



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK
P.O. BOX 129
GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA 86023-0129

IN REPLY REFER TO:

A9031 (GRCA 8226)

DEC 12 2011

Mr. Tom Martin
River Runners for Wilderness
Arizona Field Office
P.O. Box 30821
Flagstaff, Arizona 86003

Dear Mr. Martin:

I enjoyed meeting you and I appreciate the letter you wrote to me in late September, 2011. In the letter, you made two suggestions to increase river runners' chances to claim unused winter permits, and one suggestion to return the allowable trip length to 30 days. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your points.

Your first suggestion is to remove the one-trip-per-year restriction during concessions-free months. This point merits further inquiry. I will ask my staff this question and consider it before next winter.

The second suggestion is to weigh lottery chances based on playing and losing rather than for not having gone. It seems the plan did consider this, deciding against it after recognizing it would lead to extra people applying in order to increase their chances for future-year lotteries.

Lastly, your suggestion to increase the maximum number of allowed days for winter river trips (from 25 to 30) must be considered. The plan did choose the shorter maximum to limit cumulative impacts on the canyon, but it seems it did not address allowing flexibility when a significant number of other trips are not launching. I will have my staff look into this potential extension of total days allowed per trip.

At the same time, I request your patience. As you know, a tremendous number of people care deeply about the Grand Canyon and offer input. It takes time to understand the opinions, prioritize the issues, investigate the possibilities, and chart paths. I appreciate your patience as we review these concerns. Thank you again for meeting with me, for your suggestions, and for your enthusiasm for Grand Canyon National Park.

Sincerely,

David V. Uberuaga
Superintendent