

**AMERICAN RECREATION COALITION**  
**LEGENDS AWARDS**  
*Colorado BLM Nomination*

David Baker  
Outdoor Recreation Planner  
National Operations Center  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 50  
P.O. Box 25047  
Denver, CO 80225-0047  
303-236-6313  
[djbaker@blm.gov](mailto:djbaker@blm.gov)



BLM Colorado is nominating David Baker for the BLM Legends Award under WO-IB-2013-065. Don Bruns spoke with David's supervisor at the NOC, Bob Boyd, who also supports the nomination.

David Baker has been an Outdoor Recreation Planner for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for over 25 years, prior to which he served seasonally for several years. Dave is the Bureau's "go to" guy for the human dimensions of public lands recreation. He is the agency's subject matter expert for data collection. The field and Washington both rely on his expertise to find more innovative ways of better understanding those served by BLM recreation visitor services. At the National Operations Center, David serves as the BLM's Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) data steward and coordinates BLM's Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) visitor satisfaction surveys in coordination with the field and the University of Idaho. But more than simply taking care of data, David is committed to making RMIS work for the field and improving its functionality. David also served BLM Colorado as a "Service First" catalyst at his previous job as the recreation-wilderness lead for the USFS/BLM Public Lands Center in Durango. For David, recreation is a personal passion. He is an avid outdoorsman and is committed to public lands ideal and of getting outdoors for health and well-being. He has climbed Denali and most, if not all, of the highest peaks in the lower 48.

## Award Criteria Narrative:

### 1. Quantifiable improvements in Recreation Opportunities

David Baker has been an Outdoor Recreation Planner for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for over 25 years, prior to which he served seasonally for several years. Dave is the Bureau's "go to" guy for the human dimensions of public lands recreation. He is the agency's subject matter expert for data collection. The field and Washington both rely on his expertise to find more innovative ways of better understanding those served by BLM recreation visitor services. At the National Operations Center, David serves as the BLM's Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) data steward and coordinates BLM's Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) visitor satisfaction surveys in coordination with the field and the University of Idaho. But more than simply taking care of data, David is committed to making RMIS work for the field and improving its functionality.

David also served BLM Colorado as a "Service First" catalyst at his previous job as the recreation-wilderness lead for the USFS/BLM Public Lands Center in Durango. During his eight years of service at that location, David's upbeat attitude and willingness to think and act "outside the box" proved a valuable asset for both agencies. In developing a shared BLM Resource Management Plan and USFS San Juan National Forest Plan revision, David used an integrated community approach on this gigantic effort to blend both BLM and Forest planning approaches to address complex urban interface recreational issues and serve recreation groups within the larger southwest Colorado community. His knowledge of both BLM and Forest Service policies also enabled him to be most helpful to new San Juan National Forest and BLM employees coming from different backgrounds to help usher them into new working conditions under the Service First agreement. He not only taught new employees the two cultures but also had real world examples of how the two budgeting procedures were similar and yet different in many ways.

### 2. Reliance upon partnerships with for-profit and non-profit organizations in the private sector

At BLM's National Operations Center—one step further removed from the field—David rarely has the opportunity to work directly with private sector business and non-profits. But his commitment to the assessment of visitor, local participant and affected community recreation-tourism demand remains highly valued. In this regard he also plays a key role on a national Interagency Visitor Use Management Council.

At the San Juan Public Lands Center, David built working relationships with a substantial number of public and private partners who support public lands. He developed and nurtured working relationships with the Southwest Conservation Corps, the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA), the Cities of Durango and Silverton, the counties of La Plata, San Juan, Archuleta, Montezuma and Hinsdale, and the Hermosa Watershed Working Group. As the principal BLM/USFS liaison for the SJMA, David understood the synergism to be gained from this collaborative visitor services partnership to provide high-demand visitor information and book store visitor services and provided great support. He also supervised a special group of volunteers, the Rail Rangers who volunteer more than 1,700 hours annually riding the Durango Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. Dave ensured that the Rail Rangers were well trained to present interpretive information to visitors from all over the world visiting southwest Colorado. David's support for the Silverton Ski Area and Outdoor Learning Center, and for the interagency

Silverton public information center, were vital to maintaining BLM's contributions to that community's economic well-being.

Whenever there contentious situations develop, David looks on the bright side, seldom gets upset and is a great conciliator. David is highly regarded among peers for his commitment to the people served by BLM and to getting funding out to the field to serve them. He is a strong advocate for partnerships and for the professionalism that is advanced by working beyond BLM with non-government organizations, academia and community visitor service networks.

**3. Use of creative solutions and programs, and demonstrated efforts to share news of creative solutions within the agency**

David has avoided isolating himself from the field as a Recreation Planner in the Assessment and Monitoring Branch of the National Operations Center. He is well positioned to support the field, because he understands interrelationships between BLM's distinctive public lands setting character maintenance and the production of value-added recreation benefits for visitors and affected communities alike, as well as carrying capacity management. He is an enthusiastic supporter of efforts to develop in-house Field Office capacity to do the on-going recreation inventory and monitoring work required by the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976* and CFR regulations. Because He understands and supports efforts to think and act beyond agency bureaucracies, he is able to lend strategic support to forge collaborative solutions among field offices, gateway communities and the academic community to fill missing data gaps.

Colleagues at his former jobs also acknowledge that David was well respected at all levels of the BLM and Forest Service because of his upbeat, friendly, and the "get it done" attitude towards work. While working on the San Juan Public Land Plan revision he worked a blended concept of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and Special and Extensive Recreation Management Areas to help manage the recreational opportunities in a complex urban interface of USFS, BLM, Municipal, and County lands.

**4. Community support for the work of this individual, as reflected in awards, roles on community boards and committees, etc.**

David is highly regarded among colleagues for his pleasant and professional demeanor, both within the BLM and among outside collaborators. While in Durango, his support ensured continued safe operation of the Silverton Ski Area and of the interagency Public Lands Information Center in Silverton—both strategically important contributors to the area economy. While working in Worland and Cody, Wyoming, David worked with Back Country Byways partners and earned his Master Educator for training others in Leave No Trace (LNT) outdoor skills and ethics. He worked extensively with National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) students conducting LNT and cave rescue workshops working with local karst and spelunking organizations and the National Speleological Society, engaging over 10,000 hours of volunteer support in a single year. There also, David worked in a volunteer capacity for Washakie County as county planner, developing building codes for community development.

David is an avid outdoorsman and is committed to public lands ideal and of getting outdoors for health and well-being. He has climbed Denali and most, if not all, of the highest peaks in the lower 48.

