Arizona Strip Field Office (ASFO). The GSENM boundaries were drawn such that all of the main trailheads accessing the permit area, and the Paria Contact Station, are now within the GSENM, while the wilderness area itself (Utah portion) remains in the KFO. Shortly after the GSENM was created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed that gave the KFO the lead in managing the trailheads and the Paria Contact Station. This MOU is currently being revisited.

Specific projects have been developed that target each of these management concerns, and they are described in detail in Section IV.

I. Contact Person(s)

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435-688-3240

Tom Christensen

Outdoor Recreation Planner
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435-644-4600

III. CUSTOMER DESCRIPTION

A. General Description

There are two distinct types of visitors who frequent the special management area: backpackers and day hikers. Backpackers come for multi-day adventures in Paria Canyon and its tributaries, and day-hikers are looking to explore and photograph the bizarre geologic formations in Coyote Buttes, and take long day hikes in the slot canyons.

Visitors have come from all 50 states and from 47 foreign countries. Over the past seven years, the special management area has gone from a half-hidden, must-do location for backcountry aficionados and photographers, to an international adventure tourism destination. In April of 2007, 39% of the permits issued were from outside of the United States with 53% of those being from Germany. The area has become very well known in Germany and many Germans place a visit to “the Wave” in Coyote Buttes North on par with a trip to the Grand Canyon. This increasing international interest is reflected in the visitor numbers shown in Table 3.

Table 3

| Permits issued by Country in permit areas | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Country | FY99 – 10,809 Total Visitors | FY04 – 15,034 Total Visitors | FY 07-21,010 Total April Visitors |
| Percentage of Total Visits | | | |
| United States | 83 | 77 | 61 |
| Germany | 9 | 12 | 21 |
| Austria | 2 | 2 | >1 |
| Canada | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| France | 1 | 1 | >1 |
| Switzerland | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Belgium | <1 | 1 | <1 |
| Italy | <1 | 1 | >1 |
| Netherlands | <1 | 1 | <1 |
| United Kingdom | <1 | 1 | 5 |
| Czech Republic | <1 | <1 | >1 |
| Ireland | <1 | <1 | 0 |
| Japan | <1 | <1 | >1 |
| Norway | <1 | <1 | 0 |
| Singapore | <1 | <1 | 0 |
| Spain | <1 | <1 | 0 |
| Argentina | 0 | <1 | 0 |
| Australia | 0 | <1 | <1 |
| Denmark | 0 | <1 | 0 |
| Hungary | 0 | <1 | 0 |
| Israel | 0 | <1 | <1 |
| Sweden | 0 | <1 | 0 |
| China | >2 | 0 | >1 |
| Ukraine | 0 | <1 | 0 |

B. Demographics and User Surveys

In addition to the generic demographic information collected as part of the permitting process, a detailed survey was conducted by the NAU, Department of Geography, Planning, and Recreation in 1996, when the fee demonstration project began. This was followed up by a second survey conducted in 2003 that was part of a master’s thesis. The two surveys were virtually identical, with the 2003 data intended to update and provide a comparison for the information collected in 1996 and identify any changes in use patterns and/or demographics.

Both surveys identify use patterns and visitor preferences in Paria Canyon and its tributaries. The surveys do not include data for Coyote Buttes. However, day users in Paria Canyon were part of the surveys, and these users have many of the same interests and attributes as the day users in Coyote Buttes. Visitor preferences are shown in Table 4 and the associated demographic information is shown in Table 5.

Table 4

| Visitor Preferences | | |
|---|--|--|
| Survey Question | 1996 Survey | 2003 Survey |
| Days in canyon | 4-5 | 3-4 |
| Nights in canyon | 3-4 | 2-3 |
| Group Size | 2-6 | 1-4 |
| Is this your first visit? | Yes – 68% No – 32% | Yes – 74% No – 26% |
| Entry trailhead | 1. White House – 69% 2. Wire Pass – 17% 3. Buckskin – 10% 4. Lee’s Ferry – 4% | 1. White House – 53% 2. Wire Pass – 42% 3. Buckskin – 4% 4. Lee’s Ferry – 1% |
| Exit trailhead | 1. White House – 55% 2. Wire Pass – 4% 3. Buckskin – 4% 4. Lee’s Ferry – 37% | 1. White House – 61% 2. Wire Pass – 4% 3. Buckskin – 2% 4. Lee’s Ferry – 33% |
| Reasons for visiting | 1. Slot canyon hiking – 30% 2. Outstanding scenery – 30% | 1. Slot canyon hiking – 39% 2. Outstanding scenery – 30% |
| Most important benefits, in order of importance | 1. Scenic Grandeur 2. Solitude 3. Escape from urban 4. Challenge and adventure 5. Outdoor exercise | 1. Scenic Grandeur 2. Escape from urban 3. Extensive open space 4. Solitude 5. Challenge and adventure |
| Do you support the current fee schedule? | Yes – 67% No – 33% | Yes – 88% No – 22% |

Table 5

| Visitor Demographics | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Survey Question | 1996 Survey | 2003 Survey |
| Average Age | 26 – 60 | 26 – 50 |
| Gender | Male – 68% Female – 32% | Male – 60% Female – 40% |
| Income | Not Available | < \$40,000 – 27% \$40,000 - \$65,000 – 23% \$65,000 - \$100,000 – 28% > \$100,000 – 22% |
| Education | College/Bachelors – 32% Post Bachelors – 20% | College/Bachelors – 54% Post Bachelors – 42% |

C. Key Changes in Demographics and User Preferences

Four interesting changes have taken place in the seven years between surveys. First, the length of overnight trips has dropped by a full day. This is likely due to several factors: a shrinking amount of vacation time; the advent of lighter, more functional backpacking equipment; and a general increase in the fitness levels of outdoor enthusiasts.

Another interesting change is the overall decrease in group size, as visitors seem to be seeking a quiet, more intimate wilderness experience.

There has been a large increase in the use of Wire Pass as an entry trailhead for multi-day use. This is due to a growing interest in canyoneering and slot canyons in general. Wire Pass offers non-technical access to stunning and narrow slot canyon terrain. Many visitors now start their trips in Wire pass and finish at White House, avoiding lower Paria Canyon altogether. Wire Pass and Buckskin Gulch have also become a popular day-use destination as visitors can gain a slot canyon experience with very little effort. Wire Pass has seen a 44% increase in day-use visitation between 2001 and 2007.

Finally, support for the fee program has grown dramatically, from 67% to 88%. This is likely due to the fact that users now have tangible proof that their fees are being used to improve their experience, including, but not limited to: quick and efficient online permit sales and information; a predictable number of encounters with other visitors; the Paria Contact Station and its associated amenities; and trailhead signs and restrooms. Many of these benefits were not available in 1996 when the fee program for the area was still in its infancy.

D. Impacts to Low Income Users

The average Paria Canyon visitor is in a moderate to high income bracket. Fees may have a greater negative effect on students and locals with large families and lower incomes. However, fee schedules were initially set slightly below fair market value for the region to lessen impacts of fees. Current and future proposed fee schedules are discussed in Section XII.

E. Native American Access Rights

There is no evidence that the canyons of Paria or Coyote Buttes are considered sacred or traditional areas, nor has the local Native American population given any indication of such. If, in the future, it is determined that these areas are sacred or are used for traditional purposes, then Native Americans will be exempt from fees.



Two hikers dwarfed by sandstone walls at the confluence of Paria Canyon and Buckskin Gulch

IV. OBJECTIVES FOR THE USE OF FEE RECIEPTS

A. Visitor Preferences by Priority

Based on the surveys conducted in 1996 and 2003, as well as visitor feedback collected at the Paria Contact Station, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, Kanab Field Office, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, three concepts have been identified that are considered crucial for visitors to realize their desired benefits from their experiences in the special management area. These concepts are:

1. High Quality Wilderness Settings

Visitors to the fee area typically want to enjoy exploring highly scenic slot canyons and other unique geologic formations. They have the expectation of pristine wilderness conditions and outstanding opportunities for experiencing solitude. Implied in that expectation is the assumption that the BLM will use the fees collected to maintain and/or restore the wilderness conditions upon which these experiences depend. Such management includes the protection of wilderness character through consistent monitoring of high use areas and travel corridors, enforcement of permit conditions and visitor use limits, and the education of visitors.

2. Individualized Customer Service

In this age of instant information, visitors typically expect to receive timely, accurate, and clear information about recreation opportunities and regulatory requirements related to their potential visit to the fee area. Most visitors expect this information to be available online, and they also expect to be able to apply and pay for their permit online. Most visitors also expect the minimum necessary level of visitor regulation.

3. High Quality Trailhead and Public Contact Facilities

Visitors to the fee area expect high quality facilities. When fees are being paid for recreational use, visitors are interested in how those fees are being spent. High quality interpretive, informational, and directional signs are the most visible and expected amenities, with restrooms and visitor services buildings a close second. Visitors typically appreciate quality, well-maintained facilities.

B. Projects Targeting Visitor Preferences / Management Concerns

Visitor preferences and priorities as well as management concerns provide the outline for current and future spending of permit fees and/or appropriated funding on projects in the fee area. Projects have been divided into two categories: 1) current projects have been approved, are already underway, and a significant amount of work has already been accomplished; 2) planned projects are either waiting for approval, or are in the planning process. Some work on planned projects may have been completed, but implementation has not yet occurred. Each project listed identifies whether the funding comes from Special Recreation Permit Fees, Expanded Amenity Fees, federal appropriations, or a combination of the three. A summary of this information can be found in Table 7 at the end of this section.

1. Current Projects

a. Continuation of the Online Lottery Application Process

In order to address the first-come, first-served problems described on page 2 (Management Concerns), and to meet visitor expectations of individualized and instantaneous customer service, it was determined that the implementation of a lottery system was the most viable option. Initially, the lottery will be applied only to Coyote Buttes North, as the Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes South permit areas do not yet have the demand to warrant a lottery. The system is designed so that these two areas could be included in the future if use levels and public concern indicate a lottery is warranted. The criteria under which a lottery would be implemented are described in Section XII. Federal appropriated funds are being used to pay for the required computer programming.

The following is a description of how the lottery system works. An example is described below Table 6.

- The lottery applicant must apply up to four months in advance.
- The lottery application period is one month long. This has alleviated the one-time server load and eliminated the advantage of applicants with high-speed internet connections.
- The lottery applicant can request up to three entry dates for a specific month. If successful in the lottery, only one entry date will be awarded.
- There is a \$5 application fee to apply. This fee is non-refundable.
- Successful applicants are notified by end of business on the first day of the new month, for example; if someone applies for a November date during the month of July, on August 1 they will receive e-mail notification as to whether they were successful in the lottery or not.

Table 6

| Lottery Schedule | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Apply anytime between | for a permit during |
| January 1 – 31 | May |
| February 1 – 28 | June |
| March 1 – 31 | July |
| April 1- 30 | August |
| May 1 – 31 | September |
| June 1 – 30 | October |
| July 1 – 31 | November |
| August 1 – 31 | December |
| September 1 – 30 | January |
| October 1 – 31 | February |
| November 1 – 30 | March |
| December 1 – 31 | April |

Lottery application fees are set by the state director and are based on the market analysis outlined in Section XI. The \$5 application fee will be managed under the cost recovery guidelines outlined in the H-2930-1 Recreation Permit Administration Handbook. A detailed description of the cost recovery process can be found in Section XII.

Lottery Example

If a visitor was interested in a hiking trip to Coyote Buttes in the month of April, here is the procedure they would follow:

- Visit the online permit lottery application page anytime between Dec. 1 and Dec 31.
- Follow the on-screen directions, choosing up to three possible entry dates during April.
- On January 1 the computerized lottery automatically runs. Randomly selected applicants are awarded entry dates in the priority indicated on their application. Once first choices are filled, second choices would be applied, etc. until all dates are filled.
- On January 1, all lottery applicants are immediately notified via auto-response e-mail, whether their application was successful or not.
- After being notified, the successful applicant has 14 days to pay for their permit. They are sent a secure online link via e-mail to complete their transaction information.
- If payment is not received by the 11th day of the 14-day payment period, the applicant is sent a second e-mail warning them that they are in danger of forfeiting their authorized entry date if the application process and payment are not completed in the next three days.
- Four to six weeks after the applicant completes the application process and pays the required fees, their permit would be either mailed or held for pick up, depending upon the applicant's preference.

- If the applicant does not complete the application process and payment within the 14 day payment period, their authorized entry date would be made available to other visitors on the first-come, first served calendar on the 15th of the month.

b. Website Upgrade

The Paria Canyon / Coyote Buttes website has been in place since 1997 and the text and graphics have changed very little during that time. The monument webpage's have been upgraded with the new standardized BLM graphics, which will give all BLM websites an identical "look and feel." This project was performed by BLM Arizona staff and permit fees were not used. The new website, which is already in use, has separate links to Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes. The new site can be found here:

<https://www.blm.gov/az/arolrsmain.htm>

c. Wilderness Monitoring

Site monitoring in Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes is conducted annually, under a cooperative agreement, by professors and graduate students in the Northern Arizona University, Department of Geography, Planning, and Recreation. Monitoring is conducted to document visitor use impacts on wilderness character and prescribed recreational settings, and the resultant data is used to assist managers in making informed decisions. As an example, the data is used to substantiate or bring about adaptive decisions on restrictions, closures, waste disposal, and visitor use limits. Monitoring is conducted annually and the data are entered into a database program that is accessible to BLM planners and managers. Permit fees pay for this program.

d. Trailhead Interpretive Panels

A comprehensive interpretive project that includes regulatory, informational, directional, and interpretive panels for all trailheads and the Paria Contact Station is underway. A combination of permit fees and federal appropriations are paying for the project. Permit fees cover design and production costs, while federal appropriations have funded BLM staff to write text, edit photos and graphics, and design maps.

The comprehensive interpretive project has already placed interpretive panels at the Condor site, the Paria Contact station, Wire Pass, Buckskin Gulch, and Stateline campground. The interpretive signs for Whitehouse campground and Lee's Ferry will be in place by the end of Fiscal year 2008.

e. Navigation Maps and Guides

In recent years it has become apparent that the backcountry navigation skills of Coyote Buttes visitors has declined; possibly due to increased use of technology without corresponding use of maps and the decreasing outdoor skills of our visitors. In order to meet the demands of this changing demographic, a detailed color map and accompanying directions were produced for the "Wave," in Coyote Buttes North, the most popular site in the fee area. The directions contain text and pictures that, when used in conjunction with

the map, make navigating to “the Wave” a straightforward process. A similar map and directions have been completed for Coyote Buttes South, although this map is directed at general navigation to trailheads and does not direct visitors to a specific site. This project was developed by BLM staff. Federal appropriations pay for map and graphics development, and permit fees are used for printing costs.

A detailed Hiker’s Guide for Paria Canyon/Buckskin Gulch was produced in 2001. The guide gives detailed information for canyon hikers and backpackers about campsite and spring location as well as safety information and interesting details about the flora, fauna, and geology of the area. This project was performed by BLM Arizona staff with a combination of appropriations and funds from previous map sales.

f. Maintenance Activities

At most of the access points into the remote portions of the Special Management Area there are physical improvements and facilities that require continuous, annual, and sometimes special maintenance projects to keep the facilities at proper health, safety, and service standards. FLREA specifically authorizes the use of recreation fee revenues to defer such costs. Examples specific to this business plan include, but are not limited to: vehicle costs, electricity for the Paria Contact Station, contractual services, hardware and other supplies required to maintain trailheads, restrooms, campsites, and signage. Permit fees and federal appropriations are used to fund these activities throughout the area. Whitehouse Campground, in particular, has costs associated with maintenance vehicles, contractual services such as trash removal, hardware replacement and other supplies required to maintain the restrooms, campsites, site amenities such as the tables, campfire devices, and signage. Because the amenity fee revenues alone fall far short of these costs (as will be illustrated in Section IX) and the facility serves as a trailhead for the permit area, the campground is managed collaboratively with funding not only by the amenity fees collected from visitors to that facility but also the SRP permit fees and federal appropriations.

g. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Grand Staircase – Escalante National Monument (GSENM) has introduced a third agency into the management of the area. Prior to the creation of the GSENM, the area was jointly managed by the BLM Kanab Field Office (KFO) and the BLM Arizona Strip Field Office (ASFO). The GSENM boundaries were drawn such that all of the main trailheads accessing the permit area, and the Paria Contact Station, are now within the GSENM, while the wilderness area itself (Utah portion) remains in the KFO. Shortly after the GSENM was created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed that gave the KFO the lead in managing the trailheads and the Paria Contact Station. This MOU is currently being revisited.

h. Satellite Internet Connection at Paria Contact Station

Currently, there is only a satellite telephone at the Paria Contact Station. A microwave telephone relay had been developed in conjunction with the Bureau of Reclamation in Page, AZ, but it proved to be unreliable and is expensive to continue.

A cell booster antenna was recently added to the Paria Contact station to increase cell phone coverage. A satellite connection is currently being installed at the Paria Contact station. A satellite internet connection with a voice-over protocol is considered to be cheaper and more reliable. It would have multiple benefits:

- Increased safety to visitors because Paria Contact Station staff would have instant access to weather updates, emergency response, and law enforcement;
- Staff could access the permit system to determine entry availability for any date in real time, thus providing accurate service for walk-in visitors;
- Staff would input walk-in permit authorizations directly into the database in real time. The current process requires preparation and transfer of handwritten records, which are entered into the database after-the-fact by BLM staff in the Kanab Field Office.
- Staff would be able to print out walk-in permits using the same format as on-line permits decreasing the likelihood of repetitive permit issuance, and piracy.

2. Planned Projects

a. Campground Expansion

Stateline campground receives heavy use during the spring and fall hiking seasons. It is normally full during these times. A planning effort is underway to expand the Stateline campground to accommodate additional visitors. This project would be funded by a combination of permit fees and federal appropriations.

b. Flash Flood Education

A partnership has been developed with the National Weather Service (NWS) to improve flash flood awareness in visitors. A link to the NWS website for information specific to the permit area is now available from the Paria Canyon / Coyote Buttes website. Also scheduled is an additional feature to issue flash-flood advisories for Paria Canyon and its tributaries up to two days in advance. This is expected to significantly enhance visitor safety. In addition, the NWS produced a flash flood safety brochure in digital format that the BLM customized for the permit area. This brochure is mailed out with all Paria Canyon permits. Permit fees will be used for printing costs.

c. Wire Pass Parking Lot Expansion

The Wire Pass parking lot, the normal entrance for Coyote Buttes North and Wire pass trailhead has seen increased usage throughout the year. From April through September, it is not unusual to see 30 to 40 vehicles parked in and around the parking lot that was designed for 20 vehicles or less. The parking lot is being expanded by repetitive use of fringe areas. To decrease the potential for resource damage, this parking lot needs to be

expanded to accommodate 40 vehicles. This project would be funded by a combination of permit fees, federal appropriations and possibly grants.

Permit fees would pay for the installation and monthly fees of the satellite internet connection. The internet access equipment should be installed by mid-summer of FY 2008.

d. Whitehouse Campground and Trailhead Upgrade and Possible Relocation

Due to heavy erosion of the road leading out to Whitehouse Campground by the Paria river, an environmental assessment is being completed as to whether the road will be realigned or the campground moved to prevent inaccessibility to the facility and the trailhead due to erosion of the road. If it is determined the campground and trailhead will be moved two miles closer to the Paria Contact station, alterations will need to be made to the handouts, trailhead and campground facilities. Funding has not been determined for this project

Table 7

| PROJECT FUNDING SOURCES WITHIN THE FEE AREA | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Project | Funding Source | |
| | Permit Fees | Appropriations |
| Current Projects | | |
| AROLPS Conversion | | X |
| Website Upgrade | | X |
| Wilderness Monitoring | X | |
| Interpretive Panels | X | X |
| Navigation Guides | X | X |
| Satellite Internet Connection | X | |
| Online Lottery | | X |
| Memorandum of Understanding | | X |
| Future Projects | | |
| Wire Pass Parking Expansion | X | X |
| Campground Expansion | X | X |
| Flash Flooding Education | X | |
| Whitehouse Trailhead & Campground Upgrade/Relocation | | |

V. KEY COMPONENTS OF THE SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

A. Wilderness Setting

Paria Canyon, Buckskin Gulch, and Wire Pass combine to form one of the longest and most spectacular slot canyon systems in the world. The deeply incised canyons offer some of the most accessible and dramatic wilderness experiences in the desert southwest. The whirling, lithified sandstone formations in Coyote Buttes are among the most stunning backcountry sights in the country, and are among the most prized features for visitors and photographers, both amateur and professional.

B. Paria Contact Station

A permanent visitor contact station, located on U.S. Highway 89 two miles from the White House trailhead, provides visitors to the region access to hiking, backpacking, touring, and weather information. The station also provides interpretive/informational materials, restrooms, picnic tables, water, trash pickup, bus parking, and seven-day per week staffing from March 15th to November 15th.

C. White House Campground

The White House Campground is located adjacent to the White House Trailhead, two miles from the Paria Contact Station. Amenities include five campsites, picnic tables, an access road, two vault toilets, simple devices for containing campfires, and periodic patrols by law enforcement staff. Drinking water and waste collection are located adjacent the Paria Contact Station at the beginning of the campground access road.

D. Stateline Campground

The Stateline Campground is located on the Utah – Arizona border, one mile south of the Wire Pass Trailhead. It consists of four campsites, two of which have shade shelters; and one vault toilet. While not officially part of the Special Management Area, Stateline Campground serves hikers accessing the Buckskin and Wire Pass trailheads and all of the access points in Coyote Buttes South. No fees are charged for campground use.

D. Trailheads and Access Points

There are four developed trailheads that provide access to the permit area, and five undeveloped access points that are used to access Coyote Buttes North, Coyote Buttes South and Buckskin Gulch.

1. Whitehouse

The White House access consists of three facilities: 1) the Paria Contact Station, 2) the White House Campground, and 3) the White House Trailhead. These facilities provide the main access to Paria Canyon. To improve visitor service, the Paria Contact Station is located adjacent to US Highway 89. A self-pay station with informational kiosks is here. The White House Trailhead is coincident with the White House Campground. Both are two miles from the Paria Contact Station on an unpaved road and are used by both day-hikers and backpackers. They contain two vault toilets and informational and regulatory signs.

2. Wire Pass

The most heavily used trailhead within the permit area; Wire Pass is located on the gravel-surfaced House Rock Valley Road, eight miles from US Highway 89. It serves day-hikers

visiting Coyote Buttes North, Wire Pass, and Buckskin Gulch, and backpackers traveling through the entire Wire Pass, Buckskin Gulch, Paria Canyon drainage. It contains informational and regulatory signs, a self-pay station, a graded parking area, and a vault toilet.

3. Buckskin Gulch

Located four miles down House Rock Valley Road from US Highway 89, this trailhead provides direct access to the beginning of Buckskin Gulch. It contains informational and regulatory signs, a self-pay station, a graded parking area, informal camping and a vault toilet.

4. Lee's Ferry

Located within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, which is managed by the National Park Service, the Lee's Ferry Trailhead serves as a major exit point for through-hikers who begin their trek at one of the three upper trailheads (Buckskin Gulch, Wire Pass, or White House). There is a considerable amount of interpretive materials provided by the NPS on site. BLM provides only a trail register.

5. Undeveloped Access Points

There are five access points with no amenities that are used to access the permit area. The Middle Route is used infrequently as a shortcut to access the lower half of Buckskin Gulch. In Coyote Buttes North, the Notch provides alternative access to the popular Coyote Buttes North permit area. In Coyote Buttes South, Cottonwood Cove and Paw Hole are accessible only with four-wheel drive and Lone Tree requires a rugged two-mile hike to the permit area boundary.

VI. RECREATION USE BY KEY COMPONENT

All visitors to the special management area have the same activities in mind—hiking or backpacking—and they are using one or more of the individual permit areas to do so. The possible exception is the White House Campground, which is most commonly used as a jumping off point for wilderness exploration in Paria Canyon, but it may have occasional visitors who use the campground without hiking in the permit area.

The federal fiscal year (FY) runs from October 1 to September 30. Tables 8a through 10b give the actual visitation numbers from FY99 through FY06 by fiscal year. It is important to note that visitation levels were either level or showed a slight increase through FY05. This is due to two factors: a series of poor weather years and the court ordered internet shutdown of the Department of the Interior. FY06 was a record year for visitation, and it was likely due to good weather and the online availability of permits.

It is also important to note that Paria Canyon Overnight and Coyote Buttes North are either at, or are approaching, their maximum visitor use limits. Online permits for Coyote Buttes North are completely issued 365 days a year and even though walk-in permits are still available in the middle of summer and the dead of winter, this area is effectively operating at full capacity. Paria Canyon is also operating at near capacity, despite the fact that permits for winter and summer days are still widely available. This is because backpacking in a desert canyon setting like Paria Canyon and its tributaries is only feasible

in the spring and fall. While not yet at full capacity, Paria Canyon permits for March–June and September–November sell quickly.

Fluctuations in visitor use numbers can be seen in the tables below. These discrepancies are due to variable weather conditions from year to year. Years where numbers have dropped slightly were generally wetter during the prime hiking/backpacking season, and wet weather normally cancels a canyon hike due to flash flooding concerns. Adverse weather conditions can also make House Rock Valley Road impassable, cutting off access to the Coyote Buttes trailheads.

Tables 8a and 8b give the total number of permits issued.

Tables 9a and 9b give the total number of visitors who used the area. This is the number of individuals given access via the permits shown in Tables 8a and 8b.

Tables 10a and 10b give the total number of days that the visitors listed in Tables 9a and 9b actually spent in the permit area.

Table 8a

| SPECIAL RECREATION PERMITS ISSUED | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Area Component | Paria Canyon / Coyote Buttes Visitor Statistics FY99 – FY07 | | | | | | | | |
| | FY99 | FY00 | FY01 | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
| Coyote Buttes North | 1,085 | 1,565 | 1,353 | 1,973 | 2,274 | 2,340 | 1,940 | 2,752 | 2,985 |
| Coyote Buttes South | 303 | 392 | 330 | 257 | 384 | 470 | 571 | 793 | 1,359 |
| Paria Canyon Overnight | 736 | 847 | 761 | 920 | 926 | 816 | 872 | 891 | 918 |
| Paria Canyon Day Use | 1,528 | 1,927 | 1,688 | 2,168 | 1,934 | 1,856 | 1,755 | 1,959 | 2,582 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | 3,652 | 4,731 | 4,132 | 5,318 | 5,518 | 5,482 | 5,138 | 6,395 | 7,844 |

Table 8b

| WHITE HOUSE CAMPGROUND PERMITS ISSUED | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Area Component | Campground Visitor Statistics FY99 – FY07 | | | | | | | | |
| | FY99 | FY00 | FY01 | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
| White House Campground | 412 | 357 | 527 | 502 | 500 | 357 | 407 | 523 | 528 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | 412 | 357 | 527 | 502 | 500 | 357 | 407 | 523 | 528 |

Table 9a

| SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT VISITS | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Area Component | Paria Canyon / Coyote Buttes Visitor Statistics FY99 – FY07 | | | | | | | | |
| | FY99 | FY00 | FY01 | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
| Coyote Buttes North | 3,172 | 4,990 | 3,857 | 5,257 | 6,161 | 6,018 | 4,681 | 6,803 | 7,316 |
| Coyote Buttes South | 769 | 999 | 887 | 661 | 1,008 | 1,169 | 1,388 | 2,006 | 3,144 |
| Paria Canyon Overnight | 2,589 | 2,754 | 2,842 | 2,956 | 3,129 | 2,794 | 3,072 | 3,197 | 3,199 |
| Paria Canyon Day Use | 3,306 | 4,407 | 3,803 | 4,716 | 4,183 | 4,210 | 4,017 | 4,589 | 6,126 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | 9,836 | 13,150 | 11,389 | 13,590 | 14,481 | 14,191 | 13,158 | 16,595 | 19,785 |

Table 9b

| CAMPGROUND VISITS | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Area Component | Campground Visitor Statistics FY99 – FY07 | | | | | | | | |
| | FY99 | FY00 | FY01 | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
| White House Campground | 973 | 781 | 1,275 | 1,106 | 1,233 | 843 | 973 | 635 | 1,225 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | 412 | 781 | 1,275 | 1,106 | 1,233 | 843 | 973 | 635 | 1,225 |

Table 10a

| SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT VISITOR DAYS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Area Component | Paria Canyon / Coyote Buttes Visitor Statistics FY99 – FY07 | | | | | | | | |
| | FY99 | FY00 | FY01 | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
| Coyote Buttes North | 3,172 | 4,990 | 3,857 | 5,257 | 6,161 | 6,018 | 4,681 | 6,803 | 7,316 |
| Coyote Buttes South | 769 | 999 | 887 | 661 | 1,008 | 1,169 | 1,388 | 2,006 | 3,144 |
| Paria Canyon Overnight | 9,583 | 10,072 | 10,233 | 11,131 | 11,603 | 10,365 | 11,431 | 11,147 | 11,199 |
| Paria Canyon Day Use | 3,492 | 4,407 | 3,803 | 4,716 | 4,183 | 4,210 | 4,017 | 4,589 | 6,126 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | 17,016 | 20,468 | 18,780 | 21,765 | 22,955 | 21,762 | 21,517 | 24,545 | 27,785 |

Table 10b

| CAMPGROUND VISITOR DAYS | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Area Component | Campground Visitor Statistics FY99 – FY07 | | | | | | | | |
| | FY99 | FY00 | FY01 | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
| White House Campground | 1,742 | 1,690 | 2,758 | 2,383 | 2,698 | 1,887 | 2,237 | 1,154 | 2,579 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | 1,742 | 1,690 | 2,758 | 2,383 | 2,698 | 1,887 | 2,237 | 1,154 | 2,579 |

VII. FEE COLLECTION PROCESS

There are four methods by which permits are issued and fees collected for the special management area. A percentage breakdown of each method is shown in Tables 11a and 11b. The following paragraphs describe both the current method for issuing permits/collecting fees, and how the same processes will function under the AROLPS system. A graphic comparison of the two systems can be found in Figures 5 and 6.

A. Online Special Recreation Permits

The most efficient and heavily used technique for issuing permits and collecting fees is the online permit system, which allows visitors to find an available hiking date and then obtain a hiking/backpacking permit from any computer with an internet connection. The online permit system can be found at: <https://www.blm.gov/az/arolrsmain.htm>

1. Existing System (Arizona Recreation Online Permit System - AROLPS)

Under the AROLPS system, all credit card transactions are processed by Pay.gov (the US Government's credit card verification and processing system) and deposited directly into the appropriate recreational fee revenue account.

2. Lottery System (AROLPS)

For the Coyote Buttes North permit area, an online lottery began on August 1, 2007. A detailed description of how the lottery functions for visitors can be found in Section IV and how this system will be managed can be found in Section XII.

B. Walk-in Special Recreation Permits

Walk-in permits are the second-most popular method of obtaining a permit. While these permits could be issued more efficiently online, walk-in permits have proved to be a valuable service for local/regional visitors and spontaneous travelers who are just passing through the region. Walk-in permits are issued for next-day hikes. The permit information is administratively entered directly into the permit database by Kanab Field Office staff.

1. Existing System

Under the existing system, fees for walk-in permits are collected at time of sale by either BLM employees or BLM volunteers. The fees are counted according to standard BLM fee collection procedures and deposited directly into the appropriate recreation fee revenue account.

C. E-mail, Fax, and Phone Special Recreation Permits

1. Old System

BLM and ASIA employees occasionally issued permits by e-mail, fax, and phone. These permit applications were administratively entered directly into the permit database by staff.

The money flow was identical to the online permit system described above. This procedure no longer occurs.

D. Self-Pay Amenity Fees and Special Recreation Permits

Self-pay envelopes for SRPs are collected from fee tubes at the White House, Wire Pass, and Buckskin Gulch trailheads. Self-pay envelopes for payment of expanded amenity fees at the White House Campground are also collected from a fee tube (there is no charge for camping at the Stateline Campground).

1. Existing System

Under the existing system, the fee collection process normally involves a combination of two employees. The employees retrieve the locked fee tubes, replacing them with empty tubes, and return the locked, full tube containing the fee envelopes to the office. The locked fee tubes are then opened and the fees are counted according to standard BLM fee collection procedures. The SRP fees are sorted from the expanded amenity fees and deposited in their respective recreation fee revenue accounts. The SRP fee receipts are managed by Arizona’s Vermilion Cliffs National Monument Office and the expanded amenity fee receipts are managed by Utah’s Kanab Field Office.

Table 11a

| SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT FEE COLLECTION METHODS | | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Area Component | Online | Walk-In | E-Mail, Fax, US Mail, Phone | Self-Pay Envelopes |
| Coyote Buttes North | 47% | 52% | 1% | N/A |
| Coyote Buttes South | 73% | 26% | 1% | N/A |
| Paria Canyon Overnight | 79% | 11% | 10% | N/A |
| Paria Canyon Day Use | N/A | N/A | N/A | 100% |

Table 11b

| EXPANDED AMENITY FEE COLLECTION METHODS | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Area Component | Online | Walk-In | E-Mail, Fax, US Mail, Phone | Self-Pay Envelopes |
| White House Campground | N/A | N/A | N/A | 100% |

E. Permit Issuance and Fee Collection Flow Charts

The following pages contain flow charts that show the current methods for issuing permits and collecting fees.

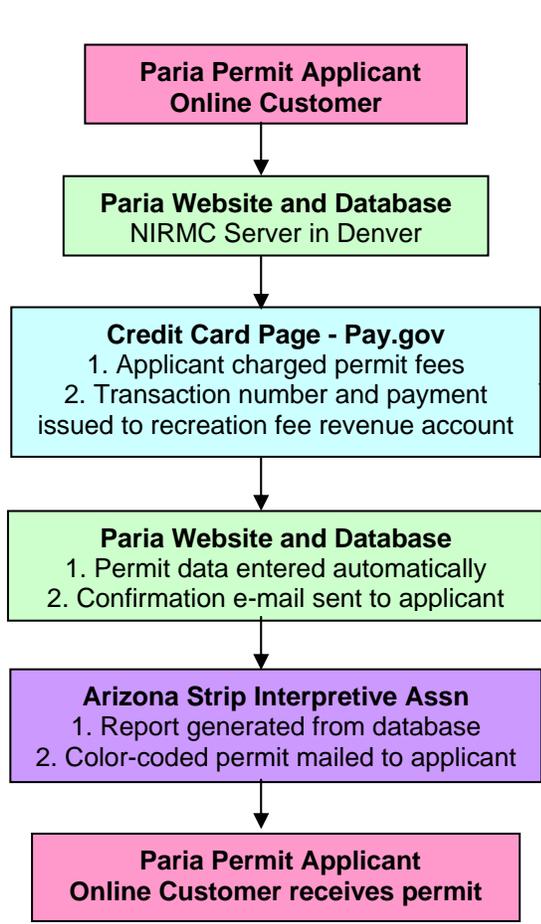
Figure 5

Shows how the old online first-come first served, walk-in, and trailhead self-pay systems function under AROLPS.

Figure 6

Shows how the system now functions under AROLPS with the addition of an online lottery application process. Note: a lottery application process would only be made available for Coyote Buttes South and Paria Canyon if and when online traffic on the first of the month becomes so heavy that obtaining a permit becomes a matter of competition between potential visitors and their internet connection speeds become a factor. Initially, Coyote Buttes North will be the only permit area to offer the lottery application process as an option. Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes South permitting will initially remain under the first-come, first-served calendar application process. More detailed information can be found in Section XII.

ONLINE PERMITS



WALK-IN PERMITS

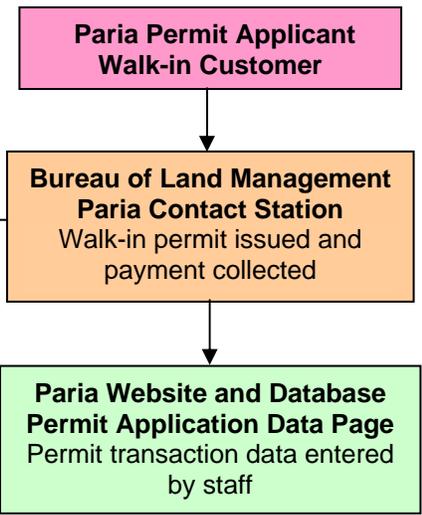
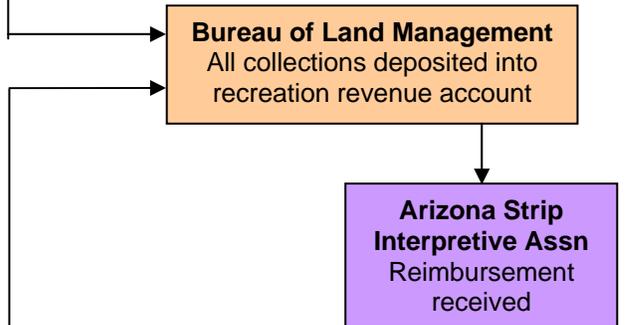
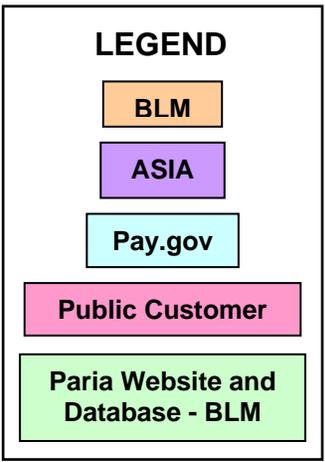
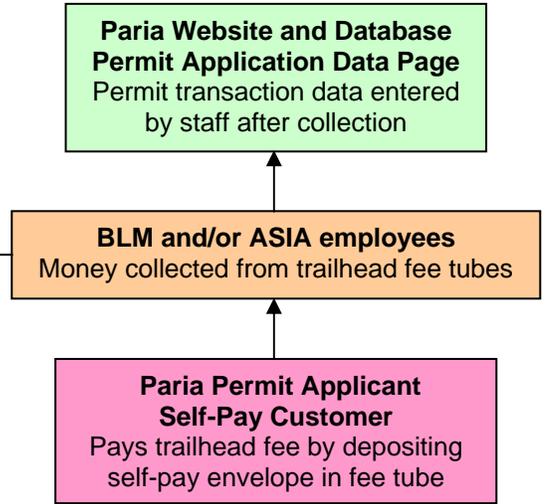


Figure 5
AROLPS Standard Permit Issuance and Fee Collection Process



SELF-PAY PERMITS



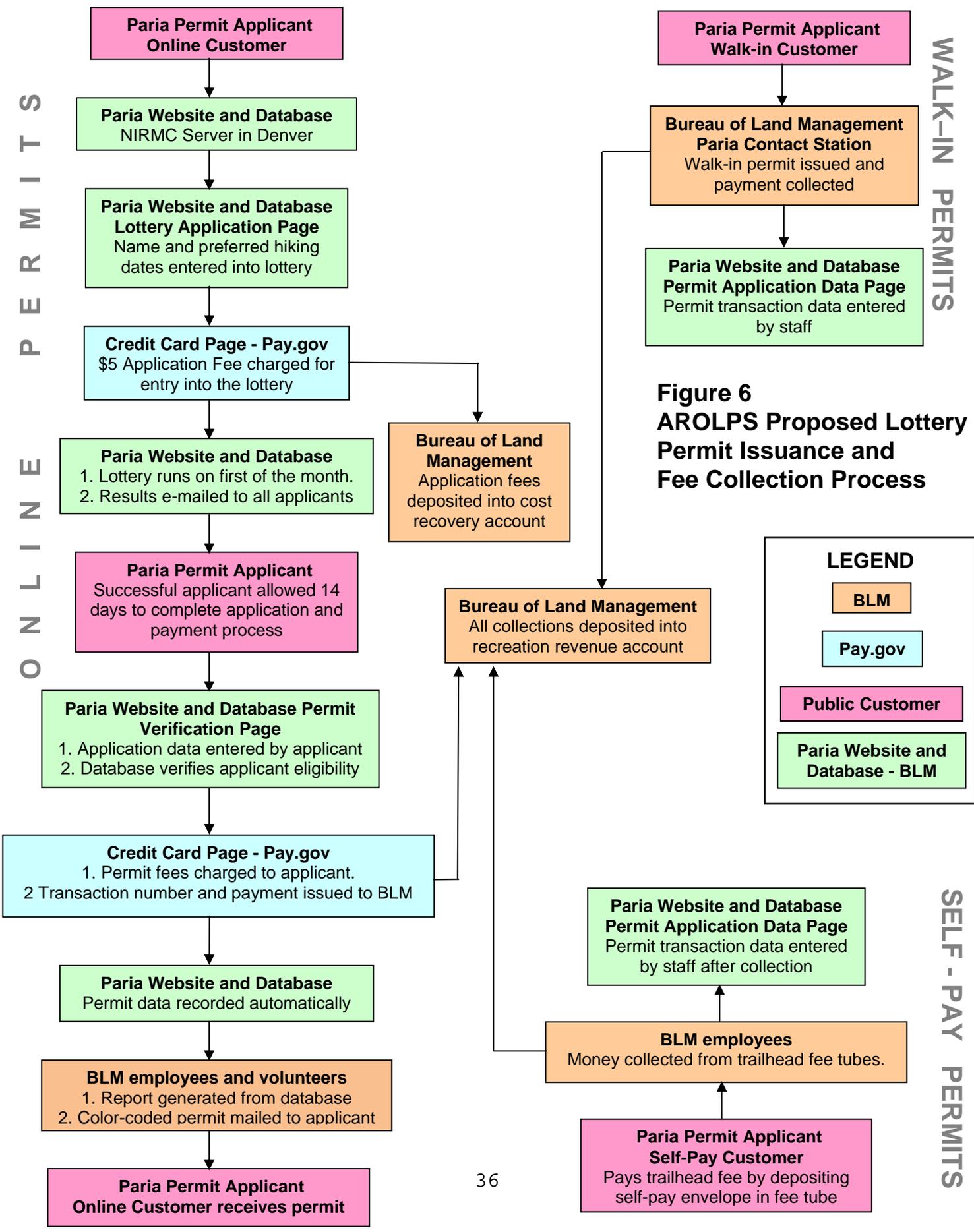


Figure 6
AROLPS Proposed Lottery
Permit Issuance and
Fee Collection Process

VIII. FEE RECEIPT HISTORY

Tables 12a and 12b show the history of fee receipts from FY99 through FY07.

Table 12a

| SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT FEE COLLECTIONS | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Area Component | SRP Revenue by Area Component | | | | | | | | |
| | FY99 | FY00 | FY01 | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
| Coyote Buttes North | \$15,762 | \$25,355 | \$19,465 | \$26,455 | \$27,935 | \$29,700 | \$22,950 | \$34,010 | \$34,885 |
| Coyote Buttes South | \$3,850 | \$5,110 | \$4,495 | \$3,360 | \$4,985 | \$5,835 | \$6,945 | \$9,925 | \$15,870 |
| Paria Canyon Overnight | \$48,947 | \$51,765 | \$52,020 | \$56,855 | \$55,200 | \$51,635 | \$55,795 | \$56,360 | \$56,795 |
| Paria Canyon Day Use | \$16,568 | \$21,850 | \$18,989 | \$25,215 | \$20,505 | \$20,797 | \$19,163 | \$22,421 | \$29,368 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | \$85,127 | \$104,090 | \$94,969 | \$111,885 | \$108,625 | \$107,967 | \$104,853 | \$122,716 | \$136,918 |

Table 12b

| CAMPGROUND FEE COLLECTION | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Area Component | Campground Revenue | | | | | | | | |
| | FY99 | FY00 | FY01 | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
| White House Campground | \$2,537 | \$2,205 | \$3,128 | \$3,019 | \$3,055 | \$2,177 | \$3,207 | \$4,024 | \$12,005 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | \$2,537 | \$2,205 | \$3,128 | \$3,019 | \$3,055 | \$2,177 | \$3,207 | \$4,024 | \$12,005 |

IX. OPERATIONAL COSTS

During the years this recreation fee project was managed under the Fee Demonstration authority, the costs specific to area components or services were not recorded separately and cannot be determined now. Therefore, the figures below reflect calculations that are inclusive of all the area components combined. Under FLREA, the expanded amenity fee revenues collected at White House Campground are now deposited separately and will be accountable accordingly.

Table 13 shows the personnel costs required to run the permit area in a typical year. This table was calculated using costs for (FY08). The Recreation Technician for Arizona is currently vacant but the position should be filled by the end of FY2008.

Table 13

| PERSONNEL COSTS – AVERAGE COST PER FISCAL 2008 | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Position | State | Permit Fees | | Appropriations | |
| | | Workdays Per Year | Cost | Workdays Per Year | Cost |
| Bureau of Land Management | | | | | |
| Vermilion Cliffs Manager | | 0 | \$0 | 24.5 | \$10,837 |
| Outdoor Recreation Planner | Arizona | 0 | \$0 | 74.5 | \$20,919 |
| Law Enforcement Ranger | Arizona | 10 | \$3,100 | 16.5 | \$5,115 |
| Recreation Technician | Arizona | 168 | \$19,816 | 76.5 | \$4,954 |
| Kanab Field Office | Utah | 0 | \$0 | 8.0 | \$3,080 |
| Visitor Information Assistant (mark) | Utah | 168 | \$32,256 | 76.5 | \$14,688 |
| Administrative Specialist | Utah | 0 | \$0 | 23.5 | \$3,431 |
| Paria Contact Station Manager (Tony) | Utah | 44.5 | \$8,544 | 200 | \$38,400 |
| Public Contact Specialist | Utah | 84 | \$15,648 | 44 | \$7,824 |
| Wilderness Ranger | Utah | 0 | \$0 | 102.0 | \$25,571 |
| Recreation Technician | Utah | 80 | \$8,160 | 50 | \$5,100 |
| | | | | | |
| | Total | 554.5 | \$87,524 | 696 | \$139,919 |

Table 14 shows the typical operating costs for the permit area in a typical year. This includes, but is not limited to: vehicle costs, electricity for the Paria Contact Station, contractual services, hardware and other supplies required to maintain trailheads, restrooms, campsites, signage, permit printing costs, and permit mailing costs.

Table 14

| AVERAGE OPERATING COST PER FISCAL YEAR | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Expenditures | Permit and Amenity Fees | Appropriations |
| Contracts and Services | \$21,932 | \$5,864 |
| Equipment | \$318 | \$1,332 |
| Labor | \$2,147 | \$0 |
| Supplies/Materials | \$7,783 | \$5,682 |
| Telephones | \$1,186 | |
| Travel | \$193 | \$2,074 |
| Vehicles | \$1,257 | \$9,328 |
| TOTAL | \$34,816 | \$24,280 |

Table 15 shows the annual permit fee revenue costs listed in Tables 12a and 12b, minus the operating costs listed in Tables 13 and 14. These costs are for fee revenues and expenditures only, they do not include appropriations.

Table 15

| ANNUAL PERMIT FEE REVENUE MINUS OPERATING COSTS | | |
|---|--|---|
| Average of 2006 and 2007 Annual Permit Fee Revenue | Average Annual Permit Fee Expenditures – Personnel and Operations | Average Annual Permit Fee Balance Available for Projects |
| \$129,817 | \$122,340 | *\$7,477 |

* This number is a reflection of the average surplus funds from FY06 to FY07. Yearly fluctuations are dependent on economic variability's.

X. FUTURE REVENUE PROJECTIONS

A. Methods and Assumptions

Table 16 provides revenue projections for the two proposed fee increases described in Section XIII. Table 17 provides revenue projections for the lottery application fees. This revenue will be managed as a cost recovery account and those funds will be collected and managed separately from permit fee revenue. The management of this account and the details of cost recovery can be found in Section XII.

The annual revenue projection for lottery application fees in Table 17 is based on the number of applicants trying to obtain permits on the existing first-come, first-served system. This projection operates on the assumption that each individual who is online during a permit opening could be expected to submit one lottery application in an attempt to obtain a permit.

While this assumption makes sense, it is possible that this logic is flawed. Because the demand for permits in Coyote Buttes North is so high, it seems likely that those individuals who really want a permit would submit more than one application. The lottery application system is set up so an individual cannot submit more than one application under the own exact same name, but there is nothing to stop a spouse, relative, or friend from also submitting applications for the same group or the user to add a middle name or middle initial. If enough visitors submit multiple applications, it is possible that revenues could be much higher.

It is also possible that revenues could be lower than projected. The lottery application system is set up so that before an individual submits an application for a specific day(s), they will be able to clearly see—through an online table that updates with each completed application—how many other applications have already been submitted for that particular day. If the numbers in the table are large enough, it is possible that this may deter other applicants. If this takes place, it is possible that revenues could be much lower. The revenue projection in Table 17 takes the middle ground between these two possibilities, but since the outcome depends entirely on human nature, it is impossible to accurately predict. After one full year of operation using the lottery application system, this business plan will be updated to reflect accurate numbers.

The annual revenue projection for the proposed fee increases shown in Table 16 for Coyote Buttes North and Paria Canyon Day-Use is much more reliable. It is based on visitation data from the past nine years and is expected to be accurate to plus/minus five percent.

Table 16

| PROPOSED ANNUAL FEE INCREASE REVENUE PROJECTION | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Area Component | Existing Fee | Proposed Fee | Projected Annual Revenue Increase |
| Coyote Buttes North | \$5 per person per day | \$7 per person per day | \$14,000 |
| Paria Canyon Day-Use | \$5 per person per day | \$6 per person per day | \$6,126 |
| | | | \$20,126 |

Table 17

| ANNUAL ONLINE LOTTERY REVENUE PROJECTION | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Projected number of online applicants | Lottery Application Fee | Projected Annual Revenue |
| 8,250 | \$5 | \$41,250 |

XI. MARKET ANALYSIS

A. Methods and Assumptions

When the original fee demonstration project was set up, fees in the market area for similar settings and services were examined to determine the fair market value for day hiking and backpacking trips in Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes. Those same areas were re-examined as part of this business plan, and the results were compared to the results obtained in 1996. The current analysis also includes an evaluation of the lottery fee by comparing two areas where lotteries have been implemented due to overwhelming visitor demand (State of Arizona Hunting Permits and Zion National Park). Table 18 provides comparative information from both the 1996 and the current market analysis.

The market analysis shown in Table 18 can be somewhat misleading because different agencies have different policies for collecting and administering similar fees. For instance, National Parks in the region charge an entrance fee, but the BLM does not. The BLM does however, charge fees for Individual Special Recreation Permits for access (entrance) to Special Management Areas. In a market analysis, it could be assumed that these are similar fees, but they are not because national parks also charge additional fees for access to many of their backcountry areas. The situation is further clouded by the fact that many National Park visitors purchase annual entrance passes, and when used frequently, these passes drive down the average cost of and entrance fee.

There are two fee increases being proposed by this business plan that will directly affect visitors. The first is a \$2 per-person increase in the daily permit fee for Coyote Buttes North. The second is a \$1 per-person increase in the daily permit fee for Paria Canyon Day-Use. The two permit fee increases are described in Section XIII.

In order to simplify the analysis, and provide a valid comparison, Tables 19 and 20 show what it would cost for a group of four to spend one day in the backcountry of each area listed. Table 19 shows this one-day cost using the existing fee structure and Table 20 shows the same cost using the proposed fee structure. To avoid the confusion mentioned above, national park entrance fees were left out of the analysis.

Table 18

| FEE ANALYSIS AND FAIR MARKET VALUE | | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Location | Backpacking | Day Hiking | Entrance Fee | Lottery Application Fee |
| Aravaipa Canyon – 1996 | \$1.50 per person, per day | \$1.50 per person, per day | | |
| Aravaipa Canyon – 2008 | \$5.00 per person, per day | \$5.00 per person, per day | | |
| Arizona Hunting Permit | Not analyzed | Not analyzed | | Not analyzed |
| Arizona Hunting Permit | Varies | Varies | | \$5.00 per permit |
| Grand Canyon – 1996 | \$4.00 per person, per day | | \$20.00 per vehicle | |
| Grand Canyon – 2008 | \$10.00 per permit, plus, \$5.00 per person, per night | | \$25.00 per vehicle | |
| Grand Gulch – 1996 | \$5.00 per person, per day | | | |
| Grand Gulch – 2008 | \$8.00 per person, per day | \$2.00 per person | | |
| Navajo Reservation – 1996 | \$2.00 per person, per day | \$10.00 per group | | |
| Navajo Reservation – 2008 | \$5.00 per person, per day | \$5.00 per person, per day | | |
| Hualapai Reservation – 1996 | \$7.00 per person, per day | | | |
| Hualapai Reservation – 2008 | \$17.00 per person, per day | | \$35.00 | \$5.00 Environmental Care Fee person |
| Zion National Park – 1996 | Not analyzed | Not analyzed | Not analyzed | Not analyzed |
| Zion National Park – 2008 | \$10 for 1-2 people \$15 for 3-7 people \$20 for 8-12 people (all above per day) | \$10 for 1-2 people \$15 for 3-7 people \$20 for 8-12 people (all above per day) | \$25.00 per vehicle | \$5.00 per permit |
| Paria / Coyote Buttes - 1996 | \$5.00 per person, per day | \$5.00 per person, per day | | Not analyzed |
| Paria / Coyote Buttes - 2008 | \$5.00 per person, per day | \$5.00 per person, per day | | \$5.00 per permit |

Table 19

| Existing Fees – Group of Four – One-Day Backcountry Permit | | |
|---|--|------------------|
| Area Component | One-Day Backcountry Fee | Total Fee |
| Hualapai Reservation | \$35 per group + (\$5.00+17) per person | \$123 |
| Grand Canyon NP | \$10 permit fee + \$5 per person + \$25.00 entrance fee | \$55 |
| Zion National Park | \$5 lottery application + \$5 permit fee + \$15 per group +25.00 entrance fee | \$50 |
| Aravaipa Canyon (BLM) | \$5 per person | \$20 |
| Paria Canyon Day Use | \$5 per person | \$20 |
| Paria Canyon Overnight | \$5 per person | \$20 |
| Coyote Buttes North | \$5 lottery application + \$5 per person | \$25 |
| Coyote Buttes South | \$5 per person | \$20 |
| Navajo Reservation | \$5 per person | \$20 |
| Grand Gulch (BLM) | \$2 per person | \$8 |

Table 20

| Proposed Fees – Group of Four – One-Day Backcountry Permit | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| Area Component | One-Day Backcountry Fee | Total Fee |
| Hualapai Reservation | \$35 per group + (\$5.00+17) per person | \$123 |
| Coyote Buttes North | \$5 lottery application + \$7 per person | \$33 |
| Grand Canyon NP | \$10 permit fee + \$5 per person+ \$25.00 Entrance fee | \$55 |
| Zion National Park | \$5 lottery application + \$5 permit fee + \$15 per group + \$25.00 Entrance fee | \$50 |
| Paria Canyon Day Use | \$6 per person | \$24 |
| Aravaipa Canyon (BLM) | \$5 per person | \$20 |
| Paria Canyon Overnight | \$5 per person | \$20 |
| Coyote Buttes South | \$5 per person | \$20 |
| Navajo Reservation | \$5 per person | \$20 |
| Grand Gulch (BLM) | \$2 per person | \$8 |

XII. ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL CHANGES

One of the following proposed changes in fees (A) is external and will be directly noticeable by permit area visitors. Based upon the demographics of the average visitor, the current lottery application fee is not considered to be overly burdensome nor apt to deny access. Response to the proposed fee increases during the public comment period was positive.

The two other changes are internal. They are aimed at increasing managerial, fiscal, and administrative efficiency for management of the recreational fee revenues for the Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes Special Management Area by resolving some of the managerial concerns and processes described earlier. Although these changes will have little direct effect upon visitors, they will help ensure that the visitor will continue to have the opportunity to attain the desired experiences and outcomes that brought them to the permit area.

A. Conversion to an Online Lottery

In order to address the first-come, first-served problems with the existing calendar application process described Section II, and to meet visitor expectations of individualized and instantaneous customer service, the implementation of an online lottery was determined to be the most viable option. Potential visitors will continue to have the first-come, first-served process available to them as well as the availability of walk-in permits for local, regional, and spontaneous travelers.

Initially, the lottery will be available only for the Coyote Buttes North component of the permit area, as the Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes South components do not yet have the demand to warrant a secondary application process. The automated system was designed so that these two areas could be included in the future if use levels and public concern indicate a lottery is warranted. This proposal incorporates expanding the lottery to include these areas if at least two of the following conditions occur:

- Public complaints about an inability to obtain a permit become frequent and predictable.
- Online applicants are frequently kicked off (timed out) the website when they return from the credit card payment pages.
- It can be demonstrated that the only successful applicants are those with latest computer processing speeds and high speed internet connections.
- If all available permits for the month are consistently issued within the first 30 minutes they become available.

A non-refundable application fee of \$5 would be required for each application in order to participate in the lottery.

As in any lottery, the more times a person enters, the better chance they have of winning. The application fee is necessary in order to discourage individuals from flooding the system with lottery applications. Without this fee, it is predicted that applicants would apply hundreds or more times each month in order to increase their odds of selection. This would

give the advantage to those who are willing to sit at their computer the longest and submit applications, which would defeat the purpose of the lottery altogether.

As demonstrated by other successful lotteries, charging an application fee is the only feasible way to avoid this, because for every automated screening process to limit the number of lottery applications received from an individual there is a workaround. Applicants can change any data element used to electronically identify them simply by using a different computer, credit card, having friends or spouse apply, or changing one character in the spelling of their name on their lottery application. The list is endless and beyond our capability to control.

However, there is also nothing to stop someone from applying as many times as they are willing to pay the \$5 application fee. It should be rare that even an applicant with the financial ability to submit a large number of applications will interfere with the opportunities available to others because the majority of such applicants are destination tourists that have a relatively small time window available for their visit. To help with this, a feature was designed into the system to allow any potential applicant to see the number of lottery applications already received for any given day of the month being applied for. This will allow the potential visitor to compare their willingness to pay for a certain day against the odds they will be authorized to enter on that day. With the lottery application fee set at the current cost of a day's permit, it is unlikely many applicants would be willing to pay many times over the cost of a permit - just to obtain a permit.

In the end, the visitor benefits from this addition as all potential visitors will have the exact same odds of obtaining a permit. As was made obvious in Section IX, the operational costs of sustaining the facilities and settings necessary for the visitor's desired outcomes are being met by existing revenues with a small surplus. The proposed projects outlined in Section IV, such as upgrading and expanding the trailhead campground, would not be possible without additional revenues.

B. Application Fees and Cost Recovery

Legal authority to establish an application fee associated with a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for the BLM is based on Sec. 304 (a) of the Federal Lands Policy Management Act (FLPMA). This authority is referenced in the latest version of BLM's Special Recreation Permit Handbook H-2930-1. A description of the authority, including its "cost recovery" applicability, is as follows:

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Section 304.

The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to require reimbursement to the United States for reasonable costs with respect to application and other documents relating to public lands. (emphasis added).

Lottery systems to award SRPs have costs associated with them -- such as printing, mailing, handling of applications, awarding permits, monitoring permit use, etc. These costs incurred by the BLM, solely benefit the applicants. Applicants who are unsuccessful in the lottery

also have benefits, as the lottery allows all applicants the opportunity for a permit without having to compete in a first-come, first-served environment in order to receive it.

BLM's Special Recreation Permit Handbook, H-2930-1, treats these application fees as a cost recovery, as opposed to standard SRP fees. On page 25, the Handbook states:

e. Cost recovery, including application fees, may also be charged when necessary to cover the costs of a permit lottery system, site reservation systems, or other special services for use of Special Areas. In these cases, fees should be based upon an analysis of the direct cost of the entire service and spread across the estimated number of beneficiaries. Such a charge may be implemented as a cost recovery application fee.

And from Page 27 of the Handbook:

(1) Application Fees. Application fees are set by the State Director and are used to offset the cost of processing SRP applications. Application fees may be charged in addition to the fees set in the Director's national recreation fee schedule. These fees might be assessed for processing permit renewals or transfers, lottery or reservation systems, or any other special service rendered to process the SRP.

The two bulleted lists below (direct and indirect costs) provide details to what are considered legitimate tasks that can be charged to cost recovery. This information comes directly from the H-2930-1 Handbook. Table 21 provides information about how much time each BLM employee spends on these specific tasks. Since this (cost recovery) will be a new account, it is assumed that the numbers in Table 22 may need to be adjusted after one full year of operation.

Direct Costs that can be charged to Cost Recovery

Costs (labor) that can be directly attributed to processing applications and issuing/monitoring permits for Coyote Buttes North:

- Time spent on the phone assisting customers
- Time spent assisting customers at the counter (Paria Contact Station and KFO)
- Time spent on e-mail correspondence
- Time spent printing and/or mailing permits
- Time spent on permit data entry
- Time spent processing, recording and issuing permit rainchecks
- Time spent on permit compliance (Law Enforcement)
- Time spent monitoring the area and visitor safety (Wilderness Ranger)

Indirect Costs that can be charged to Cost Recovery

Costs (operations) that can be indirectly attributed to processing applications and issuing/monitoring permits for Coyote Buttes North:

- Software costs, including development, upgrades, repairs, and maintenance
- Permit printing costs, including ink, paper, and replacement printers
- Mailing costs for CBN permits
- Telecommunications costs (portion of satellite phone)

The lottery application fee and the associated cost recovery guidelines apply only to the Coyote Buttes North permit area. The Coyote Buttes South and Paria Canyon permit areas will continue to be managed under the existing permit system, and because a lottery is not being proposed for those areas at this time, they are not subject to cost recovery. In the future, if implementation of a lottery proves to be necessary for these areas, then at that time they would also be subject to cost recovery.

Table 21

| COST RECOVERY SPENDING – DIRECT COSTS | | | |
|--|--------------|--|-------------------|
| BLM Employee | State | Time in a typical work week spent on cost recovery activities | |
| | | Avg. Hours | Percentage |
| Vermilion Cliffs Monument Mgr | Arizona | 1 | 2 % |
| Outdoor Recreation Planner | Arizona | 26 | *65% |
| Law Enforcement Ranger | Arizona | 6 | 15 % |
| Recreation Technician | Arizona | Projected *26 | *65 % |
| Kanab Field Office Manager | Utah | 1 | 2 % |
| Outdoor Recreation Planner | Utah | 2 | 5 % |
| Administrative Specialist | Utah | 20 | 50.0 % |
| Paria Contact Station Manager | Utah | 10 | 25 % |
| Public Contact Specialist | Utah | 20 | 50 % |
| Wilderness Ranger | Utah/Arizona | 2 | 5 % |

- It is projected that once the Recreation Technician (Paria permits) position is filled at the Arizona Field Office, the Rec. Tech will spend 65% of their time working directly on Paria Permit issues and the Outdoor Recreation Planner will spend 10% of their time working directly with Paria Permit issues.

Table 22

| COST RECOVERY SPENDING – INDIRECT COSTS | |
|--|--|
| Expenditures | Total revenue spent annually on cost recovery |
| AROLPS Software Development | \$3,000 |
| AROLPS Software Maintenance | \$3,000 |
| Printing Costs (Permit, Maps, Directions) | \$1,600 |
| Permit Mailing Costs | \$4,500 |
| Telecommunications Costs | \$250 |

C. Project Account Adjustments

Under the earlier Fee Demonstration Project for this area, all recreation fee revenues from commercial SRPs for the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (AZ) and the Kanab Field Office (UT), the individual SRPs for use of this area, and the White House Campground fees were all deposited into the same account. Also, when the Fee Demonstration Project was first established the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (VCNM) office did not exist. Recreation fee revenues were accounted for under the Arizona Strip Field Office. Currently, management of the individual SRP fee revenue account is being managed by Vermilion Cliffs National Monument.

Many of these commercial SRP's are for operations that occur outside Special Management Area than inside, and it is no longer appropriate to include those revenues under this business plan. Consequently a separate account was created to allow for accounting of those revenues differently from expenditures related only to this permit area.

In addition, FLREA distinguishes revenues from Expanded Amenity Fees differently than revenues from SRP fees. Therefore, another new account was established for the revenues collected at the White House Campground in Utah. This allows those revenues to be managed and accounted for separately from the SRP revenues and will better respond to the requirements of FLREA because not all White House Campground visitors are seeking the opportunities, experiences, and outcomes associated with SRPs for the permit area. These funds will be available through collaboration between the Kanab Field Office and the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument Office by mutual determination of expenditures that benefit all users of the Campground, including those that enter Paria Canyon after obtaining an SRP.

D. Cooperative Management Agreements

When the Fee Demonstration Project was established, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) did not exist. On the Utah side of the border, the monument boundary was drawn so that the White House, Buckskin, Middle Route, and Wire Pass trailheads lie within the GSENM, while the Utah portion of the Paria Canyon – Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness remained under the jurisdiction of the Kanab Field Office. A Memorandum of Understanding was written to define each office's role in the management of the area. The creation of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument and the development of Big Water Visitor Center have created a need to revisit the MOU to more clearly define each office's responsibilities.

XIII. PROPOSED FEE INCREASES

A future adjustment in the Special Recreation Permit fee schedule is being proposed to begin in Fiscal Year 2009 (FY 2009 begins October 1, 2008), as the current fee schedule appears adequate to provide quality service until that time. It is anticipated that operational costs in 2009 will increase beyond what is currently being collected and a moderate fee increase will be required to sustain current operations and services.

A. Proposed Future Fee Schedule

Based on the statistics in Section VI, increases in visitor use are occurring in all areas. However, the largest amount of concentrated use is occurring in and around the Wire Pass Trailhead, since it is the jumping-off point for both Coyote Buttes North and Paria Canyon Day-Use. This area, along with the Buckskin Gulch Trailhead, just a few miles away, require more trailhead maintenance, visitor education, and law enforcement efforts. This site-specific workload is reflected in the proposed fee increases in Table 21. The proposed fee structure is as follows:

Table 23

| Proposed Changes to Individual Special Recreation Permit Fee Structure | | | | |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Permit Area | Type of Fee | Existing Fee | New Fee | Effective Date |
| *Coyote Buttes North | * New Fee (lottery) | N/A | * \$5 per application | *August 1, 2007 |
| Coyote Buttes North | Fee Increase | \$5 per person per day | \$7 per person per day | Oct. 1, 2008 |
| Coyote Buttes South | N/A | \$5 per person per day | No Change | N/A |
| Paria Canyon Overnight | N/A | \$5 per person per day | No Change | N/A |
| Paria Canyon Day-Use | Fee Increase | \$5 per person per day | \$6 per person per day | Oct. 1, 2008 |

* Lottery application fee falls under “cost recovery” and this fee is set by the state director. This application fee and its cost recovery applicability are described in detail in Section XIII.

B. No Action Alternative to Future Fee Schedule

Failure to adopt the proposed fee increase for fiscal year 2009 would freeze fees for all permit areas at the current rate of \$5 per person, per day. Excluding the addition of the lottery application fee, the current fee structure has been in place since 1997 and during that time there has been a steady increase in visitor use, and a corresponding increase in operational costs. The increase in visitation has resulted in additional revenue, which so far has been used successfully to offset operational costs. Under the “No Action” scenario, it is possible that revenue may still exceed expenditures for the next couple of years, but eventually, costs can be expected to surpass revenues. The only other option to a fee increase would be an increase in federal appropriations.

In the end, the visitor benefits from these fee increases. As was made obvious in Section IX, the operational costs of sustaining the facilities and settings necessary for the visitor’s desired outcomes are being met by existing revenues with a small surplus. The proposed projects outlined in Section IV, such as upgrading and expanding the trailhead campgrounds, will not be possible without the additional revenues.

XIV. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Listed below are existing and potential mechanisms for collecting public comments regarding the permit area.

A. Existing Customer Feedback

1. Visitor Surveys

Two Paria Canyon surveys have been completed. The first was conducted in 1996 when the permit system was first put in place and the second was in 2003. These surveys were identical and are described in detail on pages 22-23. The information from these surveys was used in the preparation of this business plan.

2. Letters, e-mail, and other correspondence

In 2004, the public was solicited for comments on the existing permit system and on the management of the special management area in general. The letters and e-mail received were also used in the preparation of this business plan.

In 2007, the public was solicited for comments on proposal to increase user fees and implement the lottery application fee program. The user fee increases was abandoned.

In 2008, the public was solicited for comments on the increase in user fees. Currently, all correspondence is collected and considered in the decision-making process.

3. Direct Visitor Interaction

Comments from visitors are accepted at the Paria Contact Station, Kanab Field Office, and the Arizona Strip District Office. BLM planners have developed a form that allows public contact staff to quickly and concisely capture visitor comments.

4. E-mail Comment Submissions

E-mail comments are accepted, archived, and used for planning. Customers can access the e-mail submission option from multiple locations on the Paria Canyon and Coyote Buttes web pages.

5. Web Page Updates

The new AROLPS web site, <https://www.blm.gov/az/arolrsmain.htm>, has been developed so updates are easy and simple to achieve. Changing conditions that may affect visitors are posted quickly and displayed prominently.

6. OMB Surveys

In conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), BLM staff conducted a visitor satisfaction survey for the Coyote Buttes portion of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument. The 2007 GPRA survey was completed during the spring and early summer of 2007. Even though the data from this survey is generic, the data allows planners to gauge customer satisfaction and focus management practices on providing the experiences and benefits that Coyote Buttes visitors are seeking. 97% of the site visitors were satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services and recreation opportunities. The site survey showed that law enforcement presence, and interpretive and educational programs were unsatisfactory, receiving a rating of 66 and 69% respectively.

Both of these areas of concerns are being aggressively addressed in 2008. A new law enforcement officer for the monument was hired in 2008. During the summer of 2008, he will be completing training and should begin patrols in the area by early fall 2008. Increased emphasis has also been placed on ranger patrols in the fee area with an average of 2-3 patrols a week by other BLM staff and volunteers during the high use season in FY 2008.

Increased emphasis is also being placed on interpretive and educational information. The Paria website has been overhauled using the new BLM format while updating, and clarifying visitor on-line resources. The creation of informative handouts, brochures and signs is continuous. The new trailhead signs have been installed at Wire Pass, Buckskin Gulch, and the Paria Contact station. The final trailhead sign installments at Whitehouse will be completed in FY 2008.

**Paria Canyon/Coyote Buttes
Special Management Area
Business Plan**

XV. Recommendations and Approvals

Recommended by:

Vermilion Cliffs National Monument
Outdoor Recreation Planner

Date

Kanab Resource Area
Outdoor Recreation Planner

Date

Approved by:

Monument Manager
Vermilion Cliffs National Monument

Date

Resource Area Manager
Kanab Resource Area

Date