

GCPBA HELPS BUILD NEW CAMPSITES FROM DIAMOND DOWN

From February 23rd to March 1st, a group of 14 volunteers and NPS staff spent the week on a Diamond Down river trip, with the goal of building and improving campsites between Diamond Creek and the take-out road above the new Pearce Ferry Rapid. The trip was sponsored by the Park Service and headed by Dave Loeffler and Vanya Perputniewicz. Dave was the TL/boatman and Vanya, Grand Canyon National Park's recreational planner. The Park supplied their 37 foot S-rig, the food, and the tools, while the whole group supplied the muscle power to clean-out and open up four campsites. Among the volunteers were three GCPBA board members - Dave Yeamans (past president), Gary Hickman, and Rich Turner. Working together, we trimmed trees, cleared out brush, leveled tent/sleeping areas, built rock steps to higher benches, opened kitchen and toilet sites, and connected sites with trails. Kassy Theobald, the Park's restoration biologist, insured that the correct plants were appropriately removed, and that all areas were left looking as natural as possible.

In order for these sites to remain open, useable, and not again become overgrown, we encourage everyone to use them as much as possible. They are all large enough for a standard sized private trip (16 people), and have an easily recognizable parking area. The first camp we worked on is located at Travertine Falls, mile 230.6, on river left. The parking and kitchen areas are located upstream of the small creek while the sleeping areas are below the stream. The toilet site is just up the creek on creek left. The second site, Tomahawk, is on river right at mile 249.6.

The kitchen and several tent/sleeping areas are just above river level with more sleeping sites on a higher bench reachable by a stone stairway. The toilet location is downstream past the last tent site. Campsite number three is just above the mouth of Dry Creek Canyon, mile 264.5, on river right. The kitchen can be located either right at river level, or just up on a low bench that also has multiple tent sites. Again there are more sleeping sites on a higher bench accessed by another stone stairway. The toilet site is downstream, just around a very large boulder. The fourth site, Echo Camp, is on river left at mile 273.5. There are two places



Sunset from Tomahawk Camp at Mile 249.6



Sunset from Tomahawk Camp at Mile 249.6

to land and park boats. The first, with the kitchen site, is just above where the shoreline turns to the left. The second, closer to most of the sleeping sites, is around the point below the first. There is a trail from the upper landing to the lower, and the toilet site is above that trail to the left, just downstream of the kitchen area. We looked at creating one more site at mile 271.2 on river right, but felt the area was too unstable (like some boatmen I've known) and the parking too sparse to be a viable camp.

Besides working on campsites, we made stops at several locations where a park archaeologist surveyed culturally significant sites. These included Bridge Canyon City, the location where the dam builders stored dynamite, and an inscription containing the names of Amos Burg, Buzz Holmstrom, and Willis Johnson. We also stopped to mark and rephotograph several sites with a park geologist.



Burg, Holmstrom, Johnson Inscription

Of course, no trip could take place without the telling of tales (both factual and slightly embellished), music (Dave Loeffler has magic fingers when it comes to the mandolin), great food (thank you Dave, Vanya, Kassy, Dawn, Deanna, and the NPS), bad weather (it rained and snowed on Saturday and Sunday), and some kind of trouble at the take-out (it took several tries and a herd of would-be engineers to get the loaded boat trailer out of the water). This trip was also a wonderful opportunity to share background and viewpoints on river issues between Grand Canyon National Park and GCPBA. Although we may not always have agreed, we did have a civil and enlightening discourse. We also managed a small, yet significant, celebration of Grand Canyon National Park's ninety-second birthday on February 26th. I'll toast to that.

A few final thoughts. This was a fabulous opportunity for GCPBA to build and maintain important contacts and relationships with GCNP personnel, as well as make an important contribution to our members in the form of useable campsites in a part of the canyon with few camping options. GCPBA has a great working relationship with Grand Canyon National Park, and opportunities like this help maintain and strengthen it. We look forward to future opportunities to work and share together.



by Rich Turner For Grand Canyon Private
Boaters Association

A Trip Portfolio



Rigging at Diamond Creek



Sunrise From Travertine Falls



The Dynamite Cache



Remains of Bridge City



Sunset from Bridge City



Building Stairs to the Upper Bench at Tomahawk Camp



Clearing Tent Sites at Tomahawk Camp



Clearing Tent Sites at Tomahawk Camp



Hangin' in the Kitchen at Tomahawk



Taking a break from the Rain at one of the two Dry Creek Kitchen Sites



Building Stairs to the Upper Bench at Dry Creek



The Finished Stairs



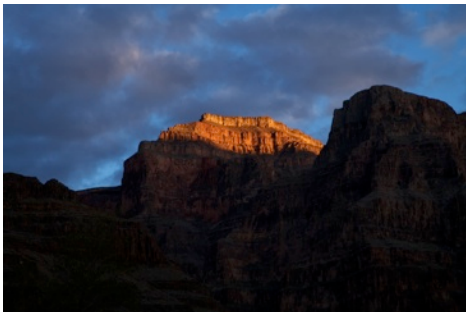
The Lower Kitchen at Dry Creek



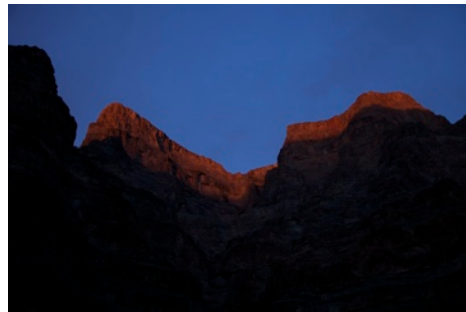
The NPS Planning More Work for Us



Sunset at Dry Creek



Sunset at Dry Creek



Sunrise at Dry Creek



Sunrise at Dry Creek



Pearce Ferry Rapid - Thank God We Didn't Have to Run It