

When paperwork isn't the hardest part.

A government wide study in commercial use
applications across land-management agencies

18F

in partnership with USA.gov

The applications to start the permit process are not difficult, despite mixed vocabulary.

Agencies use various terms for different contracts and authorizations. A permit could imply something simple like a parking pass or a 200 page, legally-binding, contract governing filming rights.

Sport Fishing Regulations

(including crabbing, clamming, oystering and shrimping)

Special Conditions

You may Fish, Crab, Clam, Oyster, and Shrimp in the Indian River Lagoon, Mosquito Lagoon, Banana River Lagoon, Mosquito Control Impoundments and Interior Freshwater Lakes except for the restricted areas of the Kennedy Space Center or as noted on the map. The normal restricted area is expanded during these temporary closures, you may call the Refuge for more information. Individuals found in NASA's normal or expanded Restricted Area will be subject to Federal Law Enforcement. Florida Fishing Regulations apply as well as the following Refuge Specific Regulations:

- You must possess a current signed Refuge Sports Fishing Permit while fishing on the Refuge. The permit is self-explanatory and must be read and understood. Merritt Island NWR.
- You may fish at night from a boat in the Indian River Lagoon, Indian River, Mosquito Lagoon, and Banana River. Night fishing is not permitted in the Mosquito Control Impoundments.
- You may not transport, or carry firearms on National Wildlife Refuge property with all provisions of State and Local laws. Persons carrying firearms in accordance with the refuge regulation specific refuge regulation (32 CFR Part 32).
- You may not park, firework, or use any other equipment in or near your vehicle or on the Refuge property.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

2013 Boating and Fishing map and Regulations

Outfitters and guides know where, when, and how to apply.

The general process across agencies is well understood by incumbent operators. Rec.gov helps outfitters buy passes for their customers, but formal guides and excursions requires a contract through each respective jurisdiction. Interactions with federal agents are friendly, but operators feel constrained by outdated and irrelevant “guidelines.”

GENERALIZED PERMIT PROCESS

SEARCH



Find local office /
Call local office /
Consult website directly /

CONTACT



Passed to special or
commercial use
administrator

FILL



Complete application

DISCUSS




Review application with FS
representative and discuss
details of location/activity

PLAY



If use is approved, start
working, and reporting trip
details to managing agency



Land use policy tends to favor the general public over outfitters and guides.

Why? Land managers only have a certain number of footsteps to give away. They make sure the general public has full access to that recreational use before sharing it with commercial outfitters.

There's a bright

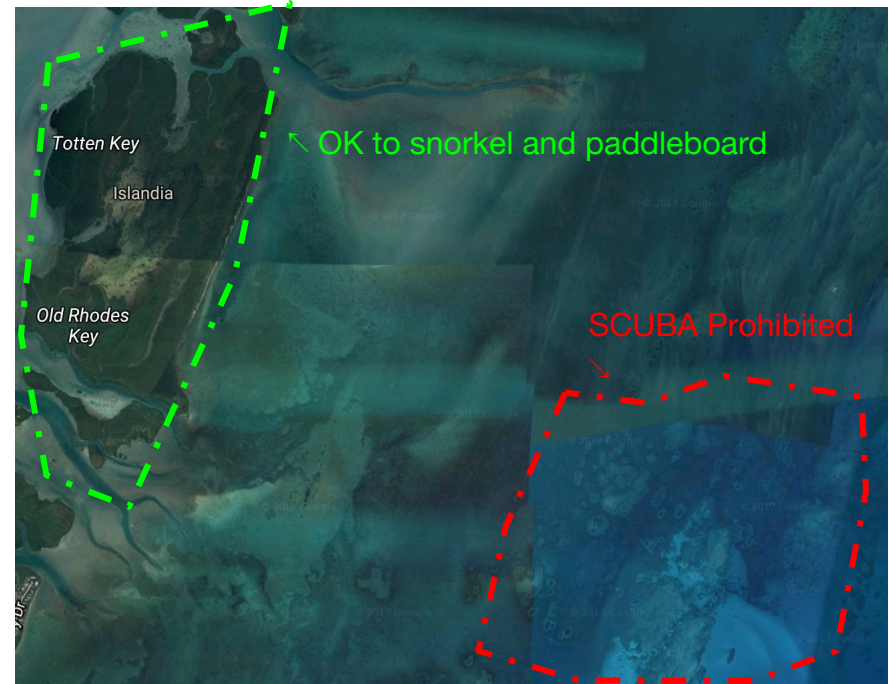
Folks who visit parks or forests for personal recreation

red line between

People who get paid to visit through their job or company.

Specific uses are the tension. It's rarely the paperwork process to obtain a permit.

Each reserve, refuge, park, forest, and prairie has specific ecological needs. Public servants make it their duty to promote effective and healthy use of the land. Sometimes that means placing hyper-specific rules, exemptions, and detours in front of recreation and commercial uses.



USA.gov doesn't have a clean opportunity to fix systemic problems.

The product could address underlying issues of awareness, expectations, and verification for operators. These efforts could help new entrants to the outdoors industry and prevent redundant conversations with federal agencies. To be clear, however, USA.gov will not be able to solve broader policy consequences like accessibility or codified permitting processes.

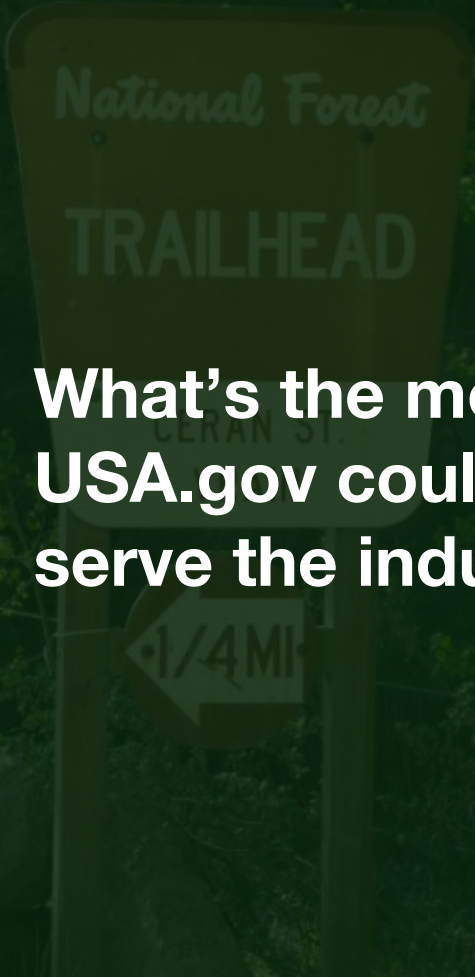
Recreation CUAs
Outfitters and Guides

Day pass ← → 10-year contract



Low ← Complexity → High

High ← Volume → Low



**What's the most
USA.gov could do to
serve the industry...**

**...and require the least
collaboration from
land use agencies?**

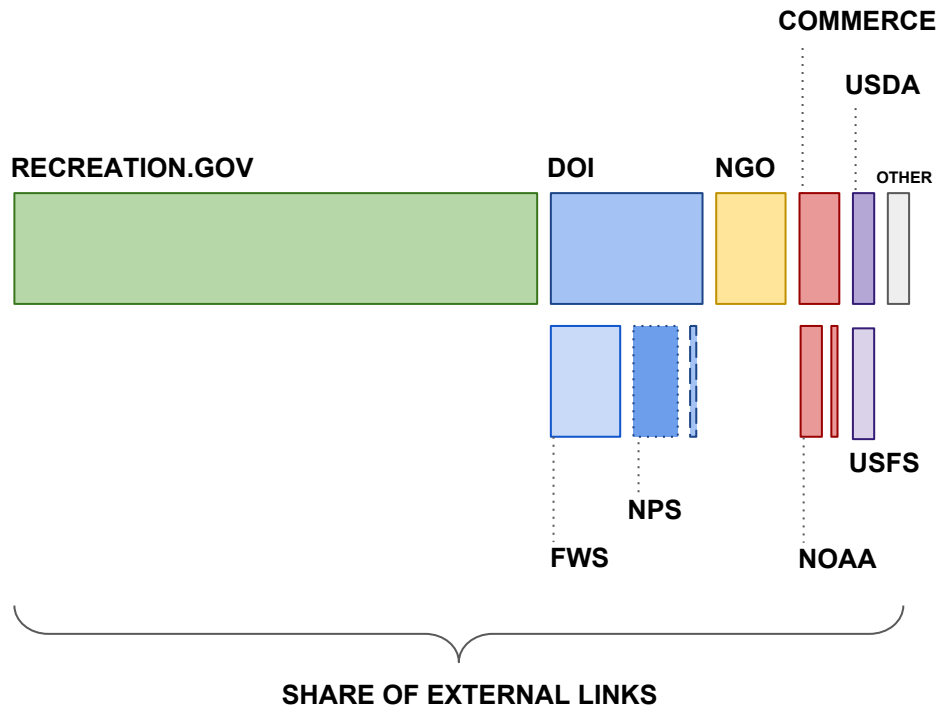


**We see three basic
building blocks
USA.gov can use.**

- 1) Referrals & content syndication**
- 2) Find & repurpose cross-agency data**
- 3) Gather, store, and share user data**

Today, USA.gov is a clear referral engine.

Recreation.gov links are the most attractive options for USA.gov users. Folks seem interested in specific activities or certain areas. Referrals to FWS, NPS, and USFS pertain to certain location searches.



We could repurpose open data provided by agencies.

Visitor statistics, contact information, and resource details can point operators in the right direction. Most applications are denied based on local context and data that suggests the land is too sensitive for commercial use. We can help operators identify those places to avoid before investing too much time and energy.

	USFS	NPS	FWS	BLM	ACE
Visitor Statistics	+	+	×	×	×
Resource Mgmt.	+	—	+	×	×
Business Opps.	—	—	—	—	×
Permit Process	—	—	—	—	—
Contact Information	+	+	—	—	—
Rec.gov content	+	+	+	+	+

⊕ Public, structured data (GIS, CSV, Tables)

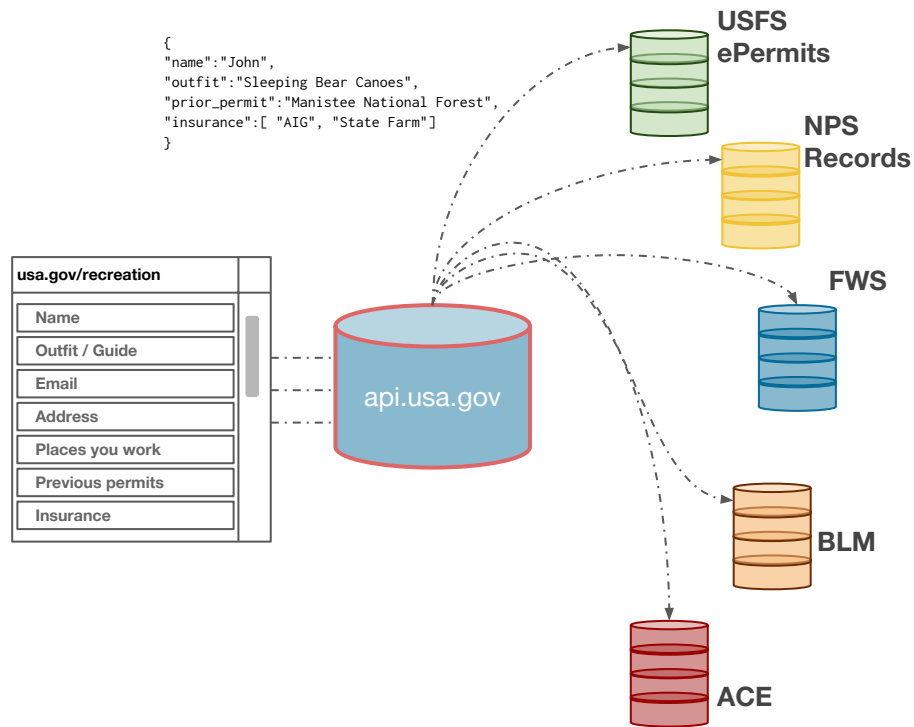
— Public, non-structured or request only data (text, scattered content)

× Unclear if the data exists

We could collect user data to build a verified common source.

A proposed model in the original FFD report resonates after our research.

“Collect once, distribute widely” might be a more beneficial model than one-to-one sharing... The “collect once, distribute widely” model would allow end users to enter their personal information once and would then distribute relevant portions of that information to the various agencies with which the user needs to engage.



Combinations of those three building blocks create a list of opportunities.

We looked across the research, user feedback, agency websites, open data projects, and the FFD report to enumerate ways USA.gov could build. The list covers everything from usurping the permitting process to simply updating content. We map these options on the next slide and will make selection decisions in the workshop.

- A** Provide high level info about guide/permit process on usa.gov, and link to individual forests. (Forest Service has a general national application process and set of documents (e.g. sample application, sample business plan, etc))
- B** Build a service / app that helps outfitters/guides log and report their usage in a standardized way (to ultimately get agencies to standardize reporting requirements).
- C** Build the consolidated permitting app for cases where there are multiple lands (forests) or agencies willing to work together.
- D** Continue developing the 18F prototype to help guides/outfitters identify contact information. Additional features could include mapping the general steps for permitting depending on usage type and agency.
- E** Create content that helps permit applicants understand what rec.gov can / cannot do for them.
- F** Build a way for users to easily discover the land management/usage plan to help operators select where to apply.
- G** Build a “pre-check” system for outfitters and guides, to compile and store profiles and remove redundant basic checks.
- H** Look more closely at Cooperative Associations and see if there is a way for for usa.gov to partner or provide/syndicate content.
- I** Create content on usa.gov that helps potential guides/outfitters understand permit/concessionaire opportunities. Pulled from regions/parks/etc.
- K** Amplify regional agency content for the public: Syndicate content generated at the regional level, including marketing, special events, and news.