

# Public Land Agency Recreation Leaders Panel

Kurt Rausch – National Park Service

Ben Johnson – US Forest Service

Kevin Oliver – Bureau of Land Management

**AMERICA OUTDOORS**  
Conference and  
Outfitter Expo

 **ELEVATE**  
THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY



# NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

COMMERCIAL SERVICE PROGRAM

AMERICA OUTDOORS'S CONFERENCE

ORLANDO, FL



**KURT M RAUSCH**  
**CHIEF OF COMMERCIAL SERVICES**  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

DECEMBER 1, 2022

- Guide and outfitters played a critical role for visitors
- Flexibility and innovation appreciated
- Seeking to get back to normal and look for continuous program improvements
  - Prospectuses
  - On-line CUA system
  - Initiatives



# Legislation



- Laws
  - America's Outdoor Recreation Act of 2022
  - Great American Outdoors Act of 2020
- Regulations
  - Commercial Use Authorization Rule, 36 CFR 53
  - Concession Rule, 36 CFR 51
  - Visitor Experience Improvement Authority, 36 CFR 52



# Executive Orders and Court Actions



- EO 14026 – Federal Minimum Wage
  - Per court order, not currently included/enforced for seasonal recreation services or recreation equipment providers.
- EO 14057 and SO 3407 – Sustainability
  - EV light-vehicle fleets
  - Waste Reduction/Plastics Elimination
  - Commercial Filming and Still Photography



# Policy and Initiatives



- America the Beautiful - Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FOCOR)
  - More equitable access and opportunities and collaboration
- National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health
- SO 3403 – Tribal Co-Stewardship
  - Continued emphasis on engaging with Tribes, working with Native American owned businesses and Native American employment

# Policy and Initiatives



- Commercial Services Guide Chapter 11 – Commercial Use Authorizations
  - Consolidates current policy and procedures.
- NPS Online CUA System
  - Beta test in AK
  - Post Beta test Public Comment Period expected April 2023
  - Full Rollout 2024 CUA Season



# Questions





# Contacts



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U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# Recreation and Visitor Services – HQ430



Desolation Canyon Wilderness Area, Utah



Mountain Biking, Oregon



Imperial Sand Dunes, California





# BLM Headquarters



## Kevin E. Oliver

### Division Chief

- Directorate Office in Grand Junction, CO
- Permits and Fees Programs
- Transportation/Accessibility
- Tourism
- Leading HQ Recreation since 2020



## Salt Lake City Team



### KC Craven

#### Outdoor Recreation Planner – Recreation Fee Program Manager

- Recreation.gov
- Recreation Use Permits
- Special Rec. Permits
- Business Plans
- Commercial Services
- Visitor Safety





# Our DOI Priorities

- Clean Energy
- Restoration
- Recreation for All
- Conservation
- Rebuild the Agency





# Executive Order 13985-January 20,2021

A wide-angle photograph of a desert canyon at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange glow and long, dark shadows across the layered rock formations. The foreground shows rugged, reddish-brown rock cliffs with some sparse green desert vegetation. The background reveals a vast, deep canyon with distant mesas and plateaus under a hazy, orange-tinted sky.

On Advancing Racial Equity and  
Support for Underserved  
Communities Through the Federal  
Government





# By the Numbers 2022



244 million surface acres administered



120 urban centers within 25 miles of BLM lands



81.1 million recreational visits



3,100 developed recreation sites/areas



5,046 permits for commercial, competitive and organized group activities



281,000 hours of volunteer work supporting the recreation program (\$8.4M value)



# FY 2022 Recreation Visits\*

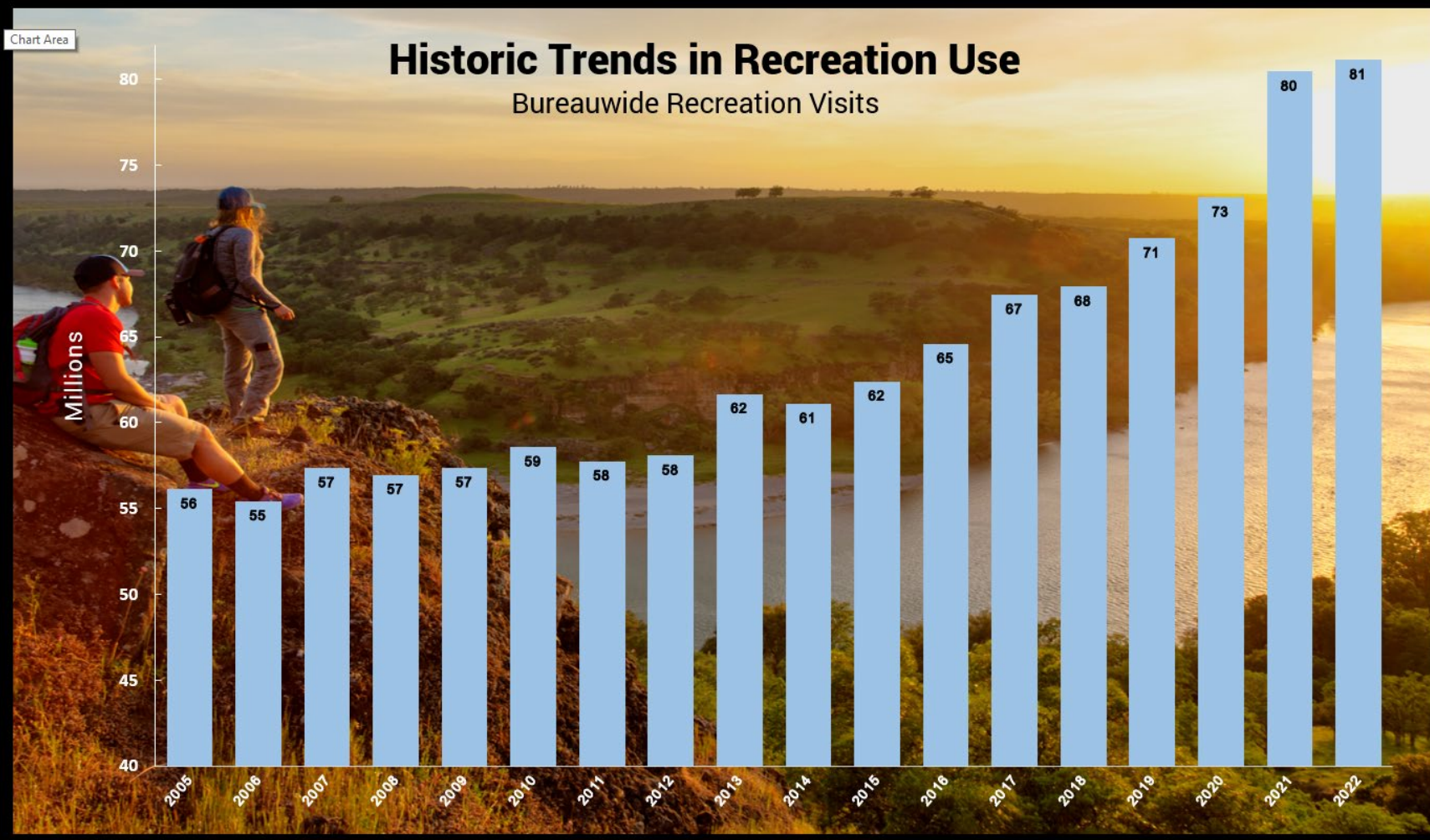
STATE Name	Recreation Visits	% Total
California	13,699,000	16.9%
Utah	11,723,000	14.5%
Colorado	10,373,000	12.8%
Oregon	9,892,000	12.2%
Nevada	8,920,000	11.0%
Idaho	7,192,000	8.9%
Arizona	6,319,000	7.8%
Montana	5,089,000	6.3%
New Mexico	3,634,000	4.5%
Wyoming	3,083,000	3.8%
Alaska	977,000	1.2%
Eastern States	220,000	0.3%
Total:	81,121,000	100.00%







# Historic Trends in Recreation Use







# Top Ten Recreational Activities in 2022\*

Activity	Participants	Percent
Non-Motorized Travel	30,210,000	17%
Viewing Public Land Resources	26,451,000	16%
Camping & Picnicking	20,314,000	12%
Off-Highway Vehicle Travel	19,885,000	12%
Specialized Non-Motor Sports, Events & Activities	18,402,000	11%
Driving For Pleasure	11,809,000	7%
Interpretation and Education	10,659,000	6%
Hunting	9,892,000	6%
Fishing	6,859,000	4%
Boating/Non-Motorized	5,872,000	3%







# Headquarters Focus Areas

- RAPTOR – Recreation and Permit Tracking and Online Reporting
- MAPLAND & Streamlining
- FICOR – Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation
- Infrastructure Funding (BIL/IIJA)
- Closure and Restrictions proposed rulemaking





U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# RAPTOR Accomplishments

Fiscal Year 2022



## Issued 65 Special Recreation Permits

- Average Processing Time = 85 days
- FY 21 = 38 SRPs issued; FY22 = 27 SRPs



## Adding BLM Offices to RAPTOR

- 10 Offices using RAPTOR
- 17 Offices training to be added to RAPTOR



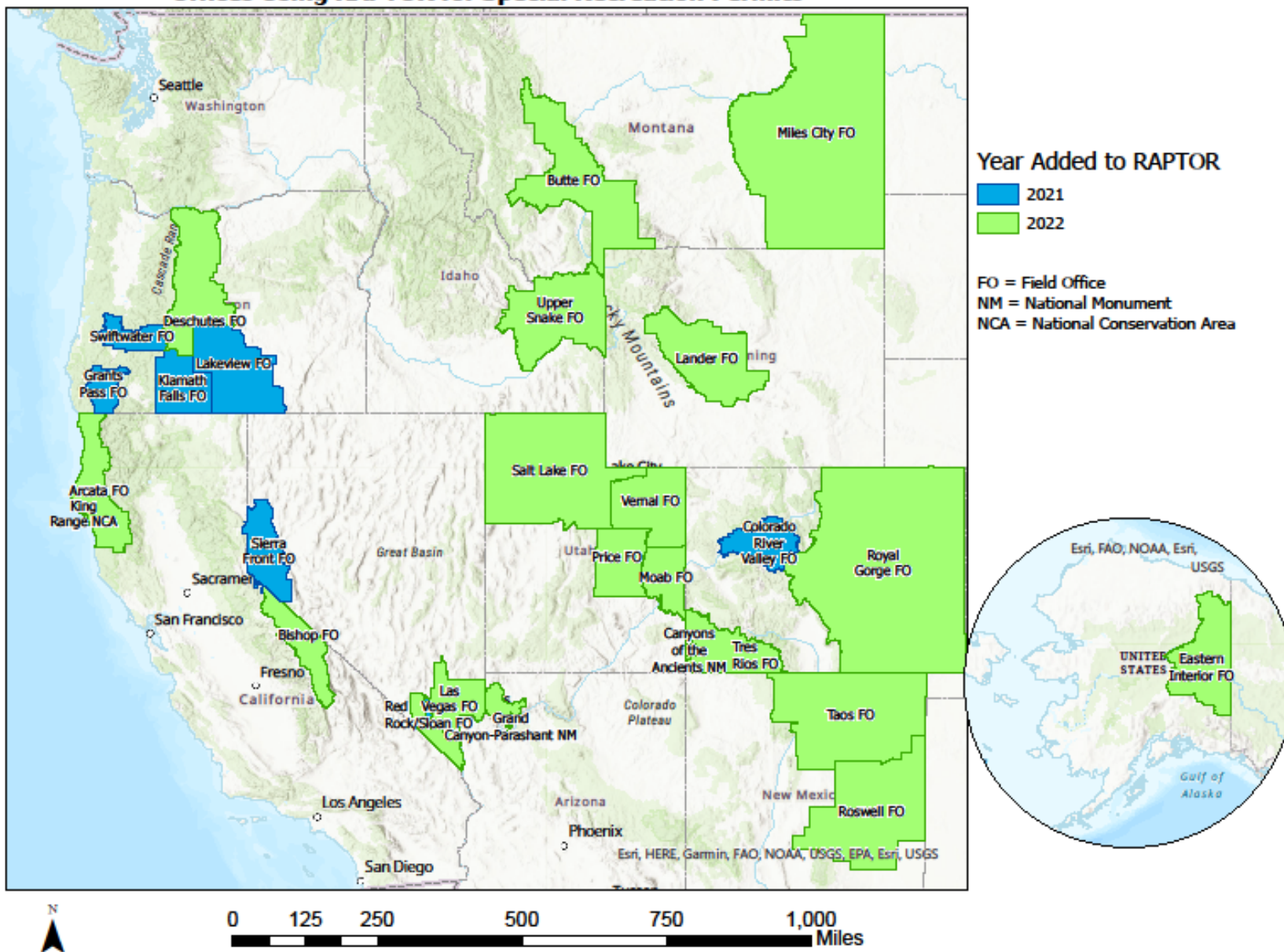
## Permit Maintenance Process

- Final User Acceptance Testing late January 2023
- Will include Post Use Reporting, Annual Validation Requirements, Permit Renewals





### Offices Using RAPTOR for Special Recreation Permits







# MAPLAND & Related Streamlining

- Digitizing Easements to provide Public Lands Access Data
- Interagency Team formed and working
- Dingell Priority Access Lists – BLM Online Submission tool





# **FICOR – Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation**

- **Announced July 21, 2022**
- **NPS –Lead Agency 1<sup>st</sup> year**
- **Forming up across agency lines, expect 2023 will be a spotlight year**
- **Great opportunity for Outdoor Recreation**





# FY 22 Recreation Infrastructure

- 31 Projects Improved BLM Recreation Sites in 12 States
- ~ \$2.4 million in FY22
- Expecting FY23 + funding allocations soon
- Examples include Trails, Cabins, Interpretive Sites, Shoreline Restoration, Campgrounds



# Example FY 22 Utah Infrastructure Project







# 43 CFR 8364 – Closures and Restrictions

- BLM identified this proposed rulemaking in the 2022 Spring Agenda
- Still framing internally, potentially a formal Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Coming Year
- Would Streamline Closure process – similar to USFS, easier to support Special Recreation Permits that need closures.





# Questions?

*BLM – Headquarters  
Recreation and Visitor Services Division*

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Division Chief  
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Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# USDA Forest Service

An update on our Recreation Special Uses program

America Outdoors Conference November  
29– December 2, 2022



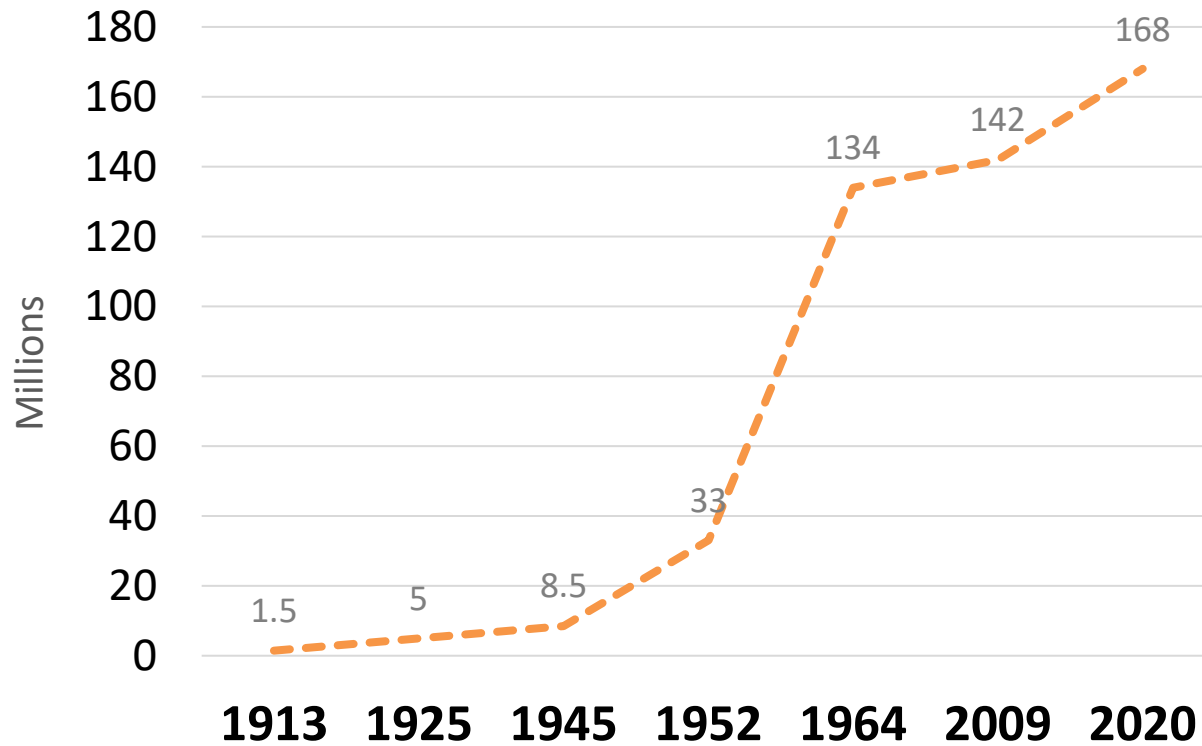
# Agenda

- Reimagine Recreation
- Agency Equity Action Plan
- National hiring efforts
- Policy Updates
- Questions

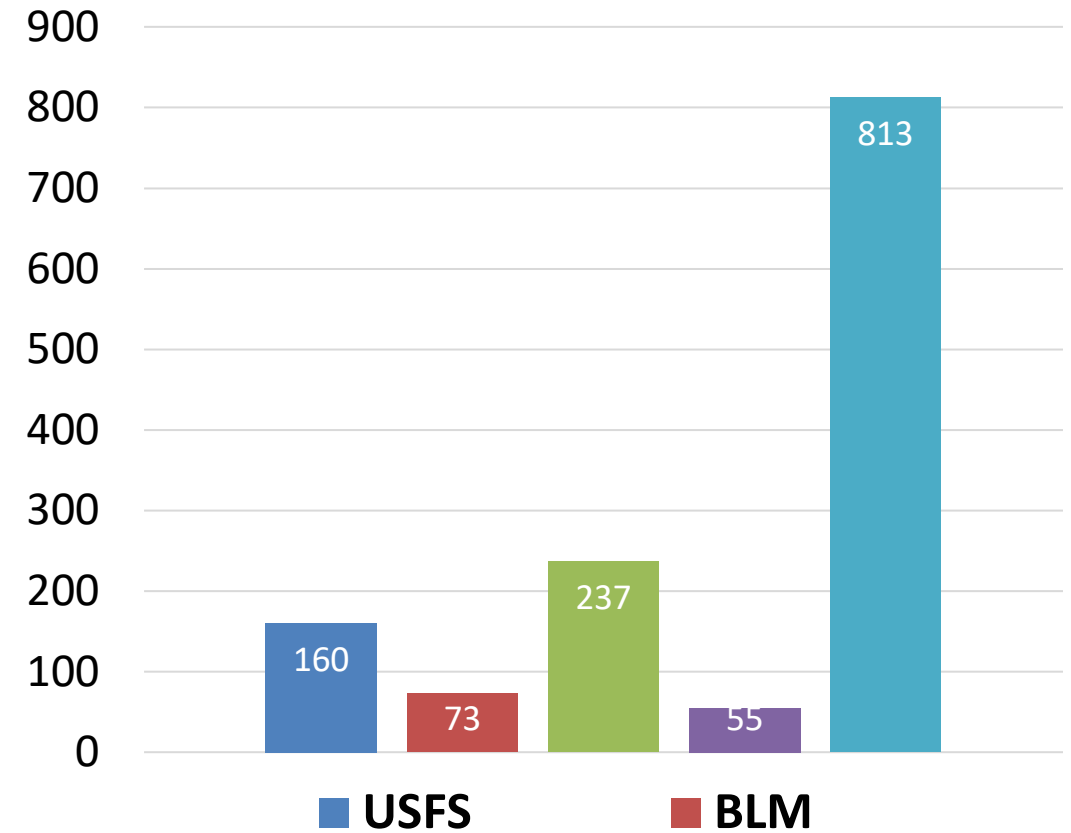


# Visitor Use

## National Forest Visits (1913 – 2020)



## 2020 Visitation



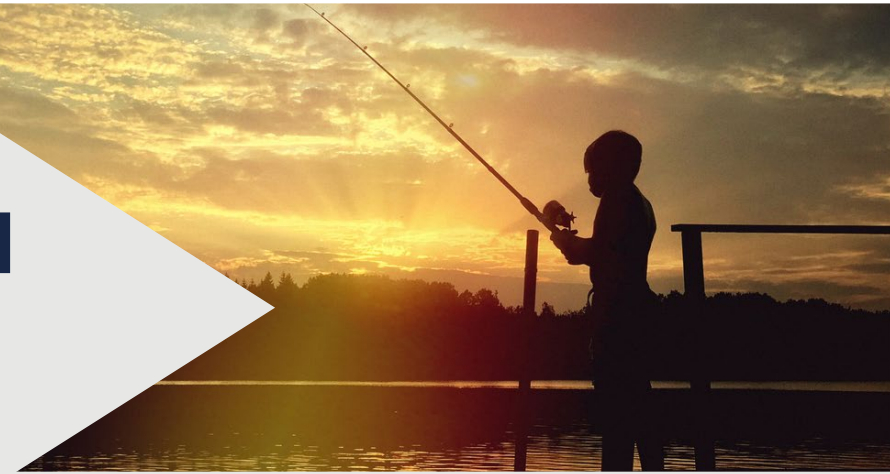
**REIMAGINE RECREATION**



# Key Learning

- **Connection** to the public
- **Economic driver** for job creation
- **Foundation** for local communities
- Future **stewards**

## RECREATION IS VITAL



## RECREATION AT RISK



- Difficult **budgets**
- Limited **workforce capacity**
- **Systems** designed for the past
- **Climate** change impacts

# Initial Foundations

## REENGAGE

Providing a place for everyone to feel welcome & connected to the outdoors; Deepening partnerships both new and old

## REINVEST

Developing our workforce and delivery systems to provide the skills, knowledge, tools, financial resources, and operating environment necessary to succeed

## REINVENT

Embracing creative ways to steward recreation on our public lands; Reexamining how we plan, design, adapt, and manage the recreation landscape into the future





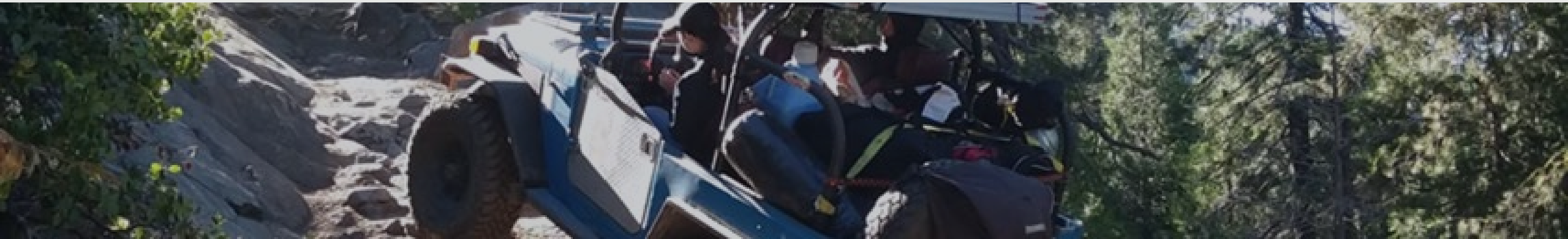
# Equity Action Plan

Recreation Special Uses is called out as one of ten specific emphasis areas

Restarted our efforts to develop an online application platform

Collaborating with our Research and Development branch, as well as external groups, to better understand barriers to getting permits

Beginning to plan additional outreach efforts to educate permit seekers on how the process works and who is required to get permits

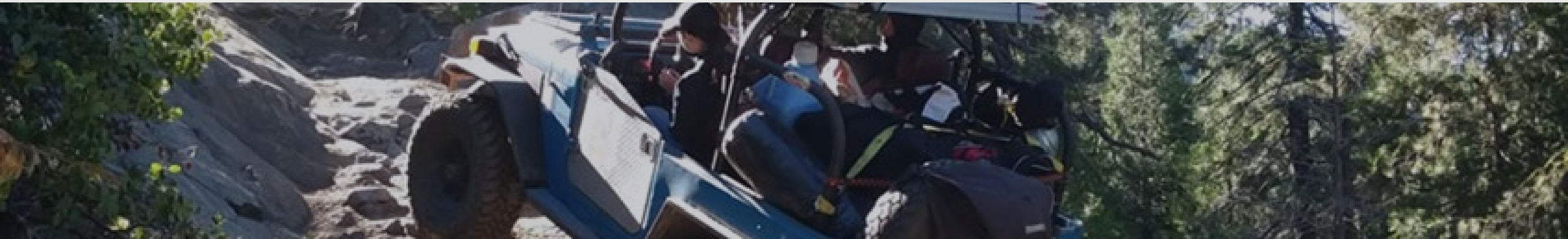


# National Hiring Efforts

Focused on all levels of recreation managers – from District to Washington Office

Approximately 1000 new recreation employees hired and on boarding in the coming months

Strong step in getting the recreation staffing back to levels we have not seen in decades





# Policy Updates

For the past 2-3 years we have been working internally on directives concerning concession campgrounds, outfitters/guides and recreation events.

These updates are going through their final Agency/Department clearance processes so they can be published for notice and comment.





**Questions?**

**Ben Johnson, National Recreation Special Uses Program Manager,  
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# Thank you!

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