



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

Release date: Immediate

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Date: December 2, 2008

Finding of No Significant Impact signed for the Bright Angel Trailhead Area Design Plan at Grand Canyon National Park

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Grand Canyon National Park’s Bright Angel Trailhead Area Design Plan was signed on November 24, 2008 by Michael D. Snyder, Regional Director for the Intermountain Region of the National Park Service.

Several thousand day and overnight hikers, mule and shuttle bus riders, and rim pedestrians pass through the Bright Angel Trailhead area on a typical summer day. This visitor volume with their multiple and often competing uses creates congestion and confusion in this popular South Rim area of the Park. The trailhead area as it is now has significant design, maintenance, and layout issues. Its existing facilities (parking, trailhead, paths, landscaping, and connections with the Hermit and Village Route Shuttle Bus Transfers) are inadequate for current use. The area’s two chemical toilets are not universally accessible and there are no park-provided public restroom facilities within a reasonable walking distance. The trailhead layout does not function effectively, and makes it difficult for visitors to find their way through the area.

The Park’s primary objectives for the design plan include enhancing the area’s wayfinding and site amenities (including signing, shade, seating, and restroom availability), improving paths and connecting trails, eliminating rim edge vehicle parking to provide enhanced pedestrian circulation, and creating a sense of place - an area visitors will immediately recognize as the

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Bright Angel Trailhead. The approximately 5-acre project area, located on the South Rim, is an important component of the Grand Canyon Village National Historic Landmark District.

In November 2007 the National Park Service (NPS) prepared an Environmental Assessment for the Bright Angel Trailhead Area Design Plan (EA). This EA, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, analyzed the impacts that will likely result from implementation of the project. The EA evaluated two alternatives for addressing the purpose and need for action (Alternatives B and C). The EA also evaluated taking no action (Alternative A, No Action) to provide a baseline for comparing impacts of the action alternatives. The NPS identified alternative B as the preferred alternative in the EA and has selected alternative B for implementation. The EA was available for a 30-day public comment period. Public comments that were received were used in preparation of the FONSI.

The Regional Director concluded that implementation of the preferred alternative does not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and is not an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

Actions under the preferred alternative include developing a plaza near the primary trailhead; separating vehicle parking and circulation areas from pedestrian zones; enhancing trail connections and wayfinding; and constructing a new restroom near the proposed plaza and existing mule corral. These actions are planned for implementation as funding becomes available. Future phases of the project could include hardening the parking area surface and delineating approximately 70-80 parking spaces, creating an interpretive area at Kolb Garage and enhancing signage, revegetation and site amenities.

The EA and FONSI can be accessed through the National Park Service Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca>. For questions and additional information about this project please contact Michael Terzich, Project Manager, at (928) 774-3402.

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