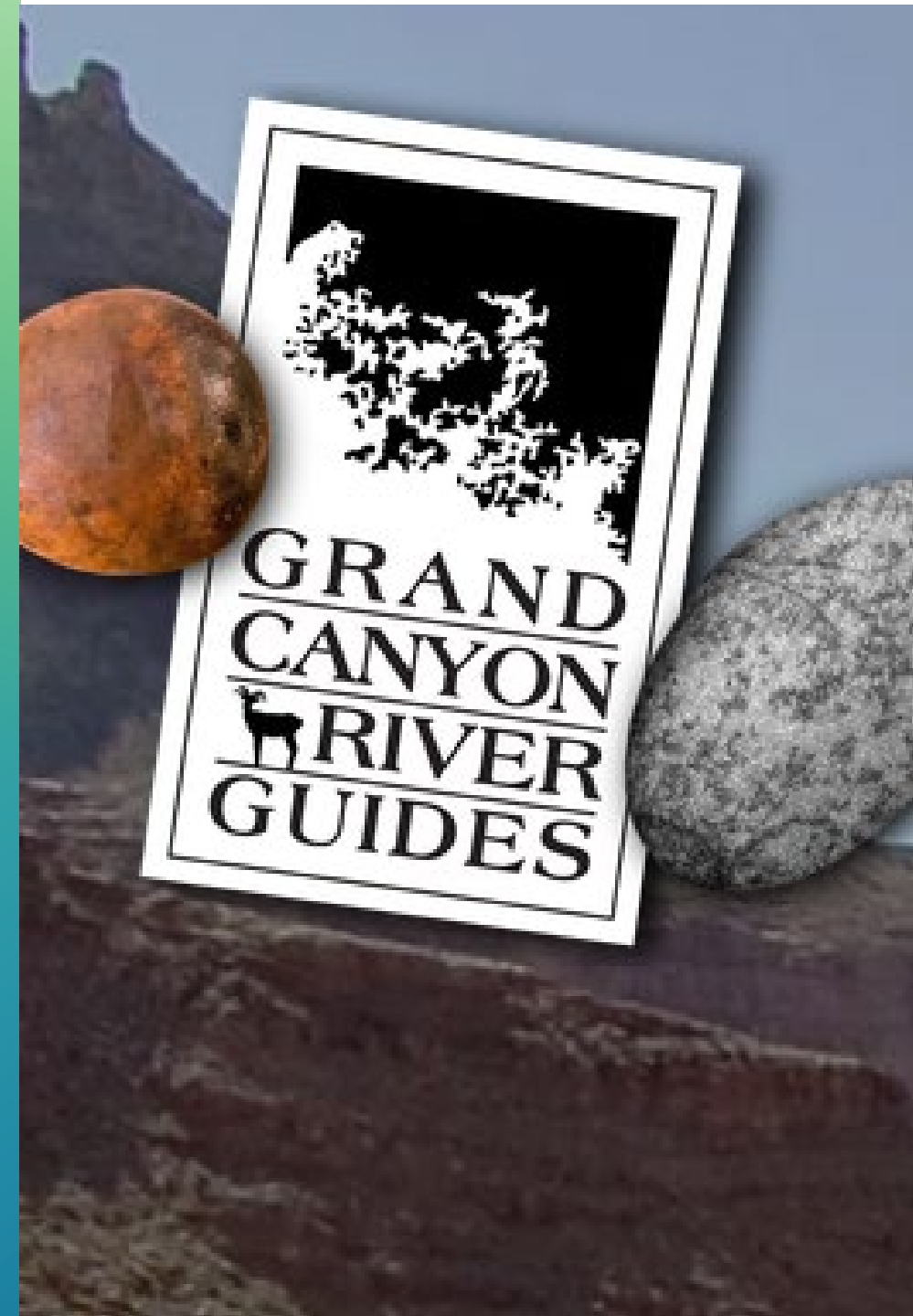


Stakeholder Perspective

Grand Canyon River Guides

Adaptive Management Work Group

August 2026





Who we are

Founded in 1988, GCRG is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) educational and environmental organization dedicated to:

- Protecting Grand Canyon
- Setting the highest standards for the river profession
- Celebrating the unique spirit of the river community
- Providing the best possible river experience

There are 1,733 guide and general members.

Professional river guides are often the 'front line' in describing and explaining the downstream impacts of Glen Canyon Dam to tens of thousands of annual visitors

Grand Canyon River Rafting Recreation Factoids

Approximate number of commercial river visitors per year:

20,000 to 22,000

Estimated number of non-commercial river visitors per year:

approximately 5,000

Estimated total number of nights spent camping in the Grand Canyon River Corridor:

200,000 – 250,000

Number of commercial river trips per year:

Up to 637

Number of non-commercial river trips per year:

Between 470 to 480 (year-round)

Annual gross receipts paid to the NPS as a franchise fee by commercial river outfitters:

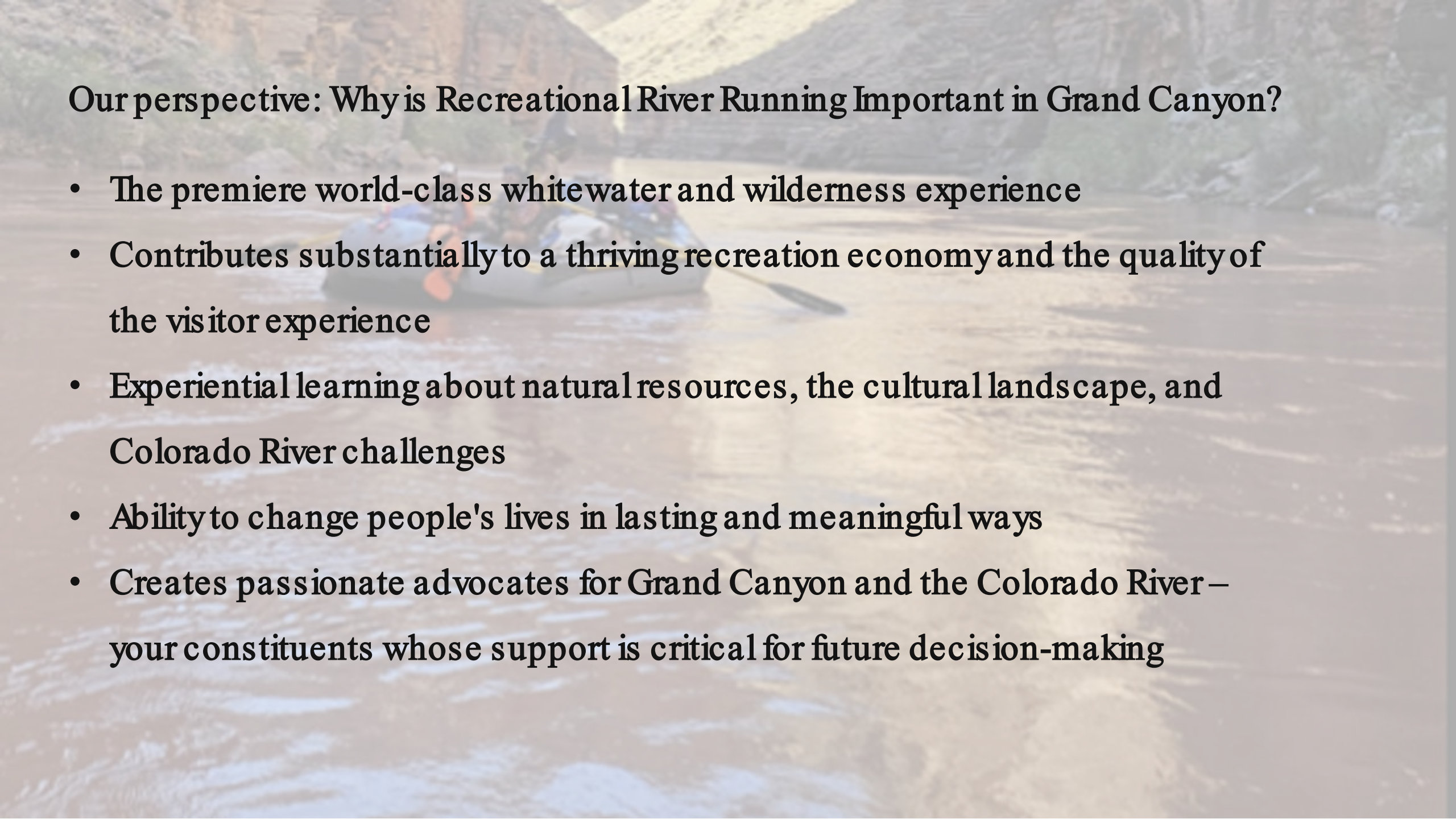
13% - 22% (one of the highest NPS concessioner franchise fee structures in the U.S.)

Average tenure of a professional Grand Canyon river guide:

15 years

Earliest year commercial river outfitter began offering trips in the Grand Canyon:

1929

A person in a blue kayak is navigating white water rapids in the Grand Canyon. The water is turbulent and white with foam. The surrounding canyon walls are steep and rocky, with some sparse vegetation. The scene is captured from a low angle, emphasizing the power of the water.

Our perspective: Why is Recreational River Running Important in Grand Canyon?

- The premiere world-class whitewater and wilderness experience
- Contributes substantially to a thriving recreation economy and the quality of the visitor experience
- Experiential learning about natural resources, the cultural landscape, and Colorado River challenges
- Ability to change people's lives in lasting and meaningful ways
- Creates passionate advocates for Grand Canyon and the Colorado River—your constituents whose support is critical for future decision-making

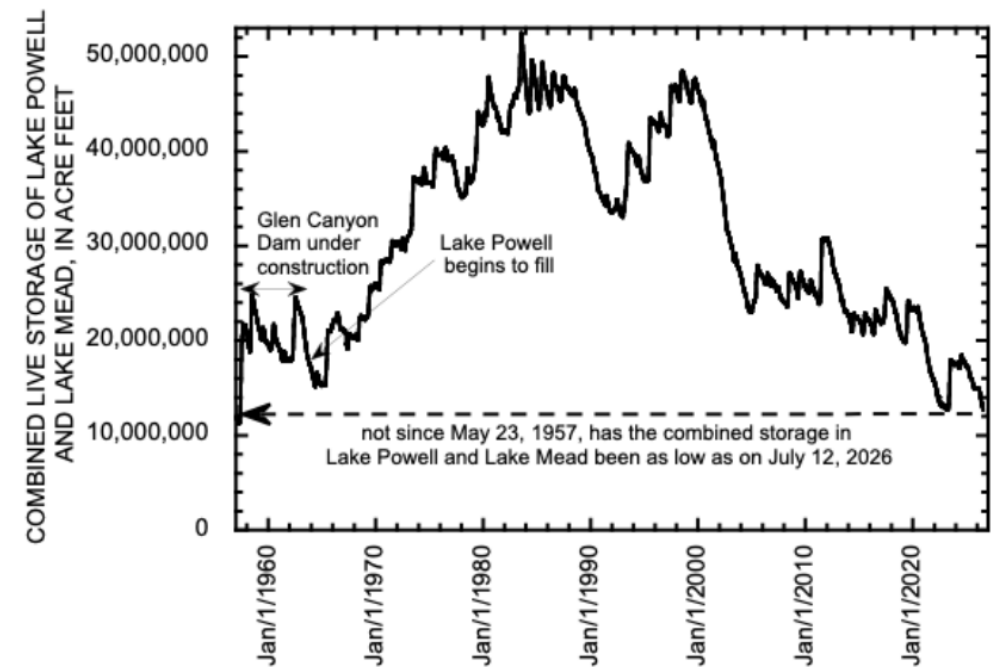
Our perspective: Concerns for future Recreational River Running in Grand Canyon?

- **Continued degradation of the recreational resource and experience**
- **Long-lasting damage to the recreation economy and businesses**
- **Adverse impacts to the Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP)**
- **Reduced navigability**
- **Impeded ability to move downriver in allotted time**
- **Increased crowding/congestion along the river corridor**
- **Failing to meet the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992 with recreation use not protected equally with other resources/values**

Our perspective: Water Supply

A Significant Moment in the Colorado River Water Supply Crisis
Jack Schmidt, Anne Castle, John Fleck, Eric Kuhn, Kathryn Sorensen, Katherine Tara July 14, 2026

The combined total live storage of Lake Powell and Lake Mead was 12,675,509 af. The last time the combined total live storage in Lake Powell and Lake Mead was this small was **May 23, 1957**, during construction of Glen Canyon Dam when the entire amount of 12,668,000 af was stored in Lake Mead (Fig. 1).



Every day going forward, until runoff from the 2026-2027 winter snowpack begins next spring, a new record low will likely be set.

- What happens after March 2027 if the lake drops below minimum power pool?

‘Drought’ is out: Aridification is our reality

(the long-term process by which a region becomes progressively drier over time, leading to a new, permanent baseline of increased water scarcity)

Our Perspective: Conditions of the Recreational Resource

Based on the annual Adopt-a-Beach (AAB) baseline survey conducted this past Spring, the following changes have been noted since 2025 to the 45 beaches included in the dataset:

- 86% have decreased in size
 - 14% have not noticeably changed in size
 - 0% have increased in size
-
- 36% of the campable areas of these beaches have worsened in quality
 - 64% have remained the same quality
 - 0% have improved

No surprises: erosion without deposition equals less sediment

The outcome: degraded LTEMP resources (sediment and recreation)

He also notes that several camps including The Garnets, Olo, and Matkat Hotel are quickly descending into the realm of being unusable, due to reduced beach size and growing erosional features (predominantly gullies and flash flood debris).

Our Perspective: Conditions of the Recreational Resource

Several historic high-use camps in critical reaches without many options, including the Garnets, Olo, and Matkat Hotel, are nearly unusable due to reduced beach size and growing erosional features (predominantly gullies and flash flood debris).



Matkat Hotel - 2023



Matkat Hotel - 2026

Our perspective: LTEMP

We are failing to uphold the spirit, intent, and legal obligations of the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992:

“The Secretary shall operate Glen Canyon Dam...in such a manner as to protect, mitigate adverse impacts to, and improve the values for which Grand Canyon National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area were established, including, but not limited to natural and cultural resources and visitor use.”(Public Law 102-575, Section 1802a, GCPA).

Our perspective: LTEMP

We are failing to meet several resource goals, including but not limited to:

- ☐ **Sediment.** Increase and retain fine sediment volume, area, and distribution in the Glen, Marble, and Grand Canyon reaches above the elevation of the average base flow for ecological, cultural, and recreational purposes.
- ☐ **Recreational Experience.** Maintain and improve the quality of recreational experiences for the users of the Colorado River Ecosystem. Recreation includes, but is not limited to, flatwater and whitewater boating, river corridor camping, and angling in Glen Canyon.
- ☐ **Nonnative Invasive Species.** Minimize or reduce the presence and expansion of aquatic nonnative invasive species.
- ☐ **Humpback Chub.** Meet humpback chub recovery goals, including maintaining a self-sustaining population, spawning habitat, and aggregations in the Colorado River and its tributaries below the Glen Canyon Dam.
- ☐ **Other Native Fish.** Maintain self-sustaining native fish species populations and their habitats in their natural ranges on the Colorado River and its tributaries.

Our perspective: LTEMP

Another year without a High Flow Experiment (HFE)

Modeling for the LTEMP EIS Alternative D indicated that on average 21.1 HFEs would be triggered and implemented in a 20-year period (FEIS, Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3.4). We would like to point out that in over 10 years of LTEMP operations, only 3 HFEs have been conducted (2016, 2018, and 2023) which is 75% lower than what the LTEMP EIS used as the basis of the Record of Decision.

Sediment is a foundational element of the Colorado River ecosystem, and the lynchpin for the health of multiple resources – ecological, recreational, and cultural.

High Flow Experiments (HFEs) replenish depleted shallow shoreline habitats, they rejuvenate camping beaches that are key to supporting the recreational experience of over 20,000 river runners annually, and windblown sand from HFEs protects fragile and non-renewable archaeological sites along the river corridor.

HFEs conducted under sediment rich conditions are the **ONLY** proven tool for protecting and improving these critical resources below Glen Canyon Dam.

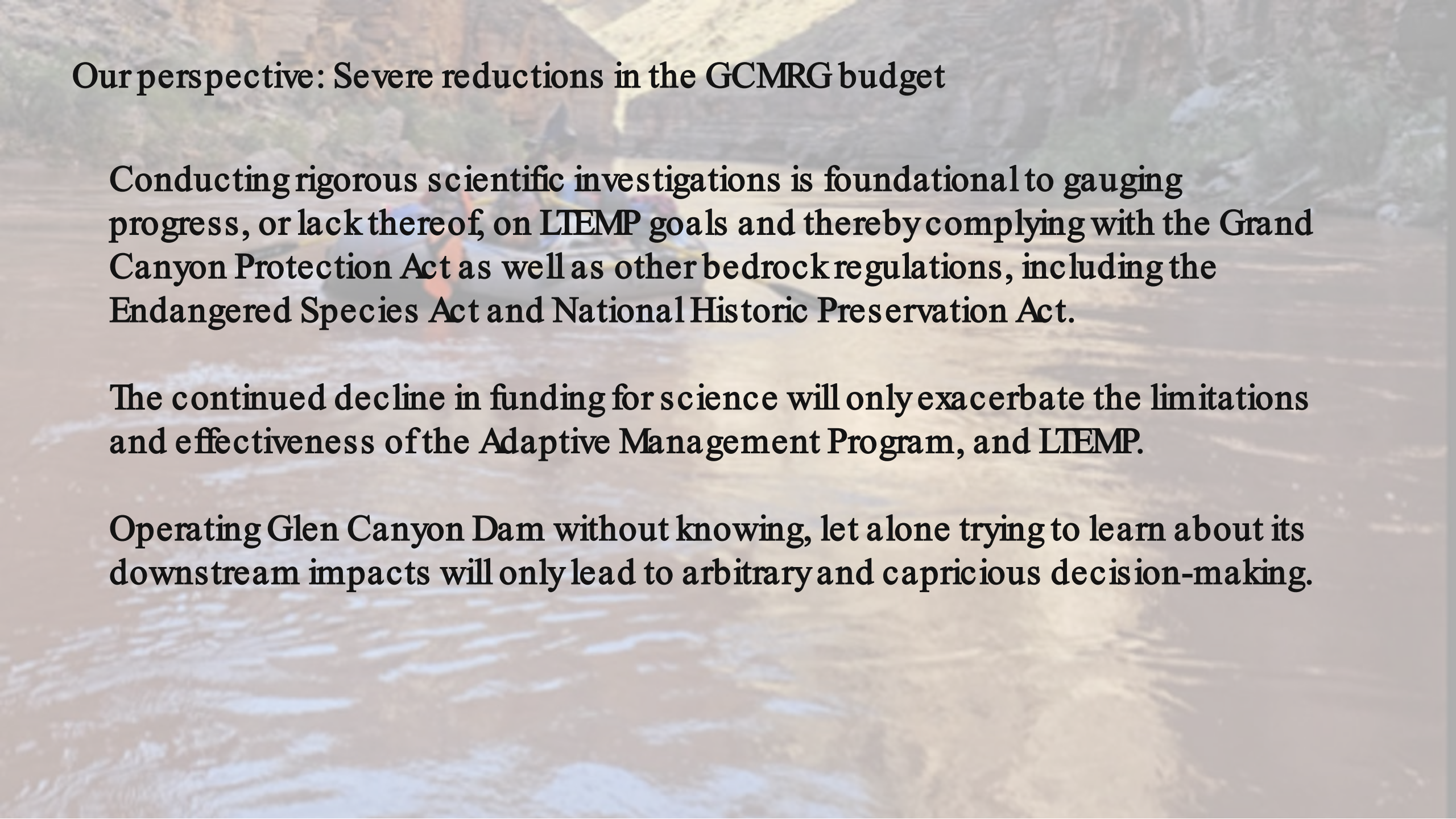
Our perspective: LTEMP

No Cool Mix Flows?

An increase in smallmouth bass and other predatory nonnative fish passing through Glen Canyon Dam due to lowering lake levels, along with warmer water temperatures sufficient for these species to reproduce are a *clear and present danger* to the federally-listed humpback chub (HBC). In fact, smallmouth bass (SMB) were rated the biggest threat to the future of the humpback chub in the USFWS 2018 Species Status Assessment. The establishment of these warm water non-native fish invaders could permanently shift Grand Canyon's aquatic ecosystem away from the fish assemblage typical of the last 50 years. (Schmidt, Yackulic and Kuhn, 2023).

95% of the world's population of humpback chub live in Grand Canyon, the establishment of SMB in Grand Canyon could crash the HBC population, and we could potentially lose our iconic native fish as a species.

Since the implementation of Cool Mix Flows in 2024 and 2025, there has been no evidence of reproduction of smallmouth bass.

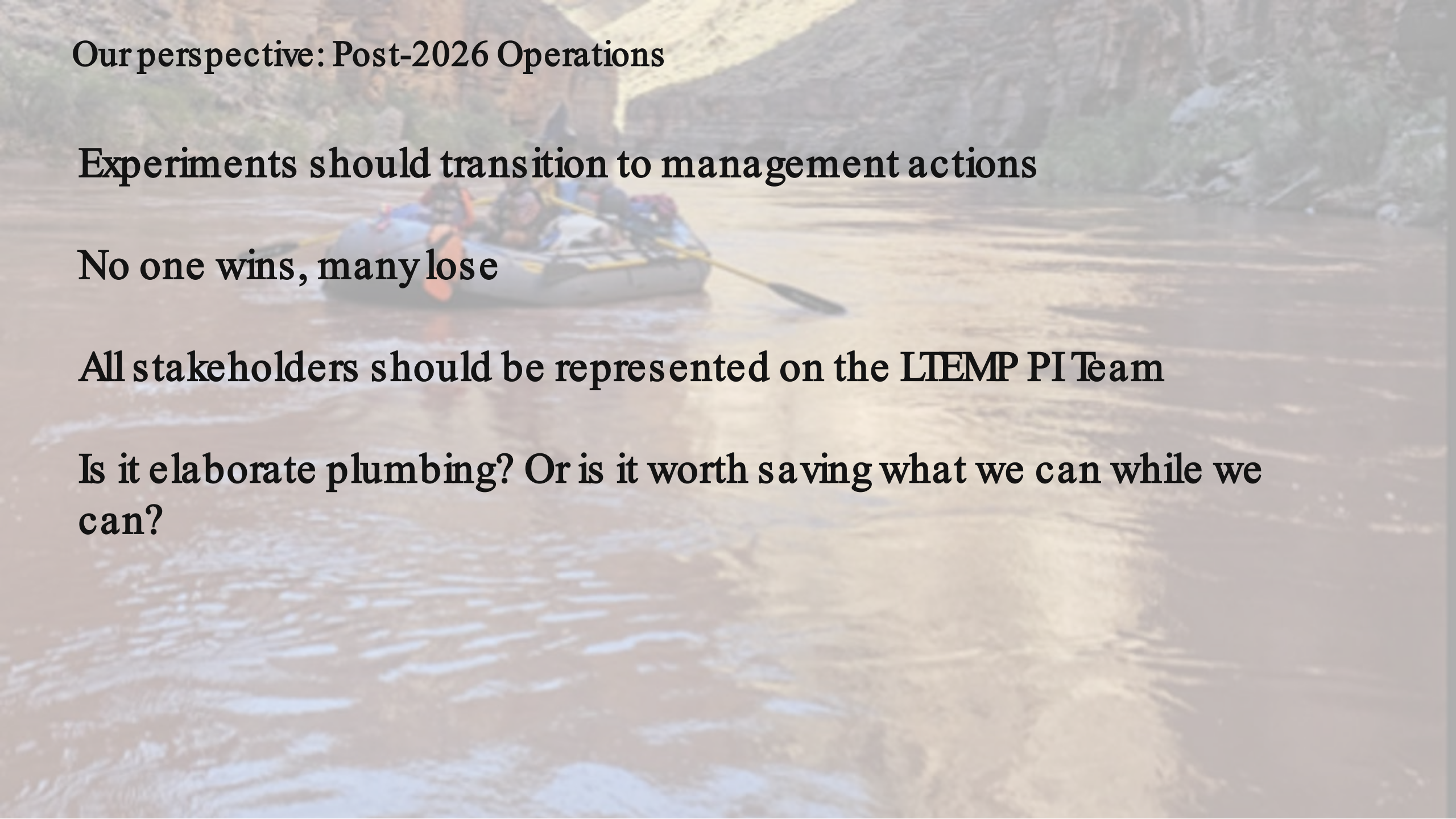
The background of the slide is a photograph of a river, likely the Grand Canyon. A person in a kayak is visible in the middle ground, wearing a blue shirt and a red life vest. The river is turbulent with white water rapids. The surrounding cliffs are steep and rocky, with some sparse vegetation. The overall tone is somewhat muted, with a greyish-blue overlay.

Our perspective: Severe reductions in the GCMRG budget

Conducting rigorous scientific investigations is foundational to gauging progress, or lack thereof, on LTEMP goals and thereby complying with the Grand Canyon Protection Act as well as other bedrock regulations, including the Endangered Species Act and National Historic Preservation Act.

The continued decline in funding for science will only exacerbate the limitations and effectiveness of the Adaptive Management Program, and LTEMP.

Operating Glen Canyon Dam without knowing, let alone trying to learn about its downstream impacts will only lead to arbitrary and capricious decision-making.



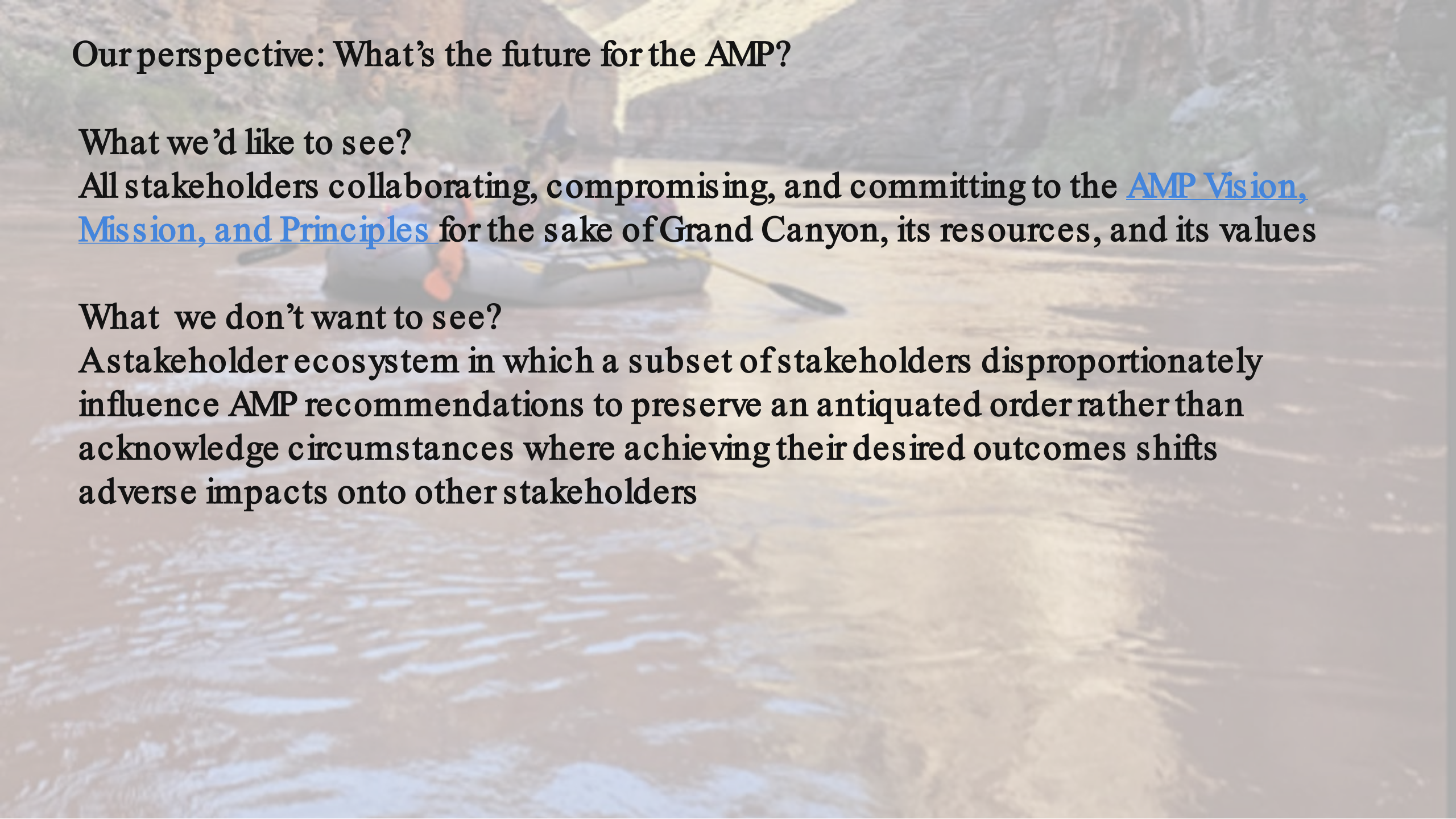
Our perspective: Post-2026 Operations

Experiments should transition to management actions

No one wins, many lose

All stakeholders should be represented on the LTEMP PI Team

Is it elaborate plumbing? Or is it worth saving what we can while we can?

A person in a blue kayak is paddling down a river. The water is a light brown color, and the background shows a steep, rocky canyon wall. The text is overlaid on the top left of the image.

Our perspective: What's the future for the AMP?

What we'd like to see?

All stakeholders collaborating, compromising, and committing to the [AMP Vision, Mission, and Principles](#) for the sake of Grand Canyon, its resources, and its values

What we don't want to see?

A stakeholder ecosystem in which a subset of stakeholders disproportionately influence AMP recommendations to preserve an antiquated order rather than acknowledge circumstances where achieving their desired outcomes shifts adverse impacts onto other stakeholders