

Mission Area 3: Recreation— Provide Recreation Opportunities for America

- End Outcome 1 Provide for a Quality Recreation Experience, Including Access and Enjoyment of Natural and Cultural Resources on DOI Managed and Partnered Lands and Waters
- End Outcome 2 Provide for and Receive Fair Value in Recreation

The Department's formal recreation responsibility began with Yellowstone National Park, established in 1872 to serve as a "pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." Today NPS, BLM, FWS, and Reclamation provide recreation opportunities, operating under the principal mandates of the NPS Organic Act, the Refuge Recreation Act, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

End Outcome Goal 1: Provide for a Quality Recreation Experience

Interior's recreation destinations are among the Nation's most popular. In FY 2004, the 388-unit National Park System reported 268 million visits. Thirty-nine million people visited the 544-unit, 96-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which just celebrated its 100th anniversary. An additional 66 million people visited the 262 million acres of public lands managed by BLM, while Reclamation logged 90 million visits to 308 sites. There are also significant recreational opportunities on lands administered by BIA as well as on Tribal lands.

Wheelin' Sportsmen

Interior's FWS and the National Wild Turkey Federation's Wheelin' Sportsmen program have partnered under a Memorandum of Understanding to create outdoor opportunities for the disabled. Wheelin' Sportsmen represents a national outreach effort to help persons with disabilities enjoy outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing, and bird-watching. The FWS has long been interested in expanding opportunities for the disabled. Through the partnership, special events are being held at National Wildlife Refuges for the disabled and mobility-impaired to encourage enjoyment of public lands.



Americans come to national parks, refuges, and public lands for many reasons—to renew their sense of self, to experience adventure and relaxation, and to sample the rich diversity of our landscape and culture on water or land, at sea level or thousands of feet above, in scuba gear, on mountain bikes, or with a camera, while hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating, white-water rafting, and birding. We assess our success with our recreation mission by measuring visitor satisfaction, ease of access, visitor learning opportunities, and the quality of our facilities.

In FY 2003, 96% of visitors responding to a satisfaction survey reported that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their experience, against a target of 95% (Figure 1-10) (Note: 2004 results will be available in March 2005 since surveys are conducted during the prior summer season (May - October). In FY 2004, 153 million visitors, against a target of 125.4 million visitors, participated in interpretive and educational programs designed to enrich their visit. Interior ensured that 7.8%, against a target of 9.7%, of its facilities were universally accessible (including access by the disabled) in relation to the total number of recreation areas it manages. Preliminary data suggest that specific management actions and partnerships made 338.5 million acres, against a target of more than 340 million acres, available for recreation along with 19,870 miles of rivers and shorelines. These data, however, have yet to be verified.

End Outcome Goal 2: Provide for and Receive Fair Value in Recreation

The Recreational Fee Demonstration Program is designed to improve visitor services. Established by Congress in 1996, this program permits agencies to retain most recreation fees at the site where they were collected so that they can be reinvested to improve visitor facilities and services. Although recreational fees date to 1908, Congress first established broad recreation fee authority in 1965 under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. In enacting this authority, Congress acknowledged that visitors to Federal lands receive some benefits that do not directly accrue to the public at large and that charging a modest fee to visitors is both equitable and fair to the general taxpayer.

In FY 2004, Interior generated \$147 million in revenues through the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program. This program has enabled us to invest funds to further reduce our maintenance backlog, enhance resource protection activities, and defray the cost of future fee collections at recreational areas managed by FWS, NPS, and BLM.

In addition, \$25 million in revenue, against a target of \$39.1 million, was collected from concessions located on National Park System lands, 94.5% of which are operated under performance-based contracts (against a target of 2.9% for FY 2004). An estimated 82.4% of those responding to a survey in FY 2004 reported they were satisfied with the value received for the fee they paid to use recreational sites, meeting our target.

FIGURE 1-10

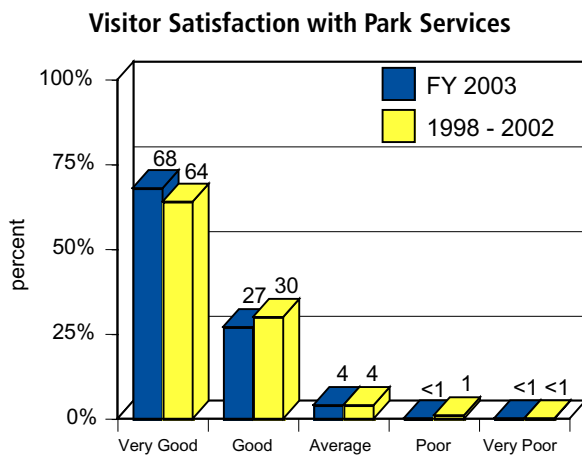


TABLE 1-6

Mission Area 3: Recreation Performance and Resource Scorecard				
End Outcome Goal	Number of Measures Met	Number of Unmet Measures	Number of Measures Containing Estimated or No Reports	Costs (in millions)
Goal #1: Provide for a Quality Recreation Experience, Including Access and Enjoyment of Natural and Cultural Resources on DOI Managed and Partnered Lands and Waters	6	2	4	\$1,834
Goal #2: Provide for and Receive Fair Value in Recreation	3	1	0	\$327
Total	9	3	4	\$2,161
Percentage (Total of 16 Measures)	56%	19%	25%	

