



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management's Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation

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Executive Summary

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is developing a “Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation” (Blueprint) intended to guide investments, partnerships, outreach, and program development to respond to current demand and chart a course to meet future needs.

The Blueprint presents several major shifts in how the agency prioritizes and supports outdoor recreation. The BLM is committed to durable change, which means it must work closely with communities and partners to respond to varying recreation opportunities and pressures and seek continuous program improvements. Another principle of change is a shift from reactive recreation management to a proactive approach, enabling planning to consider sustainable resource management needs. Importantly, the Blueprint advances the “U.S. Department of the Interior Equity Action Plan” and builds on prior work through the “Connecting with Communities: BLM Recreation Strategy,” offering a new path forward that promotes equitable access to outdoor recreation opportunities, while conserving, protecting, and enhancing BLM’s one-of-a-kind resources and experiences.

As part of this Blueprint, BLM has established a new vision to proactively manage for exceptional and one-of-a-kind recreational experiences that invite all to share in the enjoyment and stewardship of their public lands and waters. The Blueprint vision includes four strategic pillars. Each pillar outlines desired outcomes, core strategies, and partnership success stories. The BLM believes these pillars will serve as the foundation for successful recreation management in the 21st century.

The Four Strategic Pillars are:

-  1. Grow and Diversify Resources for BLM Recreation
-  2. Prioritize and Embrace Partnerships
-  3. Expand Outreach and Establish a Culture of Inclusion
-  4. Meet the Demand, Protect Resources, and Improve Access



Prioritizing BLM Recreation Now

Providing recreational opportunities is central to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. As pressures to BLM recreation resources continue to climb, BLM faces a critical window to advance a transformational shift in recreation management. The bureau and its partners will continue to collaborate to respond to current pressures. This work focuses on stabilizing and enhancing program offerings, addressing impacts to resources, and supporting staff, while ensuring recreation on BLM-managed lands continues to offer exceptional and one-of-a-kind experiences.

By creating this national recreation Blueprint, the bureau declares its intent to prioritize diversifying recreation investments and to carefully consider current and future recreation demands and program needs. Developing national- and state-level action plans is vital to implementing the Blueprint. Furthermore, the Blueprint invites partners to help the agency implement actions that increase investment in recreation, improve equitable access for all Americans, and meet visitation demand while protecting resources.

The recreation Blueprint identifies potential investment opportunities that will help inform development of the President's budget, but it is not a budget document and does not imply approval of any specific action or investment. All activities and recommendations included in the report are subject to resource constraints and prioritization as part of the annual budget formulation and execution processes, as well as the availability of appropriations provided by Congress. The Blueprint does not consider future competing priorities that may need to be considered as the President's budget is developed.



Opportunities and Challenges: A Call to Action for a 21st Century Approach

The BLM manages approximately 245 million acres of public land on behalf of all Americans. These far-reaching public lands and waters are widely recognized as a “backyard to backcountry” treasure, affording a variety of recreation opportunities—from neighborhood trails to world-class destinations and a diverse mix of camping, boating, off-highway vehicle riding, recreational shooting, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and many others. BLM-managed public lands offer visitors windows into the past, which include unique geological formations and paleontological resources. Equally important to Tribal Nations are preservation of irreplaceable and sacred cultural resources that continue to connect Native people to landscapes, people, traditional values, and their ancestors.

Prized by visitors for their relative open and accessible nature, community-based destinations, and rugged and remote qualities, BLM-managed lands offer unique recreation opportunities compared to the nation’s other public lands such as national parks and national forests. The recreational experiences on BLM public lands are distinguished by the natural, geological, and cultural resources the agency manages and the relative freedom people enjoy shaping their own experiences. In turn, these experiences provide a sense of discovery, wonder, and enjoyment to the public.

More than 120 urban centers and thousands of rural towns are located within 25 miles of BLM lands. These recreational resources provide critical economic support and quality of life benefits to local communities and businesses, while also attracting visitors from across the country and abroad. Today, recreation opportunities on BLM lands annually contribute more than \$11 billion in economic output and support more than 70,000 jobs nationwide.¹

BLM recreational assets face increased demands. In fiscal year 2022, the agency recorded more than 81 million visits, representing a 40% increase in use since 2012, with almost a third of that increase occurring since 2020 (Figure 1). The BLM’s budget for recreation resources management was \$60.2 million in FY 2022, or \$0.74 per visitor, compared to 2012, which was \$0.84 per visitor.

¹ Source: The BLM: A Sound Investment for America 2022. <https://blm.gov/about/data/socioeconomic-impact-report-2022>

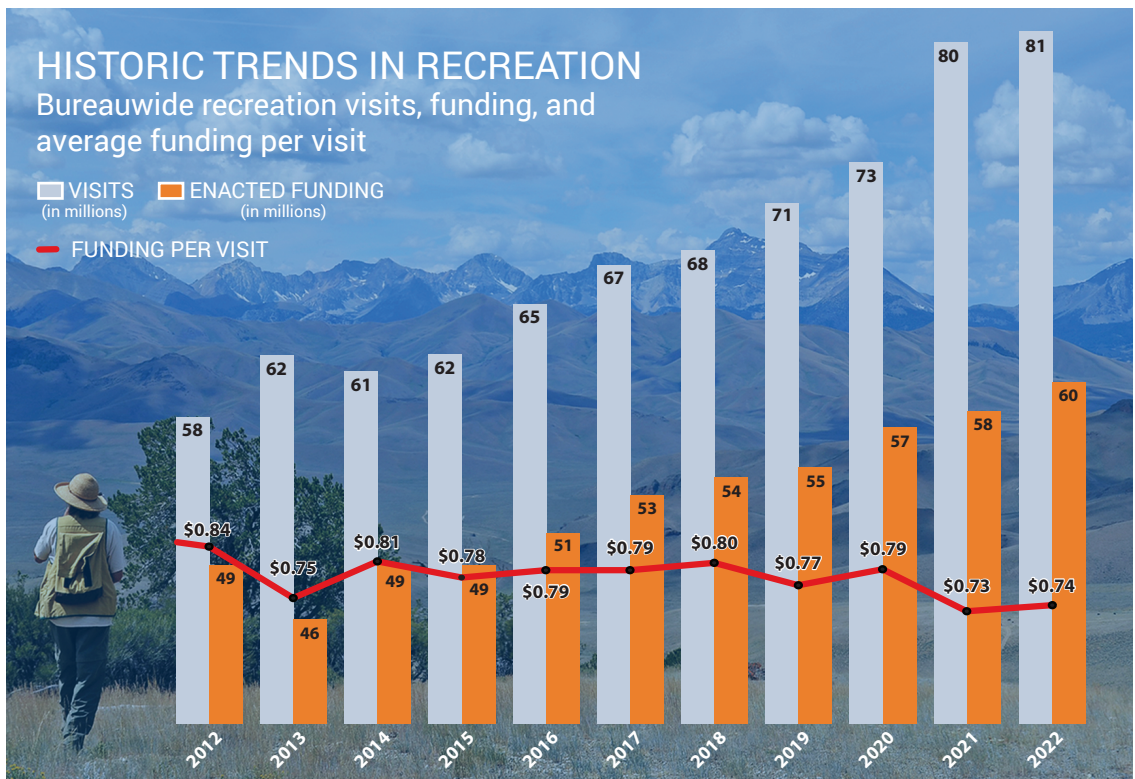


Figure 1. Historic trends in recreation use. Bureau-wide recreation visits, funding, and funding per visit from 2012 to 2022.

Going forward, BLM will expand and diversify its engagement with partner groups to achieve our shared goal of maintaining or enhancing visitor service and infrastructure in the face of rising visitation. This will be key to enhancing recreation opportunities and safeguarding vulnerable natural and cultural resources despite the demands of increased recreation combined with the challenges of climate-driven increases in wildfire, drought, and extreme weather impacts to BLM resources. Working together with our partners, we also hope to mitigate the recreation-related impacts that are beginning to occur beyond BLM's resources and boundaries, as local communities and counties face strains on law enforcement, emergency, and other services linked to new visitors.

To meet these challenges, BLM will also strive to diversify funding sources available to support recreation by growing external partnerships and increasing donations. In addition, BLM will examine fee collection to ensure that opportunities for collection available under current law are fully implemented. Significantly higher investment in BLM's recreation program from diverse sources will help BLM better manage recreation in a way that will enable future generations to enjoy the same types of experiences that current visitors expect. This would allow for important investments in recreation planning, infrastructure, interpretation, access, community engagement, and partnerships.

As BLM strengthens its focus on maintaining recreation experiences for future generations, the recreation program must also address barriers that impede equitable access to public lands and waters. Outdoor recreation has largely been dominated by economically advantaged populations despite an increasingly diverse U.S. demographic. Historically underserved and underrepresented populations² remain a small percent of outdoor recreation users on public lands. Frequently cited barriers include lack of access to transportation; high costs for participation; perceptions and challenges associated with safety; limited education, outreach, and interpretation in languages other than English; limited accessible places for people with disabilities; and a lack of representation in public lands frontline staff. The bureau believes that all visitors should be able to realize mental, physical, and spiritual benefits from public lands. Crowding, reduced access to amenities, difficulty accessing permits, and fear of negative interactions with law enforcement serve to further exacerbate both real and perceived barriers. The BLM is committed to modernizing the recreation program to acknowledge and overcome these barriers.

² Per Executive Order 13985, underserved communities are defined as, "populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life"...such as "Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality."



Finally, BLM acknowledges its responsibilities to:

- Protect the treaty, religious, subsistence, and cultural interests of federally recognized Indian Tribes.
- Ensure management reflects the nation-to-nation relationship between the United States and federally recognized Indian Tribes.
- Fulfill the United States' unique trust obligation to federally recognized Indian Tribes and their members.

BLM recreation management has the potential to both protect and enhance cultural and natural resources of significance to Indian Tribes and their citizens, including sacred religious sites, burial sites, wildlife, and sources of Indigenous foods and medicines, by directing activities away from these sites to other appropriate locations. In the context of this Blueprint, opportunities to align responsible recreation management and stewardship with enhancing and protecting these resources and the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives affords opportunities for closer coordination and, where appropriate, consultation and co-management with Tribal governments and their citizens. The BLM understands that recreation users have harmed and may continue to harm these values, bringing to light the need for more responsive and adaptable management actions.

This Blueprint will guide modernization of BLM's recreation program for the 21st century by enhancing BLM's and its partners' focus to more effectively address current challenges and respond to new needs and opportunities within available funding.



Vision

Blueprint vision: *To provide exceptional and one-of-a-kind recreational experiences that invite all to share in the enjoyment and stewardship of their public lands.*

The vision of the Blueprint includes establishing a recreation program recognized for its leadership and as a model for peers around the world. The BLM will continue to offer a spectrum of outstanding recreational experiences, both close to where people live and in more remote backcountry locations. The BLM will welcome new visitors by building an inclusive and equitable recreation program, while managing visitation and resources for the sustained benefit of current and future generations.

Achieving the vision requires transforming BLM's current recreation program, revitalizing and growing a network of partnerships, engaging diverse perspectives, and adapting in the face of change. At the same time, the bureau must address acute challenges that require prioritizing use of available funds.

The BLM will achieve the vision by focusing on four strategic pillars:

1. **Grow and Diversify Resources for BLM Recreation**
2. **Prioritize and Embrace Partnerships**
3. **Expand Outreach and Establish a Culture of Inclusion**
4. **Meet the Demand, Protect Resources, and Improve Access**

The BLM recognizes that systems change is core to the Blueprint's success and durability. A bureau-wide assessment of recreation program needs, including national and state action plans, prioritized projects, and data, will prepare BLM for future investment opportunities as they arise. Within available funding, BLM will strive to build infrastructure and workforce, shift agency culture, and adopt processes necessary to sustain improvement and results over time. The BLM commits to responding to the feedback, needs, and opportunities identified by partners, including Tribal Nations and state and local governments, and working with them toward a better recreation future.

Pathways to Success

1. Grow and Diversify Resources for BLM Recreation

The BLM will strive to identify additional funding sources for recreation that complement annual appropriations. The Blueprint will also ensure that BLM will spend its existing resources and any increases that may occur as strategically and effectively as possible. Greater investment in BLM recreation will help advance this Blueprint. New investments will also support BLM's capacity to further recreation in National Conservation Lands and strengthen and diversify BLM community engagement efforts. The collaborative, nimble, and adaptive approach this Blueprint presents is designed to benefit all BLM lands and the public we serve.

→ Desired Outcomes

- » The recreation program is prioritized and resourced appropriately to meet current and future needs.
- » The BLM provides exceptional opportunities for remote, natural, and low-contact recreational experiences across most BLM lands.
- » There is a measurable reduction of impacts on sensitive resources and decreased instances of unfavorable visitor experiences.

→ Core Strategies

A. Identify and Prioritize Recreation Investment, Staffing, and Operational Needs.

A bureau-wide assessment of recreation program needs, including state-level step down plans, prioritized projects, and data, will prepare BLM for effectively using future investments if additional funds become available. The BLM will:

- » Develop, rank, and regularly revise top recreation planning, management infrastructure, staffing, and service needs.

- » Recognize that recreation is not the same everywhere; prioritize the most intensive management actions to meet resource management objectives.
- » Implement ranking and funding criteria for infrastructure to maximize beneficial impacts.
- » Develop and codify a staffing structure (through the bureau's tables of organization) that reflects recreation program needs and incorporates support services (e.g., engineers, human resources, contracting, grants, agreements).

B. Diversify Partner Support to Meet High-Priority Investment Needs in Outdoor Recreation.

To meet the growing recreation demands, current annual appropriations need to be complemented with a range of other funding sources. The BLM will initiate proactive, focused efforts to identify sources of additional recreation funding, including:

- » Evaluate near-term opportunities to leverage Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act funding, targeting resilience and restoration to support aligned recreation program priorities. This includes deploying Youth, Veterans, and Indian Youth Service Corps teams to accomplish priority recreation enhancement projects.
- » Prioritize identifying and using available opportunities to acquire public access and provide equitable access for all public land visitors under new public laws, including the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (2019); Great American Outdoors Act (2020); Modernizing Access to Our Public Land Act (2022); and others.
- » Track federal highways and similar state and federal grant funding opportunities that can support recreation projects.

- » Develop recreation program investment opportunities for volunteers, the Foundation for America's Public Lands, donors, and corporate sponsorships.
- » Amplify opportunities to implement BLM Manual 1105, "Donations, Solicitation, and Fundraising," pursuant to high-priority recreation needs.
- » Assess and implement opportunities to apply the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide recreational access and opportunities on federal recreational lands and waters, while evaluating and piloting approaches for equitable access to fee areas among underserved populations.

Partnership Success Story

Foundation for America's Public Lands

Congress recently chartered the Foundation for America's Public Lands as the BLM's official charitable partner. As a national organization, the foundation is committed to working with the agency and its many partners to connect people to public lands and sustain lands for the benefit of all. The foundation focuses on three areas:

- **Awareness:** Educate people about the value of public lands and waters and inspire everyone to experience wonder.
- **Access:** Provide equitable access to our public lands and waters to ensure all people can connect, enjoy, and benefit from all they have to offer.
- **Stewardship:** Generate resources and cultivate partnerships to protect the resiliency of our public lands and waters for future generations.

As one of its first program initiatives, the Foundation for America's Public Lands is focusing on recreation and convening bureau partners in joint conversations about how to enhance the quality and diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands, while also ensuring that these resources are managed sustainably and responsibly.



C. Leverage New Technologies to Improve Fee Collection and Increase Outdoor Recreation Opportunities.

New fee collection and e-commerce technologies—including U.S. Treasury mobile point-of-sale processes, digital passes via Recreation.gov, and solar-powered remote off-grid kiosks—can increase options for the public to pay recreation fees. This, in turn, offers new pathways for delivering education, interpretation, and other resources that enhance recreation experiences and stewardship. The BLM will:

- » Expand use of new fee collection technologies to enhance the public recreation experience.
- » Evaluate and reduce technological and financial barriers for underserved communities to access BLM lands.
- » Align education and interpretation efforts to reach users through improved digital platforms and further reinforce principles of shared stewardship and responsible recreation.
- » Evaluate current fee systems to ensure fees are set appropriately.

Partnership Success Story

Yakima River Canyon's Journey to Fee Collection Technology and Improved Visitor Amenities



The BLM's Yakima River Canyon recreation sites (Washington State) have made the journey from sleepy river access sites in the 1980s to today's high-use, developed recreation fee sites. Along the way, BLM has continually improved customer service by upgrading these dispersed recreation sites with new facilities including outhouses, developed boat ramps, and campsites. The Yakima River Canyon is now the busiest BLM Washington recreation area, with more than 500,000 visitors annually.

In high-use visitor destinations where the bureau provides amenities, user fees are an important way to offset costs as well as improve facilities. As demand at these sites increased and staff and budgets allowed, BLM began slowly implementing fees in the Yakima River Canyon. Day-use fees for the peak season were introduced in 1998, then charged year-round. Overnight camping fees were added in 2008, and then campsites became reservable through Recreation.gov in 2015.

Continuing the efforts to upgrade sites and improve customer service, in the summer of 2021, the Wenatchee Field Office initiated a pilot at the Roza Recreation Site in the Yakima River Canyon to test a new type of fee collection system, a remote off-grid kiosk (ROK). The pay station allows visitors to pay recreation site use fees on the spot, using credit or debit cards. Onsite power, cell, and WIFI are not required. The ROK is easy for visitors to use, improves bureau staff efficiency, reduces vandalism because of the lack of cash onsite, and provides information in different languages. A remote off-grid kiosk can work well for recreation sites that do not have entrance booths or full-time personnel. More improvements for the Yakima River Canyon are ahead. The BLM is planning to add riparian habitat and two brand new recreation sites in the next few years.

2. Prioritize and Embrace Partnerships

Closer partnership with local, state, and Tribal Nation governments; nonprofits; and the private sector is necessary to prioritize investments, strengthen outreach and interpretation, and enhance stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

REACH OUT TO YOUR LOCAL OR STATE BLM LEADERS

The best way to learn about recreation efforts in your area is to talk with your local BLM staff.

- » District and field offices: District and field managers report to the state director and are the lead decision makers for how recreation and other resources are managed on their units. Recreation staff conduct planning and support the line officers in other issues related to recreation, including permits and fees, travel and transportation management, accessibility, tourism, and interpretation. To look for your local field office, go to www.blm.gov and click on the “Contact Us” tab. Click on the state of interest and then look for the district office list.
- » News and events: The bureau announces major news on its press release webpage (www.blm.gov/press-release). Be sure to check the state or regional press release pages for local information about projects and events.

Leadership at the state, regional, and national levels review and inform strategic direction, funding, and policy and can be good resources for understanding bigger picture issues.

- » States and regions: The BLM includes 12 state or regional offices. State directors lead the management of BLM lands within their state or region. Each state or region has a staff person who serves as the recreation lead on recreation.
- » National: Leadership at BLM Headquarters (www.blm.gov/about/organization-chart) sets the overall policy and regulation direction and programming across the country.

→ Desired Outcomes

- » The BLM will prioritize opportunities for shared stewardship and improved management.
- » A diversity of visitors will experience BLM lands broadly across many locations and places, and the bureau’s recreation program will contribute to more open and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities for all.

→ Core Strategies

A. Improve Partnership Models with Local, State, and Tribal Nation Governments; Nonprofits; and the Private Sector.

To prioritize partnerships, BLM will:

- » In concert with the Foundation for America’s Public Lands, develop shared communications with diverse partners that enhance interpretation, community engagement, and education for current and potential BLM recreation users and reinforce principles of shared stewardship and responsible recreation.
- » Strengthen partnerships with state divisions of outdoor recreation, and explore models for shared services and co-investment.
- » Improve Tribal Nation engagement, consultation, and co-stewardship to better safeguard sensitive cultural areas and sites and to incorporate feedback from Tribes on how they envision their use of and access to public lands.
- » Use successful agreement models to advance recreation improvements in concert with local governments and nonprofit partners.
- » Incorporate relationship-building and partner development into employee training, job descriptions, and performance measures.



Partnership Success Story

Indigenous Voices on National Trails

When we walk on a trail on public lands, do we think of the Indigenous people who walked there before? What did these lands mean to them prior to the trail's designation and today? How are these connections being honored in the management of these sacred landscapes?

The “Native Lands-National Trails” project was designed to acknowledge these connections and strengthen Indigenous partnerships along the national scenic and historic trails through action and support for Indigenous voices.



The project's origins began when BLM's National Scenic and Historic Trails Program Lead reached out to Native Lands Digital and the Partnership for the National Trails System in 2020. In 2022, the project's newly created team hired Kiana Etsate-Gashytewa through the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps, an organization that leads underrepresented Indigenous youth and young adults in conservation service programs that reconnect participants to the land, their cultural heritage, and their traditions, hoping to create pathways to education and employment in these fields. Etsate-Gashytewa is from the Pueblo of Zuni and Hopi and has bachelor of science degrees in political science and applied Indigenous studies from Northern Arizona University.

After a great deal of work among these partner organizations, the result is a new interactive GIS map that shows the intersection and relationship between Indigenous lands and the National Trail System. The map, a resource guide, and several webinars about the project and working with Tribal Nations were made available for public use on the Partnership for the National Trails System website in the winter of 2023. The map is just a start to what those involved hope to accomplish. “Acknowledging the land is the very first step, but we have to make progress towards the second and third steps of giving back to the land and making sure Indigenous people are at the table,” says Etsate-Gashytewa.

Partnership Success Story

Long-Term Relationships Support Community Recreation Economy

Once a month over the last 25 years, a group of community members, nonmotorized recreation interests, and government agencies have gathered as the “Trail Mix Committee” to talk about trails near Moab, Utah. In 2019, the group became an official Grand County body, but the mission has remained the same throughout: to work with BLM and other land managers to propose, then create, many of the trails around Moab. The Trail Mix has helped develop and maintain a long list of trails through volunteer events.



Trail Mix volunteers and their agency and business partners do this work to not only enhance the quality of life for the people who live in and around Moab, but also to provide amazing experiences for visitors, thus bolstering the outdoor recreation economy.

Membership in the group includes people who represent hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, trail running, skiing, and climbing; elected officials and staff members from Moab City and Grand County; representatives from local businesses and nonprofits; and public land managers. Over the years, the people involved have not only worked in partnership, but they have developed relationships.

“[I’m] aware of other similar regional efforts to do the same thing—to build trails, to build access to public lands—and all the hurdles and all the stop signs they run into,” said Colin Topper, Chair of Trail Mix. “Where[as] every month...we sit down with our committee, with all of our land managers...all of the things that would otherwise be hurdles, we can just talk about at one meeting.”

Partnership Success Story

Long-Term Partnership Benefits Red Rock Canyon NCA



The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and Friends of Red Rock Canyon (FORRC) began working together in the bureau’s first formal partnership with volunteers in 1984. FORRC supports a robust volunteer program that provides light trail maintenance, canyon cleanup, wildlife habitat improvement, and graffiti removal, among other services.

In addition to volunteerism, FORRC helps support events on National Public Lands Day, Martin Luther King’s Birthday, National Trails Day, and Volunteer Appreciation Day. FORRC has also been awarded grants to contract for the development of recreation area management plans in the southwest and northeast portions of the national conservation area. This innovative partnership consistently demonstrates new and creative ways the bureau can add capacity through partners. FORRC helps the BLM provide visitors with a high-quality experience while furthering the conservation mission of Red Rock Canyon.

B. Enhance Community Engagement.

BLM recreation staff are regularly tasked with leading community engagement efforts for an entire field office, such as interpretation, education, partnerships, volunteers, and youth corps. Depending on the availability of funding, to enhance this effort, BLM will establish dedicated community liaison positions, which will encourage recreation staff to collaborate on community engagement efforts but not be solely responsible for them. A dedicated community liaison will provide clear pathways for communities to engage in caring for public lands, foster connections, cultivate knowledge, inspire stewardship, and serve as a trusted partner. The BLM will provide clear guidance and create a consistent framework for community liaison outreach and partnership

development and clarify the position's relationship with appropriate district, field, and state leadership and support positions (e.g., contracting officers, Tribal liaisons). The community liaisons will:

- » Be empowered to develop new outreach, engagement, and partnership opportunities.
- » Engage communities, especially those with environmental justice concerns, in planning for resilient recreation projects and prioritizing recreation investments.
- » Work with the BLM National Training Center to develop curriculum and outreach strategies to guide staff and professionalize this effort.

Partnership Success Story

Strong Partnerships Support Integrated Community Trails System



Idaho's Wood River Valley is full of recreational opportunities thanks to many formal and informal partnerships between the BLM Shoshone Field Office and federal, state, county, and community entities. Nordic and backcountry skiing, snowmobiling, motorcycle riding, mountain biking, horseback riding, and hiking trails abound in the valley, and most of them begin in the urban interface where homes, farms, and ranches border BLM land.

Multiple partnerships make these trails possible. The Shoshone Field Office and the Sawtooth National Forest Ketchum Ranger District signed a formal agreement to administer special recreation permits, and the field office coordinates with the Blaine County Recreation District to manage, maintain, and design single-track trails. Blaine County commissioners supported development of the Wood River Valley Recreation and Access Plan, and the field office has a memorandum of understanding with Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Blaine County, Cities of Bellevue and Hailey, and the Wood River Valley Land Trust to mitigate recreation impacts on deer and elk during the winter. In addition to these formal partnerships, the field office works with organizations such as the Wood River Trails Coalition, Backcountry Skiers Alliance, and the snowmobile club, as well as outdoor gear stores, developers, community leaders, and other stakeholders.

“Even more important than the partnerships are relationships,” said John Kurtz, outdoor recreation planner. “The take home message is that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. There must be a collective 'we' and no 'I'. There's a lot of give and take, listening, and attending meetings that make you wonder why you are there, but this is how relationships are formed and trust is established. It all takes time but is worth the investment.”

3. Expand Outreach and Establish a Culture of Inclusion

Enhance communications, outreach, and interpretation to reach current and new users, distinguish BLM's unique recreation resources, and invite the public to enjoy and conserve their public lands.

→ Desired Outcomes

- » Improve BLM's brand reach by leveraging the one-of-a-kind recreational experiences available on BLM lands.
- » BLM outdoor recreation opportunities will increasingly be known and accessible to more people, youth, and underserved communities, as a place for them to go and enjoy.
- » The BLM's diverse recreation users will embrace and practice conservation values such as "leave no trace," "respect and protect," "pack it in, pack it out," "tread lightly," and "recreate responsibly."
- » Diverse communities will increasingly see themselves in the make-up of BLM staff and visitors, helping to ensure public lands are open and accessible to all and the BLM recreation program is more responsive to the needs of all Americans.

→ Core Strategies

A. Improve BLM's Brand Reach.

Improving BLM's brand reach will help form a lasting positive connection to BLM lands, while empowering future stewards of public lands. In concert with user groups, nonprofits, the Foundation for America's Public Lands, and other partners, BLM will:

- » Develop messaging and communications campaigns intended to improve the public's recognition of the unique recreational benefits available on BLM lands.
- » Use a consistent and recognizable BLM image and design to promote the agency's brand, including marketing through our partners.
- » Reinforce the distinction between recreational opportunities available on lands administered by BLM and other federal or state agencies.
- » Highlight BLM's professional management of public lands and waters.

Partnership Success Story

Partnership to Support Safe and Responsible Recreation on Public Lands: "Respect. Connect. Protect."



**Respect.
Connect.
Protect.**

A new national communications effort was launched in the spring of 2023 to help people understand what to expect when visiting public lands and how to recreate responsibly. Nonprofit and industry partners are playing a pivotal role in directing visitors to BLM online resources and getting the word out about safely visiting remote areas—all in a fun and creative way.

Led by Conservation Lands Foundation in partnership with the BLM, the Friends Grassroots Network, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, Tread Lightly!, Leave No Trace, and The Corps Network, "Respect. Connect. Protect." is a multiyear social media and internet-based campaign to support enthusiastic, respectful, and safe visits on National Conservation Lands. The campaign seeks to inspire each visitor to be a better steward of the land: respecting the awesome power of nature, connecting with the splendor of the land, and protecting its beauty along with the natural, cultural, and historic resources. Safety messaging is included as well. Often, National Conservation Lands do not typically have services like cell phone coverage, water stations, or rangers, and the messaging helps visitors be better prepared and informed.

B. Promote Diversity in All Programs, Publications, and Websites.

The bureau will prioritize efforts to incorporate and promote diversity in all its programs, publications, and websites—both externally and internally—to better represent all public land visitors. The BLM will:

- » Expand diversity, equity, and inclusion improvements to programs, exhibits, signs, and publications at visitor centers and education facilities to better reflect the nation's diversity and to better engage underrepresented groups.
- » Provide interpretation, education, and outreach materials in multiple languages.
- » Recruit and increase the number of volunteers from underserved and underrepresented communities.
- » Expand distribution of Every Kid Outdoors passes to 4th graders in underserved and underrepresented communities.
- » Ensure recreation websites are more accessible to visitors.

Partnership Success Story

Expanding Outreach through Art and Music



In 2022, the BLM Artist-in-Residence program featured a multisite tour when Native American jazz trumpeter Delbert Anderson and his ensemble D'DAT visited several National Conservation Lands sites. The tour was the first of its kind in BLM history and creatively forged new relationships with Tribes and communities through a nontraditional medium for a federal agency—music.

For more than a year, a BLM planning team composed of key Headquarters staff, representatives from each of the tour sites, and Delbert Anderson met regularly to plan the tour. The team created a new model through the BLM Artist-in-Residence program whereby Native American voices (Anderson and D'DAT) led the expression of the value of public lands through music inspired by Tribal stories and music. At each location, Anderson and D'DAT drew inspiration for new musical compositions by researching Indigenous land stories and music, meeting with local Tribal leaders, and gaining a hands-on experience exploring public lands. Research days set up between band members and local Tribal leaders were kept private, allowing for a direct, unfiltered connection that built trust and understanding. Audience-centered public workshops, facilitated by Anderson and D'DAT at each location, engaged attendees as co-creators of new music and poetry that created new connections to public lands. Anderson and D'DAT concluded each visit with a public performance to celebrate and foster deeper connections to America's public lands through music and Tribal stories. Throughout, BLM staff facilitated and empowered these connections.

This tour forged new connections between the BLM, Tribal leaders, communities, and public lands. It amplified Native American voices, stories, and music and demonstrated their value in fostering public lands stewardship. The tour also helped establish trust and raised BLM's positive standing nationally, in the host communities, and in key Tribal communities.

Partnership Success Story

Partnering to Inspire the Next Generation of Natural Resource Professionals



The nonprofit Tread Lightly! has partnered with BLM California since 2020. Over the past few years, Tread Lightly! and BLM California have participated in 16 events providing educational outreach and ethics awareness to thousands of attendees. Hundreds of volunteers have participated in cleanup events resulting in more than 20 tons of trash removal.

Recently, Tread Lightly!, the El Centro Field Office, and several other

organizations hosted a Girl Scout trail ride to inspire young women to pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) careers and enjoy the outdoors. A variety of speakers, including BLM leaders and an engineer who works for electric vehicle company Rivian, shared information about Indigenous peoples' connections and the historic significance of the area, wildlife management, and the roles of math and planning in the daily work of engineers. The ride showcased several points of interest along the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, Yuha Geoglyph, and Yuha Well, all situated in the Yuha Basin.

C. Build and Retain a Workforce Reflecting the Face of the Nation.

The workforce of BLM should reflect the diversity of the nation to ensure visitors feel represented on their public lands. The BLM will:

- » Diversify BLM's recreation staff candidate pipeline by building the foundation for data-driven recruiting strategies.
- » Advance ongoing efforts agencywide such as Schedule A and direct hire authorities.
- » Increase outreach to Minority Serving Institutions, including but not limited to, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions.
- » Increase outreach to Tribal Colleges and Universities.
- » Work with Youth Corps, Direct Hire Authority, and Indian Youth Service Corps to reach, train, and hire the next generation of recreation professionals.
- » Seek to recruit participants from underrepresented communities by marketing opportunities to job boards, minority and veteran hiring services, and organizations serving diverse student populations through existing BLM partners and programs including the Indian Youth Service Corps.
- » Continue to partner with youth service corps organizations to identify future stewards and conservation leaders from diverse audiences that are interested in pursuing careers in the natural and cultural resources professions.
- » Develop workforce retention strategies that include attention to the culture of working for BLM to ensure new staff are welcomed and supported.

Partnership Success Story

Working in Partnership to Expose Young People to the Outdoors

The BLM works in partnership with the nonprofit organization Wilderness Inquiry, whose Canoemobile program tours the country with a fleet of 24-foot canoes and a crew of trained outdoor educators to connect communities to their local waterways and public lands. BLM sites, such as Cosumnes River Preserve (California), the Salt Lake Field Office (Utah), and local partners host the Canoemobile program each spring. In 2022, the program was expanded to include the Northeastern States District. BLM staff organized the Canoemobile event at Lincoln Park on the Milwaukee River and Lakeshore State Park on the shores of Lake Michigan. The event was made available to communities who have fewer opportunities to experience their waterways in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Canoemobile brings classroom learning outside in order to engage youth in science, history, geography, and outdoor ethics. It also creates pathways for young people to pursue educational and career opportunities in the outdoors.



Partnership Success Story

Building Trails and Community with Indian Youth Service Corps



On a cloudy spring morning, BLM Oregon Division of Resources staff joined students from the Chemawa Indian School on a trail maintenance project as part of the Indian Youth Service Corps initiative. The meeting was about much more than the project at hand.

The Indian Youth Service Corps initiative is a partnership-based initiative that provides Native youth hands-on experience in land management, training in basic employment skills, and pay for their community-focused stewardship

work. The BLM and the State of Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission have joined together through the Western Oregon Tribal Youth Project Cooperative Agreement.

The goal? To hire Native youth to conduct conservation projects that are mutually beneficial to BLM and to Tribes. Together, the BLM and the State of Oregon have offered a total of \$100,000 for youth projects in western Oregon.

AntFarm Youth Services coordinated the trail project and oversaw the youth crew. They brought together the BLM, students from the Chemawa Indian School, and a young adult leader from the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs. The crew improved and maintained campgrounds; picnic sites; and hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails within the Molalla River Trail System.

Through the initiative, Indigenous young people are building connections, learning practical skills, and gaining an interest in natural resource careers. The BLM is strengthening relationships with sovereign Tribal nations and taking better care of our land together.

D. Advance Responsible Recreation Values.

Forming connections and educating our public land users will empower them to take responsibility for their public lands and foster a strong sense of stewardship. The BLM will:

» Work with its partners to advance responsible recreation values to surrounding communities, youth, and new and existing visitors.

» Empower visitors to become stewards of their public lands and waters through improved education and interpretation.

4. Meet the Demand, Protect Resources, and Improve Access

To meet the demand for increased visitation while protecting resources, BLM will modernize and update recreation management plans and actions to ensure sensitive sites are protected. Such action will also, where needed, provide improved access to public lands to increase opportunities for outdoor recreation. To better understand what experiences, benefits, and values public lands offer, BLM will continue to improve its understanding of visitor use through emerging technologies and contemporary data collection methodologies.

GET INVOLVED IN RECREATION PLANNING

Management Planning

- » The public can comment on resource management plans (RMPs) as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. RMPs describe the big-picture management approach at the state office or unit level. It is in the RMP that the bureau designates special or extensive recreation management areas.
- » Once an RMP is in place, offices or units develop implementation-level plans. For recreation, these are typically recreation area management plans (RAMPs) and travel management plans (TMPs).
- » Specific projects are listed on the bureau's ePlanning site (eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/home) as they go through environmental analysis and public involvement.

Resource Advisory Councils

- » The BLM has 28 Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) in the western states to seek advice from the public on management of public lands and resources. These citizen-based groups provide an opportunity for individuals from a variety of backgrounds and interests to have a voice in the management of these lands. RAC meetings are open to the public and regularly serve as opportunities to engage public input into local recreation management decisions.

→ Desired Outcomes

- » BLM processes will more accurately and consistently estimate visitor use across the landscape.
- » BLM practices will more rapidly identify anticipated impacts to sensitive lands to support proactive management actions.
- » The BLM will develop and revise recreation and travel management plans to provide timely guidance for visitor use and protection of resources.
- » BLM actions lead to increased outdoor recreational access to public lands lacking adequate legal access.

→ Core Strategies

A. Develop Sustainable and Equitable Recreation Management Plans and Integrate Recreation Needs and Opportunities in Land Use Planning.

Recreation management plans and land use planning allow BLM to collaborate with partners to incorporate changing environments and conditions into future management actions. The BLM will:

- » Prioritize recreation and travel management planning to ensure resource management plans and implementation plans (i.e., recreation area management plans, travel and transportation management plans) provide equitable and sustainable recreation opportunities for all visitors, while protecting environmental and cultural resources.
- » Develop and use new demographic data analytics to inform and guide recreation management planning projects.
- » Integrate the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council guidance and framework to support BLM recreation planning, implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management.

- » Ensure recreation planning is integrated with land management planning to:
 - Identify current and future desired conditions and proactively manage and maintain the one-of-a-kind BLM recreation experience.
 - Promote underused programs or locations in thoughtful and sustainable ways to provide new forms of recreation.
- Work with partners to provide and promote distinct recreation and tourism opportunities (e.g., heritage tourism on national scenic and historic trails or scenic byways).
- Integrate needs for climate resilience.
- » Promote and ensure underserved community voices are represented in recreation and land use planning and implementation decisions.

Partnership Success Story

BLM Arizona Responds to Visitor Demand with Recreational Shooting Sites

Recreational shooting is a longstanding use of BLM-managed public lands, when conducted safely and responsibly and in compliance with applicable land use plans. In the large metropolitan area of Phoenix, Arizona, where public lands are in the wildland-urban interface, BLM Arizona's Phoenix District Office recognized the need for a more managed approach, and after several years of planning and preparation, in the fall of 2022, opened the nation's first BLM-developed recreational target shooting sites.

The developed sites offer shooting sports enthusiasts enhanced access and safety through varying levels of site development, including firing lines, backstops, side berms to separate shooting lanes, concrete pads, and restrooms. The sites were selected because they are easily accessible and have minimal conflicts with other recreational activities or with natural or cultural resources, housing developments, commercial permits, or energy and telecommunications lines.

Initial visitor feedback is positive. The district office is partnering with the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and Arizona State University to conduct visitor use surveys on recreational target shooting.

This project builds upon years of BLM Arizona's efforts with partners such as Arizona Game and Fish Department and shooting sports groups to educate the public on safe and responsible recreational target shooting on public lands. These include running public service announcements in Phoenix-area theaters and on cable television and responsible recreation campaigns on social media.



Partnership Success Story

Proactive Recreation Planning

The BLM uses resource management plans (RMPs) to plan management actions to keep public landscapes healthy and productive. The Colorado River Valley Field Office developed an RMP with a “recreation appendix” to ensure that management actions are clear. Establishing the appendix is critical in achieving desired outcomes for public lands users, such as creating opportunities for people to access outdoor recreation close to the town.

“We have been able to build greater community ownership and stewardship of recreation and natural resources by providing clear guidance that our partners and the public can see,” said Alan Czepinski, outdoor recreation planner for the field office.



The recreation appendix includes specific best management guidance that has proven to be very helpful with implementation-level planning in special recreation management areas. The guidance highlights the importance of adaptive management, which focuses on a cycle of designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting. Through stakeholder engagement, the field office continues to conduct every step of the adaptive management cycle. The field office also monitors the success of their recreation management actions with the use of visitor satisfaction surveys to measure if desired outcomes are being achieved and public land visitors are benefiting.

Partnership Success Story

BLM Alaska Partnership Builds on Success and Eyes New Long-Distance Trail



Coordinating funding, sustainable construction, and maintenance of accessible trails across the largest state may sound like a monumental task—and it is. For more than a decade, a long-term partnership between BLM Alaska and the nonprofit Alaska Trails has increased recreational trail resources and improved public awareness of BLM resources. As provided for in the 2023 Consolidated

Appropriations Act, BLM Alaska and Alaska Trails will begin navigating a new 500-mile-long proposed trail route while expanding partnerships.

In 2018, BLM Alaska began supporting the Alaska Trails annual Land Managers Forum through a cooperative financial agreement.

“The event brings together federal, state, and local land management agencies, as well as multiple NGOs and user groups, to collaborate and find innovative solutions to common issues we all experience,” said BLM Alaska State Recreation Lead Zach Million. “Some of those issues include dramatic increases in post pandemic visitation, building capacity through partnerships, and looking at the variety of funding and grant sources available for planned projects.”

Alaska Trails has proposed an exciting idea for the Alaska Long Trail, which could reach from Seward to Fairbanks. With new congressional legislation and funding in 2023, BLM Alaska will spearhead a feasibility study on the proposed 500-mile-long trail. Zach Million expects to build on the relationships already established through the Land Managers Forum to help support outreach and shape Alaska’s next long-distance recreation opportunity.

B. Improve Visitor Use Data and Knowledge of Public Land Visitors Expectations Using New Methods and Emerging Technologies.

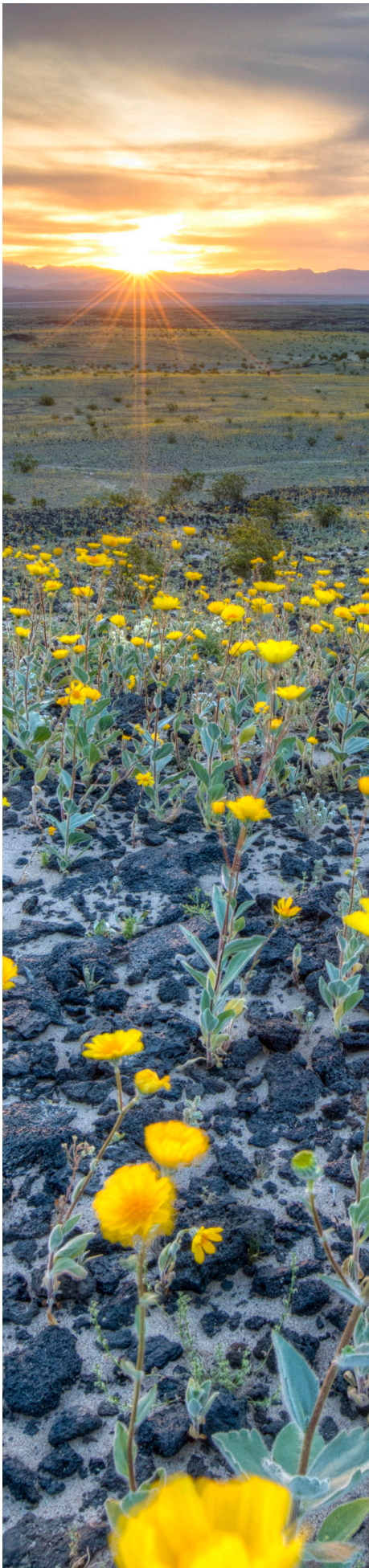
Meeting future recreation demand and protecting resources requires improving the bureau's understanding of visitor use, expectations, and experiences. The BLM will:

- » Standardize measures and methodologies for visitor use data collection while developing a greater understanding of the demographics of public land users. The BLM will accomplish this, in part, by exploring new data collection methods (which include citizen science notes) and expanding existing approved data collection methods such as "outcomes-focused management visitor assessments."
- » Use emerging technologies to better understand the value and outcomes (experiences and benefits) the public receives from recreation on public lands. Examples include crowd-sourced data, digital map downloads, and mobile app-based data.
- » Use online surveys and focus groups to understand both positive and negative outcomes visitors obtain from recreation on BLM lands and to inform future decision making.

C. Improve Access to BLM Lands Currently Landlocked or Needing Improved Access.

Public laws, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (1965); John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (2019); and Modernizing Access to our Public Land Act (2022), provide opportunities for expanding access to public lands. The BLM will:

- » Seek public input to identify and prioritize BLM lands lacking access or significantly restricted to public access.
- » Develop and make public BLM's priority access list.
- » Ensure the Land and Water Conservation Fund and BLM processes prioritize acquisition of recreational access to public lands and waters on the priority access list.



Next Steps

The BLM's "Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation" provides a new vision and framework for protecting and enhancing the recreational values of BLM-managed public lands. The BLM recognizes it cannot achieve a new vision for recreation management without working closely with the agency's federal, Tribal, state, local, nonprofit, and other partners.

Near-Term Next Steps

In sharing this Blueprint, BLM invites partners to share their feedback to further enhance the vision and its implementation. The bureau and the Foundation for America's Public Lands anticipate supporting a series of roundtables to allow partners to share their perspectives and further explore partnership needs and opportunities. Additionally, BLM has created an email address to receive and consider written feedback on the Blueprint (BLM_HQ_Recreation_Feedback@blm.gov) and is encouraging local partners to reach out to district and field offices to discuss opportunities they see to advance the Blueprint's goals.

Long-Term Next Steps

Over the coming months, BLM will work with partners to develop national and state action plans to ensure progress towards the vision outlined in the Blueprint. Through shared investment, stronger partnerships, and improved engagement, together we can sustain the quality and diversity of outdoor recreation experiences for future generations.



Appendix: List of Foundational Publications

This appendix provides a list of priorities and strategies from which this Blueprint is built.

Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (2021)

U.S. Department of the Interior FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

- » Strategic Goal 2: Conserve, Protect, Manage, and Restore Natural and Cultural Resources in the Face of Climate Change and Other Stressors
 - » Strategic Objective 2.1: Lands, Waters, and Heritage are Conserved for Present and Future Generations
 - » Strategic Objective 2.3: People Find Enjoyment and Take Pride in Our Lands, Waters and Heritage

U.S. Department of the Interior Equity Action Plan (2022)

- » Action 1: Build upon the Department's data strategies to improve the collection of equity-related data.
- » Action 4: Increase opportunities to access public lands and waters, prioritizing access to recreation areas and services in historically underserved and disadvantaged communities.

BLM Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Strategic Plan (2022)

- » Goal 1: BLM Leadership Clearly Demonstrates Accountability and Commitment
- » Goal 2: BLM Improves Work Environment Through Continuous Communication, Education, and Awareness
- » Goal 3: BLM Aligns Recruitment Efforts and Workforce Demographics with the Nation It Serves
- » Goal 4: BLM Values, Develops, Mentors, and Retains Its Workforce
- » Goal 5: All BLM Employees Share Responsibility for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility

Connecting with Communities: BLM Recreation Strategy (2018)

- » Vision: By increasing and improving collaboration with community service providers, the BLM will help communities produce greater well-being and socioeconomic health and will deliver outstanding recreation experiences to visitors while sustaining the distinctive character of public lands recreation settings.

BLM Education, Interpretation and Youth Engagement National Strategy (2013)

- » Vision: Education, interpretation, and youth programs are essential for the BLM to achieve its mission of sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands.

The National Landscape Conservation System 15-Year Strategy, 2010-2025: The Geography of Hope (2010)

- » Theme 1: Ensuring the Conservation, Protection, and Restoration of NLCS Values. Primacy of conservation within the NLCS, how science serves to further conservation, and to provide for compatible use that protects NLCS resources and values.
- » Theme 2: Collaboratively Managing the NLCS as Part of the Larger Landscape. Building a better conservation model through collaborative management.
- » Theme 3: Raising Awareness of the Value and Benefits of the BLM's NLCS. Raise public awareness and understanding of the NLCS, cultivate relationships, promote community stewardship of BLM-managed public land, and provide for use and enjoyment of present and future generations.
- » Theme 4: Building upon BLM's Commitment to Conservation. Promote a model of conservation excellence internally, through improved understanding and fully integrating the NLCS within the BLM.