

Questions and Answers for the Bighorn National Forest Recreation Site Analysis draft five-year program of work

June 15, 2016

What is Recreation Site Analysis?

The Recreation Site Analysis, or RSA, is a comprehensive analysis of the forest's developed recreation sites. Seventy-one recreation sites – campgrounds, picnic grounds, trailheads, rental cabins, interpretive sites, RV dump stations, cross-country ski parking, and rest areas – were inventoried and assessed by the Bighorn's recreation specialists to determine the sites' contributions to the recreation demand, environmental integrity, and the economic vitality of the forest and its communities.

Why did you undertake this analysis? What's the purpose?

The purpose of the RSA is to evaluate how the Bighorn can provide quality and sustainable developed recreation opportunities in the long run given the current and projected constraints on financial and staff resources. Recreation is of vital importance in connecting people to the national forests, so taking a strategic look and developing a strategic plan to guide the Bighorn's future recreation program is essential.

What does the RSA propose?

The product of the RSA is a five-year program of work that recommends and prioritizes developed recreation site investments, maintenance, open seasons, service frequency, upgrades, and other actions (including no change). Proposals aim to reduce operation and maintenance costs, maximize public benefits, and balance social, economic, and environmental needs for each of the Bighorn's developed recreation sites. A summary of recommended actions is on the Bighorn's RSA web page <http://1.usa.gov/1q0TCtI>.

How will public input be integrated into the RSA?

Substantive feedback will help us develop strategies that support community needs and still meet the purpose of the RSA.

How did you analyze the sites?

Recreation specialists rated the sites using criteria based on social, economic, and environmental considerations. Existing and projected visitor demands, resource conditions, program costs, and revenue were all considered in developing the recommendations. The specialists identified strategies to maintain recreation opportunities while reducing operation and maintenance costs in response to projected funding.

The RSA analysis strives to retain the primary recreation opportunity offered at a site, while determining whether all specific facilities or features (toilets, tables, parking, signs, etc.) are critical. The RSA also addresses whether current levels of service and patrol are adequate to maintain sites in a healthy, safe, and functional condition.

What's the difference between operating costs and maintenance costs?

Operating costs include cleaning toilets, picking up trash, patrolling, and other daily duties.

Maintenance costs include repairing doors, reroofing buildings, and grading/graveling parking areas, etc. and are performed more on an annual than daily basis.

What will you do with the recommendations in the analysis?

Some management actions could be implemented after public comment and finalizing the plan of work. It's important to note that a recommendation involving a change that would alter the environment requires further study. Environmental analyses will be conducted for ground-disturbing actions with yet another opportunity for public involvement.

We need your input

To inform and involve you in the future of the Bighorn's developed recreation program, the draft program of work is available for a 30-day public review period.

Written input should be submitted by July 15, 2016 to

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Or emailed to comments-bighorn@fs.fed.us with "RSA" in the subject line.

Where to find information

RSA is featured prominently on the Bighorn's home page. The RSA web page at <http://1.usa.gov/1q0TCtI> includes more information about the RSA process, links to documents, and describes how you can submit input.

Contacts for more information

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