The Future of Outdoor Recreation and the Federal Land Management Agencies

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1/3 of America is Your Public Land

http://gapanalysis.usgs.gov/
Federal Land Agencies share a common purpose

- Over 1.5 billion people visit parks, public lands and state parks each year across the US
- NPS alone has 335 million park visitors with 5% annual growth - that’s more than all pro sports, NASCAR and Disney combined!
- International public land visits projected to increase 17% by 2020
144.4 million Americans (48.8%) participate regularly in outdoor recreation.

Top activities/total trips and #participants:
- Running, Fish, bike, hike, camp
- 77 billion outings - trips/year
- Motivation – fitness, family/friends, nature, adventure, solitude

Real Gross Output for the Largest Core Outdoor Recreation Activities, 2016
(Millions of chained 2012 U.S. dollars)

- Boating/Fishing: $36,930
- Game Areas (includes Golfing and Tennis): $34,701
- RVing: $30,034
- Guided Tours/Outfitted Travel: $25,735
- Festivals/Sporting Events/Concerts: $23,148
- Motorcycling/ATVing: $20,266
Studies have:

- Established outdoor recreation as a major economic sector
- Fundamentally changed policy debates at state & national levels
- Justified increased investment in park and recreation
- Driven development of state offices of Outdoor Rec & recreation has become a priority for all fed agencies
- Has redefined the significance of recreation to community resiliency & vibrancy
- Stimulated awareness of other benefits such as health, education and transportation

- Contributes $412 billion to US Economy
- 2.2% of GDP
- Employs almost 5 million people
- Larger than oil/gas, mining or RX drugs
Importance of “Keeping Public Lands Public” for Outdoor Recreation

Recreation on public lands has moved from “nice to do” to a “must do”:

• We are in “the business of creating memories”
• Providing social benefits: Health, Education and Youth
• Providing community support: creates “Cool Places to Live” - and supports quality of life and community sustainability, resiliency and vibrancy
Now – more new & extreme sports- A to Z!

Aero-trekking to Zorbing

• **Non-traditional:** Sledging, zorbing, base jumping, cave diving, mountain biking, paddle boarding, slack lining etc

• **Technology driven activities** such as geo-casheing, night vision goggles, rock crawling, drones, autonomous vehicles, ultra-lite flight, e-bikes etc...

• **More organized or group events** and social media generated and facilitated experiences – of all kinds...
All Agencies share “Visitor Use Management” Challenges

- **Crowding, Congestion, Traffic:** user demand generates growing need for use allocation, permits and reservation systems
- **Backlog maintenance:** Visitor facilities, roads, trails etc. needs investment ($12+ billion)
- **Demand for Special uses** – emerging technologies – ebikes, scooters, OHV, drones...
- **Fees** – entrance, special uses, passes etc.
- **Connectivity** – visitor expect wifi, cell phones
- **Facility management** - Public/private partnerships and investment
- **Urban Growth and open space** - More than 80% of Americans live in Urban areas but do they have access to public lands?
National Park Service
Role as Stewards

"....to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."


• The “forever” challenge” – to preserve & protect AND Use & Enjoy – every use decision is considered a precedent!
• Over the last 100 years, the agency has done a pretty good job with preservation and protection...
  • The next century will be about people (& climate too!)- visitor use, recreation, equity and access of parks.
  • Last century was about “bringing people to parks” – now its about “bringing parks to the people”
NPS has served every county in the nation through both its Parks and Programs*

NPS is more than just “parks” – also serves recreation and conservation through 40+ technical & funding assistance programs:

• Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance - RTCA
• Land and Water Conservation Fund - LWCF
• Federal Lands to Parks - FLP
• The National Trails System - NTS
• Wild and Scenic Rivers - WSR
• National Heritage Areas - NHA
• Hydropower Assistance - Hydro

*Fun fact: 3,759 Communities and 162 million people live within 10 miles of park, national trail or WSR river (half US pop. does not include National Heritage Areas)

www.nps.gov/getinvolved/community-assistance
NPS and DOI Re-Energizing support for Outdoor Recreation

DOI

✓ Sec. Bernhardt has 2 priorities for DOI = Energy and Recreation
✓ Secretarial Order 3366 Recreation – to enhance and expand recreation
✓ National Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee (ORAC)
✓ Strong emphasis on Federal, State and Local coordination/collaboration
✓ Public/ Private partnerships opportunities and resource leveraging

NPS:

✓ National office of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism
✓ Regional recreation and tourism coordinators and VUM teams
✓ National Outdoor Recreation Assessment (NORA): Conducting a review of parks and programs to identify agency-wide challenges and opportunities to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities, improve visitor services and expand public/private or gateway community partnerships