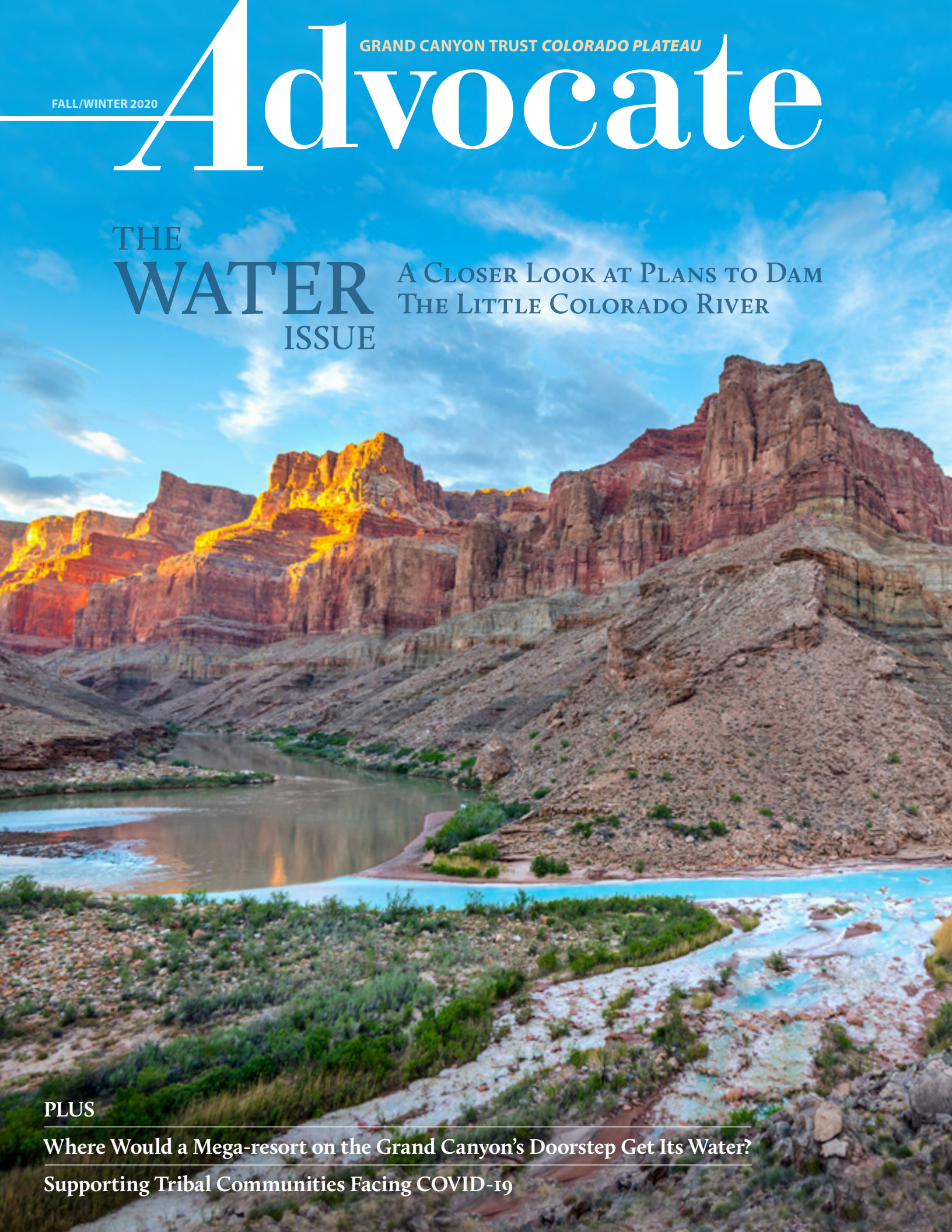
GRAND CANYON TRUST *COLORADO PLATEAU*

FALL/WINTER 2020

Advocate

THE WATER ISSUE

A Closer Look at Plans to Dam The Little Colorado River



PLUS

Where Would a Mega-resort on the Grand Canyon's Doorstep Get Its Water?

Supporting Tribal Communities Facing COVID-19

TIM PETERSON

Letter from the BOARD CHAIR

STEVE MARTIN

Welcome, everyone, to a very special issue of the Advocate, one that is focused on water and water-related issues on the Colorado Plateau. When the conversation turns to water in the West, a number of classic quotations come to mind. One of my favorites, from Loren Eiseley, goes like this: "If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water…its substance reaches everywhere; it touches the past and prepares the future." And of course we can't forget the old adage: "Whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting over," often attributed to Mark Twain. In this issue, we cover a range of topics related to tensions over water and its future in the Grand Canyon region and across the Colorado Plateau.

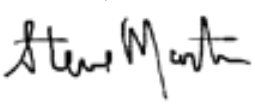
Sarana Riggs takes us deep into the heart of the Little Colorado River Gorge and Big Canyon to explore the new threat of proposed dams on and near the river. A little to the west, Roger Clark probes the proposed development at Tusayan, immediately adjacent to the Grand Canyon, an issue that just keeps cropping up. Staff attorney Michael Toll transports us to northern Utah, where the Trust is working to halt a massive oil shale project. We also present a special feature on "The Voices of Grand Canyon" multimedia project, which allows you to hear firsthand from people whose cultural ties to the canyon's lands and waters date back to time immemorial.

At our recent board meeting (via Zoom, of course) we discussed these and other current conservation challenges, opportunities, and what we can anticipate with potential changes on the horizon. We must take decisive action now to be ready for whatever the political tides bring us in 2021, including developing capacity and strategy. We need bold new ways of ensuring protection, wise use, and relationships that support Native sovereignty and cultures. The Colorado Plateau should be a model for conservation, inspiration, and social justice.

We also want to share how deeply concerned we are about recent tragic events, beginning with the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, where Cyd and I now live, and reverberating through the country and the world. While no words can express our sadness, Ethan, our executive director, addresses the direction the Trust is headed on the back cover.

On a personal note, this is also my last issue as chair of the Grand Canyon Trust's board. It has been a privilege to serve in this role over the last four and a half years and it is an honor to pass the torch to Jim Enote (page 29), a guiding force on the board for over 20 years, who will lead us onward into 2021 and beyond.

Sincerely,



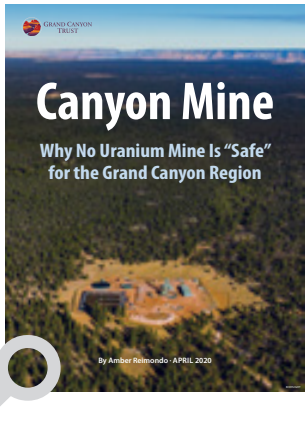
Steve Martin
Chair, Grand Canyon Trust Board of Trustees
Former superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, 2007-2011

OUR MISSION
To safeguard the wonders of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado Plateau, while supporting the rights of its Native peoples.

ON THE COVER
The milky turquoise-blue waters of the Little Colorado River join the Colorado River at the confluence inside the Grand Canyon. BLAKE MCCORD

EDITOR'S NOTE
The views expressed by the contributors in this issue are solely their own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Grand Canyon Trust.

ONLINE BONUS



Canyon Mine
A new report details flooding, high levels of uranium and arsenic, and a host of other environmental problems at one uranium mine near Grand Canyon National Park.

Download your copy:
grandcanyontrust.org/canyon-mine-report

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PHOTOS BY DEIDRA PEACHES. COLLAGE BY STEPHANIE SMITH.

PLUS

Supporting Tribal Communities

By Deon Ben

Deon Ben in Gallup, New Mexico, helping to transport PPE destined for tribal communities. The delivery was organized by the nonprofit EcoFlight. PETE MCBRIDE

ON MARCH 9, 2020, I traveled to Tulsa, Oklahoma to participate in an intertribal gathering on the "rights of nature"—a legal effort that recognizes that ecosystems and natural communities are not merely property, but lifeforms with independent rights to exist and flourish. I left the Colorado Plateau with a sense of normalcy, but my return trip two days later was a return to the unknown.

When I got back from Oklahoma, I found my beloved home initiating precautionary steps to address the possible spread of a worldwide pandemic. Public events were canceled, office doors were closed, and a feeling of fear spread across the plateau. Rather than families planning their spring-break vacations and farmers preparing their fields, people were planning for their safety, well-being, and protection. Within days, the Southwest experienced its first waves of positive COVID-19 cases. By spring, cases spiked across the plateau, reaching far into rural tribal communities and small, isolated towns.

By mid-March, the Grand Canyon Trust office closed our doors and all staff began working from their homes and adjusting to new lifestyles. I returned to my family's homestead in Tohatchi, New Mexico, on the Navajo Nation, to help prepare for a future pandemic outbreak. But nothing we planned would prepare us for the next six months of evolving orders, state shutdowns, and changing mask and sanitation protocols.

As early summer approached, COVID-19 cases steadily increased throughout tribal nations, reaching

during the COVID-19 Pandemic

their highest peak on the Navajo Nation and in the Pueblo of Zuni. By mid-May, COVID-19 had spread to more than five tribal nations on the plateau, including the Hopi, Hualapai, and White Mountain Apache nations.

As COVID-19 spread across the region, the inherent resiliency of tribal nations grew stronger and tribes took immediate action to begin establishing community relief efforts and incident command centers. Volunteers and organizers worked long nights and weekends organizing supply drop-offs of basic necessities to families isolated from grocery stores and essential services. Tribal governments and community efforts worked toward protecting the most vulnerable, delivering goods and services to the most rural, and educating the general public in their own native languages through local radio and television PSAs.

Here at the Trust, from our home offices, we quickly organized and reached out to our tribal partners to ask how we could help. Immediately, we initiated several efforts to support tribes, all while respecting tribal leadership, direction, tribal resiliency, and tribal sovereignty. The Trust first sent out information to our volunteer community with a call to support tribes, whether that be through donating time or through monetary support to tribally led relief efforts. We also put a call to support tribes in our annual spring appeal letter, directing folks to support tribally led relief efforts and sharing our support for the Change Labs Kinship Lending micro-loan program, which disbursed loans to tribal entrepreneurs financially impacted by COVID-19. The Trust also directed relief funds to a Zuni-Pueblo-led relief effort, and to the Havasupai Tribe to support preventative measures to keep COVID-19 out of Supai Village. On our website we identified several tribally led relief efforts; this helped folks navigate the relief landscape and identify efforts providing direct services to tribal citizens across the Colorado Plateau.

The Trust continues to reach out regularly to our tribal partners and monitor and reassess our efforts regularly as COVID-19 continues to impact tribal communities. Please stay connected through our website for further support efforts that will directly serve tribal communities in the coming months.

Returning home to the Navajo Nation and witnessing firsthand the negative impacts of COVID-19 also let me observe the strong, positive working relationships the Grand Canyon Trust has with our tribal partners. We thank you all for your continued support. In the coming months we will continue strengthening our relationships with our intertribal partners across the Colorado Plateau, and we look forward to the work ahead in providing support in a healing and united direction.

Deon Ben directs the Grand Canyon Trust's Native America Program.

Bluff Area Mutual Aid.

YOU CAN HELP

Community-organized mutual-aid groups are supplying elders, individuals, and families with food, water, firewood, and other essentials including hygiene products, diapers, and food for pets and livestock.

You can support these local, community-led efforts directly as they ensure that members of their own communities have what they need.

To learn more and support tribal communities facing COVID-19, please visit **grandcanyontrust.org/COVID**

Mining for Water

Tusayan's Mega-resort Would Siphon the Grand Canyon's Groundwater

By Roger Clark

"In arid lands groundwater is essentially like coal or oil: easy to exhaust, hard to replace."

—Charles Bowden, Killing the Hidden Waters

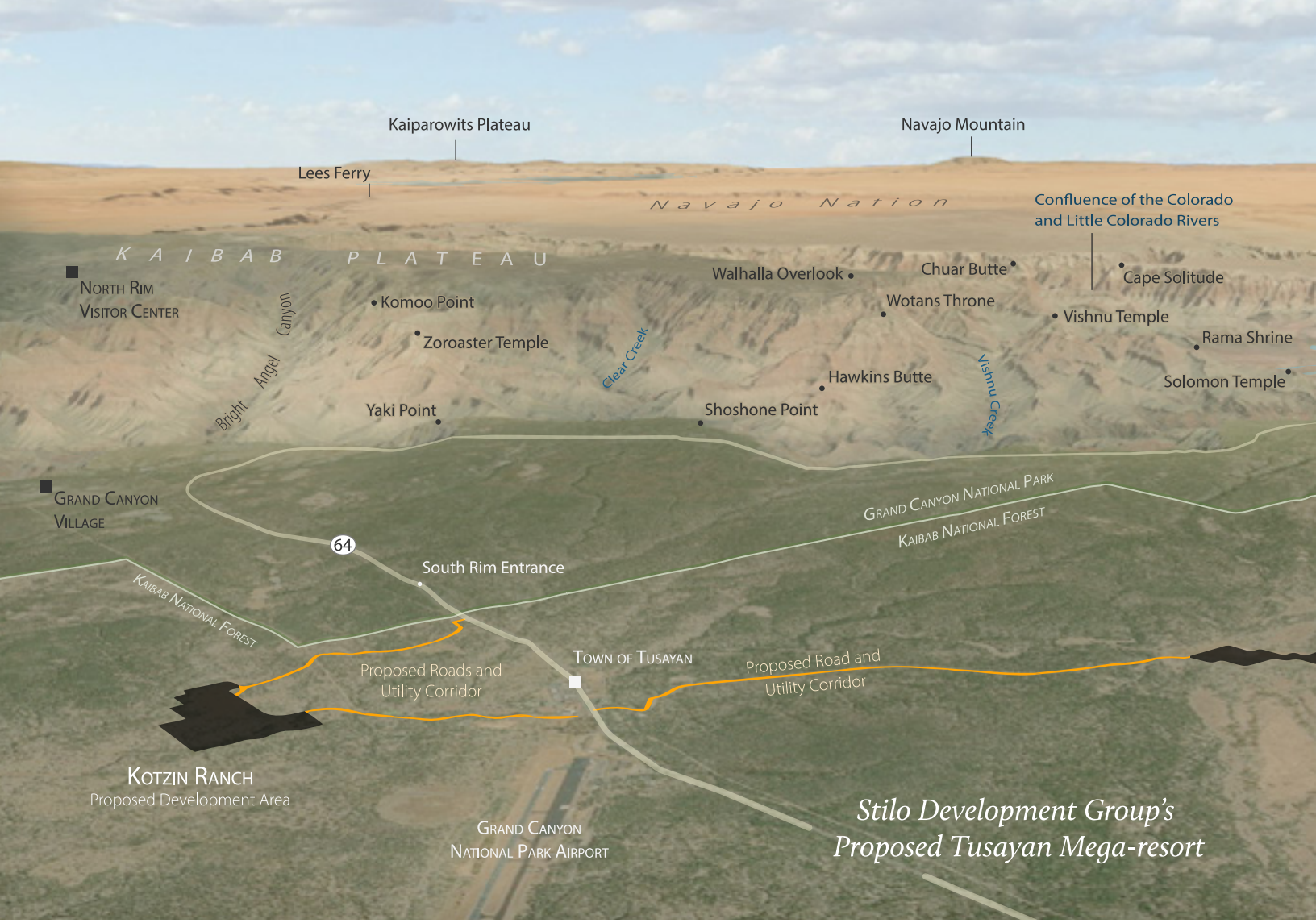
The small gateway community of Tusayan, crowded with hotels and restaurants catering to visitors, sits just south of the entrance to Grand Canyon National Park. PHOTOS BLAKE MCCORD

The Stilo Development Group is again pushing to build a controversial mega-resort on the doorstep of Grand Canyon National Park. The National Park Service has warned that the development in the gateway town of Tusayan is one of the gravest threats to the park in its 100-year history.

Stilo is seeking to build thousands of housing units, plus hotel rooms, an RV park, a conference center—over 1.8 million square feet of commercial space in all—on two islands of private land surrounded by the Kaibab National Forest. However, before it can run utilities to these parcels and pave roads, Stilo needs the Forest Service to grant rights-of-way across national forest land. But permission from the Forest Service to cross public land would help pave the way for Stilo's massive development—unleashing a Pandora's box of potential problems.

This latest development scheme is hardly the first. The Forest Service returned a similar application four years ago, concluding that the proposed mega-resort was "not in the public interest" as it "would stress local and Park infrastructure, and have untold impacts to the surrounding Tribal and National Park lands." As of early September 2020, the developer is still waiting to see if the Forest Service will accept its latest application for the rights-of-way.

Stilo's mega-resort would sprawl across 354 acres of land, about a fivefold expansion of Tusayan's current development footprint. About a mile northwest of the town, an 80-foot-wide, 1.53-mile-long road and utility corridor would connect the 160-acre Stilo property called Kotzin Ranch to



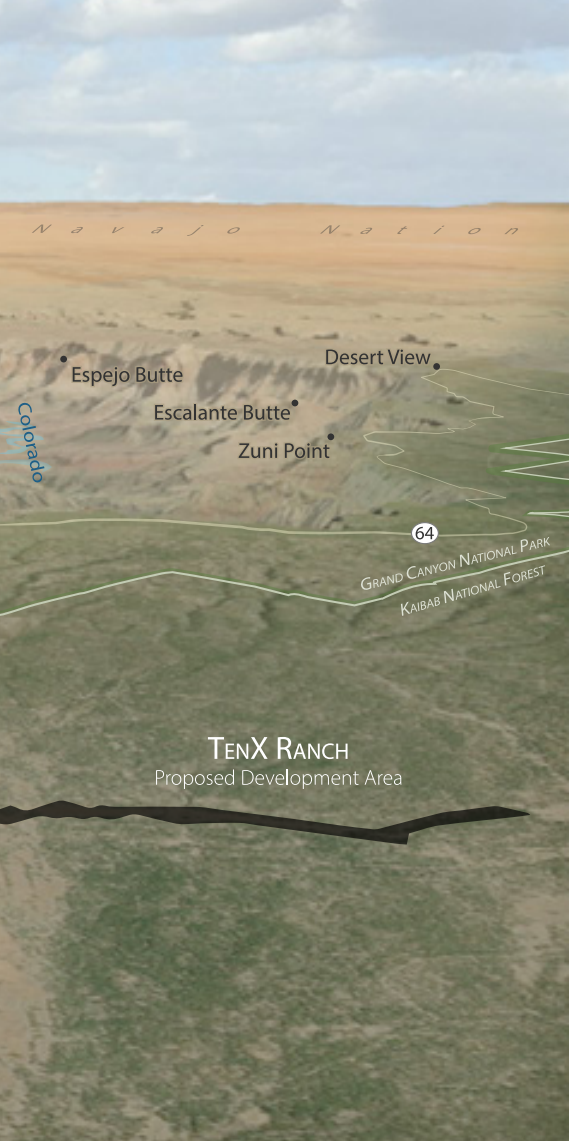
Its 1.8 million square feet of retail space would rival the size of Arizona's largest shopping mall. And its thousands of new housing units, including Airbnb-type rentals, could spur the town's population growth from about 600 to more than 5,000 residents.

the highway and Grand Canyon National Park's busiest entrance. Most of the mega-resort's lodging and retail space would be concentrated on this parcel. An emergency access road would also be built to it.

Stilo would construct another 3-mile-long, 80-foot-wide road with buried utility lines to the 194-acre parcel called TenX Ranch, located about three miles southeast of Tusayan. Altogether, the road rights-of-way and utility corridors needed to develop Stilo's private property would bulldoze 49.4 acres of national forest land, including areas currently used by wildlife and by the public for camping and recreational enjoyment.

After its last proposal was sent back to the drawing board in 2016, Stilo joined forces with the town of Tusayan to submit its newest application, which includes 2,500 hotel rooms, a conference center, health spa, retail shops, entertainment centers, educational venues, and possibly a dude ranch to boot. Its 1.8 million square feet of retail space would rival the size of Arizona's largest shopping mall. And its thousands of new housing units, including Airbnb-type rentals, could spur the town's population growth from about 600 to more than 5,000 residents.

All of the new housing would rely on Tusayan's three deep groundwater wells; decades of pumping have already diminished seeps and springs located 3,000 feet below the Grand



Canyon's south rim. A recent study found that drought and development have reduced, or in some instances stopped, groundwater flow from South Rim springs. It concluded that pumping additional groundwater from the regional aquifer will further reduce flows to springs in the national park and adjacent tribal lands.

The depletion of the Grand Canyon's groundwater, loss of wildlife habitat and public land for recreation, and increased traffic congestion and light and noise pollution are among the many concerns that caused the Forest Service to return Stilo's similar application for revisions in 2016. Since 2019, Tusayan and Stilo have submitted several new draft applications for the agency to review.

If the Forest Service accepts the current application, it will trigger a multi-year study to evaluate how the new roads and utility corridors and the mega-resort will affect the surrounding national forest and park lands. Public engagement will be essential to protect those adjacent public lands and to ensure that the addition of thousands of faucets, tubs, and toilets will not drain diminishing supplies of already scarce groundwater.

If this feels like déjà vu, that's because it is. Stilo has been angling to build a large-scale tourist enterprise in Tusayan since the early 1990s. Originally, it purchased more than 2,100 acres of private land scattered throughout the Kaibab National Forest in hopes of exchanging those parcels for national forest land near Tusayan. It planned to build 3,650 hotel rooms, 425,000 square feet of retail space, and a large residential area on the traded land. But, county voters nixed Stilo's bid to rezone the area for building that mega-development.

Undaunted, Stilo aligned with Tusayan business owners to incorporate the town and to assert local control over development decisions. Five candidates for town council—all supported by Stilo—were elected in November 2010. Stilo essentially engineered the town of Tusayan's incorporation and finagled the election to advance its mega-development.

In fairness, Stilo collaborated with many entities in the early 1990s in its attempt to make its development proposal more palatable. Among Stilo's early selling points was a promise to end Tusayan's reliance on groundwater by delivering Colorado River water to the gateway community by train. But that never happened. During the intervening years, neighboring communities drilled new

Current attractions include hotels advertising spas and swimming pools, helicopter tours of the Grand Canyon, and various food and beverage options about a mile from the main South Rim entrance to the national park. BLAKE MCCORD

Visitors from around the globe flock to the turquoise-blue waterfalls of Havasu Creek, on the Havasupai reservation. The creek is fed by the Redwall-Muav aquifer. ED MOSS

In 2016, the Havasupai Tribe filed suit in federal court against Tusayan's well owners and those of 15 other wells that consume the Grand Canyon's groundwater, claiming that the wells threaten the tribe's sole source of drinking water and world-famous waterfalls, essential to their economy.

wells, and Tusayan's guzzling of groundwater grew as hotel rooms, swimming pools, and residences were added within the bubble of existing development.

For more than a decade, Tusayan's businesses have known that their wells can't sustain increased levels of pumping, much less supply Stilo's mega-resort. By 2004, water in a well drilled by the Grand Canyon Squire Hotel had dropped by 16 feet in two years. And by 2009, the water level in another Tusayan well had dropped by

13 feet. Despite clear and mounting evidence that Tusayan is exhausting the Grand Canyon's underground reservoir of water, it still joins Stilo in proposing to pump evermore groundwater.

Rural landowners in Arizona are permitted to drill wells beneath their property and pump groundwater. In 2013, Stilo's representative said it was legal to sink a well to supply its development, "but it may not be the wisest decision for a variety of reasons," conceding that Stilo's own hydrologists agreed that groundwater pumping affects springs in the park.

Steve Rice, Grand Canyon National Park's hydrologist at the time, said that if Stilo does decide to drill for water, the damage could be "pretty substantial," suggesting that any increase in groundwater use could cause small seeps and springs below the South Rim to go dry.

Can we stop existing wells from mining the Grand Canyon's groundwater and prevent new wells from killing its life-giving waters?

Those who have the most to lose think so. In 2016, the Havasupai Tribe filed suit in federal court against Tusayan's well owners and those of 15 other wells that consume the Grand Canyon's groundwater, claiming that the wells threaten the tribe's sole source of drinking water and world-famous waterfalls, essential to their economy. The tribe's lawsuit sought to cap pumping rates from existing wells and to prohibit the drilling of new wells. A federal judge dismissed the suit for technical reasons.

Nonetheless, the Havasupai Tribe continues to seek a remedy to the reality that the tribe's underground water source cannot sustain current rates of pumping—nor can it support siphoning more water for new development. The odds are against stopping Tusayan's wells from pumping even more water. But there's a good chance that the public can plug Stilo's ploy to tap into the Grand Canyon's groundwater.

Tusayan's and much of the West's recoverable underground water is rapidly being exhausted. It's worth considering Charles Bowden's query: "If groundwater is basically fossil and nonrenewable in arid regions, then one asks whether it should be used at all, and if used, for what?" To save the Grand Canyon's disappearing seeps and springs, we must first stop Stilo from mining the Grand Canyon's groundwater.

And that is exactly what the Trust has been, and will continue, working toward. Along with a coalition of environmental organizations, we're making the case to the Forest Service that Stilo and Tusayan's proposal should be rejected because it is not in the public interest and would irreparably harm the Grand Canyon. But if the Forest Service allows it to move forward to the next step—a multi-year study of the development's environmental impacts—we'll be ready. We'll continue to work with the Havasupai Tribe and others to present the facts to the Forest Service and mobilize the public. Massive public opposition can crush Stilo's plan to pump more water from a tank that's running lower and lower. And longer term, the Trust will continue to pursue innovative legal and policy mechanisms to stop this kind of unsustainable development. It's simply not in the public interest.

Roger Clark directs the Grand Canyon Trust's Grand Canyon Program.

Leave a GRAND LEGACY

GIVE THROUGH YOUR IRA

Naming the Trust as a beneficiary of your IRA or retirement plan is one of the easiest ways to make the Grand Canyon Trust part of your legacy.

If you are over 70 ½, you can make a direct contribution from an IRA to the Trust of up to $100,000.

Even though the IRS has suspended minimum distribution requirements for 2020, you can still use this powerful strategy to put your hard-earned resources to work today.

By doing so, you'll avoid taxes on the distribution to the Trust and at the same time reduce your required minimum distribution for next year.

For more information, please contact **Libby Ellis** at **(928) 286-3387** or **lellis@grandcanyontrust.org**

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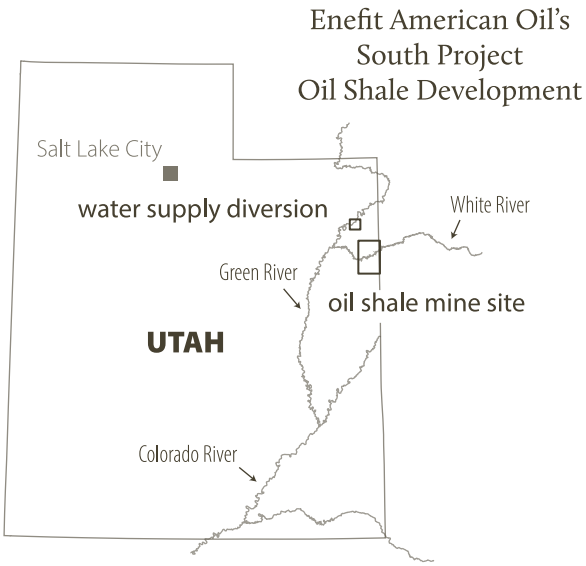
GRAND CANYON TRUST LEGACY CIRCLE

Pipe Dream



A Massive Oil Shale Project that Puts Utah's Clean Air and Rivers at Risk Arrives in Federal Court

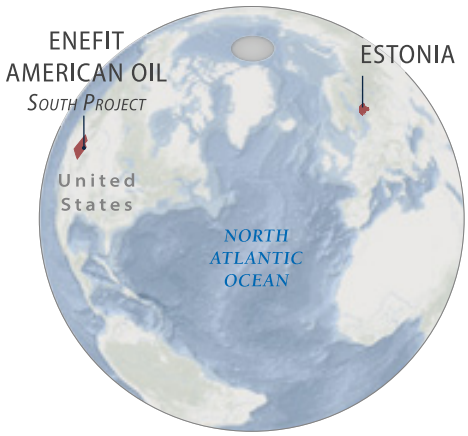
By Michael Toll

On the far northern edge of the Colorado Plateau, flanking the eastern reaches of the Uinta Mountains, the Green River carves through Dinosaur National Monument, turning southeast through the Uinta Basin, a high-desert plateau in northeastern Utah dissected by steep-walled canyons. Before departing the basin by plunging through the Book Cliffs at Desolation Canyon, the Green River, home to the endangered bonytail chub and other imperiled fish, picks up the White River, a major tributary that drains Colorado's Flat Tops Wilderness. Towering 800-foot cliffs line the White River—a favorite canoeing and rafting destination—along with broad, sloping terraces, buttes, pinnacles, and eroded towers. Thirty-some miles upstream from its confluence with the Green River, the White River is joined by Evacuation Creek, one of the basin's few perennial waterways, just west of the Utah-Colorado state line. Here, in these rugged badlands, Estonian-owned Enefit American Oil Co. plans to turn nearly 15 square miles of undeveloped land into the nation's first commercial-scale facility to strip-mine and process oil shale. The plan is to produce more than 18 million barrels of processed crude oil every year for more than three decades, while guzzling a huge amount of water and spewing greenhouse gases and other pollutants into the air. The Grand Canyon Trust has been working for the better part of a decade to make sure that doesn't happen.

Oil shale, long-heralded as the fuel of the future, is a sedimentary rock with a high concentration of kerogen, a precursor to oil. Because this rock was never buried deeply enough for pressure and heat to transform the kerogen into oil, producing oil from kerogen requires nature's unfinished work to be carried out. Through a process called "retorting," oil shale is heated to more than 700 degrees Fahrenheit to release a petroleum-like synthetic crude oil. A second process, called "upgrading," further heats the synthetic crude oil together with hydrogen and other chemicals to reduce its sulfur and nitrogen content and to produce an easily transportable, refinery-ready petroleum product.

The United States has some of the largest reserves of oil shale in the world, concentrated primarily in the Green River Formation underlying parts of Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming. For more than a century, oil shale has been touted as a potential source of unconventional fuel, and there have been several halting attempts at commercial prodution. Yet commercial production in the United States has never taken off because of

Left: The White River, near the site of the proposed South Project. MICHAEL COLLIER
Above: Kerogen-rich rock. MICHAEL COLLIER



Back home in Estonia, the waste piles from Enefit's operations are referred to as the "Estonian Alps" and are visible from space. Enefit's operations there have severely contaminated the country's precious water resources, and the company is gearing up to bring this brand of destruction to Utah.

persistent technical, economic, and environmental challenges.

Oil shale mining and processing require constant inputs of water, electricity, natural gas, and a means to move the processed oil to market. It's a thirsty undertaking. Up to four barrels of water are needed for each barrel of oil produced from oil shale. Because of the huge amount of energy required to mine, process, and transport the oil shale and resulting crude oil, total carbon dioxide emissions—from digging the kerogen-rich rock from the ground, to heating, transporting, and refining it, through the point when it's burned in the engine of your car—are up to 75 percent higher than those from conventional oil. And the mining and processing generate an enormous amount of often-toxic waste rock that can pollute surface water and groundwater. Back home in Estonia, the waste piles from Enefit's operations are referred to as the "Estonian Alps" and are visible from space. Enefit's operations there have severely contaminated the country's precious water resources, and the company is gearing up to bring this brand of destruction to Utah.

State-owned Enefit, known as Eesti Energia in Estonia, is the largest oil shale mining and processing company in the world. To boost company profits, in 2011, Enefit set its sights on the Green River Formation. To gain a foothold, Enefit purchased all of the assets of the now-defunct Oil Shale Exploration Company, including more than 30,000 acres of landholdings in the Uinta Basin. The first phase of Enefit's plans call for building a 320-acre industrial oil shale processing plant, strip-mining up to 9,000 acres of its surrounding lands, and running that oil shale through an on-site processing plant. The processing plant would include multiple retorting and upgrading units, an electric generating station, a wastewater treatment unit, numerous waste piles the size of small

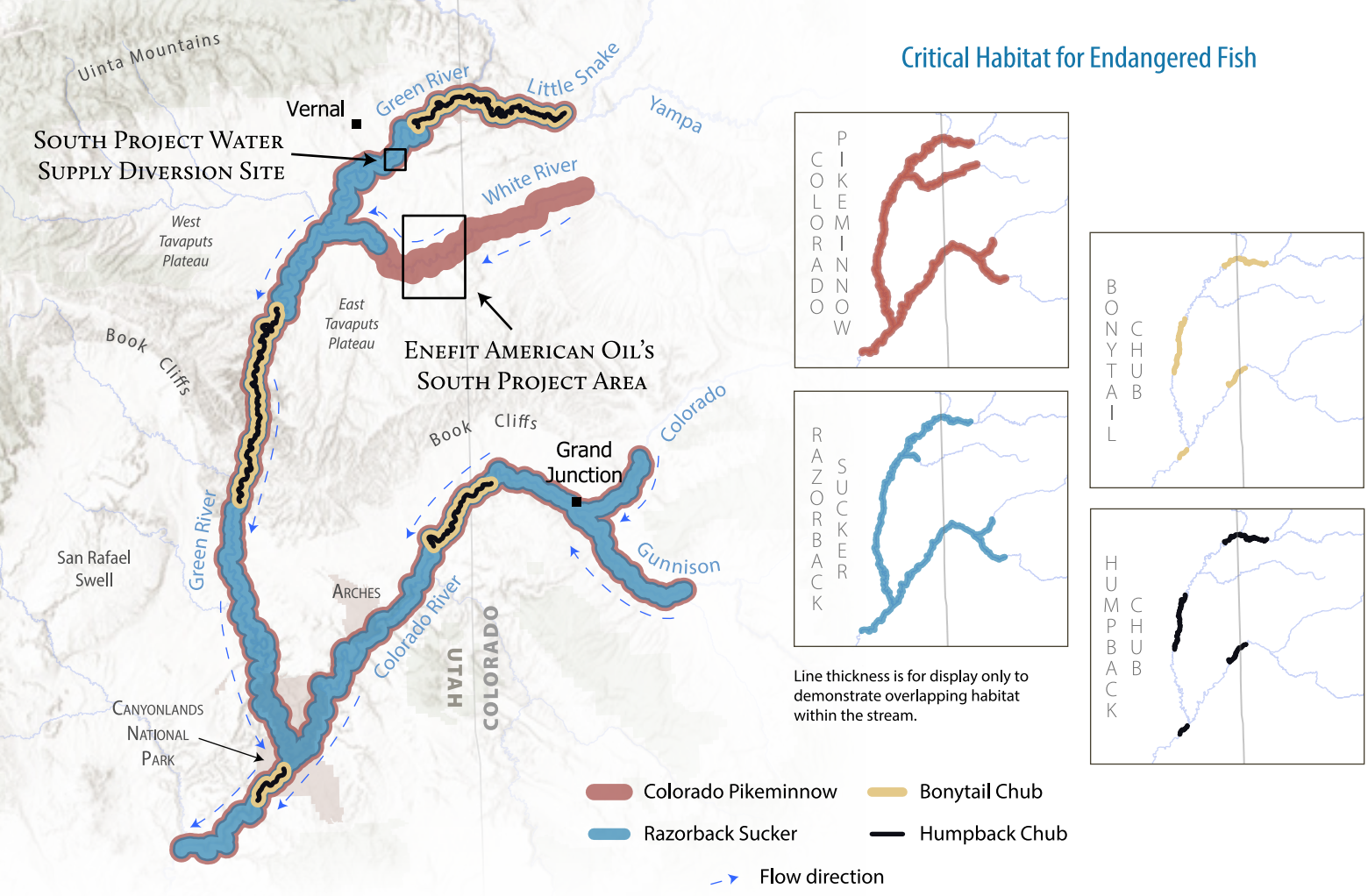
Red Wash, near Bonanza, Utah. MICHAEL COLLIER

mountains, and much more. Enefit dubs its enormous proposed mining and processing complex the "South Project."

Although the South Project would be located primarily on an island of private land, it will be surrounded by federal public land administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. So, back in 2012, Enefit applied for rights-of-way across these public lands to construct and operate a water supply pipeline, a natural gas supply pipeline, two electric transmission lines, and a pipeline to pump processed oil to refineries in Salt Lake City and beyond.

The South Project strip-mining operation would scrape up about 28 million tons of raw oil shale ore rock every year for more than 30 years. Processing that oil shale through the on-site retorting and upgrading plant would then churn out more than 18 million barrels of refinery-ready crude oil every year during those three-plus decades. That is nearly the same amount currently produced by every oil operator in the Uinta Basin combined. If the South Project processing plant gets up and running, Enefit would then move to use it to process oil shale mined from its other Uinta Basin landholdings and, potentially, from public lands nearby.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the South Project likely will harm human health and the environment. It would suck vast amounts of water out of a fragile desert river system and could force already endangered fish to the brink of extinction. The mine and processing plant will withdraw from the Green River up to nearly 10 million gallons of water per day, 3.5 billion gallons per year, and more than 100 billion gallons over the life of the project. For perspective, that's



about as much water as all existing municipal and industrial water users in the Uinta Basin combined.

Strip-mining and processing more than 800 million tons of oil shale ore rock from nearly 15 square miles of undeveloped land will generate hundreds of millions of tons of waste rock, oil shale, and oil shale processing wastes. Wind and storm runoff will carry huge loads of sediment, salt, metals, and hydrocarbons from these stockpiles and scraped landscapes into nearby waterways. Those waterways are home to numerous fish, including four endangered species—the bonytail chub, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, and razorback sucker. What's more, Enefit's natural gas and processed-oil pipelines will cross the White River and several of its tributaries. An oil spill from these pipelines would pollute surface water and harm the

Bonytail minnow. MICHAEL COLLIER

fish species. Plus, Enefit's plan to scrape layers of rock off thousands of acres of undisturbed lands will destroy a significant portion of the remaining critical habitat for two plant species proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act: the Graham's penstemon and White River penstemon.

Then there are the questions of what the project will do to air quality and how it will contribute to climate change. During stretches of wintertime, the basin's ozone levels have been among the worst in the nation, mostly due to oil and gas development. In fact, in 2018 the EPA designated the Uinta Basin a "nonattainment" area, out of compliance with the Clean Air Act's national ground-level-ozone safety standard. Ground-level ozone is linked to decreased lung function and inflammation, and harms the central nervous system, cardiovascular system, and reproductive system. The South Project's near-doubling of the basin's oil production would dramatically increase the region's emissions of the chemicals that form ozone and other air pollutants. Plus, the combustion of fossil fuels to mine, process, and transport the oil shale and resulting crude oil, the refining of that oil, and the combustion of the end-product gasoline in your car,

would dump vast amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The South Project would churn out 547 million barrels of oil over three decades, all with well-to-wheel carbon emissions up to 75 percent higher than conventional oil.

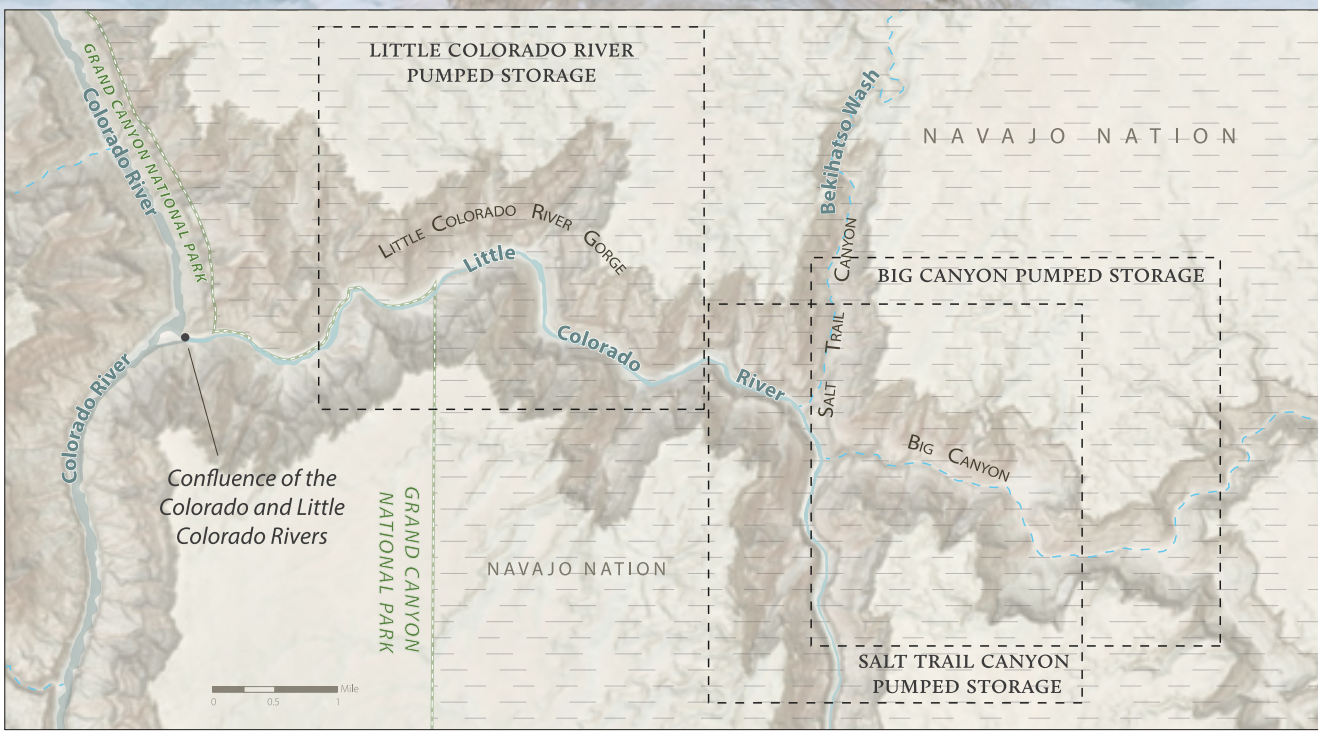
All told, the likely environmental and public health consequences of Enefit's South Project are potentially catastrophic, and would open the door for Enefit to expand its oil shale mining onto public lands next door and elsewhere in the Uinta Basin. Nevertheless, in September 2018, despite years of work by the Trust to block the project, the federal government granted Enefit the rights-of-way it wanted. And that's when things got interesting.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, before granting the rights-of-way, the Bureau of Land Management was required to prepare an in-depth environmental review to analyze the human health and environmental impacts of the rights-of-way and the South Project. And, because the South Project would affect endangered species, the agency was also required under the Endangered Species Act to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to make sure that the oil shale development would not jeopardize any endangered species or its critical habitat. But both agencies failed to satisfy their legal duties. The environmental review and the consultation both failed to analyze the true impacts of the South Project, violating the legal mandate to foster informed decision-making and informed public participation, and the duty to protect imperiled species.

So, in 2019, the Trust, along with a coalition of environmental and public interest organizations, filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Utah seeking to overturn the approval of the rights-of-way. A central issue in the litigation is whether, as Enefit asserts, the company could build and operate the South Project even if the Bureau of Land Management denied the utility rights-of-way by securing alternative sources for the facility's needed utilities. If so, the government claims a thorough analysis of the South Project's environmental harms is not necessary. Yet the government simply took Enefit at its word, even though the technical and financial feasibility of such alternative utility supplies is dubious at best. As just one example, without a right-of-way for a water pipeline, the company has said it would consider trucking water to the South Project site. But trucking nearly 10 million gallons of water per day would require running one large tanker truck, roundtrip, about every 60 seconds, 24 hours a day, every day, for more than 30 years. And those trucks would have to travel a narrow dirt road with sharp corners, steep drop-offs, and poor visibility. All told, Enefit's ability to obtain water—not to mention natural gas and the transport of the South Project's oil product—presents technical and financial obstacles that are likely insurmountable. In fact, the company's past statements explicitly acknowledged the implausibility of many of the supposed alternative utility sources.

We hope for a ruling in the case in 2020 or early 2021. While this case winds through the courts, the Trust continues to advocate outside the courtroom to make sure Enefit's egregious oil shale plans for the Uinta Basin never come to fruition.

Michael Toll is a staff attorney for the Grand Canyon Trust.



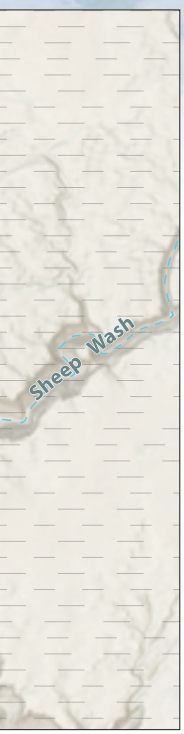
All boundaries are approximated from the July 2019 FERC project numbers 14992-000 and 14994-000 and March 12, 2020 FERC project number 15024-000.

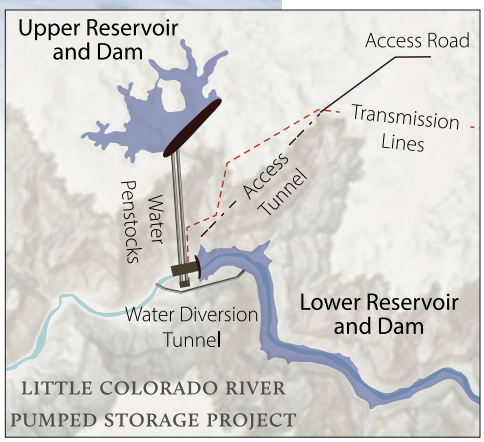
A River of Stories and Prayers

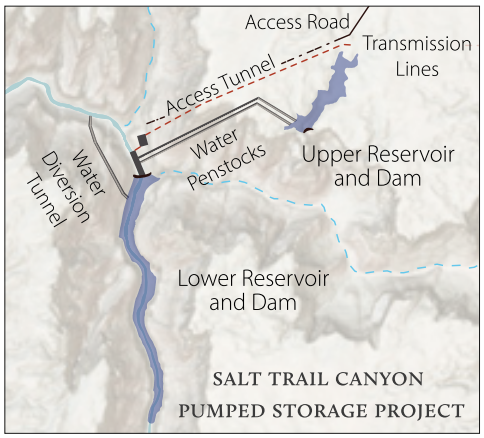
By Sarana Riggs

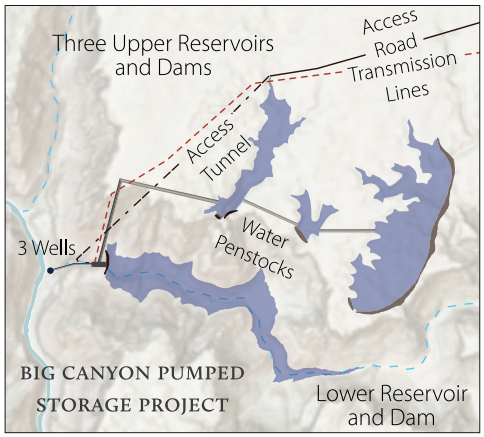
For most of its length as it winds through the Painted Desert, the Little Colorado River is a dry, cracked riverbed where only flash floods and spring snowmelt send torrents of muddy water raging downstream. But high in Arizona's White Mountains, its headwaters run clear and cool. And deep in the heart of the Grand Canyon, near its confluence with the Colorado River, spring-fed year-round flows take on a beautiful milky-blue hue and turn rich brown with silty runoff after storms.

It is here, in this pristine, remote stretch of the Little Colorado River Gorge on the Navajo Nation, near Grand Canyon National Park, that developers aim to back up ancient waters behind concrete dams.









Three Dam Proposals Threaten the Little Colorado River

The Little Colorado River's brilliant turquoise blue comes from calcium carbonate suspended in the water. The result is travertine, a chalky limestone that settles out of the water and coats the riverbed in a white hue, adding to the river's color palette. The river's warm, milky-blue waters rush into the cold, clear emerald-green waters of the Colorado River at the confluence. Both rivers run muddy after storms. ADAM HAYDOCK

In May 2020, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued preliminary permits for two of the projects despite objections from the Navajo Nation, the Hopi and Havasupai tribes, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and a host of conservation organizations including the Grand Canyon Trust.

Water seeps from the walls of Big Canyon. ADAM HAYDOCK

The Little Colorado River is known by many names to the 11 tribes affiliated with the Grand Canyon. As a Diné (Navajo) woman from Western Navajo Agency, I call the Little Colorado River Toh Bi Kaah, meaning "water above." Since time immemorial, the Little Colorado River's precious waters have meant life to Indigenous peoples in the Southwest. While hard to reach, it's been home since we emerged from the canyon's depths. This river has many connections to many tribes from its headwaters to all the tributaries that flow into this place where we say prayers, collect medicines, and make pilgrimages to our most sacred spaces.

In such an arid landscape, the Little Colorado River is also a safe haven for plants and animals. Blue Spring feeds the lower-most 13 miles of the river—its perennial turquoise waters a refuge for the federally endangered humpback chub and seven species on the Navajo Endangered Species List. Birds, plants, and wildlife abound.

Now, that natural and spiritual lifesource is at risk. A Phoenix company called Pumped Hydro Storage LLC is pursuing three hydroelectric projects on and above the Little Colorado River and its tributaries. Each project varies slightly in location and design, but all would desecrate and destroy cultural sites and fragile habitats, and forever alter the river that has sustained Native people for millennia.

The projects, called "pumped storage projects," generate electricity by moving water between reservoirs at different elevations. When energy demand is low, water is pumped uphill into the upper reservoirs, where it's held until people start switching on lights, televisions, and air-conditioning units. At peak demand, water can be released to the lower reservoirs, falling through turbines to create electricity.

In May 2020, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued preliminary permits for two of the projects despite objections from the Navajo Nation, the Hopi and Havasupai tribes, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and a host of conservation organizations including the Grand Canyon Trust.

The Little Colorado River Pumped Storage Project would back up approximately three miles of the namesake river behind a 150-foot-high dam about a half mile from Grand Canyon National Park and flood important cultural areas, including the Hopi site of emergence into this world, according to traditional Hopi beliefs. The second project, called the Salt Trail Canyon Pumped Storage Project, would be similar in size and scope, located near a historic cultural route important to the affiliated tribes known as the Salt Trail, a few miles from the national park boundary.

Fish surveys on the Little Colorado River. LISA WINTERS Humpback chub, now endangered, used to be found throughout the Colorado River drainage in interconnected desert streams. Now, more than 85 percent of their total population lives in the Grand Canyon, most in the Little Colorado River drainage. JACK DYKINGA

The geological formations in this area have already seen their share of past developments. Some have caused long-lasting damage, such as uranium mining and loss of water from over-pumping of aquifers, which can stop free-flowing springs from reaching the canyon. These dams would intrude on Navajo Nation policy and legislation. They would violate designated protected areas including the Navajo Nation Little Colorado River Tribal Park, along with an agreement between the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe protecting all of the Hopi Tribe's cultural resources in this area. In the order issuing the two preliminary permits, FERC said concerns about the lack of tribal consultation, impacts to endangered species, and harm to cultural sites were premature and would be addressed in the next phase of the licensing process.

FERC is currently considering and will likely grant Pumped Hydro Storage LLC's third preliminary permit application for the Big Canyon Pumped Storage Project, which the developers say would replace their earlier two proposals. The Big Canyon project includes four dams. Its lower reservoir would be built on the normally dry floor of the tributary Big Canyon, very near the proposed locations for the other two projects. The developers estimate they would need to pump about 14.3 billion gallons of groundwater from the underlying aquifer to fill the lower reservoir, plus another 3.2-4.8 billion gallons per year to make up for what is lost to evaporation.

This ancient, pristine aquifer would suffer greatly, as would the land, plants, animals, and people. The water that lies below and the river it feeds would be forever changed. Imagine this turquoise-blue water, free-flowing since our emergence into existence; now think of how long it would take to recharge this water which provides life for all. Are we willing to drain an aquifer so that the electricity generated could provide you with a luxurious life in your city?

We are not new to this idea of over-pumping for creating electricity that would benefit those in cities within the western United States. This has been done with the Mojave Generating Station and our N-Aquifer which does not supply adequate water to many communities, homes, and of course our springs which have now dried up. And with each development, the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe are left without infrastructure to have this electricity delivered to homes.

While all three hydroelectric projects are on Navajo Nation land, Pumped Hydro Storage LLC has not sought the consent of the Navajo Nation, nor acknowledged any of the other tribes that maintain cultural connections to the Little Colorado

River today. In 2008, The Navajo Nation designated the Little Colorado River Gorge as a biological preserve, which restricts all development that is not compatible with management goals for the preserve. But again, FERC says this is a premature concern at this point in the permitting process.

With preliminary permits in hand, the company now has exclusive rights for three years to conduct studies and determine the feasibility of the Salt Trail Canyon and Little Colorado River projects. Preliminary permits do not allow construction or grant right of entry to land, and developers must obtain necessary authorization and comply with laws and regulations to conduct field studies. Only if and when the company files a final license application will FERC require tribal consultation and compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and other relevant laws.

This is not the first time outside developers have eyed the Little Colorado River as a source of personal profits. For nearly a decade, Scottsdale developers lobbied the Navajo Nation to approve the Grand Canyon Escalade, a mega-resort and tramway that would have carried up to 10,000 tourists a day to the sacred confluence. A group of local Navajo families called Save the Confluence opposed the project, spent years working to stop the Escalade proposal, and in 2017, the Navajo Nation Council slammed the door on the project by a vote of 16-2.

A few years later, a different threat looms, but the core issue remains: The Little Colorado River is not the right place for development for cultural reasons important to many tribal nations and those who have lived on the land for generations. We are all tied to this area by our shared stories, cultural history, and our prayers taught to us by our deities, which have been carried on through generations.

The Little Colorado River near Salt Trail Canyon. ADAM HAYDOCK

Again, local community members are raising their voices in opposition to development. The local landowners and ranchers of the area have individually opposed the dams. The local grazing district has passed resolutions opposing the projects. The Cameron Chapter of the Navajo Nation, where the projects would be built, unanimously passed a resolution denying Pumped Hydro Storage LLC its proposed feasibility study for the Little Colorado River and Salt Trail Canyon projects. The Navajo Nation has filed motions with FERC opposing all three projects. The Hopi Tribe, the Hualapai Tribe, and others have formally expressed their opposition to damming the Little Colorado River to FERC.

Citizens around the country are also voicing their support for area tribes. During FERC's 60-day public comment period for the Big Canyon project that ended August 3, 2020, more than 60,000 Grand Canyon Trust supporters chimed in to protect the Little Colorado River.

Ultimately, the failed Escalade proposal and the three current dam projects have emphasized the need for permanent protection of the confluence area and the Little Colorado River. If it's not a tram, or a dam, it will be a different development threat. The Little Colorado River is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a traditional cultural property. And it is time for a review of how the local community members and tribal and federal agencies will address future threats. Exerting our voices as sovereign nations is long overdue, not individually but as collective voices from many tribes in unity having a say in how we manage our lands from a shared cultural standpoint and how to effectively co-manage our bordering lands with state, private, and federal landowners. Many of you have stood with us to stop these dams from damaging our pristine land, waters, and cultural sites. Ahéhee' (Thank you).

Sarana Riggs manages the Grand Canyon Trust's Grand Canyon Program.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, W TYSON JOYE

POSTCARDS from the FIELD

STAFF PHOTOS BY RAYMOND CHEE

GRAND CANYON

Why No Uranium Mine Is Safe

Introduced in the Senate in December 2019 after passing the House, the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act, which would permanently ban new uranium mines on about 1 million acres of public lands adjacent to the national park, still awaits co-sponsors and a hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. In April, President Trump's Nuclear Fuel Working Group released its strategy to bolster the nuclear fuel cycle. In addition to a call for Congress to allocate $1.5 billion over 10 years to support at least two unspecified U.S. uranium mines, the strategy also calls for removing barriers to public-land access for mining companies, including mining bans, and "streamlining" important federal protections for the environment and cultural resources. The Trust has published a research report, "Canyon Mine: Why No Uranium Mine Is 'Safe' for the Grand Canyon Region," detailing the problems the mine is experiencing in a region where groundwater flow is highly variable and not well understood.

Amber Reimondo

Amber Reimondo
Energy Program Director

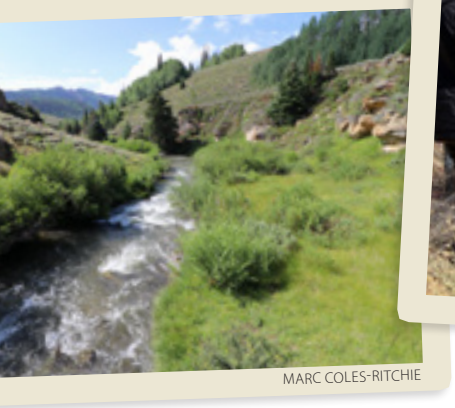
RISING LEADERS

LeaderShift, Zoom Version

This summer, 14 young people with a deep love for the Colorado Plateau came together to strengthen their skills and to put their passion for environmental justice into practice. In a departure from our usual road-trip-style programs, this year's LeaderShift took to Zoom for three weeks of intensive workshops that explored a vital question: "How do we transition the Colorado Plateau away from fossil fuels, while ensuring justice for all communities?" Each day, Indigenous elders tuned in to share stories of resilience and resistance to the extractive industries that have long threatened their homelands, and regional activists conducted creative digital trainings in an array of skills and tactics. After learning to strategize for campaigns, plan direct actions and art installations, and practice mutual aid, students dreamed of a future beyond extractive industry and mapped a path forward for their communities. "I have gained a newfound love and respect for the land all around me," one participant said. "I am inspired to do all I can."

Amber Benally

Amber Benally
Rising Leaders Program Associate



MARC COLES-RITCHIE

AMBER REIMONDO

TIM PETERSON

UTAH FORESTS

Protecting a Gem on the Wasatch Plateau

Recently we led a field trip with Manti-La Sal National Forest staff to make the case for protecting a beautiful natural area along Left Fork Huntington Creek on Utah's Wasatch Plateau. This 222-acre stretch, which includes many meadows and streams, is in excellent condition because it has been minimally grazed by livestock since 2002, unlike many areas in central Utah where cows and sheep have altered native vegetation and damaged streambanks and wetlands. We are proposing this area be designated a "research natural area," to keep it permanently free of livestock grazing and allow native vegetation—including willows, grasses, sagebrush and aspen—and wildlife to flourish. As a research natural area, it would serve as a reference area to showcase healthy natural conditions and provide opportunities to monitor natural processes and the impacts of climate change. This proposal is part of the alternative we're proposing for the upcoming revision of the Manti-La Sal National Forest Plan.

Marc Coles-Ritchie
Utah Forests Program Associate

VOLUNTEER

Keeping Tabs on Canyon Mine

In early 2020, the Volunteer Program launched a new citizen-science effort called "Keeping Tabs on Uranium Mining." On a monthly rotation, six volunteers head out to Canyon Mine, a uranium mine located fewer than 10 miles south of the Grand Canyon. From outside the chain-link fence surrounding the operation, volunteers take repeat photographs of the mine's evaporation pond, where floodwaters with high levels of arsenic and uranium pumped from the mine shaft are left uncovered, attracting birds and wildlife. Volunteers also document the size of the waste-rock pile, its dust-mitigation sprayers, and whether the mine's headframe is moving rock or water from below ground. Almost every time we're at Canyon Mine, we observe violations. For example, we observed and reported large animal burrows under the fence in June, and in February, on a windy day, documented possibly radioactive water from the sprayers blowing outside the mine's perimeter.

Audrey Kruse
Community Engagement Director

NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Standing With Bears Ears From Afar

It's been a long time since I've visited Bears Ears. My last trip there was in early March—the last place I was before the pandemic hit. As I met colleagues and cultural leaders over dinner in Bluff, Utah, it was hard to resist shaking hands in camaraderie. As we said farewell with elbow bumps, we had no idea what was in store, or for how long we'd be away.

In the meantime, the owners of the White Mesa uranium mill have sought to import radioactive waste to the doorstep of Bears Ears from far-flung Estonia and Japan. We're doing all we can to make sure that doesn't happen, and we thank you for your advocacy.

As so many suffer and grieve the loss of loved ones, it's some small comfort that Bears Ears will remain as a constant for us to return to and be healed when we can.

Tim Peterson
Cultural Landscapes Program Director

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

AUDREY KRUSE

Mindy Bell

Hometown: **Flagstaff, AZ**
transplanted from Minnesota
Member since: **2001**
Volunteer since: **2019**
Total hours donated:
29 hours and counting

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE TRUST?
A lot of what brought me to the Trust was Lisa! After I retired from teaching high school science, I became the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) coordinator in Flagstaff, and worked to connect scientists with students in local K-12 schools. I reached out to Lisa Winters. And I've known Roger Clark forever. So I've already known about the Trust. But I didn't get really involved until I retired and had time.

WHY DO YOU VOLUNTEER?
It's selfish, but volunteering makes me happier and more connected. I feel really lucky to work with others toward a common goal. I grew up as the daughter of a biology teacher and lived in the country, so I spent my childhood digging around in nature! These experiences obviously shaped me, and I want young people to be able to explore nature and see exciting possibilities for their own futures. The Grand Canyon Trust is the sweet spot for me, combining my passions for nature and for education.

WHAT'S IT LIKE IN THE FIELD?
I love experiencing the magic of water in Arizona—dragonflies, birds, and unique flowers—while working with old and new friends. The Trust's guidance, amazing food, and wake-me-up coffee don't hurt either!

Thank you, Mindy!

THE VOICES OF GRAND CANYON

If the older we get, the wiser we become, then at millions of years old, the Grand Canyon is brimming with life lessons. Nikki Cooley, a Diné woman and former Grand Canyon and San Juan river guide, says the Grand Canyon can teach us not only about the resilience of a place, which has nourished plants, animals, and people for long periods of time, but also the resilience of a people—the Native peoples who have lived in the Grand Canyon for millennia but were forcibly removed and relocated by the U.S. government.

Today, 11 tribes maintain cultural connections to the Grand Canyon. Their stories stack up as high as the mile-deep canyon itself—stories of movement and migration, hardship and struggle, origins, reverence, and awe. But rarely do tourists hear firsthand from the people whose cultures, worldviews, and livelihoods are inextricably tied to the Grand Canyon region.

Here, Nikki Cooley (Diné), Loretta Jackson-Kelly (Hualapai), Jim Enote (Zuni), Leigh Kuwanwisiwma (Hopi), and Coleen Kaska (Havasupai) share what the Grand Canyon means to them and what they know in their hearts to be true.

The Voices of Grand Canyon is an online collection of stories, videos, and audio clips from Native people about their cultural connections to the Grand Canyon. The project, which launched online on the 101st anniversary of Grand Canyon National Park, grew out of the Intertribal Centennial Conversations Group. Explore the full collection at **grandcanyontrust.org/voices**

Nikki Cooley, DINÉ

Co-manager for the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals' Tribes and Climate Change Program, and Recovering Grand Canyon River Guide

I am from Shonto and Blue Gap, Arizona. I am of the Towering House Clan, born for the Reed People Clan. My maternal grandparents are of the Water that Flows Together Clan, and paternal are of the Manygoats Clan. That is how I present myself as a Diné woman.

DEIDRA PEACHES

"The Diné, or more commonly known as the Navajo, originate from within the Four Corners area, within the four sacred mountains. When we are born our parents bury our umbilical cord in a place, such as the sheep corral, or the cornfield, or maybe near the San Francisco Peaks (Dook'oo'słiid), in order to keep and maintain that connection we have to the land. To remind us that the land is very significant and that we're not a separate piece from it. I know that's why I've always returned home having lived elsewhere for a number of years. I feel a longing to be there, because my umbilical cord is buried in the sheep corral in Shonto. It runs through my veins.

The Grand Canyon is a very spiritual place for the Diné. The waters that run through it, into it, those are often viewed as the lifelines of Mother Earth—the same way the blood lines run through our human bodies. That's where a lot of our deities live, so there are a lot of ceremonies that are conducted there and prayers offered in respect of it.

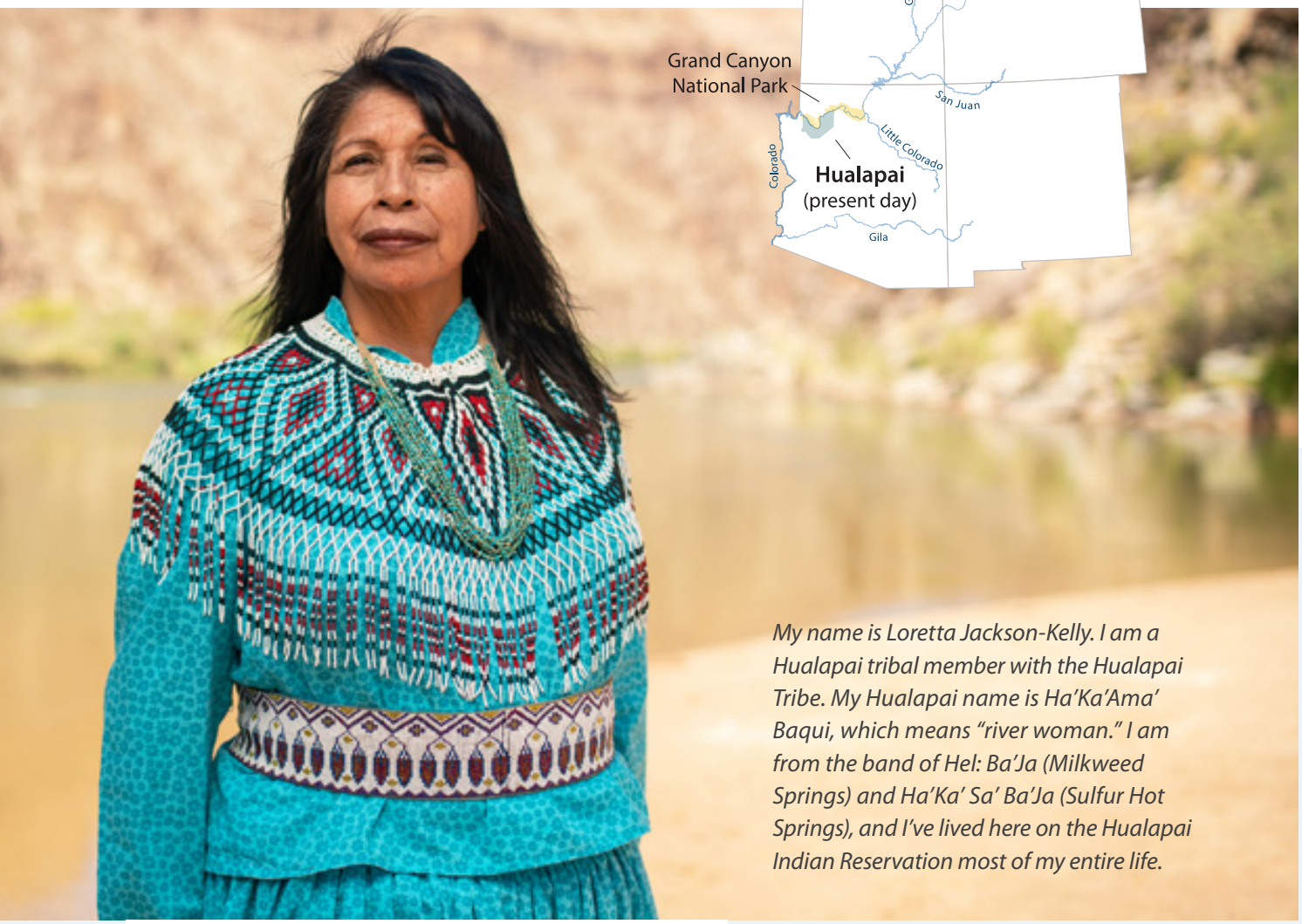
It depends on who you ask and what region you're from, but I generally refer to the big Colorado River as the male river, the raging, big, and intimidating figure. And the smaller rivers, like the Little Colorado River and the San Juan River, are considered the female rivers. They're the soft, gentle, calming counterpart. But in general, all waters are referred to as being female as they give and sustain life. The confluence is where the male and female rivers meet, and together, they go downstream to nourish the rest of the canyon and its residents, the flora and fauna.

Tó ei iiná, water is life. We've heard that term many times and we should hear and say it even more, because without water, we cannot simply survive.

As an Indigenous woman, I truly believe that the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River can teach the human race about the resilience of a place that has been continually impacted by natural changes and by mining, recreation, and the growing political wars over the waters. But also remember this place can teach us about the history of a people who were trying to just survive—the Navajo who used this as a place to hide so they could survive the hunting from the U.S. government who were trying to relocate them. It's a place of resilience in more than one sense. It's a very strong spiritual place that we should respect, especially keeping in mind that the original inhabitants, the five-fingered beings, and the animals and plants still reside there. Every time humans go down there to recreate or research, we are going into their home and we should be respectful. Indigenous people still live down there, and those who live above the rim still call the Grand Canyon their home and spiritual place. Let's work together to keep the Grand Canyon from any more intrusions and keep giving it the respect it deserves."

Loretta Jackson-Kelly, HUALAPAI

Former Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Director



My name is Loretta Jackson-Kelly. I am a Hualapai tribal member with the Hualapai Tribe. My Hualapai name is Ha'Ka'Ama' Baqui, which means "river woman." I am from the band of Hel: Ba'Ja (Milkweed Springs) and Ha'Ka' Sa' Ba'Ja (Sulfur Hot Springs), and I've lived here on the Hualapai Indian Reservation most of my entire life.

DEIDRA PEACHES

"Our ancestral homelands encompassed 7 million acres of northwestern Arizona before the coming of the Anglos. We traversed from area to area, utilizing the natural resources for food, for medicine, for housing, for trade. And within the 7 million acres there were 13-14 bands of Hualapai people, or Pai, or Ba'ja, which means "the people." Each band was named after a unique resource within their territory.

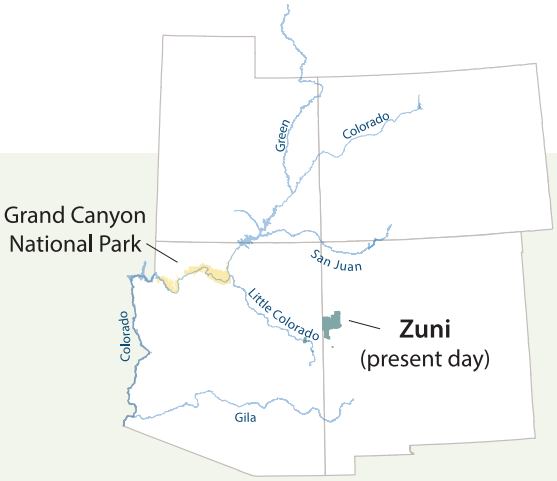
Since time immemorial, the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon have been a very important link to our existence, to the time of our creation. We always payed homage and respect to the river, because the river is a healing body of water, and when you say your prayers and you wash yourself with the water source, you're giving yourself very many blessings as well as letting go of all the negativity that might be building up around.

Our river, the Colorado River, is called Ha'Ka'Ama', and the middle of the river is called Ha'Yi-ʠaʠa, which means "the backbone of the river." Without the backbone, people cannot survive. We have to say our prayers in order to be able to coexist and visit here. When we get to the place, we clap with sticks and say "Yu'Chi' Yah," which means "I'm coming," or "We are coming. We are here." You're telling the spirits that you're here and have no ill will toward anything around you, that you're going to respect the land that you walk on.

There's a lot of respect that you have to show, listening to the river, listening to what's speaking from the rocks, from the plants. This is our world. This is everybody's world. And we all have to help each other in taking care of the world."

Jim Enote, ZUNI

CEO of the Colorado Plateau Foundation



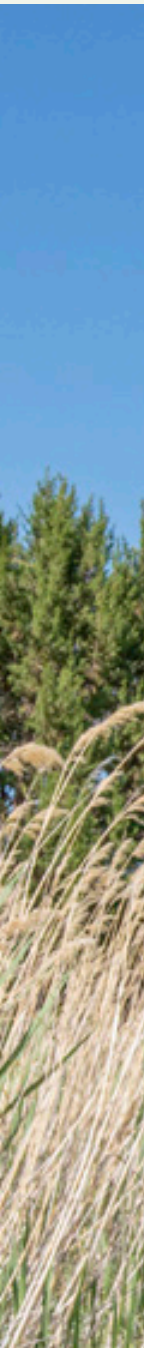
I'm Jim Enote. I'm Zuni, and I'm a member of the Corn Clan. My mother is Corn Clan, and that makes me Corn Clan. Anyone I meet who is Corn Clan means that sometime a long long long time ago, we had the same great-great-great-grandmother.

"The Zuni people call ourselves A:shiwi. The Grand Canyon is the place where A:shiwi emerged from the inner parts of this world to the surface. We call this place Chimik'yana'kya dey'a. It was there that we greeted the Sun Father for the first time. After living in the Grand Canyon for many years, we eventually began to explore the tributaries of the Colorado River, living throughout the Colorado Plateau, learning and living and raising families, then eventually settling here in the Zuni Village, along the upper reaches of the Little Colorado River. But we have never forgotten our origins. Our prayers, our songs, and our ceremonies, refer back to where we came from—Chimik'yana'kya dey'a.

The Grand Canyon, especially from Lees Ferry to Phantom Ranch, is dense with Zuni sacred places. Some that are really important are near what is called Supai Man, where there is a directional marker carved into a slab of stone pointing towards Zuni and a path out of the canyon. At Unkar Delta there are ceramics and water control features exactly like the ones we have here in present-day Zuni. Along the river and throughout the canyon there are many springs, where we still gather water to bring back to Zuni for ceremonies. There are dozens of places in the canyon, where we collect salt, willows, reedgrass and other plants, as well as mineral pigments.

The Grand Canyon is one of the most elemental places on Earth. When there, you are down deep into the womb of Mother Earth. And also, it's a liquid place. There's water there. It's like the womb of Mother Earth. And from there, everything is up. Everything from the bottom of the canyon is an ascension. When you climb out, you're entering a new world. And you're going from that elemental, primordial place to where we are now in modern times.

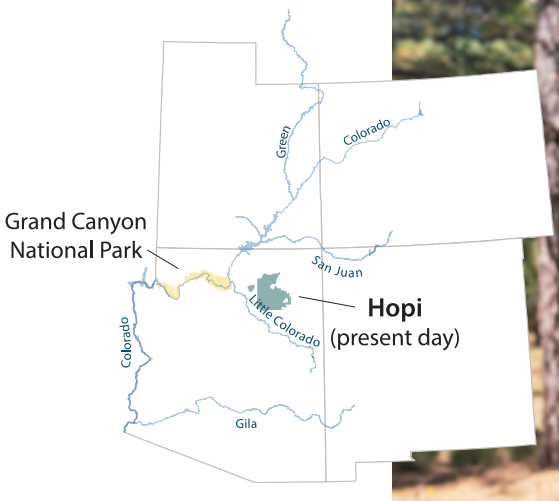
A journey to the Grand Canyon is like a visit to see a common mother and the place where you and all of your surrounding kin, friends, and everyone else in Zuni were born."



DEIDRA PEACHES

Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, HOPI

Retired, Former Director of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office for 30 years



DEIDRA PEACHES

My name is Leigh Kuwanwisiwma. I'm from the village of Baccavi with the Hopi Tribe in Third Mesa.

"The Hopi Tribe is located in northeastern Arizona, and Hopi, I believe, is really among the oldest of ancient cultures here in North America. Our history goes back to creation.

We've been here for about 1,000 years in our present Hopi villages. But beyond that you have thousands and thousands of ruins that the Hopi consider their footprints. You see them everywhere. And with that, we have our identity as being people who had to go on these migrations and experience hardship. But out of that, we earned the right to be stewards of the Earth, and that's what we consider ourselves to be.

The Hopi are taught that we traveled through four stages of life, which are still remembered vividly in our rituals, though songs and clan traditions. And finally, we emerged here, into the Fourth World. They say we emerged from the Grand Canyon at a place called Sipapuni, which is the path to the underworld. And from there we emerged to this present world. Eventually we will travel into the spiritual world. When that happens, a spirit travels to the Grand Canyon, particularly around the area of the confluence, which is home for our ancestral people and the spirits. And from the Grand Canyon, the spirits travel throughout the world as clouds. So every day they are with us. When we see a cloud, we are told to revere them by not directly looking at them, because they are the spirits of our ancestors.

For visitors coming to the Grand Canyon, particularly for the first time, you see how monumental it is. The expanse of the canyon, the way it affects you. You just get swallowed by the canyon. And I think it just challenges yourself, like gosh, how could this be? How could this be part of our life? It's gorgeous and so huge, and all of the animals—bighorn sheep, deer, cougars, wild burros—down there. I think when people go there, they need to take a big breath and look out over the Grand Canyon, and also honor it. Because for the tribes around here, including the Hopi, it is very special to us. I think it's really an honor to be able to go and visit the canyon."

Coleen Kaska, HAVASUPAI

Former Havasupai Tribal Council Member

DEIDRA PEACHES

"The Havasupai people right now reside on the reservation, which is 50 miles west of Grand Canyon Village. But this whole area is aboriginal territory for the Havasupai people, my people, Havasu 'Baaja, which means "people of the blue-green waters." This whole area belonged to them, my ancestors. My tribe has lost millions of acres, which includes all the plateau lands up here, including the Grand Canyon National Park.

When you are hiking into our village or flying in, you will not see any water source. But when you get down to the bottom, what do you see? You smell all the vegetation. You smell the water. You smell all those native trees in the village. And you see the river right by you. It's just beautiful. People go down to the village of Supai to see the waterfalls.

Water is everything for my people. We use it for cooking, drinking, washing clothes, for our animals. Most people have their horses and wildlife they have to feed and water. And every day, living, washing, showering, bathing, and then farming as well.

The water has its own source, its own running way, its own nature. It does not belong to anybody, it belongs to everybody. Water is very very important. It's our survival. When I say that, literally for my people, it is the survival of my people.

I want people to know that Natives are still around, it's just they've been restricted from the area of their roaming grounds. But they are still in the region. And they will never forget. I will never forget. I will not stop talking about my people." ©

GRAND CANYON TRUST

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OUR COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

RAYMOND CHEE

The struggle for racial justice that has become more public in our nation this year has been at once painful, provocative, and inspiring. It has exposed yet again the hard, multi-generational work we must do to combat a fear of otherness that poisons and weakens us, when diversity should be one of our nation's strengths. For many, myself included, supporting this struggle has been a very personal and sometimes uncomfortable journey of reflection, learning, and expression of resolve and solidarity.

For those of us working in conservation, this time has also created a moment of reckoning. Like any social movement that intends to be transformative and durable, the conservation movement must be diverse itself, and in the communities it serves. Historically, it has been neither. American conservation was born during a time of rampant and explicit racism. Some of conservation's original champions, from John Muir to John Wesley Powell, were themselves vocal proponents of racist worldviews and policies.

From these points of origin, and with altogether too little attention paid by the conservation community to the values of justice, equity, and diversity over the intervening century, it shouldn't be surprising that conservation organizations don't reflect, or find enough common cause with the increasingly diverse citizenry of this nation.

Beyond shining a light on the fundamental defects in the conservation movement's founding, and its shortcomings since, we must do the hard work to change. In this, words matter, but actions matter more. At the Grand Canyon Trust, this means doubling down on that half of our mission statement that commits to support the rights of the Native peoples of the Colorado Plateau. It means continuing to work closely and respectfully with tribes and Native nations to support their conservation priorities. It means helping to lead, and supporting others in leading, climate justice work. It means creating opportunities for diverse emerging leaders in the conservation field. And it means changing our organization to ensure that we are not perpetuating systems of racism and social inequality.

On my better days, I truly do believe Martin Luther King's words that "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." On those same days, I cannot fathom that these words could possibly be true without incredibly hard work, and a collective strength of will to evolve toward a more complete sense of justice. These times surely call for both.

Ethan Aumack
Executive Director