

GRAND CANYON RIVER COURTESY

Helpful Tips For All River Voyagers

Respecting and Advocating for Everyone's Grand Canyon Boating Experience

Rafting through the iconic Grand Canyon landscape is a unique and transformative experience. However, the river corridor can be a very busy place, so let's work together to create a positive boating atmosphere for all river voyagers! The concept of keeping the Canyon *grand* and protecting the river experience is everyone's responsibility.

The goals of this flyer are:

- *Provide helpful tips grounded in river courtesy that will help reduce on-river conflicts, congestion, and risk.*
- *Increase understanding and compliance by clarifying the reasons behind some of the important NPS regulations so that all boaters can enjoy the same incredible experience we expect ourselves.*
- *Emphasize the importance of respect, communication, safety, stewardship, good planning, and flexibility as necessary components for all successful river trips.*

Everyone deserves the trip of a lifetime!
Let's dive in....

This brochure is a collaboration between

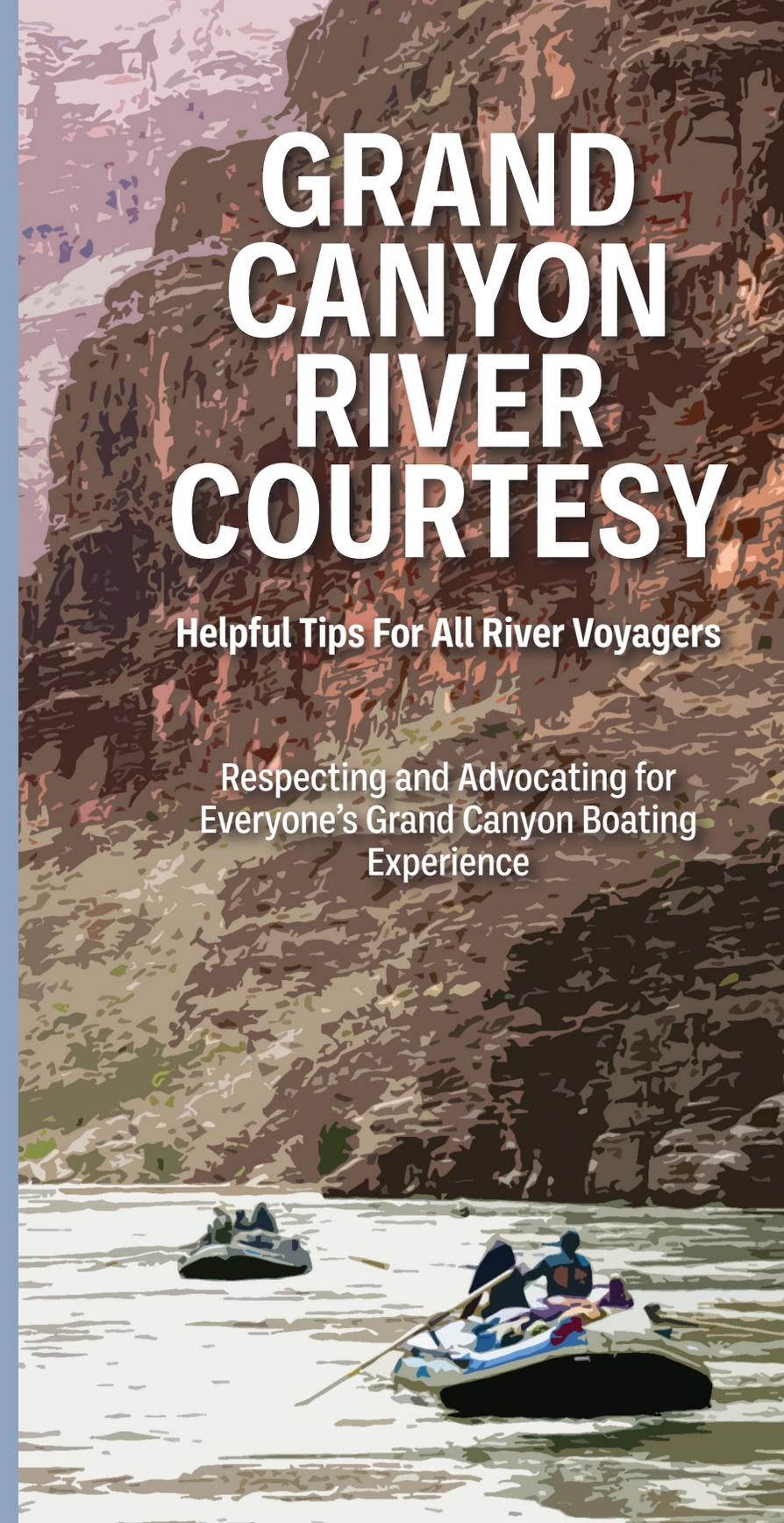


Grand Canyon River Guides
PO Box 1934
Flagstaff, AZ 86002-1934
928-773-1075
www.gcrg.org
info@gcrg.org



Grand Canyon Private Boaters
Association
P.O. Box 17727
Munds Park, AZ 86017
<https://newgcpba.org>
gcpbamail@gmail.com

Please contact us with any comments, suggestions, or to learn more about our organizations.



Action Guide for Preservation

For a better understanding of park resources, values, regulations, and techniques for preserving the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River with minimal impact, please check out the excellent **NPS Action Guide for Preservation**. NPS rangers, resource specialists, tribal members, and fellow boaters contributed to this comprehensive guide. Just scan this QR Code:



Exchange Zones

Nobody wants to get a ticket from a park ranger! Unless you're doing an exchange, please do not camp in the Phantom and Whitmore exchange zones:

Phantom Exchange Zone: All camps between River Mile 77.5 (below Hance Rapid) and River Mile 89.8 (below Pipe Creek Rapid) are reserved for trips hiking early the next morning from Phantom or Pipe Creek, from March thru October. The long and arduous hike to the rim necessitates an early start, especially in the summer when temps can be extreme!

Whitmore Exchange Zone: All camps between River Mile 185 – River Mile 187.5 are restricted to trips exchanging at Whitmore Wash or the Whitmore Helipad.

Group Size/Camp Size

Small groups camping at large camps is problematic throughout the river corridor, negatively affecting the river experience by exacerbating crowding and congestion. For example, 6 people camping at Nevills Camp (76.1L), is too few for this big camp that would be needed by much larger trips! Thinking about (and being respectful of) what groups come behind you is really important too. Take a copy of the launch calendar with you, and pay close attention to camp size designations in the River Guide you're using when you plan your itinerary. Please be open, flexible, and respectful, communicate with others, and *always have a Plan B*. Doing so makes things better for everyone!

Layovers

If you have time, taking a layover day during your trip is simply the best! Again, please be very mindful of group/camp size when you make your plans. Laying over with a small group at a big camp really makes things tough for other boaters. Also, note that layovers at any camp within the Phantom Ranch Exchange Zone (between RM 77.5 to 89.8) are strictly prohibited.

Stay Together

Please keep your trip together! Nobody wants to get a ticket, so do not split your trip to grab a camp ahead of other groups, or send faster boats downstream to be the first ones at an attraction site. This important regulation (and citable offense) is grounded in respect for other river users and safety considerations as well.

Navigating Congestion on the River

Some of the most gorgeous places on earth are found at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, and everyone wants to experience them! This is especially true for the period starting April 1 through Sept 15, which is commercial motorized season. Consequently, it can be very challenging to find places to camp above Elves Chasm, Nankoweap, near Tapeats Creek and Deer Creek, and above and below Havasu Creek. Additionally, some attraction sites such as North Canyon, Saddle, Blacktail, and Matkatamiba do not accommodate multiple groups well, and parking at Havasu can be especially tough on a busy day.

Throughout your river trip you can expect to encounter congestion bottlenecks not just near attraction sites, but also near popular campsites and exchange zones. You cannot easily predict where other trips might be but you can prepare as though there are groups ahead or shortly behind you on any given day. Here are some ways we can prepare for congested bottleneck zones:

- It is always best to stay adaptable and have a plan A through plan D.
- Prepare to switch things up; you may not get every camp or see every side canyon on your bucket list, but keeping a flexible mindset may allow you the opportunity to discover new camps or side canyons you never would have anticipated!
- Treat all stops as though another group may be pulling in next to your group.
- Stay flexible when camping in zones that have higher use. There is a high likelihood that if you are looking to camp at places like Nankoweap, Carbon Creek, Granite, Bass Camp, and Stone Creek to name a few, there are other groups planning for these camps as well.

Parking

When parking at places with very little or no shoreline, park as though there are other trips coming behind you. Park only a couple boats on the shoreline and stack the rest of your group's boats off of them to leave shoreline for those groups coming after you.

Help to shuffle boats if parking needs are not being met.

Make parking plans with other groups that you know are going to the same places around the same time as your group. This is most important at places with minimal shoreline parking, for example Elves Chasm, Deer Creek, Matkatamiba, and Havasu.

Communication is the key!

Talking and sharing plans with other trips makes everyone's trip run smoother. The first chance to do this is at the launch pad at Lees Ferry. Communicate where you'd like to camp. Communicate where you're planning on hiking. Communicate where you're planning layovers. Let's work with others and be flexible. **COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE!**

Risk Awareness

Recreating in a wilderness environment carries inherent risk, and monsoon season in Grand Canyon is no joke! Safety is everyone's responsibility in the backcountry of Grand Canyon National Park.

In 2024, the USGS together with National Weather Service, Coconino County Emergency Management and the National Park Service developed and launched a new alert communication method called the Grand Canyon River Alerts System for your SPOT, Garmin, or other satellite-based messaging devices. This system sends timely communication of hazards to individuals in Grand Canyon on a range of critical incidents such as: flash floods, boating hazards, missing persons, and out-of-the-norm dam-related events. However, please be aware that this new communication tool is no substitute for constant situational awareness and personal responsibility for safety and preparedness during your river trip. For more info, use this QR code:



Important Notes:

- Subscribe and ensure that you receive the subscription confirmation message for the Grand Canyon River Alerts System **BEFORE** you get to Lees Ferry to ensure that you receive any alerts.
- Plan ahead, be aware, and self-rescue before involving others. Be safe out there and have a great trip, everybody!