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WISCONSIN

— OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION —



A Note from the Director

Summer officially kicked off with hot temps and glowing rays of sunshine and a few strong storms. Longer daylight hours, warm weather and summer break have ushered in peak season for getting outdoors. Hopefully, you're finding time to balance your work in the outdoor recreation industry with getting outside on your own time, so we'll keep this note short.

In this issue of *Wisconsin Outside*, we take a deep dive into Wisconsin's boating industry – big business driving the state's economy. (Pictured above: A metal tube is welded at Northport Marine in Gillett where Montego Bay Pontoons are manufactured.) Boating's history and continued impacts illustrate how Wisconsin reaps benefits from the breadth of the outdoor industry. We've also included a plethora of resources to help you share timely safety information and reminders with your customers, clientele and networks.

As you put in the long hours this summer, know that your work inspiring and outfitting people for adventure is valued. Your work is growing Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry. We hope you find this season to be a successful one, and that you find time to enjoy a few adventures of your own.

Mary Monroe Brown

We're a growing office that wants to talk to all outdoor recreation related businesses & organizations.

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](#).

"Lake Life" Fuels Wisconsin's Economy

When spoken, the expression "lake life" conjures thoughts of a warm, sunny day with friends or family relaxing and having fun aboard a boat in the middle of pristine water. The saying may well have emerged from Wisconsin, where 15,000 inland lakes attract many recreational boaters each summer. The state's major rivers and two Great Lakes add to the options.

Lake life isn't just an enjoyable activity, it's also one that plays a major role in Wisconsin's economy. Over half a million boats were registered in Wisconsin in 2020, the fifth most of any state or the third most per capita, according to registration data from the U.S. Coast Guard. The expenditures by boaters on gas, accessories and travel are just a drop in the bucket of boating's contributions to the state's gross domestic product (GDP). Wisconsin is home to several marine manufacturers that make and sell products and provide thousands of jobs for Wisconsinites.



Photo courtesy of Montego Bay Pontoons.

An outgrowth of the early shipbuilding industry that flourished along the Great Lakes, recreational boating manufacturers anchored their businesses in Wisconsin. The abundant water bodies and skilled workforce continue to be an unbeatable combination. [Burger Boat Company](#) of Manitowoc, maker of luxury yachts, grew out of a shipyard and ship repair business that was started in 1863. The family-owned [Kahlenburg Industries](#), makers of propellers, started in 1895 and still exists in Two Rivers. In 1939, [Mercury Marine](#) was established in Fond du Lac, which employs over 4,000 people and estimates a [\\$5 billion economic impact](#) to the surrounding community. Another 600 are employed at [BRP's Marine headquarters](#) in Sturtevant (former home of Evinrude), 50 in Gillett by Northport Marine, makers of [MirroCraft](#) fishing boats and [Montego Bay](#) pontoons, while [Grand Craft](#) recently relocated to Genoa City from Michigan with plans to employ 20 people to make their custom mahogany boats.

Overall, recreational boating and fishing contributed over [\\$720 million to Wisconsin's GDP in 2020](#), a 51% increase from the previous year despite pandemic-related hurdles all manufacturers faced. The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) reports [the trend in first time boat buyers continued to increase in 2021](#), with optimism for another good year in 2022 as manufacturers are still working to fulfill the backlog of new orders.



The new Avator electric motor by Mercury Marine.

While demand remains high still, innovations in boating technology are also dawning. Mercury Marine recently announced its new [Avator electric outboard motor](#) which is set to be released later this year and in early 2023. The electric motor concept delivers on the company's sustainability goals and is an effort to making boating more accessible.

Other initiatives designed to make boating more accessible and introduce a wider audience to the activity are just as promising. The [Freedom Boat Club](#), which provides education and safety training and access to boat rentals for members, is expanding by

[adding five new Wisconsin locations](#) this year. One previously existed at Milwaukee's McKinley Marina, and the others will be on the Milwaukee River, in Racine, Oshkosh, Green Lake and Madison. NMMA and the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA) launched their '[See You Out Here](#)' campaign to be a year-round affair welcoming boaters from all backgrounds to experience the water, and Mercury Marine is inviting current boaters to bring a friend along for the ride during its '[Take a Friend Boating Weekend](#)' this July 15-17.

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 July industry highlights:



Nonprofit: [Madison Audubon Society](#)

- As south-central Wisconsin's chapter of the National Audubon Society, Madison Audubon works to protect and improve habitat for birds and other wildlife through land acquisition and management, education and advocacy.



Manufacturer: [Mod-U-Dock, Inc.](#)

- Mod-U-Dock is a modular dock system, for both residential and commercial use, manufactured in Nashotah. The docks come in both stationary and floating options, and are comprised of pre-built sections of various sizes, making them easy to assemble. Mod-U-Dock also offers PaddleSafe adaptive kayak docks.



Guides & Tours: [Island Adventure Company](#)

- Island Adventure Company provides UTV, stand up paddle board, kayak, fishing kayak and electric bike rentals to Washington Island. They also offer kayak tours of Rock Island, Detroit Harbor and Washington Harbor.



Retailer: [Ecology Sports](#)

- Ecology Sports is a family-owned business that has been serving the Manitowoc area for over 50 years. It offers a wide variety of gear, from paddleboards to hiking shoes, for the outdoor enthusiast, nature lover and active traveler.

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 update your information. If you are already listed, feel free to send us an [email](#) with your interest to be featured in the newsletter.

Putting Summer Safety First

Wear it, Wisconsin. That's the message from Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources about boating and water safety, and is just one of the simple safety reminders the industry can help amplify this summer. Recreating safely and responsibly fosters positive experiences along with an opportunity to come back and do it again. Whether interacting with a novice or an experienced outdoorist, include safety messaging in any sales pitch or trip orientation.

Here are a few resources to consult when creating your own safety materials or for sharing through your channels to help spread the word.

Boating/Paddling/Swimming

Wearing a personal floatation device, and wearing one that fits appropriately, are outlined here in these [tips](#) from the Wisconsin DNR, and this [video](#) from the Water Sports Foundation illustrates the various styles and what to look for in appropriate fit.

[Special considerations for recreating on flowing water](#) are the topic of constant education due to sandbar drop offs and dangerous currents. The Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway and the Wisconsin DNR have also created a text alert system to notify river users of emergencies and severe weather alerts. [Share the directions](#) on how to receive alerts.

Boating and paddling safety tips: [Click here](#)

Dam safety: [Click here](#)

Boating handbook of laws and responsibilities: [Click here](#)

Boating safety education courses: [Click here](#)

Water Information for a Safe Coast - Lake Superior (WISC-Watch): [Click here](#)

US Coast Guard boating safety app: [Click here](#)

Social media kit for boating safety: [Click here](#)

ATV/UTV Riding

A lack of safety equipment is the leading cause of injury in ATV/UTV incidents. Helmets, seatbelts and eye protection are highlights in Polaris's comprehensive review of off-road vehicle safety [here](#).

ATV/UTV safety education courses: [Click here](#)

Biking

From the often-repeated, "wear a helmet," to the less obvious recommendations to wear bright and reflective clothing and obey traffic regulations (remember bikes are considered vehicles), there are a number of biking tips that can make rides safer. The Wisconsin Bike Fed offers [train the trainer bicycle safety courses](#). A [video series](#) (below the listed courses) provides a thorough overview of bicycling safety. The League of American Cyclists also provides similar trainings, as well as a comprehensive [list of safety and preparedness tips](#), and [quick guides](#) that can be affordably purchased.

Biking safety tips: [Click here](#)

Biking rules for the road and laws: [Click here](#)

Camping/Hiking

While camping and hiking may be some of the safer ways to recreate, there are still safety precautions to be aware of, such as being aware of your surroundings, including any fire danger, and always having a plan (and a first aid kit) for emergencies. The Wisconsin DNR has recently reminded outdoorists to be bear aware, as bear activity increases in early summer when cubs begin venturing out more.

Bear safety tips: [Click here](#)

Fire danger map: [Click here](#)

Industry & Community News

Sauk County Designates ARPA Funding to Reopen Horse Campground

With the designation of \$125,000 of ARPA funding, the horse campground at White Mound County Park will be upgraded and reopened. [Read the story.](#)

Netherlands Hiker to be First Woman to Complete 11 National Scenic Trails

A woman from the Netherlands hopes to become the first woman to hike the entirety of all 11 National Scenic Trails when she arrives at the Eastern Terminus of Ice Age Trail this summer. [Read the story.](#)

Wisconsin Bike Fed, DNR, WisDOT Release Wisconsin Bikeways Report

The report details efforts that began in 2015, providing proposals and information to create a statewide network of interconnected bike routes joining U.S. Bike Routes (USBRs) that connect to adjoining states and other state-level Wisconsin Bike Routes (WIBRs). [Read the story.](#)

Natural Resources Foundation, Wisconsin DNR Launch Diversity Programs

Two statewide organizations have launched new programs to increase diversity and provide opportunities in conservation and for outdoor careers.

- The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin launched its Diversity in Conservation Internship program this summer. Applications for 2023 will be accepted this fall. [Read the story.](#)
- Wisconsin DNR welcomed its first two summer interns in urban forestry through a new partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and Southern University and A&M College, the only Historically Black College or University that offers a forestry degree. [Read the story.](#)
- [Operation Fresh Start](#)'s new Conservation Academy provides hand-on job training as a pathway to forestry and land conservation careers and will work with DNR crews at state properties across Wisconsin. [Read the story.](#)

Resources

Recreational Boating Facilities Grant

Funding is available 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. Next application deadline is September 1. [Learn more.](#)

Trail Accelerator Grant

The program provides awardees with professional trail planning and consultation services to launch their trail development efforts, which can often leverage additional investment from local, regional and national partners. Applications due July 31. [Learn more.](#)

BFGoodrich Tires Outstanding Trails Grant

Funds are available to help organize clean-ups, trail maintenance workdays and other small stewardship projects. The average grant is under \$500 and can be used for everything from feeding volunteers to purchasing equipment, trash bags and tools. Next application deadline is September 30. [Learn more.](#)

Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant Deadline August 1, November 1

The Department of Tourism's reimbursement grant for nonprofits provides funding to make a promotion or event come to fruition. Five different categories of projects can be

considered for funding: new events, existing events, sales promotion, one-time/one-of-a-kind and destination marketing. [Learn more about JEM Grant opportunities.](#)

Events

Note: In-person events may change due to precautions based on COVID-19 guidance. Please see each individual event for more information.

Through Sept 22	Friends WI State Parks Explore Challenge	Statewide
Thursdays in July	CAMBA Kids Adventure MTB Camp	Hayward
Sat, July 2	Driftless Geology Hike: Wildcat Mtn State Park	Ontario
Fri, July 8	Guided Horicon Marsh Paddle	Horicon
Sat-Sun, July 9-10	Carpenter Nature Center Grand Reopening	Hudson
Tues, July 12	Women's Bike Ride: Great Sauk Trail	Prairie Du Sac
Thurs, July 14	Lakefront Live: Concert on the Water	Madison
Thurs, July 14	Fly-fishing for Adults: Devil's Lake State Park	Baraboo
Sat, July 16	Universe in the Park: Mirror Lake State Park	Baraboo
Sat-Sun, July 16-17	CAMBA Men's MTB Clinic	Hayward
Wed, July 20	Youth Archery Clinic: MacKenzie Center	Poynette
Sat, July 23	Forest Bathing: Richard Bong State Rec Area	Kansasville
Sun, July 24	Cliff Runner 10K: High Cliff State Park	Sherwood
Sat, July 30	Lake Ripley Ride	Cambridge
Sat, July 30	Popcorn Man Triathlon (bike-run-float)	Somerset
Sat, July 30	Black Squirrel Scurry (paddle-bike-run)	Merrill

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 your 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.
