

PART 4

RECREATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) outdoor recreation program aims to sustain healthy land and water resources while promoting appropriate and responsible visitor use of those lands and waters.

The BLM provides recreational opportunities in a variety of settings that typify the vast and diverse landscapes of the Western States, from the tundra in Alaska to the deserts of the Southwest, and from the old-growth forests of the Northwest to the plateaus and plains of the Rocky Mountain States. In addition, in the Eastern States, the BLM provides recreational opportunities in settings such as the Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) in Virginia. Many BLM areas have been recognized by the BLM, Congress, or the President and have been given special designations (as detailed in Part 5—Natural and Cultural Heritage Preservation) to protect the unique and sensitive values of each area.

As a national provider of recreational opportunities, the BLM focuses on its primary niche: providing resource-based recreation and tourism opportunities. Visitors' freedom to pursue unstructured recreational opportunities is promoted, as long as they accept the responsibility to use public lands wisely and to respect other public land users. Responsible use is encouraged by the BLM and its partners through land use ethics programs such as *Tread Lightly!* and *Leave No Trace!*

Recreation sites, information and interpretative sites, trails, staging areas, and similar places are also provided on some BLM public lands to protect resources and to help visitors have quality recreational experiences. At many sites and areas, fees are charged to provide for maintenance and improvement. At other sites, generally those public lands without visitor accommodations, no fees are charged. Most recreational use on public lands occurs in nonfee areas. Whether the visitor chooses highly developed recreation fee sites or remote wilderness areas where neither fees nor registration is required, the BLM relies heavily on public land users to protect the land, water, and structures so that the next person can also have a quality experience. Because some visitors are unfamiliar with outdoor skills, the BLM issues special recreation permits to qualified commercial companies to guide visitors on public lands. Special recreation permits are also issued to competitive event organizers and other organized groups to conduct their activities on public lands.

The information in the following tables is intended to provide an overview of recreational use and opportunities on public lands. BLM offices are responsible for collecting and maintaining various data relating to the recreation program. These field-level data are then aggregated in the BLM's *Recreation Management Information System* (RMIS) database. Tables 4-1 through 4-3 summarize recreation data from RMIS and revenue data from the BLM's Collection and Billing System (CBS). Table 4-1 presents the estimated visitor use data by State; Table 4-2 presents visitor use data by recreational activity at fee and nonfee areas, including areas leased to private and public providers; and Table 4-3 presents reported revenues by State and type of authorization. These tables present a picture of the amount and types of recreational activities on public lands geographically for recreation sites and dispersed areas, and for both fee and nonfee areas.

In addition, special reports have been prepared to analyze the primary and secondary benefits of fish and wildlife on public lands. Primary benefits include both consumptive (hunting and fishing) and nonconsumptive (wildlife viewing) recreational use. These activities produce secondary benefits to local community businesses from equipment sales, services, food, lodging, and transportation, as well as to State wildlife agencies that manage the animal populations. These benefits related to fish and wildlife, based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service studies, are derived for BLM lands from Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis and are portrayed in Tables 4-4 through 4-6. Table 4-4 presents estimated fishing and related expenditures data by State; Table 4-5 presents the estimated hunting and related expenditures data by State; and Table 4-6 presents estimated wildlife viewing and related expenditures data by State.