

**Recreation and Visitor Services Planning Decision Guidance**  
(Replaces H-1601-1 – Appendix C for Recreation and Visitor Services)

**Land Use Plan Decisions.** Land use plan (LUP) decisions for recreation and visitor services (R&VS) include the:

1. Designation of recreation management areas (RMAs).
2. Establishment of R&VS objectives for each RMA.
3. Identification of LUP-level supporting management actions and allowable uses for each RMA.

**Recreation Management Areas (RMA).** The RMAs are classified as either special recreation management areas (SRMA) or extensive recreation management areas (ERMA). The RMAs are land units where Recreation and Visitor Services (R&VS) objectives are recognized as a primary resource management consideration and specific management is required to protect the recreation opportunities. The RMA designation is based on: recreation demand and issues, recreation setting characteristics, resolving use/user conflicts, compatibility with other resource uses, and resource protection needs.

**1. Designation of Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA).**

*Definition.* The SRMAs are administrative units where the existing or proposed recreation opportunities and recreation setting characteristics are recognized for their unique value, importance and/or distinctiveness, especially as compared to other areas used for recreation.

*Management Focus.* The SRMAs are managed to protect and enhance a targeted set of activities, experiences, benefits, and desired recreation setting characteristics. The SRMAs may be subdivided into recreation management zones (RMZ) to further delineate specific recreation opportunities. Within SRMAs, R&VS management is recognized as the predominant LUP focus, where specific recreation opportunities and recreation setting characteristics are managed and protected on a long-term basis.

*Requirements.* The SRMAs/RMZs must have measurable outcome-focused objectives. Supporting management actions and allowable use decisions are required to: 1) sustain or enhance recreation objectives, 2) protect the desired recreation setting characteristics, and 3) constrain uses, including non-compatible recreation activities that are detrimental to meeting recreation or other critical resource objectives (e.g. cultural or threatened and endangered species).

**A. Establish SRMA/RMZ Objectives.**

The SRMA/RMZ objectives must define the specific recreation opportunities (i.e. activities, experiences, and benefits derived from those experiences) which become the focus of R&VS management.

**B. Identify Land Use Plan-level Management Action and Allowable Use Decisions for SRMAs/RMZs.**

Identify necessary management action and allowable use decisions for R&VS and other programs to achieve SRMA/RMZ objectives.

- i. Within the R&VS Program. Identify decisions necessary to:
  - Facilitate the targeted recreation opportunities.
  - Maintain or enhance the desired physical, social, and operational recreation setting characteristics.
  - Address visitor health and safety, resource protection, and use and user conflicts (e.g. areas closed to target shooting, camping limits).
  - Address the type(s), activities and locations where special recreation permits would be issued, or not issued.
  
- ii. Within Other Programs. Establish terms, conditions, or special considerations for other resource programs necessary to achieve the SRMA/RMZ objective(s) (e.g. stipulations on mineral or other development, designations for all types and modes of travel, areas available for livestock grazing, or visual resource management classes). All actions must conform to applicable program policy, regulations, and valid existing rights.

## **2. Designation of Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMA).**

*Definition.* The ERMAs are administrative units that require specific management consideration in order to address recreation use, demand or R&VS program investments.

*Management Focus.* The ERMAs are managed to support and sustain the principal recreation activities and the associated qualities and conditions of the ERMA. Management of ERMA areas is commensurate with the management of other resources and resource uses.

*Requirements.* The ERMAs must have measurable objectives. Supporting management actions and allowable use decisions must facilitate the visitors' ability to participate in outdoor recreation activities and protect the associated qualities and conditions. Non-compatible uses, including some recreation activities, may be restricted or constrained to achieve interdisciplinary objectives.

### **A. Establish ERMA Objectives.**

The ERMA objectives must define the recreation activities and the associated qualities and conditions which become the focus for R&VS management.

### **B. Identify Management Action and Allowable Use Decisions for ERMAs**

Identify management action and allowable use decisions for R&VS and other programs to achieve ERMA objectives. Ensure all decisions are compatible with other resource objectives.

- i. Within the R&VS Program. Identify decisions necessary to:

- Facilitate visitor participation in the identified outdoor recreation activities.
  - Maintain particular recreation setting characteristics.
  - Address visitor health and safety, resource protection, and use and user conflicts (e.g. areas closed to target shooting, camping limits).
  - Address the type(s), activities, and locations where special recreation permits would be issued or not issued.
- ii. Within Other Programs: Establish terms, conditions, or special considerations for other resource programs necessary to achieve the ERMA objective (e.g. stipulations on mineral or other development, designations for all types and modes of travel, areas available for livestock grazing, or visual resource management classes). All actions must conform to applicable program policy, regulations and valid existing rights.

### **3. *Public Lands Not Designated as Recreation Management Areas***

*Definition.* All lands not designated as an SRMA or ERMA.

*Management Focus.* Public lands that are not designated as RMAs are managed to meet basic R&VS and resource stewardship needs. Recreation is not emphasized however recreation activities may occur. The R&VS are managed to allow recreation uses that are not in conflict with the primary uses of these lands.

*Requirements.* Management actions and allowable use decisions may still be necessary to address basic R&VS and resource stewardship needs:

- Visitor health and safety.
- Use and user conflicts.
- The type(s), activities and locations where special recreation permits would be issued or not issued.
- Mitigation of recreation impacts on cultural and natural resources.

#### ***Implementation Decisions.***

Implementation decisions allow site specific actions to achieve land use plan decisions (see Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, p. 30-31). If implementation-level decisions are included in the land use planning document to achieve R&VS program objectives, they must have site-specific NEPA analysis (see Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, p. 29-31; NEPA Handbook H-1710-1, Section 6.8) and be clearly distinguished as implementation decisions that are appealable to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. For example, a planning decision to establish designated areas for camping is protestable. Implementation decisions addressing specific site locations, size and amenities are appealable. Making implementation decisions as part of the planning process does not change the administrative remedies or the timing of those remedies.

Implementation decisions include these four categories:

- a) **Management.** Recreation management actions, such as commitment of resources, services to be offered to visitors, and/or the development and provision of facilities (e.g. developed recreation sites, roads and trails, concessions).
- b) **Administration.** Regulatory actions including the implementation of allocation systems, permits, fees, use restrictions, partnership agreements, as well as business plans or fiscal accountability systems, and data management protocols.
- c) **Information and Education.** Information and education actions including maps or brochures, websites, outreach efforts, events, interpretation, environmental education, signing; and other visitor information delivery services.
- d) **Monitoring.** Monitoring of recreation resources and human use including: visitor use and use patterns; recreation caused resource effects or impacts; visitor satisfaction; and effectiveness or attainment of outcomes-focused management objectives, recreation setting characteristics, standards and indicators.

Recreation management areas with complex implementation issues may require a subsequent plan that addresses implementation-level management, administration, information and monitoring actions.

*Notices, Consultations, and Hearings.* No additional specific requirements exist.