

Managing the Region's Recreation Assets

*Get Out West! Advisory Group
Report to the Western Governors*



- *Outdoor Recreation*
- *Conservation*
- *Tourism*
- *Volunteerism*



Western Governors' Association

Dear Friends of the West,

*When I became Chair of Western Governors' Association in June 2011, I launched an effort to examine and celebrate outdoor recreation and tourism in the West. We branded our effort **Get Out West!** to not only tell outdoor enthusiasts and tourists to come to the West, but also as encouragement to kids and families – particularly in urban parts of our region – to get out into the region's great outdoor places.*

The West is blessed with incredible natural areas for outdoor recreation and tourism. Recreation hot spots in our region are known across the globe and we are becoming known as the place to come for world class outdoor recreation adventures. Western Governors consider the West the outdoor recreation and tourism capital of not just the nation, but of the world.

Outdoor recreation and tourism mean jobs and “clean” economic development. But to make sure the West remains the best place for outdoor recreation and tourism we need to make sure we have policies in place that facilitate the growth of these industries and maintain and improve the lands and waters, trails and signage that make the West a great place to visit and play.

To help my colleagues and me identify opportunities to grow the outdoor recreation and tourism economy in the region and to encourage youth to explore the West's great outdoor places, WGA empanelled the Get Out West Advisory Group. These experts have developed three reports, of which this is one. The reports are:

- *The West's Competitive Advantage: Landscapes, Open Lands and Unique History*
- *Connecting Kids and Families to the West's Great Outdoors*
- *Best Practices in Managing Recreation Assets*

The Governors thank the Advisory Committee members for their hard work. The members are listed in the back inside cover of this report.

In order to provide Governors, legislators and other decision makers with information to best understand the breadth and depth of the outdoor recreation industry, WGA brought together recreation industry leaders to commission a survey that has documented the economic contribution of outdoor recreation – in terms of sales, jobs, tax revenues – in the nation and in Western states. This data will help us all comprehend how the complex and multi-faceted recreation sector contributes to our economic base and how we can assist in fostering its continued growth.

I encourage you to review all four reports. The Advisory Committee has outlined a number of strategies Governors can adopt, which we will take under consideration. Western Governors have already taken action on three of them:

- *In December 2011 we adopted a resolution encouraging the federal government to streamline and improve the tourist visa application experience and wait time for approval to visit the U.S.*
- *In December 2011 we adopted a resolution encouraging the use of the conservation corps to do construction and maintenance of recreation assets on public lands.*
- *In June 2012 we are launching a Governor's Youth Outdoor Recreation Outreach Coordinator pilot program in several Western states.*
- *In the Fall of 2012 and early 2013, WGA and our recreation industry partners will be announcing industry economic information on a state-by-state basis*

*I urge you to **Get Out West!** We live in a beautiful part of this great country. Let's not take it for granted.*



Christine O. Gregoire
WGA Chair

Managing the Region's Recreation Assets

Get Out West! Advisory Group

Report to the Governors

June 2012

Introduction

Governor Gregoire, the 2011-2012 chair of the Western Governors' Association, launched the *Get Out West!* initiative in June 2011. The goals of the initiative are to grow the tourism and recreation economies in the West and connect kids to the West's great outdoor places.

Governor Gregoire convened an advisory group to develop recommendations for Western Governors. This report and its companion reports – *Get Out West!: The West's Competitive Advantage: Landscapes, Open Lands and Unique History* and *Get Out West!: Connecting Kids and Families to the West's Great Outdoors* – are the Advisory Group's findings and recommendations.

Executive Summary

The Get Out West Advisory Group identified successfully managing the West's recreation assets as a key factor in facilitating positive outdoor recreation experiences for the region's citizens and tourists and for local economic development and job creation in communities around these places. To identify successful management strategies and exemplary case studies WGA surveyed recreation managers from around the West.

The recreation managers interviewed indicated they are struggling to maintain the quality and availability of the region's recreation assets because of increasing and shifting demands from users, shrinking budgets and weather and climate changes affecting the landscapes they manage.

The recreation managers interviewed and members of the Get Out West's Advisory Group recommend Western Governors work together to ensure that the West's unparalleled recreation assets continue to provide wonder and enjoyment – and the foundation for a powerful economic sector – for generations to come. Chief among their recommendations, explained in greater detail in the body of the report, are:

- 1. Recognize and invest in the economic and qualitative values of outdoor recreation*
- 2. Facilitate synergistic partnerships*
- 3. Promote innovative ways to raise revenue for outdoor recreation*
- 4. Lead efforts to integrate and streamline landscape-level recreation opportunities*
- 5. Promote demand for recreation in the West*

In addition to these recommendations for Governors, the report outlines tested management strategies and key policy recommendations for managers and policymakers at all levels to ensure the West remains a world-class destination for outdoor recreation.

¹See inside back cover of this report for a list of Advisory Group members

Background

The natural areas and amenities that make up the West's "recreation assets" – the mountains, deserts, lakes, rivers, canyons, beaches, wildlife populations, trails, cabins, outhouses, signposts and access points – provide unique outdoor recreation experiences for the region's citizens. Just as importantly these areas are magnets for tourists from the U.S. and abroad. These natural assets generate jobs and incomes for local communities as people spend money for food, lodging, gas and services like rafting, fishing and hunting guides.

These users generate revenue that enhances local infrastructure and pays for natural resource management by paying taxes and voluntarily purchasing fee-based permits such as hunting licenses, fishing licenses, campground fees and park passes. In addition, as indicated by the companion economic report, they are the foundation for an outdoor recreation industry.

The recent economic recession and cutbacks in federal and state support for parks and protected areas have posed significant challenges for recreation and land managers working to provide high quality recreation opportunities and protect the natural and cultural resources on which they depend. In addition, recreation managers are challenged by extreme weather events and new social trends such as changing recreational preferences.

The *Get Out West!* initiative interviewed 24 recreation managers² from a range of jurisdictions and geographic areas to identify recommendations for how to effectively and efficiently manage the West's recreation assets. Interviewees were selected by Advisory Group members for having demonstrated especially innovative responses to recreation management challenges. The following comments reflect the insights and experiences of both these selected managers and Advisory Group members.

Major Management Challenges for Outdoor Recreation Assets

Interviewees indicated that successfully managing the West's great recreation assets is vital to ensuring the continued availability of high quality outdoor recreation experiences and continued recreation-based tourism and the jobs and income they generate. They identified five major challenges to the successful management of recreation assets:

Funding and staff limitations

A limited budget was the most commonly mentioned challenge, stemming primarily from chronic underfunding of parks and recreation and more recent budget cuts due to the recession.

Age of infrastructure and facilities

Many of the West's recreation facilities (trails, outhouses, interpretive centers, etc.) were built decades ago and, like any infrastructure, require upkeep and modernization. However, operation and maintenance needs of parks and recreation departments have been largely underfunded. Estimates of the total amount of unmet needs for public outdoor recreation facilities and parkland acquisition in the West in 2011 was \$8.6 billion³. In addition, the national park system has a maintenance backlog of \$8 billion, the Fish and Wildlife Service about \$1.7 billion and BLM at less than \$100 million according to Will Shafroth, Councilor to the Secretary for America's Great Outdoors at the Department of the Interior. This maintenance backlog results in declining safety, sanitary conditions and aesthetics.

Changing demographics and recreation interests

Recreation managers are attempting to respond to social and cultural changes, including: an increasingly urban and ethnically diverse population that prefers closer-to-home opportunities; the loss

² See Appendix 1 for list of those interviews and Appendix 2 for interview questions.

³ 2011 Land and Water Conservation Fund Annual Report, National Park Service

of an outdoors ethic; the decline in preference for multi-day backpacking and mountaineering trips and rise of interest in short trips, motorized sports, mountain biking, adrenaline sports (e.g. bungee jumping, ice climbing, paragliding), and new sports, such as geocaching.

User conflicts

Conflict between different types of recreation users has sometimes resulted in damage to the resource and infrastructure and, in some cases, has led to vandalism and violence. The most prevalent conflict is between motorized and non-motorized users, but conflicts also exist between other users, such as hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders.

Degradation of the resources and assets

Both users and natural factors can seriously erode the quality of recreation resources. Currently, managers are most concerned about the impacts of illegal motorized use, and damage from natural factors such as pine beetles, fires, drought, severe storms, and floods. For example, managers in Western Oregon and Washington reported that their major challenge is severe damage to trails, roads and campgrounds from increasingly heavy storms. Because of tight budgets affecting response to this damage, the result is an increasing net loss of recreation opportunities in the region.

Strategies

Recognize and Invest in the Economic and Qualitative Values of Outdoor Recreation

Several managers stated that one of the biggest challenges they face is “the undervaluation of outdoor recreation” relative to other land uses. At the same time, despite the charge to adopt business strategies for self-sufficiency, managers stressed that they continue to rely significantly on public investment in recreation because their responsibilities to serve the public good by providing high quality recreation opportunities and protecting cultural and natural resources will always require general fund support.

The managers stressed the qualitative – in addition to the economic and quantitative – values of the West’s diverse landscapes for recreation, such as solitude, spaciousness, wonder, beauty and health. Furthermore, although recreation managers increasingly rely on public-private partnerships, especially with professional and volunteer user groups, they pointed out that they cannot rely entirely on partners for recreation management, because all forms of partnering require significant staff oversight.

Partner With Other Organizations and Citizens

Professional and Volunteer User Groups

Professional, non-profit and volunteer user groups are clearly becoming one of most important and effective tools for recreation management. Community groups are helping managers address all of the top five major management challenges listed above. Professional and volunteer user groups provide four key services for recreation managers.

First, they provide thousands of hours of volunteer labor, doing everything from rehabilitating damaged areas, building and maintaining trails, and building cabins, to desktop publishing and stuffing envelopes. Most useful are those groups directly affiliated with a particular asset, often called “Friends” groups, such as “Friends of Indian Creek” – a prime rock-climbing site in southeast Utah.

Second, user groups provide professional expertise and in some cases paid assistance to assist managers with designing infrastructure according to specific user needs and preferences. For example, the International Mountain Biking Association’s paid trail crews have assisted managers with designing and building mountain biking trails across the West.

Third, volunteer user groups often provide a fundraising service, which is especially useful when public agencies are not allowed to receive donations directly. For example, the Snake River Fund

contributes \$50-100,000 per year, or about half of the budget required for managing whitewater use on the Snake River as it flows through the Bridger-Teton National Forest. It raises money through private donations, community fundraising, and special events.

Fourth, user communities serve as “partners” when they engage with other users to resolve conflicts and collectively plan for multiple recreational uses in the same area, such as motorized and non-motorized uses, hiking and recreational shooting, hiking and mountain biking, and so on. As several managers noted, effective collaborative stakeholder processes not only result in good management plans, they build community support for plans, thereby reducing the need for enforcement, and they engage user groups in implementing plans and rehabilitating degraded areas through volunteer labor.

Conservation Corps

Conservation Corps exist in all Western states and engage young people (typically 16-25 years old) in year-round or summer paid work with training on federal, state and local public lands. Much of their work is geared towards building and maintaining recreational assets such as hiking trails, OHV trails, waterways, trailheads and fishing accesses. There are currently 35 Conservation Corps serving more than 12,000 youth annually in the West.

Government Agencies

Managers stressed the importance of partnering with government agencies and the importance of interagency cooperation, especially in order to achieve integrated regional recreation systems. Private and tribal managers rely heavily on governmental partners for grants, permitting assistance, and sharing services. One example is a BLM manager who used the Workforce Investment Act and a partnership with the Department of Labor, the Department of Agriculture, an outside contractor and the Student Conservation Association to employ youth for building trails, benches and installing signs.

Gateway Communities

Local “gateway” towns and chambers of commerce are also invaluable partners to recreation managers, especially with respect to marketing and promotion. Several managers noted that local chambers of commerce partnered with agencies in providing visitor centers and hosting special events that drew and retained new visitors. Most effective is when a recreation asset becomes a source of pride for a local community and part of its identity and sense of place.

Private Companies

Last but not least, partnerships with private businesses are an instrumental part of the recreation economy. Most notably, the West’s major ski areas are located on public land but are operated by private companies. In addition, concessionaires provide needed services at state and national parks. Outfitters, retailers, and others are important but often overlooked partners, who provide services for people who do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and equipment to recreate on their own; they also provide trail and other maintenance on an as-needed basis, valuable management advice, sell passes, bring attention to public land assets, and teach responsible use and ethics.

For a recent and in-depth review of other successful partnering strategies, see the Outdoor Alliances’ report from its 2012 Partnership Summit.

http://issuu.com/outdooralliance/docs/full_report_final?mode=a_p

Raise Revenue through Diverse Strategies

User Fees

By far the most common strategy is to leverage or increase fees for accessing recreation opportunities – such as fees for RVs, OHVs, campgrounds, fishing, trail passes, accessing parks, and accessing very popular sites (e.g. Maroon Bells in Colorado). Public agencies are only allowed to retain a portion,

if any, of the fees they collect, and the legislation allowing many of them to do so, the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, is up for reauthorization in 2014.

Amenities, Product Sales and Programming

In addition, managers are adding amenities to their sites, such as cabins, yurts, ice-rinks and specialty trails (e.g. for mountain biking) that warrant higher user fees. Some managers have also developed interpretive products and programming that generate revenue. For example, state and national parks in Montana have teamed up to sell beef jerky, the packaging of which tells the story of the Grant-Kohrs ranch, while Utah State Parks has found that visitors will pay for experiential programming like moonlit walks and bat visits.

Grants

Recreation managers are looking to grants to make up for gaps in funding and rely on states and other partners for help accessing grants. Washington State has a unique Recreation and Conservation Office whose primary function is to distribute and manage state and federal grant funding to state, local and non-profit groups for recreation and conservation projects and salmon recovery. Idaho State Parks has been aggressive in researching grants at the national, regional and local levels too.

Creative Governmental Funding

Several managers mentioned innovative ways of accessing governmental funding. Alaska State Parks, for example, set up citizen advisory boards that provide local input to Park managers, as well as inform legislators about local staff, funding and maintenance needs for recreation. This creates a dialogue, educates legislators, and promotes community support for recreation. Idaho State Parks leverages funds that counties receive for having federal lands within their boundaries to support trail maintenance and a youth conservation corps.

While it is largely agency managers who recommend using fees to make up for very constrained budgets, several GOW! Advisory Group members made the important observation that adding and raising user fees is ultimately a regressive management strategy: fees present a barrier to broad public participation in outdoor recreation and should be moderated with public investment and other sources of revenue wherever possible.

Ensure Good Planning and Integrate Recreation Opportunities

Planning

Good planning not only results in better recreation opportunities, it also helps address and avoid major management challenges – such as limited funding, changing recreation types, user conflicts, and degradation of the assets. Managers with the most successfully managed recreation assets emphasized that they planned early and often. They assessed their opportunities and constraints, prioritized their assets, and defined visions.

Public input was identified as a key ingredient to successful plans. Plans are developed five, ten, and fifteen years ahead, and are developed in phases and for specific areas. Plans take the form of federal agencies prioritizing recreation as a national plan, to integrated regional plans, to site-specific plans. Plans are developed for a wide variety of reasons, such as:

- Economic development plans to raise revenue through fees and amenities;
- Plans for trails designed for specific uses, such as mountain biking;
- Plans that separate user groups in space and/or time to address user conflicts;
- Plans denoting spatial and temporal closures for wildlife and cultural resource protection;
- Plans to accommodate a broader range and changing characteristics of user communities, such as access for the elderly, extended family campgrounds, and “digital” users;
- Plans for interpretive programs and youth engagement.

Integrating Recreation Opportunities

Of particular note are plans that helped recreation managers integrate recreation opportunities, such as trails and waterways across a regional landscape. They did so by integrating fragmented holdings within a jurisdiction by selling, exchanging and purchasing lands; and by integrating recreation systems across jurisdictions. In Colorado the Peaks to Prairies Children's Forest Corridor is being developed along the South Platte River. The Corridor is connecting urban citizens to rural recreation assets and it will span private, local, state and federal land.

Promote Demand

Another major management strategy cited by many of the interviewed recreation managers was to promote demand for recreation opportunities under their jurisdiction. The exceptions were some Forest Service and BLM managers who said their primary mission was resource management and that local communities, associations, and user groups took on the roles of promotion and marketing. Among the strategies for promoting demand are many of those strategies already mentioned above that also function to attract new and returning visitors, such as: volunteer engagement; providing amenities such as cabins; marketing through gateway communities; and accommodating a wider range of users.

Hosting Special Events

In addition, several managers indicated that hosting special events is an increasingly popular strategy for promoting demand. Events draw new visitors, give them a reason to stay longer, and ideally inspire them to keep coming back. Events included watching the solar eclipse, various kinds of festivals, hosting half-marathons and other competitions, and kids' events, such as a "storybook ski."

Youth Outreach and Programming

The National Park Service, the Forest Service and State Parks are promoting interest and demand among children and youth. The Park Service offers a wide range of programming for all ages – but is especially focused on youth outreach. In addition to in-park programming, they send rangers into classrooms and offer service opportunities for teens with the belief that once kids are exposed to the park they will come back with their families to recreate. The Forest Service's children programs include More Kids in the Woods, Children's Forests, Conservation Education Programs, and their Discover the Forest website. The Methow Valley Sports Trails Association encourages younger generations to try a new activity by making their ski trails free for kids 12 and under. State park managers, working with Outdoor Nation, are using State Parks Youth Ambassadors to reach out to their peers in the city to boost interest.

Capitalize On Growing and Shifting Demand

Successful managers spot trends and capitalize on them by adding popular new features, such as mountain biking trails across the West, and easily accessible recreation assets, such as short trails near a highway, and new amenities such as cabins.

Grow Demand by Creating Attractive Recreation Opportunities

In addition, the asset itself can create a new trend and attract unexpected demand. For example, once the single-track Maah Daah Hey trail in North Dakota was discovered by mountain bikers it was quickly nominated one of the International Mountain Biking Association's "epic" rides. Managers can grow demand by building attractive assets and connecting recreation opportunities into integrated and accessible systems that attract new people to go outdoors.

Using New Media

Several managers are turning to social media to connect and attract new interest. The Methow Valley Sports Trail Association is notable for its industry-leading social networking campaign that includes material for smart phones, Twitter, Facebook, and a website. In addition, some parks are

developing mobile apps and handheld devices for discovery and exploration. The South Dakota Department of Game Fish and Parks has developed a free iPhone app that allows hunters and anglers to purchase licenses through the phones, provides GPS-enabled maps of public hunting and fishing access, and provides access to current state hunting and fishing regulations.

Traditional Marketing

A number of recreation managers relied on traditional marketing strategies, such as marketing research, developing images and logos, and developing a marketing plan. Several worked with local tourism associations. Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park was notable for having its own newspaper circulated in the local community, sending representatives to tourism and travel shows as far away as Los Angeles and San Francisco, and setting up a booth at any large regional event. Finally, Montana State Parks bought advertising time with their local TV affiliates during the Olympics – thereby connecting themselves with an iconic symbol of outdoor sports. The stations matched the time with PSAs, doubling their advertising capacity!

Recommendations

Economic and Qualitative Values of Outdoor Recreation

- Support investment in recreation management and cultural and natural resource protection, including full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund; reauthorization of the Recreational Trails Program with language that ensures the funds go to trails; and increased funding for the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program.
- Support legislation that requires the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to utilize 1.5 percent, or a minimum of \$10 million annually, of their Land and Water Conservation Fund budgets for projects that secure public access to existing federal lands through easements, rights-of-way, or fee title acquisitions from willing sellers.
- Encourage equal prioritization of outdoor recreation in the missions and budgets of public lands agencies.

Partnering

- Encourage and support state and federal public land managers working with partners, volunteers, and fundraisers.
- Support revisions to Forest Service partnership agreements, process and paperwork to give managers the same flexibility other federal land management agencies already have.
- Consider creating Intergovernmental Personnel Assignments in Governor's office for a Forest service or BLM person to facilitate cooperation among government agencies and look for opportunities for collaboration.
- Convene state-wide outdoor recreation meetings and broker partnerships among state and federal agencies, local governments, professional and volunteer user communities, private landowners, ranchers and tribes.

Revenue Strategies

- Enable public land managers to leverage, raise, and retain fees by: supporting reauthorization of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act; changing rules to allow agencies to raise fees and use a fee structure based on user demand (e.g. raise fees during peak seasons); and supporting the Forest Service's retention of ski area fees
- Push for development of integrated national and/or regional public lands passes so people are not charged every time they enter a different recreation unit/area in the same state.

Planning and Integrated Recreation Systems

- Lead efforts to integrate and streamline landscape-level recreation opportunities in the state by encouraging all outdoor recreation stakeholders to work together to develop and implement a regional integrated outdoor recreation plan.
- Include funding in state agencies' budgets to create and make publically accessible online GIS based maps of the "recreation estate" – i.e. all the recreation assets in one area – and provide funding to accomplish it.
- Direct state transportation departments to include alternatives to automobile transportation – such as bike paths – that connect cities to outdoor recreation areas in their transportation planning.

Demand

- Direct the state tourism department to include the state's outdoor recreation and cultural assets (state, BLM, Forest Service, private, and tribal lands) in marketing materials.
- Work with other Western Governors to develop policies and promotional materials that make the West the world capitol of tourism and outdoor recreation and a model for the rest of the country.

The findings and recommendations in this report are those of the Get Out West! Advisory Group. The information and recommendations contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of individual Governors or the Western Governors' Association.

Appendix 1

Interviewees

- Jim Bedwell, National Director of Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources, USDA Forest Service
- Ed Cannady, Backcountry Recreation Manager, Sawtooth National Recreation Area
- Scott Carey, Tribal Planner, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe
- David Cernicek, Natural Resource Specialist, Jackson Ranger District, Bridger-Teton National Forest
- James DeSalvo, Executive Director, and Danica Kaufman, Grants Manager, Methow Valley Sports Trails Association
- Ben Ellis, Director, and Claire LeClaire, Deputy Director, Alaska State Parks
- Scott Fitzwilliams, Supervisor, White River National Forest
- Glenn Glover, Executive Director, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
- Rem Hawes, Manager, Hassayampa Field Office, BLM Phoenix District
- Ed Jager, Director of Visitor Experience, Parks Canada
- Chip Jenkins, Superintendent, North Cascades National Park
- Paula Johnston, Recreation Manager, Dakota Prairie Grasslands
- Ron Krueper, District Superintendent, Inland Empire District, California State Parks
- Bill Kuntz, Supervisory Recreation Planner, BLM Redding California
- Bob Leaver, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Monticello BLM Field Office
- Michael Linde, Program Manager, Pacific West, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, NPS
- Steve McClellan, Policy Director and Legislative Liaison, State of Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
- Nancy Merrill, Director, Idaho State Parks
- Rob Perrin, Trails and Travel Management Program Lead, BLM
- Bob Ratcliffe, Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Program Manager, NPS
- Mike Rivera, Private Landowner and Rancher, New Mexico and Member, Chama Peak Landowners Alliance
- Tim Smith, Deputy Director, Utah State Parks
- Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
- Chas Van Genderen, Division Administrator/Director of Montana State Parks

Appendix 2

Recreation Manager Interview Questions

I. Introductory questions.

1. What is your role at [state/agency/etc]? How long have you worked there?
2. Can you provide me with an overview of the recreational resources that you currently manage in terms of type (e.g. wilderness, rivers, city parks) and quantity (estimate of acreage/mileage)?

II. Survey questions on recreation supply and demand. In general over the last decade would you say that:

1. The quantity of recreational resources under your jurisdiction is increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same? Why?
2. The quality of the recreational resources under your jurisdiction is improving, getting worse, or staying about the same? Why?
3. Demand for recreational opportunities under your jurisdiction is growing, shrinking, or staying about the same? Why or why not?

4. Supply of recreational resources is meeting, exceeding, or not meeting demand? Why?
5. Do you feel there is potential to promote greater demand for recreational opportunities in your area? Why/why not? If so, do you have a strategy for promoting outdoor recreation in your jurisdiction? If so, please describe.
6. What is the current level of investment of your [state/agency/etc] in recreational resources in terms of funding and personnel? Over the last decade has your investment in recreation increased, declined, or stayed about the same? What strategies have you used to weather the economic recession?

III. Management case study questions.

1. Can you give me an example of a major recreational success or highlight [actual place/experience] under your jurisdiction (e.g. in terms of user numbers, popularity of the experience, economic return, etc.)? OR, if manager of specific asset, ask about the story behind it.
 - a. Describe the asset – miles of trails, acreage, type, users, etc.
 - b. What were the most important management strategies that led to these results? (If partnerships, how do these work?)
 - c. Can you give me a sense of what the return is on your investment in this recreational asset? In other words, do you have evidence of the economic benefits of the asset in terms of local economic revenue and jobs? What is the annual management budget? What are your sources of revenue?
 - d. How has this asset weathered the economic recession?
 - e. We may want to write this up as a case study - could you provide photos of this recreational highlight?
2. What are your most intractable recreational management challenges (e.g. due to high user impact, conflict, economic loss, etc.)?
 - a. Can you explain the major causes of these problems and what would most help you address them?
 - b. Are there specific strategies you recommend that you have used to successfully overcome major recreational management challenges?
3. We would like to highlight and promote 25 of the most informative, useful, and/or inspiring web portals that showcase the diverse array of recreational assets found across the West (e.g. trail networks for human-powered pursuits; OHV resources; lakes and whitewater rivers; wildlife information for sportsmen and photographers; children and family-friendly sites; expert adventures; etc.) Could you recommend any from your state/region?

IV. Policy Recommendations.

1. What policy recommendations do you have for helping to protect, maintain, and improve recreational resources in the West?
2. Are there any other ways you think WGA could assist you as a recreational planner and land-use manager given its regional scope and access to governors? Do you have any further suggestions for the *Get Out West!* initiative?

V. Closing Questions

1. Other people to interview?
2. Other questions you think we should be asking?
3. Questions for me at this point? Anything else to add?
4. Would it be okay to contact you again in case we want to follow up in more detail on your responses – e.g. to include your case studies in panel and report?

⁴ See Appendix 3 for portals identified.

Appendix 3

Web Portals to Recreation Opportunities in the West and Beyond

Designed for Kids & Families

- Children & Nature Network – *All things related to children and nature, including clubs and events* – www.childrenandnature.org/
- Discover the Forest – *The Forest Service's interactive website to inspire kids to explore the outdoors* – www.discovertheforest.org
- Nature Rocks – *Portal for finding nature with ideas for family activities to do once you're there* – www.naturerocks.org
- Cascadia Kids – *Recreation and travel tips for families in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia* – www.cascadiakids.com

Best for Experts

- American Whitewater – *Includes the National Whitewater Inventory for boaters and paddlers* – www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/view
- IMBA Epics Rides – *The world's most challenging backcountry mountain biking routes* – www.imba.com/epics/rides
- RecLink – *A social networking and resource site for recreation managers and advocates* – www.reclink.us/
- Wilderness.net – *A resource site for wilderness managers, researchers, and enthusiasts* – www.wilderness.net

Nationwide & International

- American Trails – *Information on all kinds of trails, plus related legislation, jobs, and other resources* – www.americantrails.org
- BLM Recreation Sites – *Offering the most diverse recreational opportunities of any public land agency* – www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/Recreation.html
- EveryTrail – *Worldwide trail-finder, downloadable maps, trail-mapper, social networking, and more* – www.everytrail.com
- Explore Byways – *Portal to the nation's scenic roads, with maps and ideas for things to do on the way* – <http://byways.org/explore/>
- National Parks – *Portal to all of the nation's National Parks, with a park finder and much more* – www.nps.gov
- NatureFind – *A web and phone portal for finding nature in nearby parks, museums, zoos, events, etc.* – www.naturefind.com
- PlanetExplore – *A North Face portal for finding nature, outdoor events, people to meet, and more* – www.planetexplore.com
- Recreation.gov – *A portal to federally-managed recreation and cultural tourism activities near you* – www.recreation.gov

National Geographic Portals to the History, Culture and Nature of Special Regions in the West

- Central Cascades Geotourism Map Guide – *The Cascade spine connecting Washington and Oregon* – www.thecentralcascades.com
- Crown of the Continent Geotourism Map Guide – *The Rockies of Montana, Alberta and British Columbia* – www.crownofthecontinent.net

- Four Corners Region Geotourism Map Guide – *Where Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona intersect* – www.fourcornersgeotourism.com
- Greater Yellowstone Geotourism Map Guide – *The shared wonders of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming* – www.yellowstonegeotourism.org
- California's Redwood Coast Geotourism Map Guide – *The Northern coast of California* – www.visitredwoodcoast.com
- Sierra Nevada Geotourism Map Guide – *The shared mountains of California and Nevada* – www.sierranevadageotourism.org/index.php

Western State Parks & Local Portals

- Alaska State Parks – <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/>
- Alaska State Parks Public Use Cabins – *Most are hike-in only; some require boat or float-plane* – <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/cabins/index.htm>
- Arizona State Parks – <http://azstateparks.com/>
- California: Redding Trail System – *Find all the trails near Redding, California* – <http://www.reddingtrails.com/>
- California State Parks – <http://www.parks.ca.gov/>
- Colorado State Parks – <http://www.parks.state.co.us/Pages/HomePage.aspx>
- Hawaii State Parks – www.hawaii.stateparks.org/
- Idaho State Parks and Recreation – <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/>
- Kansas State Parks – <http://www.kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/State-Parks>
- Montana State Parks – <http://stateparks.mt.gov/parks/>
- Nebraska Game and Parks – <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/>
- Nevada State Parks – <http://parks.nv.gov/>
- New Mexico State Parks – <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/prd/parktours.htm>
- North Dakota Parks and Recreation – <http://www.parkrec.nd.gov/>
- Oklahoma State Parks – <http://www.oklahomaparks.com/>
- Oregon: The Intertwine – *Find parks, trails and outdoor adventures in the Portland-Vancouver area* – <http://theintertwine.org/>
- Oregon State Parks – <http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/index.shtml>
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks -- <http://gfp.sd.gov/>
- Texas State Parks – <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/>
- Utah State Parks – <http://stateparks.utah.gov/>
- Washington: Evergreen Trail Info Guide – *Portal to the best mountain biking trails in Washington State* – http://evergreenmtb.org/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page
- Washington: Methow Valley Sports Trails – *Nordic and summer trails; weather and grooming reports* – <http://www.mvsta.com/>
- Washington State Parks – *With snow and trail conditions, boating safety, ADA accessible sites, and more* – <http://www.parks.wa.gov/>
- Washington Trails Association – *Find all hiking trails in the state, with user reviews, resources, and more* – www.wta.org
- Washington Water Trails Association – *Guide to 5 major water trails for non-motorized boaters* – <http://www.wwta.org/trails/>
- Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails – <http://wyoparks.state.wy.us/>

Get Out West!

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