Interagency Initiative: Coordinated by Forest Service

Recreation.gov

2020 Action Plan

Federal Customer Experience

US BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE WITH THE PEOPLE

Who are we?

Recreation.gov is a one-stop shop - a place with all the tools, services and information needed for visitors to dream up their next adventure, plan the details, experience it all first-hand and then share those stories. With roughly 3,600 federal recreation facilities and activities and over 103,000 individual reservable sites across the country visitors will not only find what they need, but more importantly create lasting memories and bring home a story.

To better frame the great activities visitors can discover and explore on Recreation.gov, a sampling of what visitors can do across the Federal lands, waterways, and monuments includes camping, picnicking, hiking, rafting, wildlife viewing, boating, and more.

Reservations, venue details and descriptions on Recreation.gov are brought to you by our 12 Federal Participating Partners, including the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, National Archives & Records Administration, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, Fish and Wildlife Service, US Army Corps of Engineers and US Forest Service.

Camping & Lodging

Tickets & Tours

Permits

Passes
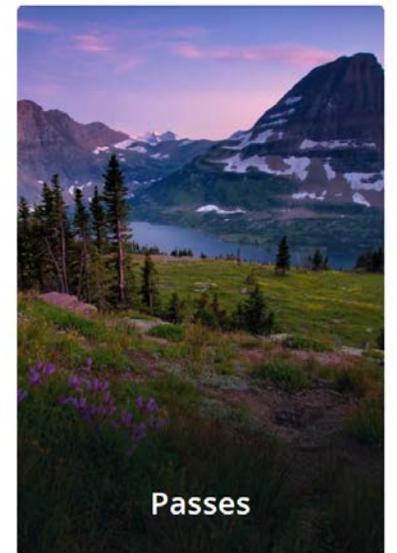
How do we deliver value to the public?

Occasion	→	High-Impact Service	→	Offering
Family travel planner putting together a family vacation, looking for camping reservations in a certain area during a general timeframe.		Visit the Recreation.gov website for trip planning tools and reservation services.		Planning tools to discover campgrounds and trailheads along their route. Other offerings include campsite reservations, tickets to a ranger-led cave tour, and trails nearby for a family hike.
Retirees on a long-distance trip in their Class A motorhome, looking for a nearby campsite offering a full hookup. One of the visitors is in a wheelchair and requires ADA-accessible facilities.		Call the Recreation.gov Contact Center to find a place nearby with availability that can accommodate their vehicle, offer accessible amenities, and provide needed RV-related services.		RV-friendly and accessible campsite reservation, RV-related services and utilities. `
Individual planning to hike Mount Whitney.		Visit the Recreation.gov website to apply for a permit, and learn about the rules and regulations for the experience.		Lottery application for a wilderness permit, important information on what to bring and how to prepare for the hike.
Couple planning honeymoon to Hawaii, wanting to visit the U.S.S. Memorial at Pearl Harbor and see the sunrise at Haleakala Summit.		Visit the Recreation.gov website to learn about the tour options and reserve tickets for both locations.		Tickets and headset rental for Pearl Harbor, ticket to the Haleakala Summit Sunrise.
Family of 4 wanting to attend the lighting of the National Christmas Tree.		Call the Recreation.gov Contact Center to find a campground nearby with availability that can accommodate their vehicle, offer accessible amenities, and provide needed RV-related services.		Event information, lottery entry for tickets to special event.

Where could we improve?

Steps ⟶	1. Before reserving	2. Reservation process	3. After completing the reservation
Customer Steps Name and describe the main steps that a person takes to use the service, left to right, start to finish.	Visit the National Park Service website for Pearl Harbor and for Haleakala Sunrise Summit. Decide to make an advance reservation through Recreation.gov. Click on the Recreation.gov link on the NPS page.	Choose tour of interest. Specify number of people. Choose dates of interest Choose the preferred tour time. Complete the reservation form Agree to "Need to Know" information. Enter the payment information.	Receive and print email confirmation. Go on the tours. Receive an invitation to provide a rating/review of their experience.
Service System Describe the channels, roles, and tools from your agency or partners.	Update availability as tickets are released into the system. Communicate availability in a clear way on that page. Provide detailed instructions on how to make a reservation for these two events.	Clearly present options and availability. Display selections and ensure confirms they read Need-to-Know information. Make the checkout process easy. Display the time left in cart to complete transaction and hold inventory for that amount of time. Provide opportunity to add more time to cart if needed.	Send order confirmation email. Send reservation confirmation email with important Need-to-Know information. Send reminder email as reservation date approaches, again relay important information about their trip. Seven days after the visit, send an invitation email to submit a Rating/Review about their experience.
Pain Points Describe the highest priority problems to solve	Complicated business rules about when tickets are released; challenging to communicate availability in a simple way. Limited availability for certain high-demand events compounds customer frustration and feelings that the system is rigged against them. Availability changes quickly on the day of an on-sale. It's essential to provide accurate, updated information about what is and isn't truly available to reserve.	Buttons are grayed out until you enter certain information. Need to complete form in a specific order. No availability on specified date. Is the email my ticket? What if I need to change or cancel my reservation?	Creating an understanding about reservation cancellations or modifications related to timing and additional fees incurred.

What will we do?

Purpose

Why did your agency undertake this project? What does it hope to achieve, in specific performance indicators, if possible.

What is the problem?

Customers are unclear about when tickets are available to book. As a result, they mistakenly believe the tickets are sold out for a specific date and give up, or they distrust the website, and call the contact Center for clarification.

Desired future state?

Customers can easily see when tickets are available to purchase. If they aren't available, the website displays the day and time to return and try again.

Any measurable indicators and targets?

Higher Net Promoter Score for ticket-purchasers.

Fewer CSAT survey comments about booking window confusion. Fewer comments about unfair booking practices.

Lower volume of calls, emails, and chats about whether tickets are currently available to reserve, and when they will be available.

Approach

Describe the timeline and work plan to achieve that purpose. If this is an ongoing initiative, describe your progress.

Process, methods, and expertise?

Visual design

Interaction design

Usability testing

Customer Experience digital listening

Timeline, stage gates and dates?

3 weeks to iterate on design

2 weeks for usability testing

4 weeks for implementation

2 weeks to monitor customer feedback on new design

Deliverables being produced?

Static mock-ups

Usability test plan and results

Implemented redesign of pages

Resources

Describe the stakeholders involved, financial and human capital dedicated to the work, and any partners contributing to the work.

Who is responsible?

The Booz Allen and R1S teams work together to continually improve the experience and interface for visitors and field managers.

Who is contributing to the project?

Experts from the Booz Allen will assign projects to the customer experience and user interface teams to then work with the developers and the R1S team to propose and implement improvements.

What are we proud of this year?

Service Improvement

Who is the user and what was the problem?

The site managers and hosts at the Red Rocks Canyon National Conservation Area near Las Vegas, Nevada (a Bureau of Land Management site) was using a manual reservation system for their first-come, first-served sites. This process was cumbersome and caused congestion at the entrance station. In addition, many visitors would not check in or even pay a fee.

What did you build? What does it do for the public?

Red Rocks transitioned to Recreation.gov online reservation system allowing visitors to make reservations in advance through their Recreation.gov account. Securing reservations in advance provides assurance that a campsite will be available when the visitor arrives. Site managers and hosts are easily able to verify visitor identification and run reports to determine vacancies. The local managers also reported a 31 percent increase in year-over-year revenue within a few months.

Other solutions considered? And why is your solution better?

The local facility manager can choose a digital solution with Recreation.gov as one of the choices. Use their own home-grown system. Buy an existing platform from a free-market provider. Remain first-come, first-serve only. We've gone through all the security protocols required for government e-commerce systems. Very rigorous process. Not a lot of commercial systems qualify. Ability to procure it – doesn't cost the agency anything to come online with R1S.

Any lessons for other agencies emulating this work?

Our job at R1S is to innovate and provide valuable tools for our agency partners to help with their visitor management service. By listening, responding, and meeting them where they are, we can help them better deliver services that meet the needs and expectations of their visitors.

It is also our job to listen to the visitor and create a reservation and trip planning service that allows them great access and enjoyment of America's public lands and waters.

Capacity Building

Was this a governance, measurement, organizational, customer understanding, service development, or service delivery capability?

Launched Ratings and Review functionality in November 2019, inviting visitors to provide a star rating, enter a comment and provide information about their mobile coverage at locations they reserved through Recreation.gov. For each location, the number of reviews and average rating is displayed, along with the comments submitted by visitors. Site managers can also access all ratings/reviews through a management portal allowing them to see that is going well and problems that need to be addressed.

What is the capability and its goal or purpose?

Ratings and reviews is an expected feature in trip planning and reservation services allowing visitors to provide valuable information about their experiences that also informs others as they make plans for future trips. Field managers also benefit from this feedback with the goals of continually improving the visitor experience.

Any lessons for other agencies emulating this work?

As we continue to improve on this feature, we need to provide the ability for managers to respond to user comments to demonstrate follow up and actions taken as a result of complaints. It will also be helpful to be able to aggregate comments to identify trends.