

Superintendent David Uberuaga
Grand Canyon National Park
PO Box 129, Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023

May 18, 2014

Dear Superintendent Uberuaga,

This March I had the opportunity to row a small dory I built by hand from Lee's Ferry to Pearce Ferry. I would like to share with you an observation from that trip that I had previously drawn to your attention. As you recall, we had written to you in a September 6, 2011 letter remarking on the Lee's Ferry put-in ramp, where a movable sign indicated that half the ramp was reserved for river concessions services, even though none had launched at the ramp for months. As you know, downriver concessions services do not operate between the months of November and April.

In 2011, I asked the Lee's Ferry Ranger about the sign, and was informed that the sign was in place to "teach river runners that they cannot expect to use the entire ramp during the busy summer season." At the time, we found that explanation most unusual, given that recreational river runners may only participate in one river trip a year.

This May, we rigged with another trip. I was able to outreach to members of the other trip ahead of time, allowing us to exchanged itineraries and connect by phone. We greatly enjoyed each other's company during our canyon trip. That said, we arrived at the ramp first, and when the other trip arrived, we were told off very harshly by their rental equipment shuttle driver to remove our vehicles from the ramp. I looked over at half the ramp, unusable by a simple sign, and asked myself, why such ramp congestion tensions are being fostered by the placement of the sign when there are no concessions services launching.

In discussing our trip with another self-guided group who launched later in March, they noted the same issue arose, only in their case, the interaction over ramp congestion set a poor precedent immediately for communication between the two trips which lasted the rest of the trip.

Would it be possible to kindly remove this sign in late October and return it to its place on April 1? If there are other concerns you have as to why this sign should be in place during the off season, we would very much like to discuss them with you to see if a work-around can be devised.

We appreciate Grand Canyon National Park's willingness to improve the recreational river runners' experience when exploring Grand Canyon. It is our hope this simple change will be implemented this fall.

Sincerely,

Tom Martin, Co-Director
River Runners for Wilderness
Arizona Field Office, PO Box 30821, Flagstaff, AZ 86003

Cc:

Superintendent Todd Brindle, Ranger Kolar, Ranger Vonk, Ranger Bloom

e-mailed May 18, 2014 to all of the above people and Jo Johnson