

CHAPTER 14

AMERICAN INDIANS IN GLEN CANYON: PAST & PRESENT

TARA ZAGOFSKY

INTRODUCTION

Glen Canyon and the Colorado River Basin have been an important source of water and life for American Indians for over 13,000 years. Various tribes inhabited and used the land for hunting, gathering, and later farming. In the 19th Century, Euro-Americans began exploring and settling in the region in significant numbers, violently pushing out American Indians and forcibly relocating them onto reservations. With the tribes off the land, White settlers and the U.S. Government invested in mining, dams and hydropower, transportation routes, and recreation activities to promote development.

Today there are 11 tribes with ties to the area who understand their cultural and legal mandate as protectors of the land, vegetation, and fauna, which are considered sacred. Although this diametrically opposes other worldviews and competing interests negotiating management decisions for Glen Canyon, American Indians are working to overcome these challenges and stay engaged as stewards of the land.

A BRIEF HUMAN HISTORY OF THE REGION

Ancestral American Indians

Paleoindians—the first humans who inhabited the continent—reached Glen Canyon and the Colorado River corridor through Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona, over 13,000 years ago (USGS Grand Canyon Monitoring & Research Center, 2011). Evidence of their intermittent use of the area—primarily used for hunting and ritual practices—includes split-twig animal figurines pierced with thorns, stone structures, and sticks wrapped with feathers and locks of human hair found in remotes caves in the Redwall limestone cliffs (Hughes, 1978).

Archeological remains indicate that Ancestral American Indians have lived continuously in the area for over 4,000 years, first as hunters and gatherer societies and later as farming villages organized by highly developed rules. Remnants of the Desert Culture people have been found near the South Rim which illustrate their way of life: fiber nets used for hunting large and small animals and woven baskets and stones for collecting and grinding wild seeds. The earliest farmers in the area were the Ancient Pueblo Peoples (sometimes referred to as Anasazi and Basketmakers); they lived between A.D. 1 and A.D. 700, and were best known for weaving decorated baskets to hold water and for making pottery that was baked for durability. Ancient Pueblo People lived under overhanging canyon cliffs first in surface shelters and later in pithouses. In addition to hunting, they raised maize, yucca, dogs, and turkeys and performed ceremonial rituals, which included smoking native tobacco and playing flutes while medicine men prepared offerings.

Archeologists claim that after A.D. 700, there was a significant cultural transition in the canyon: “pueblos” (towns) were built above ground, some of which can be seen today; Pueblo Indians found sources of water to support growing crops on more land; cotton was harvested and woven into beautiful cloths and robes; and Pueblo villages were organized independently

and governed by sophisticated rules. Although there is disagreement among archaeologists why the Pueblo Indians left the area between A.D. 1150-1200, it is assumed to relate to a threat or attack from either the Paiutes living to the north or the Yuman-speaking Indians to the south. The Hopis are one of the descendants of the Pueblo peoples which resettled 100 miles east of the Grand Canyon and continue to make pilgrimages to a salt deposit near the Colorado River.

Other groups in the region included the Cohonina, living in parts of Grand Canyon south of the river who disappeared around the same time as the Pueblo Indians; it is believed that the Cohonina are ancestors of the Havasupai—people of the blue-green water—who have lived for centuries in the southern tributary canyons and plateau. The Hualapai—pine tree people—have lived along the south side of the western Grand Canyon. Anthropologists refer to both the Hualapai and Havasupai as the “Northeastern Pai,” who share a common history farming in the canyons during the summer months and hunting on the plateau during the winter. North of the Grand Canyon lived several bands of Paiutes—the true peoples. The Navajos, or “Dineh”—the People—arrived most recently to the region (between A.D. 1000-1400) from western Canada.

Thousands of prehistoric and historic sites of human life have been documented in the region that inform us about the area’s history; moreover, 420 of these sites are located along the Colorado River and an additional 55 are in the lower reaches of Glen Canyon (USGS, 2012).

Euro-American Explorations & Settlement

The first White men in the Canyon came in 1540, in search of the mythical Seven Cities of Cibola (believed to have abundant quantities of gold)(Hughes, 1978). Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, a Spanish Conquistador, sent Garcia Lopez de Cárdenas—who is credited with “discovering” the Grand Canyon—to find the Colorado River. Guided by the Hopis, Cárdenas arrived at the river (likely at the South Rim) with his expedition and searched for a way down the canyon wall. With no success and a limited supply of drinking water, they left.

After Cárdenas’ journey, very few Europeans visited the Canyon until the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848; then the Mexican-American War ended and the U.S. acquired the region. Since much of the new territory was unknown, the American government invested in having the Colorado River and canyons mapped, strong points established, and routes identified to traverse the region. Explorations of the area were followed by a movement of federal troops during and after the Civil War (1861-1865), leading to detrimental effects on American Indians.

Soldiers encroached on tribal homeland destroying crops, herds, and homes and used violent methods of killing and forcibly moving native people off their traditional lands. Around the same time, settlement of the West—including the transcontinental railroad—meant White settlers were also encroaching on tribal lands. A series of Indian Wars ensued, when American Indians resisted being pushed off their lands and onto reservations. In the end, the U.S. Government obliged numerous treaties and land cessions by the tribes and established permanent reservations. Many American Indians were killed or harmed in the process—whether from the U.S. Army’s search-and-destroy missions, from illnesses caught on the reservations (due to changes in climate), or from starvation when military and civilian agents deprived tribes of food rations. Exploration and development of the Grand Canyon devastated American Indian life and culture; and living on the reservations drastically changed the livelihoods of tribal peoples.

Following Major John Wesley Powell’s first expedition down the Grand Canyon in 1869, American trappers, loggers, miners, and ranchers began settling in the region. As the area’s federal designation evolved to a national monument and later a national park, tourism developed as the area’s most significant industry; annual visitation rates exceeded one million in 1956 and have steadily increased to today, with over five million tourists traveling to the Canyon per year.

PRESENT-DAY TRIBES & CONCERNS IN GLEN CANYON

At least 11 contemporary American Indian tribes have claimed traditional and cultural ties to the area, including the: Havasupai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Las Vegas Band of Paiute Indians, Moapa Band of Paiute Indians, Navajo Nation, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, Yavapai-Apache Nation, and The Pueblo of Zuni. Today, three of the tribes’ reservations—the Havasupai Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, and the Navajo Nation—border with the Grand Canyon National Park and the Colorado River (Figure 1).

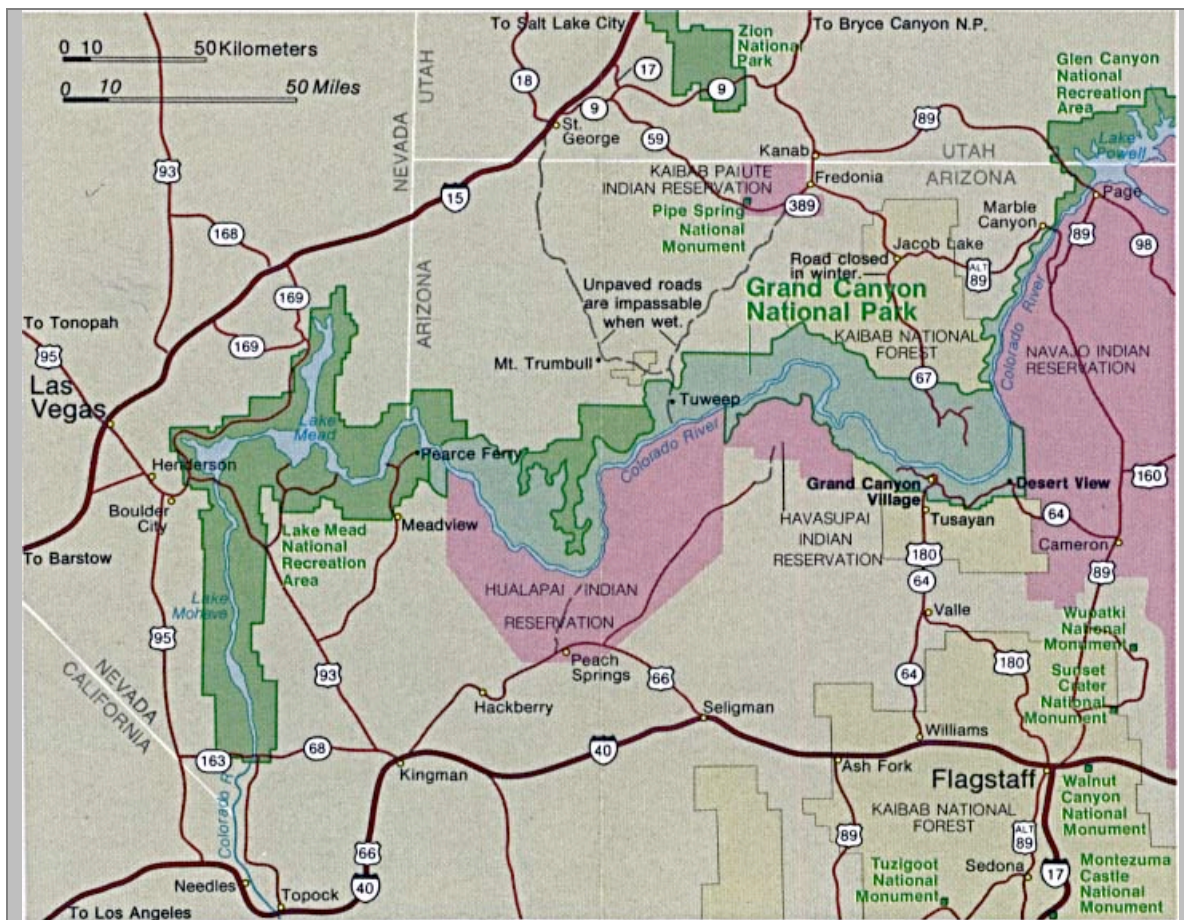


Figure 1: Current American Indian Reservations (marked in purple) in the region. Note that the Hopi Reservation and San Juan Southern Paiute Reservation are located within the Navajo Nation, not visible on this map (Uhler, 2007).

The tribes believe their cultural and legal mandate is to protect the land, vegetation, and fauna, which are considered sacred; and many wish to live within the natural limitations of the land. This contradicts starkly with the American government’s decisions to manage local

resources, including moving the tribes off their traditional lands, building the Glen Canyon Dam (finished in 1966) to provide hydroelectricity and to regulate the flow from the upper Colorado River Basin, and promoting tourism development. Because of the tribes' mandate, they have become involved in management decision-making processes.

American Indian tribes engaged in the region are most concerned about protecting natural and cultural resources; in Glen Canyon these resources include traditional and cultural properties, archaeological sites, tribal origin locations, historic sites, native plant and animal species, landforms and geologic features, ceremonial and pilgrimage sites, springs, mineral deposits, and resource collection areas (USGS Grand Canyon Monitoring & Research Center, 2011). Issues that could threaten these resources include recreational activities (river rafting, helicopter tours, etc.), nonnative fish, water rights, water temperatures, high flow experiments, commercial operations/tourism, Glen Canyon Dam, the Adaptive Management Program, land rights, pollution (of air, water, and soil), and extractive industries (logging and mining)(see Suddeth, this volume).

TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT IN GLEN CANYON MANAGEMENT

Goals for Tribal Participation in the Adaptive Management Plan

After the Glen Canyon Dam was built, the scientific community was troubled by the ecological impacts of dam operations on downstream resources, particularly the riparian areas along the river considering the effects of recreational tourism, nonnative fish, and other factors (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, et al., n.d.). This led the Interior Secretary Babbitt to establish the Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program Work Group (a federal advisory committee) in 1997, which later created the Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program (AMP).

The Goals of the Glen Canyon AMP (completed in 2001) most related to the tribes' priorities are:

Goal 11: Protect, Manage and Treat Cultural Resources:

- Preserve resource integrity and cultural values of traditionally important resources within the Colorado River Ecosystem.
- Protect and maintain physical access to traditional cultural resources.

Goal 12: Maintain a High Quality Monitoring, Research and Adaptive Management Program:

- Attain and maintain effective tribal consultation to ensure inclusion of tribal values and perspectives into the AMP.
- Attain and maintain tribal participation in the AMP research and long-term monitoring activities. (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, 2007, p.2)

According to the AMP, the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey are responsible to "fully and meaningfully engage the appropriate tribes in the decision-making process regarding activities that may affect resources of tribal concern" (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, 2001, p.46). This includes face-to-face consultation with tribal representatives and traditional leaders (both tribes engaged and not engaged with the AMP process that have claimed ties to the area).

Tribal Involvement in Glen Canyon Management

Five tribes— the Hopis, Hualapais, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, and the Southern Paiute Consortium—joined the Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG), along with numerous federal and state government agencies. Each tribe had engaged to influence decision-making on issues and places of cultural and historical importance. For example, Glen Canyon dam was built on traditional Southern Paiute territory and flooded San Juan Paiute farms, native

plants and animals, and sacred sites downstream; this caused the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians and the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah to form a new entity—the Southern Paiute Consortium—in 1993, exclusively to improve their participation in the Glen Canyon management activities (Southern Paiute Consortium, 2008).

American Indian representatives are also involved in a number of committees and projects, including: advising the AMWG on the Technical Workgroup and the Cultural Resources Ad Hoc Group, developing and implementing Colorado River Corridor monitoring and education programs, and participating in studies developed by Western scientists and other stakeholders involved in the AMP. Significant American Indian participation has been invested in the determination of eligibility for a National Register of Historic Places (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2002). Other than direct involvement on the AMP, over 20 tribes (who own one third of the allotment of water rights in Arizona) are active in decisions regarding the uses of the Colorado River (Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc., 2011).

Challenges & Opportunities for Tribal Participation

There are three significant challenges for tribal engagement in the management of Glen Canyon: differences in worldviews, poor communication, and lack of resources (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, 2007). First, efforts to bridge philosophical differences between the ways Western science and American Indian traditional knowledge understand the local ecosystem have not been successful. Moreover, there are many different and competing interests trying to influence management and planning decisions for Glen Canyon and the river corridor—most of which conflict with traditional land use (Austin and Bullets, 1996 cited in U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, 2007, p. 118). These differences have limited tribal involvement in the AMP and have deteriorated overall communication between American Indian representatives and agency staff responsible for the management decisions in Glen Canyon.

Second, even though federal agencies are mandated to have face-to-face consultation with tribal leaders, it is difficult to translate these goals into tangible actions engaging American Indians with scientists and decision-makers. This had been worsened by turnovers in leadership in agencies and among tribal representatives participating in the AMP.

In addition to a difference in worldviews, tribes are struggling to maintain their mandate to protect the land due to a shortage of funding. For example, the chairman of Hualapai Tribe, Mr. Wilfred Whatoname, testified before a Grand Canyon subcommittee on April 8, 2010, asking for much-needed funding:

Today, the Hualapai Tribe is relegated to a peripheral role in the monitoring and maintenance of Grand Canyon Resources, and that is not acceptable to us. We have more-than capable staff in our natural and cultural resources departments to undertake resource monitoring on our own lands to decide for ourselves what the impacts of the operation of Glen Canyon Dam has on Hualapai Resources. Our staff include biologists with doctorate and masters degrees and cultural resources managers that are state certified archaeologists and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers. We ask for this subcommittee's assistance in restoring funds for monitoring of tribal resources to the levels seen in the early 1990's. (Whatoname, W. Sr., 2010)

In light of these numerous challenges, there have been significant developments in advancing priorities for American Indians in Glen Canyon. Developments include ecosystem effects created by the dam; “the maintenance of modified low fluctuating flows has created a more stable environment within which native plant species, such as coyote willow (*salix exigua*) and arrowweed (*tessaria sericea*), have been able to gain advantage over those species such as

tamarisk (*tamarix chinensis*), which thrive in disturbed environments” (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, 2007, p.ix). In addition, the National Park Service is better able to predict and plan for tourists and recreation activities; this includes trail improvements and education and outreach efforts in specific sites, which align with tribal goals to better protect and manage natural and cultural resources. These developments create opportunities for ongoing collaboration between agencies and tribes to monitor and protect Glen Canyon resources.

Another opportunity to support tribal engagement in management decisions and more generally support American Indian livelihoods is through tourism and recreation on reservation lands. Many tribes have built casinos and other tourist destinations to create revenue for their members. For example, the Hualapai Tribe has 40,000 tourists each year visiting their “Grand Canyon West” destination and skywalk which has created numerous jobs and needed income (Biggs, 2010).

CONCLUSIONS

Tribal participation in Glen Canyon management is challenged by a violent history, philosophical differences between western worldviews and traditional knowledge, and competing interests. Although these challenges can be overwhelming for tribes and agencies alike, it is vital that a two-way communication and partnership exists for the future management of Glen Canyon.

Currently, the Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, and the National Park Service are spearheading a Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP) for management of Glen Canyon over the next 15-20 years and have invited American Indian tribes to participate (refer to <http://ltempeis.anl.gov/> for additional information). Although significant challenges inhibit full engagement of the sovereign nations, these types of efforts are important steps forward towards building mutual understanding and collaboration critical for the future of the region, its natural and cultural resources, and the well-being of its people.

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