

Canyon de Chelly



A Vision for Tomorrow

August 2016

Prepared by:
The Antero Group
2211 N. Elston Avenue, Suite 201
Chicago, Illinois 60614
Ph.: 312.772.5085
Email: eneagu@anterogroup.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is the product of a collaborative effort supported by numerous individuals within various Navajo Nation departments, United States agencies, local chapters, businesses, and public participants. We wish to recognize the following for their leadership throughout this process.

Project Leadership: -Ms. Bidtah Becker, Navajo Department of Natural Resources
-Ms. Lyn Carranza, U.S. National Park Service
-Bernadette Tsosie, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Project Team: -Laurel Berman, ATSDR
-Eric Neagu, P.E., LEED AP, The Antero Group
-Vanessa Roanhorse, The Antero Group
-Genie Kuester, The Antero Group



Funding for this project has been provided by:
**The Navajo Nation Small Business
and
Tourism Department**

Executive Summary

TO RESPECTFULLY SHARE STEWARDSHIP OF CANYON VALUES, AND TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE ITS BEAUTY, RESOURCES, AND CULTURE FOR THE FUTURE - HÓZHO DOOLEEL.

The Navajo Nation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and National Park Service worked diligently over a three-month period to develop a Canyon de Chelly Vision Statement that reflects the hopes and goals of the residents for the Canyon's future. This Vision Statement is an early step toward the development of a synergistic management structure that guides those organizations tasked with the health and safety of the Canyon. The objective of this process has been to better understand how the People, comprised primarily of residents residing within the Chapters that constitute Canyon de Chelly's population, wish to see the Canyon in the future.

In preparing this document, a steering committee of officials administered the process and a consulting team, including The Antero Group and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, were engaged to facilitate the conversation. Site tours were conducted, as well as a series of three public meetings. All ideas were ultimately vetted through the public forums, allowing the residents and businesses in and around Canyon de Chelly to act as the final decision-makers.

Below is a summary of the purpose, process, results, and options for advancing a more formal management strategy for Canyon de Chelly. The authors, steering committee, and participants have worked to capture the spirit of the Canyon, respecting its history, while planning for a healthy and culturally sensitive future.

CANYON DE CHELLY: A VISION FOR TOMORROW

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	5
Vision Objective.....	6
The Document	7
PROCESS	8
Committee Structure.....	9
Outreach	9
The Workshops	10
THE CANYON DE CHELLY VISION.....	14
Motivation.....	15
THE STRATEGY.....	17
Active Planning.....	17
Strategic Options.....	19
THE FUTURE.....	20

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A– 1990 Joint Management Plan
Appendix B – Sign-In Sheets
Appendix C – Notifications
Appendix D – Meeting Agendas
Appendix E – Meeting Minutes
Appendix F – Presentations
Appendix G – Base Map
Appendix H – CACH Foundation Document
Appendix I – Mapping Workshop
Appendix J – Canyon de Chelly Action Model
Appendix K – SWOT Workshop
Appendix L – Workshop Exercises
Appendix M – Canyon de Chelly Departments
Appendix N – Canyon de Chelly Permits

Introduction

Canyon de Chelly has long been an integral and sacred space to the life of the Navajo people. Occupied for more than 4,000 years, it is frequently referred to as the “heart of the Navajo Nation.” With its majestic walls, fertile floor, and archeological treasures, Canyon de Chelly is considered a globally important resource and one that is to be protected and valued. However, unlike many similar sites, where ancient ruins and dramatic scenario are primarily remnants for posterity to appreciate, Canyon de Chelly is an active and thriving community; an intersection between residents with long-cherished land holdings, businesses trying to promote the area, and various agencies tasked with managing the Canyon to protect and preserve it as a resource.

These multi-faceted interests and responsibilities have resulted in management strategies that require periodic evaluation and streamlining. With more than 830,000 annual visitors, a number that has exceeded a million in the past, growing development pressures, persistent challenges around vendor and resident concerns, and limited funding, a management strategy that seeks to be as comprehensive and compassionate as possible has become increasingly necessary.



In the face of these resource constraints, growing tourism interest in Canyon de Chelly, and a dynamic and shifting residential population, the Navajo Nation agreed in October of 2015 to advance a joint effort to improve and refine management protocols and requirements for Canyon de Chelly. The idea is to establish an all-encompassing program that engages residents, businesses, local Chapters, and relevant stakeholders to identify the challenges and initiate consensus-driven solutions over an appropriate time horizon. This would be laid down in a document that is relatable and concise; codified by each of the entities as a management strategy that guides decision-making relative to the Canyon.

But a similar effort had been attempted more than two decades prior and that attempt resulted in a document that was never adopted (See **Appendix A**). Those tasked to formulate a more modern version of a management strategy quickly realized the results of the failed prior effort

and the long memory of the stakeholder groups placed the Management Team in a challenging position. Not only would they have to create a document that would work toward resolution of many complicated issues, but they would also have to overcome significant hesitation and anxiety in the population most directly impacted by such a document.

After conferring, the Management Team elected to establish a Vision, one that established clear and concise guidance for both the development of strategic guidelines as well as the Canyon itself. To accomplish this objective, it was decided that a facilitated approach could allow for an objective and guided process, as a result a consulting firm already familiar with the region and several of the parties, The Antero Group, was engaged. They assisted in guiding a three-month process that culminated in this document.

Vision Objective



This document provides a Vision for what the Canyon will be, not a final strategy for its management.

It is important to remember that the objective of this document and the process leading up to this document is to establish a guiding Vision only. There is a longer and more engaging effort that will address specific concerns. The Management Team

is committed to advancing and finalizing a document that will establish and codify a strategy targeted at accomplishing the following:

- Clarifies Organization Roles
- Readily Communicates Protocols
- Refines Responsibilities
- Addresses Sources of Confusion
- Preserves Canyon Culture
- Protects the Rights of the Navajo People

As with any Vision it is incumbent on those with any responsibility for the area, including residents and businesses, to keep the ideals represented by the statement alive. People attracted to an area with limited resources, ancient land rights, sacred values, and contemporary pressures will encounter conflicts. Guiding documents with adequate input, communication, and benevolent motivation can provide a structure within which to minimize conflict and mitigate challenges when they arise. The Navajo Nation and the stakeholders, residents, businesses, and various agencies and departments engaged in this effort are to be applauded for the openness and enthusiasm with which this Vision has been framed.

The Document

A Visioning document, like a Vision Statement, should be concise, while acknowledging and memorializing the process, participants, and outcomes of its development. Such a document must readily translate what transpired to achieve the Vision, while also locating the reader on the spectrum of the strategic management trajectory. While a comprehensive discussion of all components of the process to establish a successful Vision Statement is beyond the Scope of this project, it is important to put down various critical elements. Below is a brief overview of the structure utilized for this document.

Format

The document has been divided into four major sections.

- Introduction. Outlines the background and objective of the Vision.
- The Process. An overview of the Vision Plan process.
- A Canyon de Chelly Vision. This section recites the Vision and more details regarding the process.
- Strategic Options. This section provides a brief outline of possible strategies given what was learned during the visioning discussions.
- Conclusion. A concise summary of the document and reminder that this is a point along an important trajectory, not a final effort.

Again, this document is intended to offer an understanding of how the Vision Statement was established, some lessons gained along the way, and thoughts on advancing the process. This is not the concluding effort, rather it is only the beginning. Much data, input, and refinement must be collected, absorbed, and tested with significant community involvement to achieve as much consensus as is possible.

Process

Intended to move rapidly and efficiently, the process for establishing a Canyon de Chelly Vision Statement included three days of workshopping ideas, identifying challenges and opportunities, and refining the Vision Statement language. Although the initial meeting included primarily those entities tasked with aspects of managing Canyon de Chelly resources, subsequent meetings allowed for more public and stakeholder input. This was done, as illustrated below, to ensure the objectives of the Vision statement process were clear to each stakeholder group and to minimize confusion. All four Navajo Nation Chapters, Chinle, Wheatfields, Nazlini, and Sawmill, were invited to have officials participate in each of the meetings. Meetings were held on the following dates:

- **May 19, 2016: Meeting intended to orient various management agencies to effort.**
- **June 29, 2016: Meeting provided for tour of site and refinement of objectives. Evening meeting with businesses and residents intended to capture feedback from those most affected by management decisions.**
- **July 27, 2016: Meeting intended to establish final Vision Statement.**

The balance of this section of the document provides an overview of what transpired during each meeting, as well as key feedback provided by the groups at those gatherings. We begin with notes regarding the structure of the committees guiding the process, as well as the efforts and intention behind community outreach.



Committee Structure

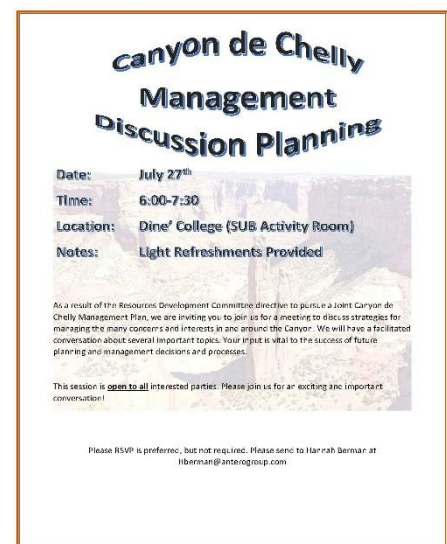
Canyon de Chelly is currently managed by a consortium of parties all of whom have designated responsibilities. Among these are the Navajo Nation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the United States National Park Service. In addition, various subdivisions of each of these entities have a role in how select aspects of the Canyon are managed. These layers are intended to serve the residents, businesses, and visitors who have a relationship with Canyon de Chelly. Given so many groups, all of whom have a different role, it was decided to establish a system of committees to collect and vet input. These included **(See Appendix B)**:

- **Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee consists of upper level directors and superintendents of the three primary management entities. The purpose of this committee has primarily been to manage contracts, schedules, communication, and other administrative responsibilities.
- **Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee has a broader membership including those Chapters that connect to the Canyon and other officials who are responsible to the residents, businesses, and visitors to the Canyon.
- **The People:** This group was divided into a first group that included primary stakeholders, especially residents and businesses who depend on and interact with Canyon de Chelly daily, and then the larger public. All ideas, concerns, and opportunities and elements of anything that transpired within the Steering Committee or Executive Committee were vetted through the Public. The Public was given the final determination of any activity or decision made as part of this effort.

Future subdivision of the committee structure may be made to facilitate communication, capture ideas, and improve meeting efficiency. For the purposes of establishing a Vision Statement, this was determined to be the most expedient structure.

Outreach

The People are the primary drivers and decision-makers of this effort. It was in response to concerns of residents and businesses that it was decided to undertake a management strategy process, and it is the People who will ultimately determine those components of the final plan that are most necessary. As such, significant outreach efforts were conducted to get as many participants as possible. Email, Facebook, word of mouth, and postings were made to promote the two public forums. Each were well-attended, though it proved difficult to get equal representation from all of the relevant Chapters, with



Chinle being the most represented at the meetings. To expand access to the meetings, the final workshop was moved from the Chinle Chapter House to Diné College, which was thought to be more centrally located (**See Appendix C and Appendix D**). A detailed discussion of each meeting is included below.

The Workshops

A description of the purpose and outcomes of each workshop day has been included to offer a sense of the progression, as well as documentation of the process (**See Appendix E**). There is significantly more detail, including the PowerPoint presentations (**See Appendix F**) included in the appendices. This section highlights the most relevant information obtained for formulating the final Vision Statement. Relevant information, including attendees, can be found in the appendices.

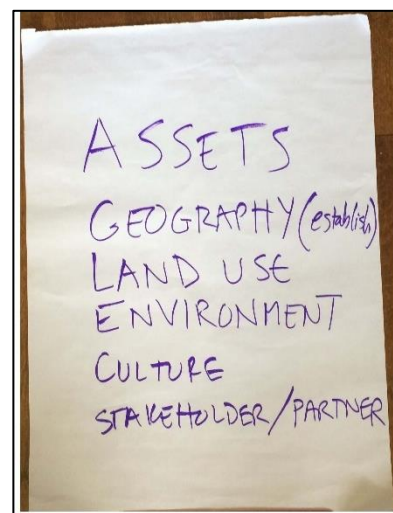
Each meeting was structured to build from material collected in the previous meetings. The goals of the meetings were threefold:

- To establish a concise and useful Vision Statement
- To collect useful feedback that can inform the Vision Statement, as well as later processes
- And to begin to establish a cohort of interested parties who will work toward a later strategy.

May 19th Workshop

The initial workshop included Chapters, relevant agencies and departments, and the Management Team. As this was the initial meeting it was decided that some sense of direction, participation, and communication structure should be established prior to communicating with the People or local businesses.

- Purpose:
 - To refine objectives and goals such that they can be clearly communicated.
 - To identify roles, geography, and other basic information (**See Appendix G and Appendix H**).
 - To establish the challenges and opportunities presented to Canyon de Chelly stakeholders and those responsible for management of the Canyon.
 - To define actionable items that may be considered as part of the process.



- And to orient those involved to one another, their activities, interests, and experience with the Canyon.

- **Activities**

- Mapping (**See Appendix I**). Participants mapped specific areas and issues and reported their findings.
- Action Model (**See Appendix J**). The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Action Model was utilized to refine goals and objectives, collect additional information and to identify actionable items.
- Rapid Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities (“SWOT”) Analysis (**See Appendix K**). A SWOT analysis was completed with respect to the Canyon to understand the primary concerns and focus energies as the process advances.



- **Outcome**

- A comprehensive understanding of specific challenges, opportunities and concerns was established and documented.
- Actionable items were identified.
- The group gained a greater understanding of one another’s roles and issues relative to managing their respective aspects of the Canyon.
- Objectives and structure for subsequent meetings were established.

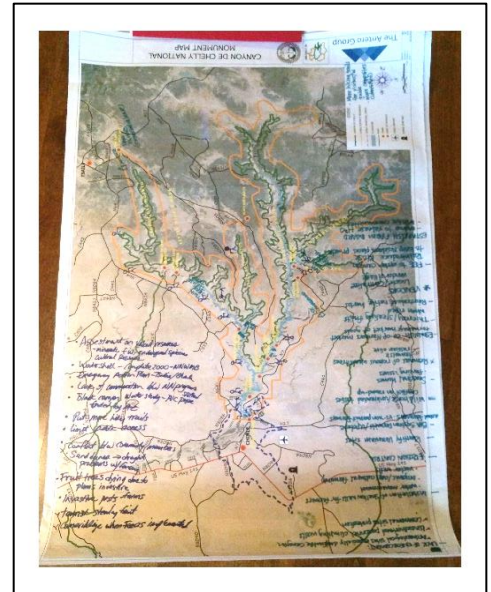
June 29th Workshop

The June 29th Workshop included a 3-hour tour of the Canyon; a steering committee workshop wherein the complexity of Canyon management, including the various roles and permits required, was discussed; and an evening workshop to collect feedback from Canyon residents and businesses.

- **Purpose**

- To collectively observe on the ground issues within the Canyon.

- To better understand the perspectives of the various entities within the Canyon.
- To refine roles, permits, and processes as currently understood.
- To relay process and collect feedback from Canyon residents and businesses.
- Activities
 - Site Tour. The Management Team toured the site and discussed specific impact areas. The tour advanced to the White House Ruins and returned, observing invasive species, erosion, vendors, and accumulated trash along the way.
 - Opportunities and Challenges (**See Appendix L**). Participants took on the role of either regulator or a resident and prioritized the challenges and opportunities for each group.
 - Regulatory Requirements (**See Appendix M and Appendix N**). A list of all the permits and departments that might be encountered by a resident or business of Canyon de Chelly was developed.
 - Stakeholder Mapping Workshop. During the evening session a mapping workshop was conducted to identify the needs and concerns of the residents and businesses.
- Outcome
 - Challenges and Opportunities were prioritized from regulator and resident perspectives.
 - Canyon concerns were observed firsthand by the Management Team.
 - Gained greater understanding of resident and business concerns.
 - Relayed that management strategy is being developed.



July 27th Workshop

The primary goal of this final workshop was to establish a Vision Statement for Canyon de Chelly and to discuss how this might advance. There were three meetings held. The first was an Executive Committee meeting intended to discuss next steps. The second was a Steering Committee meeting with the intention of identifying Vision Statement options. And lastly an open public forum was utilized to obtain additional feedback and refine and finalize the Vision Statement.

- Purpose
 - To finalize a Vision Statement.
 - To identify next steps.
- Activities
 - Survey. Conducted to inform and further refine the Vision Statement factors.
 - Vision Statement Drafts. Developed various drafts and tested each with the Steering Committee and the People.
- Outcome
 - Final Vision Statement





The Canyon de Chelly Vision

**TO RESPECTFULLY SHARE STEWARDSHIP OF CANYON VALUES,
AND TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE ITS BEAUTY, RESOURCES,
AND CULTURE FOR THE FUTURE - HÓZHO DOOLEEL.**

Improvement begins with an understanding that something could be better than it is; in some cases, the vision, such as universal suffrage or civil rights, is self-evident, while in others a more nuanced and deliberate effort is required to capture and communicate those characteristics and objectives that are most relevant for the issue. For Canyon de Chelly it was recognized in early internal discussions that establishing a strategy for managing the resources, demands, and interests of those in and around Canyon de Chelly required a stronger sense of purpose, one that incorporated the needs of the Canyon residents, the history of the area, and the global significance Canyon de Chelly represents.

Consensus around a Vision for such a critical and sensitive geography is a critical element and was considered a mandate by the Executive Committee. After much work and three workshops, a final version was debated among the steering committee and then vetted in a public forum. Generally, a time horizon of 20 years was discussed as a timeframe within which to realize the Vision, although a management plan is intended to be in place within the next two years. In a room of roughly 60 residents, business owners, Navajo and U.S. agency staff and supervisors, the following language was unanimously determined to be the optimal Vision Statement for Canyon de Chelly.

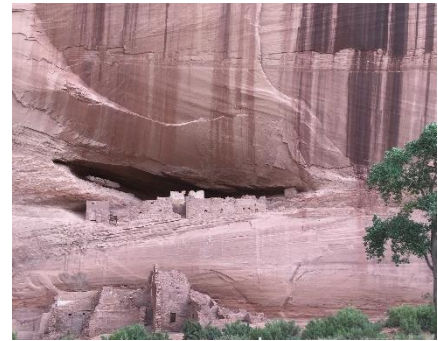
- **To respectfully share stewardship of Canyon values, and to protect and preserve its beauty, resources, and culture for the future - hózhó dooleel.**

Motivation

Canyon de Chelly's Vision Statement will drive future planning and development programs within the Canyon's geography. With the need to manage the Canyon's ever-changing demands and concerns as efficiently as possible, establishing and communicating this Vision Statement will provide an important notice to concerned Navajo citizens, organizations, and other agencies and entities that the Canyon's future has an articulated motivation.

Throughout the various workshops, and especially during the concluding workshop on July 27, consistent themes and concerns came forth. The Vision Statement seeks to relay the need to integrate the following into the future of Canyon de Chelly:

- **Share:** It was recognized that this is a shared resource and all stakeholders share a responsibility in managing and caring for the Canyon.
- **Stewardship:** Participants wanted to acknowledge that those involved are stewards of the Canyon, which implies an obligation that will be passed on to future generations. As such, we are now setting the example for those generations.
- **Canyon Values:** Canyon Values reflect the uniqueness of Canyon de Chelly for the Navajo Nation and beyond. Maintaining the values entrenched in Canyon life and respect and understanding of those values outside of the Canyon is important to recognize as strategic plans advance.
- **Protect:** There is much to be guarded against, including mismanagement of traditional practices, such as overgrazing and erosion, but also things outside of anyone's immediate control, such as climate change.
- **Preserve:** Preservation of the Canyon was a priority for all.



- **Resources:** The Canyon is replete with known and possibly unknown resources. From the multiple archeological sites, to fertile soils, to irrigation, to wildlife, and more, there is a valuable chain of resource material that, taken together, resolve into the elements that make Canyon de Chelly unique.
- **Culture:** The history, people, patterns, and place comprise a culture that belongs to Canyon de Chelly. Developing a strategy for the future management that preserves these elements is vital to those involved in formulating the Vision Statement.
- **Future:** All of this is intended for the future of the Canyon to allow for change, while retaining as much of Canyon de Chelly's place in the Navajo tradition as much as possible.
- **hózhó dooleet:** "It will be beautiful again" is a recognition of the Navajo language within the Vision as well as an intention of the spirit imbued in the Vision Statement and the Canyon itself.

Now that a Vision has been established it must be communicated and restated with frequency. Further, this Vision Statement will drive the subsequent steps during the development of management strategies for the Canyon.

The Strategy

The Vision to be achieved within the next 20 years has not been established, it is incumbent on those involved, particularly the Navajo Nation, to now develop a strategy for managing the area. To do so requires addressing various components of Canyon de Chelly, some of which will be straightforward and easy to find consensus around, while others will prove to be more complicated and take several years to implement. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Land Development**
- **Business Management**
- **Environment**
- **Archeology**
- **Access**
- **Erosion**
- **Agriculture**
- **Livestock and Grazing**
- **Wildlife**
- **Solid Waste**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Land Use**
- **Permitting**
- **Geography**
- **Resource Extraction**
- **Visitation**

Active Planning

This should be viewed as the initiation of an on-going process that requires a concise schedule, clear communication, documentation, and regular community input. We call this “Active Planning” to combat the tendency to think of planning, in any form, as something with an end result. Planning is an effort that, while documented, is on-going. Below are some of the important elements.

Process. It was once said “Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.” This is an important reminder that a plan is simply the memorialization of a process that should extend beyond the document and is on-going. For some plans the effort continues until completion, for Canyon de Chelly the process is intended to manage the area. As such, there will never truly be a point of completion for the process. Coalescing resources, sharing data, communicating response strategies, and supporting the Canyon such that it continues to strive for the Vision

established in this document is the objective. The process is initiated with this effort and will continue well past the involvement of anyone in this project. We must remember we are laying a foundation not a capstone.

Schedule. A precise and diligent adherence to a meeting and project benchmark schedule should be established and adopted early during the process. A lack of communication in the public's eyes is almost always interpreted as a lack of activity. Given that time can dissolve the best of ideas, it is important to never let more than a month lapse between public status updates on the project.

Communication. Communication of this document during and after its development will go far toward its implementation and establishing its utility. We suggest the following efforts:

- Outreach: During the planning phase every effort, including attending Chapter meetings and mailings, should be made to encourage optimal participation. The rural nature of the area makes for challenging communication. As such, an active and robust effort to reach all possible should be conducted at every point.
- Public Training Sessions: Annual training sessions should be provided to residents, businesses, and Chapters to relay the content of the strategy.
- Staff Training Sessions: Staff should be trained annually on the management plan. All new staff and volunteers should be trained, even if only temporary.
- Access: Residents, chapters, and businesses should all be given a copy of the document. Additionally, it should be posted on-line.
- Amendments: Periodic changes are likely and an amendment process should be established and integrated into the communication strategy.

Strategic Options

There are several Strategic Options that may be followed to memorialize and codify management options. As there are multiple agencies, each with its own obligations and guidelines, the option that provides the most consensus and can be readily and efficiently completed should be addressed early. This will cultivate trust and communication so that more complex concerns can be addressed most constructively later. Below is a description of options and strategies that might be followed to establish a path forward that is readily accessible and easily interpretable.

Format	Purpose	Timeframe
Joint Management Plan	A formal planning process that would include NEPA and EIS, significant public outreach, and be codified by all agencies according to their standard. Would be the most rigorous level of agreement.	3-5 years
Strategic Agreement	A “Strategic Agreement between Navajo Nation, BIA, NPS for the Cooperative Management of Canyon de Chelly” is the suggested format and title for the management effort, as it allows for the greatest process flexibility, while still attaining the goals set forth by the Vision Statement.	2-3 Years

To emphasize what has been stated above; it is important with any option to divide the planning process into distinct segments, beginning with those elements around which there is the most consensus by the various stakeholders. Building trust is done through mutual participation and consistent execution. This strategy will maximize these two critical planning components.

The Future

All that can be known about the future of Canyon de Chelly is that it will continue to experience challenges and decay if a stronger coordinated effort is not completed and implemented. This was understood in the 1980s, when the last effort was undertaken, and is observed during the intervening years, providing adequate evidence that the establishment of a strategy to ensure the enduring use and beauty of Canyon de Chelly is assembled. Those who participated in this Vision Statement are to be commended for the earnest commitment, time, energy and passion for Canyon de Chelly. The Vision is theirs to realize.

This Vision Statement offers a guide to a future that is readily attainable for Canyon de Chelly. It is a special place in the hearts and imagination of all who have visited, preserving those qualities that make it special is a worthwhile, if challenging, initiative; the vision of which has now been established.