

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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Series: Special Programs

Part 755: Youth Programs

Chapter 2: Increasing Access to Extended Outdoor Experiences for Under-Resourced Youth

Originating Office: Office of Human Resources

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2.1 Purpose. This chapter provides Department of the Interior (DOI) policy for increasing access to the outdoors for disadvantaged and under-resourced youth.

2.2 Scope. The policy in this chapter applies to the National Park Service (NPS), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR).

2.3 Authorities.

- A. Take Pride in America Act, (16 U.S.C. 4601-4608).
- B. Land management authorities of NPS, BLM, FWS.
- C. Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965, P.L. 89-72, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 4601-12-4601-21).

2.4 Policy. It is the policy of DOI to decrease unnecessary barriers to obtaining permits for, or otherwise accessing Interior managed lands and waters for individuals and organizations when they are supporting by engaging in activities subject to this chapter disadvantaged and under-resourced youth in experiencing those lands and water.

2.5 Responsibilities.

- A. Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget. Provides overall leadership and program management.
- B. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Capital and Diversity. Oversees implementation and monitors progress in decreasing barriers.

C. Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Assistant Secretary – Land and Minerals Management, and Assistant Secretary – Water and Science oversee program implementation for their respective bureaus and submit progress reports to the Deputy Assistant Secretary – Human Capital and Diversity.

D. Directors, NPS, FWS, BLM, and the Commissioner, BOR are responsible for ensuring that the policy in this chapter is implemented in their bureaus for activities subject to this chapter. This includes:

(1) Instructing local land managers to expedite processing permits and make process improvements to decrease permitting timelines.

(2) Addressing determinations regarding commercial use authorization or similar requirements by:

(a) To the extent consistent with existing regulations, ensuring that activities subject to the policy in this chapter are not required to obtain a commercial use or similar authorization; and

(b) To the extent that there are existing regulatory barriers to processing activities as described in this chapter as other than commercial activities, taking appropriate action to modify or remove such barriers.

(3) Encouraging the use of available discretion and flexibility, such as increasing group size limits, and decreasing or waiving fees, to support prompt access.

(4) Exploring alternatives to permitting requirements, such as treating activities in the same manner as the general public use.

(5) Increasing outreach to possible participants; and

(6) Coordinating permitting approaches with other bureaus/offices.

2.6 Activities Subject to this Chapter. The policy in this chapter applies whenever an individual or organization certifies to the respective bureau that it is seeking to access the bureau's lands for a group that meets the following criteria:

A. Program participants are all under 30 years of age.

B. At least 70 percent of the participants are economically disadvantaged and under resourced youth and meet one or more of the following elements:

(1) Out of School youth.

(2) In or aging out of foster care.

- (3) Limited English proficiency.
 - (4) Homeless or have run away from home.
 - (5) At risk of leaving secondary school without a diploma.
 - (6) A former juvenile offender or at risk of delinquency.
 - (7) Youth with disabilities.
- C. Planning an overnight or multi-night recreational and education excursion; and
- D. Any paying attendees are funding no more than the trip's direct costs.

2.7 Reports. The NPS, FWS, BLM and BOR must submit an annual update describing the progress of their bureau in meeting the requirements in this chapter.