



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Moab Field Office

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Recreation Division Chief





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Who is the BLM?

A multiple use agency that oversees and manages 245 million surface acres primarily located in the west.

BLM mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM Values – To serve with honesty, integrity, accountability, respect, courage, and commitment to make a difference.



SECTIONS

LOGIN

MOAB DISLIKES SMELL OF SUCCESS
 HUMAN WASTE TURNING RIVER AREAS INTO CESSPOOLS

By Jerry Spangler, Staff Writer
Published: May 20, 1989 12:00 a.m.

It reads like a rags to riches story: Small town promotes bicycling in the slickrock desert, gets caught up in the latest national craze and is promptly named Mountain Biking Capital of the World.

The result? Tens of thousands of tourists pouring in from all over the world, spending money and infusing the local populace with jobs, money and optimism. While that was how the script was supposed to read, the small-town-dream-come-true may be turning into a mini-nightmare for Moab and Grand County - a tourism-dependent region caught by surprise by its exploding popularity among bicyclists.

The problem? Human waste. Tons of it are fouling the Colorado River and its banks, causing a "horribly bad smell."

"No one's panicking yet," said David Bierschied, chairman of a blue-ribbon committee to study the impacts of increased visitation on natural resources. "But we recognize we've got to come up with long-term solutions. We can't risk destroying what we are trying to sell."

The problem is not that Moab doesn't want the tourists. The problem is an inadequacy of basic services to meet large-scale demand, particularly for the removal of human waste and garbage.

"It's reached a level something has to be done in a hurry," said Bruce Louthan, a Bureau of Land Management official. The affected lands are owned either by the BLM or the state.

The problem of human waste and garbage is increasingly evident along the slickrock bicycle trails. But of greater environmental concern is the waste along the banks of various waterways, particularly the Colorado River where hundreds of cyclists are camped every night.

These are not official campsites but rather simple pullouts along U-128 with enough room to set up a tent or roll out a sleeping bag. It's free, convenient and has plenty of bushes for privacy.

"Unfortunately, it doesn't make it a pleasant experience for the next person," said Bierschied, who also serves as a Moab city councilman and president of the Chamber of Commerce.

With the lack of restroom facilities and garbage disposal, the pullouts along the river road have become a virtual cesspool. "At times the stench is so bad you can't roll your car window down driving through there," said one state official.

1989 - Desert News

'need for long term solutions'



Moab Field Office- 1.8 million acres

Moab 1.0 1992 through the 1990s:

- Facility development: trailheads, sanitation, campgrounds, directional signs and maps
- Emergency closure order for Colorado Riverway through Federal Register Notice
- Controlled camping and development for high use corridors... SR-128, SR-279, SR-313 and Kane Creek
- Collaborative Management Agreement with Grand County for the Sand Flats Recreation Area through Americorps
- SITLA renting for Williams Bottom, Sand Flats and Ledge parcels. Visitors do not see management agency boundaries.



2008 Resource Management Plan: provides management direction and a designated Travel Plan that concurs with Grand County

- 10 Special Recreation Management Areas and associated Recreation Area Management Plans (RAMPs)
- 10 Focus Areas or Recreation Management Zones: scenic driving, mountain biking, climbing, hiking/ backpacking, motorized/ OHV, BASE jumping
- **Think BIG!!!!** Identify area, future facilities & phased approach
- Decisions that allow for future management actions
 - ex. REC-2 Where unacceptable damage to natural or cultural resources by recreational use is anticipated or observed, BLM will seek to` limit or control activities by managing the nature and extent of the activity or by providing site improvements that make the activity more sustainable or by a combination of management controls and facility development.



Business Plans:

Identify the inputs and outputs. Include language requiring a savings of at least one year worth of funding. This is necessary for unforeseen events such as flash floods, fire, vandalism, furloughs or a global pandemic.

Master Leasing Plan 2016:

Balance the value of recreation and mineral resources. Which established no surface occupancy requirements in the heavily desired recreation areas.



Moab 2.0 2018 and beyond:

- Mill Creek Community Collaborative with assistance from the NPS – Rivers, Trails, Conservation Assistance Program
- North Klondike limited to designated camping, EA signed 9/2019
- Restriction of Roped and Aerial Activities in Mineral Hell Roaring Canyons to benefit wildlife (under appeal)
- community, management & agency support needed for additional camping restrictions in three polygons approximately 70,000 acres (>10% of field office acreage being limited)



Future Needs:

- Additional staff and Law Enforcement
- Capital improvements to address increased use
- Future RMP amendments...



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Recreation Division Overview

1.8 million acres within Grand and northern San Jan counties

Developed recreation facilities:

44 Fee Campgrounds (700+ campsites not including SFRA collaboratively managed by Grand County)

29 Reservable Group Sites

64 Trailheads and 5 National Recreation Trails (Slickrock, Fisher Towers, Corona, Grandstaff, Moab Brands)

11 Wilderness Study Areas

4020 miles of motorized trail (313 miles of motorized singletrack)

180+ miles of non-motorized trail

6 Scenic Overlooks

172 toilets (not including SFRA collaboratively managed by Grand County)

2 Interpretive Trails – Mill Canyon Tracksite and Bone trails

1 Ranger Station – Westwater

2 Public Drinking Water Systems

7 Boat Ramps

3 Cooperative Management Agreements Grand County & SITLA



Challenges related to recreation

- Volume of visitation- 3 million visitors annually
- Destination for many types of activities (less than 1% of the recreational use is permitted)
- Relatively fragile desert environment
- Dispersed camping (less than 7% of office is limited)
- Secretarial Order #3376 e-bikes
- Drones and private aircraft
- Next new thing (mtn bikes, longboards, e-bikes, UTVs, paragliders, highlines etc.)
- Covid-19 pandemic
- Quality of live for community residents
- Quality of the recreation experience now and future



FLREA – we retain fees

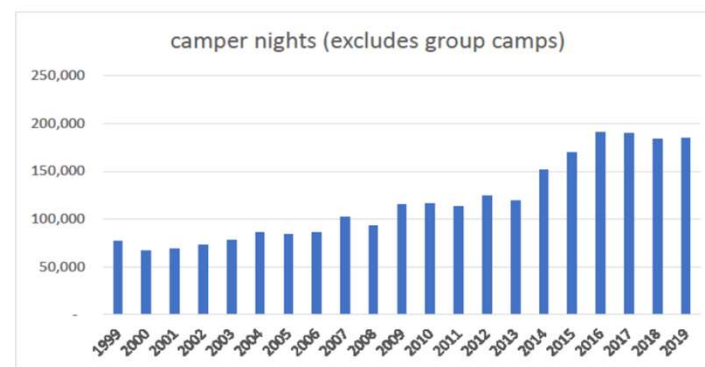
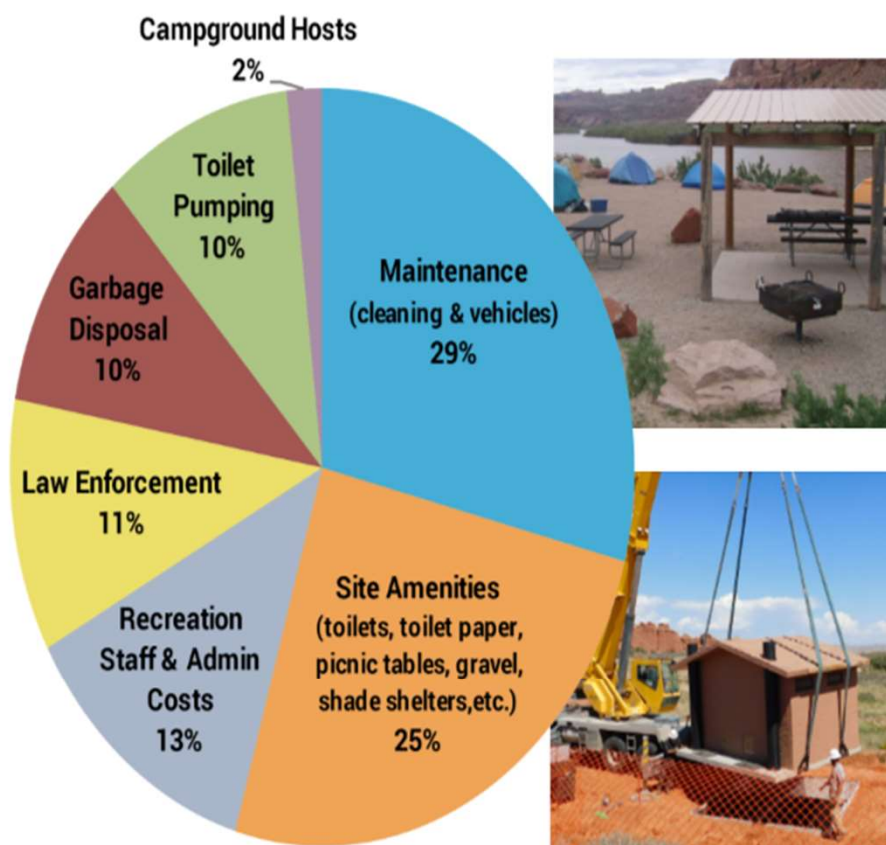
- Desperately need permanent authorization
- Essential for program operation (85%)
 - 29 staff labor, vehicles, PPE
 - maintenance, upkeep & daily operations
 - toilet paper contract
 - toilet pumping contract
 - dumpster contract

****Loss of FLREA would be fatal to this program and ability to manage****



Your Fee Money at Work

Campgrounds are operated solely with fee dollars—not appropriated government funds. Your money stays here!



General visitation
1.6 million visitors 2010
3 million visitors in 2019



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The challenges are many...



crowding



multiple use



trash



graffiti



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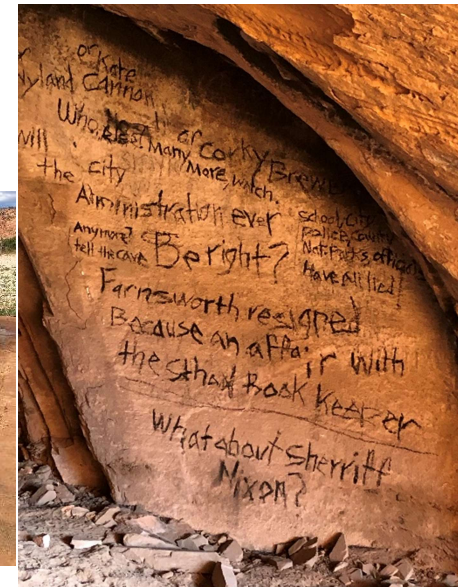
Trash – photos from 2020





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Graffiti, vandalism & more





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Toilets and dog waste





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Challenges – nature keeps us honest





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Crowding – no off season

Corona Arch on December 28, 2020

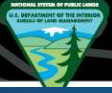




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Volunteers





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Questions????

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Thank you for your interest in our national treasures!!

Your vision and willingness to advocate for public land management is essential to a palatable future !!

