

A photograph of two mountain bikers in a lush green forest. The biker in the foreground is wearing a grey helmet and a dark jersey with 'WILSON' visible, and is holding a smartphone. The biker in the background is wearing a blue jersey and a black helmet. The forest is dense with green foliage and tall trees.

# **EXPLORE Act** **Outdoor Accessibility** **Implementation**

**Findings from a National Survey**

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## Accessibility Coalition:

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The Accessibility Coalition is made up of national nonprofits, companies, and user groups. Currently, the coalition is made up of the following organizations: REI Co-op, MoveUnited, AllTrails, The Action Foundation, National Association of State Park Directors, Rails to Trails Conservancy, Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports, Blue Star Families, Sierra Club, American Trails, Catalyst Sports, Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals, Access Hound, National Parks Foundation, Outdoor Alliance, American Hiking Society, KABOOM!, Adaptive Adventures, and Dovetail Trail Consulting.

## Introduction

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Last year, Congress passed the EXPLORE Act, the most comprehensive outdoor recreation legislation in history. Part of this bill included multiple sections to increase information sharing, improve infrastructure, and engage with partners to expand access ([Title II: Access America](#)) to federal public lands. Under the EXPLORE Act, public land agencies have until early 2026 to determine new accessible trails or upgrades to existing trails and recreational opportunities on their managed landscapes.

The Accessibility Coalition conducted a national survey of 120 organizations to recommend trails and recreational opportunities to the accessibility programs of the National Park Service, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management to help inform their decisions. We received 145 responses, included below by agency and region.

You can find the survey results here: [Final Version\\_EXPLORE Act Accessibility Recommendations](#)

## Context of Study

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For visitors with disabilities, a number of challenges impact their ability to access America's public lands. Much of the federal public land infrastructure - trails, facilities, campgrounds, visitor centers, and program spaces - was built long before modern accessibility standards existed, resulting in physical environments that are difficult or impossible for many people with mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities to use. Even when accessible features are available, visitors often cannot reliably find accurate, detailed, or accessible information about them, creating significant informational barriers that prevent many from planning or attempting a visit.

Meanwhile, federal land management agencies face tight budgets, limited staff capacity, large maintenance backlogs, and an inconsistent understanding of the laws and regulations designed to support people with disabilities. These conditions make it difficult to upgrade facilities, modernize information systems, or build new accessible programs. With such limited resources, agencies must make tough choices about which needs to address first, which makes it even more essential to bring experts with lived experience and disability community members to the table. Their leadership helps prevent decisions based on outdated assumptions and ensures that improvements reflect the full range of interests, abilities, and outdoor ambitions within the disability community. Without this guidance, land managers lack scalable, replicable models for meeting diverse accessibility needs in an equitable way. As a result, accessibility efforts often occur in isolated pockets rather than through coordinated, system-level strategies. Taken together, these factors create a landscape where access for people with disabilities is fragmented and unreliable, limiting their ability to fully experience, enjoy, and benefit from the nation's public lands.

### **Data Collection Method**

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For this stage of data collection, we used a snowball sampling technique that started with Accessibility Coalition committee members creating a summary of the EXPLORE Act and a survey about its potential applications, which was then shared with personal contacts at national, regional, state, and local organizations around the country. Per the snowball technique, those contacts were encouraged to share with their most important contacts in this area, spreading the survey out to as many thought leaders in accessibility circles as we could reach.



Photo Credit: American Trails

## Overview of Survey Methods

We asked participants for federal sites that are either in need of improvement or development or already in progress. We also asked for types of advancements participants would like to see and user groups who would benefit. Please see below for highlights:

- There were 145 responses from 120 unique organizations and 140 unique individuals (as identified by the email address of the respondent).
- There were respondents for projects across 37 unique states.
- California and Colorado had the most respondents, with 19 and 13 projects, respectively.
- Almost half (64, 46%) of respondents are from nonprofit organizations.
- Locally focused organizations are the most common (45, 32%) type of respondents, with Regional and State focused organizations each accounting for roughly a quarter of respondents.

## Scoring Results and Method

The Accessibility Coalition created a rubric to score results ([please see appendix for full rubric](#)). Through analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data in survey responses, all responses were scored according to the rubric.

Of the 145 responses, 25 responses were identified as “High Priority” projects for closer review. A secure LLM was used to generate brief 1-2 sentence summaries for why a response was scored as such. ([You can find the full spreadsheet in the appendix.](#))

State of Project   # of Respondents			
Multiple States	8	NC	3
AK	1	NE	1
AL	2	NH	2
AR	1	NJ	2
AZ	1	NV	3
CA	19	NY	5
CO	13	OH	2
CT	2	OR	3
FL	2	PA	6
IA	1	SC	1
ID	2	TN	1
IL	5	TX	3
IN	1	UT	1
KY	3	VA	1
MA	1	VT	6
MD	2	WA	4
MI	2	WI	2
MN	3	WV	3
MO	1	unknown	17
MT	1		

Tier	# of Responses
Needs Refinement	18
Developing	34
Qualified	67
High Priority	25
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>145</b>



Group of hikers in Great Smoky Mountains NP during ranger lead program with Catalyst Sports

## Limitations

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As an exploratory study, using a purposive sampling technique, these results should be understood contextually as being provided from self-selected volunteer participants, representative of highly relevant stakeholders, but not representing all stakeholders. This survey was aimed at prompting organizational-level feedback, which limited personal narratives and individual interests in favor of opening up for conversation larger themes related to the EXPLORE Act and its potential applications. As such, there was no intent to gather data equally or distribute across the country in equitable ways. That level of detail, depth, and diversity is for a future study. This one instead aimed to establish critical foundational knowledge about the topic and to create important paths of inquiry, which could lead to more-defined studies that build from this informational infrastructure. It also invites participation from a broad landscape of interested parties, providing equivalent access to small and large organizations alike.

Focused on generating helpful EXPLORE Act responses, the sorting and prioritizing efforts in this work — including the scoring rubric and scores — were intended to aid in developing clarity and comprehensibility of the results, not prescribing courses of action or fully ranking some suggestions higher than others. In many cases, loose definitions, such as “trail improvements,” are used as a way to provoke thoughts, not to determine precisely what those improvements are, or should be. This survey also did not intend to compare costs, complexities, or legal, political, social, and cultural constraints of these ideas.

In short, Accessibility Coalition members used their best efforts, best judgment, and robust personal networks to consult with as many representative organizations as possible. This survey was an all-volunteer effort, requested at short notice, and completed, from start to finish, in just a few weeks. That said, it provides authentic feedback from a variety of key stakeholders across diverse strategic missions, representing organizations formed by underserved and underrepresented people with unresolved concerns about public systems in place for outdoor recreation, involving systemic deficiencies in federal support for many types of mobilities, sensory modalities, and cognitive sensibilities.



The Silicon Valley and San Francisco chapters of the American Council of the Blind using Audio Description at Muir Woods National Monument. Courtesy of: Access Hound

([www.accesshound.com](http://www.accesshound.com))

## Results

Each survey participant had an opportunity to recommend an accessible trail opportunity and accessible recreational infrastructure opportunity. While responses were not uniform, we broke down the responses by agency and region. The highlighted results below are directly from the survey results, and the remainder of results, denoted by a (near "location"), are including responses that were not on federal lands. Also denoted by a "\*" are the 15 high volume projects that intend to serve 500+ individuals annually that we have identified as "High Priority." (See appendix for rubric and scoring.)

## National Park Service

### National Park Units within DOI's Unified Regions



DESCRIBING: A horizontal color map of the United States, including Alaska, Hawai'i, and U.S. island territories, adorned with color-coded regions and overlaid park names.

SYNOPSIS: The map displays the contiguous United States, plus Alaska, Hawai'i, and outlying Pacific islands, segmented into 12 color-coded regions labeled by number and name. Each region contains lists of National Park Units, such as monuments and historical sites, identified with green-highlighted names. Alaska and the Pacific islands are shown in dedicated insets. The visual design uses pastel shades for regions, with a dense overlay of text, park names, and shaded boxes.

IN-DEPTH DESCRIPTION: The United States mainland fills the center and is color-divided into broad regions. For example, the northeast is marked as Region 1, North Atlantic–Appalachian, in mustard yellow. The southeast, shown in teal green, is Region 2, South Atlantic–Gulf. The Midwest, Great Lakes area is Region 3, colored light green, and the west coast is split into Regions 9 (Pacific Northwest), 10 (California), and 8 (the Southwest), fading through teal, lavender, and sandy orange. Alaska, shown lower left, is Region 11, filled with several park names amid a gray-green backdrop. Hawai'i and Pacific outlying islands are in small boxes lined across the bottom, shaded coral, and labeled Region 12. Over each region, prominent text states the region number and major areas it covers. National Park Units are marked in green or black text, with abbreviations like NHP for National Historical Park explained in a legend. The map's background is pale blue, denoting the ocean coastline. Dense park labels crowd the northeast and California, while western and midwestern states appear sparser. The overall effect is a patchwork of subtle hues, overlaid by hundreds of sharply delineated park names.

SYNOPSIS: In this official NPS map, the United States and its territories are divided into seven administrative regions of the National Park Service, identified by colors and region names. Each National Park Service site and regional office is marked with distinctive symbols, and insets provide a closer look at outlying regions.

IN-DEPTH DESCRIPTION: The map depicts the contiguous United States split into five National Park Service regions: Pacific West (muted green, west), Intermountain (soft pink, southwest-central), Midwest (tan, north-central), Southeast (gray, southeast corner), and Northeast (faded pink, northeast). Dots mark the locations of National Park Service units, with larger geographically aligned shapes used for parks over 100,000 acres. Yellow stars indicate regional offices, such as in Denver, Colorado and Omaha, Nebraska. Alaska is shown in an inset on the bottom left, shaded peach to highlight its separate region with many large parks. Further insets display Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, each shaded to match their assigned region. The National Capital Region, which includes Washington, D.C., and its nearby states, appears as a purple box at the eastern map edge with a zoomed-in inset for fine detail. A legend in the upper left explains symbols, and a scale bar denotes distances in miles.

## Region 1: North Atlantic - Appalachian:

- **Mammoth Cave Railroad Bike & Hike Trail in Mammoth Cave National Park\***: There are efforts to build a shared-use path connecting Mammoth Cave National Park to Bowling Green, KY, so it would be great to see the existing gravel trail become paved in order to provide continuous hardened access between Bowling Green to the national park.
- **Appalachian Trail in Northwest Connecticut**: It is a National Scenic Trail and one small portion of it in Falls Village is universally accessible. It has ADA accessible parking, views of waterfall and a historic iron bridge. It makes sense to lengthen this .7 mile loop that is already in place to allow for more accessibility on the AT trail.
- **C&O Canal National Historical Park**: Need a smooth, predictable surface
- **Morristown National Historical Park**: As a historic site with lots of capacity to interpret features, with moderate terrain, accessibility on the site's recreational trails should be a priority. This includes accessibility in both trail conditions and interpretation on kiosks and signage.
- **Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area**: Extremely popular area, within easy reach of millions of people in the NYC metro area, but the rugged terrain on the NJ side of the NRA means it has few accessible opportunities compared to the PA side. Opportunities for accessible trails and viewing platforms, especially at vistas or water features.

## Region 2 - South Atlantic - Gulf:

- **Reconstruction Era National Park**
- **Great Smoky Mountains National Park\***: It is located in an area drastically affected by Hurricane Helene. Trail repair and extension is needed.
  - **Kuwohi**: Would love to see them in NPS site, collaboration with Tribe

## Region 3 - Great Lakes:

- **Sleeping Bear and Pictured Rocks**: Empire Bluff, Kettles, and Mosquito Falls/Beach trails at Pictured Rocks, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
- **Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, Cuyahoga Valley National Park**: This is a very long and well-used trail. There is a tactile map of the park, but unless you have a guide, a blind or low vision person will not be aware of the trail, surrounding nature points of interest, or the nearby market. Adding an audio tour with audio information on signage would be a lot for the entire trail, but it could be done in stages. This park gets a lot of use between the trails, waterfall, train, etc.

## Region 4 - Mississippi Basin:

- **Hot Springs National Park**: I'd like to see more accessible hot spring soaks in the bathhouses (a lift for mobility impairment) and accessible hiking trails.

## Region 5 - Missouri Basin:

- None listed.

## Region 6 - Arkansas - Rio Grand - Texas - Gulf

- **Padre Island National Seashore**: There is a plan to lengthen the park road, which will bring greater access to the length of the park. But there is also room for improvement for access to the areas near the parking and visitor center in regard to hard trails, boardwalks, etc.
- **Big Bend National Park**: All ADA amenities that need to be brought up to current standards.
  - Window View Trail: This trail may have potential for drinking water access along the way (plumbing) and bathrooms.

## Region 7: Upper Colorado Basin:

- **Alpine Trail Ridge, Rocky Mountain National Park**: Add some switch backs. This is just a short trail, but one that has some of the best views in the state compared to how easy it is to get to. I've tried to roll it more than once and can't make it all the way up even with help.
- **Zion National Park**: Need equipment for use for people with disabilities at trail heads.
- **Glacier National Park**: More widened, hardened trails, more accessible remote camping areas

## Region 8: Lower Colorado Basin:

- None listed.

## Region 9: Columbia - Pacific Northwest:

- **John Day Fossil Beds National Monument (near Smith Rock State Park):** Accessible group campsites, access to the crag
- **Olympic National Park:** many trails have roots that are tripping hazards for the visually impaired.

## Region 10: California - Great Basin:

- **Muir Woods:** When I was there last, the accessible trail was very bumpy. It had mounds that were challenging, to cross over with a power wheelchair.
  - With smartphones that can geolocate a visitor, trails should have apps that automatically audio describe or provide audio directions as the user nears each turn in the trail or each notable feature, such as a giant redwood or interesting rock formation. The app should allow visitors to choose between a brief or verbose mode and would cost a park little as they would not need to weather-proof speakers or Braille signage. Audio on one's own smartphone is accessible to a much wider disabled population than Braille and can also be captioned.
  - **Muir Woods National Monument (near Bay Area Ridge Trail):** Accessible trails - most are not accessible;
- **Golden Gate National Recreation Area (near Bay Area Ridge Trail):** Accessible trails - most are not accessible

## Region 11 - Alaska:

- **Denali National Park Triple Lakes Trail:** This is a location I know is accessed by people with disabilities, especially people with mobility impairments. Having access to this trail would greatly increase their ability to enjoy and engage with the outdoors.
  - McKinley River Bar Trail, Horseshoe Lake. Chugach National Forest Winner Creek Trail (not sure if suspension bridge is accessible), Hope Point Trail

## Fish & Wildlife Service



DESCRIBING: A color horizontal map showing the eight regional headquarters of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and their geographic coverage.

SYNOPSIS: The map displays the United States and its territories, split into eight labeled regions, each assigned a number and descriptive title. Regional boundaries are implied through placement rather than drawn lines.

IN-DEPTH DESCRIPTION: The large main portion of this map shows the contiguous 48 states, with bold blue circles and their numbers indicating each region:

**Pacific** — Covers Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Hawaii (in a box).

**Southwest** — Spans Texas, Oklahoma, and nearby states.

**Midwest** — Covers the north-central U.S.

**Southeast** — Includes all southeastern states and boxes for Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands.

**Northeast** — Covers New England and the mid-Atlantic.

**Mountain-Prairie** — Runs through large interior states from the Rockies eastward.

**Alaska** — Displayed in a separated box at the top left corner.

**Pacific Southwest** — Southern California and Nevada.

**Territories in the Pacific are listed without visual markers:** Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Mariana Islands. The main DC Headquarters is shown as a dot near the Northeast. The regions appear to overlap slightly without clear borders, relying on numbering and naming.

## **Pacific:**

- **Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge:** It has some accessible areas but needs general improvements and refinements. I would like this station to become a model for the Service and the metro area for quality accessible recreation.

## **Southwest:**

- None listed.

## **Midwest:**

- **Historic Route 66 Trail, Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge:** Transform abandoned roadway into accessible parkways; Connecting sidepath between abandoned pavement segments, shelters, benches
- **Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge:** Snowmobile Trail Access is needed to provide lower mobility folks the ability to experience the interior of the preserve during the winter months. This could be multi-use for use in all seasons.

## **Southeast:**

- **Laurel Falls, Smoky Mountains:** Pave Laurel Falls trail to make it actually accessible.

## **Northeast:**

- **Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge\*:** Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge is comprised of 10 units stretched across 70 miles of Connecticut's coastline. Improving accessibility would offer opportunities for people with disabilities to access Connecticut's coastline. First simple steps would be to make available information on accessibility on their website which I could not find.
- **Patuxent Research Refuge (near NCR Trail):** It is a major hiking trail in Baltimore, Maryland. It is already flat, so could be a draw for blind people with some better wayfinding, etc.
- **North Fork Mountain Trail, Monongahela National Forest:** Peters Mountain Trail just outside of Franklin, WV is just starting to be developed. It would be fantastic if the design and implementation could make it accessible to more people. It will be a 2 hour or less loop trail.

## Mountain-Prairie:

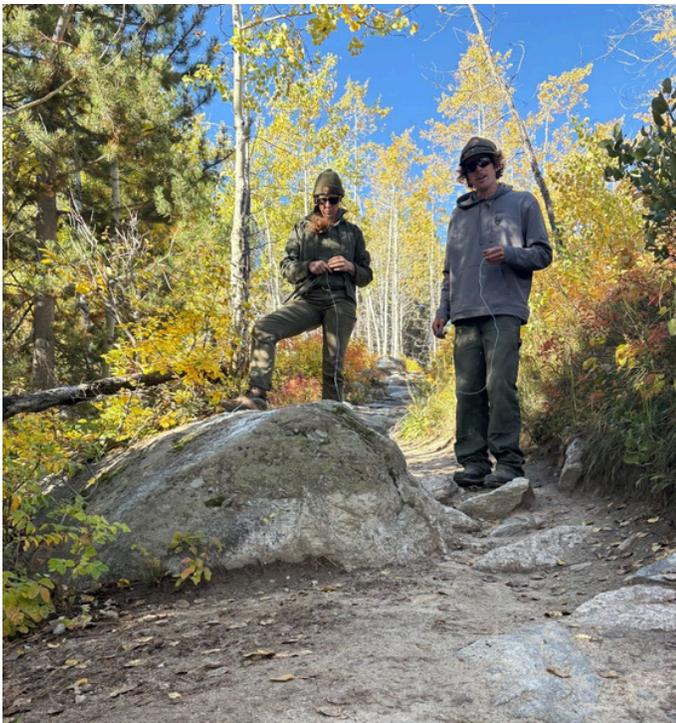
- **Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (near Barker Reservoir):** Access to the reservoir, access to the trail system around it, improvements to make the trail system accessible, updated and inflow area where there is a bridge to walk across that is not accessible.
- **Nicolet National Forest:** many new trails are in need to connect the forest from east to west and north to south

## Alaska:

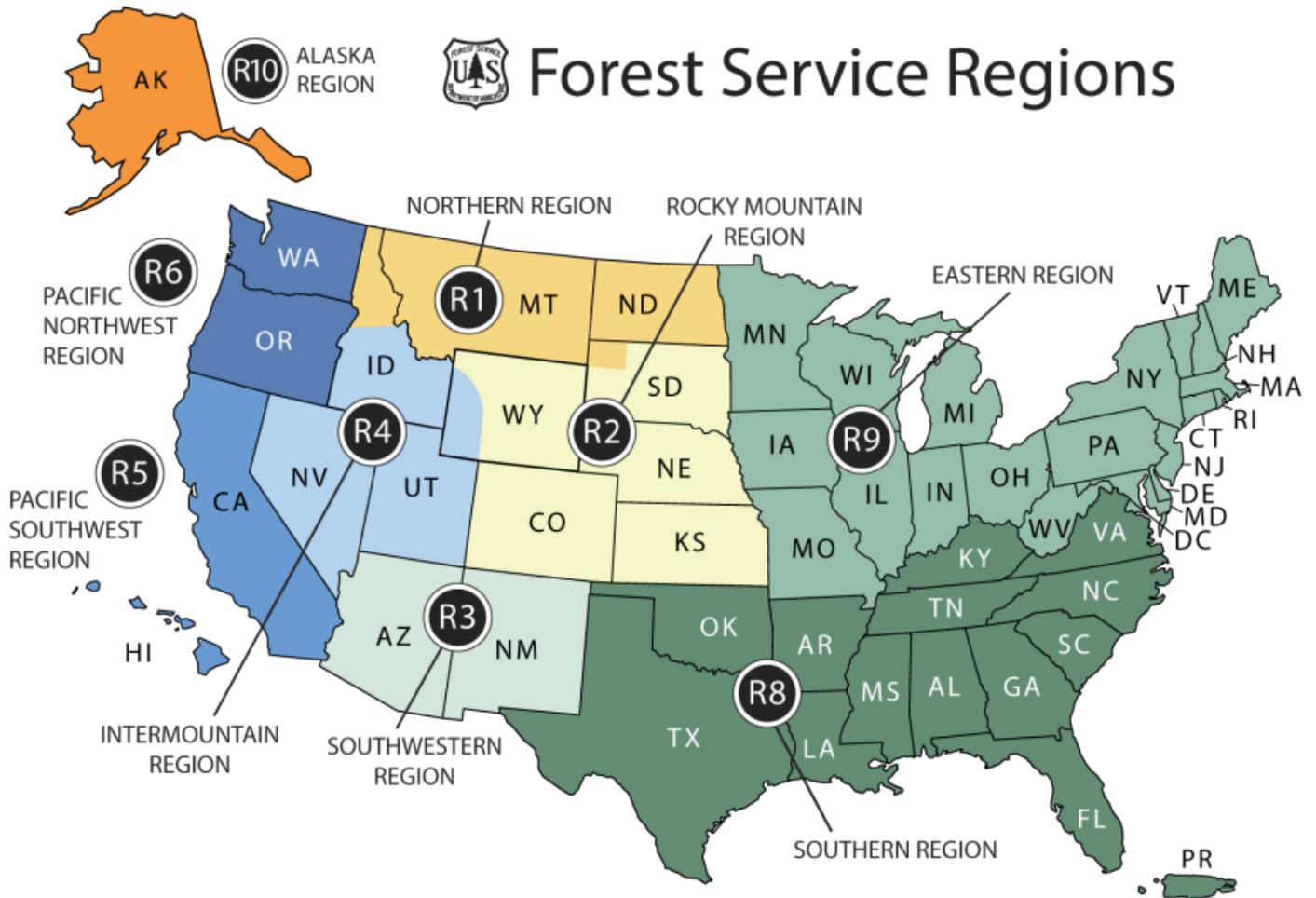
- None listed.

## Pacific Southwest:

- **Bear Valley Trailhead, Point Reyes National Seashore:** There are very few long-distance accessible trails in the region so making this one accessible for its entire length would make it a destination trail and worth the effort to get there.
- **Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge (near Bay Area Ridge Trail):** Need accessible trails - most are not accessible
- **San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge (near Bay Area Ridge Trail):** Accessible trails - most are not accessible
- **Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (near The American River Parkway):** Thinking about other ways to access things like concessions that offer different types of mobility equipment makes things cheaper long term, more accessible for the user, and gives unique, fun opportunities to those who might otherwise not have them.
- **Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Park:** The movie in the visitor center is not audio-described. Add clear snow trail with rope guide for people who are blind



Rock Removal trail work in Grand Teton National Park - Dovetail Trail Consulting



DESCRIBING: A color-coded map of the United States showing U.S. Forest Service regions, each region shaded differently.

SYNOPSIS: The contiguous United States, Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico are divided into numbered Forest Service regions on this map. Each region is marked by a distinct color and labeled by name and number. Regional divisions do not always align with state borders, and a key identifies each colored zone. Alaska and Hawaii are shown in insets.

IN-DEPTH DESCRIPTION: The central image is a map of the United States with state boundaries and color-coded regional overlays representing Forest Service administrative regions. The map includes two smaller insets in the bottom left: one of Alaska, in a blue similar to, but slightly darker than the Rocky Mountain Region, and one of Hawaii, in brown. States are labeled with two-letter postal codes. The regional names are written inside or near their respective areas. Bold black text at the top reads "Forest Service Regions."

## Region Labels and Colors

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Region 1, the Northern Region, is shaded yellow and covers Montana, northern Idaho, and North Dakota.

Region 2, the Rocky Mountain Region, covers Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, and Nebraska in light yellow.

Region 3, the Southwestern Region, is mint green and includes Arizona and New Mexico.

Region 4, the Intermountain Region, is light blue and covers Nevada, Utah, southern Idaho, and western Wyoming.

Region 5, the Pacific Southwest Region, in blue, includes California and Hawaii.

Region 6, the Pacific Northwest Region, shaded dark blue, covers Oregon and Washington.

Region 8, the Southern Region, in dark green, spans from Texas and Oklahoma east to Florida and Virginia, including Puerto Rico, which appears in a diminutive inset as a dark green box.

Region 9, the Eastern Region in light green, covers the Midwest and northeastern states from Minnesota to Maine, as well as Missouri, Arkansas, and Illinois.

Region 10, the Alaska Region, is orange and shown in an inset.

### Northern Region:

- **Swift Creek Lookout Trail, Flathead National Forest:** Need a more accessible trail
- **City Beach, Flathead National Forest:** Better bathrooms, parking lots, access to water
- **Flathead National Forest:** The Flathead River Access Sites are not accessible for those who use mobility devices.

### Rocky Mountain Region:

- **Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests (near Barker Reservoir):** Access to the reservoir, access to the trail system around it, improvements to make the trail system accessible, updated and inflow area where there is a bridge to walk across that is not accessible.
  - **(Near Golden Whitewater Park):** Accessible paths to the river
  - **Challenger Discovery Trails in Winter Park, CO:** Need boardwalk and bridge repair for leveled structures; structures are 30+ years old; Allowing reclassification of e-bikes and hand trikes for mobility improvement
  - **Discovery Trail:** This one of the only designated adaptive trails in our area and the boardwalk is becoming unsafe. We currently do not have the funding or expertise to fix this boardwalk. It is unsafe and if not repaired, will most likely have to close
  - **Willow Creek Reservoir & Campground:** Fishing pier installation; specific campsite improvements (flattening & widening)
- **Indian Peaks Wilderness (near Barker Reservoir):** Access to the reservoir, access to the trail system around it, improvements to make the trail system accessible, updated and inflow area where there is a bridge to walk across that is not accessible.
- **East Fork of the Gabriel River, San Gabriel Mountains:** There is a project by Watershed Conservation Authority that may need support. Need accessible restrooms with doors that close, path/ramp to river area.

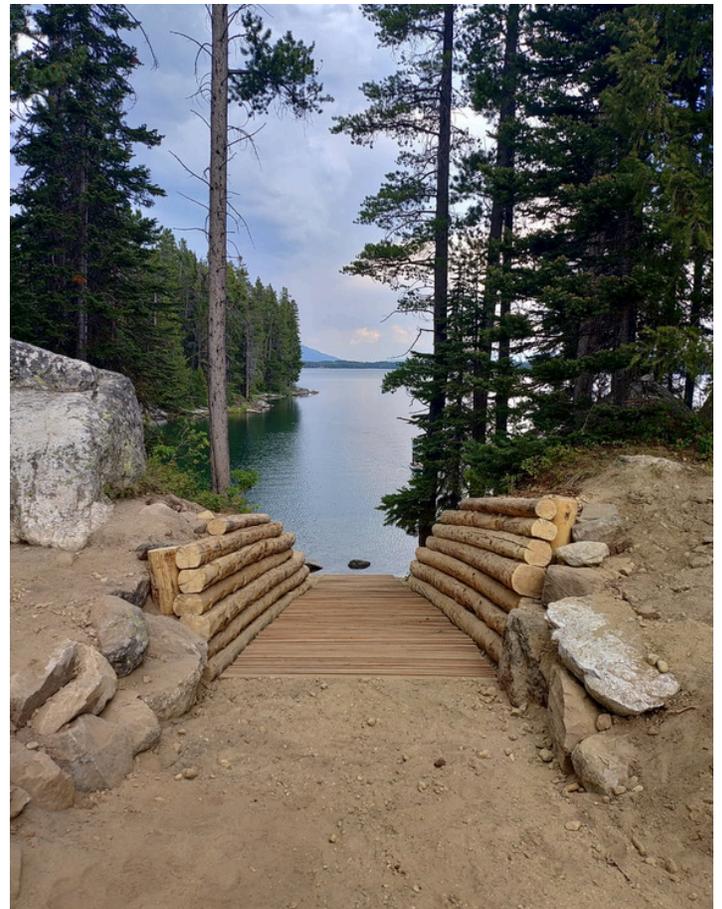
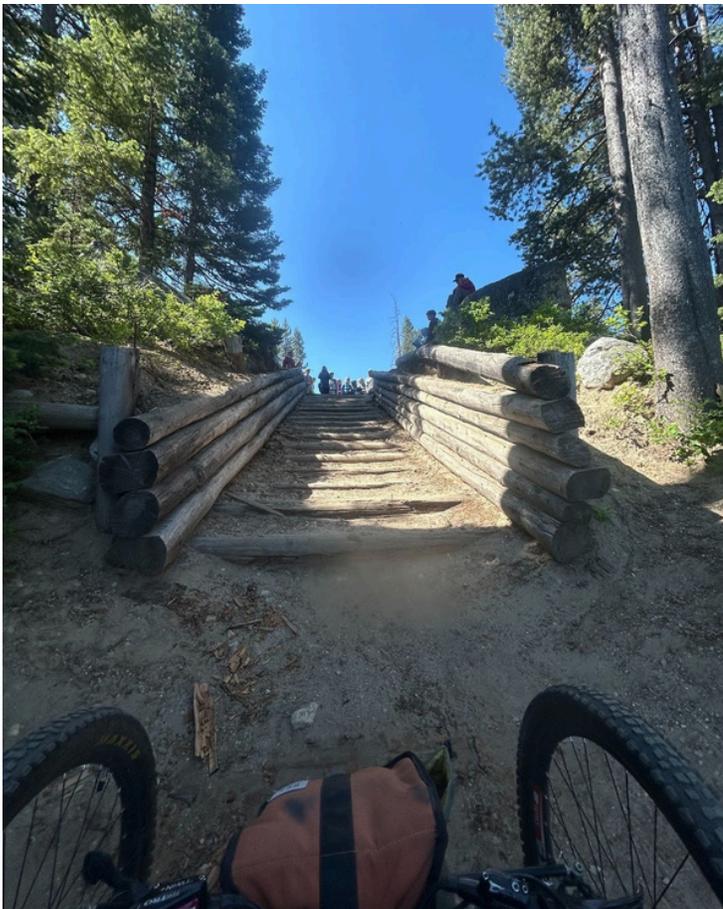
- **Northwest Passage, Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests:** widening of trail - reduction of cross trail slope & more accessible facilities.
- **Sapphire Point, White River National Forest:** Sapphire Point is easy, well-loved, and generally almost ADA due to chronic overuse. So easy low low-hanging fruit.
- **White River National Forest:** Many trails are closed just due to popularity; now we need to be allowed the use of e-assist bikes on these trails.
- **White River National Forest (near Frisco, CO):** Wheelchair friendly fishing access point on the Blue River.

### Southwestern Region:

- **Lower Salt Interpretive Trail #6, Tonto National Forest\*:** Good Parking, easy slopes, loop hike, near water, good interpretive signage in need of updating that could be incorporated to include accessibility signage. Could also use adaptable biking opportunities.

### Intermountain Region:

- **Bear Basin Trail, Payette National Forest:** Lots of trails, some could be modified for adaptive users. There are lots of recommended new trails and only 1 is slated to be adaptive right now. Ponderosa SP sees thousands of users each year and most of their trails are not remotely suitable for adaptive users. Having even one loop would be great.
- **Marijana Flat Campground, Caribou-Targhee National Forest:** No facilities for disabled



## Pacific Southwest Region:

- **Tahoe National Forest Boca Reservoir:** Access to lakes for persons with disabilities requires a floating dock
- **Sullivan O&W Rail Trail, Okanogan–Wenatchee National Forest:** Needs Expansion and surfacing
- **Lassen National Forest:** Located 5 miles from a community with an opportunity to construct a 3.5-mile trail system for people with special needs.
  - **Eagle Lake Recreation Area, Lassen County:** The asphalt trail and fishing pier need repair. Accessible viewing stations are recommended.
- **Angeles Forest:** Need a safe way to get to the river. Focus on ramp, restrooms, and parking.

## Pacific Northwest Region:

- **Deschutes National Forest (near Smith Rock State Park):** Accessible group campsites, access to the crag
- **Ochoco National Forest (near Smith Rock State Park):** Accessible group campsites, access to the crag
- **Crooked River National Grassland (near Smith Rock State Park):** Accessible group campsites, access to the crag
- **Whistler Canyon Trail, Okanogan–Wenatchee National Forest:** This trail is in high demand for such a rural area and is part of the Pacific Northwest Trail. It is not physical disability friendly as it goes straight up a mountain. The slope needs to be changed.
- **Okanogan–Wenatchee National Forest:** To my knowledge, there are no recreational opportunities for the disabled in this community. Our area has snow 6 months out of the year and we have a local ski hill. Maybe coordinate some snow skiing, snowshoeing etc.
- **Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (near Wallowa Lake):** This area gets extensive traffic and day-hike trails could be accessible but are not.

## Southern Region

- **Pisgah National Forest:** The trails in this rock climbing destination are inaccessible to wheelchair users but the type of climbing at this location is perfect for adaptive climbing.
- **Red River Gorge, Daniel Boone National Forest\*:** Very popular destination in need of accessible trails.
- **Uwharrie National Forest (near Umstead State Park):** create alternate aMTB lines and improve staging area facilities; include parking area needs, accessible restrooms, and accessible staging area for aMTB
- **Croatan National Forest (near Umstead State Park):** create alternate aMTB lines and improve staging area facilities; include parking area needs, accessible restrooms and accessible staging area for aMTB
- **Pisgah National Forest (Appalachian Trail):** Trails, communication (non-written), accessible amenities

## Eastern Region

- **Lincoln Woods, White Mountain National Forest\***: This is a very adaptable trail for Adaptive Mountain Bikes, including those with e-assist, to provide access for all types of disabilities. Currently Eassist is not allowed in NH National Parks, but should be for adaptive needs.
- **Green Mountain National Forest**: Better parking access and restroom facilities at all public entry points
- **Sherburne Pass Trail network, Green Mountain National Forest**: Opportunity for additional signage and for this to be a destination for adaptive mountain bike trails, given its proximity to Killington. It will also be a hub for the in-development Velomont Trail, which is intended to be accessible for adaptive bikes.
- **Blueberry Lake, Green Mountain National Forest**: Accessible restrooms and picnic facilities, as well as accessible water access.
- **Superior National Forest (near Spirit Mountain Recreation Area)**: Accessible hiking, overlook viewing platforms, and improvements to nearby camping opportunities would expand on the accessible opportunities at the site.
- **Wayne National Forest**: Lots of recreational land to build accessible trails
- **Monongahela National Forest**: The water access, as well as the trail are in need of attention.

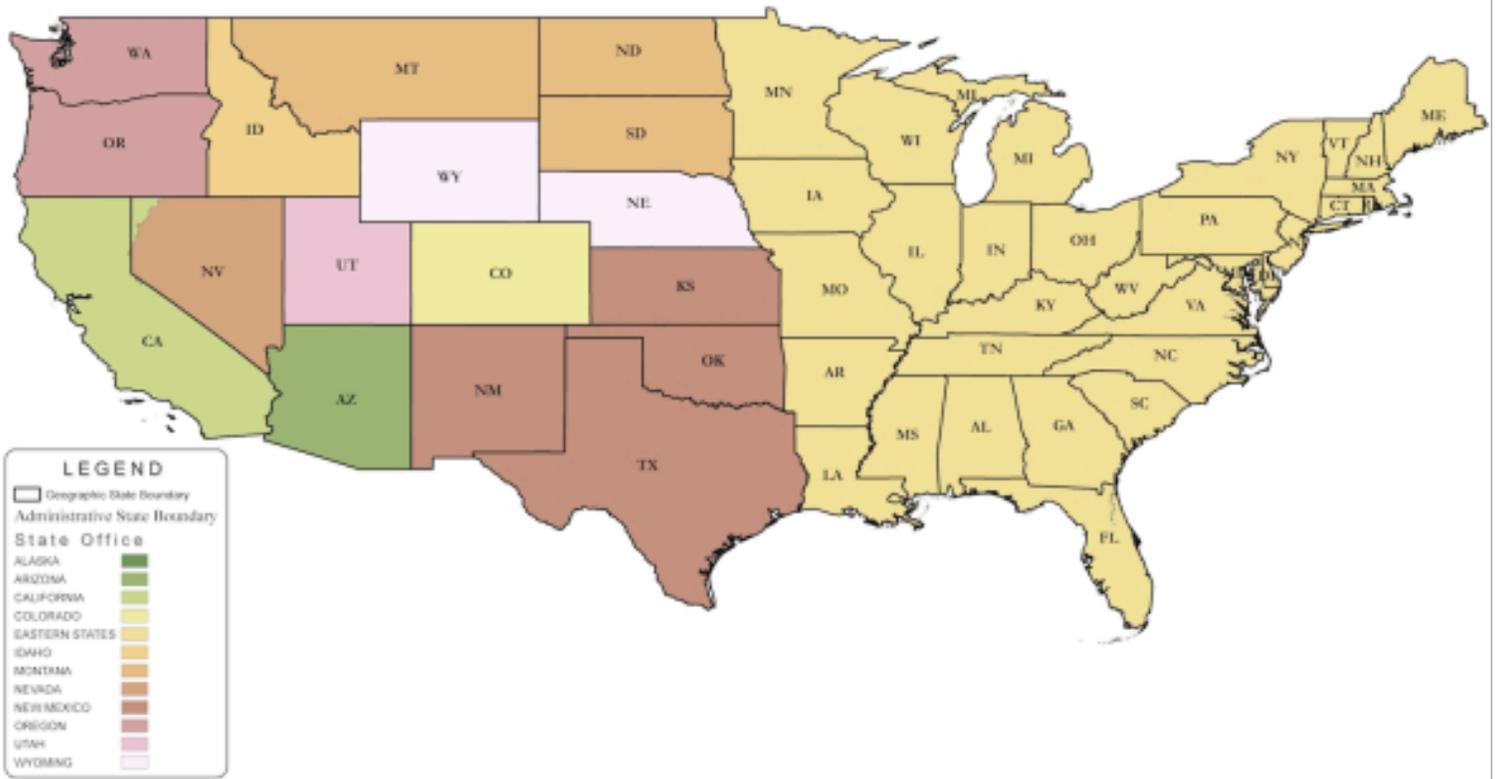
## Alaska Region

- **Chugach National Forest**: More accessible trails, access is limited to people who need power assisted handcycles to access a great deal of backcountry trails, limited access to paddlecraft launching,



Members of the American Council of the Blind explore the horse barn at Rock Creek Park, where [Audio Description can be heard](#) and trail rides are offered. Courtesy of: Access Hound ([www.accesshound.com](http://www.accesshound.com))

## BLM - Administrative States



### Bureau of Land Management

**DESCRIBING:** A rectangular color map of the contiguous United States with state boundaries and color-coded administrative regions.

**SYNOPSIS:** This map shows how the Bureau of Land Management structures its administrative offices across the United States. Most states are shaded in pale yellow, but western states are divided into different colored blocks that represent administrative regions as explained in the map's legend. State boundaries and names appear throughout, in postal codes, with a small legend in the lower left providing color references for ten states. State boundaries are marked in black, and administrative state boundaries are overlaid for BLM-specific operation. The title at the top reads, "BLM – Administrative States." No other visual elements, such as cities, topographical features, or water bodies, appear.

**IN-DEPTH DESCRIPTION:** The map's main feature is a separation between the eastern two-thirds, where all states appear in pale yellow, and the western third, where nine western states plus Alaska are distinctly color-coded. The colored states are: Alaska in dark green, California in green, Washington and Oregon in faded purple, Idaho in soft orange, Montana and the Dakotas in deeper tan, Wyoming in pale gray, Utah in pink, Colorado in yellow-green, Arizona in light green, and New Mexico in brick red. Each colored region corresponds with a state-level BLM office, as clarified in the legend at lower left.

## Oregon/Washington State Office

- **Steelhead Falls Recreation Area (near Smith Rock State Park):** Accessible group campsites, access to the crag
- **Lower Crooked Wild and Scenic River (near Smith Rock State Park):** Accessible group campsites, access to the crag
- **Deschutes River Recreation Areas (near Smith Rock State Park):** Accessible group campsites, access to the crag
- **Millican Valley OHV Area (near Smith Rock State Park):** Accessible group campsites, access to the crag

## Alaska State Office:

- None listed.

## California State Office:

- **Loma Alta Open Space (near Bay Area Ridge Trail):** Accessible trails - most are not accessible
- **Lake Natoma:** Add a 2nd kayak launch site (Granite Bay or Negro Bar), so users don't only have to go to Natoma. Expand # of beach wheelchairs and add clear signs at Beals Point and Granite Bay; add firm connections from parking to water. Mark a few truly accessible trails off the main paved routes; right now, only the main trail is accessible. Post max slope/cross-slope.
- **Fort Ord National Monument:** It's a very popular trail system with soils that are difficult to maintain.

## Nevada State Office:

- **Sacramento Pass, Ely, NV:** Good potential for accessible trails for those who visit Great Basin National Park. Focus on universal design.
- **Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area:** Desire for more trails that offer accessibility through universal design. Many already existing trails can be fixed with minimal effort.
- **Sloan Canyon NCA, Nevada:** Relatively new NCA, no accessible features there.
- **Red Rock Canyon NCA:** There are no "accessible trails" at Red Rock Canyon. The Moenkopi Trail is a candidate for access improvements because of its location at the Visitor Center, its moderate grade, and its previously disturbed ground nature.

## Arizona State Office:

- None listed.

## Colorado State Office:

- None listed.

## New Mexico State Office:

- None listed.

## Eastern States Office:

- **Proposed Meadowood Sensory Trail, VA\*:** The BLM is in the process of approving (hopefully) and building (hopefully) its first (Autism) Sensory Nature Trail, so it should be a model for other BLM (and other federal agencies') sites/trails.

## Montana/Dakotas State Office:

- **Acton Recreation Area (near Billings, MT):** Wheelchair accessible Bathrooms, walkways, etc.
- **Shepherd Ah-Nei OHV Recreation Area (near Billings, MT)** Wheelchair accessible Bathrooms, walkways, etc.

**Cotoni-Coast Dairies Unit of California Coastal National Monument:** More adaptive mountain bike-specific trails. Only about 2.5 miles of trails are adaptive mountain bike-friendly due to constraints of topography. Second phase of planned trails would include additional adaptive mountain biking-friendly trail.

- Need additional trails.

## Wyoming State Office:

- None listed.

## Utah State Office:

- None listed.

## Idaho State Office:

- None listed.



Group during Great Smoky Mountains NP program featuring adaptive mountain bikes and track chair

## Appendix

### Additional Materials

#### Survey Link

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mlzowAmTsggXJzvmDzmC\\_dLoEgN4k9tuVSwCgTs7xEo/edit](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mlzowAmTsggXJzvmDzmC_dLoEgN4k9tuVSwCgTs7xEo/edit)

Organization Name	Type of Organization (select most applicab	How many individuals	Geographic	What populations are most	Organization Location (
Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Assoc	Nonprofit	1000+	Local	Mobility or physical disability, M	Boise, ID
New Mexico Off-Highway Vehicle Allianc	Advocacy Organization	100-200	State	Mobility or physical disability, Vi	Santa Fe NM
None	Other	0-50	Local	Blind or low-vision disability	n/a
Dovetail Trail Consulting	Service Provider	1000+	International	Mobility or physical disability, C	Jackson, WY
Preston Trail Hounds	Other	0-50	Local	Children, Veterans, Seniors	Preston, Id
National Federation of the Blind	Nonprofit	1000+	National	Blind or low-vision disability	Baltimore, Maryland
Nature for All	Nonprofit	500-1000	Local	Mobility or physical disability, BI	Los Angeles County
Disability Services and Legal Center	Nonprofit	1000+	Local	Mobility or physical disability, BI	Sonoma County CA
Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association	Advocacy Organization	1000+	Regional	Mobility or physical disability	Woodstock, GA
ASCE	Other State or Local Government Agency	50-100	Local	d/Deaf or hard of hearing disab	New York
United Spinal Association (member not ε	Nonprofit	0-50	Local	Mobility or physical disability	Tampa Bay, Florida
Ignite Adaptive Sports	Nonprofit	200-500	State	Mobility or physical disability, BI	Nederland Colorado
DREAM Adaptive Recreation	Nonprofit	200-500	Regional	Mobility or physical disability, BI	Whitefish, Montana
Cary Park District	Other State or Local Government Agency	1000+	Local	Mobility or physical disability, C	Cary, IL
United Spinal	Nonprofit	1000+	National	Mobility or physical disability, Vi	New York, NY
Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation	Other State or Local Government Agency	1000+	Regional	Mobility or physical disability, BI	Mecklenburg County, North
Summit Adaptive Sports, Inc.	Nonprofit	100-200	State	Mobility or physical disability, BI	New Hartford, Connecticut
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	Other	1000+	National	Children, Veterans, Seniors	Harpers Ferry, WV
Auburn Trails Alliance	Nonprofit	500-1000	Local	d/Deaf or hard of hearing disab	Auburn, Ca
Adventures Without Limits	Nonprofit	1000+	State	Mobility or physical disability, BI	Forest Grove, OR
Designing Accessible Communities	Nonprofit	1000+	International	Mobility or physical disability, BI	Mill Valley, California
Valley County Parks and Recreation	Other State or Local Government Agency	1000+	Regional	Children, Veterans, Seniors	Valley County, ID
BORP Adapted Sports & Recreation	Nonprofit	200-500	Regional	Mobility or physical disability, BI	Berkeley, CA

#### Rubric

National Survey for Outdoor Accessibility Assessment Rubric

Serving the deliverables within Explore Act Sections 214 (Accessible Trails) & 215 (Accessible Recreation Opportunities)

#### Purpose

Evaluate survey responses for alignment with EXPLORE Act requirements that federal agencies (USFS, BLM, NPS, FWS) develop accessible trails and recreation opportunities within 7 years.

## Scoring Categories (100 Points Total)

### 1. Federal Land and Trail Target (25 points)

- a. Does the recommendation target priority federal lands?
- b. Is a specific trail or site identified?

- **25 pts:** USFS, BLM, NPS, or FWS managed land clearly identified and specific location named
  - **15 pts:** Federal land mentioned, but agency unclear
  - **10 pts:** State park or other public land or site mentioned, but jurisdiction unclear. Federal lands nearby
  - **5 pts:** General areas mentioned or limited federal land involvement
  - **0 pts:** No specific site identified
- 

### 2. Section 214 - Trail Accessibility (15 points)

#### Does it address accessible trail development?

- **15 pts:** Specific trail identified + accessibility features (surface, width, grade, signage)
  - **10 pts:** General trail accessibility mentioned
  - **5 pts:** Trail mentioned but no accessibility details
  - **0 pts:** No trail accessibility focus
- 

### 3. Section 214 - Trail Readiness (25 points)

- **25 pts:** Trail or location is used by people with disabilities and has potential to meet ABA standards with minimal or some modifications
- **15 pts:** Trail or location is used by people with disabilities and has potential to meet ABA standards with some or more complex modifications. Construction required.

#### OR

Trail is not in existing use by people with disabilities, but has potential to meet ABA standards with minimal or some modifications

- **10 pts:** Trail is not in existing use by people with disabilities and has potential to meet ABA standards with some or more complex modifications. Construction required.
- **5 pts:** General mention of trail readiness, but unclear extent of modifications required
- **0 pts:** No recommendations

#### 4. Section 215 - Recreation Opportunities (25 points)

a. Does it address accessible recreation beyond trails?

b. Is a specific recreation site identified

- **25 pts:** Clearly addresses priority activities: (1) camp shelters, camping facilities, and camping units; (2) hunting, fishing, shooting, or archery ranges or locations; (3) snow activities, including skiing and snowboarding; (4) water activities, including kayaking, paddling, canoeing, and boat launch ramps; (5) rock climbing; (6) biking; (7) off-highway vehicle recreation; (8) picnic facilities and picnic units; (9) outdoor constructed features
  - **20 pts:** Addresses activities in a general way and specific site named
  - **15 pts:** Specific site named, but activities unclear
  - **10 pts:** General area and activities named, i.e. a whole park
  - **5 pts:** Recreation implied and general area named but not detailed
  - **0 pts:** No recreation opportunities addressed
- 

#### 5. Section 215 - Recreation Implementation Readiness (15 points)

How ready is this for implementation?

- **15 pts:** Organization has active federal partnership + project in progress
  - **10 pts:** Federal partnership OR project planned
  - **7 pts:** Organization has relevant experience
  - **3 pts:** Has capacity but no active project
  - **0 pts:** No implementation capacity indicated
- 

#### 6. Population Impact (10 points)

Who will benefit?

- **10 pts:** Clearly identifies specific disability populations (mobility, cognitive, sensory) + serves 500+ annually. Specifically identifies Veterans.
  - **7 pts:** Identifies disability populations OR high service volume
  - **5 pts:** General disability community mentioned
  - **3 pts:** Limited population detail
  - **0 pts:** No population information
- 

#### 7. Site Justification (5 points)

Why this site?

- **5 pts:** Strong justification with demand data, feasibility, and community need
- **3 pts:** Basic justification provided
- **1 pt:** Site named but minimal justification
- **0 pts:** No justification

## **Total Score Interpretation**

### **90-120 Points: HIGH PRIORITY**

Strong alignment with EXPLORE Act goals. Recommend for immediate Section 214/215 implementation planning. Contact organization to develop partnership.

### **60-90 Points: QUALIFIED**

Good potential for EXPLORE Act implementation. May need additional planning or capacity building before proceeding.

### **30-60 Points: DEVELOPING**

Basic alignment but requires significant additional information or development. Consider for future phases.

### **Below 30 Points: NEEDS REFINEMENT**

Insufficient detail for EXPLORE Act implementation. Response may be valuable for general accessibility planning, but not Section 214/215 specific.

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## **Bonus Considerations (Add up to 10 points)**

- **+5 pts:** BLM or FWS lands (historically underserved)
  - **+5 pts:** Includes assistive technology plan or adaptive equipment access
  - **+3 pts:** Access to land addressed (transportation)
  - **+3 pts:** Multiple sites recommended
  - **+2 pts:** Construction-ready project
- 

## **Using This Rubric**

1. Read each survey response completely
2. Score each of the 6 categories
3. Calculate total score (0-100)
4. Add bonus points if applicable
5. Assign priority tier
6. Note key strengths for follow-up

## **EXPLORE Act Context**

### **Section 214 Requirements:**

- Develop at least 3 accessible trails per region (USFS, BLM, NPS, FWS)
- Meet ABA accessibility standards
- Provide signage, maps, promotional materials
- Complete within 7 years

### **Section 215 Requirements:**

- Develop at least 2 accessible recreation opportunities per region
  - Focus on camping, rock climbing, biking, snow activities, water activities
  - Include accessible facilities (restrooms, parking, shelters)
  - Complete within 7 years
- 

## **1. Federal Land and Trail Target (25 points)**

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- **3 pts:** Basic justification provided
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- **0 pts:** No justification

Of the "High Priority" projects, 15 are high volume projects that intend to serve 500+ individuals annually.

Location	Project	Land Area	Fed Land	Trail Access	Trail Readin	Rec Opp	Impl. Readin	Popula tion	Justifi cation	TOTAL SCORE
VA	Meadowood Sensory Nature Trail in Lorton, VA	BLM	25	15	25	25	15	10	3	118
			25	15	25	20	15	10	5	115
CT	Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge	FWS	25	15	25	25	10	10	5	115
KY	Mammoth Cave National Park	NPS	25	15	25	25	10	10	5	115
AZ	Lower Salt Recreation area	USFS	25	15	25	25	10	10	3	113
NC/TN	Great Smoky Mountains NP	NPS	15	15	25	25	15	10	5	110
CO	Summit County, Colorado	USFS	15	15	25	25	15	10	3	108
NH	White Mountain National Forest	USFS	25	15	15	25	10	10	5	105
KY	Red River Gorge NNF	USFS	25	10	15	25	15	10	5	105
CA	Yosemite	NPS	25	15	15	25	10	10	5	105
CA	Yosemite	NPS	25	15	25	25	0	10	5	105

## Laws that support people with disabilities

- [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) 1990, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in public accommodations and commercial transportation in the private sector and in State and local government. This law includes requirements for accessible new construction and renovation, reasonable accommodation, transportation, telecommunications, and just about everything affecting people's daily lives.
- [The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968](#) (P.L. 90-480) requires all buildings and facilities built or renovated in whole or in part with Federal funds to be accessible to, and usable by, physically disabled persons. Since 1968, official standards for making buildings accessible have been developed and the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board has been created to monitor and enforce compliance with the law.
- [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) (P.L. 93-112), as amended, is more encompassing than the Architectural Barriers Act. While the Architectural Barriers Act requires physical access to buildings and facilities, Section 504 requires program accessibility in all services provided with Federal dollars. The act itself is very brief. It states: *No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by Federal Financial Assistance or by any Executive Agency.* This means the NPS not only has to be concerned with enabling people with disabilities to have access to parks and facilities but, once there, the NPS also needs to do everything feasible to enable them to receive as close to the same benefits as those received by other visitors. This also means our obligation extends to individuals with visual impairments, hearing impairments, and cognitive impairments, as well as those with mobility impairments
- [Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), as amended, prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all employment practices within the Federal Government. Director's Order 16A deals with reasonable accommodation for NPS employees.
- [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), as amended, requires that all Federal agencies ensure that when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology; that, it is accessible to employees with disabilities. It also requires that individuals with disabilities who are seeking information or services from Federal agencies have access to and use of all information provided. Electronic and information technology is expansively defined. It includes computers (such as hardware, software, and accessible data such as web pages), facsimile machines, copiers, telephones, and other equipment used for transmitting, receiving, using, or storing information.

- Federally Designated Wilderness  
IN GENERAL - The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 reaffirms that nothing in the Wilderness Act prohibits wheelchair use in a wilderness area by an individual whose disability requires its use. The Wilderness Act requires no agency to provide any form of special treatment or accommodation or to construct any facilities or modify any conditions of lands within a wilderness area to facilitate such use.  
(2) Definition - for the purposes of paragraph (1), *the term wheelchair means a device designed solely for use by a mobility impaired person for locomotion, that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area.*
- The [accessibility of commercial services](#) within national parks is covered by [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#).

### Resources for Standards and Best Practices for Accessible Recreation:

- **Wheelchair and Other Power Driven Mobility Device Definitions (outside of Wilderness)**
  - <https://www.ada.gov/resources/opdmds/>
- **Wilderness Character (responsible for preserving qualities of wilderness character).**
  - <https://wilderness.net/practitioners/toolboxes/wilderness-character/>
- **Wheelchair's in Wilderness definition aligning with preservation of wilderness character.**
  - <https://wilderness.net/practitioners/toolboxes/accessibility/default.php>
- **Outdoor Developed Areas**
  - [Trails.](#)
  - [Trail access sign information.](#)
  - [Camping & picnic facilities.](#)
  - [Viewing areas](#)
  - [Beach Access](#)
  - [and more](#)
- **Web Contact Accessibility**
  - <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>
- **Anything and EVERYTHING Accessibility both ABA/ADA**
  - [Buildings and Sites.](#)
  - [Information and Communication](#)
  - [Technology.](#)
  - [Transportation Vehicles.](#)
  - [Streets and Sidewalks.](#)
  - [Passenger Vessels.](#)
  - [Reasonable Accommodations.](#)
  - [Reasonable Modifications](#)
  - [etc.](#)