

*BLM Montana/Dakotas Recreation Strategy:*  
**Connecting with Communities**  
**“Backyard to Backcountry” 2015-2019**

**Goal: Strategic Focus Area**

Strategic positioning allows the BLM to leverage opportunities and promote economic, natural resource, and social sustainability.

***EXTERNAL STRATEGY***



**Goal 1: Reposition the Recreation Program within Community Service Provider Networks to Better Serve Mutually Shared Customers.**

**Strategic Focus 1:** Proactively Engage with Partners and other Community Networks of Recreation Service Providers.

**Action Items:**

- Each field office will identify recreation areas/sites that are connected with gateway communities to prioritize funding, partnerships, and management. These areas will be managed to provide recreation settings that best fit significant customer demand, recreation setting character capacity, and community-wide service capability.
- Work with local communities and stakeholders to develop a priority list of potential land acquisitions, exchanges, easements, or Recreation and Public Purposes Act opportunities to improve public access and recreation opportunities. Develop strong Land and Water Conservation Fund

submissions for both core and collaborative categories.

- Support the development and implementation of Geotourism efforts that highlight the unique cultural and recreational opportunities in our region. Supplement existing Geotourism efforts with greater BLM information (e.g., Crown of the Continent/Greater Yellowstone Area).
- Develop visitor and information outlets within local communities and at key access points and recreation sites. Improve and maintain signage to increase visibility of BLM public lands. Work with local municipalities, state and county road departments, and private partners to provide BLM information in gateway communities, on public roadways and sites.

**Strategic Focus 2:** Plan and Manage Recreation Efforts to Achieve Specific and Desired Benefits to the Community.

**Action Items:**

- Utilize Resource Advisory Councils and sub-groups to solicit public input when developing recreation management plans to better understand public demand and desires.
- Engage the public and communities through existing programs such as Travel and Tourism’s sponsored Rural Tourism Program, the FHWA Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) and Federal Lands Access Programs, and State Scenic Byway and Bikeway Programs, to better identify opportunities to link BLM lands and facilities into broader delivery networks and incorporate these networks into our planning processes and products.
- Engage communities to manage recreation resources to foster connections, function seamlessly, and contribute values and benefits beyond BLM boundaries, such as with BLM’s Back Country Byways and the three National Scenic and Historic Trails

(NSHT) that span across public/private ownerships.

- Identify opportunities for Block Management hunting access in partnership with private, state and local governments.



fishing and hunting organizations, as well as chambers of commerce, and outdoor gear retailers to generate economic benefits during key visitation seasons.

- Partner with city chambers of commerce, state, county and non-governmental organizations to sponsor events on BLM managed land to promote BLM's unique opportunities. Examples include: National Public Lands Day, National Fishing Week, etc.
- Work with local off-highway-vehicle groups, Backcountry Horsemen, Montana Wilderness Association and other trails advocacy groups to develop and maintain local and regional trails. Sustain existing partnerships with the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) and the Billings Motorcycle Club to assist BLM with OHV and trail management.
- Develop and sustain a variety of natural/heritage educational opportunities to raise awareness of public resources and benefits and to enhance public recreation experiences.

## Goal 2: Facilitate Greater Well-Being and Economic Benefits within Communities.

**Strategic Focus 1:** Capitalize on and protect the BLM's "Backyard to Backcountry" Recreation Brand, focusing efforts on distinctive landscapes and collaboratively engaging a community network of service providers to serve mutually shared customers.

### Action Items:

- Coordinate with county and city transportation planners and recreation managers to develop trail linkages to public lands from communities. Increase non-motorized trail opportunities for biking, equestrian, and pedestrian use. Develop partner-supported grant proposals to assist with planning and implementation costs.
- Develop a network of citizen volunteers to assist with development, monitoring, and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities. An example includes: supplying information at kiosks or map vending machines when sites are not staffed by agency personnel.
- Partner with local sportsmen groups, such as Montana Outfitters and Guides Association,



### Strategic Focus 2: Create Collaborative Recreation Management Plans.

Identify opportunities to link BLM features and facilities into broader delivery networks and incorporate these networks into our planning processes and products.

**Action Items:**

- Actively participate in development and implementation of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP), Long-term regional travel planning efforts with counties and states, and with other federal agencies planning processes, such as Comprehensive Management Planning for National Historic and Scenic Trails.
- Develop agreements and working relationships with local, national, and non-governmental organizations to assist with planning, fundraising, and local site development.
- Utilize organizational networks to better understand stakeholder demand and desires.

**Strategic Focus 3:** Give Priority to those Recreation Opportunities that Promise the Most Significant Social and Economic Benefits that are within the Productive Capacity of the Community’s Delivery Systems, and that Best Fit the Character/Setting of Place-Based Recreation.

**Action Items:**

- Develop volunteer opportunities with individuals, groups, and non-governmental organizations.
- Continue and increase support for Hands-On-the-Land and Project Archeology sites that tell the unique story of BLM lands in the region.
- Attend tourism and other community public meetings to promote BLM’s unique opportunity to provide economic services, healthful benefits, and desired community outcomes.
- Establish and maintain partnerships with local schools and education organizations to promote Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) opportunities for teachers and students. Work collaboratively to help address state benchmarks and standards for education.



**INTERNAL STRATEGY**

**Goal 1: Deepen the Knowledge and Skill Base Needed for Maximizing Partnership Opportunities.**

**Strategic Focus 1:** Provide Enhanced Skills Training.

**Action Items:**

- Prioritize funding for partnerships with Montana Conservation Corps, Student Conservation Association, GeoCorps, Chicago Botanical Gardens, Friends Groups, and foundations with ties to public lands recreation to develop the next generation of recreation managers.
- Provide multi-resource training for recreation/visitor services staff at least every other year. Focus one day of the Recreation, Visitor Services and National Conservation Lands workshop discussing opportunities to service communities and publics. Include specific training for assistance agreement development and administration at the workshop.

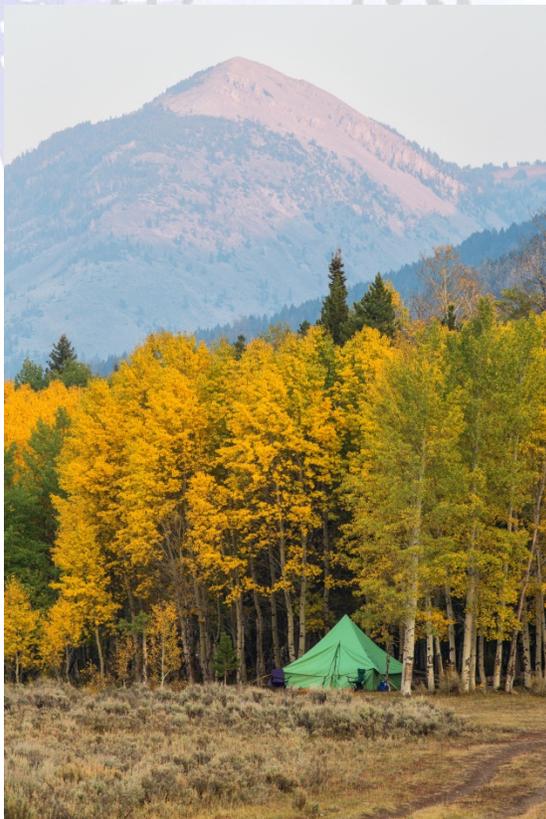
**Strategic Focus 2:** Encourage Knowledge-Sharing. This will be accomplished by fully engaging our recreation staff and other BLM units involved in recreation programs. Repositioning internally will allow the BLM to make the shift to proactively engage communities and service providers through collaborative planning at the local and regional level.

**Action Items:**

- Develop cost-share agreements for maintenance and recreation positions with the State, counties, local municipalities,

federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. Explore opportunities to support shared interpretive positions, such as between NPS and Bear Paw Battlefield to create a full time position, or between BLM and FWP to better serve the hunters and anglers.

- Cooperatively manage the special recreation permit programs with agencies to improve customer service and reduce agency workload. Continue to support the BLM/FWP partnerships on the Blackfoot and Madison Rivers.
- At least every 3 years have staff attend a national meeting of the National Conservation Lands, National Association of Interpretation, Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals, National Trails or Rivers, and trainings sponsored by other recreation-based organizations.



## **Goal 2: Ensure That BLM participation in Partnerships Remains Relevant and Effective.**

**Strategic Focus 1:** Stay Up-to-date About the Interests of Network Providers and Primary Recreation–Tourism Visitors.

### **Action Items:**

- Attend regional meetings that provide opportunities to highlight BLM’s recreation opportunities, such as the annual Montana/Idaho Parks and Recreation Conference, and the MT/DAK Governors Conference of Tourism.
- Continue to participate as a team member on the State’s Trail Committee, OHV Committee, Snowmobile Committee, where multi-agency staff get together to manage like goals and needs.

**Strategic Focus 2:** Maintain an Accurate Inventory of Data.

### **Action Items:**

- Use the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) to interconnect with budget, travel management, and Facility Asset Management System programs. Demonstrate the benefit of coordinating field, district, and state office RMIS information with Washington’s budget and program divisions. Develop standardized methods for estimating visitor use.

## **Goal 3: Transform Communication and Outreach Efforts.**

**Strategic Focus 1:** Employ a Palette of Interpretive Communication Tools and Technology to Market Recreation Opportunities.

### **Action Items:**

- Use social media and existing partner websites to promote and provide recreation information to the public (e.g., Byways with Federal transportation and State Sites).
- Develop user friendly applications that highlight recreation opportunities, such as the State Parks Pocket Ranger program, Next Exit History, and the EarthCache Trail on the Upper Missouri River. Work with private map suppliers to provide updated BLM

information on all downloadable topo software packages and print materials.

- Implement the “BLM’s Mapping” program on all BLM external websites, provide downloadable recreational and travel information, and develop electronic outreach media such as podcasts.
- Add more “mobile work” stations or teleworking for employees at recreation sites.
- Utilize field office external websites to communicate how fee revenues are used to support facilities and enhance the visitor’s experience.



**Strategic Focus 2:** Access Communications Expertise, As Well As BLM and Partner Social Media, To Improve Message Content and Delivery.

**Action Items:**

- Make use of local organizations with communications expertise and resources (college, municipalities) to teach BLM about the most effective communication tools to promote BLM at the local level.
- Use Service First agreements to provide interagency recreation and travel management information. Provide visitor guides and travel maps on our external web pages to provide seamless and site specific travel route information.

**Goal 4: Establish Secure and Reliable Funding Sources.**

**Strategic Focus 1:** Use All Funding Sources Available to Maintain Priority Sites and Services.

**Action Items:**

- Train and engage all recreation staff in the fundamentals of developing and administering budgets, assistance

agreements, fee funding requirements, and grant writing to help supplement appropriations. Work closely with the State Program Leads to create assistance agreements that are multi-purpose, multi-year, and multi- regional focused.

- Establish mitigation plans that support recreation sites and programs. Identify off-site mitigation opportunities.
- Continue and expand funding partnerships with organizations, such as PP&L Montana/Northwest Energy, who are federally mandated to enhance recreation areas and opportunities.

**Strategic Focus 2:** Use Collected Fees to Their Maximum Potential to Develop Recreation Benefits.

**Action Items:**

- Share project requests with all sub-activities to bring about the maximum effectiveness for natural, cultural and social resources.
- Run a cost analysis to determine if current fee rates are consistent with other sites providing the same services, and provide a process to regularly update site fees to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index. Determine which services should be continued or reduced based on analysis sites and use the “project fee” status to set up other recreation sites.
- Develop the “area pass” concept, as used in Fort Benton, to better serve the public and increase economic activity. Cooperatively promote agency and community facilities to meet shared goals.
- Reduce deferred maintenance backlog by 10 percent over the next 5 years. Annually update the FAMS 5-year plan with priority deferred maintenance projects for recreation areas and facilities.

