

**Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources
ANNUAL REPORT – FY2014 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)**

Agency Information:

Director:

Milward Simpson, Director

Agency Contact Person:

Michele Haagenson
(307) 777-7496
2301 Central Avenue
Barrett Building, 4th Floor
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Website:

<http://wyospcr.state.wy.us>

Other Locations:

Cheyenne:	Wyoming Arts Council Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund
Laramie:	SHPO Cultural Records Office Office of the State Archeologist
Lander:	State Trails Program Field Office
Shoshoni:	Central Construction Office
Statewide:	State Parks and Historic Sites

Statutory References:

Established 1895, reorganized July 1, 1999, as the Department of State Parks & Cultural Resources.

W.S. 9-2-401 through 9-2-419 – State Archives, Museums and Historic Department
W.S. 9-2-901 through 9-2-911 – Wyoming Arts Council
W.S. 9-2-1701 through 9-2-1708 – Reorganization of State Government
W.S. 9-2-2017 – Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources Creation
W.S. 9-2-2301 through 9-2-2308 – Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund Act
W.S. 11-10-113 – Wyoming Pioneer Memorial Museum
W.S. 16-6-801 through 16-6-805 – Works of Art in Public Buildings
W.S. 24-14-101 through 24-14-102 – State Parks Road Program
W.S. 31-2-401 through 31-2-409 – Snowmobiles
W.S. 31-2-701 through 31-2-707 – Off-road Recreational Vehicles
W.S. 36-4-101 through 36-4-123 – State Parks and Cultural Resources
W.S. 36-8-103 through 36-8-107 – State Parks and Reserves – In General
W.S. 36-8-301 through 36-8-320 – State Parks and Reserves – Hot Springs State Park
W.S. 36-8-501 through 36-8-502 – State Parks and Reserves – South Pass City State Historical Site
W.S. 36-8-601 through 36-8-602 – State Parks and Reserves – Curt Gowdy State Park
W.S. 36-8-701 through 36-8-702 – State Parks and Reserves – Sinks Canyon State Park
W.S. 36-8-801 – State Parks and Reserves – Fort Fred Steele State Historical Site
W.S. 36-8-901 through 36-8-902 – State Parks and Reserves – Bear River State Park
W.S. 36-8-1001 through 36-8-1002 – State Parks and Reserves – Wyoming Territorial Prison
W.S. 36-8-1203 through 36-8-1204 – State Parks and Reserves – Designated Transfer of Lands
W.S. 36-8-1401 through 36-8-1403 – Wyoming Historic Mine Trail and Byway
W.S. 36-8-1501 – Other Designations
W.S. 39-17-111 – Snowmobile Gas Tax Distribution

Basic Information:

The Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources (Arts Parks & History) consists of approximately 167 full time, 14 permanent part-time, and 76 seasonal positions. The department consists of two divisions: the Division of State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails (SPHS&T), and the Division of Cultural Resources. In addition, the department includes an administrative services section (Director's Office, Human Resources, Accounting, Information Technology and Public Information/Education) serving both divisions.

The Department's Headquarters, Wyoming Arts Council, and Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund offices are located in Cheyenne, with State Historic Preservation and State Archaeologist field offices in Laramie, Trails Program offices in Lander, Central Construction Office in Shoshoni, and State Parks and Historic Sites located statewide.

With recent economic impact studies, Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails has a cumulative economic annual impact of \$469.1 million, \$20.0 million in state and local tax revenue, and supports 3,891 jobs. In a 2009 economic study, Wyoming's state parks and historic sites had a \$78.1 million impact which supported 1,123 jobs and \$3.0 million in taxes. In a 2012 economic study, Wyoming's Snowmobile Trails had a \$146.8 million impact supporting 1,300 jobs and \$7.4 million in taxes. In a 2012 economic study, Wyoming's Off Road Vehicle Trails had a \$244.2 million impact supporting 1,468 jobs and \$9.6 million in taxes.

Clients Served: Wyoming citizens, out-of-state visitors, local, county and state governments and agencies, public schools and institutions of higher education, Wyoming nonprofit organizations, Wyoming businesses.

Group to Which Agency Reports: State Parks and Cultural Resources Commission (Advisory)

Number of Members: Nine

Meeting Frequency: Quarterly and additionally, as needed.

Budget Information/Expenditures for FY15:

The total operating budget for the department for Fiscal Year 13-14 was \$50,325,849, of which \$34,615,424 were general funds. The Department's budget accounts for about 1.5% of the state's overall General Fund budget. The department expended \$23,993,482 during SFY 2015 consisting of \$16,081,169 general funds, \$3,616,093 federal funds and \$4,296,220 other funds.

Core Business/Primary Functions: (What does your agency do?)

1. Provide Arts and Cultural Resources Grants and Services to the Public
2. Provide Archival Services to the Public
3. Provide a State Museum and Associated Services to the Public
4. Provide Archaeological Services to the Public
5. Provide Historic Preservation Services to the Public
6. Provide State Parks and Historic Sites and associated services and amenities for the Public
7. Provide Motorized and Non-Motorized Trails and Associated Services to the Public

Performance Highlights/Major Accomplishments of FY15:

1. **Provide Arts and Cultural Resources Grants and Services to the Public**

This service is provided by the Wyoming Arts Council (WAC) and the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund (WCTF)

Wyoming Arts Council WAC

The WAC has seen a great deal of turnover in staff over the past year as long-time WAC employees have retired. Five new staff member will join the staff in FY 2015 and 2016. In addition the WAC has moved office spaces, from the Kendrick Building to the Barrett Building, and started the creation of a new five year strategic plan to be

implemented in FY 2016.

In FY15, The WAC distributed 244 grants totaling \$934,910 to organizations and artists around the state of Wyoming to offer programs and services in the arts to local communities.

In addition to providing grant support to its constituents, the WAC produced several important programs:

- The WAC offered juried fellowships in creative writing and visual arts to nine Wyoming residents to acknowledge their artist excellence and encourage them to keep creating powerful art.
- The WAC sponsored the Biennial Art Exhibition at the University of Wyoming Art Museum. This exhibition focused on work created within the last two years by WAC visual arts fellowship recipients.
- The WAC planned and promoted sixteen concerts, sponsored by the Piatigorsky Foundation, held in rural communities around Wyoming.
- In January, 2015, the WAC hosted the annual Governor's Arts Awards with over 400 people in attendance. Governor Mead gave the State of the Arts address and awarded three master artists for their artistic excellence and service to the state.
- The WAC Folk Arts Program and UW American Studies Program with support from the Wyoming State Museum produced "Art of the Hunt", an exhibit from five years of collaborative research documenting how Wyoming's outdoor heritage has created renowned artisans of hunting and fishing gear.
- The WAC Arts Education Program received a three year grant of \$10,000 per year from Americans for the Arts to partner with the Wyoming Department of Education and the Wyoming Arts Alliance to create a statewide arts education policy, task force, and action research for pre K-16 and community organizations.
- The WAC hosted the statewide competition of Poetry Out Loud, in which ten schools participated, and sponsored the winner at the national competition in Washington D.C.
- The WAC partnered with the Wyoming Humanities Council to host "125 days of Arts and Humanities" which is an online calendar of events. This project was in celebration of 125 years of statehood.
- The WAC hosted the annual visual arts professional development gathering CLICK!, which saw approximately 75 attendees. During April in Cody which brought together visual artists from around the state.

Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund (WCTF)

- The WCTF Board has been working to clarify and strengthen their roles and responsibilities. In November 2014, the board approved a new Strategic Plan, with a newly identified vision of "Wyoming is a place where the cultural life and heritage of the state thrives, and is valued, enjoyed and supported by all," with six identified goals and supporting objectives and strategies, to guide the board, staff and program through the next three to five years.
- In 2015, a newly created logo was implemented throughout the Cultural Trust Fund program.
- In 2015, the Wyoming Legislature approved the addition of one new board member, and placing an existing board member into an ex-officio, non-voting status, and adding a new board to the nomination process. The Cultural Trust Fund has a unique board nomination process which relies on the expertise of existing boards: the Wyoming Arts Council, the State Parks and Cultural Resources Commission, and now the addition of the National Register Review Board. The moving of an existing board member to ex-officio, identified as the person serving as the Administrator for the Division of Cultural Resources was requested and approved to eliminate a previously existing potential of numerous conflicts of interest resulting in a

need to be recused from several grant deliberations.

- In 2015, the Cultural Trust Fund corpus contained \$15.05 million, invested in the State Agency Pool by the Wyoming State Treasurer. Interest earnings to cover the two grant rounds in FY15 totaled \$344,713.34. The Cultural Trust Fund used a portion of its reserve, created by prior year interest earnings, to cover awards given in 2015. The reserve was created over the eight years of interest earnings when awards did not equal full interest earnings. Due to declining interest earnings over the last several years, the reserve has been seriously eroded.
- In 2015, the Cultural Trust Fund had two grant rounds, FY 15-A and FY 15-B. In 15-A, with grants beginning effective date of July 1, 2014, had 42 applications requesting over \$1.2 million in grant support. The board awarded 21 grants totaling \$165,590 in awards. In 15-B, with grants beginning effective date of January 1, 2015, had 35 applications requesting over \$851,000 in grant support. The board awarded 24 grants totaling \$255,331.
- Combined 2015 grant awards provided assistance in a wide variety of cultural areas, including archaeological/prehistory research, historic preservation, organizational infrastructure, endowment challenges, contemporary performances, arts education, museum exhibits, humanities programming, Native American powwows, and major equipment purchases or facility rehabilitation. Statistically, in 2015, 20.7% of grants supported historic preservation activities; and 19% of grants supported facility maintenance/capital equipment purchases; and over 40 FTE personnel were supported by WCTF grant dollars (13.31 internal personnel, 27.063 external (contractors)).

2. Provide Archival Services to the Public

The State Archives' performance highlights and major accomplishments this year reflect our commitment to publicizing our holdings and helping government agencies to preserve and manage their electronic records. These highlights and accomplishments include:

- The State Archives assisted 5,425 researchers. Of those, 1,904 researchers from forty-one states and three countries visited our reading room in Cheyenne. The most used documents during the year were school records, land records, and court documents.
- The State Archives continued to develop the Digital Archives to be used for the long-term storage, preservation, and management of electronic records. Fifty-two users from thirteen agencies are participating in the project. During the year, we made substantial progress toward a long-term funding model for the Digital Archives.
- Using funds allocated to us as part of the Digital Archives project, the State Archives completed scanning the records of twenty-nine Wyoming governors and many other important state records. The records of the Warren Administration through the Sullivan Administration are now available in electronic format. We have also scanned the State Supreme Court case files from 1869 to 2011.
- The State Archives used other money allocated to the Digital Archives project for software licenses and maintenance, vendor support, and project management assistance.
- The State Archives implemented new procedures and scanning technology in our State Imaging Center to assist agencies seeking to make the transition from paper to electronic format.
- The State Archives put the "Wyoming Blue Book" online using wiki software. The Blue Book, an administrative history of the state, had been available only in paper form. We expect that easier access, enhanced searching capability, and increased promotion will result in much more use of this resource.
- The State Archives created an exhibit featuring the Wyoming State Constitution. The exhibit was in honor of the 125th anniversary of Wyoming Statehood and was displayed in the lobby of the Barrett Building in

April and May.

- The State Archives started a State Archives electronic newsletter. We have emailed two editions and our mailing list has grown to over two hundred recipients.
- The State Archives social media campaigns continued to grow this past year. We have 6,205 followers on Facebook, 1,146 followers on Twitter, and our blog received 14,940 views during the past year.
- October is Archives Month and last October, the State Archives partnered with the Cheyenne Genealogical Society to raise awareness of the valuable genealogical records in our collections. We also participated in national efforts – E-records Day and #AskAnArchivist Day – to promote archives.
- The State Archives have entered over sixty of our collection inventories into the *Rocky Mountain Online Archive* to provide better online visibility and access to our collections.
- The State Historical Records Advisory Board, on which the State Archivist serves as Coordinator, administered two very successful workshops on collecting oral histories and managing electronic records. The Board also awarded grants totaling \$11,000 to seven repositories throughout the state for projects to preserve and provide access to Wyoming's historical records.

3. Provide a State Museum and Associated Services to the Public

- In FY15, Education Programs Presented on-site at the Wyoming State Museum served 3,925 participants through 140 programs and totaling 166.5 instructional hours. The total impact of 52 instructional trunks sent out by the museum in FY was 3,360 participants. Special Programming (Family Days, Lecture Series, and Night at the Museum) totaled 2,030 participants. The total Educational Impact of the Wyoming State Museum for FY15 is represented in 9,315 participants, 54 Wyoming schools, 12 Wyoming school districts, 24 Wyoming communities, 10 Wyoming counties, five Wyoming school alternative programs, 22 Wyoming programs/groups/organizations/daycares, eight out-of-state schools, and eight states outside of Wyoming.
- FY15 saw the Wyoming State Museum serve 146,112 visitors including; tour groups, educational programs, off-site educational programs, Discovery Trunks, and travelling exhibits. During the period of July 2014-Dec 2014 visitation to sites which showcase artifacts from the museum collection saw visitation of 183,781.
- During FY15 The Wyoming State Museum embarked on a program to update exhibits and renovate exhibiting space to conform to current ADA and National Interpretation standards. Currently the State Museum has successfully updated 6,300 Square feet of exhibit space, which represents 44 % of total exhibit space in the museum.
- The Wyoming State Museum continues to conduct visitor surveys to ensure we are presenting what the public desires in a destination museum. We use the information gathered to create new exhibits and programs which better serve the desires of those who wish to visit the museum. Two hundred eighty-one visitor surveys were received in FY 2015. These surveys are self selecting and fluctuate very much by season.
- FY2015 realized the culmination of several years worth of work on a new interpretive plan and 50% conceptual design for the Wyoming State Museum in cooperation with the museum design firm, Designminds from Fairfax Virginia. This interpretive plan and initial concept design shows the physical representation of meetings and open houses the museum has held with statewide stakeholders about the State Museum and the story of Wyoming's history as it should be shown in the museum. Going forward the Museum is taking this information into hand as we plan future exhibits and strive how to give the visitor the best experience possible with each visit to the museum.

- The Wyoming State Museum received the TripAdvisor certificate of Excellence for visitor satisfaction and top tier ratings.
- In FY15, the museum obtained \$100,000 in one time funding from the Wyoming legislature to conserve and stabilize over 30 objects in the state's collection. The first four artifacts intended to be addressed are an original Abbot Downing Yellowstone coach, two unit flags from the Spanish American War, and a drum used during the Civil War. This funding, and its subsequent conservation work, will keep these important pieces of Wyoming's history from decaying beyond the point of repair.
- The museum now has a 95% completion rate for its artifact inventory. By the end of FY15, over 70,000 objects were catalogued, photographed, and properly stored. Each object now has a file in the collections database which will provide for faster retrieval for exhibit purposes. Retrieval for review by researchers is also much simpler and quicker.
- In FY15, the museum received donations of 668 artifacts from 88 donors.
- The museum assisted 38 Wyoming museums and patrons with questions regarding artifact care and Wyoming history in FY15.

4. Provide Archaeological Services to the Public

- The Archaeological Survey provided cultural resource services to nine state and federal agencies including Wyoming State Parks, Yellowstone National Park, the Wyoming Department of Transportation, the Nez Perce Trail Foundation, the Bureau of Land Management, Shoshone National Forest, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest, Caribou-Targhee National Forest, and the Bridger-Teton National Forest.
- The Archaeological Survey conducted over 25 cultural resource projects between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015, generating over \$540,000 in revenue during that period.
- The University of Wyoming Archaeological Repository (UWAR), a facility managed and operated by this office, serviced over 30 clients including the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Department of Energy, Wyoming State Parks, Wyoming Fish and Wildlife, several county and local museums, and a range of private cultural resource management firms.
- For these clients the UWAR processed 88 accessions between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015, generating over \$44,500 in revenue during that period.
- The UWAR assisted 13 visiting researchers in using our collections to augment their research.
- Staff of the Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist (OWSA) conducted 14 public outreach programs consisting of public presentations given to avocational groups, school students, and other members of the public. These programs presented information on ongoing research conducted by OWSA staff and educated program attendees on various aspects of Wyoming's historic and prehistoric past.
- OWSA staff presented eight papers at five professional conferences and symposia including the annual Wyoming Association of Professional Archaeologists Conference, two Plains Anthropological Conferences, the Society for American Archaeology conference, and the 12th Biennial Scientific Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem: Crossing Boundaries in Science, Management, and Conservation. Papers updated the professional archaeological community on ongoing research being conducted by OWSA staff.
- OWSA staff assisted in the development of three interpretive plans for Medicine Lodge Archaeological Site, Independence Rock Historic Site, and Fort Bonneville Historic Site.

5. Provide Historic Preservation Services to the Public

- In October 2014, the SHPO staff concluded a project of recording over 400 properties related to automotive tourism in Wyoming from 1916 to the early 1970s. This effort completes an initial inventory of roadside buildings and landscapes started in 2013 with the survey of the Lincoln Highway through Wyoming. Eighteen of Wyoming's 23 counties were inventoried for lodging, dining, and automotive support and repair building associated with named highways such as the Yellowstone Highway, the Black and Yellow Trail, the Custer Battlefield Highway, and the Rocky Mountain Highway, among others. In addition, resources association with numbered highways such as U.S. 20 and U.S. 16 were also recorded. SHPO staff are creating a database of images and location information relevant to these properties.
- SHPO honored 22 Centennial families in the 2014 Centennial Farm and Ranch program, which brings the total number of families recognized to 197 since the program was re-established in 2006. Staff are producing a Centennial Farm and Ranch yearbook each year. This program has provided SHPO with an entrée into Wyoming's agricultural realm and has resulted in a very successful working relationship with the Wyoming Stock Growers Association who consult with SHPO on various public grazing issues. It has also served to highlight the positive aspects of the Wyoming SHPO to our national, state, and county officials, as well as the agricultural community, who know only the regulatory function we serve.
- During Federal Fiscal Year 2014, the SHPO provided 14 Certified Local Government Grants to local communities totaling \$71,505.24. These two year grants (October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2015), given only to authorized local city/town or county governments, provide financial resources to accomplish local goals in Historic Preservation. FY14 grants supported activities such as an extensive survey and inventory of historic downtown Casper and the Old Yellowstone District; local community walking historic site brochures; archaeological research in Park County including post-fire inventory of the Hardluck Fire area and the Washakie Wilderness National Register of Historic Places survey; the 2014 Preserve WY Conference held in Powell; and the technical and archival requirement of measured engineering drawing of the historic Toomey's Mills prior to its demolition.
- The 2014 Preserve Wyoming Conference held in Powell in September 2014 brought together nearly 130 representatives of Wyoming's Certified Local Government preservation boards and Wyoming's Main Street program. This educational conference is held every year to provide training for representatives in both disciplines and provide an opportunity to share information and resources which benefit both programs.
- In 2014, the Wyoming SHPO began the process of revising the Comprehensive State Historic Plan, which is a requirement of the National Park Service. The process involves a series of in-house staff meeting focused on reviewing the historic preservation challenges identified in the previous comprehensive plan; a public discussion and listening session held at the 2014 Preserve Wyoming Conference; an online survey distributed via announcements on the SHPO web page, on Facebook, and in emails to a variety of listserv mailing lists, along with postcard mailings of the survey's availability to state and federal agencies, local governments, tribal governments, the local chambers of commerce, associated state industries, cultural resource and historic preservation professions, etc. Two hundred sixteen online responses were received. The revised Comprehensive Plan is currently in the editing stage and will be submitted to the National Park Service for review and comment late summer of 2015 and will become effective in 2016.
- In 2014, WYSHPO staff processed 1,654 requests for written comments on proposed actions in the State of Wyoming. Staff completed 1,275 file search requests and 887 technical assistance requests. A total of 2,631 cultural resources were reviewed for eligibility to the NRHP and a total of 69 historic properties were adversely affected. A considerable amount of time was dedicated implementing the BLM/WYSHPO Statewide Protocol and working to educate industry and other parties involved in the process. In addition to the BLM Protocol, the USFS Programmatic Agreement was extended and a statewide agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service is in progress. Consultation continued on numerous large

development projects in the state such as the Gateway West Power line, Chokecherry-Sierra Madre Wind Farm, Transwest Express and Gateway South Power line proposals.

- In 2014, our Monuments and Markers program restored eleven large brown cast aluminum signs. All of these signs were either vandalized or had suffered deterioration from severe weather conditions. Two of these include the signs near Devils Tower and are frequently visited by the public. The program manager is working on a plan for the coming year to prioritize the maintenance work that is needed. Currently, four monuments near Fort Laramie will be restored and refurbished. They are all in poor condition and have not had any maintenance on the since the time they were installed in the 1951 by the Wyoming Historic Landmark Commission. SHPO is working closely with State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails (SPHS&T) staff to develop a priority list and maintenance schedule. The funding recently provided by the Wyoming Legislature enables the program to work on reducing the backlog of maintenance needs on the Monuments and Markers in the state.
- On May 30, 2014, the Historic Mine Trail and Byway program of SHPO dedicated the Trona Trail Historic Mine Byway through Sweetwater County. In Sweetwater County the world's largest and purest deposit of trona is being mined. This mine byway provides an opportunity for the visitor traveling through the area to learn about this significant resource and the historic locations of trona mining activities. With seven roadside interpretive panels and three route map locations, this byway links site locations along I-80 just east of Little America and WYO 374 into Green River. The byway also includes a smart phone app interpretation option developed by the Wyoming company, "TravelStory". Visitors with GPS enabled Smartphones using the app can listen to pre-recorded interpretation of the trail triggered automatically by GPS as the visitor comes into proximity to each interpretation location. The Trona Trail is part of the Historic Mine Trail and Byway program, established by the Wyoming Legislature in 2005 and managed by the Wyoming SHPO. The program exists to identify historic mine locations and designated trails and byways that link historic mining areas within the state of Wyoming.
- During June 11-13, 2015, the Wyoming SHPO partnered with the Wyoming State Historical Society to bring together the Preserve Wyoming conference with a 125th Statehood Anniversary Conference planned by the Historical Society. The "Our Place in the West" conference, held at the new Gateway Center at the University of Laramie, brought over 200 participants from around the state for this educational and informational conference. Over 70 presenters provided panels and presentations on technical, nuts and bolts information for Certified Local Government organization representatives, along with a historical perspective on topics ranging from retrospectives from the Centennial Commission representatives; Wyoming's landscape and dominate current industries of mining and agriculture; personal stories of pioneers and our Native peoples; to myths and legends of our past and social life and mores of our current times. In addition to the presentations, nine organizations and individuals representing historic preservation efforts across Wyoming were honored with annual Historic Preservation Awards.
- Using construction budgets from user fees and Major Maintenance funds, SPHS&T was able to preserve, stabilize, maintain and restore many of its historic structures to maintain their status. We are currently in the process of preserving the newly acquired Douglas POW Officer's Quarters, We are preparing to stabilize the LX Bar Ranch complex when the state formally acquires it. In addition, the agency has partnered with the University of Wyoming to preserve the extensive collection at South Pass City and Wyoming Territorial Prison State Historic Sites.
- SPHS&T has made a concerted effort to interpret and educate the public about these sites through development of new interpretive trails and development of both interior and exterior exhibits. In the past year we have developed updated exhibits for an interpretive trail at Independence Rock, developed interior and exterior exhibits for Medicine Lodge, and completed a number of other smaller interior and exterior interpretive media projects.

6. Provide State Parks and Historic Sites and associated services and amenities for the Public

- All state parks and several historic sites were open for business 365 days this past year. Staff oversees 11 state parks, 27 historic sites, two archaeological and petroglyph sites, and one recreational area totaling 41 sites.
- In calendar year 2014, there were over 3.9 million visitors to SPHS&T, which equates to a 1% increase in visitation from 2013.
- This year the SPHS&T is a finalist for the Gold Medal Award, a national award given in partnership with NRPA, American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration and Musco Lighting. The Gold Medal Award honors State Parks throughout the United States that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management, and agency recognition. Each agency is judged on its ability to address the needs of those it serves through the collective energies of citizens, staff, and elected officials. Wyoming is the only western state to be a finalist.
- The Wyoming State Parks Law Enforcement section received the 2015 Platinum Award of Excellence for demonstrating leadership and excellence in park safety from the Park Law Enforcement Association (PLEA). PLEA is a coalition of local, state, and federal park law enforcement officers dedicated to improving law enforcement, visitor protection, and park operation services through professional development to assure better quality of life and leisure opportunities in local, state, and national park and recreation areas.
- This year, the Wyoming State Legislature passed SF0058, providing line of duty death and disability benefits similar to those all other Wyoming law enforcement officers have been receiving to the Rangers from Wyoming State Parks. Law enforcement ranked 6th in our visitor use survey as important management functions of the Division, and the visitor use survey also indicated that 99% of our visitors thought that our staff was Fairly to Very Helpful. Also per the survey, two-thirds of our visitors are families and indicate that it is imperative that they feel safe while recreating at our facilities, we strive to provide that safe and enjoyable environment while also protecting the natural resource to enable future generations an opportunity to take part in our system.
- Finding qualified officers for the number of visitors at the parks each summer, especially during the three summer holiday weekends, continues to be a challenge. Many times, there is an officer to visitor ratio of less than one officer per 2,500 visitors. The recommended ratio by the International Association of Chiefs' of Police is 1.75 officers per 1,000 residents. This situation creates the potential to provide less than optimum public safety to our visitors and less than optimum officer safety for the employees.
- This year the Wyoming State Legislature passed the HB0013, which provided the Division the flexibility to use up to 25% of the Special Revenue Fund (made up of use fees) on maintenance. This is anticipated to greatly assist in bringing the system back to a nominal level of service at all sites.
- This past year, we completed the five year Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP is a compliance requirement to receive Land and Water Conservation Funds.
- This past year, we also completed the five year Visitor Survey to determine who are visitors are, how they recreate and what they want, need and desire in relation to our recreation services. In the 2014 Visitor Use Survey, along with an increase in visitation, visitors indicated the number of repeat visits is increasing, average length of stay is increasing, and the number of people identifying state parks as a destination is increasing. The percentage of visitors traveling with an RV/trailer made the biggest increase of any type of recreation equipment and for the first time visitors most frequently identified RV/trailer camping as their primary activity. SPHS&T has made a major investment to improve park facilities, especially campgrounds and RV sites. Clearly a majority of the public likes what we are doing.
- In an effort to mitigate the effects of reduced budgets, the department continues to develop a

comprehensive, robust volunteer program managed by our volunteer coordinator position. Over 700 volunteers donated over 21,000 hours to Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails. This donation is equivalent to 10 full time employees. Of the 700 individual volunteers, over 450 of those were members of volunteer groups, and over 50 were camp hosts. Also, in conjunction with site staff, the Wyoming Conservation Corp (WCC) worked on a multitude of projects in parks from trail maintenance and trail creation, painting and maintenance of historic facilities, and pine bark beetle mitigation.

- Staff developed, administered and completed several projects paid by funds derived from entrance and camping fees including: yurts at Sinks Canyon, playgrounds at Curt Gowdy, campsite amenities (electric & water service) at Guernsey Sandy Beach & Glendo Two Moon and new tables & grills statewide, improved camping sites at Keyhole Reservoir, new host campsites at South Pass City & Glendo, four toilet replacements, water system upgrades at four locations, sidewalk repairs, irrigation system, landscaping projects and numerous system-wide energy efficiency retrofit projects. Projects administered and completed using Motor Boat Gas Tax Funds include: Keyhole – Water System Upgrade, and Seminoe – Designated Sites at South Red Hills. These amenities help market our facilities which boosts the local economic impact as well as bringing in additional revenue for future construction projects. We have also increased special events and interpretative and educational opportunities at many sites which also help capture additional time/visitation from visitors.
- Staff also managed the completion of various projects throughout the system utilizing Major Maintenance Funds including; health/life safety and maintenance repairs of existing buildings and their associated systems, emergency maintenance and rehabilitation of water systems at Boysen and Glendo, maintenance and repair of gravel roads, and repair or maintenance of asphalt roads and parking lots.
- The Division is nearing the end of a two year process to develop a Master Plan for Boysen State Park. The final public comment period ended June 30 and the Boysen Master Plan is currently under final review for approval by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Division is also completing a twenty year Master Plan for Hot Springs State Park. The Draft Preferred Alternative will be presented to the public in September. The final Master Plan will be finalized after the public presentation.
- The Division wrapped up the statewide concession master plan that identified needs for new or expanded concession opportunities in State Parks and is implementing as much of the plan as possible. We expanded an opportunity for our visitors at Curt Gowdy State Park with "Navigation Courses" which include GPS usage and map reading. In addition, we have merchandise for sale at Curt Gowdy as well. The plan recommended that more regularly schedule meetings be held with long-term concessionaires and site staff. We have started these meetings and are in the process of developing agenda items to implement these meetings. In addition, the plan recommended a ranking system for the annual concession inspections. The ranking scale, which was implemented summer of 2015, is based on 1 to 5; 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. We negotiated a master development plan for the TePee Pools at Hot Springs State Park (HSSP) and are awaiting the final HSSP Master Plan prior to proceeding with other concession opportunities at this park.
- In response to customer demand, the Division continues to improve the offering of campsite reservation sites in our system. Our on-line reservation user may now build a "user account" which allows users to have their personal information remain in the system year after year. We have enhanced the information for each of the reservable sites that include: site length, width, distance to drinking water and restroom facilities, available shade, etc. Through upgrades to our reporting, superintendents are able to make the determination of which campsite areas are more commonly used and can plan for future expansion if warranted. We also effectively oversee 65+ special/short term permits, 53 cabin leases, six cooperative agreements, 19 easements, 12 friend's agreements, five grazing leases, seven long term concessions, 23 leases, nine MOU's and 170+ selling agent contracts.
- In addition, the Division oversees the park and historic sites fee program which includes two new offerings

for the Department which are the ATM Donations and a merchandising program.

- State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails issued three Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants totaling \$251,393.06. The State Trails Program issued seventeen Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants in total \$1,310,181.20.

7. Provide Motorized and Non-Motorized Trails and Associated Services to the Public

- There were approximately 500,000 snowmobile use days and over 2.5 million ORV use days this past year on motorized trails and facilities provided for the public by the Trails program.
- The State Trails Program was again a sponsor for the 2015 Trails Summit held in Casper and received many kudos for the work we have done expanding our non-motorized coverage state-wide. Curt Gowdy was again voted top trail system in Wyoming. Glendo and Guernsey trail systems are also coming on-line and getting great attention nationwide.
- The State Trails Program partnered with Tread Lightly! and other public agencies within Wyoming such as Bureau of Land Management Wyoming State Office, Local Field Offices, and Districts, USFS Region #2 and #4 Wyoming (Black Hills NF, Bighorn NF, Bridger-Teton NF, Medicine Bow NF, Shoshone NF, Targee NF, Wasatch-Cache NF), National Park Service (Yellowstone NP, Teton NP) to initiate a Ride on Wyoming Education campaign. The purpose and focus of the Ride on Wyoming campaign is to establish a model public/private partnership of diverse stakeholders to address issues associated with motorized recreation involving the use of motorized vehicles on Wyoming trails and public/private lands
- The program budgeted funding to provide more than 2,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, each trail groomed multiple times per week, for a total of 66,550 miles of trail grooming during the 2014-2015 season.
- The State Trails Program continued to actively partner with local and federal agencies to provide access to recreational trails across the state. It issued eight maintenance, planning, and construction grants that total \$228,750 and 40 Snow and ORV Trail Ranger grants totaling \$550,350 to help cooperating agencies provide on-the-ground staffing to help provide customer service and education to trail users. These efforts helped provide access that resulted in over 2.5 million use days this past year on motorized trails managed by the program.
- The State Trails Program continues to work with land managing agencies, on-trail businesses, local economic development and chambers of commerce, and other groups to ensure trail access remains open for high quality trail experiences that will continue to attract tourism spending and additional economic development across the state.

State Parks and Cultural Resources

