

RECREATION & VISITOR SERVICES

2013 ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT—ARIZONA

Connecting Community Backyards to Backcountry Benefits

The new recreation program strategic direction of the BLM is intended to achieve social, economic, and environmental goals of local communities and provide more benefits for mutually shared customers through increasing and improving collaboration with community networks of service providers. The BLM will help communities produce greater well-being and socioeconomic health and deliver outstanding recreation experiences to visitors while sustaining the distinctive character of Arizona's public lands recreation settings.

The 12.2 million surface acres of public lands managed by BLM Arizona offer a broad range of recreational opportunities and outcomes which fall into a number of marketing niches utilized by many communities. The diverse and unique resources of BLM lands in Arizona provide an excellent opportunity to match the best of BLM attractions with the interests of practically any outdoor recreation enthusiast. Through niche marketing efforts BLM hopes to match the beneficial outcomes of recreation in backyard to backcountry settings with the desires and needs of those who recreate on public lands and the communities that support them.

The BLM in Arizona formulated a strategy to guide accomplishing this. The highlights are:

Partner-Based Delivery System

Identify, plan and implement partnered-delivery initiatives with public recreation providers such as Arizona State Parks and local communities.

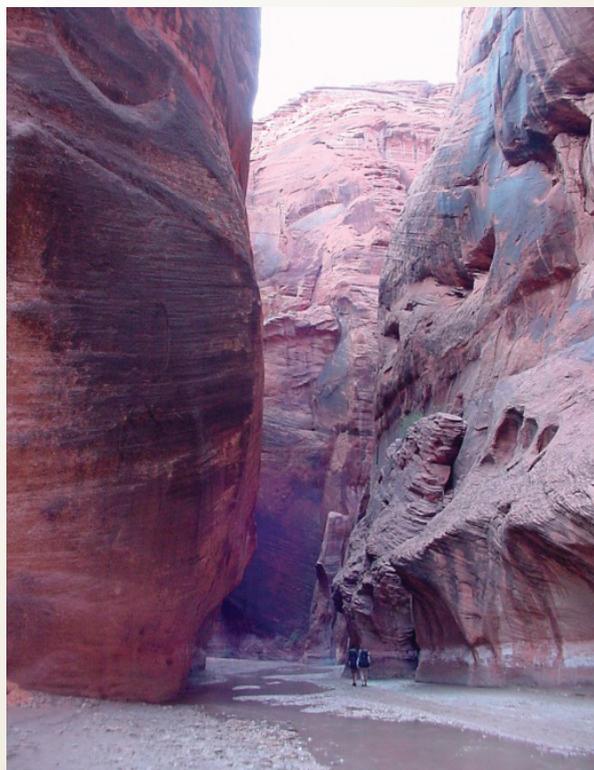
Geographic-Based Visitor Information

Package maps, signing and visitor information geographically and in partnership with communities and place-based coalitions.

Enhanced Volunteer Roles

Expand volunteer roles in delivery of recreation services on public lands.

As an example, during FY2013, Arizona BLM worked cooperatively with the Arizona Office of Tourism and others in implementing the geographic-based visitor information aspect of the state's strategy. Through the partnered efforts of the Arizona Committee for the Enhancement of Recreation and Tourism (ACERT) a centerpiece, statewide, multi-entity recreation attractions map -with corresponding interactive website- was developed to direct visitors to the settings and experiences they are seeking (Link: <http://arizonaexperience.org/live-maps/arizonas-recreation-cultural-sites-map>).



Paria Canyon

Arizona Distinct Resources and Activities

In conjunction with the Arizona Office of Tourism, Arizona BLM views its distinctive recreational product character in geographically-marketable regions.

Northern Arizona

Cultural/Heritage Tourism: The theme of the Arizona Strip District is "Where the West Stays Wild." With a spirit of adventure, Arizona Strip visitors can get a glimpse of the old west and find places to learn about and experience Native American, pioneer, ranching, and mining cultures as they exist today and were in the past, in places such as Little Black Mountain Petroglyph Site, Mount Trumbull Schoolhouse, Pakoon Springs, or the passage of the Old Spanish Trail through Virgin River Gorge.

Adventure Tourism: Because the Arizona Strip is remote and has vast uninhabited areas, such as those associated with the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, visitors utilizing services in St. George or Kanab, Utah and Page, Arizona can easily escape more populated parks and recreation areas. Opportunities include: hiking through the slot canyons of Paria Canyon Wilderness (considered one of the best on planet Earth) and mountain bicycling through vast uninhabited regions, exploring by vehicle along the Vermilion Cliffs Scenic Road or into Vermilion Cliffs National Monument and Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument via a vast network of back country trails, hunting/photographing trophy big game, floating the Virgin River, and sightseeing from remote spectacular vista points on canyon rims found in either Monument.

Arizona's West Coast

Adventure Tourism: The Colorado River District offers visits to natural settings ranging from lower elevation Mojave and Sonoran Desert environments to the higher "mountain island" forest communities supported by developed campgrounds, picnic areas, interpretive wildlife viewing facilities, and a wide choice of motorized and non-motorized



Campsite on Lake Havasu

trails, such as the Cerbat Foothills trail network managed in cooperation with the city of Kingman. In the spring, summer, and fall, water-based shoreline and extensive boating and fishing recreation opportunities are attainable, most notably on Lake Havasu and downstream through the river canyon known as the Parker Strip. The opportunities stage from primitive camping at remote sites to developed recreation camps and resorts managed cooperatively with local communities and concessionaires near Lake Havasu City, Parker, and Yuma, offering a full range of managerial settings from a stable, controlled experience to primitive areas with more freedom for self-determination of experience. Winter visitors will find excellent weather for boating, fishing, back country exploring, sightseeing and touring, emphasizing geology, petroglyph and historic mining sites and/or the Sonoran Desert's flora and fauna. Famous for "boondock" camping in trailers and recreational vehicles, long-term visitors to the lower Colorado River area are heavily supported by local gateway communities serve as Quartzsite and Yuma which provide and services for their daily needs.

Cultural/Heritage Tourism: Scenic driving and interpretive experiences are available along a portion of Historic Route 66 that is also a BLM's Back Country Byway. This provides visitors opportunities to experience and understand the trials and tribulations of early American highway travelers, and can still seek the roadside comforts found in

communities such as Kingman, Oatman, Seligman, and Golden Shores along the “Main Street America” trip back in time.

Family Fun Tourism: Opportunities along Arizona’s West Coast are heavily focused on water-based recreation. These are supported by numerous BLM facilities, as well as resort concessions operated by private partners and communities, such as Lake Havasu City, catering to groups of friends and families seeking boating, water skiing, camping, picnicking, and beach related activities and special events.

Central Arizona

Adventure Tourism: The Phoenix District offers diverse and year-round recreation opportunities to one of the fastest growing and densely populated urban areas in the nation. In balance to the high-end resort, spa, golf course, professional sport, shopping, and cultural event venues throughout the metro area, the public lands market the open space with remote settings for off-highway driving



Bronco Jamboree Event

such as those staged from Boulders Off Highway Vehicle Area, mountain biking and bicycling in areas around Lake Pleasant, hiking, backpacking, recreational shooting, camping, hunting, nature study, wilderness appreciation, in Aqua Fria and Sonoran Desert National Monuments. Local resorts and hotels often expose visitors to the benefits of commercially guided tours of BLM-managed Arizona backcountry. Or, many travel to the area to take part in or spectate any one or more of numerous types of cross-country competitive events ranging from foot races, through mountain bike competitions, to off-highway vehicle events.

Cultural/Heritage Tourism: Opportunities to explore the rich prehistoric and historic heritage of Arizona are abundant in this area. Visitors can experience National Historic Register sites such as Painted Rocks Petroglyph Site, Harquahala Mountains Smithsonian Observatory, and Perry Mesa within the Aqua Fria National Monument, or experience nationally significant trails such as Anza National Historic Trail, the Southern Overland Route, Butterfield Stage Route, or the Black Canyon Trail.

Southern and Southeastern Arizona

Nature-based Tourism: The Gila District offers year-round recreational opportunities in natural settings. The San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area has 40 miles of lush riparian vegetation and is known as one of the premier birding areas in the nation with nearly 400 species of birds recorded. Visitors can hike the river corridor, view wildlife, study geology, and take photos of lush landscapes. Environmental and interpretive programs are offered throughout the year through partners such as local guides, schools, and community friends groups. Also, the Empire-Cienega Resource Conservation Area offers settings of tall grasses, oak woodlands, and lush riparian areas with opportunities to spy on rare and colorful birds found in giant cottonwoods along Cienega Creek. Hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, exploring, and photography in these areas, as well as the Silverbell Mountains, are popular public land activities for regional and international visitors

staging out of local communities such as Tucson, Sierra Vista, Tombstone, and Bisbee. Additionally, the higher elevations around Safford provide over 100 miles of rivers, streams and shoreline around ponds in wilderness areas and developed settings, all available for exploration. The Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area offers rafting and fishing along the Gila River, or bird watching from viewing platforms along Bonita Creek. The Araviapa Canyon and Redfield Canyon Wilderness Areas offer backpacking and hiking through canyons, and the ponds in San Simon Valley offer upland bird and waterfall hunting while a unique combination of sand dunes and developed hot springs offer family soaking and off-highway vehicle experiences in Hot Well Dunes Recreation Area.

Cultural/Heritage Tourism: BLM lands around Safford are also rich in cultural heritage, as demonstrated by sites such as Serna and Old Lady Gay Cabins, Pueblo Deval and Turkey Creek cliff dwellings. Or, the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area is also known for its cultural resources, such as artifacts dating back 11,000 years, and historic artifacts reflecting the Spanish, Mexican, and American periods found throughout the San Pedro River Valley. The 1800s Empire Ranch and Ranch House on the Empire-Cienagas National Conservation Area offer visitors a peek at the recent past, an opportunity to view a working ranch and fell for how life centered around one of Arizona's oldest adobe residences.



Bonita Creek