

Grand Canyon National Park COVID-19 River Update, Feb-25-2021

Grand Canyon National Park's COVID-19 Mitigation Phase for River Use will move from "Medium" to "Light" restriction level on April 1, 2021. Where the "Medium" level allowed for up to 75% of summer use levels, the "Light" restriction level allows 100% river use while continuing key COVID-19 Safety Mitigation requirements:

- **Minimum Standards for River Trips:** Noncommercial trips must follow CDC guidance and Public Health Service Recommended Minimum Standards for River Trips (https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/upload/Public_Health_Minimum_Standards_for_River_Trips_during_COVID-19.pdf). Please plan carefully and ensure all trip members follow the plan.
- **COVID-19 Mitigation Plans:** River concessionaires have submitted COVID-19 Safety Plans to the park that outline how they will ensure their trips followed Public Health guidelines and remain safe.
- **Minimize Contacts Between Groups at Lees Ferry and Ramp:** Lees Ferry will promote physical distancing. Launch times will be coordinated to separate trips at the ramp. River outfitters will continue to coordinate with one another. The goal is to eliminate contact between participants on different trips where possible.
- **Promote Physical Distancing Between Trips on the River:** Avoid sharing river camps with other river trips, and limit total people at attraction sites and take-outs to 50 people or two trips at a time.
- **Avoiding Tribal Lands:** At the request of local tribes who are dealing with COVID-19 situations, the NPS requests all river users voluntarily bypass tribal lands.

TWO-YEAR DEFERMENTS. Due to the pandemic, a temporary exception to the no deferment rule has been implemented for permittees who obtained a launch date prior to March 2020 for a launch to occur before the end of August 2021. These permittees have until 70 days before their original launch date to request a 2-year deferment (the replacement launch date will be exactly 2-years later). The deferment option is NOT available for trip leaders who obtained permits after March 2020 – they knew about COVID-19, understood their trips could not be deferred, and applied for dates vacated by others who had accepted a 2-year launch date deferment. Deferment is not an option for these trip leaders.

FOLLOW-UP LOTTERIES. Follow-up lotteries will be used to re-release launch dates made available due to cancellations or deferments. These re-released launch dates cannot be deferred, and those who apply are expected to be aware of potential COVID-19 risks and take appropriate precautions.

CONTINUED VIGILANCE. Grand Canyon National Park leadership remains concerned about the COVID-19 situation in the U.S. and in Arizona. If participants take appropriate precautions and start their trips healthy, chances may be good that the trip will remain virus free. However, if

even one participant comes to the trip infected or is a carrier of COVID-19, there is a high risk of group transmission. Additionally, the risk of transmission can extend to rescue rangers, helicopter pilots and other NPS staff should a river emergency or evacuation be required. Please follow the Public Health guidelines for river trips, plan carefully, and ensure all trip members follow the plan. Thank you for taking this seriously and for your cooperation! Thanks also to all river trip leaders and participants from the 2020 river season – we are pleased to note that in 2020 there were no cases of COVID-19 reported by Grand Canyon National Park’s commercial river outfitters, noncommercial river users, or administrative river users.

For status updates regarding open and closed areas of Grand Canyon National Park visit <https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/grand-canyon-national-park-public-health-update.htm>