

Volunteers help restore disturbed lands in Grand Canyon National Park

Visitors may see cliffrose, Indian paintbrush, stemless townsendia, early flowering wood-betony, and varieties of cacti and penstemon in the ponderosa pine or piñon-juniper woodlands on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. They may also notice Dalmatian toadflax, cheat-grass, spotted knapweed, Mediterranean sage, and rush skeletonweed. While these latter plants may contribute to the colors of the landscape, they are some of the 160 plant species not native to Grand Canyon National Park.

Dedicated volunteers in the park have helped to restore disturbed lands by donating more than 16,500 hours to the vegetation management program in 2002. They rehabilitated more than 24 acres (10 ha) of disturbed lands while they gained hands-on experience removing exotic species,

planting native species, collecting seed, and spreading mulch. Even a few hours of manually digging Mediterranean sage with hand picks contributes to the overall preservation of park resources. Many groups and organizations such as Elderhostel and Sierra Club return annually to satisfy their vested interest in the restoration projects in which they participate. Volunteers take pride in their work and many remember the specific plants they have planted.

Partnerships' and volunteers' long-term commitment to restoration efforts greatly benefit Grand Canyon National Park. Volunteers help the National Park Service achieve its mission and goals. Some volunteers return to their homes and seek out local natural areas in which they can volunteer. They may even carry a sense of stewardship into their own backyards.



NPS PHOTO BY MIKE BOOTH