

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

September 16, 2011

Dear Superintendent Uberuaga,

Thank you again for your time during our meeting on September 6, 2011. I greatly enjoyed our frank exchanges covering many aspects of river and backcountry management here at Grand Canyon National Park. You had asked if we had any other thoughts on the recreational river runner lottery. I would like to take this opportunity to review River Runners for Wilderness points that we have raised as recently as last year about the river lottery.

We now have six winters worth of data to gauge how the 2006 Colorado River Management Plan lottery is working, and how it could possibly be adapted to better serve the resource and river runners seeking a self-guided Grand Canyon river running experience.

We were very optimistic in 2009 when Superintendent Martin initiated the first steps toward taking adaptive management corrective action to assist self-guided river runners in claiming unused winter permits. We regret that those changes were not implemented at that time.

In reviewing the 2010 river statistics posted here:

http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/upload/Calendar_Year_2010_River_Statistics.pdf,

we note that 21 fall, winter and spring recreational river permits did not launch. In 2009 and 2008, there were twenty five unlaunched trips. We encourage you to consider decreasing the present overly restrictive hurdles river runners must clear to obtain a winter rafting permit. Below are mechanisms we have identified to increase river runners' chances to claim one of these unused winter permits:

- -Remove the One-Trip-per-Year restriction during the concessions-free months.
- -Remove the weighted point restrictions during the winter months. At present, potential permit holders get extra points (up to 5) for staying away from the resource, one point for each year they stay away. This point system awards permits to those with the least experience, and we continue to advocate lottery losers be awarded points for playing and losing, not for staying away.
- Return winter trip lengths to the pre-2006 winter trip length of 30 days to Diamond Creek.

Thank you for your willingness to improve the recreational river running experience in exploring Grand Canyon. We look forward to working with you to modify the regulations impacting recreational river runners applying for winter permits as we suggest above. It is our hope these changes will be implemented this fall.

Sincerely,

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