

GUIDE

Making the Case: Why Disc Golf Fits BLM Land

Data-driven arguments for disc golf on public lands — cost efficiency, growth statistics, environmental profile, and BLM priority alignment.

EXPLORE Disc Golf

A 501(c)(3) initiative by ElevateUT — explorediscgolf.org

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Disc golf on America's public lands.

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The right pitch

The most persuasive pitch to BLM is **not** "disc golf deserves a course because it's popular." The best pitch is:

"Disc golf is a low-cost, low-footprint, family-friendly, stewardship-ready recreation option that can help your office advance accessible recreation, youth and veteran engagement, underutilized day-use sites, shoulder-season visitation, and organized-group recreation management under authorities you are already implementing."

That framing matches the statute much better than a pure sports pitch. It aligns with BLM's early implementation emphasis on accessibility, permits, visitor information, local coordination, and recreation infrastructure.

Cost-per-recreation-hour case

Disc golf delivers more recreation hours per dollar invested than nearly any comparable facility:

Metric	Value
9-hole course build cost	\$9,000–\$18,000
18-hole volunteer-built course	\$15,000–\$25,000
18-hole professional install	\$30,000–\$50,000+
Comparable pickleball court	\$28,000–\$37,500
Daily capacity (9-hole)	432 player-slots
Annual maintenance	\$1,000–\$5,000 (primarily volunteer)
Creekside DGC (Lehi, UT)	59,142 recreation-hours on ~\$200K
Individual consumer surplus	~\$68 per trip (peer-reviewed)

Metric	Value
Average round	93 minutes outdoors, 3,800 steps

Growth data

- **11,165 courses** in the United States
- **21.2 million rounds** logged on UDisc in 2025; **32.8 million player-hours**
- **1,650 new U.S. courses** built 2022–2024
- **89%** of courses are free to play
- **3 new courses** opened per day in 2025
- Two USDGC/CDGNC events in York County, SC generated **\$4.5 million in economic activity**

Environmental profile

An 18-hole course occupies **15–25 acres** with only tee pads, 18 metal basket targets, signage, and existing natural terrain. No irrigation, no chemical treatment, no mowing, no motorized equipment in operation. Courses are designed around existing vegetation and topography.

Standard mitigation includes concrete tee pads (eliminating tee-area erosion), dual pin placements (distributing wear), mulching around high-traffic zones, and seasonal course modifications. **97%** of disc golfers are willing to modify behavior to offset environmental impacts (peer-reviewed).

Best near-term concepts

- Accessible or beginner-friendly day-use layouts near existing recreation nodes
- Youth or veteran clinic series
- Event and tournament proposals using early SRP coordination
- Retrofits or stewardship upgrades at existing BLM disc golf sites
- Projects bundled with parking, signs, restrooms, trail links, and volunteer maintenance

Weakest pitches

Remote, high-conflict, infrastructure-heavy projects with no maintenance plan, no local support, and no explanation of compatibility with existing land-use plans. The Act itself requires compatibility with applicable plans and minimizing conflicts with existing uses.



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