

1.4. Participate in planning processes for public lands management

This Strategic Action strengthens Montana's tourism product and builds respect for the tourism industry in Montana.

Recommended Tactics

MTOT

- » Clearly and consistently state the importance of public land management for tourism in Montana. Clearly state MTOT's commitment to leading active involvement by the tourism community.
- » Identify a point of contact with whom the tourism community can actively engage for each of the public land management agencies. Reach out to this point of contact to initiate an *active* partnership between tourism and the agency.
- » When authorized by the administration, work with public land management agencies to identify and address issues of access and visitor service needs on public lands (see Strategic Action 4.7.).
- » When authorized by the administration, represent the tourism sector in planning processes, through document reviews, and by communicating directly with land management agencies regarding tourism interests, research, and initiatives.
- » Encourage tourism stakeholders to participate in the public land management process. Coordinate the sharing of background information to support accurate, consistent, and effective representation of tourism interests (see Strategic Action 5.1.).

Regions, CVBs, Communities, Tribes, Businesses & Organizations

- » Become an active and informed participant in public planning processes for public lands in the area. Monitor the management agency(ies) website(s) for important planning documents or planning activities; let others in the area know about important issues or developments; and participate in public comment opportunities.
- » Find other involved tourism stakeholders – in your community, your region, or the state – and coordinate your efforts. Share background information, insights, and tourism talking points to represent tourism's interests more effectively, more consistently, and with less effort.

Indicators of Success

- » The Montana tourism community is recognized by public land managers and by the public as an active partner in public land management processes.
- » MTOT's coordination allows MTOT and other stakeholders to efficiently convey a tourism perspective whenever needed.
- » Tourism interests are considered in all key decisions regarding management, access, and alternate uses of public lands, so that Montana can deliver on its brand promise of "spectacular unspoiled nature" now and into the future.
- » MTOT and key stakeholders provide the tourism perspective for use in planning documents, where appropriate.

- » The tourism community is aware of public lands planning processes, and is well informed regarding planning issues relevant to tourism.
- » Tourism stakeholders participate in public forums for public land management planning, or provide input through other means.

Background & Rationale

Public lands are an important asset for Montana's tourism sector. Management agencies preserve, maintain, and promote these lands in large part for recreation, contributing significantly to Montana's "spectacular unspoiled nature". Management of these lands and access to them holds important implications for the long term success of Montana's tourism industry. As new management plans are developed for each public land area over the coming years, it will be important for MTOT and the tourism community to provide input so that tourism interests are considered in decisions regarding management and alternate uses of these lands.

Participation of tourism interests in public lands management also offers benefits for the public land management agencies, by ensuring that preservation and recreation goals receive public support. Participating in the document review process for each management plan offers a way for MTOT to efficiently and effectively represent the tourism perspective, raise concerns, and contribute solutions. Establishing the key elements of MTOT's (and the tourism industry's) position – clearly, concisely, and as early as possible – can further minimize the time needed to provide input and can also improve the consistency of that input across planning processes.

Key planning processes for tourism community involvement include the following:

- » U.S. Forest Service Lands: National Forest Plan Revisions for each National Forest.
- » U.S. National Park Service: Revision of planning documents related to Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, national historic sites, and the national register of historic places.
- » U.S. Bureau of Land Management Lands: Resource Management Plan revisions for each BLM region.
- » U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Planning for Fort Peck Dam, Libby Dam, and Lake Koocanusa.
- » U.S. Bureau of Reclamation: Resource Management Plan revisions for nine reservoirs, Canyon Ferry Lake, and (through NPS management) Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area.
- » U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Planning for each of the 21 wildlife refuges and five wetlands managed in Montana.
- » Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks: Management Plan revisions for each Montana state park; 2014-2018 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). See <http://stateparks.mt.gov/about-us/parksData.html>.