

Recreation and Underserved Communities

August 25, 2010

CURRENT STATUS

The Bureau of Land Management continues to strive to accommodate a diversity of visitors and remains committed to increasing and facilitating public land and water access to persons with disabilities and other underserved populations.

BLM Colorado has several ongoing initiatives to improve access for all public land visitors. This includes a statewide analysis of training needs, opportunities, and service providers for disabled and underserved populations. The analysis is scheduled for completion in March 2011.

Some of the options we are reviewing include:

- Setting aside special launches for veterans.
- Offering new commercial permits targeting service for persons with disabilities.
- Piloting a project to offer a select number of launches on permitted rivers to organizations that serve veterans and the disabled.
- Improving access and building awareness of services for persons with disabilities, including developing a training program for guides and outfitters designed to improve the capability to meet specialized needs.
- Accelerating facility accessibility upgrades at outdoor recreation sites and river access points

Nationally, the BLM is also taking steps to improve accessibility for veterans and persons with disabilities.

BACKGROUND

Many commercial permittees, schools, institutions, and non-profit organizations provide recreational opportunities for underserved communities such as youth, students, minorities, and disabled populations among others. However, as these organizations advertise their services and provide an expected standard of care for their clients, they are uniformly considered commercial service providers by state and federal agencies. In the past several months, the BLM started reviewing how permit policies meet the needs of underserved populations.