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IUCN REVIEW

World Heritage Nomination

1. NAME: Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP)
2. LOCATION: State of Arizona, South Western, United States
3. NOMINATED BY: Mr. David Hales
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Fish & Wildlife & Parks
US Department of Interior
4. DOCUMENTATION:
 - i) Nomination, dated February 2, 1979
 - ii) Master Plan for GCNP approved June 1976
 - iii) Topographic map 1:62:500
 - iv) Seventeen illustrations included with nomination form
5. BACKGROUND:
 - i) Grand Canyon National Park was established by an Act of Congress approved by President Woodrow Wilson, February 26, 1919. With 493,270 ha. it is the fourth largest of the US National Parks.
6. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

The Grand Canyon is about 1 mile (1.5 km) deep. It ranges in width from 200 metres to 30 kms. Measured along the river it is 443 kms. long. Within the walls of the canyon we have a view of geologic time that covers two billion years. The canyon is a vast biological museum stretching through five different life zones.

JUSTIFICATION:

The area has been evaluated against the operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention as amended at its 2nd Meeting.

Outstanding universal value

The characteristics of the Grand Canyon are so exceptional that they meet all four of the criteria (i) evolutionary history (ii) ongoing geological process (iii) exceptional natural beauty and (iv) contain rare or endangered species. Some of these features are as follows:

Criteria (i) Exposed canyon walls contain depositions from the Cenozoic, Mesozoic (limited) Paliozoic, Cambrian and pre-Cambrian (p. 10-11 nomination form).

Criteria (ii) "The Grand Canyon of the Colorado is the world's most moving geographical wonder" --- To us now it is the biggest living lesson in geological history in the world."

Geography
The Macdonald Illustrated Library
Prof. Gordon Manley, (ed.)

Criteria (iii) A 1903 statement by President Roosevelt is attested to by approximately 3,000,000 visitors per year to the national park.

"In the Grand Canyon, Arizona has a natural wonder which, as far as I know, is in kind absolutely unparalleled throughout the rest of the world."

National Geographic, July 1978

Criteria (iv) Seventeen endangered species are listed in the nomination form. Two unique species are listed, the Kaibab squirrel and the pink Grand Canyon rattlesnake.

Cultural: The nomination includes extensive references to cultural heritage which have not been evaluated in this review.

INTEGRITY:

The park has been managed by the US National Park Service as a National Park since 1919. A management plan has been prepared. (August 1976).

Conservationists argue that the wilderness character of the park is being destroyed through excessive visitor use. (National Geographic, July 1978). There is little doubt that excessive visitor use may have an impact on some of the Canyon's biological systems - they will not however effect its character as a World Heritage Site.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Grand Canyon National Park be placed on the World Heritage List.



International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

March 1979