

## **OUTDOOR RECREATION ON PUBLIC LANDS IN FREMONT COUNTY**

In terms of land area, Fremont County is the second largest county in Wyoming with 5.9 million acres within its boundaries. Of this total 2.1 million acres is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 981 thousand acres is managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and 343 thousand acres is owned by the State of Wyoming. These public lands support a substantial amount of outdoor recreation use by both local residents and visitors to the area. This report provides information on the estimated recreation use on BLM, USFS, and State lands in Fremont County. Fremont County also contains the Wind River Indian Reservation. While the reservation is not public land, the Shoshone and Arapahoe Tribes do sell fishing permits to non-tribal members. Information on total fishing permit sales by the Tribes is also included in the report.

### Bureau of Land Management

Although it includes parts of other counties, the BLM's Lander Resource Area is primarily located in Fremont County. Table 1 summarizes the estimated recreation use on the Lander Resource Area for 1999. This information was obtained from the BLM's RMIS data system. The BLM measures recreation use in terms of 1) Number of Participants, 2) Visitor Hours for participants, and 3) Visitor Days. A visitor day is defined as 12 visitor hours. The Lander Resource Area reported 2.2 million participants in 1999, 4.2 million visitor hours (1.9 hours per participant), and 348 thousand visitor days. The most common recreation activities in terms of visitor days were 1) Viewing – Other, 2) Viewing Cultural Sites, 3) Photography, 4) Hiking/Walking/Running, and 5) Viewing – Wildlife. The least common recreation activities in terms of visitor days were 1) Hunting Upland Bird, 2) Boating – Motorized, 3) Boating – Nonmotorized, 4) Hang-gliding, and 5) Hunting – Waterfowl.

### U.S. Forest Service

Fremont County contains parts of three national forests. However, the majority of Forest Service land in the County is managed by the Shoshone National Forest. Table 2 summarizes the estimated recreation use on the southern portion of the Shoshone National Forest for 1997. This information was obtained from the USFS's RIMs data system. 1997 was the latest year that RIMs data was available for the Shoshone National Forest. The Forest Service measures recreation use in terms of 1) Occasions (Visits) and 2) Recreation Visitor Days (RVDs). A RVD is defined as 12 hours of recreation. Only RVDs were included in this report. The southern portion of the Shoshone National Forest reported a total of 528 thousand RVDs in 1997. The most common recreation activities were 1) Viewing Scenery, 2) Camping, 3) Automobile Travel, 4) Ice & Snowcraft Travel, and 5) Hunting, Big Game. The least common recreation activities were 1) Diving, 2) Hunting, Upland Game, 3) Spectator Viewing, 4) Hunting, Small Game, and 5) Boating.

## State Lands

The majority of outdoor recreation use on State lands in Fremont County occurs on the three State Park located in the County (Boysen, Sinks Canyon, and South Pass City). Table 3 summarized total visitors and visitor days for the three state parks for 1998 and 1999 by month. Total visitor to State Parks in Fremont County were 258 thousand in 1998 and 274 thousand in 1999. Total visitor days were 562 thousand in 1998 and 600 thousand in 1999. Boysen had the highest number of visitors and visitors day in both 1998 and 1999 followed by Sinks Canyon, and South Pass City. Visitor days per visitor ranged from 4 days per visitor for Boysen to 0.5 days per visitor for Sinks Canyon, to 0.2 days per visitor for South Pass City.

Although snowmobile trails are primarily located on Federal lands, these trails are managed by the Division of State Parks. Table 4 summarizes snowmobiling for Fremont County for 1999. A total of 3,222 snowmobile registrations were sold in Fremont County in 1999. Of this total about 60 percent were purchased by residents and about 40 percent were purchased by nonresidents. Trail counters in Fremont County counted 56,362 snowmobiles in 1999. Assuming two counts per recreation day (one going and one coming back), this would represent over 28,000 recreation days of snowmobiling in Fremont County.

## Wind River Indian Reservation

The Shoshone and Arapahoe Tribes sell fishing permits for the reservation to non-tribal members. In 1998, the tribes sold 2,472 permits (Table 5). About 40 percent of these permits were to residents with the other 60 percent going to nonresidents. In 1999, the tribes sold 3,577 permits (Table 5). About 50 percent of these permits were to residents with the other 50 percent to nonresidents.

## Conclusion

Public lands are an important source of outdoor recreation opportunities in Fremont County for both local residents and visitors to the area. Although they may not be entirely comparable, the combination of BLM visitor days, USFS RVDs, and State Parks visitor days totals about 1.5 million user days annually in Fremont County. About 60 percent of these user days were on Federal land (BLM and USFS) with the other 40 percent on State Parks. Presumably, snowmobiling is included in these user days. The Wind River Indian Reservation also offers opportunities for non-private outdoor recreation in terms of fishing in Fremont County.

**Table 1. Outdoor Recreation on Public Lands in Fremont County - BLM**Bureau of Land Management - Lander Resource Area (1999)

	<u>Number of</u> <u>Participants</u>	<u>Visitor</u> <u>Hours</u>	<u>Visitor</u> <u>Days</u>	<u>Hours Per</u> <u>Participant</u>
Viewing - Other	441,151	658,590.50	54,882.54	1.49
Viewing - Cultural Sites	294,874	613,043.35	51,086.95	2.08
Photography	331,896	509,377.95	42,448.16	1.53
Hiking/Walking/Running	260,959	455,975.95	37,998.00	1.75
Viewing - Wildlife	243,243	443,197.30	36,933.11	1.82
Driving For Pleasure	105,800	285,700.00	23,808.33	2.70
Camping	28,207	246,281.60	20,523.47	8.73
Four Wheel Driving	87,500	175,000.00	14,583.33	2.00
Interpretive Exhibit Viewing	148,633	144,462.90	12,038.58	0.97
Hunting - Big Game	18,716	106,305.84	8,858.82	5.68
ATV Riding	31,773	91,228.75	7,602.40	2.87
Bicycling - Mountain	28,169	82,716.88	6,893.07	2.94
Picnicking	83,115	77,156.75	6,429.73	0.93
Horseback Riding	21,167	71,275.64	5,939.64	3.37
Backpacking	5,925	47,651.60	3,970.97	8.04
Climbing	7,637	35,132.40	2,927.70	4.60
Viewing - Wild Horses	14,580	28,708.00	2,392.33	1.97
Fishing	5,930	27,740.15	2,311.68	4.68
Motorcycling	8,750	17,500.00	1,458.33	2.00
Snowmobiling	3,435	11,770.00	980.83	3.43
Environmental Education	1,413	11,291.00	940.92	7.99
Rockhounding	5,789	10,306.25	858.85	1.78
Cross Country Skiing	3,638	7,081.50	590.13	1.95
Nature Study	4,154	4,769.70	397.48	1.15
Snowshoeing	3,263	4,765.75	397.15	1.46
Social Gathering	335	3,320.00	276.67	9.91
Target Practing	3,500	1,750.00	145.83	0.50
Pack Trips	80	670.00	55.83	8.38
Hunting - Waterfowl	185	570.00	47.50	3.08
Hang - Gliding	263	525.00	43.75	2.00
Boating - Nonmotorized	160	470.00	39.17	2.94
Boating - Motorized	15	60.00	5.00	4.00
Hunting - Upland Bird	13	50.00	4.17	3.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,194,268</b>	<b>4,174,444.76</b>	<b>347,870.42</b>	<b>1.90</b>

**Table 2. Outdoor Recreation on Public Lands in Fremont County - USFS**

Southern Shoshoni National  
Forest (1997)

	Recreation Visitor <u>Days</u>
Viewing Scenery	259,300
Camping	106,682
Automobile Travel	30,400
Ice & Snowcraft Travel	20,904
Hunting, Big Game	18,506
Horseback Riding	16,742
Hiking & Walking	16,667
Viewing Wildlife	14,500
Snow Play/Trail Head/Snow Park	8,529
Fishing	8,239
Mountain Climbing	6,799
Picnicking	5,900
Resort & Commercial	4,984
Cross-Country Skiing, Shoeing	1,897
Gathering Forest Products	1,802
Viewing Intrepretive Exhibits	1,533
General Information	875
Nature Study	788
Biking	740
Recreation Cabin Use	642
Boating	526
Hunting, Small Game	489
Spectator Viewing	408
Hunting, Upland Game	257
Diving	5
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Total	528,114

**Table 3. Outdoor Recreation on Public Lands in Fremont County - State**

	Visitors 1998	Visitors 1999	Visitor Days 1998	Visitor Days 1999
<u>Boysen State Park</u>				
May	19,125	16,912	77,782	68,783
June	23,456	28,225	95,397	114,791
July	33,427	32,372	135,950	131,660
August	23,488	24,610	95,528	100,089
September	14,923	16,706	60,693	67,946
October	7,298	11,097	29,681	45,132
Total	121,717	129,922	495,031	528,401
<u>Sinks Canyon State Park</u>				
May	15,423	15,701	8,370	8,520
June	20,807	24,058	11,292	13,056
July	31,401	31,364	17,041	17,021
August	20,850	24,177	11,315	13,121
September	16,689	17,298	9,057	9,387
October	12,305	13,192	6,678	7,159
Total	117,475	125,790	63,753	68,264
<u>South Pass City State Historic Site</u>				
May	1,575	1,241	277	218
June	3,231	3,287	569	579
July	6,475	6,664	1,140	1,173
August	5,065	4,563	891	803
September	2,979	3,084	524	543
Total	19,325	18,839	3,401	3,316
State Parks Total	258,517	274,551	562,185	599,981

**Table 4. Outdoor Recreation on Public Lands in Fremont County - Snowmobiling**

Snowmobile Registrations sold in Fremont County (1999)

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Resident	1,995	61.9%
Nonresident	1,227	38.1%
Total	3,222	100.0%

Snowmobile Recreation Days (1999)

<u>Location</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Recreation Days</u>
Middle of Game Warden	2,952	1,476
Pelham Lake	8,111	4,056
Tie Hack	5,275	2,638
Green Creek	5,444	2,722
Warm Springs Bridge	12,302	6,151
Sweetwater/Pinecreek	10,112	5,056
Sinks Canyon/Bruce's Parking Area	5,784	2,892
South Pass	3,552	1,776
Rock Shop	2,830	1,415
Total	56,362	28,181

**Table 5. Shoshone & Arapahoe Tribes Fishing Permits**

	1998	1999
<u>Resident</u>		
Seasonal	495	989
One Day	273	352
Seven Day	16	33
Senior Citizen	109	238
Youth (7-11)	27	39
Youth (12-18)	56	86
Total Resident	976	1,737
<u>Non-Resident</u>		
Seasonal	175	245
One Day	836	976
Seven Day	320	418
Senior Citizen	66	82
Youth (7-11)	25	31
Youth (12-18)	74	88
Total Non-Resident	1,496	1,840
Total Permits	2,472	3,577