

## 1.2 Integrate public lands more fully and functionally into tourism information

This Strategic Action strengthens Montana's tourism product and marketing efforts.

### Recommended Tactics

#### **MTOT, Regions**

- » Show the location of the public lands on official tourism websites. Highlight iconic locations within those lands (see Strategic Action 1.1.).
- » Make the following information more prominent on official tourism websites: access points to public lands; recreational, natural, historic, cultural, and heritage assets located on public lands; and recreational activities available and allowed on public lands.
- » Link to useful maps produced by public land management agencies and other entities.
- » Link to other *specific* pages of particular value to visitors from the public land agency websites (rather than the agency's home page) or request permission to pull content from them.
- » Share information with each public land management agency that is useful in meeting their own mandates for the promotion of recreation on public lands; for example:
  - use of agency information in tourism promotion and visitor information;
  - research or data regarding public land use by non-resident visitors; and
  - information regarding the Montana Brand pillars and tourism promotion activities.
- » Share with public land management agencies information and insights regarding infrastructure or other visitor needs on the lands they manage.

#### **CVBs, Communities, Tribes, Businesses & Organizations**

- » Make the following information more prominent on official tourism websites: access points to public lands; recreational activities available and allowed on public lands; and recreational, natural, historic, cultural, and heritage assets located on public lands.
- » Work with local governments to develop information regarding city and county parks that could be important recreation assets for non-resident tourism. Provide information to MTOT and Regions for incorporation into tourism websites.
- » Identify high quality local assets for outdoor recreation, such as local bike trails, favorite public sledding hills, and parks with playground equipment or other features attractive to traveling families.

### Indicators of Success

- » Information regarding public lands in each of the six tourism regions is readily available in a usable form on or through MTOT and regional websites.
- » Information is sufficiently comprehensive for non-residents to plan activities on public lands for recreational, natural, cultural, historic, and heritage tourism.

- » Visitors can easily identify opportunities to enjoy Montana's natural wonders, allowing Montana to deliver on its brand promise of "more spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48."
- » Awareness of the large number of access points and activities available encourages more trips, extended trips, and more trips to less-visited areas. Thus, economic benefits are increased throughout the state.

## **Background & Rationale**

Following is a list of agencies that manage public lands for recreational use in Montana:

- » U.S. Forest Service
- » U.S. National Park Service
- » Bureau of Land Management
- » U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- » Bureau of Reclamation
- » U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- » Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Montana's vast public lands are central to delivering on its brand promise of "more spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48." Providing more substantive information regarding these public lands and how they may be accessed is essential to facilitating trip planning and will help create deliverable expectations for the non-resident visitor. Awareness of the large number of access points and activities available can encourage (i) extending the length of the trip and (ii) extending visitation to areas that would otherwise be overlooked. The result is a potential to increase economic benefits throughout the state. The information available from public land management agencies is valuable but can be difficult or time-consuming for visitors to find. To tap this resource, the tourism sector must gather the most useful and appealing information for the potential visitor and make it readily available as part of Montana's visitor information resources (directly or through links).

Maps will be among the most important of these informational resources, particularly because non-resident visitors may be unfamiliar with many place names or have a limited sense of the distances involved. Maps allow visitors to build a realistic itinerary.

Montana's tourism promotion bodies and public land management agencies share a number of goals, making theirs a natural partnership. Raising awareness and appreciation of Montana's public lands and their full recreation potential supports the *mutual* goals of promoting recreation, supporting preservation, and ensuring appropriate recreational use by visitors. To help strengthen the partnership, tourism stakeholders should let public land management agencies know when they are linking to their information in tourism sites and acknowledge the value their work. Unilaterally sharing research, data, or other information regarding visitors' use of the public lands can also build stronger inter-agency partnership.