

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240
<http://www.blm.gov>

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EMS TRANSMISSION
Instruction Memorandum No. 2018-056
Expires: 09/30/2021

To: All Field Office Officials, State Offices and National Operations Center
Attn: Outdoor Recreation Planners, State Public Affairs Officers

From: Assistant Director, Resources and Planning

Subject: Launching the New Recreation.gov

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) clarifies policy and provides direction to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offices to prepare for and execute the launch of the new, Recreation.gov site on October 1, 2018. Recreation.gov is the official, one-stop source for information about accessing federal recreation opportunities nationwide. It is an important tool for increasing access for youth, veterans, and diverse populations, as specified in Secretarial Order 3356 and other directives. Because there will be no overlap between the cessation of the existing site and the launch of the new web platform and services by Recreation One Stop (RIS)¹, managers and users at all levels must prepare to support and implement the relaunch of Recreation.gov to avoid a break in service. This IM outlines tasks/requirements and general milestones for use with internal audiences.

Policy/Action: This policy affects all BLM offices with recreation management responsibilities, especially those currently utilizing a reservation service (Recreation.gov or other).

A. General Policy

1. Requirement to list appropriate sites on Recreation.gov and maintain the Recreation Information Database. All BLM "developed recreation sites and areas", as defined in 43 CFR 8360.0-5², are required to appear on Recreation.gov, as either general information entered into the Recreation Information Database (RIDB)³ and uploaded to Recreation.gov, or as a reservable facility on Recreation.gov. Information stored in the RIDB and listed on Recreation.gov populates relevant BLM web pages and is publicly available to other web content providers.

2. Requirement to use Recreation.gov for reservations. Field locations wishing to provide public reservation services will use Recreation.gov, except where currently under contract/agreement or via other directive. As contracts/agreements expire or require modification, contract reservation services shall be converted to Recreation.gov. Offices operating in-house/local reservation programs should plan to transition to Recreation.gov if deemed advantageous through cost-benefit analyses, public demand, or other factors. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Washington Office, Assistant Director for Planning and Resources (AD-200) after coordinating with the BLM Agency Program Manager (APM) Peggi Brooks or alternate Kate Yancho.
3. Expanding inventory of BLM reservable sites on Recreation.gov. States and field locations are expected to offer suitable recreation opportunities as reservable inventory on Recreation.gov, as a convenience for the public and to increase efficiency for the government. On an ongoing basis, state offices will coordinate with field staff and the APM to add sites to the reservation system on Recreation.gov, subject to criteria in item B.6 of this IM and other guidance.
4. Use of Electronic Commerce Opportunities (e-commerce). The Recreation and Visitor Services division is working with the National Operations Center and four states (Idaho, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona) in 2018 to conduct pilot projects of several e-commerce platforms, and is coordinating with other federal agencies engaged in similar pilot studies. E-commerce solutions facilitate electronic payment of reserved facilities, electronic check scanning, purchase and display of BLM's Recreation Use Permits, Individual Special Recreation Permits, and provide various, discount passes to many, non-reservable BLM recreation sites.

States and field locations must transition their recreation fee programs (including sales of local agency passes) to one (or more) methods for fee collection and to conduct official business electronically via authorized e-commerce solutions, pending evaluation of the pilot programs. Your Pass Now is a web-based, digital payment program offered by NIC, Inc., a partner of Recreation.gov contractor Booz Allen Hamilton. Your Pass Now will be available as part of Recreation.gov's suite of services after October 1, 2018. Your Pass Now will be piloted at several BLM sites in summer of 2018 and, if beneficial, will be adopted as a preferred, one-stop provider of e-commerce for recreation services. At applicable BLM reservable sites, "point of sale" functionality for field sales via credit cards or cash may also be provided through Recreation.gov.

Mobile e-commerce applications, provided by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, are being piloted at several BLM recreation areas in 2018. The Your Pass Now/Recreation.gov, Treasury and other e-commerce opportunities will be widely available after October 1, 2018, and at the conclusion of pilot program testing. Additional information about these services will be provided by the Recreation and Visitor Services division.

To ensure a unified and consistent customer service platform that is integrated with BLM's Collections and Billing System and other financial and reporting programs, field locations should confer with the Recreation and Visitor Services division and the National Operations Center prior to using these or other e-commerce tools.

5. Costs for Use of Online Reservation and Electronic Payment Services are borne by the customer. All BLM field locations will ensure that any commercial transaction fees charged for use of online reservation and electronic payment services are passed on to the customer, in addition to any recreation use fees charged by the BLM. Transaction fees are line item costs set forth in the signed contract/agreement with the Recreation.gov contractor/e-commerce provider. These transaction fees also cover some of the BLM's share of expenses for supporting R1S contract management. Transaction fees or other costs for use of a reservation system or fee management agreement are not recreation use fees as defined in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (REA). Such fees or costs are not subject to the public involvement processes specified in REA.

B. Preparing to Launch the New Recreation.gov Website

Offices must work with the Recreation and Visitor Services division and the APM to implement the general milestones and program elements listed below. Additional guidance, including detailed instructions and due dates, will be provided to State Recreation leads, Public Affairs leads, and field office points of contact for Recreation.gov. This guidance will be distributed via electronic updates from the APM as they are received from R1S and the Recreation.gov contractor.

1. User Accounts and Role Verification (March – August 2018): Verification of users, roles, and permissions is required for staff that use the Recreation.gov platform for operations and management of the reservation system. This is a critical step to ensure the right people have the right access to this new system. Existing user accounts are being verified informally by the state offices, and will be rolled over into the new R1S system with the appropriate role assigned. The ability to create new user accounts and to review and verify existing accounts will be available to state offices in summer of 2018. Specific instructions will be issued through the APM.
2. Testing (March – June 2018): Three rounds of testing are planned between March and late June, with the objective of identifying and correcting issues or defects prior to live launch of the Recreation.gov website and associated services. Agency personnel may be asked to participate in this testing; supervisors/managers should support staff participation as appropriate.
3. Equipment Installation (March – September 2018):
 - a. New satellite equipment will be available through the new Recreation.gov contract for any suitable location that would like to procure telecommunication services for electronic reservations/payments.

A new HughesNet satellite system provided by Recreation.gov will significantly increase bandwidth and connectivity speed for locations that lack the infrastructure. The cost for satellite equipment and installation must be borne by the requesting office; recreation fee revenues may be applied to cover these costs. Field locations are not required to use the Recreation.gov source for satellite services and may procure local services instead. A cost-benefit analysis should be performed before making decisions on satellite services.

- b. EMV Chip and Pin Credit Card Encryption Devices. All locations that process credit cards for Recreation.gov transactions will need to obtain, install, and use upgraded EMV P2PE (Point to Point Encryption) chip and pin devices in order to process credit card transactions through the new Recreation.gov system. Field units that currently have no credit card transaction devices and that enter credit card information directly into Recreation.gov (via computer keyboard) will be required to enter that information into the EMV P2PE devices instead. EMV P2PE devices must be implemented by field units prior to October 1, 2018, or, for offices that charge fees only at certain times of year, prior to fee collection being needed. Point to Point Encryption is the most secure method of handling and processing credit cards. These devices are necessary to meet U.S. Treasury Department requirements for credit card security.

EMV P2PE devices will be centrally purchased by the new Recreation.gov contractor and either billed to the field location or deducted from existing Recreation.gov fee revenue accounts (additional direction to be provided by the APM). In the spring of 2018, the Recreation.gov contractor will survey BLM field locations and other reservable sites to determine needs for new devices that currently process credit cards.

Payment Card Industry (PCI) Compliance. Each June, offices that accept (or plan to accept) credit cards for payment via onsite computer/terminal will complete an annual attestation for the sponsoring bank. PCI procedures may change under the new contract due to the adoption of the new EMV Chip and Pin devices described above. Affected offices should continue to comply with existing procedures until further notice. Additional instructions will be provided by the APM as information becomes available.

4. Data Validation (April – August 1, 2018): Reservable inventory information for locations currently using Recreation.gov will be imported into the new platform. To reduce the risk of missing/invalid/unverified data:
 - a. Field units must verify website content for reservable recreation sites currently on Recreation.gov. By August 1, 2018, field staff should review existing content and make needed changes. Additional instructions and timeframes for making these edits/additions will be provided as they are

received from the Recreation.gov contractor.

- b. Photos. By June 1, 2018, a minimum of one photo of every reservable individual campsite or other reservable unit must be provided for uploading into Recreation.gov. Images should be collected in accordance with the photo guidance posted on Google Drive at the link [Instructions Rec.gov Photo Collection 2018-02-28](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M2q0gTDy_U5RnfsM6i4v4_kXSeH4AIeza-tlEMoMvA/edit#heading=h.9voyz68gzwgb) (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M2q0gTDy_U5RnfsM6i4v4_kXSeH4AIeza-tlEMoMvA/edit#heading=h.9voyz68gzwgb). Field locations should make every effort to enhance reservation web pages with high-quality photos of facilities and activities available for visitor use, and to ensure these images are accessible to persons with disabilities. Images of amenities, such as picnic shelters, interpretive kiosks, restrooms, water sources, sanitary dump stations, and trailheads/trails may be included.
 - c. Geospatial data needed for mapping most BLM reservable facilities was provided to the new contractor. Field locations will have instructions to verify the data mapping is accurate and to make necessary changes by August 1, 2018.
 - d. Non-reservable recreation site data. Within one year from the date of this IM, field locations are expected to verify and enhance non-reservable site data and images, including access to activities such as hunting, fishing and shooting sports. Data, including geospatial information, photos, links, and narratives for non-reservable recreation sites, will continue to be updated and managed through the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS), and transmitted via Application Program Interface (API) to the RIBD and then to Recreation.gov and BLM.gov websites.
5. Training (August – September 2018): Based on feedback from field users, training modules will be prepared by RIS and available on demand. Training modules will focus on access and use of the new Recreation.gov site. Relevant staff throughout the organization must be proficient in the new system. Training opportunities will be communicated through newsletters, e-mail messages, and other methods.
 6. Moratorium on New Inventory (February – September 2018): Due to contract transition requirements, no new, reservable inventory can be added to Recreation.gov until October 2, 2018. The APM maintains a list of new, reservable inventory. States should continue to send requests to add new reservable inventory to the APM, and should gather the necessary information for these sites in preparation for the onboarding process with the new Recreation.gov contractor. More information about the onboarding process and requirements is forthcoming.

C. Communication

A draft communications plan was prepared for the purpose of internal messaging. This plan focuses on key components and timelines of the IM. The communications plan

and any updates will be posted on the "Recreation.gov for BLM Users Sharepoint Site" (<https://doiportal.doi.net/blm/WO200/250/RecGov/Pages/Overview.aspx>).

Because the new Recreation.gov platform will remain under development beyond October 1, 2018, ongoing plans for communication include the following:

- xRIS Quarterly newsletters for Recreation.gov practitioners and managers
- Frequent email updates from the APM with bulletins and specific instructions
- Updates to the Recreation.gov for BLM Users Sharepoint Site (<https://doiportal.doi.net/blm/WO200/250/RecGov/Pages/Overview.aspx>).
- Training, "Go Live Kits," and phone support provided by RIS and APMs
- BLM Daily articles and news releases

Timeframe: This policy is effective immediately.

Budget Impact: Temporary increases in program costs may occur due to the identified tasks. Implementing this policy is expected to increase fee program revenues to recreation fee (1232) accounts as a result of expanded marketing and greater fee compliance through the use of Recreation.gov and associated programs. Some costs related to additional administration requirements may result, although these costs should be offset by increased efficiencies.

Background: RIS and Recreation.gov began as an e-government initiative in 2003. Recreation.gov now serves as the national, one-stop source for public information, trip planning, and reservations for outdoor recreation on federal lands. A new contract for Recreation.gov was awarded in July 2017 to Booz Allen Hamilton, with a Go-Live date of October 1, 2018. Until then, the existing contractor will provide the current level of service and support under a short-term contract. Some of the many benefits of using Recreation.gov include: online and credit card purchase which reduces cash handling, fee collection costs, and safety concerns for field office staff; point of sale capability for field sales; centralized financial collection and distribution; online reports; compliance with IT security and privacy requirements; round-the-clock online reservation services; dedicated customer service call center and online helpdesk; trip planning and search features; and expanded marketing tools to reach diverse populations and reduce overload during peak use periods. Recreation.gov contract costs primarily covered by the user; oversight, operational costs, and some equipment costs are borne by the Government.

From Fiscal Years 2003 through 2018, the BLM's presence on Recreation.gov has grown from a handful of reservable campsites to 55 reservable campgrounds, picnic areas, group shelters, cabins, tour tickets, and individual, special recreation permits for wilderness hiking and river rafting. The visitor demand for online reservations (and electronic payment) for BLM facilities and services continues to expand. Over 50 BLM recreation sites will be added under the new contract, bringing the total to 105 reservable sites out of approximately 400 existing BLM fee sites. Many more BLM recreation sites have expressed interest in using an electronic fee payment system for both advanced and point of sale payments, and several pilot studies of such systems are underway in 2018. Some of BLM's recreation sites are not suitable for management under a reservation or electronic fee payment system due to

factors such as remoteness, lack of cellular and/or Wi-Fi connectivity, or lack of operational staff. However, many sites are well suited for reservations/electronic payments with ensuing benefits to visitors and the BLM. Field offices should enroll sites in the new system to better serve visitors and to meet the goals of streamlining government and increasing access to youth, veterans and diverse/under-served populations, in accordance with Secretarial Order 3356.

Manual/Handbook Section Affected: This IM alters BLM Handbook H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration, 2014, Chapter 2, Section IV on pages 2-21 and 2-22. The policy of this IM will be incorporated into H-2930-1 when the handbook is next revised.

Coordination: Development of this IM was coordinated among the Recreation and Visitor Services division, the National Conservation Lands division, the Communications Directorate, the Business, Fiscal and Information Resources Management directorate, and the Interagency RIS Program (Rick DeLappe, Program Manager).

Contact: For further information, please contact Peggi Brooks, Recreation.gov Agency Program Manager (APM), 202-912-7254; Kate Yancho, alternate APM, 202-912-7248; or David Ballenger, Recreation Permits and Fees Program Lead, 202-912-7642.

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¹ Recreation One Stop is the Federal interagency program that manages Recreation.gov and the Recreation Information Database (RIDB).

² The definition of “developed recreation sites and areas” in the 43 CFR 8360.0-5 (C): “Developed recreation sites and areas means sites and areas that contain structures or capital improvements primarily used by the public for recreation purposes. Such sites or areas may include such features as: Delineated spaces for parking, camping or boat launching; sanitary facilities; potable water; grills or fire rings; tables; or controlled access”.

³ The Recreation Information Database (RIDB) is a searchable application that provides public access to federal recreation data. The BLM provides recreation data to the RIDB through an Application Program Interface (API) from its Recreation Management Information System (RMIS).