

Provide Recreation for America

The Department of the Interior provides recreational opportunities on federal lands. It also provides leadership and coordination and serves as a catalyst for recreation efforts by state and local governments and the private sector.

Federal lands provide outstanding recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating, driving off-highway vehicles, mountain biking, and birding. Interior continues to promote and provide recreational opportunities that are consistent with other land uses and with maintaining the health of the land.

Interior-managed lands support tremendous recreational use. In 1999, the National Park System had approximately 287 million visits, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public lands about 75 million visits, and the National Wildlife Refuge System about 36 million visits. In addition, the Bureau of Reclamation provides visitors with water-based recreation opportunities at more than 300 reservoirs in the 17 western states. There were an estimated 90 million recreation visits to Reclamation facilities in 1999. The total economic impact of recreational activities on Interior lands exceeds \$28 billion. These recreational activities generate more than 400,000 jobs.

Interior is committed to providing access to public lands and enhancing opportunities for everyone to enjoy the benefits of our Nation's heritage. Adequate funding of the national parks, wildlife refuges, and other public lands will continue to be a high priority. Increased entrance fees at many of the larger "destination" parks and recreation areas may begin to address the funding and infrastructure problems that persist.

In 1999, the Department employed the following strategies to achieve the goal of providing recreation for America:

- Offered "one-stop shopping" for recreational information and services through the interagency federal recreation web site, www.recreation.gov;
- Supplemented appropriated dollars through increased revenues and cost recovery for services;
- Expanded the use of volunteers and actively enrolled groups and associations;
- Increased concession revenue and expanded concession opportunities while ensuring that the returns the federal government receives reflect fair market value;
- Established partnerships and collaborative efforts to encourage protection of "areas of national significance" such as national trails, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, and heritage areas that cross jurisdictional lines;
- Helped states, tribes, territories, and non-profit groups promote recreation; and
- Provided grants to states, tribes, and localities for recreation acquisition and development.

The major departmental activities to achieve the goal of providing recreation for America are shown in *Figure 6*.

"There were approximately 488 million recreational visits to Interior-managed lands in 1999."

Figure 6

Goal 2 – Provide Recreation for America	
GPRA Program Activity	1999 Expenses (\$ in millions)
1. Provide for Visitor Enjoyment at National Park Facilities	\$1,297
2. Public Use and Enjoyment of Fish and Wildlife Resources	164
3. Provide Opportunities for Environmentally Responsible Recreation on Public Lands	94
4. Enhance Recreation Opportunities Through Partnerships	225
5. Reclamation Land Management and Development	30
Total - Goal 2	\$1,810

Provide for Visitor Enjoyment at National Park Facilities

Desired Result: Provide for the enjoyment of the National Park Service resources in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

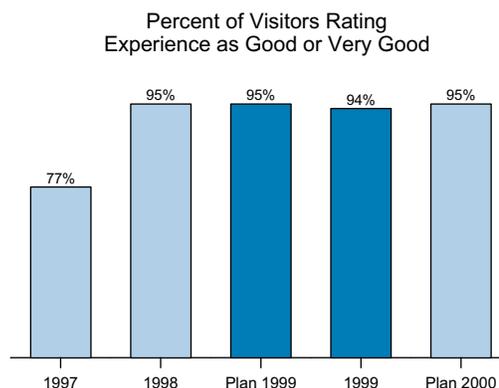
The National Park Service manages nationally significant battlefields, parks, historic sites, monuments, lakeshores, memorials, parkways, preserves, recreation areas, riverways, and seashores. National park areas have long been favorite destinations for millions of Americans as well as people from around the world. It is estimated that there were 287 million recreation visits to America's national parks in 1999. In fulfillment of the NPS mission to make America's national parks available for public enjoyment and inspiration, the Park Service provides an array of activities, opportunities, and visitor services that allow the public to use and enjoy the



National park areas have long been a favorite and inexpensive destination for millions of Americans as well as people from around the world (photo by NPS).

National Park System safely and with minimum impact to resources. Enjoyment of the park units and their resources is a fundamental part of the visitor experience. Knowledge about people who visit these NPS areas has become increasingly important because we need to know if visitor expectations are being met.

1999 Performance Indicator



An assessment of visitor surveys completed during 1999 found that 94 percent of park visitors are satisfied with park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities in the parks. The difference between the 1999 target and the actual result is insignificant.

Public Use and Enjoyment of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Desired Result: Provide the public with opportunities to understand and participate in the conservation and use of fish and wildlife resources.

The Fish and Wildlife Service recruits and trains volunteers to assist in a variety of wildlife refuge activities including habitat management, education, public use, and research. These hands-on experiences provide tremendous benefits to refuges while increasing public understanding and appreciation of wildlife resources and wildlife resource management. The volun-

teer program promotes partnerships with state and local government, individuals, and private groups.

1999 Performance Indicators

	1997	1998	Plan 1999	1999	Plan 2000
Percent increase in volunteer participation hours from 1997	1,335,738	1,396,000 (4.5%)	1,689,707 (26.5%)	1,221,649 (-9%)	1,402,524 (5%)
Number of new friends groups	63	100	129	120	150

In 1999, the number of volunteer hours decreased approximately 9 percent from the 1997 base level. The volunteer rate is impacted by a number of factors (i.e., economic, demographic, and climatic) that are beyond the control of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Volunteerism, however, will continue to be encouraged in 2000. New efforts are being implemented under the Volunteer and Community Partnership Act to include the hiring of full-time volunteer coordinators on field stations. This will help the recruitment, training, and mentoring of volunteers and provide a test of whether additional staff devoted to the volunteer program will result in corresponding increases in volunteer interest.

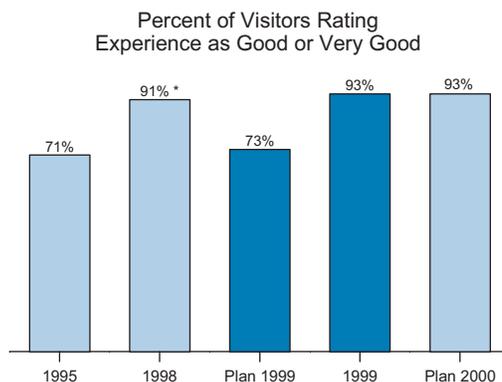
Provide Opportunities for Environmentally Responsible Recreation on Public Lands

Desired Result: Provide the public with diverse opportunities to recreate on the public lands while maintaining the lands and facilities in good environmental condition.

Recreation area condition has a great impact on users' recreation experience. Visitor satisfaction with any site or area depends on both the condition of the area and the expectations of the visitor. The BLM strives not only to manage its areas to preserve and improve their condition, but also to communicate with visitors regarding the nature of the resource, its condition, and the presence of any facilities.

Information on customer satisfaction with the condition of BLM recreation areas is obtained through a national survey of recreation users conducted and analyzed by an independent contractor.

1999 Performance Indicator



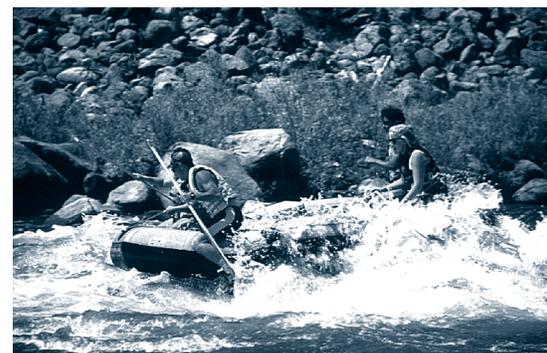
* During 1998, satisfaction survey was conducted only at premiere recreation fee sites.

In 1999, the BLM exceeded its planned target of 73 percent by achieving a satisfaction rating of 93 percent. The 73 percent target for 1999 was chosen without benefit of a benchmark from previous surveys covering similar recreation sites and areas. In 2000, this performance indicator will be replaced by another measure.

Enhance Recreation Opportunities Through Partnerships

Desired Result: Strengthen and preserve natural and cultural resources and enhance recreational opportunities managed by partners.

The National Park Service implements a broad range of programs that assist others to preserve our natural and cultural and recreational resources. These programs encompass formal partnership programs with over 60 other federal agencies, 59 states and



White water rafting on the Bruneau River (photo by BLM).

“The Recreational Fee Demonstration Program has enabled Interior to improve visitor services, protect resources, and address health and safety issues. In 1999, over \$149 million was collected in entrance fees.”



Reclamation reservoirs provide many recreation opportunities, including fishing (photo by Reclamation).

territories, more than 1,000 local governments, over 300 Indian tribes, foreign governments, private organizations, friends groups, academic institutions, and the general public. The NPS strives to increase the number of significant historic and archaeological properties protected and to improve customer satisfaction with technical

assistance provided by the Park Service.

1999 Performance Indicators

	1997	1998	Plan 1999	1999	Plan 2000
Miles of recreational trails added	N/A	700	920	2,116	2,600
Miles of recreational river corridor added	N/A	1,100	1,340	1,504	2,100
Acres of recreational park land added	N/A	33,700	40,700	45,425	61,300

The National Park Service helps communities find appropriate strategies for protecting trail corridors, open space resources, rivers and watersheds, and historic and cultural resources that define their sense of place. The Park Service becomes involved when formally asked by local officials, landowners, and other citizens who share the desire to protect or to improve their communities. The NPS also brings technical expertise in public involvement, publications, organization building, project design, and site restoration. All projects are founded on cost-sharing, cooperation, and community initiative. Projects are implemented with local, state, and private funds leveraged by NPS funds.

Reclamation Land Management and Development

Desired Result: Provide the greatest overall benefit from existing land resources in a manner that is efficient and effective, uses sound conservation practices, and protects the environment.

The Bureau of Reclamation strives to manage lands in cooperation with others to improve, protect, and enhance land use, cultural, recreational, and environmental values. Using an ecosystem-based management approach, Reclamation assures that lands are managed in an economically and environmentally sound manner to benefit the interest of the American people.

During 1999, Reclamation developed policy, directives, standards, and guidance on recreation and concession management.