

Maximizing Wyoming's State Trust Lands with a Conservation License



Research Brief by,

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Why It's Needed

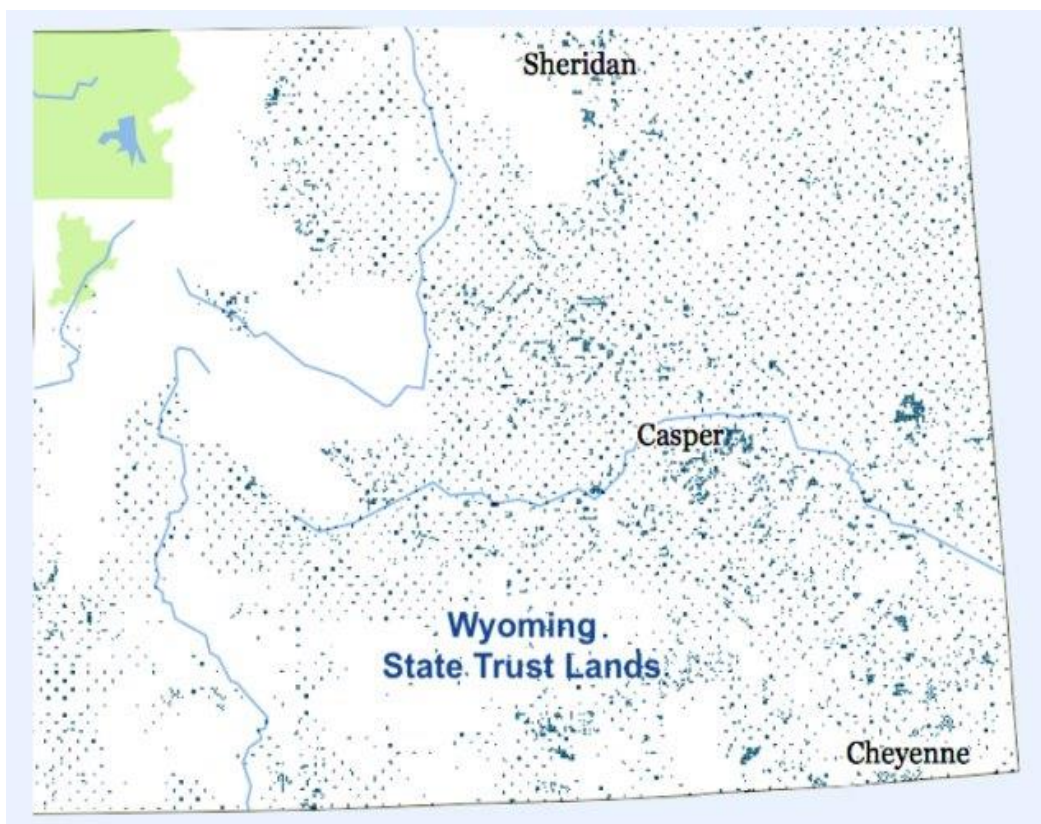
Wyoming has great opportunities when it comes to outdoor recreation and plenty of land options for these activities. But when it comes to state trust lands (STL) there are different factors to consider in terms of recreation. We want the benefits of the revenue generated off these lands, easy access to them for recreational use but also to consider the impacts this use will have on this land. So, keeping conservation in mind is also important. We wanted to find a way to generate revenue off state trust lands with conservation stamps or access passes. Other states such as Montana and Arizona have conservation stamps or access passes in place in order for people to access state trust lands and have had success with it. This project is important and needed to allow individual access to state trust lands without causing more environmental harm, with the option of working with stacked leases. Stacked leases would allow for a parcel of land to not only generate the revenue but allow for the use of recreation with a combined need such as grazing. We analyzed and compared Montana's conservation stamp vs. Arizona's access pass to see which method of paying to access STL's would be effective in Wyoming, as well as finding a payment method that is capable of generating a stable economy for conservation while also allowing affordable access to STL.

Why is it important

The introduction of a new conservation stamp would generate revenue for STL beneficiaries while also satisfying multiple stakeholders by allowing them to manage and use their land as they please. This could potentially come with public backlash with individuals being unwilling to pay to use land that was previously free to access. The proposed revitalized stamp to conservation license would greatly increase revenue generated by increasing the recreators required to purchase it, from just hunters and fishers to all who recreate on STL's. Due to the nature of conservation stamps this would also open opportunities for future conservation efforts for species that are valued within our state. Increased spending on an annual conservation license would also increase the budget and potentially the work force of departments such as the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

What are the findings

After comparing the two, between Montana and Arizona, we found that Montana has the most applicable model for Wyoming. This decision was made after taking a deeper dive into each state. After speaking with Jessica Hoag, the Recreational Use and Public Access Coordinator for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, we were able to highlight aspects for Montana as a model. Within Montana, the conservation stamp generated \$2.3 million with over 604,000 people purchasing them. The cost of this stamp for residents is \$8 while for people out of state it is \$10. \$1.7 million of the revenue generated went to the beneficiaries which are the public schools. While the rest was dispersed in different ways. Multiple forms of this license have been in place in Montana for over 20 years, which has easily allowed for the state to adjust the bill overtime as needed. Stacked leases are an option that would be beneficial in this case to allow for multiple land uses. While people would be purchasing these permits or licenses, there would also be other leases on the parcel of land. This multi-use of land would keep and increase the revenue, allow for recreation, things like grazing, restoration and/or conservation leases. After presenting our project at the Emerging Issues Forum and speaking with many people who are involved in some way with STL's, we were able to get some more insight, opinions and questions for what this would potentially look like in Wyoming.



Future Research Questions

- ☐ Would there be public backlash?
 - How would public backlash be handled?
- ☐ What's the appropriate price for Wyoming?
- ☐ How would enforcement be done for the license?
- ☐ What would the timeframe be if a new conservation license were to be implemented?

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