

protection of environmental values and reduce conflict among visitor use activities.

Section 7.70(g)(1)(i) addresses the Colorado River between Glen Canyon Dam and the downstream river boundary of Glen Canyon NRA where it adjoins Grand Canyon National Park. The restriction pertaining to PWC use contained in the current Superintendent's Compendium (36 CFR, Sections 1.7(b) and 1.5), would be added to this proposed rule. The compendium prohibits PWC use between the Glen Canyon Dam and the downstream river boundary of Glen Canyon NRA where it adjoins Grand Canyon National Park. This closure went into effect in 1998 to eliminate possible conflicts between the traditional fishing and scenic float trips and conflicting PWC use.

Section 7.70(g)(1)(ii) addresses the Colorado River upstream of Sheep Canyon. The proposed rule would prohibit PWC use on the Colorado River upstream from Sheep Canyon. This action would have two benefits. Cataract Canyon upstream of Sheep Canyon is a popular white-water rafting destination that provides a recreational experience that is not available in other parts of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Closure of the Colorado River upstream from Sheep Canyon would preserve this locally unique visitor experience for Colorado River white-water river runners.

Because of the transition from lake to river conditions, PWC operation upstream from Sheep Canyon is substantially different than operation below this point. Beginning in Cataract Canyon, conditions become increasingly hazardous because of conflicts between traditional rafting uses and use of PWC. The river's uncertain currents and shifting sandbars can force both groups to use a common river channel. The presence of standing waves also produces a high potential for collision. Closing this area to PWC use would help protect the safety of visitors. Implementing these closures to all PWC use would strengthen the NPS' intent to maintain areas of quiet and solitude on portions of the rivers and to reduce the potential for conflict between motorized and non-motorized users. Closing the areas in both directions of travel would provide for consistency within the regulations. This limitation will be applied to all motorized vessels in the Superintendent's Compendium, except for permitted activities.

Section 7.70(g)(1)(iii) addresses the San Juan River upstream of Clay Hills pullout. The intent of the PWC closure on the San Juan River would be to

provide an opportunity for visitors to enjoy quiet and solitude. Establishing the closure at the Clay Hills pullout would allow continued opportunity to access the lake from this remote site when the lake level is above an elevation of 3675 feet. At the same time, it would protect a rare visitor experience for San Juan River travelers upstream from this point. This limitation will be applied to all motorized vessels in the Superintendent's Compendium.

Section 7.70(g)(1)(iv) addresses the Escalante River upstream of Coyote Gulch. The proposed rule would prohibit PWC use on Escalante River upstream of Coyote Gulch. Implementing this closure to all PWC use would strengthen the NPS's intent to maintain areas of quiet and solitude on portions of the rivers and to reduce the potential for conflict between motorized and non-motorized users, thus enhancing the traditional river experience. This limitation will be applied to all motorized vessels in the Superintendent's Compendium.

Section 7.70(g)(1)(v) addresses the Dirty Devil River at the point where measurable downstream current is encountered. The operation of PWC upstream from where noticeable current is encountered is significantly different than operation below this point. The Dirty Devil Canyon is very narrow with tight, blind bends, and becomes increasingly hazardous upstream because of shallow and murky water, floating debris, uncertain currents, and shifting sandbars because of the transition from lake to river conditions.

Section 7.70(g)(2) has two subsections that outline additional wake restrictions. To further reduce visitor conflict, enhance visitor safety and experience, and protect soundscapes, the proposed rule would prohibit operation of PWC above flat wake speed on portions of the Dirty Devil and Escalante Rivers. PWC are required to comply with existing wake restrictions in the current Superintendent's Compendium (36 CFR Sections 1.7(b) and 3.6) that apply to all motorized vessels. These include requirements that watercraft operators cannot operate at speeds in excess of 5 miles per hour or create a wake when operating within harbors, mooring areas, flat wake areas, and other "no wake" buoyed areas.

When PWC operate at flat wake speeds many of the impacts they cause are greatly reduced. Visitor conflicts are virtually eliminated due to their reduced speed and noise. Although at flat wake speed, access may still be obtained by PWC users. Flat wake areas were considered to be prime access

areas that all types of visitors seek out, but also areas within a river corridor that supports traditional rafting and river experiences.

Section 7.70(g)(2)(i) addresses the Escalante River from Cow Canyon to Coyote Gulch. The 4.4-river-mile stretch of the Escalante River between Cow Canyon and the confluence of Coyote Creek would be designated as flat wake for PWC. This stretch of the Escalante River is a popular float stream and hiking area. In most years, travel upstream by PWC from Cow Canyon is precluded by low water levels and insufficient stream flow. However, when lake levels are sufficiently high, the natural quiet of this area is often disturbed by noise from PWC. Limiting PWC use to flat wake speeds upstream from Cow Canyon would help maintain a more natural sound quality in this portion of the Escalante River and Coyote Gulch area. This limitation will be applied to all motorized vessels in the Superintendent's Compendium.

Section 7.70(g)(2)(ii) addresses the Dirty Devil River upstream from the Utah Highway 95 bridge until measurable downstream current is encountered. PWC would have to operate at flat wake speed on the Dirty Devil River upstream from Utah Highway 95 bridge to the point where measurable downstream flow is encountered. Flat wake speed requirements would help protect the safety of visitors. The Dirty Devil River is a popular destination for fishing, including both trolling and fishing from stationary boats. High-speed maneuvering with PWC is inconsistent and disruptive to this traditional visitor activity. Visitor conflicts would be reduced with flat wake speed of PWC. This limitation will be applied to all motorized vessels in the Superintendent's Compendium.

Section 7.70(g)(3) addresses the temporary limits and restrictions on PWC use within areas of the recreation area. The recreation area may consider other location restrictions, which would be implemented as part of the lake management plan that is discussed in the DEIS in the description of Alternative B. To support the decision to implement other restrictions, a 3-year pilot study would be conducted. The study would examine the effectiveness of location restrictions and other management actions in reducing visitor conflicts associated with motorized vessels, including PWC, in the recreation area.

History of Public Involvement

Public meetings were initiated in August 2001 to solicit early input into