

[Having trouble viewing this email? View it as a web page.](#)



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

When asked what sets outdoor recreation in Wisconsin apart from all other destinations, we often say, “It’s the people.” And after two weeks on the road meeting with stakeholders across the state last month, we’ve never felt that statement to be truer.

You, the outdoor recreation professionals and leaders of Wisconsin, are passionate about providing exceptional opportunities. You are dedicated to your work and growing the opportunities for all, no matter ability, skill level or background. You are collaborative and willing to work with others to get big things done. You are motivated by one another and driven to keep moving forward. We heard it and witnessed it in every one of our seven Wayfinding Forums.

We have something special in Wisconsin, and it’s you. A total of over 100 people took time out of their busy summer schedule to join us at a forum, and nearly 200 people completed our stakeholder survey. Participants represented all segments of the outdoor industry including manufacturers, retailers, guides, outfitters, land managers, planners, nonprofits, recreation user groups, destinations and representatives from local, county, state and tribal agencies. At almost every forum, there was cross-collaboration occurring in a way that doesn’t happen every day. Several commented on the uniqueness of the situation, and we’re so glad the time we spent together was valuable for you, too!

Thank you for sharing your feedback and insights with us. We are eager to dig into our notes and the survey responses which will help inform the Office's Expedition Guidebook, our strategic plan for the next five years, and we look forward to continuing to be a catalyst for our industry to connect and grow. Thank you for being a part of the process.



Cassie Mordini
Director, Office of Outdoor Recreation

The Office is interested in making industry connections.

Click [here](#) to update your information and help build Wisconsin's outdoor recreation directory.

Wisconsin Outside is a monthly newsletter from the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation. Please share it with friends or colleagues with a vested interest in Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry by forwarding this email or [subscribing here](#).

Don't Count Them Out: Older Adults With Spending Power Like to Recreate Outside, too.

Seniors, aged 55 and older, are participating in outdoor recreation in increasing numbers and are largely responsible for driving participation growth in 2023, according to the [Outdoor Foundation's Annual Participation Trends Report](#). Coupled with their spending power – the Baby Boomer generation, generally defined as those born between 1946 and 1964, holds [over half of the nation's household wealth](#) – this demographic presents significant opportunities for the outdoor recreation industry.

In Wisconsin, about [19% of the population is aged 65 and older](#), and outdoor recreation can provide many benefits that Baby Boomers seek as they age. Simply going outdoors more frequently [reduces mortality risk](#), and participating in outdoor activities with others combats loneliness, a [serious health concern](#) facing older adults at higher rates than others, according to a recent [U.S. Surgeon General's advisory](#).

Programs Make Outdoor Recreation Social

Programs like those offered by [La Crosse Parks & Rec](#) get older adults outside connecting with nature through topics like geology and pollinators. They also partner with Wisconsin's own N.A.S.A. program, the [North American Squirrel Association](#), a nonprofit that provides those with physical limitations and older members of the Holmen community with outdoor opportunities such as hiking, pontoon riding, skiing, hunting and fishing. Using donated funds and equipment from individuals and businesses in the Coulee Region, N.A.S.A. provides such opportunities free of charge to those in need, all the while continuing to grow.

In the Wausau area, [The Landing](#) is a senior center within the Woodson YMCA catering to the 55-year-plus demographic whose [membership has grown to over 5,500](#) in its first four years. "Based on internal surveys, we have learned there is a desire and demand for outdoor activities in all four seasons. In fact, folks in this demographic are moving to Wausau because of The Landing's social outdoor recreation opportunities paired with the proximity to quality health care in the greater Wausau area," explains Jon Oestreich, Outdoor Adventure Guide at The Landing.

[Friends groups](#) also offer great ways for seasoned community members to get involved in outdoor recreation activities, events and more, plus organizations often benefit from the time and talents shared by these engaged volunteers. Groups like the [Ice Age Trail Alliance](#) rely on volunteers for trail maintenance.

Along with programming, equipment, infrastructure design and other interventions help this population get outside and stay active for mental and physical health.



The Wisconsin Bike Fed is wrapping up a three-year grant with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to provide technical assistance for Cycling Without Age (CWA) programs, like pictured above at a skilled nursing facility in Altoona. Photo credit: Wisconsin Bike Fed.

Getting Outdoors for Health

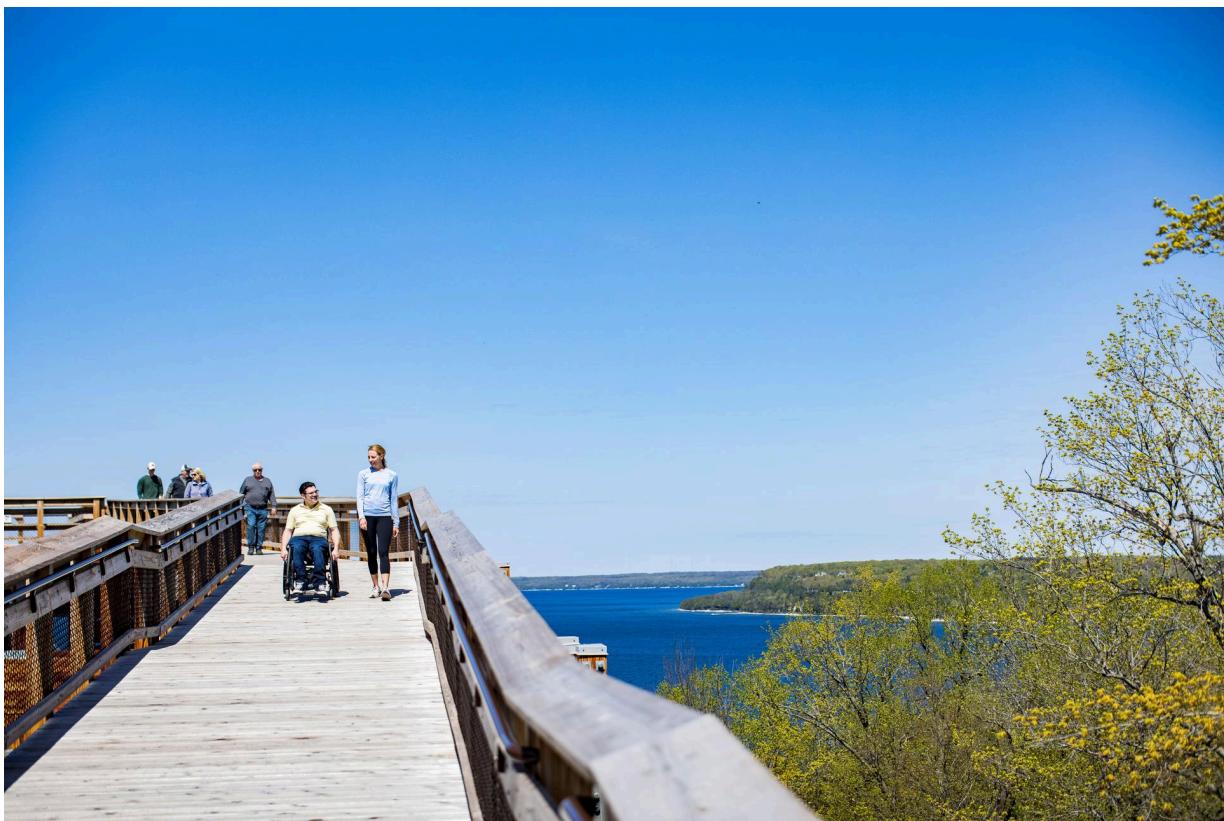
A [recent story](#) highlighted the long-term health benefits of biking, including less knee pain and even an increasing likelihood of living longer. In addition to traditional bikes, recumbents, trikes and other models can make cycling possible for people of all ages and abilities. The [Hostel Shoppe in Stevens Point](#) specializes in the retail sale of these specialized bikes, and they also partner with the national organization [Spokes Fighting Strokes](#). Started by former Wisconsinite Dan Zimmerman, Spokes Fighting Strokes will be in Port Washington Aug. 2-9 demonstrating recumbent bikes and raising awareness of biking benefits for people who experience or are at risk of stroke.

Another program utilizing specialized bicycles is [Cycling Without Age \(CWA\)](#). It brings the feeling of riding a bicycle to those who are not able to pedal on their own by using trishaws — a three-wheeled, pedal-powered bike with passenger seats that's operated by a "pilot." Passengers can feel, hear, see and engage all the senses of a bike ride without having to pedal. See how it works in [this video](#).

In Luck, a partnership between the [Friends of the Gandy Dancer State Trail](#) and the [United Pioneer Home](#) inspired a CWA project to get residents of the senior living facility out on the nearby state trail. All the steps to get a CWA project started, such as becoming a volunteer trishaw pilot, forming a CWA chapter or learning how to buy or store a trishaw, can be accessed through the [Bike Fed](#).

Making Places Accessible, Providing Adaptive Equipment

The Wisconsin State Park System also offers [a suite of accessible opportunities](#), including outdoor wheelchairs, accessible cabins, adaptive kayaks, beach mats and cross-country sit skis, which are available at several [Wisconsin state parks and forests](#). Many trails are universally accessible, meaning they may be paved, flatter, wider or otherwise designed to accommodate users of all abilities without segregating access. For communities looking to build or convert more universally accessible trails, [American Trails](#) and the [U.S. Forest Service](#) offer resources on design.



Visitors of all abilities can visit one of the [Wonders of Wisconsin](#), Eagle Tower, with this fully accessible observation point at Peninsula State Park.

With host locations across the state, [Access Ability Wisconsin](#) provides low-cost, all-terrain wheelchairs for use making it easier for people with mobility challenges. About a dozen wheelchairs are available by reservation. Motorized wheelchairs are designed to handle a

variety of natural and paved surfaces, so individuals of all abilities are able to connect with nature.

[Milwaukee County](#) is on the forefront of being an accessible outdoor recreation haven for people of all ages and abilities. Handcycles and adaptive bikes are available for free use at Veterans Park South and on the Oak Leaf Trail. Golfers can find adaptive equipment at Currie Park or Greenfield Park golf courses. Pools with ramps to enter, accessible fishing piers, ice sleds and more are available across the county. The [Wehr Nature Center](#) in Franklin has committed to being an accessible nature destination all year round. With adaptive equipment, adaptive programming, universal park features and an all-terrain outdoor wheelchair, the Wehr Nature Center is an intergenerational destination. The locally grown nonprofit organization [The Ability Center](#) has been a key player in helping make these connections between accessibility, education and recreation.

Wisconsin is fortunate to have a culture so deeply rooted in outdoor recreation, with traditions embedded across generations. From stories of an 87-year-old grandmother tracking her deer with her grandson to retirees moving to the Northwoods, older adults are an outdoor recreation market ready for adventure.



Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry is an impressive combination of businesses, manufacturers, outfitters, guides, destinations and nonprofits. Each month, we share information about the industry so you can get to know your peers across the state and learn how each contributes to the collective success and diversity of the valued outdoor recreation industry in Wisconsin. Here are this month's industry highlights:

Nonprofit: [Standing Cedars Community Land Conservancy](#)



- Standing Cedars Conservancy protects more than 1,500 acres along the St. Croix River. Trails are open to public access for hiking and skiing on four properties.

Manufacturer: [Harken, Inc.](#)



- Harken, Inc., is a manufacturer and distributor of innovative sailboat hardware and accessories. Headquartered in Pewaukee, Harken manufactures in the U.S. and Italy.

Guides, Tours, Rentals: [Aquatic Adventures](#)



- Take a scuba tour with Aquatic Adventures in Brookfield, a PADI 5-Star Dive Center. A variety of scuba training classes are available, as are chartered dive trips, annual events and other guide services. Equipment also available for rent.

Retailer: [Wildside Action Sports](#)



- Located in Baraboo, Wildside Action Sports is a bike retailer catering to the cycling, skiing and climbing needs of Sauk County. Wildside offers industry-leading products, service, repair and rentals for cyclists, skiers and snowboarders and rock and ice climbers.

Destinations: [Mercer Chamber of Commerce](#)



- Mercer is home to the 14,300-acre Turtle-Flambeau Flowage, 214 lakes and over 74,500 acres of public forest. The Chamber of Commerce helps visitors discover this part of the Northwoods wilderness whether by ATV, camper, bike, boat, foot, ski or snowmobile.

Interested in being featured? To be considered, make sure your business or organization is listed in our [Outdoor Business Directory](#). There, you can submit a request to be added or to update your information. If you are already listed, feel free to send us an [email](#) with your interest to be featured in the newsletter.

Wisconsin Trail Report Nominated for ESTO Mercury Award

Thank you, reporters! Travel Wisconsin's three seasonal reports — and by extension, the hundreds of dedicated volunteers who maintain the resources — secured Travel Wisconsin a finalist spot for a prestigious ESTO Mercury Award!

During the annual ESTO conference (Education Seminar for Tourism Organizations), the U.S. Travel Association bestows Mercury Awards to state tourism agencies for industry-leading marketing projects. This year, Travel Wisconsin nominated the campaigns executed for the Fall Color Report, Wisconsin Snow Report and Wisconsin Trail Report for the Digital and Social Campaign category.

Being named a finalist is a HUGE honor. We are so grateful to you, the seasonal reporters, who grew the Fall Color and Snow Reports into popular pages and helped make the Trail Report possible – now growing to be a top page alongside the other reports! These resources are appreciated and trusted because of the reporters. Travelers wouldn't turn to them season

after season if they weren't consistently updated with the latest conditions for hiking and biking, fall color and winter recreation. A great big thank YOU for your award-worthy work to deliver these resources to the public.

THANK YOU, REPORTERS!

INDUSTRY & COMMUNITY NEWS

Wisconsin Land Trust Days 2024

Sponsored by Gathering Waters, Land Trust Days is an annual celebration of land trusts with outdoor events, including hiking and trailbuilding, across the state in August and September. [Find a list of events and learn more about land trusts.](#)

Wisconsin transportation safety projects receive federal funding

Projects in Waukesha and Appleton recently received competitive federal RAISE funding for activity transportation infrastructure. In Waukesha, \$1.1 million will be used to design two key trail bridges within the regional [Route of the Badger](#) trail network. The funding will be used to address safety concerns at highway intersections. In Appleton, \$25 million will be used to reconstruct the Valley Transit Center with expanded facilities and improve mobility and community connectivity. [Learn more.](#)

Captain Barb in the spotlight

Wisconsin Women Fish founder Captain Barbara Carey is featured in this WDJT – Milwaukee news story. [Read the article.](#)

What is the Coolest Thing Made in Wisconsin? nominations open soon

The Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce annual competition aims to highlight the state's vibrant manufacturing industry. Nominations are accepted Aug. 19-Sept. 6. After products are nominated, they compete in a popular vote that sets the stage for Manufacturing Madness. Previous winners include motorcycles, boats, all-terrain vehicles and more. [Learn more.](#)

Outdoor Recreation Roundtable seeks industry input on sustainability

In partnership with the Masters of the Environment program at the University of Colorado—Boulder, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable is asking outdoor recreation businesses and organizations to provide input for a first-of-its-kind sustainability report for the industry and help develop a framework for future sustainability programming. Select one representative from your business or organization to [take the survey.](#)

Join Travel Wisconsin as a Fall Color Reporter

Travel Wisconsin is seeking enthusiastic volunteers to help keep travelers updated with the latest fall color insights. The Fall Color Report is one of TravelWisconsin.com's most popular website pages and allows you to showcase the beauty of fall in your region and drive travelers to visit. [Sign up](#) as a reporter today!

RESOURCES

Climate Resilience and Outdoor Recreation Webinar Series

The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals is offering a free webinar series exploring how land managers, communities, nonprofits and policymakers are proactively designing and communicating in anticipation of more severe weather and responding to events such as floods in a collaborative way. The webinar series runs every Wednesday at noon in August. Topics include Designing Recreation and Trails to Support Climate Resilience (Aug. 14) and Outdoor Recreation Policy Solutions for Climate Resilience (Aug. 28). [Learn more and register.](#)

Bike Comfort: Expanding our Understanding Through Data and Empathy

This Aug. 21 webinar presented by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals will describe how planners are taking a deeper look at what bike comfort means and how this influences decision making while also sharing data about some measurable impacts of implementing a more comfortable bike network. [Learn more.](#)

Leave No Trace Spotlight Program nominations due Aug. 23

Leave No Trace Spotlights are designed to energize local sustainability efforts by rallying the community, connecting partners and inspiring continued action. This free program provides Leave No Trace training, community outreach and volunteer stewardship. Selected areas receive up to three days of on-the-ground Leave No Trace programs for staff, partners and the community. [Learn more.](#)

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) planning grant applications due Aug. 29

Federal SS4A grants uniquely fund multimodal networks, safe routes to everyday destinations and separated biking, walking and rolling routes, creating opportunities to invest in trail and active transportation infrastructure. The Rails to Trails Conservancy recently released a webinar that offers strategies for effectively demonstrating safety outcomes in grant applications. [Learn more here.](#)

Recreational Boating Facilities Grants due Sept. 1

Funding is available through the Wisconsin DNR to counties, local governments, sanitary districts, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts and qualified lake associations for recreational boating facility projects including ramps and service docks, weed harvesting, dredging and navigational aids. Applications are accepted any time and next reviewed Sept. 1. [Learn more.](#)

JOB LISTINGS

CAMBA Hiring Project Manager

The mountain biking nonprofit in northern Wisconsin seeks a flexible and willing problem solver to get involved in the organization. [Learn more.](#)

Upper Sugar River Watershed Executive Director

The Upper Sugar River Watershed Association seeks a new part-time Executive Director to guide a dedicated staff and lead the organization into the future. [Learn more.](#)

This is a new feature for Wisconsin Outside. If you have an outdoor recreation job posting you'd like us to include, please send a link to the posting to orec@travelwisconsin.com.

EVENTS

Sat Aug 3	Deerbrook Rumble Motorcycle Ride	Gleason
Sat - Sun Aug 3 - 4	Bike MS: Best Dam Bike Tour WI	Baraboo
Fri Aug 9	Window to the Universe	Belgium
Sun Aug 11	Ride the Drive	Madison
Wed - Sun Aug 14 - 18	Ice Age Trail Trailbuilding - Plover River	Marathon Co.
Thurs Aug 15 - Sun Aug 18	Paddles and Premieres Weekend	La Crosse
Sat Aug 17	Ride to Remember	Niellsville
Sat Aug 17	Bridge 2 Bridge Run	Wis. Rapids
Sat Aug 17	Valley Springs Dual Sport Cycle Ride	Ellsworth
Sat Aug 17	Underdown Trail Races	Merrill
Sat - Sun Aug 17 - 18	Ride Across Wisconsin	Statewide
Sun Aug 18	Bluff Bash: An Outdoor Recreation Celebration	La Crosse
Tues Aug 20	Women's Wingshooting Night	Sun Prairie
Wed Aug 21	Sandhill: Learn to Hunt Deer	Babcock
Sat Aug 24	Coon Fork 40	Augusta
Sat Aug 24	Big Bull Falls Grand Fondo	Wausau
Sat - Sun Aug 24 - 25	CAMBA's Festival of Trails Revival	Hayward area
Sun Aug 25	Chris' Slow Roll	Milwaukee
Sat Aug 31	9th Annual Paddlefest	Wis. Rapids

Add your events to TravelWisconsin.com to increase your reach. Events should be marketed to a statewide audience or beyond. Read the full criteria [here](#). Login to the Travel Wisconsin database to submit a listing or fill out the [event form here](#). Please also keep the Office up to date on the events, projects and news in your area by adding orec@travelwisconsin.com to your email distribution lists. A few selected events are highlighted here each month.