



VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT Fact Sheet

Land and water managers from across the United States and Canada have similar goals: Providing high-quality outdoor recreation experiences and protecting natural and cultural resources as visitor use increases and public expectations change. Managing people and places requires a comprehensive approach that considers community vitality, individual and collective connections to the outdoors, and the resilience of natural and cultural resources.

Interagency Visitor Use Management Council (IVUMC)

DEFINITIONS

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT

Visitor use management is the proactive and adaptive process for managing characteristics of visitor use and the natural and managerial setting using a variety of strategies and tools to achieve and maintain desired resource conditions and visitor experiences.

VISITOR CAPACITY

A component of visitor use management, is the maximum amounts and types of visitor use that an area can accommodate while achieving and maintaining desired resource conditions and visitor experiences consistent with the purposes for which the area was established.



RESOURCES

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT (VUM) FRAMEWORK

The IVUMC is made up of six federal land and water management agencies: BLM, NPS, USFS, NOAA, USFWS, and USACOE. Representatives from these agencies work together to develop guidance for consistent planning and implementation of visitor use management regardless of jurisdiction. The council published the 2016 **Visitor Use Management (VUM) Framework** that outlines four core elements and associated steps for visitor use management planning regardless of scale. They also published associated guidebooks on desired conditions, visitor capacity, and monitoring.

Beyond the federal agencies - VUM on state, local, and other lands

While the elements, steps, definitions, and resources in the VUM Framework were developed specifically for the agencies involved in the IVUMC, the concepts are applicable in a variety of settings and at different scales.

The VUM Framework is an approach grounded in research for proactive and adaptive recreation planning to connect people to the outdoors and protect important natural and cultural resource values. The elements and steps in the VUM Framework can be thought of as best practices for visitor use management planning. While the VUM Framework was developed specifically for recreation planning on federal lands and waters, the concepts are applicable to any type of outdoor recreation setting. Several state and local agencies and Parks Canada have adopted the VUM Framework.

QUICK TIPS

- One of the first - and most important steps - in visitor use management is building a coalition and gaining buy-in for visitor use management needs. Byways groups are a great resource for beginning this step and remember to consider underrepresented voices and perspectives.
- The VUM Framework is adaptable to the planning processes and documents of federal and non-federal organizations. Many organizations follow the framework or aspects of it without explicitly using the terminology. Use language that resonates with the people and communities along your byway.
- Communicating expectations for visitor experiences and amenities goes a long way in helping people enjoy their trip! Visitor use management planning can help create a shared vision and approaches for the type, location, and availability of visitor resources.



Interested in learning more about visitor use management?

The **IVUMC website** has a lot of great resources for planners. The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals has a **VUM Resources page** and facilitates an online community of practice for SORP members to ask questions, share resources, and celebrate successes!