

# Footprints

The Newsletter of the Grand Canyon Hikers and Backpackers Association

[www.GCHBA.org](http://www.GCHBA.org)

P.O. Box 11986, Prescott, AZ 86304

Issue 8

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## The Votes Are In

By Cliff Beck, Editor

At the GCHBA meeting in October, roughly half of the Board of Directors positions of GCHBA were voted on, and new officers were elected by the newly installed Board. Our current Board consists of the following.

**Doug Nering** (Phoenix), is our new President.

**John Nanke** (Prescott), was reelected Vice President.

**Hank Schnieder** (Prescott), was reelected Treasurer.

**Cindy Kleist** (Flagstaff), is a new board member and is the new Secretary.

**John Azar** (Fredonia)

**Pat Davis** (Texas)

**Bob Ribokas** (Massachusetts)

**Tom Martin** (Flagstaff)

**Cliff Beck** (Maryland)

Three positions that are filled by the Board; newsletter editor, service project coordinator, and webmaster, will continue to be staffed by Cliff Beck, Mike Coltrin, and Bob Ribokas, respectively. Cindy Kleist will help with maintaining the webpage.

A big round of applause for Mary Simpson, Mike Coltrin, Sally Underwood, Doc Thomas and James Hayford for their years of service on the Board.

## Another Hiking Season Comes to an End

I often think of the Holiday Season from late November to January as the off-season for Grand Canyon backpacking. For many of us the time is spent preparing for the next hike. For me, the planning process begins during my most recent hike. This year was no different, except that I have to figure out a way to get my East Coast body tuned to Grand Canyon conditions.

My year was disappointing in that I suffered severe dehydration during my hikes. The reason I mention this is to express my personal respect and admiration for Ken Phillips and the many members of Grand Canyon's search and rescue team. This group is

professional, experienced, and the best in the business of assisting wayward hikers.

So my off-season is being spent trying to implement some basics that I have ingrained in my mind but have struggled to implement, including:

1. Train, train, train. Carry a pack, run, walk, up and down hills for long distances.
2. Slow down the conversion from office puppy to canyon hiker. Relax and acclimate at the canyon before taking off on the long one.
3. Drink and eat, drink and eat.
4. Did I mention drink and eat?
5. Did I mention relax? I get pretty fired up by the time I am ready to go over the rim.

## A Change for "Footprints"

At the October Board Meeting, it was decided that a new approach to the newsletter is warranted. Beginning with this issue, 5 low budget versions will be issued every other month in order to get you GCHBA information more frequently, and to reduce the costs of printing them. We hope to reduce the costs by copying the document for mailing rather than sending it to the printer. In addition, a single annual issue will be produced to bring you pictures, information and stories in the format of recent issues.

Hopefully, GCHBA member Delta James Hayford will continue to volunteer his publishing expertise to produce this high quality issue. Before sending the newsletters off to the printer, James has volunteered to provide the professional publishing and graphics support that have given the newsletter a special quality.



## Correction to the Permit Committee Report

Due to an editing error in the last issue of Footprints, a discussion draft of the Permit Committee's report was inadvertently published instead of the final report. Look for the final report later in this issue.

### Minutes of the October 19, 2003 Semiannual Meeting

By John Azar

#### Meeting organization

Mary Simpson resigned her office of president recently and was not present. Vice president John Nanke was unable to attend due to personal matters, so past president Mike Coltrin (Coltrin), opened the meeting. Secretary Tom Martin also was not in attendance, so John Azar (Azar) agreed to record the activities of the meeting.

Attendance	
Dick Gladson	Cindy Kleist
Joan Gladson	Jake Kleist
Gene Fowler	Sueanne Kubicek
Josh Case	Hank Schnieder
Karl Buckendahl	Cliff Beck
Bob Ribokas	Doug Nering
Pat Davis	John Azar
Lynn Davis	Mike Coltrin
Chris Weikum	

#### Old Business

Coltrin raised the subject of the April 2003 Minutes, and asked for discussion.

Cliff Beck (Beck) mentioned that the minutes were published in the Footprints, and most in attendance had read them. Pat Davis (Davis) made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Azar seconded, and the motion went out for a vote. Coltrin asked for a show of hands for the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### Board Election

Coltrin asked for the ballots from Hank Schnieder (Hank) and Hank produced them. Coltrin tallied the written votes and then asked those in attendance whom had not already voted for a show of hands as he read aloud the names of the nominees. Those elected were:  
Pat Davis John Azar Cindy Kleist Doug Nering  
Cliff Beck

Coltrin asked for nominees for the office of president, Azar nominated Doug Nering (Nering). Hank seconded the nomination. Coltrin asked for other nominations. None came forth. Coltrin asked for a show of hands for the election of the nominee. Nering was elected unanimously.

Coltrin asked for nominees for the office of vice president. Cliff Beck (Beck) nominated John Nanke(Nanke). Davis seconded the nomination. Coltrin asked for other nominees. None came forth. Coltrin asked for a show of hands for the election of the nominee. Nanke was elected unanimously.

Coltrin asked for nominees for the office of secretary. Beck nominated Cindy Kleist (Cindy). Hank seconded the nomination. Cotrin asked for other nominations. None came forth. Coltrin asked for a show of hands for the election of the nominee. Cindy was elected unanimously.

Coltrin asked for nominees for the office of Treasurer. Beck nominated Hank. Doug seconded the nomination. Coltrin asked for other nominations. None came forth. Coltrin asked for a show of hands for the election of the nominee. Hank was elected unanimously.

Coltrin turns his chair over to Nering, the newly elected president. Nering temporarily adjourns the meeting.

Fifteen minute break.

Nering brings forth two items for discussion:

1. Member Fees and renewal notices--discussion centered around the idea of making all membership fees due at the same time for all members. Azar mentions setting a date of July 1 for all membership fees to be due. After some discussion, it was agreed to give "grace time" to any members who have already paid to extend their membership until July 1. Any renewing or new members will have grace time extending to July 1, 2005. Davis made a motion to adopt this new policy. Hank seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

2. Footprints newsletter--Beck mentions that with the smaller membership that he would like to scale back the production of the newsletter until such time as membership increases. Discussion then centered on the idea of one yearly magazine, and 5 smaller newsletters. Printed copies could be sent to those without internet access, and electronic copies would be sent on request. Complimentary copies would continue to Gale Burak, George Steck, Cline Library, and Joe Alston. Azar mentioned that the renewal notice could be included as the last page in the yearly magazine. Nering appoints Beck and Cindy to

organize a committee for the purpose of exploring these ideas.

### **Odds and Ends**

Tee shirts became the next topic for discussion. Hank explained the tee shirt production. James Haywood (James) produces the tee shirts, sends them to Hank, and Hank distributes them to interested members. The price for long or short sleeve shirts has been \$18. After some discussion, it was agreed to build up our inventory and to include smaller sizes. After our inventory is sufficient, Davis will post a message on the e-groups page with a picture included of the shirts. In the meantime Cindy will add the ability for interested parties to put the cost of the shirts on their credit card. Beck made a motion to accept this plan. Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Nering appointed Bob Ribokas (Bob), Cindy, and Gene Fowler (Gene) to a website maintenance committee. It was agreed to invite James Hayford to sit on this committee.

Hank presented the Treasurer's report. Our balance is \$4,653.22.

Discussion focused on member access to the board member's website. Azar mentioned that members should read but not post. Davis mentions an interest to limit the posts. . Nering tables this subject until more people can contribute ideas.

Nering suggests two more committees:

1. Wilderness Designation
2. Trailhead Access

Nering adjourns meeting and the group reforms in line at the Maswik cafeteria.

### **Spring Reveg Work at Indian Garden** By Dick Gladson

After the GCHBA meeting in April, we hiked down to Indian Garden and worked with Deb and Jamie of the Grand Canyon Reveg Team. The extensive trail work on the Bright Angel Trail was very evident, as was the lack of mule deposits. Monday and Tuesday were spent trying to rid Garden Creek and the stream below the Indian Garden Pumphouse of the invasive Blackberry vine. The group included Pat, Lynn and Chris Davis, Joan Gladson and myself. Cliff Beck helped some the first day, then headed west on the onto for a personal hike.

GCHBA has worked on the Blackberry project several times now. As supporters of the Reveg Project, we are glad to report that the park is very close to getting this invasive and non-native plant

under control. As you hike through the cottonwoods at IG, you will notice much more open ground along the stream banks as a result of clearing the briar patches. I look forward to the native species reclaiming the territory.

Ranger KJ Glover was at IG during our stay. She is another GC ranger who is a real special person.

Many thanks to Pat Davis for her arranging and cooking the meals. A special surprise in the Trail Crew kitchen freezer was ICE CREAM! Hey Gene Fowler....You are "THE MAN".

### **Upcoming Opportunities**

By Mike Coltrin, Service Project Coordinator

Thanks to our volunteer members, GCHBA has established a proud tradition of service to the Park. We hope to provide opportunities for more of you to help keep this tradition alive. We continue to spend considerable effort in maintaining and improving the corridor campgrounds. I expect to have a project for Cottonwood Campground next Spring. Stay tuned

### **GCHBA Permit Committee Report** **June 11, 2002** **Revised January 26, 2003**

#### Permit Committee Members

Tom Martin, GCHBA Secretary  
John Nanke, GCHBA Vice President  
Doug Nering, GCHBA Board Member and Permit Committee Chair  
Mary Simpson, GCHBA President (ex-officio committee member)

The permit committee was initiated by GCHBA board members Tom Martin, John Nanke and Doug Nering in response to discussion posts on the Yahoo Groups Grand Canyon list group on the subjects of fairness in how permits are issued and the extent of commercial use or potential for commercialization of backcountry hiking.

Committee members collected comments from GCHBA members and non-members by list group posting and e-mail and met together to discuss the issues. There was also an exchange of comments on this subject at the GCHBA meetings on April 21, 2002; and on October 20, 2002; and by GCHBA board teleconference on December 11, 2002.

Three points are submitted for the GCHBA board to consider adopting as a position statement on the permit process and issues of concern over commercial uses in the backcountry.

- The first day permit process for the next open month should be neutral so permits are not

granted in person at the Back Country Office before all others.

- No type of business concession should exist in Grand Canyon National Park involving overnight use of backcountry areas by permit.
- Advance reservation (before public access) of backcountry areas for educational programs should be managed formally within the current schedule.

### **Overview and intent**

It should be emphasized that the general perception of the hiking and backpacking community is that the policies and operation of the Back Country Office (BCO) have never been a problematic subject at Grand Canyon. Over the years the BCO has been established and has adapted to circumstance in such a way as to create the minimum management, annoyance or limitation to hikers. Therefore, GCHBA wishes to communicate to Grand Canyon National Park and the Back Country Office our desire to see this success continue.

Furthermore, GCHBA recognizes that the more detailed the rules for backcountry use become, the more difficult it is to manage the process without unintended negative consequences for some users. Therefore, we favor the simple and general over the detailed and complex and desire that latitude and flexibility in the way that BCO personnel apply the rules should continue. Such latitude and flexibility is essential, for example, in planning trips of unusual length, allowing access to the more remote areas and trailheads far from services, and sharing administration with adjacent Forest Service and Native American lands.

The overall intent of these comments is to assure equal access to Grand Canyon backcountry use areas for all visitors to Grand Canyon and to preserve the non-commercial characteristic of traditional, cooperative, recreational hiking and backpacking activities. This includes recognition that Grand Canyon has major worldwide appeal for outdoor enthusiasts, and gives support for the principles that place of residence and economic status should never create an advantage in opportunity for those wishing to spend time in the wilderness areas of Grand Canyon.

### **Neutral first day permit process**

A completely neutral process is recommended for the first day that permits are granted for the next month being opened. The current process is not neutral to the extent that persons may arrive at the BCO several days before the first permit day and take early numbers that can be used to obtain first request

on the next open month in preference over mail and fax requests.

Discussion: GCHBA supports changes proposed by the BCO to merge and randomize all first-day requests (mail, fax, window) for the next open month. This change should not affect the permit process (mail, fax, window) for dates that are already open. Walk-in permit requests could be negotiated in person at the window the next day following random processing. Nor is there any issue of concern with respect to the use days that NPS/BCO allocates for later use by visitors without advance reservations. Information from contacts with the BCO is that a change like this might be implemented in the near future but no date has yet been made public.

There has been some debate about whether the current situation is a problem in need of resolution and some people may even feel that this change would end a privilege enjoyed by local residents. It is the mission of GCHBA to represent Grand Canyon hikers worldwide. The majority who responded on this issue urged a neutral policy and most supporters of no change were local residents; this is evidence the current arrangement is not fair.

### **No backcountry concessions**

There should be no NPS concession created for organizing, equipping and/or leading backcountry users in the GCNP other than for non-profit educational activities (Grand Canyon Field Institute) consistent with the public service mission of the NPS and closely monitored by the NPS/BCO .

Discussion: "Concession" refers to the NPS process of competitive bidding for the right to provide exclusive commercial services for profit in GCNP (hotels, restaurants, retail, commercial river trips and other commercial services regulated by NPS). The establishment of such a concession would withdraw from public access some share of the limited use days available for backcountry camping and create a sale of access where visitors would compete with their dollars for the privilege of backcountry use. This is inconsistent with the long-standing tradition of do-it-yourself hiking at GCNP. If the NPS recommends adding such a concession then a process of full public comment and debate is mandatory under NEPA regulations. GCHBA will act with all its resources and membership to oppose any such concession as detrimental to the hiking and backpacking community we represent.

### **Grand Canyon Field Institute use should be managed formally**

The Grand Canyon Field Institute (GCFI) enjoys a unique status allowing selection of trip dates before any other backcountry use. This use is consistent

with the NPS mission to provide visitors with a range of services, activities and interpretation. However, the withdrawal of backcountry use days for this purpose must be managed and periodically reviewed to match public demand and public good following NEPA guidelines. Management of allocated days is essential for high-demand locations such as the campgrounds in the Corridor use areas. GCFI activities above the rim or in use areas with lower demand for permits by individuals need not be controlled at this time. NPS policy should articulate clearly as to why this exception should be allowed for GCFI but not for other organizations (scouting, education or conservation) that might also request special consideration. If NPS should grant this status to any other organization no additional use days should be taken from recreational backpacking use.

Discussion: GCHBA does not oppose GCFI operating privileges as they are now and we do not feel that the current management and operating practices are unfair, but some portion of the hiking community does view GCFI as equivalent to a commercial service, and expresses opposition and concern about perceived sale of access even though the GCFI mission is educational and non-profit.

GCFI does compete for time and space with self-guided recreational hikers, and includes trips to all of the most popular areas where demand is greatest. GCFI offers a service that GCHBA considers complementary to the NPS mission, clearly beneficial to the public, and desired by many GCHBA members. It may be that not all members will support this and it is true that GCFI activities are very similar to those of a commercial trip service. GCFI also offers the only trips that are organized with the characteristic of backcountry camping without self-transport of equipment (pack mule supported hiking). Trips of this type may have a greater potential to create a sale of access situation and a "deluxe" class of service if frequently scheduled. Any individual can currently plan such a trip on a completely equal standing with other users, so this is not viewed as a problem.

### **Issues noted but not decided**

In addition to the three points detailed here other items came up for discussion but no recommendation is being made at this time.

### Permits by Internet

A permit process by Internet or access to available use days by Internet is desired by many list group participants and GCHBA members. The committee is sympathetic to these wishes but concerned about costs to NPS to develop this capability, the complexity of operating such a system along with the current BCO process, and unintended consequences

of allowing users to generate trip plans without BCO oversight. If NPS should find that it is feasible to have a process to submit a backcountry permit request by Internet that is equivalent to and given similar handling to requests by mail or fax, we would strongly support this enhanced access.

### Native American lands

The relationship between the BCO permit process and permits for access across and/or use of Native American lands is often a subject of question for Grand Canyon hikers. The simplest way to summarize this issue is to say that there are very few persons with a comprehensive view of the subject or useful recommendations how to clarify or improve these issues. The relationship between NPS and tribal organizations and interests is complex and GCHBA should probably best be observant and report any helpful information to members, but not attempt to become a participant in this issue at this time.

### Permit fees

Opposition has often been heard expressed regarding the "fee demo" system that authorizes collection of backcountry permit fees to be retained by GCNP for local improvements, services, or operational costs. There is debate about the philosophy behind this process and/or some of the activities these funds go to, but consistent support for the importance of the permit process for protecting Grand Canyon resources and the quality of the wilderness experience. The permit committee does not favor issuing permits at no cost to users and has no other consensus recommendation at this time.

### Incidental Business Permits

The permit committee discussed and favored a recommendation that backcountry use permits should not be issued directly to a commercial user (Incidental Business Permit holder) or entity for the purpose of organizing, equipping and/or leading backcountry users in the Grand Canyon. Under this proposal the IBP holder may offer services (organizing, equipping and/or leading) to support any permit holder and their companions. Discussion within GCHBA raised concerns that the recommendation was an extreme approach and would limit availability of guiding services to some individuals; especially solo hikers and those seeking aid in planning a trip and obtaining a permit. Therefore this was not made a final recommendation.

The purpose of this recommendation was to remove incentives for abuse of the permit process for commercial use and to assure that commercial guiding always reflects public demand for services and not the artificial demand of resale of a limited

commodity (such as occurs with river access). Although current regulations require that IBPs submit a client list when obtaining a permit, members of the committee believe this regulation is difficult to enforce, there are financial incentives for IBPs to subvert it, and observation suggests that the rule is not effective. We support the logic behind the current requirement for a client list and urge effective enforcement by the BCO and rangers in the field.

### The Latest News

The next Annual Meeting will be at 10:am April 18, 2004 at the Rec Center in the Village. Hope everyone can make the meeting. Look for details on the Internet.

Do you fly to the canyon, with backpack in tow? Next time you go, doublecheck the airline's bag and weight limits. Apparently they are tightening the limits in many cases, reducing free checkins to 2 bags (from 3) and the weight allowed from 70 to 50 pounds. When I flew in October 2003, they weighed my one bag (with full pack and other travel gear) at 49 pounds. Extra bags and pounds will cost you money.

If you would like to receive your issues of Footprints by Internet, go to <http://www.gchba.org>, login and update your membership profile..

### Membership

We would like you to join in preserving the bipedal enjoyment of the Grand Canyon experience. Please send your name, address, phone number, and email address along with a check or money order of \$20 for the first year's dues to:

**Grand Canyon Hikers and Backpackers Association  
P.O. Box 11986  
Prescott, AZ 86304**

We are a tax-deductible non-profit group organized under section 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code.