

# Mission Area Three Recreation

**R**ecreation is a vitally important part of Interior's mission. More than 22 million people live within 25 miles of Interior lands. Accessible and nearby, public land is quickly becoming America's backyard. The land we manage contains multiple recreational opportunities for individual enrichment through interaction with nature. Recreation activities are diverse—from off-road vehicles to contemplative wilderness experiences; from edutainment to work/play volunteerism; from hunting and fishing to hiking the National Trails System. Outdoor recreation is an enjoyable and easy way for families to spend time together, and for children to have the kinds of experiences one can have only by connecting with the natural world.

Interior's Recreation Mission Area encompasses both recreation and tourism—primary factors in helping local and regional economies sustain themselves. Therefore, the availability of public land and water for recreation purposes is a critical economic factor.

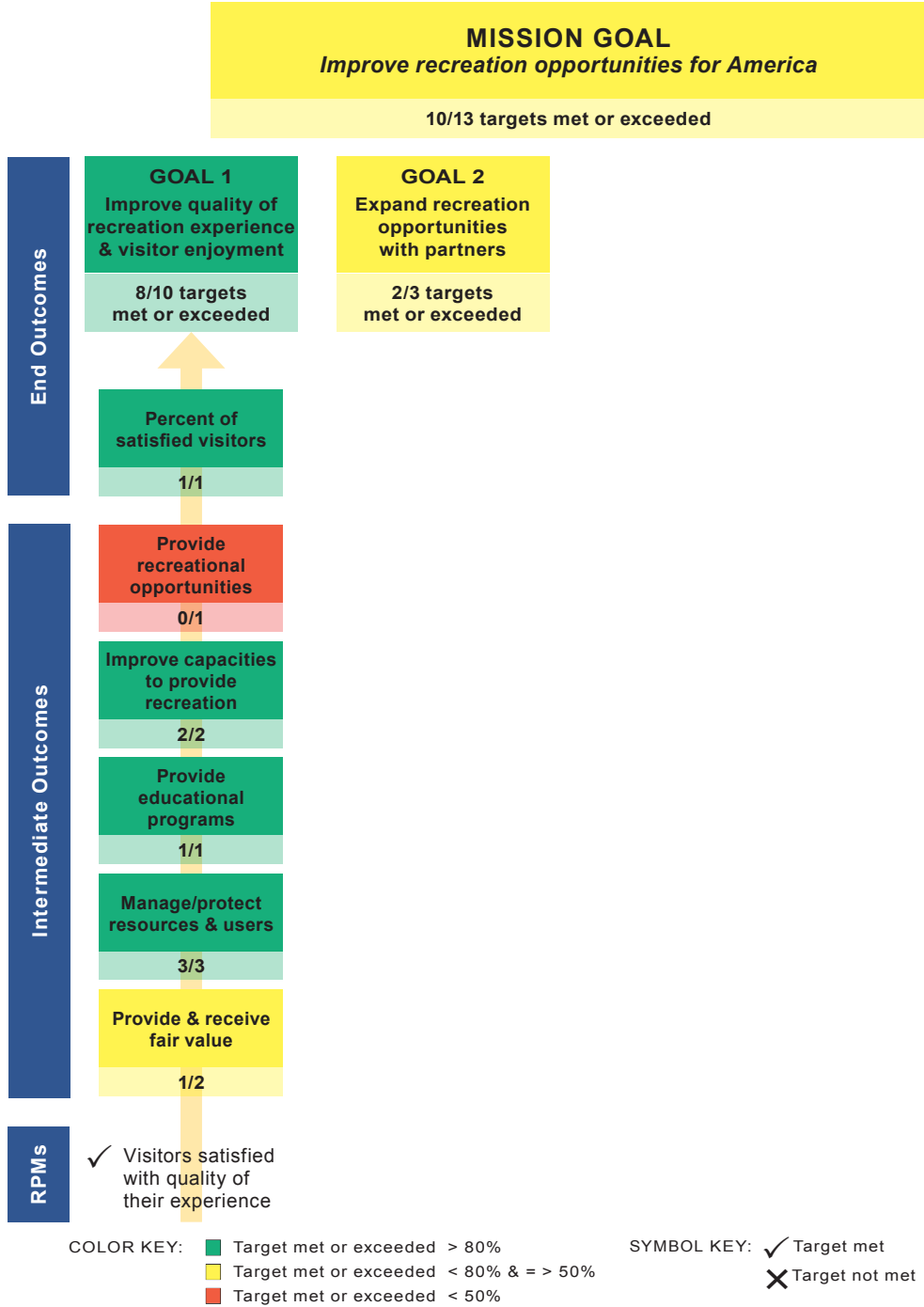
Interior maintains and manages thousands of recreation areas. Over 460 million people from around the world annually spend time in recreational activities on land managed by the Department of the Interior (DOI). To the greatest extent possible, DOI works among its own bureaus and with our partners to provide a seamless and enjoyable experience.

**Mission Area Two: Recreation**

FIGURE 1-27

**RECREATION**

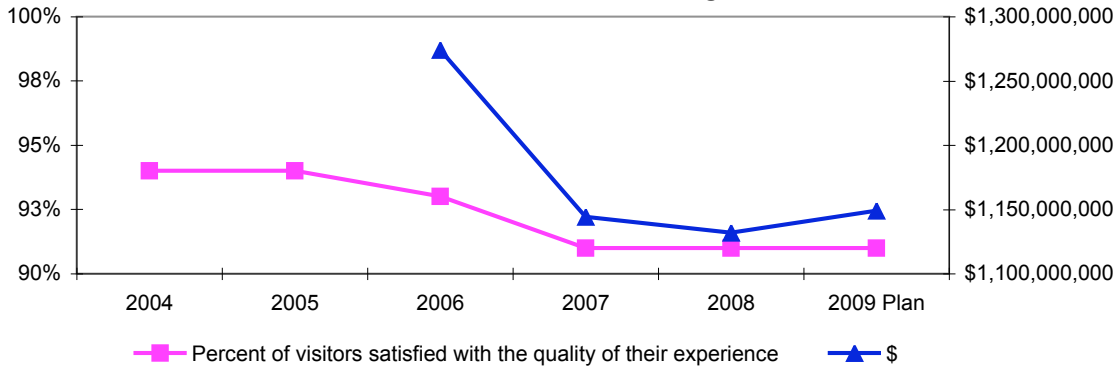
*Interior's stewardship activities devoted to recreation are shared by the National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). They oversee our National parks, wildlife refuges, water recreation areas and public land recreation sites. Opportunities to visit and enjoy these natural resources are a benefit enjoyed by the public through the work in this Mission Area.*



Percent of visitors satisfied with the quality of their experience

FIGURE 1-28

Performance vs. Funding



ID #554	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 Plan
Target	95%	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%
Performance	94%	94%	93%	91%	91%	
\$	Not Available		1,273,925,343	1,144,335,910	1,131,989,792	1,149,046,396

**Snapshot:** Performance remained at 91 percent for FY 2008, slightly less than in earlier years, with funding slightly declining.

**Bottom Line:** There is a 2 percent increase in funding planned in FY 2009 in order to maintain current satisfaction levels at 91 percent.

**Status:** Challenged Performance, due to a reevaluation of how high to try to increase visitor satisfaction above 90 percent.

**Public Benefit:** Outdoor recreation is integral to a healthy lifestyle for millions of Americans. Over 460 million visitors to Interior’s public lands and waters took advantage of the physical, mental, and social benefits outdoor recreational experiences provide.

Visitor satisfaction is measured through surveys handed out to visitors by three different bureaus with slightly different priorities. At the Department level performance remained at 91 percent.

NPS visitor satisfaction maintains record levels at 95 percent or higher. With the upcoming 2016 centennial of the establishment of the National Park Service, the President has called for the further enhancement of the National parks. With this influx

of Centennial funding, NPS visitor satisfaction is expected to rise to 97 percent by 2012, as opposed to a potential decrease that was otherwise expected.

It is more difficult for BLM to assess visitor satisfaction overall, as surveys are given primarily to those visitors who pay an entrance fee. BLM tries to balance its goals for resource use while still providing for visitors (12 percent of total Interior visits), and expects to maintain visitor satisfaction at 92 percent in 2009. FWS has maintained a constant visitor satisfaction rate of 85 percent from 2005 through 2008, which is considered adequate for refuges in which the primary purpose is to protect wildlife and habitat.

**Programs Supporting This Measure**

- BLM Recreation Management & Concessions
- NPS Visitor Services
- NPS Concessions Management
- FWS National Wildlife Refuge System
- BOR Recreation & Concessions
- NPS Technical Assistance
- FWS Fisheries



### Centennial Initiative

#### Stewardship

The National Park Centennial Initiative was created to improve our national parks in time to celebrate the 100th birthday of the National Park Service in 2016. The first round of projects approved for FY 2008 were directed at parks nationwide—large and small, urban and rural, natural and historical—to enhance visitors' park experiences.

Padre Island National Seashore is the premier nesting grounds in the United States for the endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle, considered the smallest marine turtle in the world. This year the park has augmented reestablishment efforts that have been under way since 1978, in cooperation with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and other partners in the United States and Mexico, to ensure that this species survives through the 21st century.

The park has engaged the public in observing and relocating nests, which will ultimately result in the protection of over 100 nests and the release of thousands of hatchlings at Padre Island National Seashore. Volunteers are recruited to patrol, locate, and protect nesting turtles and nests, and an extensive public outreach program will inform beach users of current issues and regulations. Through these efforts, we may be celebrating an endangered species success story in 2016.



### Centennial Initiative

#### Creating Future Park Stewards through Education

Three national parks—Biscayne, Dry Tortugas and Everglades—and Big Cypress National Preserve, all in Florida, have a program under way to stimulate a lifelong love of nature in underserved students. The South Florida National Parks will expand their ecosystem and curriculum-based education programs at no cost to students by hiring staff, transporting classes to the parks, and purchasing supplies to allow 50,000 local children to connect with their national parks.

The program will develop relationships with local schools and sponsor events, science fairs, classroom visits by rangers, traveling trunks, and interactive demonstrations. Day and overnight camping trips are planned to give the children positive experiences of the natural world



*Students participate in the cypress slough study*