

Colorado Recreation Overview

March 2015

About 20 percent of BLM Colorado is managed specifically for recreation and tourism. The balance of BLM Colorado's recreation areas are managed to maintain visitor freedom to choose where to go and what to do. More than 100 developed recreation sites exist on the 12.5 percent of lands the BLM manages in Colorado along with large undeveloped "backcountry" settings. Special recreation permits for commercial and competitive events also contribute to a diversity of opportunities on public lands and help provide capacity for managing the program.

A high priority for the BLM nationwide is improving stewardship and inspiring healthy communities and lifestyles, particularly in youth. These are also key goals for the state of Colorado as identified through recent state planning efforts. Youth and volunteers in Colorado engaged on projects ranging from trail maintenance to habitat restoration.

2014 ECONOMIC IMPACT

3rd highest visitation numbers for BLM nationally
7.5 million visitors
Approximately \$468 million economic impact
Approximately 4,200 jobs created

2014 SPECIAL RECREATION PERMITS

770 permits issued
\$479,450 in fees
\$16 million industry on public lands

2014 VOLUNTEERS/YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

193,000 volunteer hours
\$4.3 million equivalent
235 volunteers under 25 contributed 40,000 hours

RECREATION STRATEGY

The BLM's 2014 national recreation strategy directs offices to engage communities at all levels. Beyond economic development, communities are embracing these lands for quality of life, improved health and engaging youth. As part of the "backyard" niche, the BLM enhanced the trail systems that connect with the community of Salida, where city-acquired parcels preserve open space and link trails to BLM managed lands. Bicycle riding is now one of the most common reasons for overnight stays supporting several businesses and mentions in publications. High school mountain bike racing supports 30 team members who regularly use the trail systems on public lands for practice and training.

Recent successes on the BLM-managed Upper Colorado River Special Recreation Management Area include Eagle County receiving \$3.9 million for easements and acquisitions to preserve and improve river along 3.7 miles of river frontage. The BLM and the Upper Colorado Wild and Scenic River Stakeholder Group coordinate maintenance and monitoring. The group is also conducting research on visitor use and use patterns. The BLM is studying the effectiveness of the fee program at developed sites and developing a new visitor brochure highlighting the recent improvements.

The BLM has been actively engaged with the Montrose Tourism and Retail Advisory Committee for the past two years. The city is rebranding itself with the new, broader slogan, "Stay Here-Play Everywhere," based largely on the diversity of recreation opportunities available on BLM-managed lands.

