

Nevada

Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

2016 – 2021



Nevada Division of State Parks
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



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Office of the Governor

Dear Fellow Nevadans;

I am pleased to present the 2016 *Nevada Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*. This report identifies critical recreation issues facing our state and recommends eight priorities that citizens and institutions can act upon in order to improve citizens' engagement with the outdoors.

These priorities were developed with public input, as well as research into current best practices within the public, private, and non-profit sectors of the outdoor recreation industry.

Nevada's outdoor attractions are both abundant and unique. From our diverse natural landscapes to the culture and history that have developed within those environments, residents and visitors have much to explore.

It is important that Nevada provide safe and engaging outdoor opportunities for all. Whether it be a wild backcountry trail or a welcoming neighborhood playground, our outdoor infrastructure must entice people to get outside. The benefits are substantial. Outdoor engagement has been shown to both improve the health of individuals and strengthen the economic security of communities.

These positive outcomes can be achieved by building upon the tremendous energy and optimism that already exists across our state. Nevadan's understand that our land is a unique part of who we are and that our opportunities to engage it must not be taken for granted.

Sincere regards,

A blue ink signature of Brian Sandoval, written in a cursive style.

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

Executive Summary

The Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) is best known for its development and maintenance of 23 state parks, recreation areas, and historic sites across the state. However, NDSP plays an important role in outdoor recreation beyond its own park boundaries. Specifically, the Division has been the grantor of millions of dollars in Federal funding for outdoor recreation. These funds come from two sources: the National Park Service's *Land and Water Conservation Fund* (LWCF) and the Federal Highway Administration's *Recreational Trails Program* (RTP).

In order to receive LWCF dollars, all states are required to update their *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP) every five years. Grant funds are distributed to communities in the form of competitive grants, based on issues and needs identified in the SCORP. The NDSP administers all aspects of the grant process, from project start to finish.

As required, this edition of Nevada's SCORP is an integrated, research-based plan, designed to assist in the improvement and expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities. As the 10th edition of the report, this document describes the overall status of outdoor recreation in our state, and proposes specific priorities for improving outdoor opportunities for citizens.

Those priorities are ultimately the foundation of the LWCF grant process. As noted, it is the priorities identified herein that form the basis of scoring LWCF grant applications. As such, they play a significant role in determining which outdoor recreation projects are put on the ground, in Nevada.

This document describes and explains eight priorities that were identified via research and public engagement. To identify these priorities, NDSP staff first conducted a systematic research survey of existing planning documents from throughout the state. These included municipal master plans, open space strategies, economic proposals, and more. The outdoor recreation plans from each of these sources were tallied. When combined with selected regional and national recreation goals, a list of priorities was developed. This process ensured that Nevada's priorities would be aligned with the best practices and current thinking of the recreation community at large, but with particular consideration given to concerns in Nevada.

This general ranking was presented to Nevada citizens via a public survey. Conducted online in the summer of 2016, the survey captured the attitudes, opinions, and observations of citizens statewide. Among other questions, respondents were asked to rank recreation priorities by importance. The survey proved to be a success, with hundreds of respondents contributing to the data. It was the best response rate yet, for any SCORP surveys to date.

From these responses, NDSP staff were able to clarify a set of priorities with which to score LWCF grant proposals. They are as follows:

- **Maintain and rehabilitate existing facilities**
 - Keep older and other existing facilities (restrooms, trails, signs, etc.) in proper working order and looking good.
- **Increase connectivity between trails, facilities, and other recreation locations**
 - Make sure that trails and paths are connected, making an inter-linked system for hikers, bikers, riders, and others to explore.
- **Ensure safety**
 - Ensure that all facilities are safe as possible and reduce conflicts between users (hiker-equestrian-biker-OHV)
- **Develop new facilities**
 - Build new restrooms, trails, signs, and other amenities in areas that need them.
- **Conserve water and habitat**
 - Build new facilities and restore older ones with water and habitat conservation in mind.
- **Engage youth**
 - Encourage children, young adults, and families to explore the outdoors more frequently.
- **Integrate with economic security and growth**
 - Develop outdoor recreation opportunities that help local and/or regional economies grow.
- **Meet the needs of underserved regions and populations**
 - Identify people and neighborhoods without access to parks, trails, or playgrounds and establish outdoor recreation opportunities for them.

In preparation for the next edition of the SCORP, NDSP staff plan an expanded array of public engagement opportunities. These will be developed in coordination with the NPS, agency partners at all levels of government, and individual constituents as well.

Acknowledgements

This document was made possible by the contributions of many people. The Nevada Division of State Parks gives special thanks to the following:

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The NDSP extends sincere thanks to the hundreds of citizens who participated in our public workshop and/or completed an online survey of outdoor recreation. Your responses have played a significant role in how outdoor recreation projects are selected, as well as providing a valuable basis for future research.

All photos courtesy of Nevada Tourism Media Relations via Flickr

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) is best known for its development and maintenance of 23 state parks, recreation areas, and historic sites across the state. However, NDSP plays an important role in outdoor recreation beyond its own park boundaries. Specifically, the Division has been the grantor of millions of dollars in Federal funding for outdoor recreation. These funds come from two sources: the National Park Service's *Land and Water Conservation Fund* (LWCF) and the Federal Highway Administration's *Recreation Trails Program* (RTP).

Purpose of SCORP

The Nevada Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is an integrated, research-based plan, designed to assist in the improvement and expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities. As the 10th edition of Nevada's SCORP, this document will describe the overall status of outdoor recreation in our state, and proposes specific priorities for improving outdoor opportunities for citizens.

In order to receive LWCF dollars, all states are required to update their SCORP every five years.¹ The RTP program has no such requirement, but the SCORP is a useful tool for prioritizing projects under that program as well. The funds from both sources are distributed to communities in the form of competitive grants, based on issues and needs identified in the SCORP. The NDSP administers all aspects of the grant process, from project start to finish. Authority for the SCORP process is granted to the Nevada Division of State Parks by the Nevada Legislature and is found in the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) under 407.205; 407.207; and 407.209.

Following passage of the LWCF Act of 1965, Nevada has remained eligible for Federal funding through consistent adherence to the program requirements and a commitment to outdoor recreation. The SCORP document has been updated as required, including the most recent revision in 2010.

The SCORP improves outdoor recreation in a general way by providing an opportunity to assess where outdoor recreation stands in Nevada – and to gather up-to-date information on citizens' preferences. The SCORP also improves outdoor recreation in a very specific way, by developing the actual priorities that guide the grant selection process (i.e., the Open Project and Selection Process – OPSP, see appendix B). Through the OPSP, grant applicants are evaluated based on the degree to which they advance issues and needs detailed in the SCORP. Please refer to Part Three of this report, for a full discussion of current priorities.

The LWCF and RTP programs have resulted in thousands of successful projects and outdoor recreation opportunities for millions of citizens nationwide. In Nevada, they have resulted in the development of trails and community parks, as well as the many smaller-scale amenities that make public spaces more user-friendly and inviting: such as signs, picnic tables, restrooms, Wi-Fi access, safety improvements, and maintenance. Our state has seen the benefit of millions of dollars and thousands of projects over the history of these programs (50 years of LWCF; 25 years of RTP).

Ultimately, the SCORP is a starting point for enhancing outdoor recreation in Nevada and thus

¹ National Park Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program, *Federal Financial Assistance Manual*, vol. 69 (2008): preface 2, <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/manual/lwcf.pdf>.

contributes to the positive experiences of citizens and visitors, now and into the future

Legal Authority

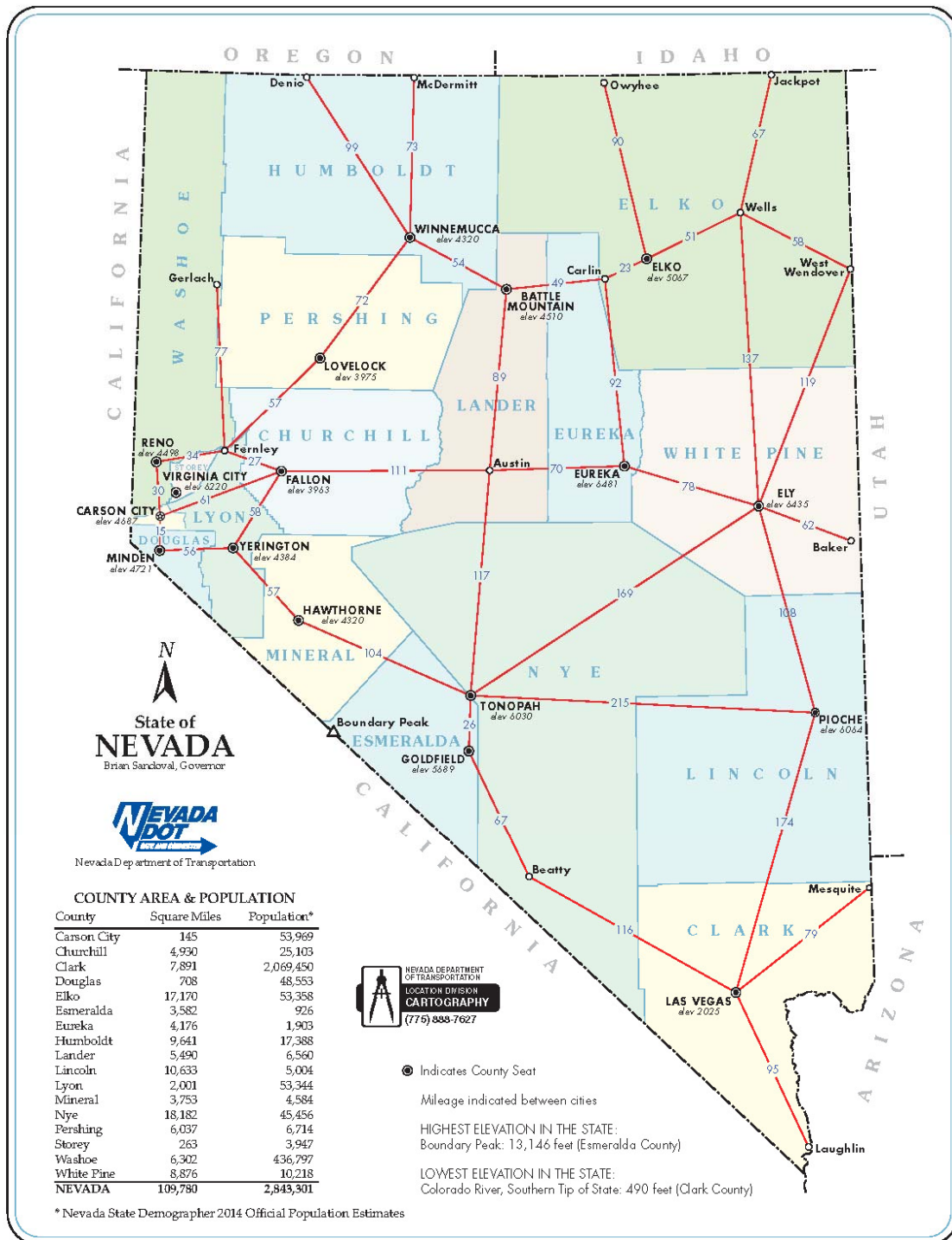
The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (LWCF) provides Federal funding assistance to individual states, for the promotion of outdoor recreation. The Fund imposes specific requirements for states to be eligible to receive disbursements. Primary among these requirements is the compilation of SCORP and OPSP documents. LWCF guidelines state:

The LWCF State Assistance Program was established by the LWCF Act of 1965 (section 6, Land and water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended; Public Law 88-578; 16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq.) to stimulate a nationwide action program to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring to all citizens of the United States of present and future generations such quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation. The program provides matching grants to States and through States to local units of government, for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation sites and facilities. Grant funds are also available, to States only, for fulfilling the statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation planning requirements of the program.



Nevada General Highway Map (2016), courtesy of Nevada Department of Transportation,
https://www.nevadadot.com/Traveler_Info/Maps/State_Map.asp

NEVADA STATISTICS



Nevada Statistics Map (2016), courtesy of Nevada Department of Transportation,
[http://www.nevadadot.com/uploadedFiles/NDOT/Traveler_Info/Maps/Nevada%20Statistics%20\(2012\).pdf](http://www.nevadadot.com/uploadedFiles/NDOT/Traveler_Info/Maps/Nevada%20Statistics%20(2012).pdf)

Importance of Recreation in Nevada

Outdoor recreation is a major feature of life in Nevada. Our State maintains one of the largest land areas in the Union, but one of the smaller populations². As a result, most residents and visitors are in close proximity to outdoor recreation opportunities at any given time.

These opportunities are diverse. Straddling the Great Basin and Mojave Desert, Nevada has a wide range of environments to explore: from dry lake beds situated within broad valleys to dense forests high above sea level. Within these environments exists an equally broad array of plants, animals, and geologic curiosities. With humans having occupied the region for at least 12,000 years, there are many opportunities to explore our cultural heritage as well: from ancient rock-shelters to ghost towns.

All of these resources exist among mountains. In fact, as the most mountainous state in the U.S.³, all recreation activities take place either on mountains or within sight of them. Put into perspective, Nevada has hundreds of peaks rising above 10,000 feet⁴, many un-named mountains, and un-named mountain *ranges* as well.

Mountains are not the only defining feature. Nevada is the driest state in America⁵. Lakes, rivers, and reservoirs are significant centers of outdoor activity – not to mention their importance to farmers, ranchers, municipalities,

and land developers. Balancing the needs of environment, recreation, and development is an ongoing concern throughout the state. Thus, protection of water resources is an important component of outdoor recreation. For more information regarding water resources, please refer to Appendix C.

The management of these diverse landscapes is unique as well: Nevada contains an exceptionally high percentage of public land. The State Legislature estimates that 87% of our land area is within federal jurisdiction alone.⁶ With few exceptions (mostly related to military use) public lands are open to outdoor recreation.

In Nevada, vast spaces, natural and historic diversity, and high levels of public access are combined to a unique degree. As a result, the outdoors are a significant element of the Nevada experience for residents and visitors alike.

A direct way to clarify the importance of the outdoors is to look at recreation through the benefits it provides, economically and socially.

Economic Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

When we think of the connection between outdoor recreation and economics, most of us focus on direct purchases of equipment. For example, when a family seeks to visit a Nevada State Park, they might purchase camping equipment, bicycles, and hiking boots. Such direct

²“U.S. and World Population Clock”, United States Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/popclock>. Accessed February 2016.

³ National Park Service, “The Great Basin”, <https://www.nps.gov/grba/planyourvisit/the-great-basin.htm>.

⁴ “Nevada 11,000 Foot Peaks”, *Peakbagger.com*, <http://www.peakbagger.com/list.aspx?lid=21324>. Accessed February 2016.

⁵ “Nevada is the Driest State in the Nation”, Texas A&M University, Water Management and Hydrological Science Department, last updated 2013, <http://waterprogram.tamu.edu/latest-articles/230-nevada-is-the-driest-state-in-the-nation>.

⁶ “Nevada Facts and State Emblems”, Nevada State Legislature, last updated 01/08/2013, <http://leg.state.nv.us/general/nvfacts/index.cfm>.

purchases do indeed make up a large percentage of the economic activity surrounding outdoor recreation, but recreation's full effects are much more expansive.

When that family takes their trip, they will conduct economic transactions on the way to the park, at the park, and on their return from the park. These transactions typically include gas stations, grocery stores, visitor centers, souvenir shops, and many other sources of goods and services. Other visitors will purchase apps (for navigation, interpretation, or entertainment), hire guides, purchase any required licenses, permits, or tickets, and even enroll in classes or other forms of instruction in their selected activity (e.g., fly-fishing). Every Nevada adventure motivates economic activity. Thus, the accessibility, safety, and overall number of recreation resources is critical to the State's economic energy.

But the economic impacts of outdoor recreation are not limited to large-scale trips or vacations. When activity is closer to home, those same economic impacts are still felt, but on a different timeline. For example, while an afternoon visit to a local park does not require "gearing up" or significant preparation, the ease of access to that park (i.e., the very fact that it *doesn't* require much preparation) facilitates repeat visitation by individuals and families. Across years of regular, small-scale visits, people conduct the same economic transactions: gas, shoes, apps, classes, etc. Over time, these small-scale recreation events amount to large-scale economic benefits for communities.

Whether large- or small-scale, outdoor recreation is a foundation of economic activity. Many individuals, businesses, agencies, communities, and livelihoods depend on it. In fact, the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) estimates that 6.1 million jobs directly depend on outdoor recreation nationally.⁷ This is a very significant sector of the economy. In fact, the overall recreation industry is larger than more traditional "giants" of the American economy such as pharmaceuticals, motor vehicles and parts, and household utilities.⁸

In Nevada, the economic impacts of outdoor recreation are proportionally large as well. The OIA reports that 57% of Nevadans participated in outdoor activities between 2011 and 2012. When combined with the outdoor activities of the State's many visitors, Nevada received 14.9 billion dollars in outdoor recreation spending. That spending translated into 148,000 jobs, 4.8 billion dollars in wages and salaries, and 10 billion dollars in state and local tax revenue.⁹

A particularly striking example of outdoor recreation's impact can be seen through the economic influence of Nevada's state parks. In 2007, the Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) commissioned the University of Nevada, Reno to conduct a study titled *The Economic Value of Nevada State Parks*.¹⁰ At the time, the NDSP budget was approximately \$12,000,000. Researchers concluded that the State Park system was generating approximately \$500,000,000 in economic activity. This was the impact of the State Park system alone. Across all areas and jurisdictions, such return is likely to be magnified,

⁷ Outdoor Industry Association and Southwick Associates, Inc., *The Outdoor Recreation Economy* (2012), https://outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/OIA_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf.

⁸ OIA, *Outdoor Recreation Economy*, 3.

⁹ OIA, *Outdoor Recreation Economy*, 1-3.

¹⁰ Jeffery Englin, et al, *The Economic Value of Nevada State Parks* (2007).

as (previously-noted) state and national statistics suggest.

Since these figures were established, outdoor recreation has only grown. In fact, it was one of the few industries to expand during the economic downturn (“Great Recession”) of 2007-09¹¹ and it has continued to expand since then.¹²

While gaming and mining are critically important to Nevada’s economy, outdoor recreation has become another foundation of our State’s well-being.

Social Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

While economic success is important, an economy ultimately exists to make the lives of citizens more memorable and secure. Therefore, in addition to understanding outdoor recreation’s economic value, it is important to clarify how people’s lives are influenced by recreation opportunities. Research has consistently demonstrated that there are significant social benefits to outdoor recreation. These benefits have been intensively studied, especially as they regard two areas: public health and quality-of-life.

Regarding public health, research has shown that health improvements come from even small changes in diet and exercise.¹³ Outdoor recreation’s effect on both diet and exercise has been documented. The effect is most obvious with exercise: When people have accessible, fun outdoor recreation opportunities, they are

motivated to get out and move, and to move more often. Well-designed outdoor recreation projects create the spaces within which people want to move – spaces that motivate people to get active.

Outdoor recreation’s influence on diet is more indirect, but research has clearly demonstrated that when people are motivated to stay active, they are much more likely to eat well and properly fuel their physical activities.¹⁴ Outdoor recreation opportunities indirectly (and in concert with other factors) form environments that encourage and reward healthy diets.

When it comes to quality-of-life, it has been shown that the quality and quantity of outdoor recreation has a direct and measurable effect upon one’s mental outlook and how individuals view their conditions. Put simply: the more high-quality outdoor opportunities a person has access to, the more positively they see their personal circumstances.¹⁵

Social research has demonstrated that, in neighborhoods with high average incomes, levels of green/open space are also very high; and in areas with relatively low average incomes, green spaces near residences have been shown to reduce the number of violent and property crimes.

¹¹ Hugo Martin, “Outdoor Recreation Spending Grew 5% Each Year Since 2005”, *Los Angeles Times*, June 20, 2012, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/20/business/la-fi-mo-outdoor-recreation-2005-study-says-20120620>.

¹² American Recreation Coalition, *Outdoor Recreation Outlook: 2015* (2014), 7, <http://www.funoutdoors.com/files/Outdoor%20Recreation%20Trends%202015%20final.pdf>.

¹³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, <https://health.gov/paguidelines/pdf/paguide.pdf>.

¹⁴ Gregory J. Welk and Steven N. Blair, “Physical Activity Protects against the Health Risks of Obesity”, cited in California State Parks, *The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation* (2005).

¹⁵ California State Parks, *Meeting the Park Needs of All Californians* (2015), 8.

PART TWO: RECREATION TRENDS IN NEVADA

Overview

Studies show that about half of all Americans participate in some form of outdoor recreation every year.¹⁶ Specifically, the Outdoor Foundation reports that 48.5% of the U.S. population participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2015. In Nevada, participation rates are typically much higher, with 57% of residents participating in outdoor recreation in 2012, for example.¹⁷ These participation rates are affected by many variables: from economic conditions to demographic changes, and even weather events from year-to-year or season-to-season.

Demographic Trends

In order to set achievable outdoor recreation goals in Nevada, it is important to understand general demographic changes occurring within the population. Outdoor recreation participation is historically sensitive to variations in age, income, ethnicity, geographic location, and level of education, among other variables. Equally important, these variables are constantly changing on the ground, within our communities. Every state has different demographic trends that could prove to be opportunities or challenges. In this section, three particular topics are highlighted: population growth, aging, and diversity. These topics are noted because they are (or are expected to) manifest differently in Nevada than in other states.

Population Growth

Nevada's population continues to grow at rates above national average. While that rate is not at

the remarkably high levels of 2003-04, it is still quite rapid. Because of this, the challenges and opportunities inherent to a growing population are more urgent here, than in most other states.

In general, a growing population equates to more potential outdoor recreation users. There are opportunities and constraints inherent to this momentum. In a positive way, increasing population could lead to even greater utilization of existing recreation infrastructure – more Nevadans (and visitors) outside, with all the benefits that come from that (health, economic, etc.). On the other hand, more citizens outside will inevitably result in more frequent repair and replacement cycles for our facilities, as well as greater public demand for new and innovative opportunities. These are good problems to have, to be sure, but they nevertheless require significant time and preparation when it comes to budgets, planning, and overall management of our public spaces.

Aging

Populations are aging globally, nationally, and within Nevada. However, the process in Nevada has been described as unique, because there are two, equally influential processes occurring simultaneously. First, our urban areas continue to attract large numbers of retirees due to climate, reduced cost of living, and desirable amenities. Second, our rural areas experience continued, large-scale migration of young-people to locales elsewhere in the state and outside Nevada altogether. This migration of younger residents

¹⁶ U.S. Forest Service, "Recent Outdoor Recreation Trends", IRIS Series (2012), <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/pdf-iris/IRISRec23rptfs.pdf>.

¹⁷ Outdoor Foundation, "The Outdoor Recreation Economy – Nevada" (2012), https://outdoorindustry.org/images/ore_reports/NV-nevada-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf.

leaves a particularly high proportion of older residents in our rural areas.¹⁸

Together, these two aging trends (newly settled retirees and rural “aging in place”) could have a significant influence on outdoor recreation demand in the coming decades. It is imperative that the effect of aging be considered in the development of broad priorities and individual project design.

Diversity

The American populace continues to diversify. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that more than half of the population will belong to a minority group by 2044: at that point, the country will be “majority minority”. However, among the many minorities making up this new majority of the population, “...no group will have a majority share of the total and the United States will become a plurality of racial and ethnic groups.”¹⁹

The effects of this shift are difficult to determine across regions, industries, and society at large. With regards to outdoor recreation, there are many questions. Among them:

- To what degree will a diversified society rally around single issues (such as conservation)?
- Will current minority participation rates (which are generally low²⁰) continue in the future?

- Can outdoor recreation trends even be mapped across “race” and ethnicity in any consistent manner to begin with?

Answers to these and other questions are not easily identified, as so many variables are involved. But some recurring observations have been made. Some are cause for concern, others suggest powerful opportunities.

One cause for concern, for example, is that outdoor participation remains largely wealthy and white: with one-third of participant households earning \$100,000 or more per year, and 73% of all participants identifying as Caucasian.²¹ The roots of this pattern have not been identified: Is non-white participation an economic issue (the average white household having a higher income and more leisure time), a cultural difference in how the outdoors are valued, a lack of access, or some combination of these and other factors?

Alternatively, there are indications that outdoor recreation – as an industry, sector, and ethic – could be in a much stronger position, as the country diversifies. For example, research indicates that one group, Latinos, “...spend more per capita on outdoor gear than any racial (or ethnic) group, including whites...”²² and that they consistently express “....deep attachment

¹⁸ Jennifer Reid Keene, Kathryn A. McClain, Jacqueline Ragin, “Aging Trends and Challenges in Nevada,” in *The Social Health of Nevada: Leading Indicators and Quality of Life in the Silver State*, edited by Dmitri N. Shalin (UNLV Center for Democratic Culture, 2012).

¹⁹ Sandra L. Colby and Jennifer M. Ortman, “Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014-2060”, March 2015.

²⁰ Outdoor Foundation, *Participation Report: 2013*, page 47.

²¹ Ryan Kearney, “White People Love Hiking. Minorities Don’t. Here’s Why.”, *New Republic* (newpublic.com), September 6, 2013.

²² Outdoor Industry Association, ConsumerView data, cited in: Glenn Nelson, “A New Kind of Outdoor Group”, *High Country News*, June 27, 2016.

to...public lands.”²³ Other racial and ethnic groups are seeing low participation rates, but also an increasing number of programs and initiatives to increase those rates.^{24 25}

As with the nation, Nevada continues to diversify: primarily through an increase in its Latino populations.²⁶ The questions of concern and opportunity at the national level are equally important here. However, the trend towards diversity may affect Nevada more acutely, and deeply, than other places. With significant amounts of public land, Nevada (and other western states) are, to some degree, at the mercy of broader public attitudes towards the outdoors, the environment, and conservation. If our changing population, in all its diversity, continues to recognize the importance of the outdoors, Nevada will quickly see the positive effects of that – given its huge volume of public space. If our changing population does not accept the importance of the outdoors, Nevada will, in turn, see the effects just as quickly. In short, our State will stand as a highly sensitive indicator of the degree to which the outdoor recreation community embraces diversity.

Economic Aspects of Outdoor Recreation Recreation Supply

It is important to understand the supply of outdoor recreation opportunities within any given area. But knowledge of recreation supply doesn't end with the sheer volume of facilities. It is equally important that recreation opportunities are distributed and maintained in a way that all citizens have access to them. Therefore, it is important for states to understand both *how*

much outdoor recreation is available and *where* the opportunities are. This section will summarize what opportunities are available in Nevada, then provide general observations on where they are – and where they are not.

As noted earlier, Nevada has a very large proportion of land in public trust. This responsibility to the public sits with many different management entities: Federal, Tribal, State, county, municipal, and private.

Federal Providers of Outdoor Recreation National Park Service (NPS)

The NPS manages land areas with numerous unique features deemed valuable to our national heritage. In Nevada, these areas include two national parks, one national monument, one national recreation area, and three national historic trails. Over 5 million visitors were seen at Nevada's national parks in Fiscal Year 2014.

Great Basin National Park

Located near Baker, NV, Great Basin National Park includes 77,000 acres of land that includes Wheeler Peak and stands of bristlecone pine. The park features the Lehman Caves Visitor's Center, guided cave tours, camping at four developed and two primitive campgrounds, and 60+ miles of maintained hiking trails.

Death Valley National Park

Straddling the Nevada-California border, Death Valley National Park encompasses 109,476.8 acres in Nevada. The park features the Furnace Creek Visitor's Center and Museum, guided tours of

²³ Colorado College, State of the Rockies Project, "Conservation in the West Poll" (2016).

²⁴ Glenn Nelson, "Diversity in the Outdoors, One Hashtag at a Time", *High Country News*, June 27, 2016.

²⁵ James Edward Mills, *The Adventure Gap: Changing the Face of the Outdoors* (2014).

²⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, "Quick Facts: Nevada", <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/32>. Accessed August 2016.

historic Scotty's Castle, nine developed campgrounds, and three-million acres of designated Wilderness to explore.

Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument

Located north of Las Vegas, this 22,650 acre National Monument contains the fossilized remains of numerous prehistoric species, including mammoth, bison, horse, camel, and wolf. As a new NPS unit (established in December 2014) there are currently no developed facilities.

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Straddling the Nevada-Arizona border, Lake Mead National Recreation Area encompasses 1.5 million acres, with approximately 600,000 in Nevada. Visitors can participate in boating, swimming, and fishing on the lake. Onshore opportunities include hiking, biking, sightseeing, and photography. There are numerous facilities for RV and car camping.

California National Historic Trail

Over 2,000 miles in length, the CNHT straddles eight states. During the 1840's and 1850's it served as the primary route to California. Auto Tour Interpretive Guides are being developed for the trail, in each state it passes through.

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

The OSNHT was the primary trade route between Santa Fe and Los Angeles, from 1829 through the 1840's. The trail passes through Nevada at Las Vegas.

Pony Express National Historic Trail

The PENHT links St. Joseph, MO and Sacramento, CA. For 18 months (April 1860 – October 1861) the trail was a significant mail route between the east, Midwest, and west coasts. Despite its short

window of operation, it has become synonymous with the Old West. Auto Interpretive Guides are being developed for each state that the trail passes through.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The BLM manages about 67% of Nevada's land – nearly 47 million acres. The variety of recreational opportunities on these lands is diverse and include: camping, hiking, biking, OHV and horseback riding, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, and photography. BLM-Nevada manages three National Conservation Areas and 23 campgrounds.

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

Over one million visitors per year enjoy the RRCNCA. Within its 195, 819 acres are a 13-mile scenic auto route, 30+ miles of hiking trails, rock climbing, horseback riding, mountain and road biking, picnic areas, nature viewing locations, and a visitor's center.

Black Rock Desert-High Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area

This area protects about 200 miles of emigrant trails. Encompassing 800,000 acres, it includes the Applegate and Nobles trails, as well as the Black Rock Desert Playa: site of the annual Burning Man Festival and a land speed record in 1997.

Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area

Centered upon the Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site, this 48,438 acre space forms a buffer around the site's 300+ rock art panel, believed to be developed from the Archaic period to historic times.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS)

The USFS manages three significant spaces in Nevada: the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, and the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The most popular activities in these areas are camping, OHV riding, hiking, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and snow sports.

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

The LTBMU encompasses over 154,000 acres of public land within the Lake Tahoe basin. Recreation opportunities are diverse and include hiking, biking, many beaches, campgrounds, as well as riding stables and historic sites. In addition to recreation, significant responsibilities include erosion control, watershed restoration, and fire/fuel management.

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

At 6.3 million acres, the Humboldt-Toiyabe is the largest national forest in the lower-48 states. Spread across the state, the forest is managed through ten Ranger District offices. The forest includes 23 Wilderness areas and countless opportunities for outdoor recreation, cultural sightseeing, and nature observation.

Spring Mountains National Recreation Area

45 minute from Las Vegas, the SMNRA receives over 1 million visitors annually. Known for its diverse landscapes, the area is dominated by Mount Charleston. Facilities include a visitor's center, campgrounds, and the Las Vegas Ski and Snowboard Resort.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

The USFWS seeks to conserve the natural biological diversity of the Great Basin, eastern Sierra, and Mojave Desert. The agency manages five national wildlife refuges (NWR) in Nevada. All

refuges are considered critical habitat; each is diverse in location and in respective approach to wildlife and habitat management. Each provides outdoor recreation opportunities, although public access is considered secondary to wildlife and habitat management. The Ash Meadows NWR comprises 23,000 acres in the Amargosa Valley in Nye County; Desert NWR is 1.5 million acres in size, within the Mojave Desert; the Moapa Valle NWR contains four separate units totaling just 117 acres, north of Las Vegas; the Pahrnatagat NWR comprises 5,380 acres within Lincoln County; and the Sheldon National Antelope Range contains over 500,000 acres in Washoe County.

Native-American Recreation Providers

Nevada contains numerous properties and open spaces under Native-American jurisdiction. Some of these areas are suitable for outdoor recreation and managed as such.

Pyramid Lake

Located on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Indian Reservation, northeast of Reno, this lake is renowned for quality fishing and has yielded record-size cutthroat trout. Lake access and RV camping are available. The tribe regulates the sale of fishing permits.

Walker River

The Walker River Paiute Tribe provides access to the Walker River for fishing and recreational activities. The river is a popular location for cutthroat trout fishing. Tribal headquarters are located in Schurz, NV.

Las Vegas Paiute Golf Resort

The Las Vegas Paiute Tribe owns and operates this full-service golf operation outside Las Vegas.

State Recreation Providers

Given the diversity of Nevada's outdoor recreational resources, management responsibilities are widely distributed. Multiple state agencies contribute to the quality and quantity of outdoor recreation in Nevada, with emphasis on their particular missions and areas of expertise.

Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP)

The NDSP celebrates its 81st anniversary in 2016. The system was established in 1936 with 4 units: Valley of Fire, Cathedral Gorge, Kershaw-Ryan, and Beaver Dam State Parks. Today, the system includes 23 locations and serves over 3.1 million visitors annually. The park units are broadly distributed across the state and encompass a variety of attractions, including lakes, waterways, mountains, and unique attractions such as caves and historical sites.

The parks are grouped into Northern and Southern regions for administrative purposes.

Northern Region State Parks:

Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park

Centered upon Berlin, a turn-of-the century mining town near Lone, NV, this unit allows visitors to engage directly with Nevada's mining history. In addition, the Fossil House displays the remains of the official state fossils - ancient marine reptiles (ichthyosaurs) that swam the ocean that covered Nevada 225 million years ago. Recreation activities include guided tours of the Diana Mine, as well as a campground, picnic areas, hiking trails, and OHV access.

Cave Lake State Park

A 4,500 acre park in the Schell Creek Range, near Ely, NV, this park highlights the opportunities surrounding Cave Lake. The lake is a high-altitude

reservoir known for trout fishing, crawdad gathering, boating, hiking, picnicking, and camping. Facilities include trails, two campgrounds, group areas (picnic and camp), showers, boat launch, and a yurt available for reservations. Winter activities include ice fishing, cross-country skiing, and ice skating. The park also hosts portions of the White Pine Fire and Ice Show, a popular winter festival of the area.

Dayton State Park

Centered upon remnants of the Rock Point Mill (1861), this park is located in Dayton, one of Nevada's earliest Comstock settlements. Opportunities include hiking, picnicking, and camping. Facilities include an RV dump station and group-use facilities.

Fort Churchill State Historic Park

Located on the site of a circa-1861 U.S. Army fort, this park presents multiple elements of Nevada history, including pioneer life and the Pony Express (via nearby Buckland Station). Historically accurate adobe replicas of the fort and its structures form the centerpiece of the park. Outdoor recreation opportunities include hiking, camping, picnicking, photography, canoeing, and horseback riding. Facilities include an extensive trail system, campground, RV dump station, picnic area, group-use areas, and access to the Carson River.

Lahontan State Recreation Area

With 69 miles of shoreline, Lahontan Reservoir provides fishing, boating, water skiing, camping, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, and picnicking opportunities. Facilities include boat launches, restrooms, showers, and RV dump stations. In addition, canoe trips can be made from Fort Churchill State Park.

Mormon Station State Historic Park

Mormon Station is considered to be Nevada's first permanent, non-native settlement. A replica of the 1851 trading post houses a museum with pioneer-era artifacts. The park hosts several important events, including the Genoa Cowboy & Music Festival, Pops in the Park, and the Candy Dance Arts and Crafts Faire. Picnic and group-use facilities are available.

Rye Patch State Recreation Area

Rye Patch Reservoir is widely known for its walleye fishing. In addition, visitors can engage in swimming, boating, water skiing, hiking, camping, and picnicking. Facilities include campgrounds, boat launch, restrooms, showers, RV dump stations, and picnic sites.

South Fork State Recreation Area

South Fork Reservoir is surrounded by 2,200 acres of meadows and hills. The area is popular for hunting, camping, boating, picnicking, swimming, ice fishing, winter sports, and wildlife viewing. The reservoir itself is well-known for its trout and bass fishing. Facilities include boat launches, campground, RV dump station, restrooms, showers, and a picnic area.

Ward Charcoal Ovens State Historic Park

This park is focused on six beehive-shaped ovens, used in the late 19th-century to smelt ore from nearby silver mines. In addition to these historic structures, the park provides hiking, camping, picnicking, and OHV access.

Washoe Lake State Park

Consisting of Washoe and Little Washoe lakes, this park is situated between Carson City and Reno, against the Carson Range of the Sierra Nevada mountains. The park facilitates many activities, including: nature study, bird watching, hiking,

biking, horseback riding, picnicking, windsurfing, water skiing, Jet skiing, swimming, camping, and fishing. Facilities include: two campgrounds, boat launches, a group-use area, day-use picnic sites, restrooms, showers, RV dump station, equestrian arena, and equestrian trailhead. The park also includes a wetlands viewing tower and interpretive displays.

Wild Horse State Recreation Area

This park occupies 120 acres on the shore of the Wild Horse Reservoir. The higher altitude facilitates ice fishing and other winter activities. Warm-weather opportunities include hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, and boating. Facilities include campgrounds, RV dump station, boat launch, restrooms, and showers.

Southern Region State Parks:

Beaver Dam State Park

Located near Caliente and the Utah border, this 5,500-acre park includes rugged landscape for fishing, camping, picnicking, hiking, photography, and nature study. Facilities include campgrounds, a group-use area, day-use area, and numerous trails.

Big Bend of the Colorado State Recreation Area

Just downstream of Davis Dam, on the Colorado River, Big Bend offers picnicking, fishing, boating, camping, Jet Skiing, hiking, and swimming. Facilities include an RV campground and dump station, as well as restrooms.

Cathedral Gorge State Park

Northeast of Las Vegas, Cathedral Gorge is well-known for dramatic geologic formations. Outdoor recreation includes hiking, picnicking, camping, nature study, photography, interpretive programs, and various annual events. Facilities include a

campground, RV dump station, restrooms, showers, and a group-use area.

Echo Canyon State Park

East of Pioche, Echo Canyon is oriented around a 35-acre reservoir suitable for fishing, hiking, and camping. The park is known for its diversity of plants and animals, as well as unusual rock formations. Facilities include two campgrounds, RV dump station, picnic area, group-use area, restrooms, and a boat launch.

Elgin Schoolhouse State Historic Site

In use from 1922-1967, this one-room schoolhouse, just south of Caliente, features original furnishings and accessories typical of its period. The facility was completely restored in 1998 and is available for tours.

Kershaw-Ryan State Park

South of Caliente, this park sits at the north end of scenic Rainbow Canyon. Visitors can take in 700-foot tall canyon walls and historic, settler-era landscaping. Other opportunities include a children's wading pool, picnic area, trails, group-use area, and new RV and tent campground.

Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park

This fort was the first permanent, non-native settlement in the Las Vegas Valley. Today's visitors can view remnants of the original fort structure and experience the Visitor's Center. Interpretive programs are offered year-round. The park is located in downtown Las Vegas.

Spring Mountain Ranch State Park

Located near Las Vegas and the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (BLM), this park highlights opportunities in and around the Wilson Range, as well as tours of the ranch house and

buildings. Popular activities include picnicking, living history events, hiking, wildlife viewing, and numerous events throughout the year. Facilities include a picnic area, trails, and an events pavilion.

Spring Valley State Park

Centered upon the Eagle Valley Reservoir east of Pioche, this park offers fishing, hiking, and tours of the historic Stone Cabin Museum. Facilities include a boat launch, picnic areas, camping, restrooms, showers, RV dump station, groups-use areas for picnicking and camping.

Valley of Fire State Park

Located northeast of Las Vegas, Valley of Fire is renowned for its red sandstone formations, petrified trees, and petroglyphs. Popular activities include camping, hiking, picnicking, and photography. Facilities include extensive RV and camping facilities and a Visitor's Center with diverse exhibits and programs.

Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW)

As part of their mandate to maintain fish and wildlife resources within the State, NDOW manages twelve Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) that include 120,000 acres distributed across the state. These areas are popular for hunting, fishing, camping, and wildlife viewing.

NDOW has other responsibilities that directly impact outdoor recreation as well. The department is responsible for boat registrations statewide, as well as wildlife monitoring and the promotion of conservation education.

Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

DCNR manages natural resources through both the Division of Water Resources and Division of

State Lands. The mandate of the Water Resources Division is to conserve, protect, manage, and enhance the State's water resources for Nevada's citizens. The State Lands Division provides planning services related to state-owned lands. In the process of meeting these missions, the DCNR is active in outdoor recreation planning throughout the state.

Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA)

The NDA protects natural resources statewide through its Resource Protection Office. The primary function of this office is to resolve conflicts between agricultural activities and sensitive natural resources. Thus, while the department does not facilitate outdoor recreation directly, the NDA helps to maintain the environments within which recreation occurs.

Municipal and County Recreation

Providers

Most Nevada cities and counties have developed facilities to serve neighborhood and regional populations. The smallest parks are intended to serve an area within walking distance and usually provide children's play areas, open space, and picnic sites. Larger facilities usually provide sports fields, bathrooms, and parking areas.

The largest sites tend to be regional parks that may include trail systems, outdoor theater space, and sports complexes. Notable examples of regional parks in Nevada include Rancho San Rafael (Reno) and the Clark County Wetlands Park (Las Vegas).

Private Recreation Providers

Nevada's open spaces are vast, requiring cooperation between government and private

entities to serve outdoor recreation demand. The private sector plays a critical role in meeting that need. The outdoor recreation industry is represented in nearly every Nevada town: from hunting and fishing guides to jet-ski and houseboat rentals.

Every activity available in Nevada has some amount of focus from industry. This includes newer and fast-growing pursuits such as disc-golf and stand-up paddle boarding. A mutually beneficial integration exists between established public spaces (national parks, regional parks, trail systems, etc.) and supportive businesses. Public spaces contribute to sales and employment in the private sector: with benefits being seen in retail outlets, tourism facilities, construction markets, transportation providers, lodging, and restaurants, to name a few.

Volunteerism

In discussing recreation supply, the role of engaged citizens cannot be overlooked. In researching this report, it became clear that Nevada is experiencing a significant increase in the amount of work done by volunteer and non-profit groups. This work, which in Nevada is nearly always conducted on behalf of public entities (given the State's extensive public lands), has become a pillar of recreation management. Put simply, much outdoor recreation maintenance and development would simply not occur, were it not for citizen groups giving their time for grant-writing, planning, and on-the ground labor. As this dynamic evolves in Nevada, there is growing discussion of how to grow and support these groups. In the public workshop,²⁷ participants suggested that communication is increasing between different users and

²⁷ Nevada Division of State Parks, SCORP Workshop with the Nevada Recreational Trails Committee and open to members of the public, June 27, 2016.

communities, as they assist public land managers on various projects. To a lesser degree, groups are starting to integrate their projects between one another as well.

As these local and regional groups mature in their networks and strategies, there remains the ever-present challenge of maintaining energy and momentum. As personnel changes, how do we entice new members to contribute? One intriguing strategy was explored in the workshop: to approach potential outdoor advocates through their existing social networks. Rather than drawing people directly into groups with a strong outdoor identity (e.g., a trail group or OHV club), it may be fruitful to meet citizens within the social networks they already claim membership.

For example, outdoor advocates could engage church groups, veterans associations, college clubs, corporations, and neighborhood associations, to name a few. These groups may not hold outdoor recreation as their primary concern, but all of them can recognize the importance of the outdoors for their members, if not their core missions. This becomes a strategy of meeting potential volunteers where their interests overlap with the outdoors, but stopping short of asking that they make the outdoors a primary social concern.

More discussion must be had, regarding the role of volunteers in reaching our outdoor recreation goals; as well as the methods for bringing new volunteers onboard. Nevada has benefited greatly from the organic (grassroots) expansion of outdoor volunteerism, but direct discussion and forethought is now required, to maintain these gains and plan for the future of recreation management.

Distribution of Outdoor Recreation

Nevada has a diverse array of recreation providers and facilities, which together allow exploration and understanding of the State's landscapes, biology, and culture. Less understood is the distribution of outdoor facilities and/or opportunities. This is particularly true of smaller-scale facilities that cater to local citizens and generally do not serve as tourist attractions. These facilities include local parks, playgrounds, pools, bike trails, and all the other outdoor recreation locations that serve people where they live – ideally within a walkable distance from their residences.

Knowing the distribution of recreation opportunities is important to understanding recreation in Nevada generally. As discussed elsewhere in this report, outdoor recreation provides multiple benefits to citizens: economic, health, and quality-of-life improvements, among others. If neighborhoods or other areas of our state are lacking recreation facilities, then not all of our citizens are being afforded full and equal access to the advantages of open space.

In short, uneven distribution amounts to a lack of access. This is a nationwide problem, and, in response, the outdoor recreation community has begun talking about “park deserts”. Park deserts (also referred to as “open-space deserts” or “play deserts”)²⁸ are similar in concept to “food deserts”. Just as food deserts refer to neighborhoods that lack access to fresh, healthy foods; park deserts are those areas that do not have parks, playgrounds, pools, trails, or any other outdoor recreation opportunities for their residents. These park deserts can be found anywhere: urban, suburban, exurban, and rural communities.

²⁸ Samantha Bartram, “Making Places for Play”, *Parks & Recreation*, April 1, 2014.

Unfortunately, a comprehensive database of Nevada’s park deserts has not yet been developed. Until recreation availability can be mapped to the neighborhood (or similarly detailed) level, no assessment of supply and demand will be complete. Meeting this need for data may not be altogether difficult: much of the information likely resides in city, county, and other planning documents. Put another way, local residents, planners, and outdoor professionals likely know where many of these underserved areas are, we must only gather the data with this particular questions in mind.

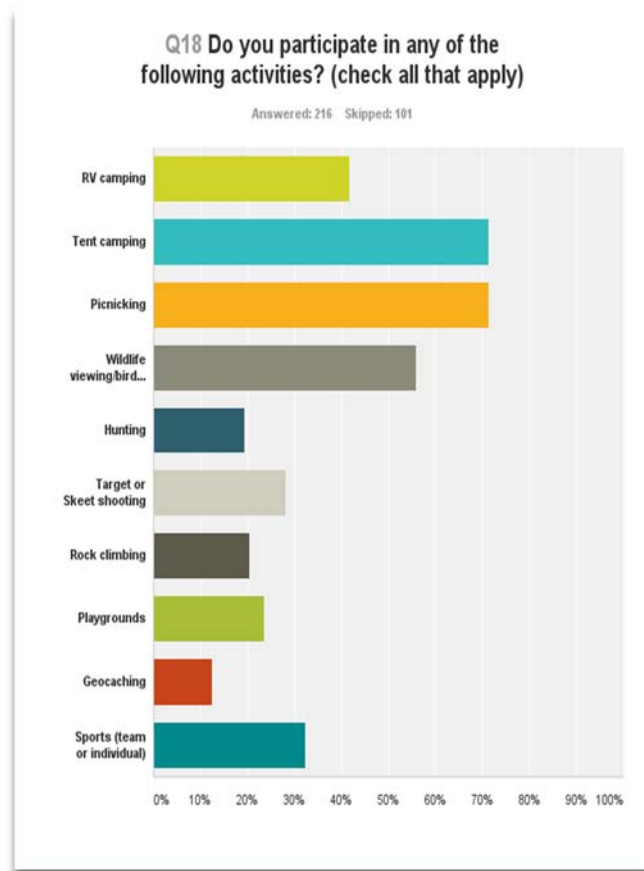
More detailed strategies for identifying such areas (and underserved communities in general) can be found on pages 28 and 40. In addition, the *Nevada Open Project Selection Process* (OPSP) is designed to encourage grant applicants to collect and analyze data on this issue (see Appendix B).

Demand for Outdoor Recreation in Nevada

Nevadans engage the outdoors regularly and with real commitment: the *Nevada Survey of Outdoor Recreation* found that 68% of respondents had travelled 100 miles or more, to recreate within the State.²⁹ In addition, our state hosts large numbers of visitors throughout the year. While Las Vegas is the most widely known tourist destination, it is not only “the Strip” that visitors seek out. From Las Vegas to the farthest reaches of the State, visitors come for hiking, history, hunting, fishing, boating, and more, regardless of the season.

In the course of soliciting public input (as described in Appendix A), several recurring observations were made, with regards to the direction of outdoor recreation in Nevada. These

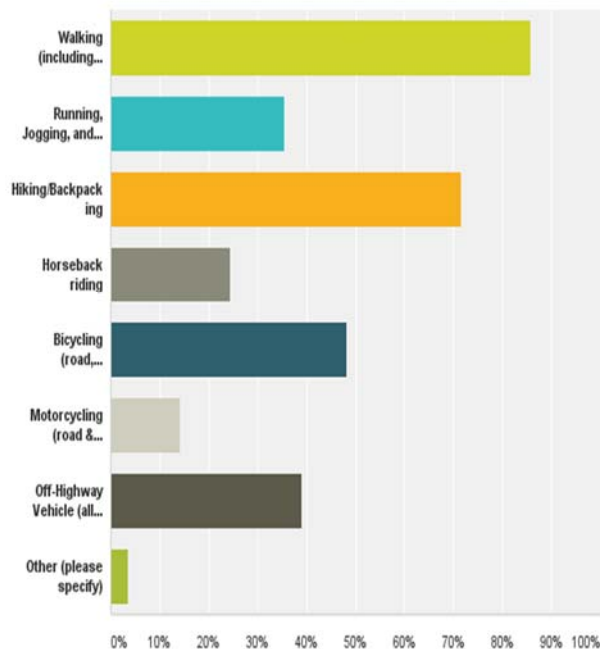
trends, if not already influencing developments on the ground, are expected to play a role in how Nevadans (and visitors) utilize the outdoors. They have been collected here, specifically because they were mentioned frequently in both the community workshop and public survey.



²⁹ Nevada Division of State Parks, *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, designed by NDSP, hosted by Survey Monkey, August 16 – September 5, 2016, Question 23.

Q19 Which of the following TRAIL & ROAD activities do you participate in?

Answered: 226 Skipped: 91



Participation

72% of those surveyed say that they do not get to the outdoors as much as they would like. Often-cited reasons are work, family, and child-rearing obligations. But it was clear that outdoor participation is also being affected by the sheer diversity of recreational options available to citizens today. In fact, when asked what specific entertainment and/or recreation options compete for their free time, respondents indicated a broad range of opportunities: from casino gaming, movies, and video games, to music concerts, theater, television, and myriad home-based activities (e.g., reading, visiting neighbors, and relaxing).³⁰

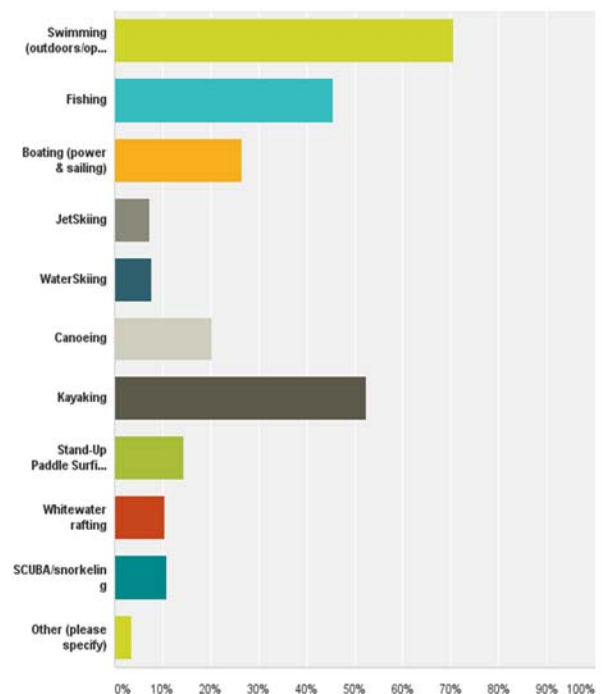
³⁰ Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada, Question 31.

³¹ Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Recreation Participation: Topline Report* (2016).

On this issue, Nevada is little different than the country at large. In an increasingly globalized and wired culture, residents enjoy more options for their time, money, and attention. Outdoor recreation (in all its forms) become a relatively smaller proportion of an individual's menu of options. This trend is reflected in national statistics indicating flat or declining participation numbers for many (although not all) demographic groups.³¹

Q20 Which of the following WATER-BASED activities do you participate in?

Answered: 193 Skipped: 124

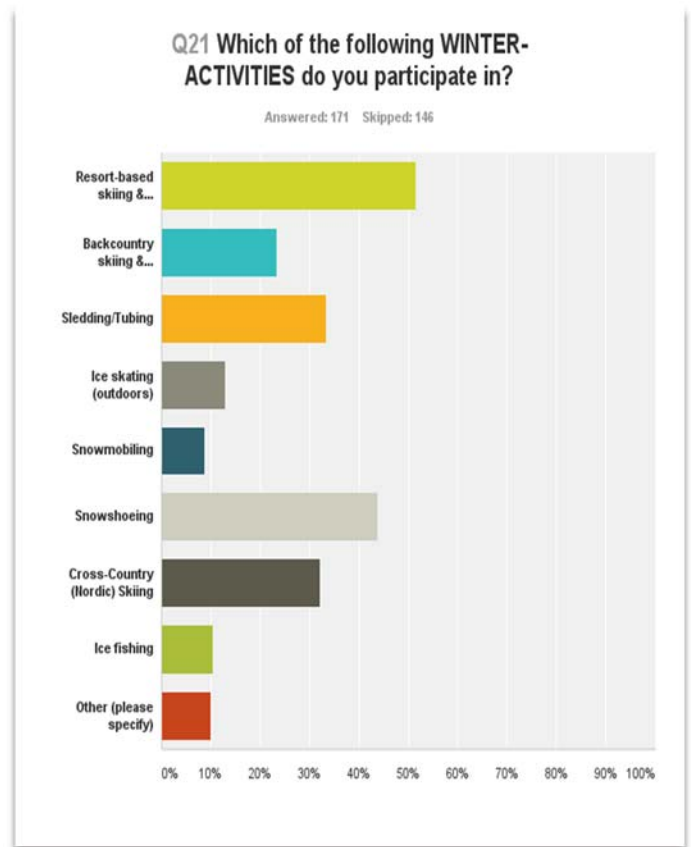


There is also a significant portion of the population which does not participate in the outdoors at all. These individuals are difficult to engage for research purposes. Surveys on outdoor recreation – or any issue – are typically completed

by individuals with some interest or attraction to the subject. Who among us completes surveys about issues and activities we are not interested in, or have never participated in? Because of this, it is challenging to understand – in any direct way – why some people do not participate in the outdoors. Indirect evidence (e.g., geography, economic circumstances) address this issue somewhat, but the challenge remains.

These issues are particularly important in Nevada because, despite its vast tracts of open space, most of the population is urban: residing in just a few large cities. As counter-intuitive as it may sound, given its low population density, Nevadans faces the same obstacles to outdoor recreation that other large, metropolitan areas do. Many of these obstacles center upon access and safety for residents living in densely-populated urban and suburban areas.³²

Despite these dynamics, outdoor recreation remains popular in Nevada. Survey respondents provided an interesting snapshot of recreation habits, as they are occurring now. Nevadans participate in a wide range of activities, with regularity. While there are clear preferences in what people choose to do, there remains a strong sense of exploration and adventure – of experiencing Nevada’s outdoors in multiple ways, across the seasons.



Participants in the community workshop gave indications that Nevada’s outdoor recreation may be fragmenting into niche activities. Put another way, there is growing interest in smaller and non-traditional opportunities. These pursuits include geocaching, disc golf, fat-bike cycling, and land-sailing, to name a few. It is not yet clear if these are taking participants away from more traditional activities, or if they are attracting new participants to the outdoors.

While this could be good news for outdoor participation rates, there are potential pitfalls to navigate as well. For example, the increasing use of fat-bikes brings a cycling population (mountain bikers) into a season (winter) that traditionally do not overlap. While new winter users can contribute to winter-season gate receipts and other advantages, they could also create new

³² Avery Stonich, “Play Deserts Get Fertilized”, *Outdoor Industry Association News*, August 23, 2016.

challenges for trail maintenance, user conflict, and agency staffing.

Two questions in the survey had the potential to address this (at least indirectly), but responses were ambiguous. When asked which outdoor activities were growing in popularity and which ones seemed to be declining in popularity, within their area, respondents provided a wide range of observations. For example, cycling was perceived as growing in some areas, for others it was declining. The same pattern held for nearly all activities. There was some mention of niche activities being on-the-rise (particularly disc golf and geocaching).³³

Going forward, it will be critical to document which activities are growing, which areas are hosting these niche activities, and the cost-benefit to any given area or facility. Short of targeted research, NDSP staff can sketch the boundaries of this phenomenon by systematically tracking its presence in grant applications and other proposed recreation projects throughout the State.

Engagement

In compiling this report, a distinction was made between participation and engagement. Outdoor participation, as discussed above, focuses upon *whether* people get outside, and what activities they participate in. Engagement refers to *how* they go about the activity, and what their general experiences are. While the quantity of participation is obviously an important driver of demand, outdoor recreation is highly dependent on the quality of peoples' engagement with facilities, staff, landscapes, and other visitors.

Engagement with the outdoors starts inside. How do Nevadans select their activities and conduct their trip planning? Most respondents to the NDSP survey gather their information via the

internet and word-of-mouth (88% and 81%, respectively).³⁴ This suggests that many people balance the facts and opinions of many (internet) with the observations of a trusted few (word-of-mouth).

Technology is utilized throughout the various stages of outdoor adventures. Nearly all respondents (92%) use technology for research. Many use it for sharing/documenting their outings (72%), over half utilize technology for assisting in their activities (navigation, payment of fees, etc.), and nearly half of all respondents are now using technology to track their activities (GPS, apps, etc.).³⁵

But, while technology continues to grow in importance, it does not exist by itself. Nevada is a large state, but many areas are not fully mapped for recreational purposes. Participants go to areas for which there are maps and background information – they do not tend to visit areas without clear and reliable information. In short, patterns of participation and engagement are influenced by marketing and publishing trends. This suggests that outdoor participation need not be driven by large infrastructure projects (e.g., trails) alone. Projects focused upon the creation of maps or refinement of apps may have an outsized effect upon an area, and people's willingness to engage it.

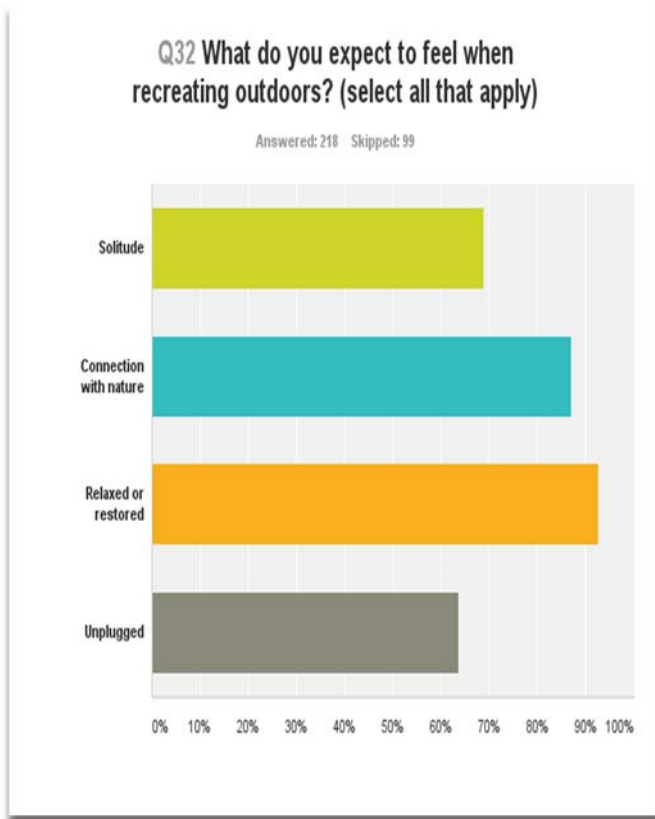
Once people arrive at a location, what is their experience? Much of this depends upon their expectations. When heading outdoors, most respondents (93%) expected to feel relaxed and

³³ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Questions 27 and 28.

³⁴ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 24.

³⁵ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 25.

restored afterwards,³⁶ but there were obstacles to achieving that.



Many survey responses cited user conflicts as a barrier to having a good time outside. Most respondents have had some experience with user conflict, although this was not an overwhelming majority. Of those who did have such experiences, the conflict most often turned on the sheer volume of users. Many responses referred to “too many” users, although no single user community was cited: respondents noted too many cyclists, horses, hikers, etc. It is not clear whether these conflicts originate in genuine inter-personal conflict on the ground, or a general sense that trails and facilities should cater to one user community alone (the implication being that each user group should have their own spaces).³⁷

³⁶ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 32.

³⁷ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Questions 29 and 33.

Interestingly, the only consistent example of specific conflict was centered upon (as one workshop participant put it): “shooters and everyone else”. In both the workshop and survey, there was a small but steady stream of comments regarding all users’ wariness of recreational shooting areas. To be clear, there was little or no animosity towards recreational firearms use in principle, but there was clear concern about the lack of boundaries for shooting areas.

In Nevada, there has been much progress made in guiding hikers, bikers, OHV, and equestrian users to their designated areas, but proportionally very little work of that kind for firearms users. As a result, “everyone else” has clear guidance on where they should be, but shooters don’t have guidance on where they can go. This quickly leads to the inadvertent use of firearms in areas that are uncomfortably close (if not within) existing trail systems and the like.

In general, user conflicts do not appear to be widespread in Nevada, but they are growing in frequency at the State’s more popular locations. When combined with a seeming shortage of guidance for firearms users, as well as Nevada’s growing population, this suggests that user conflicts will continue to appear in more places throughout the State, unless projects and policies engage the issue early within their planning cycles.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Access

Nevada is home to an estimated 269,000 people over the age of five who have some form of

disability.³⁸ There is a clear sense that the demand for ADA-accessible facilities is significantly ahead of the supply. Workshop participants cited this issue as it concerns nearly all user communities (OHV, cycling, hiking, etc.). It was the same for outdoor recreation professionals, who were asked to “Describe the challenges or needs for your organization, related to accommodation of disabled communities (ADA).” Professionals confirmed what the workshop suggested: there are many locations that remain out of compliance with the ADA. These range from trailheads and bathrooms, to fishing areas, boat ramps, and pools.

This lack of accessible facilities seems to turn on funding. Among professional survey respondents, their most significant ADA-related organizational challenge (beyond the lack of compliant facilities to begin with) is a shortage of funding for this purpose. It is not clear from our data why this funding is not available; nor is it clear how much influence local professionals have over the funding processes within their organizations, as it regards ADA compliance.

There are options available. For example, the retrofitting of existing facilities is an eligible expense for LWCF grants. This would allow a project to address ADA issues directly.

Environmental Change (Climate Change)

As Nevada’s diverse environments get warmer, significant changes are occurring to plants, animals, soils, water, and all other characteristics of natural systems. But there is also a series of cascading effects upon the timing and geography of outdoor recreation. Of most immediate concern is the phenomenon of “migrating

recreation seasons”, as one community workshop participant put it.

As average local temperatures rise across all seasons, outdoor recreation participants are conducting activities outside of traditionally “normal” times of year. For example, Nevada outdoor professionals are already seeing more trail users (e.g., equestrian, hiking, cycling) in January and other, traditionally “winter” months. At the same time, because snowfall is concentrated in smaller areas (i.e., ever-higher elevations), traditional winter activities (e.g., skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling) are being concentrated onto smaller patches of land.

These shifting patterns of use and demand, across both time (seasons) and space (locations) are starting to influence everything from trail conditions to agency staffing cycles. As more people participate in summer activities at a (nearly) year-round pace, all supporting facilities will deteriorate more quickly. At the same time, winter participants, concentrated more densely into the remaining areas with snow cover, may begin to experience more instances of user conflict and decreased visitor satisfaction.

While problematic initially, these climate-driven changes could be advantageous. More warm-weather users across more of the calendar year could result in greater revenue from gate receipts and the like. That, in turn, could accelerate maintenance and development initiatives.

The phenomenon of migrating recreation seasons is not completely understood. Further research will require the cooperation of outdoor professionals, researchers, and visitors, in order to

³⁸ Disability World, cited by the Nevada Division of Emergency Management – Homeland Security, “Special Needs Population”, http://dem.nv.gov/preparedness/Special_Needs_Population.

measure where and when these changes occur. Given the extent of Nevada's public lands, it is critical to gain an accurate understanding of this trend as it develops. With its vast open spaces, even small changes in use-patterns will manifest across a large geographic scale, in this state.

PART THREE: NEVADA'S OUTDOOR RECREATION PRIORITIES

The sheer physical scope of Nevada's landscape and diversity, combined with the high proportion of land under public control, results in tremendous outdoor recreation potential. Nevada's recreation providers (public and private) have an admirable record of fulfilling that potential, but there is always more to be done as recreational preferences change, climate changes accelerate, and the State's population grows.

Methods

This section presents a number of priorities that Nevada can focus on over the next five years. They were established via a multi-step process that included a document survey, community workshop, and public opinion survey. A general description is provided here: please refer to Appendix A for more detailed information on the SCORP development process.

Document Survey

First, NDSP staff undertook a survey of planning documents from throughout Nevada and neighboring states. Among these documents were municipal and county master plans, open space plans, economic development proposals, past SCORPs, advisory reports, and statistical surveys. This document review allowed NDSP staff to determine current and trending priorities on the local, regional, and national scales. Specifically, outdoor recreation goals were tallied from counties, municipalities, agencies, and others who

had undertaken public engagement and strategic planning, and produced informed plans for outdoor recreation within their jurisdictions.

By establishing a list of goals in this manner, NDSP staff gained an understanding of the current concerns of the outdoor recreation community. This served to narrow the universe of possible directions we might take as a State, and provided a concise menu of options for citizens who would be responding to the online survey. This particular range of options was also an up-to-date reflection of ethical and philosophical priorities within the outdoor recreation community at large.

Community Meetings

To gain a statewide representation of Nevada's citizens, the Nevada Recreational Trails (RTP) Committee was invited to comment on the SCORP program and the outdoor recreation priorities that NDSP staff had identified.

The involvement of the RTP committee was particularly important because Nevada has not historically maintained an LWCF committee. In acknowledgement of current best practice, NDSP staff is currently working to establish an LWCF committee, with members being identified as of this writing.

A workshop was convened in the summer of 2016 and all RTP committee members were in attendance. The committee is made up of a representative cross-section of outdoor communities within the State. Members could knowledgeably speak for citizens engaged in pursuits as varied as hiking, biking, OHV, equestrian, outdoor education, and wildlife conservation; as well as disabled and youth communities. The committee represented all geographic areas of the State.

In addition to providing general insights and observations on the SCORP process, the committee workshop also contributed significantly to the development of the online survey – in regards to both its general scope and the specific questions asked.

Online Survey

An online survey of state residents was the primary mechanism for generating data specific to Nevada. Chronologically, the public opinion survey came after both the document survey and RTP committee workshop. This was by design. The research survey was meant to establish broad context with regards to outdoor recreation goals, both nationally and locally. The RTP committee workshop solicited observations specific to Nevada from highly informed outdoor recreation professionals and citizens. Both of those processes helped to clarify and refine survey questions.

Conducted online through Survey Monkey, the survey was made of four components (sub-surveys): a series of questions for outdoor recreation providers, another (longer) series for adult citizens, a youth survey, and demographic section. Together, these components captured data that went beyond the priorities and goals described in this section. However, the questions were designed such that respondents understood the importance of establishing basic priorities, and the response rate was quite good for the goal-ranking portion of the survey, despite the time-consuming nature of those particular questions.

Nevada's Outdoor Recreation Priorities

After the above processes were completed, a ranking of priorities emerged. As might be expected, the specific order of priorities varied. The following is a summary of the relative rank of priorities by survey type (full descriptions of these priorities can be found later in this section).

Ranking of Priorities by Survey Type (high to low)

Document Survey (NDSP staff)	Online Survey (Providers)	Online Survey (Citizens)
Connectivity	Maintenance	Maintenance
New Facilities	Safety	Safety
Maintenance	Economic Integration	Design for Conservation
Youth Engagement	Youth Engagement	Connectivity
Safety	Design for Conservation	New Facilities
Economic Integration	Connectivity	Youth Engagement
Underserved Communities	Underserved Communities	Economic Integration
Design for Conservation	New Facilities	Underserved Communities

To clarify the relative importance of these priorities overall, a composite ranking was developed. This was established by identifying a priority's rank in each of the survey types (above), then summing the total of its three rankings. The

priority with the *lowest* total sum would have been ranked *highly* by all three surveyed communities, and thus be a relatively more important priority. To summarize:

Scoring of Priorities by Survey Type (Composite Rank)

	Document Survey Rank	Provider Survey Rank	Citizen Survey Rank	Sum of Survey Rankings	Composite Rank
Maintenance of Existing Facilities	3	1	1	5	1
Safety	5	2	2	9	2
Connectivity	1	6	4	11	3
Youth Engagement	4	4	6	14	4
New Facility Development	2	8	5	15	5
Economic Integration	6	3	7	16	6 (tie)
Design for Conservation	8	5	3	16	6 (tie)
Underserved Community Engagement	7	7	8	22	8

With a composite ranking established, NDSP staff reviewed the survey methodology for particular biases or other factors that would introduce inaccuracies. This led to a re-consideration of one particular priority: Underserved Community Engagement.

As discussed elsewhere (p.19), it can be difficult to obtain response data from populations that do not engage the outdoors. This difficulty commonly leads to “coverage bias”. Indeed, given budget and staffing limitations, NDSP was unable to fully identify and engage Nevada’s underserved communities. As a result, the survey depended heavily on current outdoor recreation participants (“power users” as discussed in Appendix A). While such an approach harvests much useful data, it does not reflect the experiences of underserved groups. Put another way: It is not surprising that the needs of underserved groups might rank low within a survey that could not fully engage underserved communities.

To account for this, the OPSP scoring system utilizes “Underserved Community Engagement” differently than the other priorities noted above. Specifically, it is not assigned points and weighted directly *against* the other priorities. Instead, it has become a prerequisite to *all* the scoring criteria within the OPSP.

For example, one criterion within the scoring system requires applicants to engage the public as they develop project plans. The scoring measures for that criterion specifically assess (among other things) whether underserved communities were identified and engaged by the applicant.

Another criterion requires applicants to summarize their project management history. The rubric for that criterion captures applicants’

record of considering underserved areas and populations within their planning processes.

When consideration of the underserved is extended across all the scoring criteria within the OPSP, an important step is made. In asking LWCF applicants to describe the underserved communities they can (or should) engage, Nevada’s recreation sector comes to share the responsibility for gathering and collating substantive data regarding underservice in the state. As noted, this was difficult for NDSP to accomplish independently, as the SCORP was compiled.

But there is a more fundamental value to this process as well. By infusing the needs of the underserved into multiple scoring criteria, Nevada’s recreation community is recognizing the fundamental importance of those who have yet to experience the full breadth of our land.

In summary, this process of ranking and adjusting priorities forms a reasonable basis for scoring grants and conducting further research. On a practical level, national, state, and local concerns are each accounted for, without one particular community or perspective being prioritized more heavily than the others. National concerns must be recognized, but they should not overwhelm local issues. Likewise, local issues are very important, but Nevada’s outdoor recreation plans must account for broader trends in ethics and strategy, as they have come to be understood beyond our State.

Note that the following discussion does not specify strategies or actions that might be taken to address each priority. Having narrowed the general priorities for our state (as described previously), NDSP does not further presume to assign blanket solutions. In a large state,

constituted of a small populace and (nearly) all public land, local understandings are paramount. Nevada has a vibrant and engaged outdoor community, with intense commitment and deep local knowledge. To capture this local energy and creativity, strategies and actions will come from “the bottom, up”. It is important that on-the-ground implementation is situated within the contexts of Nevada’s communities, since local applicants know best how to meet the following priorities, given local resources and circumstances.

Each of the following priorities will be included in the OPSP, as part of the scoring process for grant applications. Every applicant will be required to describe the degree to which they have considered these priorities; and the specific actions they will take to meet them, within the context of their project.

Priority 1

Maintain and Rehabilitate Existing Facilities

From online survey: Keep older and other existing facilities (restrooms, trails, signs, etc.) in proper working order and looking good.

While new facilities, trails, and other infrastructure draw attention, it is the existing facilities (once new themselves) that support most recreation activity on any given day. Most of these facilities are fundamentally sound, but may need improvements. Needed updates could range from a new coat of paint in a restroom, to a structural modification that would allow the elderly easier access to a trailhead. For the public, it is even

more basic: clean and properly maintained facilities. Past State Park surveys suggest that visitors are satisfied when restrooms function, fire pits are clean, and boat launches are orderly.³⁹ In our most recent survey, respondents cited easy access and cleanliness as the most important elements of an outdoor facility.⁴⁰

The survey for this report suggested that Nevadans are happy with their facilities so far, with nearly 95% of respondents being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the outdoor facilities they use regularly.⁴¹ This suggests that current infrastructure is doing enough – for now.

But this balance can change quickly. Changes in recreational interests, new roads or housing developments, and other changes in local conditions can put pressure on infrastructure almost overnight.

In fact, there is growing concern that the positive views reflected in the public survey may not last. Public workshop participants indicated that the need for maintenance is reaching a critical threshold in Nevada. The budget cuts of the “Great Recession” have not been entirely recovered, thus a significant (and growing) maintenance need exists statewide.

Outdoor professionals seemed to confirm this. When asked to describe infrastructure and facility-related challenges, “funding” was most often cited.⁴² If funds are not adequate now, it is likely that maintenance issues will only increase going forward.

³⁹ Nevada Division of State Parks, *State Park User Survey* (2009).

⁴⁰ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 35.

⁴¹ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 34.

⁴² *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 8.

To prevent the deterioration of current outdoor infrastructure, project developers (agencies, groups, citizens) must consider how the improvement of existing facilities can further their goals. Because new facilities in new locations create “something from nothing”, they are sometimes easier to justify, explain, and defend to grant reviewers, planning commissions, etc. Moreover, for many (though not all) grants, maintenance is not even an eligible expense. As such, new development is often the first type of response we think of, when responding to needs.

Nevada does have many effective facilities already. It is vital that every outdoor project consider whether improvements to existing infrastructure might have a larger effect on recreation trends, than the development of entirely new facilities. Upgrades to existing elements won’t solve every problem, but they are each valuable outdoor resources. They represent the best possible solution to past challenges and should be leveraged to the fullest extent possible.

Priority 2

Ensure safety

From online survey: Ensure that all facilities are safe as possible and reduce conflicts between users (hiker-equestrian-biker-OHV)

While it is critical that we ensure widespread participation in the outdoors through maintenance and connectivity, it is equally essential that safety is factored into all projects.

As noted, there are many ways to engage the outdoors, from a simple walk in a park to high-risk activities that require years of preparation. There is room for all of these pursuits, but the risks inherent to any of them must come from the fundamental nature of the activities themselves,

not from elements that can be controlled through good planning and the management of conditions. There are many ways to accomplish this, because “safety” is a very broad concept. It encompasses all stages of a recreational outing, from arrival to departure. Every aspect of recreation has an element of risk that can be minimized through planning and design.

Projects have wide latitude to address these issues. From pedestrian flow through (or around) a parking lot, to the number of turnouts at an equestrian trailhead – down to the specific shape and material on doors, paths, signs, and surfaces. All of this affects the general perception of safety that visitors have, during their activities.

On the other hand, such wide latitude can be overwhelming within the context of a project planning process. Safety has no “conclusion” – there is always more that could be done. As a result, nobody wants to declare that they have done “enough” in regards to safety, so the entire subject is often addressed indirectly, or left unspoken entirely.

To more directly measure the safety of Nevada’s outdoor recreation opportunities, project proponents are encouraged to identify, describe, and explain the most significant potential safety concerns inherent to their undertaking. This process should account for the physical setting (environment) within which the project sits, the user populations that will engage the facility, and the long-term management goals for the facility.

Doing this is not necessarily difficult. Personnel must consult up-to-date guidelines and best practices from the beginning. Guidelines that go beyond mere legal requirements may easily fall within a budget if considered early in the design process.

The objective is to develop projects with more explicitly clear and justified safety goals. It is understood that safety improvements never end, but projects can and should identify their most significant safety challenges and solve them directly.

Priority 3

Increase connectivity between Trails, Facilities, and other Recreation Locations

From online survey: Make sure that trails and paths are connected, making an inter-linked system for hikers, bikers, riders, and others to explore.

In conducting the document survey, NDSP staff found “connectivity” to be the single most-cited goal within Nevada’s various vision statements, master plans, economic reports, and other planning documents.

Broadly defined, connectivity represents the degree to which outdoor recreation facilities are linked or connected. The focus is on “networks” or “systems”: of trails, parks, restrooms, and other elements that can be accessed from each other. Ideally, all recreation infrastructure in a given area are joined to create a single integrated system that users can explore in different ways. This creates a diversity of options from any one entry point (e.g., trailhead), thus encouraging longer explorations, higher visitor satisfaction, and repeat visits.

A typical example involves hiking trails. Many communities in Nevada have trails extending from their edges. Many of these routes are out-and-back in form, or often loops. However, a cluster of

trails on, say, the north end of town, will rarely be connected to other recreation opportunities on the east side.⁴³ As our document survey suggested, many jurisdictions are recognizing that the linking of isolated trails can provide many new options for users. Even one new trail, placed properly, can dramatically increase the menu of options available to a visitor. When combined with other elements of infrastructure (e.g., restrooms, parks, OHV parking, boat launches), the possibilities multiply quickly.

Many communities view connectivity as having an outsized impact on other goals and priorities. From a safety perspective, a connected recreation system allows for more entry and exit points for emergency personnel. At the same time, by giving residents more directions on the landscape, user conflicts can be reduced. In regards to maintenance, connectivity generally reduces the amount of pressure on any one location (insofar as users are able to spread out across a system). This can lead to extended (i.e., fewer) maintenance cycles.

For some areas and users, connectivity may be a singular priority, unto itself. During our public workshop, there were repeated comments regarding the lack of connectivity among OHV trailheads statewide, especially around Nevada’s urban areas. In particular, it seems that OHV trails and trailheads are not generally well connected to urban and suburban locations. Users in these areas often have trailheads nearby, but OHV-appropriate trails do not extend fully to their neighborhoods. As a result, these urban and urban-ring riders must trailer their vehicles for exceedingly short trips. Faced with such an

⁴³ There are many reasons for this, often rooted in the historical circumstances of their construction (the timing of their development, which neighborhoods they were envisioned to serve, the funding entity, etc.).

inefficient use of time and equipment, many users simply drive these short distances on public streets, thus exposing themselves to citations – not to mention the elevated physical risk inherent to such activities for riders, pedestrians, and others in the community.

To address issues of connectivity, personnel are encouraged to look beyond the immediate scope of their project. When building a new OHV trailhead, for example, the core elements of the project (parking, signage, etc.) must be established. But it is equally important to consider the context within which that trailhead is placed. Where will it sit relative to neighborhoods, rest areas, and more distant trail systems? Could these other local elements be integrated with the new trailhead in any way?

There are countless possible answers to these questions, but the first objective is to routinely ask the question of all projects.

Priority 4

Engage youth

From online survey: Encourage children, young adults, and families to explore the outdoors more frequently.

“Youth” are generally defined as children or young adults under the age of 18. As a group, youth can be a part of underserved populations or regions, but are generally considered as a distinct, priority audience for outreach and awareness initiatives.

In regards to outdoor recreation, there is broad acknowledgement that a focus on youth recreation can directly impact both health and environmental awareness. In regards to health, it has been demonstrated that America’s youth are not meeting expectations with regards to diet and exercise.⁴⁴ The same goes for Nevada’s youth.⁴⁵ Across the state and nation, more young people are being identified as obese, diabetic, and generally inactive.

At the same time, researchers have quantified a significant decline in youth connection to the outdoors.⁴⁶ This is cause for concern, for several reasons. First, engaging the outdoors has been shown to improve multiple aspects of health – mental, physical, and social.⁴⁷ Second, a connection to nature is strongly correlated with greater appreciation and understanding of the outdoors. It is this appreciation that has motivated our long tradition of conservation and wise use.

How do we know that youth connection to the outdoors is dropping? Traditionally, outdoor recreation has been “...a prime indicator of youth connection to nature,”⁴⁸ and most significant surveys suggest that youth are not engaging or identifying with the outdoors as they once did.⁴⁹ By encouraging youth to engage the outdoors, we are providing them with one powerful tool for combatting health problems, while at the same time developing a citizenry with strong positive associations with the outdoors.

⁴⁴ “Facts & Statistics”, President’s Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition, accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.fitness.gov/resource-center/facts-and-statistics>.

⁴⁵ Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, *2013 Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report* (2013).

⁴⁶ Western Governors’ Association, (2010).

⁴⁷ California State Parks, *The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation* (2005).

⁴⁸ Carter J. Betz, et al, *A Preliminary Look at the 2008 NSRE Youth Module* (2008).

⁴⁹ Western Governors’ Association, *Connecting Kids and Families to the West’s Great Outdoors: Go Out West! Advisory Group Report to Western Governors*, 1 (2012).

With Nevada's diverse landscapes and abundance of space, we have many varied ways to entice youth outside. One section of the *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada* focused on this population. Parents were asked to name factors limiting their children's engagement with the outdoors. The overwhelming response was "busy schedules", followed by "other entertainment options" (e.g., video games, movies).⁵⁰

On the other hand, when asked about their children's favorite activities, a truly diverse range of options was noted: from OHV, fishing, and shooting, to hiking, biking, camping, and swimming, to name a few.⁵¹ An equally diverse range of opportunities were listed when respondents described the outdoor activities that were trending with their children and their children's peers.⁵²

How can Nevada's outdoor projects encourage youth engagement? As the public survey responses suggest, our recreation supply may not be the problem, but generating demand could be. The obstacles to outdoor engagement in Nevada are similar to those nationwide, with so many children and families faced with various combinations of hectic schedules, challenging economic circumstances, and abundant digital distractions.

If demand is the problem, it is questionable the degree to which more infrastructure will help – if we build it, will they come? The challenge of youth engagement highlights the fact that outdoor recreation does not exist by itself. The outdoors – and the facilities we use to engage it – are influenced by all other aspects of our culture

and society: technological distractions, social fears of crime and reduced civility, economic pressures, and more. Enticing youth to get outside requires cooperation between disparate sectors of a community. As the saying goes: it takes a village to raise a child. In the same way, youth will be encouraged to go outdoors through the cooperative work of families, schools, agencies (education, health, tourism, etc.), advocacy groups, and more.

Even though this priority is fundamentally bigger than any single project, it is still important for project personnel to consider their role in youth engagement initiatives. How can a new project assist in ongoing local efforts to get youth outside? If no such efforts exist in a particular area, can a project serve as the impetus for new youth programs? It is not necessary for project personnel to become youth engagement experts, but the existence of their project might be just the activity that schools or local outdoor groups are waiting to rally around. The objective is to remain open to the youth engagement possibilities inherent to any project and, at the very least, communicate with those who might integrate youth with a project.

Priority 5

Develop New Facilities

From online survey: Build new restrooms, trails, signs, and other amenities in areas that need them.

While the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing facilities is very important, older facilities cannot ensure reliable access alone. With Nevada's expanding population, the need for

⁵⁰ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 45.

⁵¹ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 42.

⁵² *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 43.

outdoor recreation facilities will only increase beyond what existing infrastructure can accommodate.

To some degree, the development of new facilities may be more about geography than it is about any particular type of building or trail. As the state's population expands, there will likely be a need for recreation infrastructure in areas once considered out-of-the-way, if not entirely remote. With its large size and low population, Nevada can accommodate very remote excursions. But as the population expands across the landscape, more neighborhoods will gain proximity to wilderness areas, trailheads, and other locations. Being more isolated and under-utilized in the past, will these locations and their infrastructure (if they have any) be able to safely and efficiently accommodate escalating visitor volumes?

This question is arising more frequently. Within Nevada State Parks, for example, there are an increasing number of projects (and grant applications) focused upon the upgrade of restrooms to handle increased visitor numbers, the expansion of parking lots, and a host of other improvements that are fundamentally an adjustment to expanding use in both old and new locations.

It is important that projects consider population growth and outdoor user trends early in their planning process. New facilities must be located and designed for future circumstances, not necessarily for what is happening now. If new boat launches are planned for a lake, how will they fit into the recreation environment 5, 10, even 20 years from now? If population and economic trends are on an upswing locally or regionally, the launches may prove invaluable. But if trends suggest a slowing of growth, there may

be other outdoor projects that better fit the recreation climate to come.

All outdoor projects in Nevada should consider future conditions in an explicit manner. While it is not necessary that every project fund a full critical study of future recreation trends, it is nevertheless important that project personnel consult the reports and plans that speak to future developments. These are not difficult to find, being produced by our universities, government agencies, and other political entities, often for quick and concise public consumption. The important part is to look, so that every project has at least a general understanding of how their project will contribute to Nevada's outdoor future, as best we can see it.

Priority 6 (tie)

Integrate with Economic security and growth

From online survey: Develop outdoor recreation opportunities that help local and/or regional economies grow.

In an era of increasing inequality and economic anxiety, governments and citizens must put significant emphasis on their economic plans. In Nevada, counties, municipalities, and other entities have developed many unique strategies for creating jobs and improving household incomes, customized to their local opportunities and constraints.

In many cases, outdoor recreation is playing a significant role. There is widespread acknowledgement that Nevada can leverage outdoor recreation for real and lasting benefit, from stronger local economies to better health for our residents.

Elsewhere in this report (Part One), the economic benefits of outdoor recreation are discussed. The focus of communities now is to ensure that recreation projects are being integrated into broader economic goals and initiatives. The advantages are real: evidence suggests that parks, for example, can increase real property values, raise municipal revenues, attract new residents, and increase home sales.⁵³ In addition, recreational infrastructure can boost tourism and increase revenues for local businesses. When a community has a useful and attractive recreational infrastructure, real benefits follow.

To leverage these advantages, the recreation community must recognize the broader economic possibilities inherent to every project. To do this, it is critical that project personnel make a habit of considering local and regional economic goals. In reality, it is not necessary for project proponents to understand the intricacies of local economics, but it *is* necessary that they contact citizens who might recognize various economic benefits to a project. In Nevada, every community (or county) has individuals whose responsibilities include some degree of economic awareness: city planners, economic commissions, city councils, and chambers of commerce, to name a few.

By creating a culture of communication, economic opportunities will not be missed.⁵⁴ This can help everyone involved: communities can diversify their economic options as they navigate uncertain futures, recreation projects may diversify their suite of justifications as they look for funding, and

local citizens and visitors are ultimately rewarded with a better quality of life.

Priority 6 (tie)

Conserve water and habitat

From online survey: Build new facilities and restore older ones with water and habitat conservation in mind.

The American West has a unique relationship to water. As the driest state in the Union, Nevada is representative of that relationship. Our state has many habitats that depend on a small supply of water to flourish. These range from remote alpine lakes to surprisingly large wetlands – not to mention our own human habitats as well. Water security has long been an urgent issue, and that urgency is only increasing, not just in Nevada and the West⁵⁵, but worldwide.⁵⁶

Efforts to grow communities, economies, and entire societies in a sustainable manner can broadly be categorized as conservation development. As stated by Colorado State University (CSU), conservation development (CD) is:

“...an approach to the design, construction, and stewardship of a development that achieves functional protection of natural resources, while also providing social and economic benefits to human communities. CD includes a wide range of project types, ranging from rural ranches, to

⁵³ American Planning Association, *How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development*, City Parks Forum Briefing Paper #3 (2002)

⁵⁴ For example, see U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Recreation & Visitor Services Program, *Connecting with Communities: BLM Recreation Strategy, 2014-2019* (2014)

⁵⁵ President's Council, *America's Great Outdoors*, 19.

⁵⁶ United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report* (2012), <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/water>.

suburban conservation subdivisions, to large master-planned communities.”⁵⁷

While respondents did not usually refer to it as conservation development, it was clear from our surveys that the consideration of projects’ effects on water and habitat were important. In particular, the online survey demonstrated a very high concern for this issue (it ranked second among online respondents, among possible recreation goals for Nevada).⁵⁸ It seems that survey respondents were at least intuitively aware of the challenges. As CSU states it, conservation development is urgently needed because:

“Current funding for land conservation is inadequate to assemble an inclusive and ecologically viable network of conservation areas, and existing protected areas are unlikely to accommodate shifts in species’ ranges due to climate change.”

Every recreation project, whether new construction or rehabilitation of older facilities, can either integrate with water and habitat needs or detract from it. Projects are never neutral in this regard. The specific manner in which conservation is accomplished will be dependent on a project’s particular form and location. In every case, however, there needs to be an assessment of the opportunities available. Small changes in location, orientation, and design can improve habitat formation and/or water use. At the very least, a project should never detract from water and habitat dynamics. Outdoor recreation projects are meant to facilitate our engagement

with the environment. These projects, first and foremost, must do no harm.

Priority (not ranked)

Meet the needs of underserved regions and populations

From online survey: Identify people and neighborhoods without access to parks, trails, or playgrounds and establish outdoor recreation opportunities for them.

The term “underserved” has several different meanings. Most commonly, discussions refer to underserved populations, but one will also find discussion of underserved areas or regions. Underserved people or populations are a demographic subset of the general population (e.g., elderly, minorities, disabled). Underserved regions, on the other hand, are physical areas that have little or no recreation opportunities for their residents, regardless of those residents’ demographic attributes.

But what does it mean for a region or population to be “underserved”? With regards to outdoor recreation in Nevada, it means that significant areas or populations exist without ideal access to outdoor recreation opportunities. For example, a neighborhood that has no public park or open space within a reasonable walking distance would be underserved with regards to outdoor recreation.⁵⁹ In a similar way, a community that has many technical mountain bike trails but few level, evenly-surfaced walking trails, might be underserving its elderly or disabled populations.

⁵⁷ Colorado State University Global Challenges Research Team on Conservation Development, “What is Conservation Development?”, <http://cd.colostate.edu/conservation-development-overview>.

⁵⁸ *Survey of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada*, Question 36.

⁵⁹ The State of California defines an underserved community as one with less than 3 acres of parkland per 1000 residents, per the 2008 California Statewide Park Program (Public Resources Code 5642); see also: California State Parks, *Meeting the Park Needs of All Californians* (2015), 15.

While more intensive pursuits (like mountain biking and multi-day hikes) get much attention, there are many other ways to engage the outdoors. It is important to recognize that outdoor recreation includes an incredibly wide array of activities within its scope, and in order to serve diverse populations, a variety of activities can (and should) be provided within communities.

Given this potential to engage so many different interests, it is important that projects explicitly consider their ability to engage new outdoor users and/or to better serve the needs of existing users through more equitable access. By reflecting on the demographic makeup of nearby communities early on, a project can be shaped to encourage new and diverse users. For example, multi-lingual signage can be a small but clear symbol of a facility's interest in hosting immigrant populations (who, as discussed elsewhere, do not typically engage the outdoors as frequently as other populations). In another way, the installation of a small connector trail can go a long way in getting an underserved neighborhood to engage with a nearby trailhead.

While it may not always be that easy, it often could be. The objective is to consider this aspect of a project from the start, so that any advantages can be recognized and leveraged to the fullest extent possible.

For more details about the way this priority will be utilized, please refer to page 28 of this section and the OPSP (Appendix B).

Implementation of Priorities

Identifying and describing priorities is only the first step. The day-to-day task of outdoor recreation providers is to transform these ideas into real opportunities. The task of citizens is to engage (and enjoy) these opportunities and

provide feedback regarding their quantity and quality.

Towards that end, this section summarizes how the aforementioned priorities (and this SCORP in general) might be used in a dynamic way. Specifically, there are some challenges to implementing our priorities and these are discussed. But there are also some valuable actions that Nevada's recreation community can take to improve the conditions for success.

Use of this SCORP

The goal of every SCORP is to be dynamic. It is hoped that this document might be actively used to improve recreation conditions in multiple ways.

The most direct use of the SCORP comes through the OPSP. The latter document requires LWCF applicants to explain precisely how their project(s) address SCORP priorities. These responses are weighted, scored, and are ultimately the most important element of any LWCF application. For complete details about the OPSP, please refer to Appendix B.

The SCORP and its priorities are useful in other ways, as well. For the NDSP, the SCORP provides important background information as recreational plans are updated, park infrastructure is improved, and services are expanded.

But the SCORP has potential value beyond single agencies or divisions.

Each edition of the SCORP should encourage the outdoor recreation community to think beyond their day-to-day concerns. The SCORP is designed to collect diverse pieces of knowledge, and it should be read by recreation providers and users for new ideas, not simply to confirm what we might already know.

Challenges to Implementation

Every jurisdiction has challenges to implementing its recreation priorities and Nevada has its own. These challenges are not insurmountable, but they are a fundamental part of working in Nevada and must be acknowledged within the context of any project or initiative:

- **Geography:** Even though Nevadans adapt to advances in technology and communication quickly, this remains a very large and mountainous state. Environments (natural, economic, political) offer very different constraints and opportunities for citizens, depending on both where they are and what their recreation goals are.
- **Public land:** with nearly all of the state in public hands, there is a very high number of political entities, bureaucracies, and systemic cultures that must be negotiated in order to make progress on any scale. Moreover, many missions and mandates come from outside the state. While Nevadans work well with each other and outside perspectives are welcome, the sheer number of players can make it difficult for any single citizen or agency to make steady progress.
- **Population:** With a relatively small population, Nevada does not have the sheer mass of outdoor constituents that larger populations enjoy. While the passion and dedication of our outdoor advocates is unquestioned, there are natural advantages to numbers as well.

Because of these particular challenges, it is difficult to develop consistent momentum and focused direction over the long term. Ultimately, this may compromise our ability to make progress

in a manner that is fair and equitable to all people and areas of the state.

Actions to Support Recreation Priorities

There are specific and meaningful actions that Nevadan's can take to support recreation priorities. Whereas the priorities emphasize real on-the-ground improvements, the following actions would create the conditions for success: a recreation environment that would improve our collective ability to meet recreation goals.

Funding

In most states, recreation funding is a regular challenge. Nevada's constraints are particularly significant because of its land area and population. With so much physical space, there are seemingly endless opportunities for recreation projects. On the other hand, a smaller population provides less of a tax base and fewer private or otherwise philanthropic sources. As a result, Nevada routinely experiences a single, small pool of applicants applying for a single, small pool of funds.

In this environment, a culture of collaboration becomes critical. Collaboration is addressed in more detail below, but a collective willingness to maintain open communication, share data, and form partnerships can have dramatic effect on funding for anyone.

There are also some important actions that individual entities can take to improve funding outcomes. The first is a diversification of funding sources. Research suggests that "...a diversified portfolio encourages more stable revenues and consequently could promote greater

organizational longevity.”^{60 61} In practical terms, an entity should explore public and private sources of funds and generally strive to identify new sources at the local, state, regional, and national levels.

On the other hand, there is often a temptation to modify projects (if not one’s entire mission statement) in order to qualify for a particular grant or other set of funds. Recreation providers must understand that while there are costs to turning down (or not applying for) certain funds, there are also real costs to accepting funds as well.⁶² If a project pulls an organization away from its core mission, the potential costs can be more significant than one lost funding opportunity.

This dynamic not only applies to nonprofits and other community organizations, but government agencies as well. In the public realm, providers must take care to monitor the full array of possible funding sources and think creatively in terms of how projects can fit into existing management plans.

Assessment/Metrics

It is important that the recreation community is collecting, analyzing, and sharing data about its activities. Specifically, recreation providers should collect information (metrics) that broadly capture the impact of a facility or program. These metrics can focus upon any relevant aspect of operations: the number of visitors, students served, reduction of accidents, or the increase in satisfied survey respondents, to name a few possibilities. The

specific data being tracked should speak clearly to the mission and strategic goals for the facility, program, or organization involved.

Quantifying the effect of a recreational opportunity can be useful to individual providers and the recreation community at large. For single groups or agencies, measurement provides a powerful means of judging progress and conveying value to funding sources. For the broader recreation community, the sharing of metrics leads to faster adoption of best practices and more widespread collaboration.

Communication

There are many ways to increase the interconnectedness of Nevada’s recreation community. Simple communication can lead to integrated collaboration. A practical and direct goal is to generate more face-to-face time with community members. This can come through regular meetings, workshops, summits, working groups, and other events in which Nevada’s diverse recreation community can exchange ideas and hatch new plans.

The use of technologies such as video conferencing and collaborative software platforms (for document distribution) can greatly aid the frequency and utility of such meetings. More importantly, technology can shrink (if not eliminate) the vast distances between our communities, thus allowing more frequent exchange of plans and ideas. Utilizing such platforms may not necessarily create a new expense, either. There are multiple public and

⁶⁰ Deborah A. Carrol and Keely Jones Stater, “Revenue Diversification in Nonprofit Organizations: Does it Lead to Financial Stability?”, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 19 (2009): 947-966.

⁶¹ Foundation Center (Grantspace.org), Knowledge Base, “How are nonprofits funded?”, <http://grantspace.org/tools/knowledge-base/Funding-Resources/General/how-are-nonprofits-funded>.

⁶² Kim Jonker and William F. Meehan III, “Mission Matters Most”, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 6 (2008): 60-65.

private entities within the state that maintain these technologies and may be willing to host tech-assisted meetings.

Collaboration

Over time, increased communication can evolve into collaboration on real plans and projects. For example, collaboration can influence funding in a few important ways. First, it allows for the efficient collection and distribution of best practices. When there is a small recreation community applying for a small pool of funds, it is essential that every project implements the most current models of design and management. This makes for stronger applications, better projects, and ultimately better experiences for the public. Over time, this makes Nevada's (already positive) reputation stronger.

Collaboration can also facilitate partnerships. Partnerships are critical to success for a number of reasons: they spread risk, increase a project's collective technical and leadership skill set, minimize redundant skill sets, save costs, and generally improve efficiency.⁶³ For these and other reasons, a well-designed partnership goes a long way to inspiring confidence on the part of funders, staff, and volunteers.

Collaboration is fundamental to improving recreation conditions in Nevada. When our recreation community has a more holistic sense of constraint and opportunity, we get closer to developing a kind of "single system" perspective. When ideas and data are shared, it becomes easier to secure funding, generate metrics, and leverage organization strengths. Those actions, in turn, create better conditions for achieving our recreation priorities.

Conclusion

One of the fundamental purposes of any SCORP is to create some unifying message(s) within a state's outdoor recreation community. With such a diversity of environments and population spread across such a vast space, the *Nevada Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* lays out priorities that might provide a consistent focus.

The priorities listed in this report are broad goals, varied and complex. As noted previously, the specific strategies and actions for accomplishing them will come from grant applicants, outdoor advocates, and other citizens who recognize their stake in Nevada's outdoor future. In this way, projects will be developed that address our priorities in creative ways, while being maximally relevant to conditions on the ground.

But while solutions will come from local knowledge, there remains a need for some degree of statewide consistency. In its way, this report is meant to facilitate more coordinated action by establishing priorities and providing general recommendations. The priorities are more concrete, having been identified and organized in a systematic way. The recommendations attached to each priority were more abstract. In fact, the recommendations are really "habits of mind". They encourage project personnel to be expansive in their thought processes: *Can* we aid in regional connectivity? *Who* can leverage our project for better youth engagement? *How* could we contribute to local economic needs?

It is absolutely vital that Nevada remain open and innovative in its thinking on recreation. By leaving room for citizens to develop solutions, the possibility for innovation is maximized. But, as suggested in the previous section, there is no

⁶³ Geri Stengel, "Nonprofit Collaborations: Why Teaming Up Can Make Sense", *Forbes.com*, April 9, 2013.

doubt that more coordinated action would significantly improve the implementation of priorities.

To address this, a few states have pursued a very particular, structural strategy for supporting recreation. Colorado, Washington, and Utah (all western states with circumstances broadly similar to Nevada's) have expanded state leadership roles for outdoor recreation.^{64 65} Montana may soon follow their lead.⁶⁶ The precise implementation varies. In all cases, however, outdoor recreation officials are situated at the highest levels of the executive branch: either through appointment as a policy advisor to the governor or via legislation that creates a Department of Outdoor Recreation (or similar). Regardless of specific form, these structural changes serve to elevate the importance of outdoor recreation within state government. Broadly, these changes make it easier to monitor innovative developments within outdoor communities, while simultaneously enhancing collaboration by bringing all outdoor stakeholders to the table: diverse user groups,

government, industry, and even citizens who do not engage the outdoors regularly.⁶⁷

While not a goal to be achieved through grant programs, the elevation of outdoor recreation within the state government hierarchy would go a long way towards improving both the broader conditions within which projects are funded and the environment in which every Nevada project might flourish.

Nevada remains a special part of the American landscape. Large, remote, and diverse, we stand unique, both naturally and culturally. Most importantly, Nevada is doing right by its outdoors. There is a deep and sincere appreciation of our resources and intelligent recognition of our opportunities. In doing research for this report, the most consistent observation was one of optimism: Nevadans recognize when small victories are achieved and they leverage those achievements to bring about further change. With this attitude, all opportunities are possible.

⁶⁴ Avery Stonich, "Washington Just Threw Down the Gauntlet", *Outdoor Industry Association News*, February 19, 2016.

⁶⁵ Avery Stonich, "A Rising Tide for Outdoor Recreation", *Outdoor Industry Association News*, August 26, 2015.

⁶⁶ Cailin O'Brien-Feeney, "Big Plans for the Outdoor Economy in Big Sky Country", *Outdoor Industry Association News*, June 9, 2016

⁶⁷ Outdoor Industry Association, "State Leadership Roles for Outdoor Recreation: A Promising Trend" (White Paper), May 3, 2016.

APPENDIX A

SCORP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

SCORP Development Process

Overview

From the start, Nevada State Parks (NDSP) sought to establish a broad outline of outdoor recreation in the State. With one full-time staffer and one part-time assistant managing multiple programs and SCORP development, deep analysis of individual trends could not be implemented. However, a general outline remains critical to understanding Nevada. Indeed, there has been little research on the recreation tendencies of our citizens and thus a broad sketch of the State's recreation habits was needed. In scope, this report was designed as an orientation document: it is meant to provide a fair and reasonable basis for scoring grant proposals, but also a collection of data and observations that can provide meaningful directions for future research. From there, Nevadans can begin to understand how and why outdoor recreation happens as it does.

Research and writing duties were held by Arthur Krupicz, Grants & Cultural Resource Assistant with the NDSP; with close support from Janice Keillor (NDSP Park and Recreation Program Manager) and Jennifer Scanland (Nevada OHV Commission).

In order to establish the aforementioned "broad outline" of Nevada outdoor recreation, data collection revolved around three elements: a research survey of outdoor recreation goals, community meetings with outdoor recreation representatives, and a public opinion survey.

Document Survey

Given that the SCORP provides the rationale for the OPSP, Nevada's editions have traditionally been oriented around the explanation of outdoor recreation goals. This document maintains that focus, but sought to be more systematic in its data collection. Staff began their research by quantifying which goals are being talked about and/or implemented into planning documents. To do this, outdoor recreation goals were collected from sources with wide geographic scope (e.g., national agencies) and then down to smaller entities (e.g., municipalities).

Compilation began with planning documents and reports that were national in perspective. These included reports from outdoor industry sources, Federal agency documents, and national associations of various type (e.g., the Western Governors' Association).

Compilation continued with other states' SCORP documents. This tally focused on those states that border Nevada: partly because of time constraints, but also because the primary focus of the survey was not national or even regional, but rather to identify goals being prioritized by smaller Nevada entities.

Keeping with this pattern, Nevada-specific goals were compiled first from the reports of entities operating on a statewide scale (e.g., state and Federal government agencies); then to mid-level entities (primarily counties, as Nevada does not work with planning regions in any overarching or integrated manner); then to municipalities and smaller areas. The smaller, non-municipal areas were primarily development districts

associated with a particular neighborhood or portion of a municipality. The nature of these documents were varied, from municipal master plans and open space strategies, to economic proposals, agency planning reports, and recreation management advisories.

By quantifying the myriad goals included in these documents, staff was able to gain a sense of the most commonly-stated outdoor recreation concerns and objectives, both nationally and in Nevada. As it turns out, there was significant consistency between the majority of sources. National priorities and local Nevada priorities are largely similar, across most geographic and management areas.

Community Meetings

During initial planning, a statewide series of community meetings was envisioned, so that data could be gathered in-person. It was felt that personal engagement would provide deeper understanding of citizens' hopes and concerns, beyond what could be done with documentary research and public surveys alone. However, circumstances related to staffing and program commitments made it exceedingly difficult to design, deliver, and analyze community meetings in multiple locations statewide. Given this, NDSP staff reduced the community meeting schedule to one workshop and expanded the scope of the opinion survey, in terms of both questions and audience⁶⁸.

In order to alleviate the effect of fewer community meetings, the workshop was designed to capture a broad cross-section of the Nevada public. To this end, the workshop was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Nevada Recreational Trails Advisory Board. This particular event was chosen for three reasons. First, the event brought together RTP grant applicants (who themselves represent a wide cross-section of Nevada's outdoor recreation community) as they made proposals to the RTP committee. Second, the event draws members of the general public who maintain an interest in particular local projects. Third, the RTP committee itself was invited to participate in the workshop.

This ad hoc committee is charged with scoring proposals and making recommendations for the distribution of RTP grant funds each year. The committee is made up of a representative cross-section of outdoor communities. It is designed to provide (for the RTP program) the same level of representation that NDSP had hoped to achieve with multiple community meetings. The committee involved with this workshop included members who could knowledgeably speak about pursuits as varied as hiking, biking, OHV, equestrian, outdoor education, and wildlife conservation, as well as disabled and youth communities. The committee represents all geographic areas of the State.

Held on July 27, 2016, the workshop was attended by all the parties noted above: members of the general public, RTP applicants, and the RTP committee. The workshop began with an introduction to the LWCF

⁶⁸ Note also that NDSP staff implemented the document survey (described earlier in this section) in part to account for the reduced scope of community meetings. The documents consulted for the survey (master plans, open space strategy papers, etc.) were themselves the products of extended community engagements on the part of counties, municipalities, agencies, and more. Thus, while our own SCORP development process could not emphasize community meetings, our data collection identified the goals and priorities developed from numerous community engagements occurring throughout Nevada, over the past several years.

program and the role of the SCORP within that context. What followed was several hours of discussion and fruitful dialog. The following is a brief summary of comments, thoughts, and ideas from the meeting:

- Water trails: seem to be popular where they are present, need to develop more
- ADA accessibility demands are greater than supply
- Connecting urban locales to trail systems is difficult:
 - Right-of-way/access
 - In Las Vegas/Henderson, locals tend to be wary of trail proposals at first, then see advantages in neighboring communities – pendulum quickly swings to high demand
- In Las Vegas, recreation deserts are largely known – not referred-to that way, but the data is present
- OHV trails are not well-connected to urban or suburban locations – many places require driving on streets. Right-of-way and directed access needed...integration of the urban ring
- NV OHV commission is currently producing a report which aims to summarize issues, numbers, etc.
- For many users, in many locations, access is intermittent (seasonal, etc.) – need consistent, perennial access
- Properly designed facilities and education are primary element of desert conservation – careful attention to maps, restrooms, signage, trash
- Out rec is going niche (geocache, disc golf, fat bikes, land-sailing)...a flourishing of “small” activities
 - Some of these (e.g. fat bikes) are bringing users across multiple seasons
 - ID areas of current/potential use
- Many people go to areas for which there are maps (paper & digital) – be aware that marketing (and merely publishing) has big effect upon on-the-ground patterns/observations
- Facilitated access: use of ambassadors (outdoor concierge?) to assist public in meeting their recreation goals/having best time possible
- Grassroots trail map is needed (statewide one-source)
- Maintenance of existing infrastructure is critical statewide
- Volunteer/non-profits doing more than ever for agencies – how to support & grow these groups:
 - Facilitate communication between them....especially OHV groups
 - Partnerships, shared projects, etc.
 - Approach them within existing social networks...which may not be “outdoor” in identity – e.g. church groups, neighborhood associations, veterans groups consider a “State Outdoor Recreation Official” or at least have existing staff try to do it
 - but remember: Feds can’t be messenger in many places within Nevada – utilize grassroots ambassadors
- Integrate with private-sector “community participation” requirements – utilize employee community service for out rec projects
 - Also integrate with schools
- Social media: not always a source of accurate info – how to combat mis-information
- Climate change: creates “migrating recreation seasons” (e.g., hikers/riders in January)...this leads to different/non-traditional use patterns (e.g. skiers on less snow/acreage...density; trails being utilized more & longer...singletrack wearing out faster)
- Goal 5: Conserve Water & Habitat
 - Need education to public & experts/officials...need to “bake in” these issues to each project
 - “Bake-in” public input – make sure grantees have factored the public to some degree
- High pressure areas: wild-urban interfaces (WUI) as focus area

- User conflicts: in NV, this often comes down to all users vs. shooters on public lands...where are the hotspots...how to design, sign, direct flows of traffic
- Outdoor rec education takes a generation: see of anti-smoking campaigns: kids hear it, tell their parents, etc.
- As NV population grows in urban areas, the rural areas will:
 - Get inundated with recreation traffic
 - Then see exurban migration
 - Which may put further pressure on previously-remote locales

Online Survey

An online survey of state residents was the primary mechanism for generating data specific to Nevada. Chronologically, the public opinion survey came after both the research survey and RTP committee workshop. This was by design. The research survey was meant to establish broad context with regards to outdoor recreation goals, both nationally and locally. The RTP committee workshop solicited observations specific to Nevada from highly informed outdoor recreation professionals and citizens. Both of those processes helped to clarify and refine survey questions, allowing a two-person SCORP team to efficiently create and process useable data.

NDSP chose to implement the survey through Survey Monkey, a platform found to be flexible, easy to learn, and carrying broad name recognition and trust. As noted earlier within this appendix, there has been little regular research on Nevada's outdoor recreation patterns. Because of this, the SCORP survey was designed to go beyond the simple ranking of outdoor recreation goals and the listing of favorite activities (although these topics were included).

Four surveys were designed and linked:

- A recreation provider survey
 - For those who work in the outdoor recreation field; this included professionals in the public and private sectors, as well as volunteers who held management or leadership positions in outdoor-oriented non-profit or community groups.
- An adult citizen survey
 - For Nevada residents and visitors who did not work in the outdoor recreation field. Note: outdoor recreation professionals were given the option to complete the citizen survey, recognizing that professional providers engage the outdoors in multiple spheres, both professionally and as private citizens.
- A youth survey
 - This was not completed by youth themselves, but by parents/guardians who had children under the age of 18. This survey was offered as an option, at the end of the adult citizen survey.
- Demographic information
 - All respondents were asked to complete general information regarding age, gender, income, and other attributes.

In final form, the survey contained 59 questions. It would typically take between 5 and 15 minutes to complete, depending on which sections a respondent chose to engage. For example, an adult without children, who was not a professional recreation provider, would only complete the adult citizen survey and demographic section. At the other extreme, a professional provider who had children at home, could elect to complete all four elements.

Distribution was implemented via three mechanisms. First, a press release was issued by the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (under which NDSP operates). Second, a highly visible link to the survey was provided at the top of the NDSP homepage (“We want to hear from you! Click here to let us know about your outdoor recreation ideas!”). Third, email announcements were sent out, via multiple NDSP distribution lists.

The survey was active from August 16th through September 5th, 2016 (21 days/3 weeks). 317 responses were captured in total. This was a significantly higher response volume than previous Nevada SCORP surveys.⁶⁹

Judging from captured demographic data, the typical respondent was a 45-54 year old white female college graduate. The typical respondent had lived at their current address for more than five years, and had a household income of \$50,000 - \$74,999 per year.

The Provider Survey was completed by an outdoor professional who typically had completed college and been in their current position for over ten years. In fact, the overwhelming majority of professional respondents (nearly 77%) had been in outdoor recreation for ten years or more.

The survey was not designed to be representative of the State as whole. Given time and staffing limitations, the focus was upon outdoor recreation professionals and members of diverse, but organized, user groups. Respondents were essentially outdoor “power users” who engage the outdoors more than average and generally have a greater impact upon outdoor trends; whether that be through product purchases, volunteerism, or advocacy. This strategy is analogous to – and partly informed by – the leveraging of cultural influencers by marketing and advertising firms across various industries.⁷⁰

While valuable, this approach resulted in a particular instance of “coverage bias” in which underserved communities in Nevada were under-represented. This was addressed by modifying the final ranking of priorities within the SCORP and OPSP. Please refer to the SCORP (page 28) for more detailed information on these adjustments.

Survey distribution was wide, with respondents coming from all areas of the State and representing a wide range of activities and interests. As a result of this focus on highly-engaged outdoor users, we argue that the survey results, while not necessarily representative, are certainly suggestive of real trends and patterns within the State.

⁶⁹ NDSP staff, personal communication.

⁷⁰ Kyle Wong, “The Explosive Growth of Influencer Marketing and What It Means For You”, *Forbes.com*, September 10, 2014.

From this survey process – and the SCORP development process generally – the NDSP staff has generated numerous strategies for improving the process further. Most importantly, staff will be working to engage Nevada residents more regularly. While this edition of the Nevada SCORP included more public participation than previous versions, NDSP staff believe that additional participation will only improve this document in the future. Through additional online surveys and (more importantly) regular community engagement meetings, it is hoped that Nevada’s relationship to the outdoors can be closely and accurately tracked. To this end, staff aims to develop a series of workshops and travelling presentations that can capture citizens’ thoughts and ideas on a regular basis. With these and other structures in place, the next Nevada SCORP might go beyond a general outline, and begin to uncover fundamental explanations for how and why our State goes about its outdoor recreation.

APPENDIX B

Nevada Open Project Selection Process

Nevada

Open Project Selection Process

2016



Testing the Ash Canyon Trail (Carson City) for accessibility, via MTB wheelchair

Nevada Division of State Parks
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



The policy of the Nevada Division of State Parks is to fully comply with the intent of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI provides that no person in the United States shall, on grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

The preparation of this plan was financed in part through administration funds from the Recreational Trails Program in partnership with the Federal Highway Transportation Administration.

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Introduction

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act was established in 1964 in order to provide recreational opportunities for America's communities. The intent was to provide a consistent source of funding for the development of local parks, playgrounds, and other recreational spaces. The fund does not use any taxpayer dollars; rather, it utilizes earnings from offshore oil and gas leases to fund local recreation projects.

The fund is currently authorized through September 30, 2018.

In Nevada, the Division of State Parks (NDSP) is responsible for administering the LWCF. The administration of Nevada's program is the focus of this document. While every state is given some flexibility in the implementation of its LWCF program, the Nevada program does adhere to the requirements outlined in the LWCF Federal Financial Assistance Manual.⁷¹

Overview

In order to remain eligible for LWCF funds, states must maintain several documents: an approved Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)⁷², Statewide Wetlands Plan (SWP)⁷³, and Open Project Selection Process (OPSP).

The OPSP is meant to perform two essential functions:

1. Establish a public notification process, provide LWCF application assistance, and implement grant review systems that assure equitable opportunities for participation in grant funding by all potentially eligible applicants;
2. Provide objective criteria and standards for project selection that are explicitly based on each State's priority needs for land acquisition and outdoor recreation development as identified in the SCORP.

The LWCF program is overseen by Nevada's LWCF State Liaison Officer (SLO). The current SLO is Eric Johnson (NDSP Administrator). The current Assistant State Liaison Officer (ASLO) is Janice Keillor, Parks and Recreation Program Manager.

The SLO and NDSP staff perform a detailed review of each project submitted. The criteria for review were developed by NDSP, and are explained in detail below. As permitted by LWCF regulations, NDSP may itself apply for LWCF funding, however, these applications (referred to as "State" projects) are processed independently from and do not compete with "local" projects (see next page for more details on this particular aspect of the program).

⁷¹ National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program, *Federal Financial Assistance Manual*, Volume 69 (October 1, 2008), https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/upload/lwcf_manual.pdf.

⁷² Nevada Division of State Parks, *Nevada State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan: 2016-2021* (2016).

⁷³ Ed Skudlarek, editor, *Nevada Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan: Technical Review Draft* (Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 2006), <http://www.heritage.nv.gov/node/173>.

Program Elements

Authority

The LWCF Grant Manual states that: “To be eligible for assistance under the LWCF Act, the Governor of each State shall designate in writing an official who has the authority to represent and act for the State as the State Liaison Officer (SLO)...” This position “...shall have authority and responsibility to accept and to administer funds paid for approved projects.”⁷⁴

To achieve this, Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 407.205 permits the Administrator of NDSP to accept, administer, and disburse Federal grant monies for the planning, acquisition, or development of outdoor recreation projects. NRS 407.207 allows NDSP to apply for Federal funds for any outdoor recreation programs.

Public Input

The OPSP is developed directly from the SCORP. The latter document was developed through a combination of systematic research and public opinion survey. In addition, a community workshop was held and previous user surveys were re-analyzed. As a result, the current OPSP is built upon more data than previous versions. Plans for the next editions of the both the SCORP and OPSP include even more public involvement.

Funding Cycles

Nevada's LWCF grants are offered bi-annually. Each cycle begins with the Secretary of the Interior's notice of apportionment. This notification identifies the amount of funds which will be made available to Nevada for that year.

In the past, there have been occasional instances of underfunding. In these cases, the amount of LWCF funds apportioned to the states is so small that effective projects cannot be fully funded. Under such circumstances, cycles may be altered by the SLO. In other words, while biennial grant cycles are the goal, it is funding amounts that ultimately determine grant cycles.

Nevada's LWCF program will strive to maintain consistency with the grant cycle. The specific timeline for each cycle will be presented in the official grant announcement distributed by the NDSP.

Local and State Project Funding

In Nevada, LWCF monies are divided into two distinct funding pools. Each year (or cycle) funds are assigned for both “local” projects and “state” projects. Local funds are those for which political entities and subdivisions apply. State projects are undertaken by NDSP. The particular distribution of funds is established by the SLO and is usually a 50-50 split (i.e., 50% of LWCF funds are utilized by NDSP and 50% are opened for local project competition). While this distribution will remain as the standard in Nevada, there are exceptions permitted by the LWCF Act:

⁷⁴ NPS, *Federal Financial Assistance Manual*.

- The SLO may retain a portion of funds to cover administrative costs;
- The SLO retains the right to assign 100% of an LWCF apportionment to the NDSP (i.e., no local applications will be accepted for a cycle). If this were to occur, the decision would be based upon particular state recreation priorities and NDSP would inform potential applicants through its standard public notification channels (see next section);
- Occasionally, a cycle will see a limited number of local applicants. In these instances, there are not enough applications to utilize all of the funding designated for local projects. When this occurs, NDSP reserves the right to utilize un-used local funds for state projects.

When projects are cancelled, closed, or completed, any remaining funds are assigned to a Special Reapportionment Account (SRA). These funds may be used by NDSP or put towards local projects after meeting specific reporting requirements, as defined by the Department of the Interior. For example: NDSP may utilize SRA funds only if all of its entire regular apportionment of LWCF funds have been obligated for that year.

SRAs are available to NDSP year round for additional projects and amendments, but not to political subdivisions unless NDSP has no projects scheduled. At the discretion of the SLO, funds may be made available to political subdivisions as described in the Amendments section below.

State projects (those LWCF funds set aside for NDSP projects) must demonstrate their alignment with the recreational goals identified in the SCORP, just as local applicants do. For these projects, the NDSP Chief of Planning and Development, in consultation with the Deputy Administrator, will develop and submit project proposals. Being in-house NDSP projects, final approval does not come from NDSP staff or even the SLO. Instead, these projects must get legislative approval and, ultimately, final authorization from the NPS.

Public Notification

NDSP informs all potential LWCF applicants of the funding opportunities in the coming grant cycle. NDSP staff maintains a comprehensive mailing list of past applicants, potential applicants, and other state and local organizations that can distribute information about the program.

The LWCF announcement will include:

- the areas and facilities eligible for funding;
- the amount of funds available and the due date;
- a statement of objectives for the program;
- an explanation of the OPSP;
- application instructions (including the application itself and guidance documents)

Priority Rating System

All LWCF applications are subject to a scoring system. The system is points-based and provides for the fair evaluation of proposals in terms of project need, project quality, alignment with SCORP goals, and applicant history.

These aspects of the application are weighted. A project's alignment with SCORP priorities is the most important element of the rating system. For full details, please refer to "Selection Criteria" on page 5.

Technical Assistance

NDSP provides assistance to potential applicants regarding project formulation, proposal preparation, understanding of criteria, and general grant management. Site visits and consultation meetings are encouraged and should be scheduled with NDSP staff far in advance of the application due date.

Amendments

While successful projects are planned properly from the start, LWCF undertakings are nevertheless complex and sometimes require amendment in order to complete a project as envisioned. The process of amending an LWCF project requires close coordination between the applicant, NDSP, and NPS.

Cost increases of up to 30% will be at the discretion of the SLO, dependent on justification and subject to available funds. All cost increases more than 30% must compete in the next available OPSP. No scope changes shall be implemented on an active LWCF project without advance written NPS approval.

If SRA or other allocation funds are available, project funding could be increased without change to the original Federal percentage of the project. These funding amendments cannot exceed 30% of the original project cost.

Open Project Selection Process

The process of selecting local grantees includes three phases: Screening, Evaluation, and Recommendation.

Phase 1: Screening

This initial phase serves to assess a project's eligibility. The sole factor under consideration is the presence or absence of various required elements. In short, an eligible project application must include the following:

- Both the applicant and project must meet the eligibility requirements of the most current National Park Service LWCF Manual.⁷⁵
- Applications must be complete and submitted by the deadline.
- Adequate control and tenure of lands must be established, including the project site as well as lands within the 6(f) (3) boundary. Control and tenure may be demonstrated by:
 - fee simple ownership of all project lands without encumbrances;
 - a lease from the Federal government with a remaining term of 25 years or more;
 - applicants may also have partial ownership (e.g., conservation easement).
 - If control and tenure cannot be established, a deed restriction may be required.

⁷⁵ NPS, *Federal Financial Assistance Manual*.

Phase 2: Evaluation

Projects found to include all required elements will be scored and ranked by the LWCF committee. Committee members will be identified by NDSP staff and shall include citizens with an interest and/or experience in outdoor recreation. As noted above, scoring and ranking are carefully defined by the scoring criteria described in the next section (Selection Criteria). The total score awarded to each project will determine the overall rankings. Projects with the highest scores will be the first projects recommended for funding.

The amount of LWCF funds available will play a role in the projects that get funded. As funds are committed to the highest-ranking projects, the available LWCF funds decrease. At some point, available funds will drop below the requested amount on a given application. At that point, NDSP and the applicant will work to adapt the project to available funds.

Also note: each project must meet Federal legal requirements as they pertain to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and other relevant laws (for a complete list, please refer to the LWCF Manual⁷⁶). In order to meet these requirements, the NDSP will work diligently with the applicant through all phases of compliance. However, the NDSP does not guarantee compliance in any way: final responsibility for compliance ultimately rests with the applicant.

Phase 3: Recommendations to the State Liaison Officer (SLO)

After completing Phases 1 and 2, NDSP staff will submit a summary of all project materials to the SLO for approval. Materials are then forwarded to the National Park Service. In addition, binding documents are signed between the State of Nevada and each grantee.

⁷⁶ NPS, *Federal Financial Assistance Manual*.

LWCF Grant Selection Criteria

This section describes the criteria for scoring LWCF projects in Nevada. Four general areas are represented: project need, project quality, alignment with SCORP priorities, and applicant history.

Project Need

2 criteria, maximum possible score of 7 points

Applicants must clearly explain how their project would fulfill an outdoor recreation need in Nevada. Specifically, applicants are prompted to describe the specific need, explain how their project provides a solution, and demonstrate how conditions would be improved, upon completion of the project. The specific criteria are:

Inclusion in Current Development Plans

Is the proposed project identified in a finalized, active community planning document? Such documents may include (but are not limited to): municipal master plans, open space plans, economic reports, or other studies commissioned by public entities.

Applicant will provide:

Narrative description of the project's role in current, accepted community development plans.
Applicant may include supporting documents as deemed appropriate.

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | Project is specifically identified as a priority within an existing plan |
| 3 | General project type is identified as a priority |
| 2 | Project not mentioned in a plan, but compelling justification is provided |
| 1 | Project not mentioned, nor is project fully justified, given other community priorities |

Impact on Recreational Opportunities

How will the proposed project expand the recreational options available to a community? Projects must strive to either bring new recreation options to an area or population or improve upon existing facilities such that new areas or populations can engage them. This includes American with Disabilities Act (ADA) retrofits, as well as any other elements that improve accessibility for underserved populations.

Applicant will provide:

Narrative description of a project's ability to enhance recreation options for an underserved area or population. Applicant may include supporting documents as deemed appropriate.

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 | Project introduces an entirely new opportunity to an area or population |
| 2 | Project improves an existing opportunity so that new areas or populations are accommodated |
| 1 | Project improves an existing opportunity, but does not expand its impact |

Project Quality

5 criteria, maximum possible score of 16 points

While it is important to establish the need for a project, it is also necessary to determine the ability of any specific proposal to fulfill that need. This section assesses an applicant's particular strategy for accomplishing their stated goals. The specific criteria are:

Project Readiness (logistics)

Is the project "shovel-ready"? Projects need not be completely ready to go, but a clear schedule must be established, logistics must be addressed, and contingencies planned for. Note: this criterion also considers environmental (NEPA) and cultural (NHPA/Section 106) compliance.

Applicant will provide:

- Documentation which confirms project schedules, logistical strategies, and contingencies.
- For NEPA compliance, applicant must provide one of the following documents: *Record of Decision*, *Finding of No Significant Impact*, or *Categorical Exclusion*.
- For NHPA compliance, applicant must provide evidence of compliance with the Finding of Effect, provided by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Project construction will begin immediately |
| 2 | Project construction will begin within six months |
| 1 | Project construction will begin within one year |

Partnerships

Does the applicant have commitments from partners who will move the project forward? Letters of support will not suffice. This criterion assesses the level of cooperation between the applicant and those who have committed to functional roles in the project. Partnerships can be established for management, funding, volunteered labor, sponsorships, donations, underserved community engagement, and other aspects of a project.

Applicant will provide:

Narrative description of how project partners will cooperate to achieve project goals, as well as evidence that the relationship(s) are formalized or otherwise confirmed (e.g., contract, memorandum of understanding/agreement, letter of commitment, or other signed documentation).

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Applicant will complete project with two or more partners |
| 2 | Applicant will complete project with one partner |
| 1 | Applicant will complete project without partners |

Public Involvement

Was the public involved in the development of the project and its goals? Every project must give the public an opportunity to convey their perspectives. In particular, underserved communities must be identified and engaged. Public involvement may include (but is not limited to): workshops, public meetings, surveys, and letters of endorsement from community groups.

Applicant will provide:

Documentary evidence of both the scope and substance of public involvement (e.g., meeting notes, survey results, letters of endorsement). Applicant must specifically describe how they addressed:

- the engagement of underserved populations, and
- concerns raised by the public, in regards to the project.

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Clear evidence of public involvement and comprehensive attention to public concerns |
| 2 | Public involvement was solicited, but concerns not addressed |
| 1 | Public involvement not solicited or otherwise not appropriate for project scale or impact |

Innovation and Best Practices

Does the project implement new and/or broadly accepted methods? Innovations need not be completely new to an industry or sector, but might be new to Nevada or a particular community. Creative solutions can be applied to any aspect of the project: planning, design, construction, funding, partnerships, underserved community engagement, etc. Best practices should be utilized in all aspects of the project.

Applicant will provide:

Narrative description of innovative solutions and/or the degree to which current best practice is being followed across all aspects of the project. Applicant may include supporting documents as deemed appropriate.

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Project utilizes innovative solutions and best practices in all aspects of the project |
| 2 | Project utilizes innovative solutions and best practices in some aspects of the project |
| 1 | Project does not utilize innovative solutions or best practices |

Budget

Are cost estimates appropriate for the work proposed? In addition, is the projected match available and/or secured? Applicants often assume that lean budgets are preferred. However, budgets must be realistic and designed to avoid future delays or project amendments. Matching funds must be secured by the time applications are submitted, so that they are a settled/confirmed element of the budget.

Applicant will provide:

Documentation of cost estimates and a narrative rationale for particular budgetary choices, as the applicant deems necessary. The status of matching funds must be documented with evidence that the arrangement is confirmed or otherwise secure (e.g., contract, memorandum of understanding/agreement, letter of commitment, or other signed documentation).

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | Cost estimates are realistic and match is secured |
| 3 | Match is secured, but cost estimates are not realistic |
| 2 | Cost estimates are realistic, but match is not secured |
| 1 | Match is not secured, nor are cost estimates realistic |

Alignment with SCORP goals

7 criteria, maximum possible score of 50 points

In order to receive LWCF funds, every state must develop a *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP). This report requires updating every five years and provides a means to incorporate public input, current research data, and best practices for recreation planning. Most importantly, the SCORP must include outdoor recreation goals (priorities) that will serve as the basis for scoring LWCF grants, via the OPSP.

The degree to which a project aligns with SCORP priorities is the most important element of the scoring process (i.e., this section is worth more points than any other section).

Applicants will provide:

Narrative explanation of how the project fulfills the intent of each SCORP priority. Applicants must describe their engagement with underserved populations where applicable. A detailed explanation of these priorities may be found within the current SCORP.⁷⁷ Nevada's current outdoor recreation priorities are:

- Priority 1: Maintenance and/or rehabilitation of existing facilities
- Priority 2: Ensure safety
- Priority 3: Connectivity between trails, facilities, and other locations
- Priority 4: Engage youth
- Priority 5: Develop new facilities
- Priority 6 (tie): Integrate with economic goals
- Priority 6 (tie): Conserve water and habitat

Scoring Rubric

Nevada's outdoor recreation priorities are weighted to reflect their importance as described in the SCORP.⁷⁸ Each narrative response will be rated along a scale, with zero representing "no alignment" with a particular priority and the highest possible score representing "significant or complete alignment" with a particular priority. NDSP reviewers may rate a response anywhere within its weighted range, in order to assess the relative degree to which a project aligns with a priority.

	Significant alignment	Moderate alignment	No alignment
Priority 1	10	from 9 down to 1 point	0
Priority 2	9	from 8 down to 1 point	0
Priority 3	8	from 7 down to 1 point	0
Priority 4	7	from 6 down to 1 point	0
Priority 5	6	from 5 down to 1 point	0
Priority 6 (tie)	5	from 4 down to 1 point	0
Priority 6 (tie)	5	from 4 down to 1 point	0

⁷⁷ Nevada Division of State Parks, *Nevada Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2016 – 2021*.

⁷⁸ NDSP, *SCORP 2016-2021*, page 28.

Applicant History

3 criteria, maximum possible score of 9 points

In addition to explaining the fundamental need for a project, justifying the particular plan for meeting that need, and detailing a project's fulfillment of SCORP priorities, applicants must be able to demonstrate a successful management record. The specific criteria are:

Grant Management History

What are the applicant's experiences with grant management? A general record of successful grant oversight is necessary. Previous experience with LWCF grants is preferred, but not required.

Applicant will provide:

Narrative description of grant management experience, in order to establish an adequate sense of the applicant's capability. The description need not include every grant project managed by an entity. It should emphasize the grant management experiences of current personnel who will be involved with the project under consideration. Please note: this description must include not only successful instances of grant management, but also the challenges faced by the applicant, and their response to project adversity.

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 | Applicant demonstrates consistent success in management of LWCF grants |
| 2 | Applicant has not managed LWCF grants, but demonstrates consistent success in management of other grant projects |
| 1 | Applicant demonstrates inconsistent management of grants (LWCF or otherwise) |

additional Applicant History criteria on next page

Project Management History

How was the applicant's performance (beyond grant management) as assessed by auditors or other institutional reviewers? Per CFR 200.205, applicants may be assessed upon their financial stability, quality of management systems, history of performance, reports and findings from audits, and their overall ability to implement any necessary requirements of an LWCF project.⁷⁹

Applicant will provide:

Summaries of audits, institutional reviews, or other independent assessments related to organizational management and the overall institutional ability to consistently complete stated objectives. Applicant should include their record of engaging with underserved populations as well. A narrative explanation may be included with any documents, as the applicant deems appropriate.

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 | Consistently positive audit findings for the last seven (7) years |
| 2 | Inconsistent audit findings for the last seven (7) years |
| 1 | Consistently problematic audit findings for the last seven (7) years |

Maintenance Capacity

Does the applicant have the capability to perpetually maintain the facility once the project is complete? All property acquired or developed with LWCF assistance must be maintained perpetually in public outdoor recreation use (per the National Park Service). In general, past results are not a reliable indicator of future performance. Applicants must emphasize the planning strategies that will ensure perpetual use going forward.

Applicant will provide:

Evidence of their institutional ability to maintain projects over the long term, from project completion forward. Documentation may include, but is not limited to: operations & maintenance plans, programmatic agreements, memoranda of understanding/agreement, or charters.

Scoring Rubric

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 | Perpetual maintenance is very likely |
| 2 | Perpetual maintenance is somewhat likely |
| 1 | Perpetual maintenance is not likely |

⁷⁹ U.S. Government Publishing Office, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200, Subpart C, 200.205: Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

Summary

Applicants are encouraged to do each of the following, prior to starting an LWCF grant application:

- Review the *LWCF Grant Manual*. This document will provide detailed information about the entire LWCF grant program, from the initial planning of new projects to the long-term maintenance of past projects. The grant manual is available on the NDSP website or by contacting NDSP staff (contact information below)
- Review the *Nevada Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*. Special attention should be paid to Part Three, which describes current outdoor recreation priorities. The SCORP is available on the NDSP website or by contacting staff.
- Review the current LWCF grant cycle announcement. In the months before a new grant cycle is to begin, NDSP will issue an announcement confirming available funds, deadlines, and any modifications to the program that might vary from the grant manual.

Most importantly, potential applicants are urged to contact NDSP staff during the earliest stages of planning. Staff can help assess whether an LWCF grant is a good option for a project and, if a grant is pursued, help to develop application strategies.

For more information, please contact:

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APPENDIX C

Nevada Priority Wetlands Inventory

Nevada Priority Wetlands Inventory (2007)

By regulation, each SCORP "...must contain or reference a wetlands priority component consistent with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. At a minimum, the wetlands priority component must:

- 1) Be consistent with the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- 2) Provide evidence of consultation with the state agency responsible for fish and wildlife resources;
- 3) Contain a listing of those wetland types which should receive priority for acquisition, and;
- 4) Consider outdoor recreation opportunities associated with its wetlands resources for meeting the State's public outdoor recreation needs.

In 2006, Nevada completed a technical review draft of just such a document: the *Nevada Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan*.⁸⁰ The strategies contained in that document remain current and have been considered in the development of this SCORP and the OPSP.

The *Wetlands Priority* remains a critical component of recreation planning in Nevada. Given the predominance of arid environments within the state, wetlands are valued at a premium and considered a match for conversions.

⁸⁰ Ed Skudlarek, editor, *Nevada Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan: Technical Review Draft* (Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 2006), <http://www.heritage.nv.gov/node/173>.