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WISCONSIN

— OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION —



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As is our charge, the Office is a central hub where you can turn to find resources, tools, guidance and inspiration for your work. In this month's edition of *Wisconsin Outside*, we are excited to share several upcoming opportunities for networking, recognition and education.

First, is a new webinar titled "Small Changes, Big Impacts for a More Accessible Outdoors." Hear from national and regional experts about considerations and modifications to incorporate for a more accessible outdoors. The economic impact expands when the outdoors include opportunities for all. ([Register here](#) or see details below.)

The annual Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism (WIGCOT) includes specific outdoor recreation-centered conversations and learning opportunities, and you are invited to attend. [Register here](#). Please join an ever-growing list of tourism and outdoor recreation industry leaders in Green Bay on March 12-14. Nominations are being accepted for the Governor's Tourism Awards through February 8. We encourage you to look over the categories and [submit a nomination](#). Sponsorships are also available. Learn more about the benefits [here](#).

Mark your calendars to take advantage of these opportunities to network and learn about the outdoor recreation conversations and trends taking place. You can also find the latest in economic data and a review of resources we offer in our [recent report](#).

We're always inspired by your work, and this past week it was reaffirming and so much fun to be a part of events that are engaging people outdoors, supporting local businesses and building community. It was exciting to see all this unfold at the [Ski de She Clinic](#) as the Birkie team, Olympian cross-country skier Kikkan Randall and guest coaches empowered women to expand their skiing skills, build racing confidence and connect with fellow women skiers. We also saw it on display at the [Fat Bike World Championships](#) where the Big Ring Flyers and New Richmond community were fabulous hosts of a premier racing event and a festive celebration of the sport.

As we look ahead, we hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming events, and we look forward to continuing to provide resources like these that advance your work and uplift the industry.



Mary Monroe Brown
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](#).

Toward an Accessible Outdoors

Creating access-centered recreation opens the outdoors to [61 million Americans](#), or one in four adults, who live with a disability. In Wisconsin, nearly [1 million adults](#) are affected by disabilities that impact mobility, cognition, hearing or vision.

Wisconsin is home to several nonprofit organizations that provide programming and equipment to get people with disabilities outdoors and connected with nature. [Wisconsin Hero Outdoors](#) connects veterans, first responders and their families to outdoor activities in Wisconsin, and [Life Striders](#) provides nature-based, integrative therapies through horseback riding for people living with neuromusculoskeletal conditions. And events like the American Birkebeiner and Tour of America's Dairyland host races for adaptive athletes, the [ParaBirkie](#) and handcycle criteriums, respectively.

“There is a real value in serving this demographic. Whether it's disease, accident or the aging process, none of us can escape the need for different, adapted or inclusive access in the future,” says Damian Buchman, Founder & Executive Director of [The Ability Center](#). Projects have included upgrades making Milwaukee's Bradford Beach the most accessible beach in the country, the addition of adaptive cycles for rent at Veteran's Park, and the newest initiative underway, The Opportunity Center, which aims to be the nation's first 100% accessible, inclusive and equitable community center for health and fitness.



Mobi mats and free use of beach wheelchairs are part of the upgrades that now make Bradford Beach in Milwaukee the nation's most accessible. Photo courtesy of The Ability Center.

While there are few studies that measure the levels of outdoor recreation participation by people with disabilities, a National Survey of Recreation and the Environment [study](#) shows this group has similar motivations to take part in outdoor activities. To find more data, examining travel trends can shed some insight into the potential economic contributions of the demographic. According to the [2020 Market Study by Open Doors Organization](#), 27 million U.S. travelers with disabilities took 81 million trips and spent \$58.7 billion during the two-year period of 2018-2019.

When someone with a disability chooses where to spend their time, they're looking for an opportunity to find a destination that works for everyone, where the group can all participate together.

“It is said that public lands belong to everyone. That can only be true if that includes the 1 in 5 Americans that struggle with mobility issues every day,” explains Jeff Rennie, Executive Director of the [Friends of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore](#). The group recently launched an [Access for All](#) campaign that continues their years-long work to make the park more accessible. In partnership with the National Park Service, the park has seen more than a dozen accessibility improvements over the last several years.

Park Superintendent Lynne Dominy explains the time horizon, “When you have old infrastructure, you have to go forward a little at a time to improve access. That’s what we’re doing as funding is available.”



Ribbon-cutting for the accessible amphitheater on Stockton Island was held in summer of 2021. Pictured are Friends Board Chair Erica Peterson and Park Superintendent Lynne Dominy. Photo courtesy of the Friends of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

Progress has been met with positive feedback. Accessibility upgrades at the Apostle Islands like boardwalks that have made wheelchair access possible have also created conveniences for families with strollers and have eliminated foot traffic over sensitive areas. They also provide ongoing opportunities for everyone to experience the joys of outdoor recreation and have provided inspiration for additional projects in the park and elsewhere.

Learn ways to grow your outdoor recreation offerings by attending the upcoming webinar “Small Steps, Big Impact for a More Accessible Outdoors” on March 2. Find the details and link to register below.

MEET YOUR WISCONSIN OUTDOOR INDUSTRY

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 your February industry highlights:



Nonprofit: [North East Wisconsin Trails \(NEWT\)](#)

- North East Wisconsin Trails (NEWT) is dedicated to maintaining and expanding multiuse singletrack trails that accommodate a variety of trail users. As an International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) affiliated group, NEWT educates and works with communities, trail managers and volunteers.



Manufacturer: [Borah Teamware](#)

- Borah Teamware, located in Coon Valley, has been manufacturing custom sports apparel since 1997. Borah makes custom, high-quality gear for cyclists, runners, skiers and triathletes.



Guides & Tours: [Mr. Bluegill Guide Service](#)

- Mr. Bluegill Guide Service offers multi-season and multi-species guided fishing trips throughout the year. Captain Troy Peterson has over 21 years of experience fishing in the waters of central and northeastern Wisconsin.



Rental & Retailer: [Zeller's Ski & Sports](#)

- A three-generation owned sports shop, Zeller's offers a range of equipment and gear from kayaks and cross-

country skis, to snowboards and stand up paddleboards. Zeller's also offers a variety of services to get you, and your equipment, ready for your next adventure.



Destinations: [Travel Boulder Junction](#)

- Boulder Junction boasts hundreds of miles of snowmobile, cross-country ski and snowshoe trails and ample lakes perfect for ice fishing. Travel Boulder Junction helps promote these activities for a healthy and vibrant community.

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.

New Webinar Announcement: Small Changes, Big Impact for a More Accessible Outdoors

The Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation is excited to bring you this new webinar – an opportunity to hear from experts on creating a more accessible outdoors.

“Small Changes, Big Impact for a More Accessible Outdoors” brings together experts who will share criteria and considerations to incorporate into your planning, design and construction process to help ensure your next outdoor recreation project is accessible. In this webinar, you will also learn how to evaluate current spaces and make modifications to be more welcoming to people with a variety of disabilities, as well as what information you can provide in your marketing materials so outdoorists can accurately prepare for their outing.

Presenters:

Syren Nagakyrie, Founder, Disabled Hikers

Quinn Brett, Consultant, Dovetail Trails

Sarah Lisiecki, Education and Communications Manager, BCI Burke

Lynne Dominy, Superintendent, Apostle Islands - National Park Service

Moderated by Mary Monroe Brown, Director, Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation

Thursday, March 2 at 12:00 PM

Register

For additional learning:

This webinar will build off the second training in a five-part series offered by the Department of Tourism. We encourage you to attend "Approaching Inclusion: Accessibility & Ableism" on February 23 as it will provide important foundational knowledge on the topic. [Register here](#) to secure your spot this webinar.

INDUSTRY & COMMUNITY NEWS

Mercury Marine Unveils New Electric Outboard Motor

The Fond du Lac-based manufacturer of outboard and inboard boat motors unveiled its first electric outboard, the Avator 7.5e. [Watch the story.](#)

Luxury Boat Maker Grand Craft Has Grown Since Move to Wisconsin

Since its move from Holland, Michigan, to Genoa City, Wisconsin, at the end of 2021, the company has seen an increase in sales and employees and is targeting more growth. [Read the story.](#)

Ariens Nordic Center Opens

The new facility features a state-of-the-art biathlon course, 5 kilometers of lighted cross-country ski trails and snowmaking equipment to make these activities accessible to the region. [Read the story.](#)

Sheboygan to Host International Powerboat Racing Event

Powerboat P1, the Formula One Championship Series, and Mercury Racing selected Sheboygan to host the new Mercury Racing Midwest Challenge which will take place August 11-13. [Read the story.](#)

DNR Request for Public Feedback on Potawatomi Tower Design Plans

The DNR is collecting public feedback on the preferred design option for the Potawatomi Observation Tower which has been closed since 2017 due to structural hazards. Deadline to submit comments is February 13. [Learn more.](#)

DNR Seeking Nominations for Ethical Hunter Award

The award recognizes a hunter whose action is symbolic of Wisconsin's hunting heritage and whose exceptional moral actions and character have been demonstrated while out in the field. Nominations are due February 15. [Learn more.](#)

RESOURCES

Angler R3 Grant Deadline February 15

The Angler R3 (**Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation**) grant program provides funding for programs or projects that help grow the number of anglers in Wisconsin. This is a reimbursement grant that may award up to 75% share of total eligible project costs, up to \$15,000. [Learn more.](#)

Free Webinar: Housing Solutions in Rural Recreation Communities February 15

USDA Rural Development webinar will highlight federal resources and private sector strategies that help communities leverage their outdoor recreation and tourism venues to address housing solutions and improve economic resilience. [Learn more and register.](#)

Snowmobiling Safety Tips

Review these reminders to safely operate snowmobiles this winter and especially during fluctuating weather conditions. [Review the tips.](#)

Electric Mountain Bike Identification Guide

The International Mountain Bicycling Association in partnership with Trails Are Common Ground created a new guide to help identify various types of e-MTBs and know where they can and cannot be operated. [View the guide.](#)

EVENTS

Various dates	Candlelight Hikes @ State Parks	Various
	<i>Search Type: Candlelight Events</i>	
Sat Feb. 4	Winter Star Gazing	Campbellsport
Sat Feb. 4	NWIRC Ice Races @ Rock Dam	Willard
Sat Feb. 4	Mt. Ashwabay Summit Nordic Ski Race	Bayfield
Sat Feb. 4	Tri-Norse Ski Jumping / Nordic Combined	Rome
Sat Feb. 4	Curtiss Snowmobile Races	Curtiss
Mon-Sat Feb. 6-11	Wisconsin Union's Winter Carnival	Madison
Fri-Sun Feb. 10-12	Sturgeon Spectacular	Fond du Lac
Sat-Sun Feb. 11-12	Classic Race of Champions	Plymouth
Sat Feb. 11	North End Classic Ski Race	Cable
Sat Feb. 11	Jig's Up Blugold Ice Fishing Contest	Chippewa Falls
Sat Feb. 11	Ice Fishing Clinics for Kids	Milwaukee

Sun Feb. 12	<u>Learn to Ice Fish (for Women)</u>	Amherst
Fri-Sat Feb. 17-18	<u>Battle on Bago Ice Fishing Tournament</u>	Oshkosh
Sat Feb. 18	<u>Trailtessa 2023: Be Blissful</u>	Waupaca
Sat Feb. 18	<u>Winter Trails Day</u>	Sturgeon Bay
Sat Feb. 18	<u>Northern Pines Sled Dog Race</u>	Iron River
Sat Feb. 18	<u>Book Across the Bay</u>	Ashland
Sun Feb. 19	<u>Bike Across the Bay</u>	Washburn
Sat Feb. 25	<u>Learn to Cook Wild Game</u>	Babcock
Wed-Sun Feb. 22-26	<u>American Birkebeiner Races</u>	Hayward

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.

Header image courtesy of Amber Mullen/Wilderness Inquiry.

The Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation is part of the
Wisconsin Department of Tourism



Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation | 3319 West Beltline Highway | Madison, WI 53713

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