

Officials work on strategic plan

By EVE NEWMAN
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A public meeting to discuss a five-year strategic plan created by Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails will take place tonight from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Wyoming Territorial Prison's Horse Barn Theater.

Division administrator Dominic Bravo said he and other planning staff will be at the meeting to take public comments regarding the plan, which sets out mission and vision statements for the division as well as goals for the next five years.

The plan, SOAR 2015, includes goals for the management of natural resources, cultural historic resources, interpretation and education, recreation and trails, revenue, concessions, human resources, planning, funding and construction.

The Laramie meeting is part of a series of meetings that have been taking place around the state.

"This whole summer we started having these town hall-type meetings to get public leaders' comments and see what people thought," Bravo said.

Some of the broader objectives in the plan include encouraging kids to spend more time outdoors and keeping up with maintenance.

"The legislature has been very nice to us the last couple years, and we've started to take care of a lot of deferred maintenance, but we don't want to fall back into having buildings that are falling apart, so we want to try to keep our plan looking for innovative ways to keep those sites and buildings going," he said.

A new program that started this year, Wyoming Kids Xtreme, provides programming aimed at kids and their families.

One objective is to further integrate such programming into more department events.

One challenge for the state parks system is balancing the public's desire for better amenities with the desire for a rustic camping experience, Bravo said.

"Some people like to be able to pull up to the beach and have a campsite, while others want to have that experience but also have a flat and level site," he said.

One action strategy calls for building more shower facilities, camper cabins and electrical hook-up sites as funding is available.

The plan is available online at wyoparks.state.wy.us/PlanningDocs/SOAR.asp. A comment form accompanies the plan.

For more information about the meeting, call (307) 777-2416.

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A canoe and oars sit on the bank of Crystal Reservoir in Curt Gowdy State Park in Granite Canyon. Andy Carpenean/Boomerang photographer