

Department of the Interior



Customer Service Plan 2011

October 23, 2011

Executive Summary

The Department of the Interior (DOI) protects and manages the Nation’s natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities. In accomplishing this mission, DOI serves its customers in the four broad areas of recreational uses, commercial uses, community services, and science for decision making. This focus is reflected in the Department’s Strategic Plan¹, which identifies the following five mission areas.

1. Provide Natural and Cultural Resource Protection and Experiences
2. Sustainably Manage Energy, Water, and Natural Resources
3. Advance Government-to-Government Relationships with Indian Nations and Honor Commitments to Insular Areas
4. Provide a Scientific Foundation for Decision Making
5. Building a 21st Century Department of the Interior

In accordance with Executive Order 13571 on Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service, DOI developed this Customer Service Plan, which identifies certain actions that will improve its customer service, focusing on the four broad areas of customer service and one technology-driven signature initiative.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE
National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<p>Overview: Modern information technologies, and in particular service-oriented architecture (SOA), provide tools and procedures that allow multiple data systems, within and among various programs and agencies, to share data and information. The National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) are working together to modernize, integrate, and link what used to be numerous stand-alone data systems through the use of SOA and common data exchange standards. The Integrated Resource Management Applications (IRMA) data system being developed by NPS is an internet-based tool for more efficient and effective discovery and delivery of scientific data and information about NPS natural and cultural resources to DOI internal and external customers. When fully implemented, IRMA and the FWS counterpart that it will link to will provide improved customer access to scientific data, reports and other documents, maps, images, links, and other information, and will streamline how resource data are entered, managed, discovered, and shared.</p> <p>Timing: By FY 2011, NPS has integrated six previously stand-alone “silos” into one system with a consistent user interface using the service-oriented architecture technology. In FY 2012, NPS will implement the following additional steps toward full implementation of the system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modernize and integrate several additional “legacy,” stand-alone data systems, such as the NPS Public Use Statistics system, into IRMA (NPS, FY 2012).• Adapt and pilot the “Data Store” component of IRMA at 8 National Wildlife Refuges (FWS, FY 2012).• Develop a direct link with the NPS Technical Information Center’s “Documentum” data system to allow searches across both systems (NPS, FY 2012).

¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, “Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2011-2016.”

<p>SERVICE 1: RECREATIONAL USES OF PUBLIC LANDS National Park Service</p>
<p>Overview: The National Park Service (NPS) manages 395 National Parks, Historic Sites, Monuments, and other units of the National Park System. In 2010, there were over 281 million recreational visits to these important resources. Recreational opportunities enjoyed by these visitors include hiking, wildlife viewing, and learning about cultural and historic places and events. These and other outdoor recreational opportunities on Federal lands are described, and reservations for their use can be made, at http://www.recreation.gov.</p> <p>Key Customer Groups: The recreational opportunities provided by NPS are available to all. Our visitors include international travelers in addition to the American public. These visitors span all ages and all racial and ethnic groups, and include families with children, veterans, and others.</p> <p>Challenges: One key challenge faced by NPS in serving its customers is providing timely and relevant information regarding the availability of recreational opportunities in a convenient and useful way. While there are already significant educational resources such as printed materials and web sites, including http://www.recreation.gov, that provide this information, additional efforts could be made to take advantage of newer modes of communicating such as social media. Another key challenge in providing recreational opportunities to our customers is managing other activities that may distract from the recreational experiences they demand. These distractions can include air and water pollution and manmade noises that intrude on natural soundscapes.</p> <p>Featured Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate survey methodologies and implement ways to improve response rates and representation of customer groups (NPS, beginning in FY 2012). • Evaluate new and emerging modes of communication and implement ways to improve feedback from customers (NPS, beginning in FY 2013).
<p>SERVICE 2: COMMERCIAL USES OF PUBLIC LANDS Bureau of Land Management</p>
<p>Overview: Federal onshore lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are designated for multiple uses, and offer harvestable timber; grasslands for grazing; and mineral, oil, gas, and renewable energy sites for lease. Permitting commercial activities on these lands sustainably enhances public benefit, promotes responsible use, and generates economic value. In providing this service, BLM processes applications for a wide variety of commercial uses on public lands such as filming, grazing, oil and gas production, mineral extraction, recreation, energy development, and transmission lines, and issues authorizations, permits, leases, and rights-of-ways to facilitate those uses.</p> <p>Key Customer Groups: Approximately 5,000 users of Federal onshore lands receive or request applications, permits, or authorizations annually.</p> <p>Challenges: Challenges include ensuring customer and client awareness of application processes and timelines, and ensuring consistent feedback.</p> <p>Featured Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase customer and client awareness of the lands and minerals permitting process by soliciting and using feedback collected through web-based tools and electronic mail (BLM, beginning in FY 2013). • Identify and respond to emerging customer and client needs by addressing these issues during existing programmatic conference calls with field personnel (BLM, beginning in FY 2012).

SERVICE 3: COMMUNITY SERVICES Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians
<p>Overview: The Department, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST), provides services to 565 federally recognized Indian Tribes and over 1.9 million Native Americans and Alaskan Natives throughout the greater United States. The BIA administers a multitude of programs on Indian reservations which include social services, economic development, tribal court administration, water resources, housing development, wild land fire management, roads maintenance, irrigation, law enforcement services, and realty and natural resource management on Indian trust lands (approximately 55 million surface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface minerals estates). The OST is responsible for the accounting, investment, and management of Indian trust funds. OST manages approximately \$831 million in receipts annually. In addition, OST manages approximately 383,800 Indian trust accounts. These Indian trust accounts have a cumulative account balance that totals approximately \$3.57 billion.</p> <p>Key Customer Groups: Indian trust beneficiaries, Indian Tribes, and, businesses on Indian reservations.</p> <p>Challenges: One key challenge faced by the Department, in the area of Indian trust asset management, is managing the large number of Indian trust accounts that have small account balances. As of FY-end 2010, there were 125,516 Individual Indian Moneys (IIM) trust accounts with balances of less than \$15 and with no activity for 18 months. These small balance accounts are primarily due to Indian trust beneficiaries having small percentage ownership in their trust land (fractionation). Fractionation makes it difficult to maintain title, manage probates in a cost effective manner, and prudently manage the trust property. The BIA and OST continue to work with Indian trust beneficiaries (i.e. IIM account holders) and Indian Tribes to stress the importance of consolidating trust land ownership in order to reduce fractionated interests. This effort will result in fewer IIM accounts to manage and should increase the likelihood of more Indian trust land being leased, which should subsequently result in more trust income being generated for the Indian trust beneficiaries. It should also result in the remaining Indian trust beneficiaries taking a more active role in managing their trust assets.</p> <p>Featured Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute a system to survey the identified key customer groups to determine their satisfaction with the trust services provided by OST and to elicit customer feedback comments (OST, beginning in FY 2013). • Identify and address significant problems in providing services to the identified key customer groups by analyzing common customer feedback comments (OST, FY 2013).
SERVICE 4: SCIENCE FOR DECISION MAKING U.S. Geological Survey
<p>Overview: The Department, through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) provides impartial information on the health of our ecosystems and environment, the natural hazards that threaten us, the natural resources we rely on, the impacts of climate and land-use change, and the core science systems that help us provide timely, relevant, and useable information. This information is used by a variety of customers as they make important decisions about managing our natural resources, minimizing loss of life and property and protecting and enhancing their quality of life. As the demand for our information continues to grow, we will need to ensure that our information is understandable, useable and accessible in many forms. Providing timely, relevant and accurate information is the cornerstone of our customer service activities.</p> <p>Key Customer Groups: USGS science data, information, and products are used by a wide variety of audiences including: the general public, other Federal, State and Tribal governments, non-government</p>

organizations, and the private sector.

Challenges: One key challenge faced by the Department is how to manage and disseminate the wealth of science information and data that it holds and how to meet the increasing demand for that information from a wide array of users. We need to be able to provide that information in a way that is convenient and useful, both through traditional and non-traditional media. Our customer service activities will have to take advantage of new modes of communications such as social media as we interact and respond to our customer's needs.

Featured Actions:

- Develop and consistently implement customer service standards and best practices across the bureau (USGS, beginning in FY 2012).
- The USGS Science Strategy outlines the major societal issues that USGS science is poised to address during the next decade. We will provide customers the opportunity to comment and weigh in on specific strategies for each of those areas - - helping us to better understand how science can meet customer needs (USGS, ongoing in FY 2012).
- Increase customer awareness of USGS science by realigning the USGS web presence to make it easier for customers to explore and discover information (USGS, ongoing in FY 2012).
- Continue to expand the use of social media tools as a method of interacting with and responding to customer inquiries (USGS, ongoing, and continuing annually).
- Explore the use of real-time web-based chat with customer service agents (USGS, beginning in FY 2012).
- Leverage collaboration tools such as Microsoft® SharePoint™ to develop a centralized pooling of information that can be accessed by customer service agents, decreasing response time and helping to ensure consistency in responses (USGS, ongoing in FY 2012).

Signature Initiative

Overview: Modern information technologies, and in particular service-oriented architecture (SOA), provide tools and procedures that allow multiple data systems, within and among various programs and agencies, to share data and information. The National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) are working together to modernize, integrate, and link what used to be numerous stand-alone data systems through the use of SOA and common data exchange standards. The Integrated Resource Management Applications (IRMA) data system being developed by NPS is an internet-based tool for more efficient and effective discovery and delivery of scientific data and information about NPS natural and cultural resources to DOI internal and external customers. When fully implemented, IRMA and the FWS counterpart that it will link to will provide improved customer access to scientific data, reports and other documents, maps, images, links, and other information, and will streamline how resource data are entered, managed, discovered, and shared.

Overview

Data and information about NPS and FWS natural and cultural resources are invaluable assets, as evidenced by the many management and planning decisions, information products, and services that result from their use, analysis, and synthesis. NPS and FWS managers, planners, interpreters, scientists, and other staff need to be able to efficiently search, retrieve, share, and disseminate data and information in order to effectively manage public lands. Integrated Resource Management Applications, or IRMA, is the name given by NPS to the project that is guiding this transformation, and the web portal

that is the end result. Modern information technologies, and in particular, service-oriented architecture (SOA), upon which IRMA is based, are providing tools and procedures that allow multiple data systems, within and among various programs and agencies, to share data and information. The design and functionality of the IRMA portal is based on interviews and surveys with hundreds of users from multiple customer and stakeholder groups who were asked “what does the data system need to do in order to help you do your work?”

Impact and Benefits

NPS is implementing IRMA for two primary reasons: 1) to better serve its customers; and 2) to improve management of its current and future information technology investments. The SOA approach to IRMA holds the promise of better cost sharing, rapid adaptability to changing mission needs, and improved interoperability with other data systems. With ever-increasing amounts of data and continually changing customer and technical requirements, developing an information management framework with maximum flexibility will provide many benefits. SOA is the approach most likely to meet customers’ needs over the long term, and to allow the efficient sharing of data and information both internally and externally.

Key Milestones and Timeline

By FY 2011, NPS has integrated six previously stand-alone “silos” into one system with a consistent user interface using the service-oriented architecture technology. In FY 2012, NPS and FWS will implement the following additional steps toward full implementation of the system.

- Modernize and integrate several additional “legacy,” stand-alone data systems, such as the NPS Public Use Statistics system, into IRMA (NPS, FY 2012).
- Adapt and pilot the “Data Store” component of IRMA at 8 National Wildlife Refuges (FWS, FY 2012).
- Develop a direct link with the NPS Technical Information Center’s “Documentum” data system to allow searches across both systems (NPS, FY 2012).

Service #1: Recreational Uses of Public Lands

Overview: The National Park Service (NPS) manages 395 National Parks, Historic Sites, Monuments, and other units of the National Park System. In 2010, there were over 281 million recreational visits to these important resources. Recreational opportunities enjoyed by these visitors include hiking, wildlife viewing, and learning about cultural and historic places and events. These and other outdoor recreational opportunities on Federal lands are described, and reservations for their use can be made, at <http://www.recreation.gov>.

Key Customer Groups: The recreational opportunities provided by NPS are available to all. Our visitors include international travelers in addition to the American public. These visitors span all ages and all racial and ethnic groups, and include families with children, veterans, and others.

Challenges: One key challenge faced by NPS in serving its customers is providing timely and relevant information regarding the availability of recreational opportunities in a convenient and useful way. While there are already significant educational resources such as printed materials and web sites, including <http://www.recreation.gov>, that provide this information, additional efforts could be made to take advantage of newer modes of communicating such as social media. Another key challenge in providing recreational opportunities to our customers is managing other activities that may distract from the recreational experiences they demand. These distractions can include air and water pollution

and manmade noises that intrude on natural soundscapes.

1. Increase Feedback from Customers

NPS already collects customer feedback information regarding the recreational opportunities they enjoy. This feedback information includes satisfaction surveys and detailed surveys on desired activities and options for managing them. These feedback mechanisms will be improved by the following steps.

- Evaluate survey methodologies and implement ways to improve response rates and representation of customer groups (NPS, beginning in FY 2012).
- Evaluate new and emerging modes of communication and implement ways to improve feedback from customers (NPS, beginning in FY 2013).

2. Adopt Best Practices for Improving Customer Experience

Through its existing customer feedback mechanisms, NPS continually evaluates ways to improve the recreational experiences of its customers. The following best practices will be implemented to improve these experiences.

- Evaluate satisfaction surveys and implement ways to improve measures of satisfaction to better reflect customer experiences (NPS, beginning in FY 2012).
- Evaluate indicators of distractions to recreational experiences such as air and water pollution and manmade noises and implement ways to improve the information provided by these measures (NPS, beginning in FY 2013).

3. Set, Communicate, and Use Customer Service Metrics and Standards

NPS will develop and implement the following customer feedback service metrics, and evaluate them for purposes of establishing standards.

- Track and evaluate the number of information products provided on-line and implement ways to improve their utilization (NPS, beginning in FY 2012).
- Create “dashboards” for web sites to provide real-time performance metrics such as visitation statistics and the resulting economic benefits to local communities (NPS, beginning in FY 2012).

4. Streamline Agency Processes to Reduce Costs and Accelerate Delivery

NPS will develop and implement the following actions to streamline the delivery of recreational services to our customers.

- Conduct meta-analyses of visitor survey results to identify trends relating to specific services and locations (NPS, beginning in FY 2013).
- Reduce “stove-pipes” in the delivery of information products by utilizing information technology to create single portals for related types of information (NPS, beginning in FY 2012).

Service #2: Commercial Uses of Public Lands

Overview: Federal onshore lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are designated for multiple uses, and offer harvestable timber; grasslands for grazing; and mineral, oil, gas, and renewable energy sites for lease. Permitting commercial activities on these lands sustainably enhances public benefit, promotes responsible use, and generates economic value. In providing this service, BLM processes applications for a wide variety of commercial uses on public lands such as filming, grazing, oil and gas production, mineral extraction, recreation, energy development, and transmission lines, and

issues authorizations, permits, leases, and rights-of-ways to facilitate those uses.

Key Customer Groups: Approximately 5,000 users of Federal onshore lands receive or request applications, permits, or authorizations annually.

Challenges: Challenges include ensuring customer and client awareness of application processes and timelines, and ensuring consistent feedback.

1. Increase Feedback from Customers

BLM will develop and implement the following measures to increase feedback from customers.

- Increase customer and client awareness of the lands and minerals permitting process by soliciting and using feedback collected through web-based tools and electronic mail (BLM, beginning in FY 2013).
- Identify and respond to emerging customer and client needs by addressing these issues during existing programmatic conference calls with field personnel (BLM, beginning in FY 2012).

2. Adopt Best Practices for Improving Customer Experience

BLM will develop and implement the following measures to adopt best practices for improving customer experience.

- Enable customers and clients to find answers to their questions by redesigning appropriate websites so that information is presented in a logical and readily available, understandable way (BLM, FY 2012).
- Ensure consistent responses to customer inquiries, by developing standardized policies, procedures, and responses to frequently asked questions (BLM, FY 2013).
- Allow applicants to submit application information and data online by developing an online application within information technology approvals (BLM, FY 2013).
- Ensure appropriate phone and online experiences of customers and clients by providing direct access to staff processing applications via email or phone (BLM, FY 2013).
- Create and update manuals and handbooks to reflect best management practices (BLM, beginning FY 2013).

3. Set, Communicate, and Use Customer Service Metrics and Standards

BLM will develop and implement the following customer feedback service metrics, and evaluate them for purposes of establishing standards.

- Provide consistent service to customers and clients by establishing and publicizing clear timeframes and fee schedules (when appropriate) for responding to customer and client inquiries (BLM, beginning in FY 2013).
- Increase customer and client awareness of the land use authorization permitting process by soliciting and using feedback collected through customer comments and other information collection techniques (BLM, beginning in FY 2012).

4. Streamline Agency Processes to Reduce Costs and Accelerate Delivery

BLM will develop and implement the following actions to streamline the delivery of commercial use services to our customers.

- Identify and address process problems by analyzing common customer feedback issues (BLM, FY 2012).

- Conduct risk assessments and internal control reviews and respond to audit findings on the major customer processes to identify streamlining and redesign opportunities (BLM, beginning in FY 2012).
- Develop a portal for payment of fees online (BLM, beginning in FY 2013).

Service #3: Community Services

Overview: The Department, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST), provides services to 565 federally recognized Indian Tribes and over 1.9 million Native Americans and Alaskan Natives throughout the greater United States. The BIA administers a multitude of programs on Indian reservations which include social services, economic development, tribal court administration, water resources, housing development, wild land fire management, roads maintenance, irrigation, law enforcement services, and realty and natural resource management on Indian trust lands (approximately 55 million surface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface minerals estates). The OST is responsible for the accounting, investment, and management of Indian trust funds. OST manages approximately \$831 million in receipts annually. In addition, OST manages approximately 383,800 Indian trust accounts. These Indian trust accounts have a cumulative account balance that totals approximately \$3.57 billion.

Key Customer Groups: Indian trust beneficiaries, Indian Tribes, and, businesses on Indian reservations.

Challenges: One key challenge faced by the Department, in the area of Indian trust asset management, is managing the large number of Indian trust accounts that have small account balances. As of FY-end 2010, there were 125,516 Individual Indian Moneys (IIM) trust accounts with balances of less than \$15 and with no activity for 18 months. These small balance accounts are primarily due to Indian trust beneficiaries having small percentage ownership in their trust land (fractionation). Fractionation makes it difficult to maintain title, manage probates in a cost effective manner, and prudently manage the trust property. The BIA and OST continue to work with Indian trust beneficiaries (i.e. IIM account holders) and Indian Tribes to stress the importance of consolidating trust land ownership in order to reduce fractionated interests. This effort will result in fewer IIM accounts to manage and should increase the likelihood of more Indian trust land being leased, which should subsequently result in more trust income being generated for the Indian trust beneficiaries. It should also result in the remaining Indian trust beneficiaries taking a more active role in managing their trust assets.

1. Increase Feedback from Customers

OST will develop and implement the following measures to increase feedback from Individual Indian trust beneficiaries and Indian Tribes (i.e., its customers).

- Institute a system to survey the identified key customer groups to determine their satisfaction with the trust services provided by OST and to elicit customer feedback comments (OST, beginning in FY 2013).
- Identify and address significant problems in providing services to the identified key customer groups by analyzing common customer feedback comments (OST, FY 2013).

2. Adopt Best Practices for Improving Customer Experience

OST will develop and implement the following measures to adopt best practices for improving customer experience.

- Institute regular monitoring of feedback to identify customers that could potentially benefit from particular service improvements (OST, beginning in FY 2013).

- Enable customers to find answers to their questions by designing new web sites and/or improving current web sites to provide better and more relevant information, and to address customer concerns (OST, beginning in FY 2013).

3. Set, Communicate, and Use Customer Service Metrics and Standards

OST will implement the following measures for purposes of establishing customer service standards.

- Establish draft criteria for identifying particular customer concerns, and communicate those criteria to customers to elicit their comments (OST, beginning in FY 2013).
- Identify potential opportunities for outreach strategies and implement appropriate approaches to educate and communicate with customers (OST, beginning in FY 2013).

4. Streamline Agency Processes to Reduce Costs and Accelerate Delivery

OST will develop and implement the following actions to streamline the delivery of community services to our customers.

- Improve the delivery of information products in collaboration with BIA utilizing information technology to create single portals for related types of information (OST, beginning in FY 2013).
- Institute regular communications and improve collaboration among service providers, OST, and BIA, to review customer comments, identify trends, and take corrective action (OST, beginning in FY 2013).

Service #4: Science for Decision Making

Overview: The Department, through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) provides impartial information on the health of our ecosystems and environment, the natural hazards that threaten us, the natural resources we rely on, the impacts of climate and land-use change, and the core science systems that help us provide timely, relevant, and useable information. This information is used by a variety of customers as they make important decisions about managing our natural resources, minimizing loss of life and property and protecting and enhancing their quality of life. As the demand for our information continues to grow, we will need to ensure that our information is understandable, useable and accessible in many forms. Providing timely, relevant and accurate information is the cornerstone of our customer service activities.

Key Customer Groups: USGS science data, information, and products are used by a wide variety of audiences including: the general public, other Federal, State and Tribal governments, non-government organizations, and the private sector.

Challenges: One key challenge faced by the Department is how to manage and disseminate the wealth of science information and data that it holds and how to meet the increasing demand for that information from a wide array of users. We need to be able to provide that information in a way that is convenient and useful, both through traditional and non-traditional media. Our customer service activities will have to take advantage of new modes of communications such as social media as we interact and respond to our customer's needs.

1. Increase Feedback from Customers

USGS will develop and implement the following measures to increase feedback from its customers.

- The USGS Science Strategy outlines the major societal issues that USGS science is poised to address during the next decade. We will provide customers the opportunity to comment and

weigh in on specific strategies for each of those areas - - helping us to better understand how science can meet customer needs (USGS, ongoing in FY 2012).

- Employ a single web statistics provider across the bureau web presence to improve consistency of data and analytics about visitor engagement and experience (USGS, beginning in FY 2012).
- Administer the American Customer Satisfaction Index survey across more of the USGS web presence (USGS, beginning FY 2012).

2. Adopt Best Practices for Improving Customer Experience

USGS will develop and implement the following measures to adopt best practices for improving customer experience.

- Ensure consistent response to customer inquiries, by developing standardized policies, procedures and responses to frequently asked questions (USGS, beginning FY 2012).
- Continue to build the bureau's Frequently Asked Questions database that includes questions addressing science topics from across the organization and making them easily accessible via the web (USGS, ongoing and continuing through FY 2012).
- Increase current response rate to inquiries from 86% to 90% within a 24 hour time period (USGS, beginning FY 2012).
- Increase customer awareness of USGS science by realigning the USGS web presence to make it easier for customers to explore and discover information (USGS, ongoing in FY 2012).
- Explore the use of real-time web-based chat with customer service agents (USGS, beginning in FY 2012).

3. Set, Communicate, and Use Customer Service Metrics and Standards

USGS will implement the following measures for purposes of establishing customer service standards.

- Publish bureau customer service standards so customers know what to expect when interacting with the bureau (USGS, beginning in FY 2013).
- Collect and analyze customer satisfaction survey results and use analysis to make improvement to processes and procedures and our online web presence (USGS, beginning in FY 2012).

4. Streamline Agency Processes to Reduce Costs and Accelerate Delivery

USGS will develop and implement the following actions to streamline the delivery of community services to our customers.

- Improve the delivery of information and products by realigning the USGS web presence to make it easier for customers to explore and discover information (USGS, ongoing in FY 2012).
- Reduce "stove-pipes" in the hosting of Frequently Asked Questions within individual program areas by utilizing the bureau database and making them easily accessible via the web (USGS, ongoing and continuing through FY 2013).