

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Canyon needs protections

Hamburg, Stacey. "Canyon needs protections." Editorial. The Arizona Republic 12 Jan. 2008.

<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/opinions/articles/0112satlets4-121.html#> accessed 6 June 2008.

Jan. 12, 2008 12:00 AM

This week marks the 100th anniversary of President Theodore Roosevelt's proclamation which created the Grand Canyon National Monument and launched a vital era of protection for this ecologically diverse region. Roosevelt declared:

"Let this great wonder of nature remain as it now is. Do nothing to mar its grandeur, sublimity and loveliness. . . . Keep it for your children, your children's children, and all who come after you, as the one great sight which every American should see."

With 5 million visitors a year, the Grand Canyon serves as the perfect outdoor classroom, teaching the visiting public that Nature and Man are not mutually exclusive entities; that people derive from and are reliant on a healthy natural world. The Grand Canyon is also a great place to illuminate how human activities can drastically affect the natural world.

The National Monument and subsequent National Park status have provided a critical level of protection for the last 100 years. Numerous conservation organizations, researchers, and private citizens have also made great strides in emphasizing protection and safeguarding the beauty and tranquility of the Greater Grand Canyon ecoregion.

Despite these special protections, however, there are numerous threats to this amazing landscape.

New water diversions from the Colorado River threaten the overall health of the river ecosystem. Groundwater pumping as far away as Flagstaff can impact seeps and springs in the park. Climate change is an additional wildcard; it is imperative that the National Park Service take the problem seriously and begin to develop measures to mitigate its impacts. Our National Parks should not be contributing to the climate-change problem - an energy-efficient shuttle system and an emphasis on parking outside of the park would be one step towards drastically reducing carbon emissions at the Grand Canyon.

The Greater Grand Canyon region inspires and renews. It offers outstanding recreation from hiking, backpacking and rafting to wildlife viewing. Grand Canyon has also provided enormous ecological services - watershed values, drinking water, and clean air - for countless generations.

There are many competing demands on the Canyon, but none should be superseded by the obligation to protect this natural wonder for generations to come.

- **Stacey Hamburg**, *Flagstaff*

The writer is conservation program manager for the Grand Canyon chapter of the Sierra Club.