

Reclamation Manual

Policy

Subject: Recreation Management

Purpose: Defines Reclamation's overall responsibilities and establishes the basic principles for planning, development, management, and protection of public recreation resources on Reclamation lands and waters.

Authority: The Reclamation Act of 1902, as amended and supplemented; the Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965, as amended; the Reclamation Project Act of 1939; the Reclamation Recreation Management Act of 1992; and specific project authorities as applicable.

Contact: Land, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Office, D-5300

1. **Background.** The recreation and tourism industry is the Western States' largest industry and the nation's second largest employer. National surveys show that water-based recreation activities are among the most popular outdoor recreation activities. Statistics also show that the American public strongly relies on publicly owned and managed reservoirs and lands for many of these recreation activities. Currently, there are about 90 million visits to Reclamation's designated recreation areas each year. As our nation's population increases, so does the need for adequate recreation opportunities and facilities.
2. **Purpose and Responsibility.** The Reclamation Recreation Management Act of 1992 states "There is a Federal responsibility to provide opportunities for public recreation at Federal water projects." In that Act, and numerous other project authorizations, Congress created various Federal authorities for the development and expansion of recreation facilities at Federal water projects. This policy statement establishes the basic principles for implementing these authorities. Implementation of this policy and the underlying authorities is the responsibility of Reclamation's Regional Directors and Area Managers.
3. **Recreation Principles.** In the development, management, operation, and protection of public recreation resources on Reclamation lands and water, Reclamation will be guided by the following principles:
 - A. Fulfill Reclamation's stewardship responsibilities by providing appropriate recreation opportunities, facilities, and services on Reclamation land and water.
 - B. Protect, conserve, preserve, enhance, and interpret the natural, historical, and cultural resources entrusted to Reclamation.
 - C. Conduct necessary planning studies, research, assessments, and public involvement processes, in conjunction with managing partners where possible, to provide recreation

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facilities commensurate with public needs and Reclamation responsibilities and objectives.

- D. Use appropriate and effective approaches to managing Reclamation's land and recreation resources, including Federal and non-Federal partnerships where feasible.
 - E. Give appropriate consideration to the regulations and policies of managing partners when developing partnership agreements, keeping within the framework of Reclamation laws, regulations, and policies.
 - F. Ensure that recreation facilities, services, and activities are compatible with other project operations, purposes, and benefits.
 - G. Protect public health and safety.
 - H. Provide access for people with disabilities.
 - I. Prohibit new exclusive uses and eliminate existing exclusive uses, as allowed by current use agreements, to maximize public recreation opportunities, facilities, and services.
 - J. Promote appropriate opportunities for private sector development of recreation facilities and services when an opportunity exists for a reasonable profit for the operator, an appropriate return of fees to the Government, and reasonable user fees and charges to the public.
 - K. Provide appropriate resources to support Reclamation's stewardship responsibilities including funding, staff, and training.
 - L. Use sound business practices in the operation and management of recreation facilities and concessions, and exercise appropriate approval authority and oversight of managing partners and concessionaires to ensure the full implementation of these principles.
 - M. Promote active outreach and communication efforts with stakeholders, Congress, and the public to ensure successful implementation of recreation management actions.
4. **Supporting Reclamation Manual (RM) Policy, Directives and Standards.** This policy is supported by the following RM policies, directives and standards. These policies, directives and standards provide detailed information regarding the planning, development, financing, management, and protection of recreation resources.
- A. *Implementation of the Cost-Sharing Authorities for Recreation and Fish and Wildlife Enhancement, LND 01-01.*

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- B. *Concessions Management*, LND P02.
- C. *Concessions Management by the Bureau of Reclamation*, LND 04-01.
- D. *Concessions Management by Non-Federal Partners*, LND 04-02.