

Map by Mark Nebel, GRCA GIS



# Grand Canyon

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Grand Canyon National Park  
Arizona

## Beamer Trail

The Little Colorado River joins the main stem of the Colorado at river mile 61.5. Since Powell's voyage of exploration in 1869 this confluence has marked the end of Marble Canyon and the formal commencement of Grand Canyon proper – the threshold of Powell's "Great Unknown". The setting is remarkable. When unstained by floodwater, the Little Colorado is the color of the sky. Huge unbroken sweeps of vibrant vertical stone range 4000 feet up to the rim as two monumental canyon systems merge into one. The Grand Canyon is a place where the extraordinary is routine, but even here, the Beamer Trail to the mouth of the Little Colorado River represents choice canyon décor.

The Beamer Trail was named for Ben Beamer, pioneer, farmer, and miner active in eastern Grand Canyon during the early 1890s. Beamer tried, unsuccessfully, to grow crops and live near the mouth of the Little Colorado.

The mouth of Palisades Creek provides a backdrop for other human activities. The legendary Horsethief Route forded the river a short distance downcanyon. Useable only during the pre-dam low water of winter, this crossing made it possible to move stolen stock from Utah across the canyon for eventual re-sale in Arizona. Seth Tanner (of Tanner Trail fame) discovered and maintained a number of active silver and copper mining claims on both sides of the river. Other early pioneers also became involved with these efforts, including George McCormick who optimistically changed the name of the mine from Tanner to Copper Blossom.

The section between the Tanner Trail and Palisades Creek offers a chance to inspect some of the oldest sedimentary rocks exposed in Grand Canyon. Known collectively as the Grand Canyon Supergroup, these colorful rocks and dark lava flows are thought to be between 800 million and 1.2 billion years old. The Supergroup is easy to spot by its distinctive 20 degree tilt.

### Locations/Elevations

Tanner Beach (2650' / 808 m) to Palisades Creek (2720' / 829 m):  
Palisades Creek (2720' / 829 m) to Little Colorado (2722' / 830 m):  
Tanner Beach (2650' / 808 m) to Little Colorado (2722' / 830 m):

### Mileages

2.9 mi (4.7 km)  
6.2 mi (10.0 km)  
9.1 mi (14.7 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Cape Solitude and Desert View Quads (USGS)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)

## Water Sources

The Colorado River is the only reliable source of quality drinking water. The shoreline can be accessed almost anywhere between the Tanner Trail and Palisades Creek and near the mouth of the Little Colorado River. The Colorado frequently carries a heavy sediment load and is difficult to purify under those conditions. There is permanent water in the lower reaches of the Little Colorado but the mineral and/or sediment content make it practically undrinkable.

## Campsites

The Beamer Trail falls within "at-large" use area BA9. Please use existing campsites whenever possible. There is one closed area: The mouth of the Little Colorado River represents sensitive wildlife habitat so the area within ¼ mile of the confluence is closed to overnight use. The best campsites are located between the Tanner Trail junction and Palisades Creek on beaches adjacent to the Colorado River. Campsite selection along the Tapeats rim between Palisades Canyon and the Little Colorado River is limited (at best) for a small party, and nonexistent for a large group. Visitors camping at the Colorado River are reminded to urinate in the river. The scent of urine and associated algae growth quickly foul beaches for other hikers. Human feces should be buried 4-6 inches deep in a cat hole a minimum of 200 feet from water, camp and trails. Carry out toilet paper and all other trash.

## Trailhead Access

The Tanner Trail provides access on the south. The Beamer Trail joins the Tanner Trail just above Tanner Rapids.

It is possible to access the Beamer Trail at the north end by way of the Little Colorado River, but rim-to-river routes in this seldom visited gorge are, without exception, rough and possibly dangerous wilderness routes. The Little Colorado drains most of northeastern Arizona and has the potential to produce sediment laden floods of massive proportions. A current weather report, careful campsite selection, a conservative attitude, and a vigilant eye on the sky are essential for safe travel through this confined, flood-prone canyon system. Visitors accessing the area via Little Colorado River routes will need a permit to cross Navajo land.

## Trail Description

Walk the Tanner Trail to the river and start upcanyon. Small outcroppings of Dox Sandstone present minor obstructions (with obvious solutions) at a couple of spots along the way, but in general the route between Tanner Canyon and Palisades Creek is straightforward. Riparian vegetation is dense near the shoreline so the trail tends toward a line a short distance above the water where the brush starts to give way to rocky slopes.

The character of the Beamer Trail changes dramatically at Palisades Canyon. A relatively easy, straight-line stroll across sandy slopes becomes a tedious, demanding trek along narrow, exposed ledges at the very brink of high cliffs.

Tapeats Sandstone outcrops emerging from deep water make it impossible to stay near the river above the mouth of Palisades Creek. Climb about 300 vertical feet up the talus immediately north of the mouth of Palisades to the top of the Tapeats. This slope offers the only break in the sandstone cliff in the general vicinity so the place to start up should be obvious. The top of the Tapeats is the route all the way to the Little Colorado. The trail is badly eroded, narrow, and, in places, remarkably exposed at the edge of an impressive precipice, so hikers should walk carefully. Hikers with a known fear of heights may find this trail segment difficult. It's almost like a junior version of the Tonto Trail, contouring around each of the many small, steep gullies that drain Palisades of the Desert. The trail is reasonably well-defined, but if there are to be route finding problems they will probably occur at the point the trail crosses the drainages. It is possible to scramble down to walk the shoreline ¼ mile below the confluence, but the main trail stays on the Tapeats rim all the way to the Little Colorado River.

## Important Notes

If you encounter remnants of mining or other historic activities, please leave artifacts in place for other visitors to enjoy and historians to interpret. The stories of these places and people can be lost when objects are moved.

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## Boucher Trail

The Boucher Trail (pronounced Boo-shay) offers access to a charming and secluded part of the Grand Canyon, but the beauty has a price. The Boucher challenges even experienced canyon hikers. The trail consists of tough, tedious traverses linked together by knee-destroying descents, with a section of exposed hand and toe climbing thrown in for good measure. On the other hand, the canyon always seems to compensate physical effort with spiritual rewards, and opportunities abound to explore side canyons, encounter wildlife, examine ancient geology, and touch the Colorado River at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

The Boucher Trail was the creation of Louis D. Boucher, the “hermit” of the Hermit Creek basin. Boucher maintained seasonal residences at Dripping Spring and near Boucher Creek and lived in the area for 20 years. Labeled a hermit because he lived alone, Boucher was in fact well known and socially active within the South Rim community during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Boucher called his trail the “Silver Bell”. Very few modern hikers follow the original Silver Bell Trail from the rim above Dripping Spring. Most of the old switchbacks are intact, but the location of the trailhead is an obscure spot no longer accessible by vehicle. For all practical purposes, the Boucher Trail, as we know it today, starts at the intersection below Dripping Spring.

### Locations/Elevations

Hermit trailhead (6640 ft / 2024 m) to Boucher Rapids (2400 ft / 732 m):	10.8 mi (17.4 km)
Hermit trailhead (6640 ft / 2024 m) to sites at Boucher Creek (2760 ft / 807 m):	9.3 mi (15.0 km)
Hermit trailhead (6640 ft / 2024 m) to Boucher Trail Junction (5280 ft / 1609 m):	2.7 mi (4.4 km)
Boucher Trail junction (5280 ft / 1609 m) to Yuma Point (5429 ft / 1655 m):	2.5 mi (4.0 km)
Yuma Point (5429 ft / 1655 m) to top of Redwall (4500 ft / 1372 m):	2.4 mi (3.9 km)
Top of Redwall (4500 ft / 1372m) to tonto junction (3100 ft / 945 m):	1.3 mi (2.1 km)
Tonto junction (3100 ft / 945 m) to sites at Boucher Creek (2760 ft / 841 m):	0.4 mi (0.6 km)
Boucher Creek (2760 ft / 841 m) to Hermit Creek, BM7 (2900 ft / 884 m) via Tonto Trail:	5.0 mi (8.1 km)

### Mileages

### Maps

7.5 Minute Grand Canyon Quad (USGS)  
Grand Canyon Trails Illustrated Map (National Geographic)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)

## Water Sources

The only reliable water along the Boucher Trail is Boucher Creek and the Colorado River. The Colorado is often sediment laden and may be difficult to purify. Water may be available at Santa Maria or Dripping Spring, but neither is considered permanent and both involve considerable detours away from the Boucher Trail. Potholes at the top of the Supai north of Yuma Point may hold water for a few days after precipitation, but dry up quickly and are often frozen solid in winter.

## Campsites

The Boucher Trail is contained within “at-large” use area BN9. Nice (but dry) sites can be found where the trail rounds below Yuma Point and on the saddle just south of Whites Butte (which is located near the top of the Redwall Limestone descent). Camping near water is possible along Boucher Creek near the Tonto Trail crossing and at the Colorado River. West of Boucher is the at-large use area Slate (BO9). East of Boucher is Hermit Creek (BM7) and Hermit Rapids (BM8) both of which are zoned as designated campsites.

## Trailhead Access

Restricted access to the Hermit’s Road occurs annually from March 1 through November 30. Backpackers with a valid backcountry permit for the Hermit or Boucher Trails are allowed access during this time. Drive 8 miles west along Hermit Road to Hermit’s Rest then continue on the dirt road ¼ mile to the trailhead. From December 1st through the end of February the Hermit Road is open to all traffic (during this time the park shuttle bus does not operate).



Two old, seldom used trails also provide access to the Boucher Trail below the rim. The Waldron Trail comes down the slopes at the head of Hermit Creek and Louis Boucher's Silver Bell Trail leaves the rim above Dripping Spring. Vehicle access to these remote trailheads is restricted.

### **Trail Description**

Hike the Hermit Trail two miles through the Kaibab, Toroweap, and Coconino Formations to the Dripping Springs Trail junction. Turn west (left) and follow the narrow Dripping Springs Trail for 1 mile as it rounds the bays at the head of the Hermit Drainage before intersecting the Boucher Trail proper. Striking views of the often overlooked Esplanade Sandstone which is the top most member of the Supai Group are visible and quite impressive in this area. The Boucher Trail departs in a northerly direction continuing the long traverse on the rim of the esplanade. The route crosses numerous small, steep drainages complicated by rockslides from the Coconino cliff above. Finally the spectacular camp below Yuma Point is reached. This indeed is one of the finest upper canyon camps with soaring openness and classic seasonal "Esplanade water pots." This area is directly below the Dragon Corridor; between 8 and 5, the constant drone of sightseeing overflights can be a major distraction.

The trail continues on the flat Esplanade as it rounds the corner below Yuma Point into the head of Travertine Canyon. Continue at this level for perhaps half a mile, then start looking for where the route drops abruptly down the slope toward the bed of Travertine Canyon. A break in the upper cliff requires intimidating hand and toe climbing, and it is tough going throughout the Supai. The trail is being slowly reclaimed by erosion – steep, narrow, and covered in a layer of ball bearing-like pebbles. Take your time!

The route drops to the Redwall rim of Travertine Canyon, crosses to the west side of the drainage and wanders across the open saddle between Cocopa Point and Whites Butte to the top of a gully that plummets through the Redwall Limestone southwest of Whites Butte. The descent to the Tonto Trail is nothing less than brutal, a physical beating in classic Grand Canyon style. The Tonto Trail intersection is marked by a large cairn (no sign). Go right (north and east) along the Tonto Platform toward Hermit Creek or turn left (west) and continue down through the Tapeats Sandstone to Boucher Creek and permanent water. If time allows it is an easy walk down the creek to the Colorado River.

The Tonto Trail could be used to complete a loop hike from Hermits Rest down the Boucher Trail and up the Hermit Trail (or vice-versa). It is about five waterless miles between Boucher and Hermit Creeks, and the trail is well-defined. Great canyon views and spectacular travertine deposits near the bed of Travertine Canyon provide diversion en route.

### **Important Notes**

The Boucher Trail is one of the most difficult and demanding of the south side trails. The degraded condition of the trail, especially in the Supai and Redwall Formations, presents an obvious hazard. The trail through the Supai is hard to follow when covered with fresh snow. Expectations should be low and navigation skills high. The Boucher Trail is best left to experienced canyon hikers.





## Bright Angel Trail

The Bright Angel Trail is considered the park's premier hiking trail. Well maintained, graded for stock, with regular drinking water and covered rest-houses, it is without question the safest trail in Grand Canyon National Park. There is a ranger station located at the trail's halfway point (Indian Garden) and one at the bottom of the canyon (Bright Angel Campground). Visitors hiking for the first time at Grand Canyon often use this trail in conjunction with the South Kaibab Trail. Particularly during hot weather, it makes sense to ascend via the Bright Angel Trail because of potable water, regular shade and emergency phones.

Following a natural break in the cliffs formed by the massive Bright Angel Fault, today's Bright Angel Trail approximates a route used for millennia by the many Native American groups that have called the Grand Canyon home. Early western pioneers at the canyon first built a trail in 1891 to reach mining claims established below the rim at Indian Garden. Recognizing that the true worth of the claims would be measured in visitation by tourists, these pioneers immediately registered their trail as a toll road and extended the trail to the river. The mining claims and use of the trail as a toll road would be the source of much controversy, first in legal battles with railroad companies that wanted to control tourism and later with the federal government. The trail was turned over to the National Park Service in 1928. Though it has been rerouted and improved considerably over the years, present day visitors on the Bright Angel Trail can sense its rich history from ancient pictograph panels and historic structures, and by marveling at the trail's construction over some of the roughest terrain in North America.

### Locations/Elevations

Rim (6860 ft / 2093 m) to Mile-and-a-Half Resthouse (5729 ft / 1748 m):  
Mile-and-a-Half (5729 ft / 1748 m) to Three-Mile Resthouse (4748 ft / 1449 m):  
Three-Mile Resthouse (4748 ft / 1449 m) to Indian Garden (3800 ft / 1160 m):  
Indian Garden (3800 ft / 1160 m) to River Resthouse (2480 ft / 756 m):  
River Resthouse (2480 ft / 756 m) to Bright Angel Campground (2480 ft / 756 m):  
Rim (6860 ft / 2093 m) to Bright Angel Campground (2480 ft / 756 m):

### Mileages

1.6 mi (2.6 km)  
1.5 mi (2.4 km)  
1.7 mi (2.7 km)  
3.2 mi (5.2 km)  
1.5 mi (2.4 km)  
9.5 mi (15.3 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Phantom Ranch Quad (USGS)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)

## Rest Stations

**Drinking water:** From late April or early May to early October, potable water is available at Bright Angel Campground, Indian Garden Campground, Three-Mile Resthouse, and Mile-and-a-Half Resthouse. From mid-October to early May, water is only available at Bright Angel Campground and Indian Garden. There is never potable water available at the River Resthouse. Please note that, due to the remote conditions, potable water is not guaranteed: bring a backup method to treat water. **Toilets are located at:** Bright Angel-Phantom area; also on the Bright Angel Trail near the River Rest Station, at Indian Garden, Three-Mile and Mile-and-a-Half Resthouse.

## Campsites

Camping in designated campgrounds only. Indian Garden Campground (15 small group sites, 1 large group site, no stock). Though not technically along this trail, Bright Angel Campground located on the north side of the Colorado River (30 small group sites, 2 large group sites, stock allowed).



## Trailhead Access

The Bright Angel trailhead is located just west of Bright Angel Lodge. To reach the trailhead park at the Backcountry Information Center (Lot D) and walk 5 minutes to the trailhead or park at the Grand Canyon Visitor Center and catch the free shuttle bus (:20 minute one way trip).

## Trail Description

While the South Kaibab Trail follows a ridge line, the Bright Angel Trail conforms to a fault, keeping to the back of the canyon during the first few miles. Views on the Bright Angel Trail are framed by massive cliffs, and by virtue of being a shadier trail with natural water sources, there is more plant life and animal life along the Bright Angel Trail than on the South Kaibab Trail. These features make the Bright Angel Trail appealing to those interested in geology and in viewing wildlife.

The majority of this trail's elevation change takes place in the upper four miles of trail via a series of switchbacks that can seem endless. Be sure to utilize the resthouses and seasonal water sources along the way. Whether ascending or descending, it is worthwhile to take breaks regularly. Approaching Indian Garden, the trail flattens out considerably as it crosses the shale dominated Tonto Platform.

Indian Garden is an oasis in the canyon used by Native Americans up to modern times. Ralph Cameron, one of the early pioneers who built the Bright Angel Trail (and who would later become an Arizona senator), by 1903 had come to an agreement with the resident Havasupai allowing him to build a camp for tourists. He staked mining claims to secure the site, built tent cabins, and planted the enormous cottonwood trees still present today. Hikers camping at Indian Garden should consider the mile and a half side trip to Plateau Point.

Below Indian Garden, the trail follows a creek through a meandering gully of water-sculpted stone and shimmering cottonwood trees. The trail becomes steep once again where this gully empties into the broad, bowl-shaped Pipe Creek drainage. This section of trail, affectionately referred to as the Devil's Corkscrew, is brutally hot during the summer months and should therefore only be attempted during the early morning or late evening hours. There are no potable water sources between Indian Garden and Bright Angel Campground. A composting toilet is located near the River Resthouse.

From the Pipe Creek/River Resthouse area to Bright Angel Campground, the trail traverses exposed sand dunes for over a mile until reaching the silver bridge across the Colorado River. Again, during hot weather, these sand dunes become a dangerous slog.

## Important Notes

Grand Canyon is, above all else, a place of extremes. It is helpful to plan according to seasonal norms and to take appropriate precautions depending on seasonal variations in trail conditions and weather. During winter months (most pronounced December through February), the top 2 miles are often icy. Because the wintertime sun never reaches the trail, it can remain slick for weeks or even months after a snowstorm, so over shoe traction and hiking poles are recommended. During times of scorching temperatures when the bottom of the canyon is most likely to reach at least 100 deg F (which is most likely to occur between early May and late September) it is critical that hikers depart before dawn or wait until late afternoon. Hiking through the midday hours of 10am and 4pm is not recommended. Hike Smart.





## Clear Creek Trail

The Clear Creek Trail was built in 1934 and 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corp (Company 818). It was originally built as a mule trail so visitors at Phantom Ranch would be able to gain access to a scenic side canyon. At the same time, Clear Creek was stocked with trout so that visitors could do a bit of fishing. All mule activity to Clear Creek ceased with World War II, a period when the park experienced extremely limited visitation. Today, this is the only trail traversing the Tonto Platform on the north side of the Colorado River. Because the slope is south-facing, the hike from Bright Angel Campground to Clear Creek is warmer than similar trails in the fall and spring; with the summer being almost too hot to hike.

Clear Creek experiences its highest visitation in March and April by hikers interested in seeing Cheyava Falls. The falls were first discovered in 1903 when a prospector saw what he thought might be a sheet of ice coating the cliffs up the northeast arm of Clear Creek drainage. The Kolb brothers, famous photographers who lived at Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim, caught wind of this and decided to investigate. They found a nearly 800 foot waterfall, Grand Canyon's tallest. Though perennial lower down, the 'high spout' flows in spectacular fashion only after snowmelt, usually in springtime; in drier years it does not flow at all (Cheyava is a Hopi word meaning "intermittent waters").

### Locations/Elevations

Phantom Ranch (2500 ft / 762 m) to Clear Creek Trail Junction (2600 ft / 792 m):	0.3 mi (0.5 km)
Clear Creek Trail Junction to Sumner Wash (3750 ft / 1143 m):	1.7 mi (2.7 km)
Sumner Wash (3750 ft / 1143 m) to Clear Creek (3600 ft / 1097 m):	6.7 mi (10.8 km)
Clear Creek (3600 ft / 1097 m) to Colorado River (2480 ft / 756 m):	6.0 mi (9.7 km)
Clear Creek (3600 ft / 1097 m) to Cheyava Falls (4875 ft / 1486 m):	5.0 mi (8.0 km)

### Mileages

### Maps

7.5 Minute Bright Angel Quad (USGS)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)  
Trails Illustrated Map (261 and 262), Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

## Water Sources

Phantom Ranch, Clear Creek, Colorado River, and seasonally at Sumner Wash (potholes). **THERE IS NO RELIABLE WATER SOURCE BETWEEN PHANTOM RANCH AND CLEAR CREEK!**

## Campsites

The Clear Creek Use Area (AK9) is currently zoned as "at-large" camping with the following exceptions: No camping in the Clear Creek drainage from its mouth at the Colorado River upstream to the first major side canyon entering from the east, and between the North Kaibab/Clear Creek Trail junction and Sumner Wash, a distance of two miles. Two large trailside cairns mark the first legal camping on the west end of the Clear Creek Use Area. There are several campsites along the Clear Creek Trail on the Tonto Plateau. At Clear Creek, there are four campsites along the creek. They are not designated, but are recognizable. Bring your own animal proof container to safeguard your food. A waste carry-out experiment has been completed and a toilet returned on site as of June 2012. **BE AWARE THAT THIS AREA MAY BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO FLASH FLOODING!**

## Trailhead Access

The trailhead is approximately ¼ mile north of Phantom Ranch on the North Kaibab Trail. The junction is marked by a wooden sign.



## Trail Description

From the junction with the North Kaibab Trail, the Clear Creek Trail climbs through a series of switchbacks to the southeast towards Phantom Overlook (a sharp switchback with a landing where there are a few stone benches; from this point there is a good view looking straight down at Phantom Ranch). After passing Phantom Overlook, the trail continues up to the base of the Tapeats and then traverses to the east for another mile up to the Tonto Platform. While walking along the base of the Tapeats, hikers are exposed to the Great Unconformity, a gap in the geologic record spanning more than 1 billion years. After a final ascent to the top of the Tapeats, the trail contours along the Tonto Platform, crossing Sumner Wash and two minor drainages. The trail turns to the north when it intersects the Clear Creek drainage below Demaray Point: When Clear Creek Canyon appears on the right; hikers are still only halfway to their destination. From here, the trail crosses shallow Zoroaster Canyon and then continues over an unnamed drainage to the north. Finally, at the end of the Tonto traverse, the trail drops into a drainage by traversing a long slope of brilliantly orange-colored Hakatai Shale. The trail ends at a dry tributary creek bed: Looking up this drainage one can see Brahma Temple. From here there is no trail, so it is necessary to hike down the drainage for approximately 150 meters to its confluence with Clear Creek. Most backpackers camp at the many impacted sites just downstream from the confluence.

A faint route continues downstream to the confluence with the east fork of Clear Creek. Hiking to the Colorado River via the creek requires scrambling and numerous creek crossings. It is approximately six miles one way. One-quarter mile from the river there is a pour-off that requires a fifteen foot down climb. This climb can be wet and icy, so use extreme caution, and don't attempt if you don't feel comfortable with free climbing. Allow a full day to complete this hike.

Many hikers also day hike up Clear Creek toward Cheyava Falls. This is a five mile hike one-way and follows the creek bed. Allow a full day to complete this hike. Cheyava Falls only flows in the spring after winters with high snow fall.

## Important Notes

Clear Creek is extremely popular in the spring and fall and permits may be difficult to obtain. Plan ahead! Many first-time backpackers to Clear Creek attempt to hike from the South Rim to the Clear Creek Use Area at Sumner Wash, however by the time they arrive at Bright Angel Campground they are exhausted. Bright Angel is the most popular backcountry campground in the park and space for overflow hikers may not be available. It is recommended that you obtain a permit with Bright Angel Campground as your first and last nights.

The nine mile stretch from Phantom Ranch to Clear Creek is south facing and consequently is in the sun from sunrise to sunset. Expect neither shade nor water for the entire length of the trail. During the hot months, often mid-April through the end of September, it is best to hike this trail in the extremely early morning or in the evening.





## Escalante Route: Tanner Trail to New Hance Trail

Among the commonly hiked sections below the South Rim, the Escalante Route has a reputation for requiring a bit extra from Grand Canyon hikers. Several passages encountered along the way require exposed hand and toe climbing. A feel for the route ahead will save time at the difficult spots. The Colorado River is usually the only reliable source of water, so fool-proof methods of turbid water purification are a real necessity. On the other hand, you are presented with a delightful variety of canyon environments, ranging from the wide open spaces of Furnace Flats, to the slot-like confines of lower Seventyfive Mile Creek. Hance Rapids at the mouth of Red Canyon represents the premier stretch of whitewater in the upper reaches of the Grand Canyon. Changing geology, as the sedimentary Supergroup gives way to the ancient Vishnu Complex, combine with remarkable views from a variety of elevations to produce a Grand Canyon experience of the first order.

### Locations/Elevations

Tanner Beach, BB9 (2700 ft / 823 m) to Cardenas Creek, BC9 (2650 ft / 807 m):

Cardenas Creek, BC9 (2650 ft / 807 m) to Seventyfive Mile Creek, BC9 (2580 ft / 786 m):

Seventyfive Mile Creek, BC9 (2580 ft / 786 m) to Hance Rapids, BD9 (2550 ft / 777 m):

### Mileages

3 mi (4.8 km)

7 mi (11.2 km)

2 mi (3.2 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Desert View, Cape Royal, and Grand View Point Quads (USGS)

Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)

Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

### Water Sources

The Colorado River represents the only reliable water. Hikers can access the shoreline many places between Tanner Beach and Cardenas Creek, at the mouths of Escalante Creek and Seventyfive Mile Creek, at several spots between Seventyfive Mile and Papago Creeks, and near Hance Rapids. The Colorado River is often silt-laden and difficult to purify.

### Campsites

Most hikers utilize beaches along the Colorado River for camping. Good beach camps are located at the mouths of Tanner Canyon (BB9), Cardenas Creek (BC9), Escalante Creek (BC9), Seventyfive Mile Creek (BC9), Papago Creek (BC9), and Red Canyon (BD9). Encounters with river trips are possible at Cardenas and Red Canyon; please yield large camps to large river trips. A dry camp is located west of Cardenas Creek near the head of the unnamed drainage.

### Trailhead Access

Access is via the Tanner Trail on the east. The New Hance Trail and the Tonto Trail provide access on the west. Please see these route descriptions for more information on these trails.

### Trail Description

The route can be hiked in either direction, but traveling with the flow of the land is appealing so this passage will be described from the perspective of a downcanyon hiker. Follow the Tanner Trail to the shoreline. Rocks placed at the trail margins make it easy to see the way across Tanner Beach and up onto the bench above the river that forms the route downstream towards Cardenas Canyon. A well-trodden trail works its way along the foot of the Supergroup slopes above the shoreline. Shallow gullies must be crossed at intervals; but generally speaking, the route from Tanner to Cardenas is straightforward.

Cardenas Creek is almost always dry, but there is easy access to the Colorado River via the bed of the drainage. This is the last reliable water source until one reaches the river at the mouth of Escalante Creek. The trail crosses Cardenas Creek about two hundred yards above the shoreline and climbs the Dox Hill immediately west. There are a couple of ways to do this, but these route options ultimately converge into a single trail immediately south of the Dox Hill. The correct path, however, follows the rising



slope of red sandstone toward and up the unnamed side canyon between Cardenas and Escalante Creeks and reaches the bed of the drainage above the cliff bands that block access to the Colorado River.

The route crosses the unnamed drainage and traverses west toward the crest of the ridge north of Escalante Creek. Caution is indicated throughout this area, as there are many places where you will want to avoid a misstep at all cost. Some sections offer a walking surface about a boot-sole wide while traversing slopes that fall steeply away for hundreds of feet. Take your time and walk with care. The exposure may appear dramatic but truly is comfortable hiking. The trail seems to traverse west forever, finally going to the top of the ridge just short of the west end. A fine view in all directions is the reward for all the side hill walking. (This is also the location of the steep bypass through "Butchart's Notch".)

The trail crosses the ridge and descends rapidly to the bed of Escalante Creek. A barrier fall in the main arm prevents direct access to the river, so the route crosses to the south side of the wash and around into the short arm of Escalante. Well-developed route-finding skills will help here. The canyon bottom forms the route for a short distance but soon the trail traverses west to pass a high pour-off, crosses a bit of talus and descends to the creek bed below the fall. Both arms of Escalante Creek are normally dry, but once established below the fall it's an easy walk to the shoreline.

The trail climbs away from the river below the mouth of Escalante Creek and follows a rising ramp of Shinumo Quartzite downcanyon. Walk the top of this formation around into Seventyfive Mile Creek. Though there is a route directly down the cliffs to the creek bottom, a less thrilling (and probably safer) option is to walk the top of the Shinumo all the way to the bed of Seventyfive Mile Creek and continue down the drainage bottom to the river. A couple of minor obstacles present themselves but the solutions are obvious. The Shinumo Quartzite section of Seventyfive Mile Creek is a real treat - deep and narrow. Watch for some neat slickensides near the river, the results of ancient faulting. Nevills Rapids provides a backdrop for several nice camping spots. The area is equally popular among river runners so you may encounter other groups. Seventyfive Mile Creek is normally dry in its lower reaches, but there is access to the river at various points throughout the stretch from Escalante to Papago Creeks. Note: Seventyfive Mile Creek, in particular, is prone to flash floods. These flood events regularly change the structure of the drainage and, in kind, the route. Hikers should be wary of drainage travel during rain events.

Trails along the beach form the route downriver towards Papago Creek. Eventually sand gives way to rock and a series of ledges require a bit of attention to avoid being rimmed up. In general, stay as close to the river as is conveniently possible. The trail goes up and over a small outcrop of sandstone before dropping back to river level at the mouth of Papago Creek. A high route is also possible and may be cairned.

A cliff emerges from deep water below the mouth of Papago Creek. A significant detour is necessary to bypass a relatively short river stretch. Exit Papago on the west and work up a series of tall ledges. A short rope to better facilitate pack handling will prove a worthwhile accessory, especially for a solo walker. Start up immediately west of the mouth of the drainage. The holds are big and secure, but as one gains height the perception of exposure is hard to avoid. The route leads up from ledge to ledge, so it's never more than a move or two between resting places if you have chosen the line of least resistance. The climbing is easy, but no mistakes are allowed. About 35 feet up the angle relents and one can scramble up the talus toward minor cliff bands above. There are several ways to surmount these little crags, all with obvious trails giving access. Climb the slopes to a (more or less) horizontal trail about 300 vertical feet above the river.

The trail traverses less than 100 yards downcanyon before coming to the top of a talus filled runnel that allows passage back to the shoreline. This gully seems dangerous - steep, with lots of big boulders in precarious balance. Large groups are more at risk because more people moving around means increased chances of dislodged rocks. Large groups should hike VERY close together, or VERY far apart. Pick the path of least resistance through the shoreline vegetation, which is choked with camelthorn and tamarisk. The beach above Hance Rapid is popular with river camps, so be prepared to share this beach. A downcanyon walker arriving at Hance Rapids could continue west via the Tonto Trail toward Mineral Canyon, the Grandview Trail and points beyond, or ascend to the rim via the bed of Red Canyon on the New Hance Trail.





## Grandview Trail and Horseshoe Mesa

Impressions of the dazzling topography of Grand Canyon have changed and shifted since that day in the summer of 1540 when Garcia Lopez de Cardenas gazed out from the South Rim. The conquistador saw a worthless desert wasteland, nothing more than a barrier to political expansion. At the opposite extreme, the modern view tends toward the romantic, reveling in what we today perceive as the remarkable spirituality of the gorge. Products of the age in which they lived, American pioneers arriving in the 1890s were more practical and utilitarian: they assumed with so much exposed bedrock inevitably there had to be mineral riches waiting to be claimed by those willing to go below and look. Would-be miners fanned out across the inner canyon, probing everywhere, and at a place called Horseshoe Mesa found what they sought. Rich copper deposits initially averaging 30% pure promised wealth, but only if transported from the depths. Optimism reigned supreme, a route was scratched out, and in February 1893 an endless succession of mule trains began moving raw ore to the rim along a rough canyon track originally known as the Berry Trail, more recently as the Grandview Trail. More than any other canyon trail, the Grandview is steeped in the legacy of the mining days at Grand Canyon. Numerous small artifacts associated with these halcyon days are scattered across the top of Horseshoe Mesa, providing a link across the years. Hikers can inspect the physical remains of this bygone era while enjoying canyon scenery at its finest.

### Locations/Elevations

Grandview trailhead (7400 ft / 2256 m) to Coconino Saddle (6210 ft / 1893 m):

Grandview trailhead (7400 ft / 2256 m) to Horseshoe Mesa, BF5 (4900 ft / 1494 m):

Horseshoe Mesa to Cottonwood Creek, BG9 (3900 ft / 1189 m):

Horseshoe Mesa to Page Spring (4400 ft / 1341 m):

Horseshoe Mesa to Hance Creek, BE9 (3700 ft / 1146 m):

Horseshoe Mesa to Hance Rapids, BD9 (2608 ft / 795 m):

### Mileages

1.1 mi (1.8 km)

3.0 mi (4.8 km)

1.5 mi (2.4 km)

0.7 mi (1.1 km)

1.9 mi (3.1 km)

8.4 mi (13.5 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Cape Royal and Grandview Point Quads (USGS)

Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Grand Canyon Association)

Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

### Water Sources

Hance Creek and Page Spring (aka Miners Spring) are permanent, year-round water sources. The southernmost spring in Cottonwood Creek is reliable during cooler seasons but occasionally runs dry during hot weather. O'Neill Spring and the northern spring in Cottonwood are undependable at best.

There is no water available between the rim and Horseshoe Mesa, nor between Hance Creek and Hance Rapids.

### Campsites

Backpackers camping on Horseshoe Mesa (BF5) must camp in the designated campsites. Three small group sites are located east of the standing masonry structure. The large group site is further north, east of the little butte that caps Horseshoe Mesa. Toilet facilities are located at both areas. Camping is not allowed in or near the historic mines or structures. Camping in the Cottonwood (BG9) and Hance Creek (BE9) Use Areas is "at-large". All hikers should bring animal proof food containers; mice and ravens are especially adept at stealing food and opening packs and bags in this area.

### Trailhead Access

The Grandview Trail leaves the rim at Grandview Point, located about 12 miles east of Grand Canyon Village via the Desert View Drive. Please use the upper parking lot for overnight parking.

### Trail Description

The original Grandview Trail was created to connect the rim with the copper mines on Horseshoe Mesa. The well built trail eventually provided access to more tourists than miners, as the Grandview trail



provided one of the best access routes into the canyon for its time. The undamaged segments of the pioneer trail in the upper half of the canyon testify to the engineering prowess of the builders as they devised solution after creative solution to the problems posed by the landscape.

Start off the rim from the established Grandview Point overlook. The Kaibab/Toroweap section traverses steep ground and the old trail is eroded so attention to the problems at hand is essential. Vertical steps were surmounted by construction of log "cribs" that were chained or pinned to the cliff face to provide a foundation for the trail where nature provided none. The exposure here impresses some hikers as hazardous. Unfortunately, several of the historic cribs were swept away by landslides during the winter of 2005. Trail crews restored the trail, but not the historical context of the old logs. A series of sloping ledges at the top of the Coconino cliff demands caution especially when icy or wet. Be careful throughout the Kaibab and Toroweap - a fall here could have catastrophic consequences.

Original "cobblestone riprap" trail construction shows throughout most of the Coconino. Large slabs of sandstone placed edgewise provided a durable (albeit labor intensive) walking surface. The trail comes to the top of a dramatic east-facing gully at Coconino/Hermit contact (known locally as Coconino Saddle) that offers tantalizing views into the upper valley of Hance Creek. Steep cobblestone switchbacks below Coconino Saddle dispense with most of the Supai Formation before the walking moderates and the trail begins a gradually descending traverse across the slope to Horseshoe Mesa.

Horseshoe Mesa offers a myriad of attractions. The campsites are located east of the historic masonry structure. Remnants of mining operations, including rusty cans, nails, tools and structures are protected as archeological resources. Please leave these objects as you found them, where you found them. Backpackers headed deeper into the canyon can choose between three trails that link the rim of Horseshoe Mesa and the Tonto Trail. The northernmost trail that descends the east side of the western arm of the "horseshoe" is the most civilized of these options. Most of the original switchbacks have survived so this route is relatively straightforward, intersecting the Tonto Trail north of Horseshoe Mesa. Hikers can continue along the Tonto about 1.5 miles west to Cottonwood Creek or about 2.2 miles east to Hance Creek. The trail down the west side of the mesa is more demanding, severely washed out in the Tonto Group above the bed of Cottonwood Creek. The path off the east side to Page Spring and Hance Creek is probably the most difficult and exposed. Recent trail work has rendered the hardest place a bit easier, but the potential for a nasty fall exists throughout the Redwall descent. Watch for the spur trail to Page (aka Miners) Spring near the bottom of the Redwall.

Modern backpackers use the Tonto Trail to connect the Grandview Trail with points beyond. An established trail follows the bed of Cottonwood Creek to the top of the Tapeats Formation where the Tonto heads west toward the South Kaibab Trail. Hikers walking east from Hance Creek can follow the Tonto Trail toward Mineral Canyon. The Tonto Platform starts breaking down near the west rim of Mineral Canyon causing the trail to drop below the Tapeats Sandstone to descend Supergroup slopes to the bed of Mineral Canyon. Exiting at the mouth of Mineral Canyon on the east side is a bit tricky. The trail splits as it rounds the point before starting down the slope to Hance Rapids. The upper trail is straightforward, but the lower option requires walkers to bend low and traverse a narrow and exposed ledge. There are a couple of ways across the talus to the shoreline at Hance Rapids and the foot of the New Hance Trail.

## **Important Notes**

THE GRANDVIEW TRAIL IS DANGEROUS IN WINTER. Hard ice often sheathes potentially hazardous passages, making some sort of traction device (i.e. instep crampons) mandatory

Old decomposing mines are inherently unsafe. For your protection as well as for the protection of local bat populations all historic mines are closed to visitation. The many artifacts scattered about are protected by federal antiquities laws.

With the exception of "Cave of the Domes", permits are required to enter caves in Grand Canyon National Park due to the extremely sensitive nature of cultural and natural resources inside. Contact the Backcountry Information Center for further information.

LA 09/06, revised LA 05/09





## Hermit Trail

Much pioneer period history of northern Arizona revolves around various schemes of development designed to promote and capitalize on the indescribable but undeniable magic of the Grand Canyon. The Hermit Creek basin was the scene of one of the most aggressive of these improvement efforts. Initiated by the Santa Fe Railroad in 1911, this program involved much development on the rim and also included the construction of what was, at the time, a state of the art rim-to-river trail. The Hermit Trail was built to serve a luxury campsite near Hermit Creek. Hermit Camp predated Phantom Ranch by 10 years, and in its heyday was complete with a tramway from the rim, a functional automobile for transportation within the facility, and a Fred Harvey chef. Operations ceased in 1930, but for two decades Hermit Camp was the last word in gracious tourism below the rim. As is always the case at Grand Canyon, time and erosion have taken a heavy toll. The old Hermit Trail is today a mere shadow of its former self, but for experienced, knowledgeable canyon backpackers the walk offers a direct link to the excitement and romance of the early days at Grand Canyon.

The “hermit” of the Hermit Creek basin was Louis D. Boucher who lived in the area for 20 years. Boucher built the Boucher Trail (west of the Hermit Trail) and seasonal residences at Dripping Springs and near Boucher Creek. Labeled a hermit because he lived alone, Boucher was in fact socially active within the South Rim community.

### Locations/Elevations

Hermit trailhead (6640 ft / 2024 m)  
Santa Maria Spring (5000 ft / 1524 m)  
Breezy Point (4420 ft / 1347 m)  
Tonto Trail Junction (3210 ft / 978 m)  
Hermit Creek (2900 ft / 884 m)  
Colorado River at Hermit Rapids (2300 ft / 701 m)

### Mileages

0 mi  
2.2 mi (3.5 km)  
5.5 mi (8.8 km)  
7 mi (11.2 km)  
8.2 mi (13.1 km)  
9.7 ( 15.5 km)

Tonto Trail Junction (3210 ft / 978 m) to Monument Creek, BL7 (2995 ft / 913 m): 2.3 mi (3.7 km)  
Monument Creek, BL7 (2995 ft / 913 m) to Granite Rapid, BL8 (2330 ft / 710 m): 1.6 mi (2.6 km)  
Hermit trailhead (6640 ft / 2024 m) to Monument Creek, BL BL7 (2995 ft / 913 m): 9.3 mi (15.0 km)  
Hermit trailhead (6640 ft / 2024 m) to Granite Rapid, BL8 (2330 ft / 710 m): 10.3 mi (16.6 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Grand Canyon Quad (USGS)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

## How You Can Help

Legions of small animals (squirrels, mice, ringtails, ravens) will devote much attention to separating you from your food during your stay. An animal proof food storage system is a necessity; bring heavy gauge plastic containers, metal tins or purchase a metal mesh food storage bag (available in the park).

## Trailhead Access

Restricted access to the Hermit’s Road occurs annually from March 1 through November 30. Backpackers with a valid backcountry permit for the Hermit or Boucher Trails are allowed access during this time. Drive 8 miles west along Hermit Road to Hermits Rest then continue on the dirt road ¼ mile to the trailhead.

From December 1st through the end of February the Hermit Road is open to all traffic (during this time the park shuttle bus does not operate).

## Trail Description

The upper section of the Hermit Trail is steep and sustained, dropping almost 2000 vertical feet in the first 2.5 miles. Passage through the Kaibab and Coconino Formations is via well-defined switchbacks. Most of the Hermit Trail was originally surfaced with large hand-fitted rock slabs that created a smooth walking surface. Ongoing



erosion has claimed much of this remarkable labor-intensive paving, but a few isolated fragments survive, especially in the Coconino. Fossilized animal tracks have been noted in many locations throughout the canyon but they were first studied in detail along the Hermit Trail. A few of these fossilized lizard-like tracks can be seen by observant hikers in the lower half of the Coconino.

Pass the Waldron Trail junction and then the Dripping Springs Trail junction near the bottom of the Hermit Shale (stay right at both junctions) and drop into the Hermit Creek gorge. Santa Maria Spring is soon reached offering a trickle of water and a historic masonry rest house.

Between Santa Maria Spring and the top of the Redwall at Cathedral Stairs the Hermit Trail is characterized by long traverses. This section of the trail is tucked up against the west facing walls of the south rim and thus offers hikers a period of extended shade during the hotter months.

At Cathedral stairs the descent becomes unrelenting. An endless series of rocky switchbacks eventually leads hikers through the Redwall cliff and down the west facing talus below Cope Butte to the intersection with the Tonto Trail. The Tonto Trail is an important inner Canyon route that allows access in both directions along the Tonto Platform, east to Monument Creek, west to Hermit Creek. Turn left (west) and follow the Tonto Trail about a mile to the Hermit Creek campsite. Be sure to walk downstream a short distance during your stay at Hermit Creek. The little Tapeats gorge is a real gem.

The Hermit Trail continues another 1.5 miles beyond the established campsite at Hermit Creek to the Colorado River and Hermit Rapids. Follow your nose down the bed of Hermit Creek or take the cut-off from the Tonto Trail that drops to the drainage bottom below the campsite. A little of the original trail construction shows in the Vishnu Formation, but today the lower section of this once impressive trail is mostly a little foot path winding quietly through riparian vegetation to the shoreline. Hermit Rapids is a big one, well worth the trip if time and energy allows.

### **Water Sources**

Santa Maria Spring, 2.5 miles below the rim offers year round spring water. Hermit Creek is a permanent water source that flows all the way to the Colorado River. All water sources require purification.

### **Campsites**

The only legal places to camp within the Hermit Creek drainage are the designated campsites at Hermit Creek (BM7, toilet on site) and Hermit Rapids (BM8, no toilet). A sign with a prominent 'L' marks the Large Group site near the toilet at BM7. Large groups of 7 to 11 people must use this site.

At-large camping is not permitted along the Hermit Trail.

### **Important Notes**

At Hermit Rapids abundant sand and rocky cliffs surround the camp area. Appropriate locations to bury waste are non-existent. Never deposit waste in sand or sand dunes. Please carry out your toilet paper and urinate directly into the river.





## Nankoweap Trail

During his famous early explorations in the region, John Wesley Powell became fascinated with the area's complex geology. His continuing interest ultimately prompted him, in the 1880s, to send a geologist and trail crew to improve an old Native American route to the river. Subsequently, the trail became the northern terminus of the "Horse Thief" route. It's difficult to envision a horse traveling this trail now but, according to legend, outlaws would steal horses in Utah and drive them to the bottom of Grand Canyon, then across the river and out the Tanner Trail to ultimately sell them in southern Arizona.

This is a mostly waterless trail, with significant exposure in places. This trail is not recommended for people with a fear of heights. The majority of hikers take two days to complete the journey, spending the night on the way down at either Marion Point or Tilted Mesa; to do so requires carrying plenty of extra water. Hikers up to the challenge are rewarded with magnificent views, excellent chances for solitude, and fascinating human history.

### Locations/Elevations

*West Access (seasonal) via Kaibab Plateau (HWY 67)*

Highway 67/FR 610/Trail #57 (8800 ft / 2707 m) to Nankoweap trailhead (7640 ft / 2351 m): 3 mi (4.8 km)

*North Access (year round – weather dependent)*

Highway 89A/BLM 8910/Trail #57 (6800 ft / 2092 m) to Nankoweap trailhead: 3.5 mi (5.6 km)

Nankoweap trailhead (7640 ft / 2351 m) to Colorado River (2760 ft / 849 m): 11 mi (17.6 km)

### Mileages

### Maps

7.5 Minute Point Imperial Quad and Nankoweap Mesa Quad (USGS)

Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

## Water Sources

A very small seasonal seep is located just above the trail approximately 150 yards past where the trail passes Marion Point. Permanent water sources include Nankoweap Creek and the Colorado River. **It is advisable to cache one half to one gallon of water per person along the trail for the hike out.** Be sure to label all caches with names and dates and place in a location that is not visible from the trail. Remove all caches when you leave the canyon.

## Campsites

Camping is available in the Kaibab National Forest near the National Park Service trailhead, at Nankoweap Creek (AE9), and at the Colorado River. There are 4-5 small sites located along the trail in the Supai rock layer between Marion Point and Tilted Mesa. For more river privacy, camp near the delta in the smaller beach areas and you won't be invaded by raft trips.

## Trailhead Access

The Nankoweap Trail can be accessed from the west via Forest Road (FR) 610 (4.6 mi / 7.4 km north of the North Rim entrance station) or from the north through House Rock Valley via FR 8910 (south of Lees Ferry along Highway 89A). FR 8910 is a lower elevation access and more reliable year-round. Note that both trailheads are called Saddle Mountain AND that both USDA Forest Service trails are numbered 57.

## Trail Description

### FOREST SERVICE TRAILHEADS TO NPS BOUNDARY

Both Forest Service trails #57 merge at the canyon National Park Service boundary (trail 57 actually connects the two trailheads). The trail from FR 610 is straight forward. Long pants are advised because of dense, thorny brush. The trail from FR 8910 leaves the parking lot and follows an old road south (uphill). It soon becomes a proper trail and descends into a deep ravine. At a fork in the trail at the ravine bottom, bear right to follow the creek. The trail crosses the creek several times over the course of about a half



mile, then exits the creek bed to the south and travels continuously upward through forest toward the saddle.

### **NPS BOUNDARY TO MARION POINT**

At the saddle you are a good 1000' below the true rim of the Grand Canyon. From here, the trail descends quickly through the Esplanade Sandstone. At the bottom of the switchbacks you begin a lengthy traverse for the next five miles (2 miles to Marion and an additional 3 miles to Tilted Mesa). On a map one might be fooled into thinking that this is a fast and straightforward contour but on the ground the trail is narrow, brushy, rocky and slow. Just West of Marion Point the trail narrows to less than a foot wide and for 50' one is intimately close to a 100' drop. **This trail is not recommended for people with a fear of heights.** Pay close attention when approaching Marion Point, if continuing down trail stay high and to the north. Limited space at this ridgetop campsite and very limited mineral soil, essential for proper disposal of human waste, make this area suitable for infrequent small groups only. Overuse of this fragile campsite could result in future restrictions so Tilted Mesa or Nankoweap Creek are preferred campsites, especially for large groups.

### **MARION POINT TO TILTED MESA**

The traverse continues in a rising and falling pattern until it approaches the ridge leading down to Tilted Mesa. There it begins the descent through the remainder of the Supai and becomes more steep on the ridge. Two short cliffs are descended with the aid of a couple of trees. Excellent campsites are located at the top of each of these cliffs. The trail soon reaches the top of the Redwall limestone on the isthmus between Nankoweap and Little Nankoweap Canyons. The trail continues on or near the ridge until dropping off to the southwest and beginning the descent through the Redwall.

### **TILOTED MESA TO NANKOWEAP CREEK**

The trail in the upper Redwall is clear and relatively well constructed. Where it is gravelly, the rocks are angular and large enough to be stable. Things deteriorate when the trail makes a couple of loose traverses, then a couple more, then descends straight down a loose ridge of yellow shale. A walking stick is helpful. At the base of this distinctive yellow shale slope, the trail then turns back to the northwest and onto a plunging ridge of semi-stable, conglomerate boulder debris. Though more stable than the shale, the trail down this ridge is **VERY** steep. When it approaches a large colorful knob the trail turns back to the southeast onto another narrow and loose traverse through the Bright Angel shale. This lasts about 1/3 to 1/2 mile.

After traversing the lower reaches of Tilted Mesa, the trail continues a mild descent down the top of a wide, round, stable ridge. It goes through the Tapeats Sandstone via a few switchbacks and some multiple trailing. Then it drops into a small saddle and off to the southwest down a ravine separating the gray Nankoweap Formation and Black Cardenas Lavas. This ravine empties onto a large alluvial terrace above Nankoweap Creek. The trail stays on the terrace until dropping down to the creek.

### **NANKOWEAP CREEK TO COLORADO RIVER**

There are large springs above and below the point where the trail meets the creek. Those upstream provide tastier drinking water (this must be treated of course) than those below. There is an excellent campsite here but watch out for flash floods. From the campsites at the trail's first junction with the creek, the remainder of the trail follows Nankoweap Creek to the river. Once you reach the river, please stay on the established trails to decrease the erosion and confusion (beach trails are outlined by rocks).

## **Important Notes**

**This trail is classified as MOST difficult of the named trails in Grand Canyon.** It has the largest total rim-to-river drop (5640 ft / 1735 m) and is one of the longest trails. Hikers must be experienced in canyon route finding; this trail is not recommended for inexperienced or solo hikers. The Nankoweap Trail is not enjoyable as a summer hike as there is no water and little shade until Nankoweap Creek. The hike will require a minimum of 4 to 6 liters of water per person, per day.



## New Hance Trail

In 1883, "Captain" John Hance became the first European American to settle at the Grand Canyon. He originally built his trails for mining, but quickly determined the real money lay in work as a guide and hotel manager. From the very start of his tourism business, with his Tennessee drawl, spontaneous wit, uninhibited imagination, and ability to never repeat a tale in exactly the same way, he developed a reputation as an eccentric and highly entertaining storyteller. Shortly after his arrival, John improved an old Havasupai trail at the head of today's Hance Creek drainage, the "Old Hance Trail," but it was subject to frequent washouts. When rockslides made it impassable he built the New Hance Trail down Red Canyon. The New Hance Trail developed a reputation similar to that of the original trail; eliciting the following comment from travel writer Burton Homes in 1904 (he did not exaggerate by much):

There may be men who can ride unconcernedly down Hance's Trail, but I confess I am not one of them. My object in descending made it essential that I should live to tell the tale, and therefore, I mustered up sufficient moral courage to dismount and scramble down the steepest and most awful sections of the path on foot .... 'On foot,' however, does not express it, but on heels and toes, on hands and knees, and sometimes in the posture assumed by children when they come bumping down the stairs .... The path down which we have turned appears impossible .... The pitch for the first mile is frightful ... and to our dismayed, unaccustomed minds the inclination apparently increases, as if the canyon walls were slowly toppling inwards ....

Hikers and geologists alike will enjoy the colorful rock layers found throughout Red Canyon. These layers are referred to as the Supergroup, and collectively represent hundreds of millions of years of earth's history. Pockets of Supergroup, like those found in Red Canyon, are the last vestiges describing what occurred during the Great Unconformity (the gap of time missing between the Vishnu Schist and Tapeats Sandstone). In Red Canyon, the most immediately apparent layer is the brilliant orange Hakatai Shale, which can be seen throughout the area. Across the Colorado River at Hance Rapids there exists a notable basalt dike intrusion. Beneath the Hakatai Shale, outcrops of Bass Limestone contain bulbous stromatolites (1.2 million year old bacterial mats), which are some of the oldest fossils in the world.

### We Need Your Help

With the privilege of being able to walk and camp in the footsteps of John Hance comes a degree of responsibility. Sand dunes are special, the less we camp and walk on them the longer they will last. Never bury human waste in the dunes, near or in dry creek beds, near water, near camp or trail. Appropriate locations to bury waste are far and few between- you have been empowered so plan accordingly. Every ounce of effort must be brought to bear to dispose of waste in soil. Consider a carry-out method and always Pack-Out Your Toilet Paper.

### Vital Statistics

#### Locations/Elevations

Highway 64 (6982 ft / 2129 m):  
Red Canyon Overlook (5000 ft / 1524 m):  
Redwall Descent (4949 ft / 1509 m):  
Creek bed (3250 ft / 991 m):  
Hance Rapids (2560 ft / 780 m):

#### Mileages

0  
2.0 mi (3.3 km)  
3.0 mi (4.9 km)  
4.9 mi (7.9 km)  
6.5 mi (10.5 km)

#### Maps

7.5 Minute Grandview Point and Cape Royal Quads (USGS)  
Trails Illustrated, Map 261 or 262, 2009 (National Geographic)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)



## Trailhead Access

The New Hance Trail begins approximately 16 miles east of the junction of Desert View Drive and the South Entrance Road. Park at Moran Point and walk west, or park at the first pullout east of the Buggeln picnic area. This pullout is on the south side of the road and from here walk east, to the "No Parking" sign which marks the ¼ mile path that will take you to the trailhead proper.

## Trail Description

Today's trail very closely follows the 1894 original alignment. Multiple scrambles and short down climbs are the norm as the trail traverses a series of ledges through the Kaibab and Toroweap. The Coconino is defined by obscurity; a stretch of trail which could be difficult to navigate at night and near impossible to navigate after significant snowfall. Below the Coconino, at a grassy saddle, the character of the trail suddenly changes as it plunges into a dry wash through the Supai. Route finding skills are required through the Supai section: a braided network of trails wander in and out of the wash. Any of these trails will take hikers to the top of the Redwall Limestone (Red Canyon Overlook), where it leaves the creek bed and starts a difficult traverse to the east, about one mile in length, through the lower part of the Supai layer. The trail has been obliterated by rockslides in shallow ravines through which the trail meanders during this traverse. A knob at the top of the Redwall Limestone marks the top of the descent.

Once through the Redwall, the trail runs down the nose of a rounded ridgeline that parallels the creek bed far below. Though the terrain appears gentle from above, don't be deceived: the trail angles down sharply with very few switchbacks until the crumbly rock layers allow access into the bottom of Red Canyon.

From the intersection with the creek bed to the Colorado River the dry creek bottom is the trail, with minor spur trails bypassing short pour-offs in a few places (all bypasses are on the east side of the creek). The creek bed terrain is a mix of gravel and boulders. A few yards before reaching the river, the Tonto Trail heading west intersects the New Hance Trail at the base of a large sand dune. The Escalante Route begins to the east. Both intersections are unmarked and can be difficult to find.

## Water Sources

The Colorado River is the only reliable year round water source. When the river runs red (or brown) it is recommended that you settle the silt out prior to treatment and that you have a backup means of water purification. Spring water often flows from where the trail meets the bed of Red Canyon beginning in late fall and lasting through April.

## Campsite Planning

Sites can be found mid-canyon both above and below the Redwall, though dry, they offer wide-open fantastic views. Additional sites can be found where the trail first descends into the bed of Red Canyon. Once you reach the river there are only two optimal locations to camp. First option, just upriver there exists a large sandy beach which is often used by boaters. If a river trip shows up at this beach, you will be sharing the camp with them. The second option, which offers a degree more of solitude, are the downstream camps located west of Red Canyon at the foot of the dune.

All camping areas along the New Hance Trail are in the Red Canyon Use Area (BD9).

## Important Notes

The New Hance Trail lies within a primitive use area and is thus recommended only for highly experienced canyon hikers. It is not maintained and may be the most difficult established trail on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

The lack of organic soil, nearby riparian habitat and sand dunes are common traits to all camps in the area and this means there is no easy solution to the problem of proper human waste management. Waste buried in the dunes is quickly exposed by the wind. Desert soils above the dunes lack organic materials and the associated microbes which break down waste. Be prepared to either walk as much as a half a mile or if you want the convenience to poop near camp consider bringing a waste carry-out bag. All toilet paper must be packed out. When at the beach urinate directly into the river to prevent the build-up of nitrates (watch your step at night).



## North Bass Trail

The North Bass Trail is possibly the quintessential Grand Canyon trail combining thrusting faults, diverse geology, and an introduction to one of the region's mythic pioneers: William Wallace Bass. Explorer, trail builder, miner, family man, and tourist entrepreneur, in many ways Bill Bass personified that rugged breed that ventured into the unknown to claim a life from the wilderness. Walking in the footsteps of a man like Bass is humbling. His trail will quickly confuse the unprepared and inexperienced, but strong and knowledgeable canyon hikers will appreciate the woven complexity of the area's history, geology, and ecosystems. Forest and upland shrub frame white hoodoos near the rim, while slickrock sections and small waterfalls wait to enchant the hiker further down. As the trail approaches the canyon floor, the canyon widens to offer stunning views and the vegetation shifts to a combination of riparian and low desert scrub. Hikers headed to the Colorado River will have to crisscross Shinumo Creek several times before reaching the historic Bass camp. The profusion of artifacts is startling—household implements, mining tools—each telling a story about the lives that Bill Bass touched. Nearby, Bass tended a canyon orchard filled with fig, peach, and apricot trees. Sit for a spell and imagine the aroma of sun-drenched peach trees. How many hikers have eaten a fresh peach at the bottom of the Grand Canyon? The North Bass Trail has a well-deserved reputation as one of the most difficult and demanding canyon trails, enjoy with caution.

### Locations/Elevations

Swamp Point (7500 ft / 2286 m) to Muav Saddle (6700 ft / 2042 m):

Muav Saddle (6700 ft / 2042 m) to top of the Redwall Descent (5000 ft / 1524 m):

Redwall Descent (5000 ft / 1524 m) to Shinumo Creek (2800 ft / 853 m):

Shinumo Creek (2800 ft / 853 m) to Shinumo Camp (2400 ft / 732 m):

Shinumo Camp (2400 ft / 732 m) to Colorado River (2200 ft / 671 m):

Swamp Point (7500 ft / 2286 m) to Colorado River (2200 ft / 671 m):

### Mileages

1.0 mi (1.6 km)

3.5 mi (5.6 km)

5.8 mi (9.3 km)

1.7 mi (2.7 km)

1.5 mi (2.4 km)

13.5 mi (21.7 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute King Arthur Castle and Havasupai Point Quads (USGS)

Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon East, Map 262 (National Geographic)

### Trailhead Access

The remote North Bass trailhead is located at Swamp Point. Though it is possible to access the trailhead from the North Rim Village by taking the Point Sublime and Kanabownits Roads through the park, it should be noted that passage is much easier using the Forest Service Roads from the north. A North Kaibab National Forest map is essential. The Swamp Ridge Road is gated and is not accessible by vehicle from first snow (often in Nov or early Dec) until the National Park Service fire crew has cleared it of down trees. In some years this road is not open until late May or early June.

### Trail Description

From Swamp Point it is a mile via switchbacks to the Muav Saddle trail junction. The middle trail continues south and ascends to Powell Plateau. The trail to the right leads to an old patrol cabin. The North Bass is to the left and contours the base of the Coconino Sandstone for approximately quarter mile to the fairly reliable Queen Anne Spring.

The one-mile descent from the spring to a benchmark in White Creek (BM 5692') was restored to the historic trail alignment and completely rebuilt in 2005. Continue down White Creek until you reach a waterfall. The bypass is on creek right about 50 feet before reaching the waterfall. Continue down the bed of White Creek until you come to the large pour-off in the Redwall.

The cairned trail to the right crosses four drainages as it traverses along the Redwall rim. Several nice campsites can be found along this stretch of the trail. After crossing the fourth drainage the trail continues along a cliff to the start of the Redwall descent. The descent through the Redwall to the bed of White



Creek is steep and rocky, but well marked. Continue down the drainage to a pour-off in the Bright Angel Shale which can be bypassed on creek right. The bypass is approximately half mile in length and contours along the Tonto before dropping back into White Creek.

The trail continues down the drainage until intersecting a cairned route near the top of the Tapeats that leads out of Whites Creek and up onto the tonto. The trail follows the tonto platform a couple of miles before the final quick descent drops hikers alongside Shinumo Creek about a quarter mile downstream of the White-Shinumo confluence. There is a nice campsite at the bottom of the descent that would fit a good number of tents.

The trail follows Shinumo Creek downstream for approximately one and half miles to the remains of Bass's tourist camp. Hikers heading to the river will exit the canyon a quarter mile downstream of Bass's Camp on creek left (east side). A climb of approximately 700 feet is required to reach a saddle before the trail descends to a large beach and terrace above the Colorado River.

## Water Sources

Water is available seasonally at the spring southeast (down trail) of Muav Saddle. White Creek is perennial but flows are intermittent (water usually available in the Supai). Shinumo Creek is perennial. High flows in Shinumo Creek during spring runoff make crossings extremely hazardous or impossible. Water is always available at the Colorado River. Purify all water.

If a dry camp on the hike out is planned then think about caching water on the descent. Caches should not be visible from the trail; other hikers do not want to see it and unscrupulous hikers will drink your water. Write your name on your cache and date it. **REMEMBER TO PACK OUT UNUSED CACHES!**

## Campsites

First and last night camps exist near the top and bottom of the Redwall. Nice camps also exist where the trail meets Shinumo Creek and upstream from there at the confluence of White and Shinumo. Limited sites exist along Shimuno Ck. There are sites available at the river but be prepared to share the popular beach camp with river runners and ringtail cats. Ringtails can be very aggressive about getting into your pack and looking for food, so be sure to have a way to safely store your provisions! The entire North Bass Trail is in the North Bass Use Area (AS9).

## Important Notes

In 2005 the National Park Service trail crew restored several miles of this trail to its historic alignment. This alignment may be different from what is shown on some maps.

Do not drive off-road to go around fallen trees.

The lower mile of Whites Creek is worth exploring for its lovely Tapeats narrows. Additionally, a cairned route on creek left allows hikers to exit the canyon. The adventurous can use this exit point to gain the Tonto bench and loop back around to the Bass trail.

The North Bass Trail follows the White and Shinumo Creek drainage and is susceptible to flash floods. Shinumo Creek may be dangerous to cross during weeks when the North Rim snow pack is melting. Much of the trail is marked by cairns. Follow cairns at your own discretion...in doing so, you assume that the person who placed them was not lost.



## North Kaibab Trail

The North Kaibab Trail is the least visited but most difficult of the three maintained trails at Grand Canyon National Park. Almost a thousand feet higher at the trailhead than South Rim trails, hikers on the North Kaibab Trail pass through every ecosystem to be found between Canada and Mexico. At the rim, hikers will glimpse the vast maw of Bright Angel Canyon through fir trees and aspen, ferns and wildflowers. The trail as it descends through the Redwall Limestone is blasted directly into the cliff, "literally hewn from solid rock in half-tunnel sections." Farther down, the ecology progresses so that hikers look up at the surrounding canyon walls through a blend of riparian and desert vegetation. Along the way, Roaring Springs and Ribbon Falls both offer rewarding side trips that are wonderfully juxtaposed to the often hot conditions of the main trail.

Built throughout the 1920s to match the quality and grade of the South Kaibab Trail, the present-day North Kaibab Trail replaced an older route infamous for crossing Bright Angel Creek 94 times (the present-day trail crosses only 6 times). Even though it is masterfully constructed and is a maintained trail, don't be deceived by the apparent ease and convenience of hiking it; from beginning to end, the North Kaibab Trail has its challenges.

### Locations/Elevations

North Kaibab trailhead (8241 ft / 2512 m) to Supai Tunnel (6800 ft / 2073 m):	1.7 mi ( 2.5 km)
Supai Tunnel (6800 ft / 2073 m) to Roaring Springs (5220 ft / 1591 m):	3.0 mi (4.8 km)
Roaring Springs (5220 ft / 1591 m) to Manzanita Rest Area (4600 ft / 1402 m):	0.7 mi (1.1 km)
Manzanita Rest Area (4600 ft / 1402 m) to Cottonwood Campground (4080 ft / 1244 m):	1.4 mi (2.3 km)
North Kaibab trailhead (8241 ft / 2512 m) to Cottonwood Campground (4080 ft / 1244 m):	6.8 mi (10.9 km)
Cottonwood Campground (4080 ft / 1244 m) to Ribbon Falls (3720 ft / 1134 m):	1.6 mi (2.6 km)
Cottonwood Campground (4080 ft / 1244 m) to Bright Angel Campground (2480 ft / 756 m):	7.2 mi (11.6 km)
North Kaibab trailhead (8241 ft / 2512 m) to Bright Angel Campground (2480 ft / 756 m):	14 mi (22.5 km)

### Mileages

### Maps

7.5 Minute Quad, Phantom Ranch (USGS)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

## Water Sources

Potable water is available at the trailhead, Supai Tunnel, Roaring Springs, the Manzanita Rest Area, Cottonwood Campground and Bright Angel Campground. All except Bright Angel Campground are seasonal only and are turned off in the fall (exact dates vary; because each station's dates depend on temperatures, the rim and Supai Tunnel are turned off first). Please note that due to random acts of erosion causing pipeline breaks, potable water stations should be considered a gift and not relied upon. Check trailhead signage prior to descending and always bring an alternative and lightweight form of water treatment. From Roaring Springs to the Colorado River the trail is never far from water that can be filtered or treated with chemicals.

## Campsites

At-large camping is not permitted on the North Kaibab Trail; visitors must camp in designated campgrounds: Cottonwood Campground (CCG) located near the trail's halfway point 7 miles from the North Kaibab trailhead, or Bright Angel Campground (CBG) located immediately adjacent to the Colorado River at the bottom of the canyon and 14 miles from the North Kaibab trailhead.

## Trailhead Access

The North Kaibab trailhead is located 41 miles south of Jacob Lake on Highway 67 (1.5 miles north of Grand Canyon Lodge). A small parking area offers limited parking. Transportation is available from the Grand Canyon Lodge (twice each morning; check at the lodge for times and fares) or, for those staying at North Rim Campground, it is a half-mile walk to the trailhead. Hikers on a rim-to-rim hike and who have only one vehicle often use the private Trans-Canyon Shuttle (928-638-2820), which provides service between the North Rim (departs around 6 a.m.) and the South Rim (departs around 1 p.m.) daily from



May 15 to October 15. North Rim park facilities (lodge, store, gas station) close on October 15, but Highway 67 remains open to vehicle traffic until winter conditions preclude access. Visitors should be prepared for road closure anytime after October 15, but often Highway 67 remains open into November. Once closed Highway 67 remains so until May 15. It is not possible to reach the trailhead by vehicle before May 15.

## Trail Description

Resembling the Bright Angel Trail more than the South Kaibab Trail, the North Kaibab initially descends steeply down the head of a valley via a series of numerous switchbacks. After the lush verdancy and impressive views below the trailhead, the trail reaches the distinctive Supai Tunnel, where hikers will find potable water (mid-May to mid-October) and pit toilets, but no emergency phone. Switchbacks continue to the massive cliffs of Redwall Limestone, where for long stretches the trail has been blasted out of the cliff in a half tunnel. The Redwall section is awe-inspiring in every way; fantastic exposure and views mingle with a reminiscence of an age when engineering marvels were commonplace.

Where the bulk of the trail's descent meets the flatter bottom of Bright Angel Canyon, Roaring Springs is a worthwhile side trip. Here, water gushes forth directly out of the cliffs, cascading over moss and fern to form Bright Angel Creek (which will be a constant companion all the way to the Colorado River). This giant spring provides drinking water for every visitor and resident within Grand Canyon National Park. The water is delivered to the South Rim via a pipeline buried beneath the North Kaibab Trail (installed 1965-1970). You can see this amazing pipeline as it stretches across the Colorado River on the underside of the Bright Angel Trail's Silver Bridge.

At mile 5.4 an unexpected house comes into view. Once known as the Pumphouse Residence or the Aiken Residence, where for decades, artist and park employee Bruce Aiken lived, painted and worked. In years past the lucky hiker could get a refreshing cup of lemonade from one of the Aiken kids who were raised at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. The Pumphouse has since been automated and the famed house now serves as a ranger station. Nearby the house, hikers have access to the Manzanita Rest Area which affords access to Bright Angel Creek, a toilet, drinking water and shaded benches. Passing the old Aiken Residence is a welcome sign for the descending backpacker for it signals the approach of Cottonwood Campground. Those fortunate to overnight at Cottonwood Campground will have the time to explore a beautiful oasis located 1.6 miles down-creek from the campground: Ribbon Falls is a true gem of the North Kaibab Trail. The waterfall is located in a grotto on the west side of Bright Angel Creek, so reaching it is a short but extremely rewarding side trip. Hikers caught in the heat of the day should consider taking a siesta here from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Between Cottonwood Campground and Bright Angel Campground the trail enters the Inner Gorge, a narrow canyon within the canyon where the trail is boxed in on either side by 1.7 billion year old Vishnu Schist (the contact between the top of the Vishnu Schist and the overlying Tapeats Sandstone marks the Great Unconformity where over 1 billion years of geology is missing). Though the trail here is not challenging from the perspective of elevation profile, be aware that this is a particularly dangerous stretch of trail during summer months. Because the entire 7.2 mile stretch is at low elevation, it becomes extremely hot from early morning to late afternoon. The gorge of black rock through which the trail passes becomes like an oven and can be compared to walking through a parking lot in Phoenix or Las Vegas in summertime. Always plan on reaching Bright Angel Campground before ten in the morning.

## Important Notes

Grand Canyon is, above all else, a place of extremes. It is necessary to take appropriate precautions depending on seasonal variations in trail conditions. During the deep winter months, the upper section of trail in Roaring Springs Canyon can be ice-covered and perpetually snowbound. On the North Rim, hikers need to be prepared for extreme winter conditions. During the hotter months, which can begin as early as May and last through September, it is critical that hikers have the discipline to begin their hike well before dawn or after 3 p.m. Success and enjoyment really depends on the amount of time spent in the Plan Ahead and Prepare stage (Leave No Trace). Success in the summer can be as simple as staying off the trail and out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Hiking the entire North Kaibab Trail in a single day is not recommended, particularly in summer, as it is nearly impossible to avoid hiking in the heat of the day.



## Royal Arch Loop

This challenging five day loop is considered by many to be the most difficult of the established south side hikes, appropriate for experienced canyon hikers with basic canyoneering skills (ACA rating: 3A VI). The rappel near the river and the lack of reliable water along the Tonto Trail make this hike significantly more hazardous than other canyon trails. The Royal Arch Loop which begins and ends at the South Bass trailhead offers a top drawer canyon adventure, replete with more natural beauty than humans can absorb. For those yet to acquire off trail navigational skills and the ability to rig a rappel anchor, this hike offers about a million ways to get into serious trouble in a remote part of the Grand Canyon.

### Vital Statistics

#### Location/Elevation

South Bass trailhead (6650 ft / 2027 m)  
Esplanade Trail Junction (5400 ft / 1646 m):  
Royal Arch (3200 ft / 975 m):  
Toltec Beach (2100 ft / 640 m):  
Copper Creek (3150 ft / 960 m):  
Bass Canyon (3200 ft / 975 m):  
South Bass trailhead (6650 ft / 2027 m):

#### Mileages (approximate)

0  
1.4 mi (2.2 km)  
12.6 mi (20.2 km)  
3 mi (5 km)  
9 mi (14.4 km)  
3.3 mi (5.3 km)  
4.3 mi (6.9 km)

#### Maps

7.5 Minute Explorers Monument and Havasupai Point Quads (USGS)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon #262 (National Geographic)

### We Need Your Help

Don't Bust The Crust. Please keep off the living soil crust. Walk on durable surfaces such as trails, flat eroded areas, dry washes, and stone. Water caches are acceptable but they must be removed from the canyon, PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT. Cache must not be visible from the trail and include a 'use or remove' date. Remove all rope that you bring into the canyon. If you must leave webbing then remove an old piece and carry it out.

### Water Sources

Perennial water sources include Royal Arch Canyon (Redwall gorge) and at the Colorado River. Seasonal water (during cooler weather or just after rains) is sometimes available from Seep Spring (between Chemehuevi and Toltec Points), from temporary pools in drainages and on the Esplanade points, in the bed of Royal Arch Canyon, in Copper Canyon, and from potholes in Bass Canyon (below the Tonto Trail crossing). Garnet Canyon is extremely mineralized and is considered undrinkable.

### Campsite Planning

Garnet "at large" Use Area (BR9) includes the Esplanade (west of South Bass), Royal Arch Canyon, Toltec Beach, and the Tonto Trail. South Bass "at-large" use area (BQ9) includes the entire South Bass trail, nearby expanses of the Esplanade, and the small beach at the foot of Bass Canyon known as the "Ross Wheeler" beach. Elves Chasm is closed to overnight camping.

### Trailhead Access

South Bass Trailhead is accessed via 25 miles of unimproved roads. Precipitation is most likely December through March; also July and August which can make roads impassable. For more details on the South Bass Trail and driving directions to the trailhead, please see the "South Bass Trail" description.



## Trail Description

This hike is completed in a clockwise direction in order to avoid a 20 ft free climb. Descend the South Bass Trail 1.5 miles to a cairned intersection then walk west on the Esplanade (top member of the Supai Formation), passing Chemehuevi, Toltec, and Montezuma Points. South of Montezuma Point the route starts down the long, eastern arm of upper Royal Arch Canyon. Before the eastern arm joins the main stem of the drainage, walkers are presented with a 200 ft pour-off. This obstacle can be circumvented on either side, but it's much safer on the right (north side). Leave the bed of the canyon, follow a worn path (usually cairned) first slightly ascending and then level under an overhang. Work down over some easy to negotiate ledges to the talus slope below and back to the bed of the east arm.

The main arm of Royal Arch Canyon is just ahead, continue down canyon. In wet years, pools of water might impede progress in the Redwall gorge. Scrambling required, lowering of packs optional but helpful, as you negotiate car size boulders piled one on another. Spring water will eventually emerge prior to reaching the arch. In wet years prepare to swim or negotiate pool-side ledges. Hikers descending the drainage to see the natural bridge should note the large cairns that mark where the route climbs east and out of the drainage. Royal Arch itself is spectacular, Grand Canyon's largest natural bridge (technically it is a bridge because it is water-carved). A huge cliff below Royal Arch presents tantalizing views but cuts off any possibility of additional progress downcanyon. Retrace your steps upcanyon about ½ mile to the cairns marking the path up and out of Royal Arch Canyon. An hour long walk on a short section of Tonto-like trail ends at the top of the infamous 20 ft rappel. Rig an anchor worth betting your life on and rappel. Beware of old webbing or rope of unknown origin. The rest of the way to the shoreline is steep and sandy, but straightforward, coming to the river at the mouth of the Toltec Point drainage.

It would be a pity to come this far and not detour downriver to spend an hour at the splendid Elves Chasm. An easily missed path, not visible at river level, leads 1.5 rough, rocky miles downriver to Royal Arch Canyon. Elves Chasm is just a few minutes up the Royal Arch Canyon. Further exploration above Elves requires some degree of climbing skill. Prior to leaving the bed of the canyon consider the remoteness of your location. Return to camp the way you came.

The next phase of the hike will be away from the river on the Tonto Bench. It is possible to walk upstream along the shoreline but eventually this route is pinched out and hikers are forced up. The most efficient trail starts about 100 yards upslope from rivers edge. The trail eventually starts a gradual climb and works back into Garnet, crossing the salty creek and continuing west. A short ascent through the Tapeats leads to the Tonto Bench and its namesake, the Tonto Trail.

The Tonto Trail is pleasant walking with absolutely stunning views into the Shinumo Amphitheater. Camps are limited and water scarce. The Tonto Trail intersects the South Bass Trail in the bed of Bass Canyon. It is about 1 hour to the river or if you are climbing out it is about 4 hours.

## Important Notes

Plan on carrying a minimum of a 40 foot rappel rope, 20 feet of webbing for the anchor, additional webbing to tie a harness, a locking carabineer, and, if so desired, your choice of an ascender.

At the South Bass trailhead, one has the rare opportunity to car camp within view of the canyon. SE3 is next to the trailhead parking lot and can hold large and small groups. SE1 and SE2 about a mile east of the trailhead hold one small group each. SE1 is near the rim. SE2 is on the rim (ranger favorite)! No fires please.

Request the "Technical Canyoneering" handout for more information on Grand Canyon's climbing policy.

Revised 12/12 MW



## South Bass Trail

William W. Bass was the most noteworthy of the early pioneers that came to the rim of Grand Canyon in the 1880s to carve a life and a lifestyle from the wilderness. The contribution of this man to canyon history is difficult to measure. A list of his accomplishments during more than 40 years of living on the rim would fill a book. Among the most notable is the construction of more than 50 miles of inner canyon trail, most of which can still be walked today. The South Bass Trail was the foundation of this far-flung system of pathways and today it offers modern backpackers a doorway to a fascinating part of Grand Canyon, steeped in the history Bill Bass lived.

Hikers arriving at the beach at the bottom of the South Bass Trail can't help but notice an old boat chained to the rocks above the high water line. Abandoned by Russell and Tadge in 1915, the Ross Wheeler was built by Bert Loper, the grand old man of Colorado River runners, and named for a murdered friend. Loper died a romantic death in 1949 during a Grand Canyon river trip, suffering a heart attack at age 79 while at the oars of a Colorado River cataract boat. His remains were not recovered until 1975, 26 years after his death.

### Locations/Elevations

Rim (6646 ft / 2026 m) to Esplanade Trail Junction (5400 ft / 1646 m):

Esplanade Trail Junction (5400 ft / 1646 m) to westbound Tonto Junction (3200 ft / 975 m):

Westbound Tonto Junction (3200 ft / 975 m) to eastbound Tonto Junction (3150 ft / 960 m):

Eastbound Tonto Junction (3150 ft / 960 m) to Colorado River (2250 ft / 686 m):

South Bass trailhead (6646 ft / 2026 m) to Colorado River (2250 ft / 686 m):

### Mileages

1.4 mi (2.2 km)

4.2 mi (8.0 km)

0.1 mi (0.2 km)

1.8 mi (2.9 km)

7.5 mi (12.1 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Havasupai Point Quad (USGS)

Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

### Water Sources

The Colorado River is the only reliable water source. The river is often sediment laden and can be difficult to purify. Water can occasionally be found during or immediately after wet weather in potholes in the bed of Bass Canyon below the Tonto Trail or in sandstone pockets on the Esplanade.

### Campsites

The Bass Canyon Use Area (BQ9) allows "at-large" camping. Serviceable sites can be found on the Esplanade, the Tonto Platform, and the beach at the Colorado River.

### Trailhead Access

The South Bass trailhead is located in a remote area about 30 miles northwest of Grand Canyon Village. Access is via Forest Road (FR) 328 (the Kaibab National Forest). This unpaved byway is not shown accurately on most topo maps, so a road map of the Tusayan Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest will be useful. FR 328 is rough and rocky and sections can become impassible during wet weather. A high-clearance vehicle is recommended, and four-wheel drive might be required if the road is muddy. Driving to the South Bass trailhead can offer almost as much adventure as the hike.

Access to FR 328 is via Rowe Well Road from Grand Canyon Village. Follow signs from Maswik Lodge toward the park kennel. Rowe Well Road continues past the Kennels, forks once (stay left) and then 1 mile further merges with FR 328. Alternate access: FR 328 can also be reached from Highway 64 about 1 mile north of Tusayan. FR 328 departs from the Westside of Hwy 64.

From the intersection of FR 328 and Rowe Well it is about 16 miles to a gate that marks entry to the Havasupai Indian Reservation. The Havasupai Tribe usually has rangers stationed at the gate so expect to pay an entrance fee (\$25 in 2016) to cross their land. This station is not staffed full-time, so if nobody walks out to greet you then simply pass through the gate and continue about 1.7 miles to a four-way intersection. Turn right (northeast) toward Pasture Wash, follow the road about 1.9 miles to the Forest



Service boundary fence. Continue another half a mile to the park boundary fence and cattle guard. Please help keep cows out of the park by closing this gate after passing through. Keep driving north and continue past the ruins of the Pasture Wash Ranger Station. This outpost on your left has not been staffed for many years and no assistance is available. Maintain the northerly heading for 3.6 rutted, rocky miles to rim. Be forewarned: The road north of the four-way intersection can be rendered impassible by deep mud during periods of heavy rain or snow melt.

## Trail Description

A well-defined descending traverse gets hikers through the Kaibab and Toroweap formations. The trail passes an old fence and follows the rim of the Coconino a short distance north before starting down rocky switchbacks to the Esplanade platform at the top of the Supai Formation. The Royal Arch Route leaves the South Bass Trail and starts west where the trail comes to the Esplanade, the junction marked with a large cairn. Stay right at this intersection and follow the South Bass Trail north across the terrace east of Mount Huethawali. The route traverses near the Supai rim for about a mile to a steep break that allows passage to the slopes below.

Dropping below the Esplanade, the trail rounds a promontory and descends Supai ledges south toward the bed of Bass Canyon. Once established in the drainage the route follows the bottom of Bass Canyon through the Redwall. The path leaves the drainage and descends most of the Tonto Group rocks via the slopes east of and above the bed of Bass Canyon, eventually returning to the bottom of the canyon just above the Tonto Trail junction. The Tonto Trail is marked by large cairns. Below Tonto Trail the South Bass Trail continues down Bass Canyon, crossing and re-crossing the drainage as it winds around various obstructions. This section can be confusing, but the trail stays as close to the bed of the canyon as the terrain allows, so any disorientation shouldn't last long.

An impassable rock fall blocks access to the river at the mouth of Bass Canyon. Watch where the trail leaves the bed of the drainage, going west a short distance to a large cairn marking a shortcut that allows passage down a rocky ravine to the river below. The ravine route can be tedious and this shortcut may be bypassed by continuing another couple minutes west until a gentler path descends to the river opposite a historic fire place.

## Important Notes

There are several other trails located in and near Bass Canyon. Shortcuts to the Tonto Trail continuing west toward Copper Canyon ascend the slopes from points low in the drainage. The trail that heads west out of the bottom of Bass Canyon continues downstream beyond the routes to the river and after a couple miles comes directly across from the mouth of Shinumo Creek. A short scramble allows access to the river. In route downstream watch for the site of a cable crossing that linked the North and South Bass Trails. This historic crossing created the first rim-to-rim trail system. The cable is gone, but these and other sites north of the river attest to the remarkable physical energy Bill Bass brought to his various projects in this lovely part of the Grand Canyon.

LA Revised 11/08 MJS



## South Canyon

South Canyon is typical of hikes descending off the Marble Bench; steep and loose, minor route finding, lack of meaningful trail, and many miles of ankle-twisting drainage bottom walking. Hikers endure such tribulation so that they may camp along the Colorado River beneath the towering cliffs of the Redwall. Short excursions to the aptly named Vasey's Paradise and the infamous Stanton's Cave are an added benefit and a welcomed reward.

### How You Can Help (topic of special concern)

The lack of available mineral soil, riparian habitat, and abundant sand are common traits to all camps in the area and this means there is no easy solution to the problem of proper human waste management. Never deposit waste in sand or near to camp. Carry out your toilet paper and urinate directly into the river.

This is a popular place for rafting parties to lay-over. If a trip pulls up you may end up graciously sharing the camp. The downside to sharing is a lack of solitude but the upside is good karma, a pooper box, and great food.

### Vital Statistics

#### Locations/Elevations

Rim (5600 ft / 1707 m) to Colorado River (2875 ft / (877 m):

#### Mileage

6.5 mi (10.4 km)

#### Maps

Buffalo Ranch, North Canyon, and Tatahatso Wash 7.5' Quads (USGS)  
Trails Illustrated, Map 262, 2009 (National Geographic)

### Trailhead Access

Access is via the House Rock road from Highway 89A. At mile marker 559.5 you will come to a dirt road on the south side of the highway. It is prominently marked with a big sign "House Rock Buffalo Ranch 22 miles." This road is marked as 8910, but some maps may show it as Forest Road (FR) 445. From here it is about 22 miles to the trailhead. Follow this road south. At 10.7 miles the road splits. Take the left fork (the right fork is labeled entering private property and leads to the Kane Ranch). At 11.5 miles you pass through a fence over a cattle guard. A large sign on the right states that you are now in the Kaibab National Forest. Continue straight on FR 445 (8910) to mile 18.8 passing by FR 220 and FR 631. At mile 18.8 you reach the junction with FR 632 (labeled 3510 on some maps) marked by the sign "Wildlife HQ 2 Miles, Wilderness Access 8 Miles." Turn left at this fork toward South Canyon. Follow FR 632 1.9 miles to the South Canyon Trail sign and turn right. Cross a cattle guard and continue on this road for another mile to a parking area at the canyon's edge. A small trailhead sign marks the beginning of the South Canyon route.

### Trail Description

Head southwest from the parking area towards the rim and follow the trail for about 90 yards (82 m) along the rim to a chute marked by a cairn. Hike and scramble down this chute. From here a series of tight switchbacks and short down-climbs covered with loose rocks leads to prominent outcrop of limestone. The route crosses the top of this outcrop and traverses up canyon across the top of a red and white slick rock gully (visible from the rim of the canyon). Descend this gully and contour down canyon below the limestone outcropping. Another set of tight switchbacks and down-climbs leads to the canyon floor. Head down canyon by boulder hopping, bushwhacking, and generally following the path of least resistance. Two 15 to 20 foot pour-offs will be encountered. These can be bypassed by following cairned routes around them to the right side (south side) of the drainage.

Bedrock Canyon enters South Canyon from the north (left side). From this junction continue approximately 125 yards (114 m) to a 40 foot dry fall. This dry fall can be skirted by following a cairned route along a shelf on the right side (south side) of the drainage for about 220 yards (200 m) to a junction with an unnamed canyon. Here the route descends back into the creek bed. Continue down canyon until reaching the top on the gray Redwall

Limestone. The limestone here is not “painted” red but gray which is actually its natural color. A cairned path leads up and around the Redwall narrows on the left side (north side) of the canyon. This traverse is loose and crosses several small ravines. Continue following the cairns across the Supai layer back down onto the limestone. Here views of the river and Vasey’s Paradise open up to you. Head left and around a corner and begin a steep descent. A 12 foot climb down leads to a large ledge. Head downriver along the shelf to an obvious break in the limestone and scramble down it to the beach area. Raft groups usually use the lower end of the beach so for more solitude find a spot along the upper, narrower section of beach to call home.

### **Water Sources**

South Canyon is usually dry. Some water may be present after rain or snowfalls. The Colorado River is the main water source for hikers in this canyon so plan to carry enough water to reach the river. When the river runs red (or brown) it is recommended that you settle the silt out prior to treatment and that you have a backup means of water purification.

### **Campsites**

Desirable campsites exist at the beach along the Colorado River. Small sites can be found along the way, but water is usually not available at these sites.

### **Important Notes**

Vasey’s Paradise has slippery rocks slanted toward the river, exercise caution and beware of nearby poison ivy. Vasey’s Paradise was named by the first Powell expedition in 1869 for the botanist that traveled with Powell in 1868 through the Rocky Mountains. Stanton’s Cave (gated) has produced many important clues about the canyon’s past including 4,000 year old split twig figures and the 15,000 year old remains of a giant teratorn, an extinct condor-like bird that had a 12 foot wingspan. Archeological sites are protected by law and lose their significance when disturbed. Please do not disturb or take artifacts from any sites.





## South Kaibab Trail

Hikers seeking panoramic views unparalleled on any other trail at Grand Canyon will want to consider a hike down the South Kaibab Trail. It is the only trail at Grand Canyon National Park that so dramatically holds true to a ridgeline descent. But this exhilarating sense of exposure to the vastness of the canyon comes at a cost: there is little shade and no water for the length of this trail. During winter months, the constant sun exposure is likely to keep most of the trail relatively free of ice and snow. For those who insist on hiking during summer months, which is not recommended in general, this trail is the quickest way to the bottom (it has been described as "a trail in a hurry to get to the river"), but due to lack of any water sources, ascending the trail can be a dangerous proposition.

The South Kaibab Trail is a modern route, having been constructed as a means by which park visitors could bypass Ralph Cameron's Bright Angel Trail. Cameron, who owned the Bright Angel Trail and charged a toll to those using it, fought dozens of legal battles over several decades to maintain his personal business rights. These legal battles inspired the Santa Fe Railroad to build its own alternative trail, the Hermit Trail, beginning in 1911 before the National Park Service went on to build the South Kaibab Trail beginning in 1924. In this way, Cameron inadvertently contributed much to the greater network of trails currently available for use by canyon visitors.

### Locations/Elevations

Rim (7260 ft / 2213 m) to Cedar Ridge (6120 ft / 1865 m):  
Cedar Ridge (6120 ft / 1865 m) to Skeleton Point (5220 ft / 1591 m):  
Skeleton Point (5220 ft / 1591 m) to the Tipoff (4000 ft / 1219 m):  
Tipoff (4000 ft / 1219 m) to Bright Angel Campground (2480 ft / 756 m):  
Rim (7260 ft / 2213 m) to Bright Angel Campground (2480 ft / 756 m):

### Mileages

1.5 mi (2.4 km)  
1.5 mi (2.4 km)  
1.4 mi (2.3 km)  
2.6 mi (4.2 km)  
7.0 mi (11.3 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Phantom Ranch Quad (USGS)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

## Water Sources

There is no water on the South Kaibab Trail. From early May to mid-October there is water near the trailhead (from a spigot near the bus stop). Potable water is available year round at Bright Angel Campground, however, please note that due to occasional pipeline breaks water at Bright Angel Campground is not guaranteed: bringing an alternative form of water treatment, such as iodine tablets or a water filter, is essential. During hot weather, take at least 4 liters of water.

## Campsites

At-large camping is not permitted on Corridor Trails; visitors must camp in designated campgrounds. Along the South Kaibab Trail, the only camping option is at Bright Angel Campground (CBG) located immediately adjacent to the Colorado River at the bottom of the canyon.

## Trailhead Access

The South Kaibab Trail is located near Yaki Point. Due to the popularity of this area and extremely limited space, parking is not permitted at the trailhead. Hikers must use the park's free shuttle bus system to reach the trailhead. Every morning, three hiker express buses leave from the Bright Angel Lodge and then from the Backcountry Information Center (times vary depending on the month). Otherwise, hikers will need to take the village bus (Blue Line) to Canyon View Information Plaza and transfer to the Orange Line.

## Trail Description

When camping at Bright Angel Campground, many hikers prefer to hike down the South Kaibab Trail and up the Bright Angel Trail. Though the South Kaibab Trail has an almost identical maximum grade compared to the Bright Angel, it is more consistently sloped but does not have water or shade. The hike down South Kaibab Trail typically takes 4-6 hours.

The trail begins with a series of tight north facing switchbacks. This is where ice will most likely be encountered during the winter months. After these initial switchbacks, the trail traverses a west facing slope until reaching the top of the Coconino Sandstone and the aptly named Ooh Ah Point (the first panoramic view of the canyon). From here, the trail transitions to the dominant ridgeline, descending on its east and west sides before reaching Cedar Ridge. There are pit toilets at Cedar Ridge, but no water or emergency phone.

From Cedar Ridge, the South Kaibab Trail traverses below O'Neill Butte without a single switchback to Skeleton Point. At three miles from the rim, Skeleton Point is the maximum distance recommended for a day hike. The trail goes directly off the end of Skeleton Point and here, where the trail has been blasted directly out of the limestone cliffs, hikers will encounter the most dramatic sense of exposure. The trail descends rapidly via a series of switchbacks to the Tonto Platform and Tipoff. There are pit toilets and an emergency phone at Tipoff, but no water. For hikers who will be utilizing the Tonto Trail to the east or west, the intersection is located fifty feet or so up-trail from the pit toilets.

Below Tipoff, the South Kaibab Trail loosely follows the course of an earlier trail called the Cable Trail (built in 1907 to accommodate access to the old cable car system across the river that existed before construction of the present suspension bridge). Vestiges of this earlier trail can be seen as the South Kaibab Trail descends toward the Colorado River. Access to Bright Angel Campground is via the black bridge (built in 1921).

## Important Notes

Grand Canyon is, above all else, a place of extremes. It is necessary to take appropriate precautions depending on seasonal variations in trail conditions. During winter months, the series of tight switchbacks near the top of the South Kaibab Trail will be icy for days or even weeks after a snowstorm. For hikers who insist on entering the canyon from May to September, it is critical to begin hiking well before dawn or in the late afternoon: Success depends upon staying off the trail between 10 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon (average descent time is 4 to 6 hours). Failure to arrive at Bright Angel Campground by 10 in the morning during hot weather can result in hikers having a miserable experience, with some requiring medical intervention and rescue. Every hour that you are on the trail past 10am exponentially increases your chance of becoming a statistic! Ascending the South Kaibab Trail in hot weather is not recommended. Carefully study the National Park Service "Hike Smart" pamphlet issued with summer permits and always practice Leave No Trace.



## Tanner Trail

The lower reaches of the Grand Canyon below Desert View are dominated by a series of tilted layers of stone known as the Grand Canyon Supergroup. The Supergroup is a complex collection of ancient sedimentary and igneous rocks ranging in age from 800 million to 1.2 billion years, the oldest sedimentary deposits in the canyon. The colorful rocks are soft and easily eroded so the canyon floor is unusually expansive, offering unimpeded views of some of the steepest walls to be found below the rim.

In addition to being geologically noteworthy, the Tanner Trail is also historically significant. Native people used this natural rim-to-river route for several thousand years and the trail as we know it today has been in constant use since 1890 (when it was improved by Franklin French and Seth Tanner). The Tanner Trail allowed early miners access to their claims and was used as the southern component of the disreputable Horsethief Route. Wilderness seekers are only the latest humans to discover the charms of the area.

The historic Tanner Trail is the primary access by foot into the eastern Grand Canyon. The trail is unmaintained and ranks as one of the most difficult and demanding south side trails, but for an experienced canyon walker the aesthetic bounty of the area will be adequate compensation.

### Locations/Elevations

Lipan Point (7350 ft / 2240 m) to Colorado River (2700 ft / 823 m):

### Mileage

9 mi (14.4 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Desert View Quad (USGS)

Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)

## Water Sources

The Colorado River is the sole source of water. No reliable water exists above the shoreline. The Colorado is often silt laden and can be difficult to purify under those conditions.

## Campsites

As part of the ongoing efforts to salvage plant and animal habitats that revolve around what remains of the old pre-dam sediments near the river, the large sand dune at the mouth of Tanner Canyon is closed to visitation. With this exception, the Tanner Canyon Use Area (BB9) allows "at-large" camping. There are nice (although dry) established campsites at the Seventyfive Mile Creek - Tanner Canyon saddle, trailside in the Supai, above and below the Redwall, and in the Tapeats. Campsites near the river can be found on the east side of Tanner Canyon. A composting toilet is located nearby.

## Trailhead Access

Park at Lipan Point, walk back down the road a few steps, and look for the trailhead east of the pavement.

## Trail Description

What remains of a once popular pioneer-era trail goes down the gully immediately east of Lipan Point. The upper section of the Tanner Trail is narrow, badly eroded, and can be difficult to follow, especially after a winter storm. The trail stays on the slopes east of the bottom of the gully through the Toroweap and switches to the west side at the top of the Coconino. Rock slides in the Coconino have covered the original trail in places, forcing hikers to improvise short sections. The trail descends steeply across the slope west of the bed of gully nearly all the way to the Seventyfive Mile Creek - Tanner Canyon saddle. A prime canyon view at the saddle is the reward for a couple of miles of notably insecure hiking.

The next three miles present the only reasonably civilized hiking to be found along the entire route. Traversing near the bottom of the Supai, the trail contours around the base of Escalante and Cardenas



Buttes, goes up to cross a small ridge and descends to the top of the Redwall. Walk the rim of the limestone north; watching for the place the trail starts down the Redwall cliff well short of the end of the developing promontory. The view from the Redwall rim across to the Palisades of the Desert is exceptional.

The Redwall descent is nasty—steep and loose. A thin coating of gravel makes some slipping and sliding inevitable and a serious fall is a real possibility, so take your time. The trail contours along the base of the Muav to a neat little saddle at the top of the Tapeats. Ancient faulting has created significant offset within the Tapeats Formation, so a hiker has to effectively walk through the Tapeats twice. The Supergroup (Dox Sandstone) appears about 2 miles above the river. Pay attention in the Dox. The trail chokes down to about a foot wide and traverses across an angle of repose slope of eroding red sandstone that falls away for hundreds of feet. The unrelenting grade of the trail as it drops toward the shoreline puts the final touches on already weary canyon hikers.

### **Important Notes**

The Grand Canyon in general is infamous for summer heat and the Tanner Trail is specifically noted as being **unusually** hot. The wide open nature of this part of the canyon means the summer sun comes up early and sets late. No water means no vegetation, and that means no shade. River runners call this part of the Grand Canyon "Furnace Flats". Avoid this trail during hot weather.

Revised 2/08 MJS



## Thunder River Trail and Deer Creek

The huge outpourings of water at Thunder River, Tapeats Spring, and Deer Spring have attracted people since prehistoric times and today this little corner of Grand Canyon is exceedingly popular among seekers of the remarkable. Like a gift, booming streams of crystalline water emerge from mysterious caves to transform the harsh desert of the inner canyon into absurdly beautiful green oasis replete with the music of water falling into cool pools. Trailhead access can be difficult, sometimes impossible, and the approach march is long, hot and dry, but for those making the journey these destinations represent something close to canyon perfection.

### Updates and Closures

Climbing and/or rappelling in the creek narrows, with or without the use of ropes or other technical equipment is prohibited. This restriction extends within the creek beginning at the southeast end of the rock ledges, known as the "Patio" to the base of Deer Creek Falls. The trail from the river to hiker campsites and points up-canyon remains open. This restriction is necessary for the protection of significant cultural resources.

### Locations/Elevations

Indian Hollow (6250 ft / 1906 m) to Bill Hall Trail Junction (5400 ft / 1647 m):  
Monument Point (7200 ft / 2196 m) to Bill Hall Junction:  
Bill Hall Junction, AY9 (5400 ft / 1647 m) to  
    Surprise Valley Junction, AM9 (3600 ft / 1098 m):  
    Upper Tapeats Camp, AW7 (2400 ft / 732 m):  
    Lower Tapeats, AW8 at Colorado River (1950 ft / 595 m):  
    Deer Creek Campsite, AX7 (2200 ft / 671 m):  
    Deer Creek Falls and Colorado River (1950 ft / 595 m):

### Mileages

5.0 mi (8.0 km)  
2.6 mi (4.2 km)  
4.5 mi ( 7.2 km)  
6.6 mi ( 10.6 km)  
8.8 mi ( 14.2 km)  
6.9 mi ( 11.1 km)  
7.6 mi ( 12.2 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Tapeats Amphitheater and Fishtail Mesa Quads (USGS)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)  
North Kaibab Map, Kaibab National Forest (USDA)

### Trailhead Access

Leave the pavement on Forest Service Road (FSR) 22. FSR 22 can be accessed from either Highway 67 a couple miles north of the Park entrance station or from Highway 89A a few miles east of Fredonia. Take FSR 22 to the junction with FSR 425. There are two potential trailheads: Monument Point (Bill Hall trail) and Indian Hollow (Thunder River trail). For Indian Hollow take FSR 425 to FSR 232, for Monument Point, take FSR 425 to FSR 292 and then 292A (see the road map for the North Kaibab Ranger District, Kaibab National Forest). Winter and Spring access is unreliable. Get a road update from the Fredonia Forest Service field office or the Backcountry Information Center prior to leaving home.

### Trail Description

The historical point of access to the esplanade was via the gentler but longer Thunder River Trail. Now days many opt for the more challenging Bill Hall Trail, which shaves 2.5 mile off the hike. For the first ½ mile, the Bill Hall Trail contours on the rim, actually ascending a bit before entering the canyon on the east side of Monument Point. The trail drops steeply through the Kaibab and Toroweap Formations north of Bridgers Knoll, then contours northwest to the Coconino descent west of Monument Point. Many steep switchbacks provide passage through the Coconino Sandstone and on to a small drainage leading down to the Esplanade and the junction with the trail from Indian Hollow. A short rope may be useful to lower the packs at a short (15 feet) scramble. The descent from Indian Hollow is less demanding. It was originally designed as a stock trail and features a more reasonable gradient but requires extra walking

Take the Thunder River Trail generally south across the Esplanade. The trail crosses expansive slickrock sections as it works around several small drainages, so hikers need to be alert for cairns that mark the route ahead. Try to locate the next cairn before the last one is lost from view. About 2.5 miles of reasonably flat walking brings hikers to the southern edge of the Esplanade, a wonderful canyon view, and the top of a series of steep switchbacks through the Supai and Redwall Formations to the floor of Surprise Valley. The descent is long and rough and the southern exposure makes the entire area infamously hot. Avoid hiking in Surprise Valley after 10 a.m. during warm weather. A large cairn marks a fork in the trail – east (left) to Thunder River and Tapeats Creek, west (right) to Deer Creek.

The trail to Thunder River and Tapeats Creek winds east across the floor of Surprise Valley, crossing shallow drainages and low hills for about a mile before dropping down steep switchbacks to Thunder River. After so many hot, dry miles the cascades of Thunder River seem almost too good to be true and the place demands a stop for rest and relaxation. The designated Upper Tapeats campsite (AW7) is about ¼ mile below the confluence of Thunder River and Tapeats Creek on the west side of the creek. Hikers headed for the Colorado River can cross to the east side of the creek either just below the campsite or about ½ mile downcanyon and continue about two miles to a second creek crossing back to the west side. A short rope may come in handy to lower packs at a little downclimb (8 feet) above the lower crossing. **Snowmelt or heavy rain may make creek crossings impossible.** Spring warming trends and intermittent high creek levels are more likely after mid-March with the peak flows often in May. During periods of high water hikers must use a sketchy, seldom used trail that stays west of the creek all the way to the river. This option is narrow and exposed and should be used only as a last resort, but when Tapeats Creek is in flood it may be the only possibility. Lower Tapeats (AW8) is a designated campsite, please look for the tent symbol sign and camp on the west side of the creek.

Go west at the trail junction in Surprise Valley to reach Deer Creek. The trail becomes rocky, loose and somewhat exposed as it descends into the arm of Deer Creek. Deer Spring is a wonderful respite, enjoy the water, and celebrate that camp is only 20 minutes away. Below camp, Deer Creek slides over a promenade known as The Patio before gracefully plunging into the famous Narrows. Carved from the hard, resistant Tapeats Formation, the Narrows are, in a word, enchanting; though they are closed below the patio, a trail on their west side leads to the Colorado River, affording the opportunity to experience one of Grand Canyon's most spectacular waterfalls.

## Water Sources

Thunder River, Tapeats Creek, Deer Creek, and the Colorado River are permanent water sources. Immediately after wet weather temporary pools might be found in potholes along the Esplanade. Many hikers choose to cache water on the Esplanade or Surprise Valley for the return trip. Caches should be dated, hidden from view, and carried out at the end of the hike.

## Campsites

At-large camping is permitted in the Esplanade (AY9) and Surprise Valley (AM9) Use Areas whereas designated sites exist at Tapeats Creek (AW7) and Deer Creek (AX7) Use Areas. The designated campsites at Deer Creek accommodates two groups and Upper Tapeats accommodates three groups; both have toilets. The designated site at Lower Tapeats (AW8) accommodates two groups and does **not** have a toilet.

## Side Notes

Between Lower Tapeats Camp and Deer Creek Camp, a rough, but established route has created the possibility of a loop hike from Surprise Valley. At the mouth of Tapeats Creek start downriver near the shoreline to the obvious dark, almost black, granite-like obstruction. Follow the cairned route up the steep, decomposing face to the top and traverse the outcrop to the precarious descent back to river level. This passage involves genuine hand and toe climbing and a light 25' rope for the packs will prove invaluable. Continue downstream for about 1/2 mile to a distinct trail marked by cairns that provides access up and away from the river. Follow this to a saddle east of Deer Creek, and then descend to the drainage and the nearby designated campsites.

Bill Hall was a seasonal park ranger on the North Rim who was killed in the line of duty (automobile accident) in 1979.

River trips often stop at Tapeats Creek and Deer Creek so be prepared to encounter large groups of day hikers, especially May through September.

LA, MW 0113





## Tonto Trail: Boucher Trail to South Bass Trail

As canyon hikers gain experience many seek to broaden their wilderness horizons and inevitably thoughts turn to the Tonto Trail west from Boucher Creek to the South Bass Trail. This segment of the Tonto Trail is notorious, regarded by canyon experts as the most difficult and potentially dangerous section of this long transcanyon trail system. Main reason: It is almost 30 rough, unmaintained miles from the permanent water in Boucher Creek to the South Bass trailhead, and throughout that entire stretch there are no reliable water sources near the Tonto Platform level. None. Another thing: Once started, hikers are committed. The complete lack of bail-out routes to the rim between Boucher and South Bass means the only possibility for help is at the end of the trek. Combine these factors with the usual selection of Tonto Trail hazards (such as narrow, eroding trails, numerous passages near the brink of sizable cliffs, and a notable lack of shade) and it all adds up to a serious undertaking.

### Locations/Elevations

	Mileages
Hermit trailhead (6640 ft / 2024 m) via Boucher Trail to Boucher Creek (2760 ft / 841 m):	9 mi (15.2 km)
Boucher Creek, BN9 (2760 ft / 841 m) to Slate Creek, BO9 (3100 ft / 945 m):	5.25 mi (8.4 km)
Slate Creek, BO9 (3100 ft / 945 m) to Turquoise Canyon, BO9 (2950 ft / 899 m):	9.3 mi (15 km)
Turquoise Canyon, BO9 (2950 ft / 899 m) to Ruby Canyon, BP9 (3100 ft / 945 m):	5.8 mi (9.3 km)
Ruby Canyon, BP9 (3100 ft / 945 m) to Serpentine Canyon, BP9 (3100 ft / 945 m):	4.8 mi (7.7 km)
Serpentine Canyon, BP9 (3100 ft / 945 m) to Bass Canyon, BQ9 (3200 ft / 975 m):	3.8 mi (6.1 km)
Serpentine Canyon, BP9 (3100 ft / 945 m) to South Bass trailhead (6646 ft / 2026 m):	9 mi (14.4 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Grand Canyon, Piute Point, Shiva Temple, and Havasupai Point Quads (USGS)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)

### Water Sources

As previously stated, drinking water is the essential issue along the western Tonto Trail. There are no permanent springs, only unreliable, unpredictable, seasonal trickles here and there. Sometimes it's there, sometimes it's not. The Backcountry Information Center occasionally receives and files water reports from hikers or patrol rangers, but the utility of these reports is limited because what was there two weeks ago might not be there today. The only way to obtain accurate water information before departing is to talk with someone who walked the route very recently, but that is easier said than done. Under these circumstances, hikers have no choice but to assume the worst. It is the responsibility of the trip leader to always have a backup plan if anticipated water sources come up dry.

The most critical step you can take to protect yourself and your group is: **Schedule your hike for the cool months**, November through April. This is when water is most likely to be found in the side canyons, and cool weather means hikers can cover the ground most efficiently. Secondly, get water when you can! Fill your water containers, and your belly, every chance you get. Heavy water loads and dry camps are almost inevitable.

Water records indicate (predictably) that best chance for water occurs during cool weather in the larger drainages, Ruby, Turquoise, Sapphire, and Slate. Water is sometimes found above or below Tonto Trail level but you will have to decide if it is worth the time and effort to check. There is relatively straight forward class I access to the Colorado River at the bottom of the South Bass Trail and easy class II via the beds of Serpentine Canyon and the unnamed side canyon east of Serpentine. There are rugged scrambles to the shoreline from the rim of the Inner Gorge west of Turquoise and via the drainage bottom in Ruby and Slate, but all routes to the river are major detours off the Tonto Trail and the latter three require well developed climbing and route finding skills.

### Campsites

The Tonto Trail between Boucher Creek and the South Bass Trail is contained within "at-large" use areas BN9, BO9, BP9, and BQ9. Decent sites can usually be found where the trail crosses the side canyons

and occasionally near the trail between the drainages. As usual, hikers are requested to utilize established sites to minimize impact on a pristine part of the canyon.

### **Trailhead Access**

Access from the east is typically via the Hermit or Boucher Trails. From the west the South Bass Trail is the usual starting point. Please see those route descriptions for further information on reaching the trailheads and accessing the Tonto Trail. Driving directions to South Bass trailhead are also available.

### **Trail Description**

Follow Boucher Creek down to the confluence with Topaz Canyon and look for where the trail climbs the slope west of the drainage bottom. Climb the trail to the top of the Tapeats Formation and start around Marsh Butte, headed for Slate Creek.

Progress west of Boucher is generally straightforward for an experienced Tonto Trail hiker. The Tonto is like a contour line on a topo map. The trail much prefers a consistent elevation, climbing or descending only when there is no other option. The route stays relatively close to the top of the Tapeats so hikers can generally guess about where the trail is likely to be. Crossing the side canyons can be tricky. The trail usually goes more or less directly across the cobble-filled beds of the drainages to the far side before continuing, but not always. Should the trail seem to vanish when crossing a side canyon back up and look up or down the drainage for the proper exit. The trail gets a bit vague when rounding the points between the side canyons, and occasionally seems to disappear altogether. Remember the Tonto Trail is seeking that theoretical line of least resistance between the Tapeats rim and the steepening talus slopes above. Stay on that line and the trail should reappear shortly. To say the Tonto Trail is indirect represents masterful understatement. Map study does not adequately prepare one for all the ins and outs and roundabouts, but given the time, water, and energy, it is mostly just a question of slogging out the miles.

### **Important Notes**

The Tonto Platform provides the only convenient route between the side canyons for almost 40 river miles but it falls far short of traversing the entire length of Grand Canyon. West of the South Bass Trail the Tonto Trail starts pinching down until it disappears entirely at Garnet Canyon. West of Aztec Amphitheater the Esplanade, a new platform system at the top of the Supai Formation, becomes the main playing field for transcanyon walkers.

Revised 2/08 MJS



## Tonto Trail: Bright Angel Trail to Hermit Trail

The dynamic interplay of soft and hard layers of stone created an open benchland at the rim of the Inner Gorge called the Tonto Platform. Easily visible from several South Rim overlooks, the greenish Tonto rocks have eroded into an obvious exception to the striking vertical cliffs that characterize most of Grand Canyon. The Tonto Trail follows this natural transcanyon route for 95 rough, unmaintained miles, from Red Canyon on the east to Garnet Canyon on the west. All of this makes the Tonto Trail unique among Grand Canyon pathways. Most descend from the rim towards the Colorado River, but the Tonto Trail offers passage by foot up and down the canyon, parallel to the course of the river. Because of its length, most hikers approach the Tonto Trail not as a single unit, but rather as a series of installments, breaking the route down into four or five sections defined by rim-to-river trails and the natural lay of the land. A notable lack of reliable water makes most of the Tonto Trail a daunting, possibly dangerous, proposition, but the section between Bright Angel Trail and the Hermit Trail is blessed with three water sources hikers can count on. As a result, this segment of the Tonto Trail offers a degree of civility not found elsewhere along the trail, and it is here that most hikers get their first exposure to the unique nature of this singular transcanyon route.

### Locations/Elevations

Bright Angel trailhead (6860 ft / 2091 m) to Indian Garden, CIG (3800 ft / 1160 m):	4.8 mi (7.7 km)
Indian Garden (3800 ft / 1160 m) to Horn Creek, BL4 (3550 ft / 1082 m):	2.5 mi (4 km)
Horn Creek, BL4 (3550 ft / 1082 m) to Salt Creek, BL5 (3550 ft / 1082 m):	4.8 mi (7.7 km)
Salt Creek, BL5 (3550 ft / 1082 m) to Cedar Spring, BL6 (3329 ft / 1015 m)	2.1 mi (3.4 km)
Cedar Spring, BL6 (3329 ft / 1082 m) to Monument Creek, BL7 (2995 ft / 913 m)	1.3 mi (2.1 km)
Monument Creek, BL7 (2995 ft / 913 m) to Hermit trailhead:	9.3 mi (15.0 km)
Monument Creek, BL7 (2995 ft / 913 m) to Hermit Creek, BM7 (2900 ft / 884 m):	3.5 mi (5.6 km)
Bright Angel trailhead to Hermit trailhead (6700 ft / 2043 m):	24.8 mi (39.9 km)

### Mileages

### Maps

7.5 Minute Grand Canyon Quad (USGS)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Grand Canyon National Park (National Geographic)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)

### Water Sources

Purified water is available at Indian Garden. Occasionally water can be found in Horn and Salt Creeks, but neither is recommended. Horn Creek is radioactive and Salt Creek highly mineralized. Cedar Spring is unreliable and can be difficult to collect. Good water can always be obtained at Monument Creek at or below the Tonto Trail crossing. Hermit Creek is also reliable, but requires a one mile detour west from the Hermit Trail junction. The Colorado River can be accessed at the mouth of Monument or Hermit Creeks. With the exception of the treated water from Indian Garden, all water must be purified.

### Campsites

Increasing popularity has created a need for a system of designated campsites along the Tonto Trail between Indian Garden and Hermit Creek. These designated campsites are the only legal places to camp within this area. Campsites are located at Indian Garden Campground (CIG), Horn Creek (BL4) toilet, Salt Creek (BL5) toilet, Cedar Spring (BL6) no toilet, Monument Creek (BL7) toilet, Granite Rapids (BL8) no toilet, Hermit Creek (BM7) toilet, and Hermit Rapids (BM8) no toilet.

### Trailhead Access

See the Bright Angel and Hermit Trail descriptions for access information to this section of the Tonto Trail.

### Trail Description

Walk down the Bright Angel Trail to Indian Garden and head west on the Tonto Trail. The Plateau Point spur diverges north about 3/4 miles beyond Indian Garden. Plateau Point directly overlooks the Colorado



River and is perhaps the best single viewpoint within the Bright Angel Trail system. If time and energy allow it is a worthwhile detour.

Meanwhile, the Tonto Trail continues west toward Horn Creek. The Tonto Trail could be compared to a contour line on a topo map. The trail much prefers to maintain a consistent elevation, gaining or losing height only when there is no other option. It can seem infuriatingly indirect but, when evaluated with benefit of hindsight, it almost always represents the line of least resistance.

There is water in the bed of Horn Creek about half the time, but unfortunately it is radioactive so don't drink it unless death by thirst is the only other option. The source of the radioactivity is a deposit of high quality uranium contained within a collapsed cave system geologists call a breccia pipe. The odd yellowish stain on the rocks near the rim at the head of Horn Creek testifies to the presence of unusual minerals and a claim predating the park allowed the deposit to be actively mined as late as 1969. Some of the individual loads of ore that were taken from the Orphan Mine were among the highest grade uranium ever recorded from a North American mine. Percolating ground water picks up traces of the radioactivity and carries it to the surface in the bed of Horn Creek.

A small ridge north of Dana Butte forces the Tonto Trail up for a short distance, but soon the path resumes its predictable progression toward Salt Creek. The designated campsite at Salt Creek is located directly upon one of the most common types of archaeological sites in Grand Canyon. Archaeologists call them mesquite pits or roasting pits and they represent the remains of slow cooking mechanisms employed by native people to prepare the hearts of agave plants. The plants were trimmed down to a fibrous core, buried and roasted. When the cooking was complete the people broke open the pile of stones to retrieve the food, thus creating a distinctive, crater-like circle of stones. Mesquite pits are found throughout Grand Canyon, sometimes in the most unexpected of places.

The trail wanders west, past the little seep at Cedar Spring, and on to Monument Creek. Monument is the largest of the drainages between the Bright Angel and Hermit Trails, and the only one that allows passage through the Vishnu Formation to the Colorado River. Granite Rapids at the mouth of Monument is steep and impressive. The view upriver from the beach at Granite Rapids is a classic canyon scene that has attracted photographers since the days of the Kolb brothers.

The Tonto Trail winds on, turning the corner north of Cope Butte. Soon after entering the Hermit Creek drainage watch for the Hermit Trail junction west of Cope Butte. The intersection is marked with a sign and large cairn. Follow the Hermit Trail to the rim or continue along the Tonto Trail to the Hermit Creek campsite.

## **Important Notes**

The Tonto Trail is a rough, unmaintained wilderness route. Washouts and narrow, eroding sections are common. Hikers must be prepared, mentally and physically, to deal with the harsh realities of inner canyon hiking outside the cross-canyon corridor.

The army surplus food storage boxes at Monument Creek (BL7) and Hermit Creek (BM7) were removed. Bring some type of animal-proof food container to protect your food.

The entrance to cave systems can occasionally be seen in the cliffs above the Tonto Trail. These inaccessible caves in the upper part of the Redwall Limestone have provided nesting sites for California Condors for thousands of years before they disappeared from Arizona skies in 1924. Captive breeding has produced sufficient numbers of birds to support re-introduction to the wild, and today the Grand Canyon hosts 30 or so of these magnificent animals. New nesting pairs have adopted the same caves used by past generations of condors, so hikers along the Tonto Trail are occasionally treated to a sight some experts predicted would never again be seen: a wild, free-flying California Condor riding the thermals of Grand Canyon.

Revised 03/09 MJS



## Tonto Trail: Grandview Trail to South Kaibab Trail

The Tonto Trail gently rolls in and out of seemingly innumerable drainages along its 95 mile length from Hance Rapid to Garnet Canyon. Deep inside the canyon, the distinctive Tonto Platform towers 1200 vertical feet above the level of the river, but a series of springs makes it possible to walk the length of this trail roughly parallel to the river. Because it is so long, it is not typically done in one through hike. The trek along the Tonto Trail between the Grandview and South Kaibab Trails offers experienced backpackers an excellent introduction to the magic of the Grand Canyon, with magnificent sweeping views, quiet desert streams, and a chance for solitude in a most wild and beautiful place. (This hike is very exposed to the sun, and definitely not recommended from May to September).

### Locations/Elevations

Grandview Point (7400 ft / 2256 m) to Cottonwood (3690 ft / 1125 m):  
Cottonwood (3690 ft / 1125 m) to Grapevine (3550 ft / 1082 m):  
Grapevine (3550 ft / 1082 m) to Lone Tree Canyon (3680 ft / 1122 m):  
Lone Tree (3680 ft / 1122 m) to Cremation (3650 ft / 1113 m):  
Cremation (3650 ft / 1113 m) to South Kaibab trailhead (7200 ft / 2135 m):  
Grandview Point (7400 ft / 2256 m) to South Kaibab trailhead (7200 ft / 2135 m):

### Mileages

4.5 mi (7.2 km)  
5.5 mi (8.8 km)  
8.7 mi (14 km)  
3.5 mi (5.6 km)  
6.5 mi (10.4 km)  
28.7 mi (46 km)

### Maps

7.5 Minute Grandview Point, Cape Royal, and Phantom Ranch Quads (USGS)  
Trails Illustrated Map, Map 261 or 262 (2009) (National Geographic)  
Sky Terrain Trails Map, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Grand Canyon (Sky Terrain)

### We Need Your Help

The transition from corridor hiking to wilderness hiking is abrupt as one leaves the South Kaibab Trail and enters the Cremation Use Area (BJ9). Extra care and planning is warranted when heading into this area, as there is limited shade, limited camps, and no reliable water. Additionally, the boundary delineating where hikers are allowed to camp (located on page 2) within the Cremation Use Area was changed in the spring of 2014, please take this into account and realize that commercial maps have yet to be updated.

### Trailhead Access

To start this section of the Tonto Trail from the east, walk the Grandview Trail to Horseshoe Mesa (the parking lot closest to Grandview Point is day use only; the overnight lot is located just beyond the day use lot). Trails through the Redwall on the west and north flanks of Horseshoe Mesa provide ways to reach the bed of Cottonwood and the Tonto Trail. Western access is from the Tip-off, five miles down the South Kaibab Trail.

### Trail Description

The Tonto Trail generally follows the path of least resistance as it meanders, sometimes very deeply, back into drainages. It is generally not cairned, but if you lose the trail, as is inevitable, you'll find it again if you know your overall direction, grateful to be back after having been shredded by the merciless blackbrush, which forms the dominant plant cover on the Tonto platform.

The Tonto Trail leaves the bed of Cottonwood near the top of the Tapeats Formation, contours around the west arm, and heads west toward Grapevine. Entering Grapevine from the east involves a short section of narrow, eroding trail with significant exposure. The views down into the lower reaches of Grapevine are wonderful, but watch your step. Grapevine is, by far, the largest and most complex side canyon between the Grandview and the South Kaibab Trails. Looking across the mouth of the drainage from the Tonto Trail the distance seems short, but plan on at least 2-3 hours of steady hiking to cross. The small unnamed drainages between Grapevine and Boulder and Boulder and Lone Tree will slow progress, and a little confusion on the west side of Lone Tree is normal, but generally speaking the route between Grapevine and Cremation is straightforward.

Cremation is deceptive because it traverses the Grandview/Cremation monocline. This faulting creates significantly more elevation change than previously encountered along the route, which can be especially tough because of the total lack of water. There is also no river access at Cremation Canyon.

## Water Sources

The Tonto Trail is notorious for its dearth of reliable water sources, and this section is no exception.

**Cottonwood (BG9):** Cool weather: Southern spring is usually reliable. Northern Spring and O'Neill Spring are unreliable at best. Hot weather: May be dry.

**Grapevine (BH9):** Cool weather: Water in the east arm at the Tonto Trail crossing and from the spring on the east side of the drainage. Hot weather: Water normally available in the east arm above or below Tonto Platform level (but sometimes dry at the Tonto Trail) and usually a small trickle from the spring on the east side of the drainage. Further downcanyon water flows perennially.

**Boulder (BH9):** Cool weather: Dry at the Tonto Trail crossing. Small amounts are occasionally found above Tonto Platform level. Water may also be found downstream about 20 minutes. Water is often reported as salty and unpalatable. Hot weather: Dry.

**Lone Tree (BJ9):** Cool weather: Small amounts at or below Tonto Trail crossing (the most reliable water source is a half hour walk downstream of the Tonto crossing near a lone cottonwood tree). Hot weather: Dry.

**Cremation (BJ9):** Dry all year. Occasional potholes in the Tapeats (down the west arm of the drainage).

**Emergency Water Sources:** Page Spring and Hance Creek (east of Horseshoe Mesa), Burro Spring and Pipe Creek (west of the Tip-off) and the Colorado River at the bottom of the Kaibab Trail. **River access in each of the side canyon's is not realistic with some like Cremation plunging 100 or more feet prior to reaching the Colorado River.**

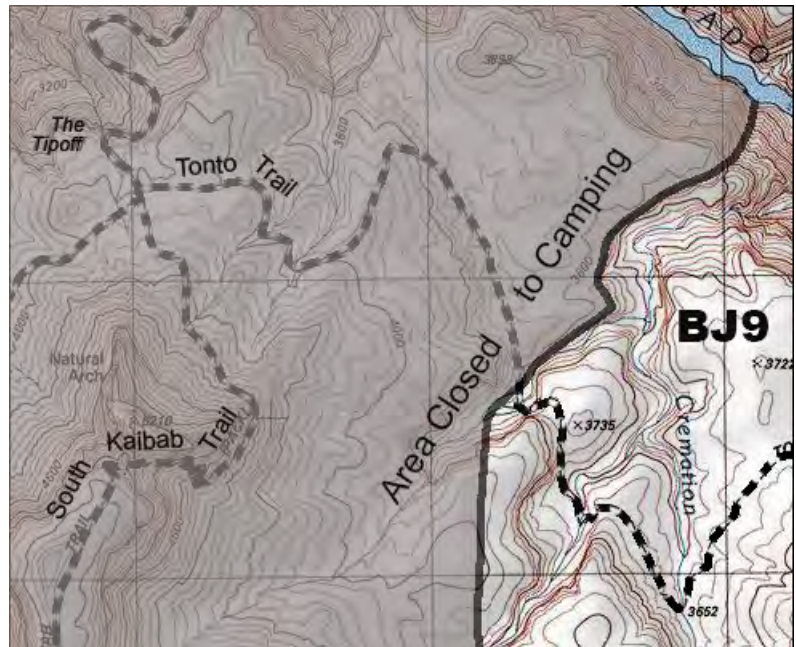
## Campsites

"At-large" camping is allowed between Cottonwood drainage and Cremation drainage. Campsites are located where the Tonto Trail crosses the drainages (often better shade and access to seasonal water) and also 1 to 2 miles on either side of the drainages, out on the Tonto Platform (more sun- so nice winter camps).

In spring of 2014, the western boundary of the Cremation Use Area (BJ9) was adjusted in order to protect sensitive resources. Camping is no longer allowed west of the west arm of Cremation drainage. The area closed to camping is shaded grey on the map.

## Important Notes

You must pack out all toilet paper. Bury human waste, and go as far away from people and water as possible. Despite the dry, hostile nature of this area, the archaeological record shows that it has been used for thousands of years. If you should find such sites, please leave everything in place, as you found it, and take only pictures.



Revised Feb 2014



## Tuckup Trail/Route

The Tuckup area is a remote, vast expanse of labyrinthine gorges, sandstone slickrock, and fascinating history. However, the unique combination of heat, unreliable water sources, and inaccessibility, makes this one of the most challenging and least visited of Grand Canyon's named trails. In summer the sun and sandstone would cook even the hardiest desert creature, and winter access may be impossible due to heavy snow or mud. Spring or fall; after a rain is the best time to go, if you can get your vehicle out there. The easiest way to access this area is on the Tuweep road, just north of the Tuweep Overlook. The road descends into the Esplanade layer within the canyon, so it's one of the few Grand Canyon hikes that begins without a steep descent. This beginning is deceptively easy, and the terrain soon necessitates a seemingly endless variety of choices for navigation. There are numerous possibilities for trips in this area; this description gives information on main access points going west to east. The eastern portion really has no trails, and excellent route finding skills are essential.

### Locations/Elevations

	Mileages
West end of Tuckup: (4000 ft / 1219 m) to Willow Spring:	20 miles
Willow Spring to (4000 ft / 1219 m) to Cottonwood Spring: (4000 ft / 1219 m)	8 Miles
Cottonwood Spring: (4000 ft / 1219 m) to Schmutz Trailhead: (5840 ft / 1780 m)	4 miles
Schmutz Trailhead: (4000 ft / 1219 m) to Cork Spring: (4000 ft / 1219 m)	17 miles
Cork Spring: (4000 ft / 1219 m) to Hotel Spring: (4000 ft / 1219 m)	8 miles
Hotel Spring (4400 feet ) to 150 canyon trailhead: (5600 ft / 1706 m)	3 miles

**\*Mileages are very difficult/impossible to gage, because the terrain is so convoluted, and routes vary. Total distance east to west is around 60 miles.**

### Maps

7.5 Minute Tuckup Canyon, National Canyon, Kanab Point, Mt. Trumbull Quads (USGS)

### Water Sources:

Willow and Cottonwood Springs are unpalatable, mineralized, and will likely cause short-term gastrointestinal problems. Cork, Hotel, Buckhorn, and Little Joe Springs are reliable. Water can be found at the top of the Redwall in Tuckup Canyon and usually at the top of the Redwall in 150 Mile. Pothole water is often preferable, which reinforces the need to do this hike when it's cool, and preferably after a rain.

### Campsites:

There are abundant campsites on the sandstone slickrock throughout the area. Do not camp on cryptobiotic soil.

### Trailhead Access:

BLM Road 109 (The Sunshine Road) is the primary access road to Tuweep and all destinations on the Kanab Plateau. To reach the western terminus of the Tuckup Trail follow Road 109 until 4.7 miles south of the Tuweep Ranger Stations, turn left. To reach the Schmutz Spring trailhead (Tuckup Canyon), 150 Mile trailhead, Kanab Point or SB Point then turn left from Road 109 at June Tank. This is about midway between H389 and Tuweep Campground. The National Park Service does not maintain these roads; conditions are significantly worse on park service land. Check with the Fredonia Ranger Station for road conditions at 928-643-7395.

### Trail Description:

Most people access the canyon from just north of the Tuweep Campground. Since the Tuweep road descends to the Esplanade layer, the trail begins deceptively easily as three miles of winding dirt road. At the road's end, there is a cairned trail through the blackbrush. Once you reach the vast Esplanade bench into Cove Canyon, the overall aim is to stay high on the slickrock. It's pretty well marked through this



area, but the farther you are from the Tuweep area, the more faint the trail becomes. It is possible to cut off time by going up and over the high mesa protruding below Big Point.

The first perennial water source in this area is Willow Spring, in Fern Glen Canyon. The water here is very poor quality, with a high mineral content, and has caused gastrointestinal problems for many hikers. There is a route to the river in Stairway, and also a route out to the rim from Willow Spring. The top of the Redwall in Stairway requires some careful route finding, and is a route for experienced off trail canyon hikers. If possible, it is preferable to find pothole water both as an alternative to both Willow and Cottonwood Spring, which is also highly mineralized. Ranchers from the Arizona Strip have a long history of grazing this area. Feral cattle roamed the esplanade for many years until the National Park Service removed the last vestige of a bygone era, setting the stage for a slow ecosystem recovery.

Look for an abandoned mine shaft on the north side of Cottonwood Creek. This was a copper claim dating to 1907. There is a loop trail around the Dome, and pockets of water can be found in this area. The trail fades in and out north of Cottonwood, but the trail up to the rim near the head of Tuckup Canyon is very distinct. Crinoid fossils are abundant near the historic fence that crosses the trail near the midway point up.

Hikers often miss Schmutz Spring because of its odd location. At the northwest end of Tuckup Canyon, the trail veers northwest of the basalt narrows; look for the spring on a cutbank in the arroyo to the northwest. It's really more of a minor seep that was dynamited open by some enterprising cowboy. It is possible to walk down Tuckup Canyon to the river, but there are several climbs which involve significant exposure.

The route continues on the Esplanade in the eastern arm of Tuckup Canyon. Again, the farther you walk away from the established trailhead, the fewer trails and cairns you'll find. After the large side drainage flowing east/west into Tuckup, there is no trail at all, and the terrain becomes significantly more unforgiving, as you must descend and re-ascend a seemingly endless maze of arroyos. Cork Spring is reliable, but the access to the spring in the eastern arm is blocked by a huge pouroff, which can be bypassed by contouring into the next drainage and downclimbing to the right. 'The Cork' is a distinct butte with a solitary cap of basalt. The terrain is very open through this area, and there are no visible signs of volcanism for many miles from this feature.

Hotel Spring is reliable, and there are abundant remnants of old cowboy activity throughout the area. The route out to the rim at Buckhorn Spring in Hundred and Fifty Mile Canyon (150 Mile Canyon) has a few cairns, and some vestigial trail remains, but is mostly a scramble through a ravine in the Coconino. Up from the Coconino, follow the historic fence line and then traverse west. Once around the ridgeline, head up and out on a faint trail in the small ravine west of the historic corral.

There is a route down 150 Mile Canyon to the Colorado River at Upset Rapid, but it requires several rappels, possible swimming and excellent canyoneering skills. Cowboys referred to the drainage as 'S.O.B' canyon, but according to longtime Tuweep ranger John Riffey, prudish cartographers changed it to 150 Mile Canyon.

## Important Notes

Water availability and quality is always a concern in this area, trip reports are greatly appreciated. You may send information to [grca\\_bic@nps.gov](mailto:grca_bic@nps.gov) or call 928-638-7875.

Please remember to travel and camp on durable surfaces. Cryptobiotic soil is an important, yet fragile, part of the ecosystem. Make every effort not to 'bust the crust'. Plants, especially grasses, are more resilient than these soils. Minimize impact by camping on slickrock.

You may encounter evidence of human activity going back thousands of years. Protect the canyon's valuable archaeological resources by leaving what you find. Report any abuse of this resource to park dispatch at 928-638-7805.

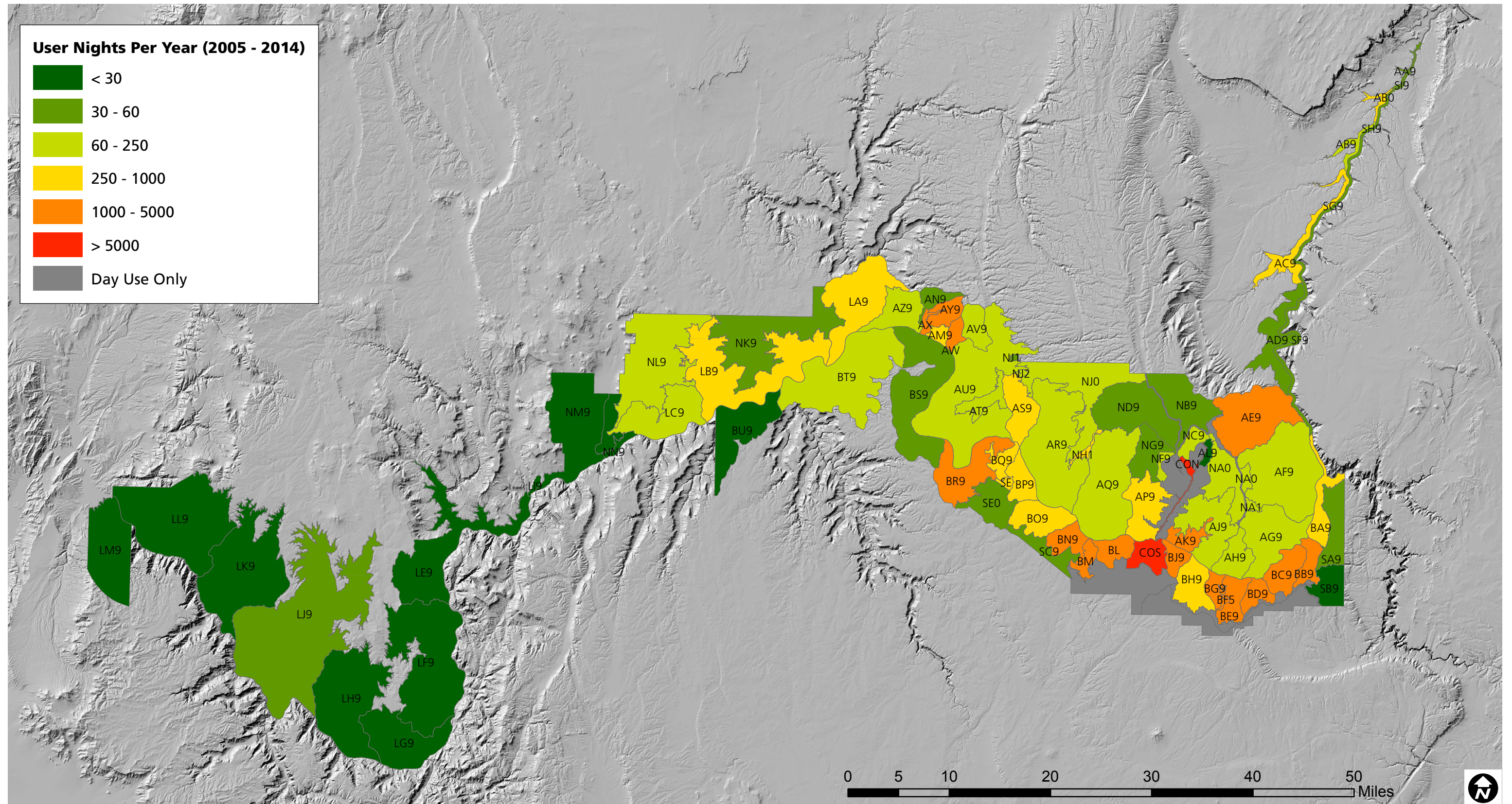
Original 4/08 DR





# Overnight Backcountry Use

Source: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=65&projectID=22633&documentID=69878>





# Grand Canyon Backcountry Information Center



## **2018 Backcountry and River Use Statistics**

Source: [https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/upload/Backcountry\\_and\\_River\\_Use\\_Statistics\\_2018.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/upload/Backcountry_and_River_Use_Statistics_2018.pdf)

**-by Steve Sullivan**

## Most Common Backcountry Itineraries in 2018

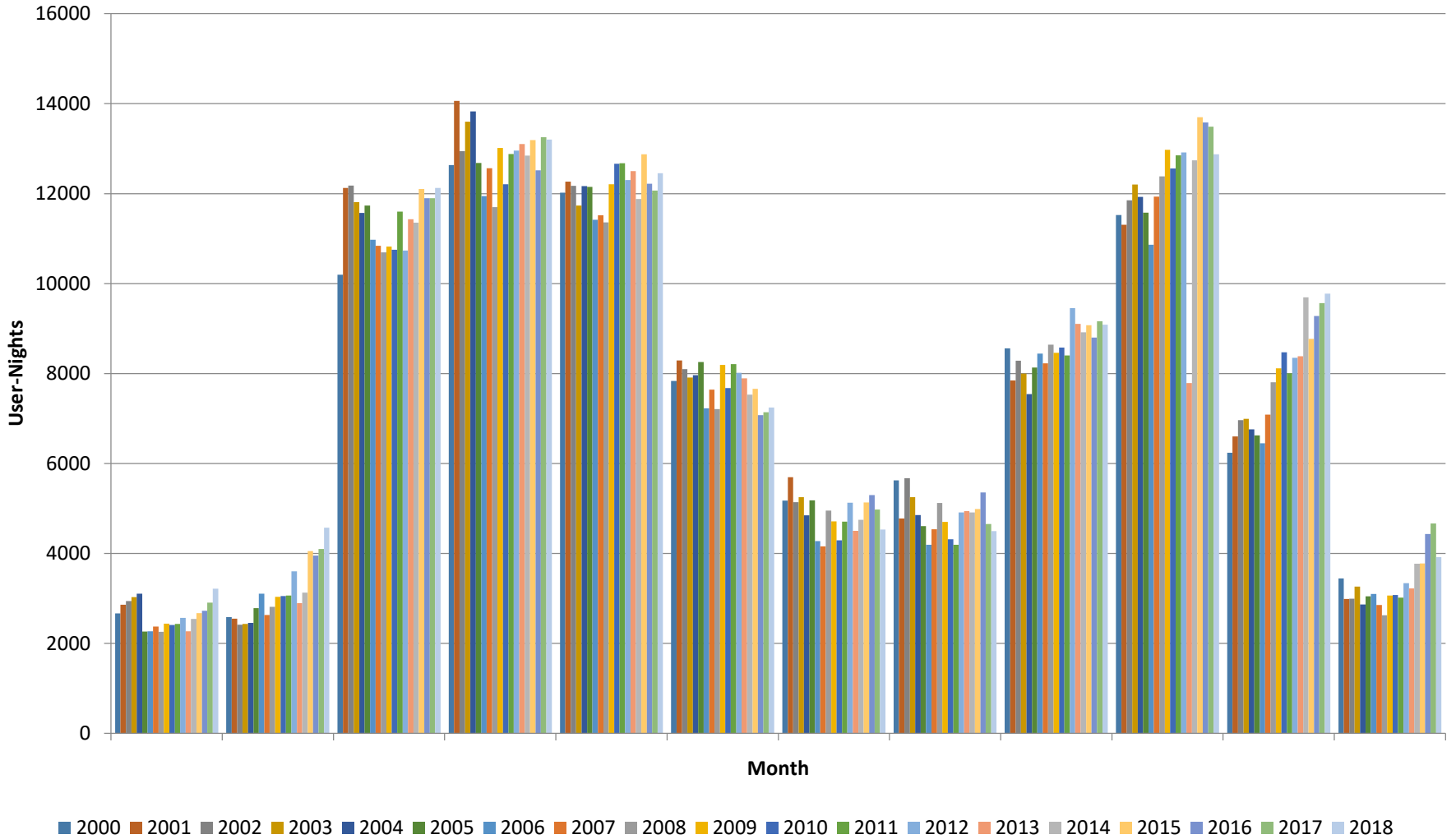
Permits	Itinerary
2585	CBG,OUT,
1039	CBG,CIG,OUT,
900	CBG,CBG,OUT,
750	CIG,OUT,
397	CBG,CBG,CIG,OUT,
383	CCG,CBG,CIG,OUT,
368	TCG,OUT,
245	CCG,OUT,
231	CCG,CBG,OUT,
208	CIG,CIG,OUT,
168	CCG,CCG,OUT,
166	TCG,TCG,OUT,
165	CBG,CCG,OUT,
116	BF5,OUT,
111	NH1,OUT,
87	CIG,CBG,OUT,
81	CBG,CCG,CCG,CBG,OUT,
71	BF5,BF5,OUT,
66	BM7,BM7,OUT,
65	CCG,CBG,CBG,CIG,OUT,

Code	Refers To
CBG	Bright Angel Campground
CIG	Indian Garden Campground
CCG	Cottonwood Campground
TCG	Tuweep Campground
BF5	Horseshoe Mesa Campsites
NH1	Point Sublime
BM7	Hermit Creek Campsites
OUT	Hike Out Day



# Backcountry Use Trends, 2000-2018

## Corridor + Non-Corridor



## Use Area Details for 2018

Use Area	User-nights	Group-nights	People*	Permits*	First-nights	Last-nights	Stock	Stock-nights
AA9	33	15	29	12	10	5	0	0
AB0	170	42	113	28	20	21	0	0
AB9	55	17	37	11	5	5	0	0
AC9	393	94	192	48	40	42	0	0
AD9	42	19	21	9	3	3	0	0
AE9	665	233	272	103	87	67	0	0
AF9	310	116	125	54	14	5	0	0
AG9	149	63	91	36	11	10	0	0
AH9	86	32	57	21	2	1	0	0
AJ9	107	44	58	23	12	10	0	0
AK9	1310	471	747	275	96	84	0	0
AM9	588	139	492	110	46	41	0	0
AN9	33	11	32	10	5	5	0	0
AP9	325	116	140	53	33	29	0	0
AQ9	106	67	44	24	11	7	0	0
AR9	287	56	73	22	9	10	0	0
AS9	447	164	171	61	30	35	0	0
AT9	113	42	69	27	16	18	0	0
AU9	85	50	48	26	5	4	0	0
AV9	182	38	121	28	5	3	0	0
AW7	1010	272	766	210	92	38	0	0
AW8	537	123	494	113	5	4	0	0
AX7	1067	262	880	218	42	42	0	0
AY9	1500	331	1031	230	129	198	0	0
AZ9	184	56	111	37	11	13	0	0
BA9	1010	345	574	208	78	43	0	0
BB9	2178	679	1618	503	420	229	0	0
BC9	1633	450	1168	353	43	29	0	0

Use Area	User-nights	Group-nights	People*	Permits*	First-nights	Last-nights	Stock	Stock-nights
BD9	1727	484	1427	414	132	150	0	0
BE9	1728	482	1541	430	128	193	0	0
BF5	2035	601	1663	499	286	409	0	0
BG9	1549	477	1279	404	217	168	0	0
BH9	861	312	691	260	48	23	0	0
BJ9	1089	392	945	348	113	176	0	0
BL4	824	234	748	219	95	109	0	0
BL5	331	121	324	118	24	34	0	0
BL6	169	75	164	74	23	22	0	0
BL7	2298	680	1937	571	267	185	0	0
BL8	1057	311	975	284	84	71	0	0
BM7	2748	761	2269	631	394	366	0	0
BM8	993	286	896	261	137	113	0	0
BN9	1502	483	901	297	171	169	0	0
BO9	267	107	172	68	5	8	0	0
BP9	192	75	148	57	14	5	0	0
BQ9	775	233	522	160	68	110	0	0
BR9	975	315	308	103	53	35	0	0
BS9	11	11	4	4	2	1	0	0
BT9	148	41	53	15	4	2	0	0
BU9	10	5	2	1	0	1	0	0
CBG	30212	9458	22677	7259	5790	4329	46	63
CCG	8778	2828	7018	2200	1402	796	10	16
CIG	14886	4564	13395	4102	1382	3728	1	6
GLC	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
LA9	744	199	247	76	35	46	0	0
LB9	473	150	200	57	33	42	0	0
LC9	253	72	118	32	13	23	0	0

Use Area	User-nights	Group-nights	People*	Permits*	First-nights	Last-nights	Stock	Stock-nights
LE9	46	18	25	8	5	6	0	0
LF9	14	7	6	3	0	2	0	0
LG9	12	4	6	2	1	0	0	0
LH9	6	2	6	2	0	0	0	0
LI9	35	13	15	6	4	4	0	0
LJ9	85	41	20	9	7	3	0	0
LK9	56	22	21	9	3	6	0	0
LL9	21	11	12	6	2	6	0	0
LM9	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
NA0	61	35	27	16	13	13	0	0
NA1	192	89	179	83	73	71	0	0
NB9	22	13	22	13	4	9	0	0
NC9	27	11	21	9	6	5	0	0
NCG	339	161	322	152	52	50	0	0
ND9	43	22	41	21	6	11	0	0
NF9	241	101	227	93	82	74	0	0
NG9	21	12	19	11	5	6	0	0
NH1	614	238	491	192	172	166	0	0
NJ0	37	20	29	17	4	5	0	0
NJ1	148	51	125	43	35	36	0	0
NJ2	208	86	157	66	45	38	0	0
NK9	156	60	106	35	24	23	0	0
NL9	97	36	73	26	25	8	0	0
NM9	15	6	8	3	3	2	0	0
NN9	17	6	15	5	2	5	0	0
NRH	286	61	80	18	18	18	86	307
SA9	59	30	39	20	18	20	0	0
SB9	6	4	6	4	4	4	0	0



Use Area	User-nights	Group-nights	People*	Permits*	First-nights	Last-nights	Stock	Stock-nights
SC9	11	6	7	4	4	4	0	0
SE0	7	5	5	3	3	1	0	0
SE1	84	28	67	24	23	17	0	0
SE2	185	60	136	45	43	30	0	0
SE3	139	49	118	43	39	12	0	0
SF9	66	22	38	12	8	11	0	0
SG9	62	15	45	11	10	8	0	0
SH9	17	3	10	2	2	2	0	0
TCG	2800	981	1776	640	619	613	0	0
XXX	1644	577	1339	456	192	147	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>97477</b>	<b>31012</b>	<b>75839</b>	<b>23911</b>	<b>13758</b>	<b>13752</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>392</b>