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WISCONSIN OUTSIDE | August 2021

A Note from the Director

Good news! We're thrilled to share the 2021-2023 state budget which reauthorizes the Office of Outdoor Recreation for another two years passed through the Assembly and Senate and was signed by Governor Evers. We're grateful for the bipartisan support of the Office and our work to uplift Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry.

Looking ahead, the Office will continue supporting you in meaningful ways, and we are excited about the impact we can make working together. With this in mind, we are asking for your input to continue to help guide our strategic planning. We invite you to complete the stakeholder input survey [here](#) before it closes at 11:59 pm on August 15.

As you read on, you'll learn how one tourism organization is leading the way in stewardship efforts for their region. Then, drawing inspiration from the championship win by Milwaukee Bucks and the Wisconsin athletes competing in Tokyo, we share

how the outdoors is an important training ground for many elite athletes. After all, the outdoors is a way of life in Wisconsin.



Mary Monroe Brown
Director, Office of Outdoor Recreation

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](#).

Leading the Way with Stewardship

Even before the impacts of crowded trails, parks, and waterways were experienced during the pandemic, [Destination Door County](#) had begun taking steps to play a larger role in protecting the natural places that are vital to their tourism offerings.



A couple hikes at Forestville Dam in Door County, one of the countless natural attractions in the area. Photo courtesy of Destination Door County.

With its 300 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, five state parks, 19 county parks, and several land conservation organizations, the natural beauty of the area is a draw and largely accessible to the public. “In Door County, outdoor recreation is a key component of our tourism offerings. And tourism is one of our community’s primary economic drivers. It’s our largest industry and collectively our biggest employer,” explains Jon Jarosh, Director of Communications and PR.

In 2019, Destination Door County began a partnership with [Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics](#) to provide an educational campaign around the Seven Principles of Leave No Trace. Customized for the Door County region, the campaign is for both visitors and locals and kicked off this spring by inviting all to take the [Care for Door County Pledge](#) to “preserve, protect, and care for Door County, always.” It focuses on personal safety outdoors, environmental stewardship, and respect for cultures and traditions.



A campaign image encouraging residents and visitors to take the Care for Door County Pledge. Image courtesy of Destination Door County.

“Our role as an influential steward of this destination is a key component of the tourism management efforts we’ve moved to the forefront of our list of responsibilities,” explains Michelle Rasmusson, Director of Marketing & Sales. In the spring of 2019, the organization implemented a community survey to better understand the needs of the businesses and residents as well as visitors. Results of the survey led to a shift in the organization’s model, moving from a destination marketing organization to a destination marketing *and management* organization.

The partnership and pledge is part of a broader effort, which also includes working to become a certified [Green Destination](#), providing resources and tools to local businesses to engage in the stewardship campaign, and most recently hosting a series of volunteer events called [Leave No Trace Tuesday](#).

Stewarding these beautiful, accessible natural places is critical to preserving opportunities for outdoor recreation and the economic impacts those activities generate. Rasmusson added, “It’s about expanding everyone’s understanding of the county and helping us realize the role we all play in keeping it the special place it is.”

“ **What We're Hearing** ”

"We're seeing more destinations, organizations and businesses from the tourism industry reaching out to Leave No Trace as a solution for effective stewardship education. Everyone — from hospitality and retail, guides and outfitters, tribes and land managers — is making an intentional effort to increase awareness of responsible recreation. Those who are building this destination stewardship philosophy into their organizational structure are seeing the biggest returns for resource protection and maintained visitorship."



- Andrew Leary, Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics

To learn more about Leave No Trace partnerships visit their [website](#) or [email](#) Andrew Leary, Senior Manager of National Outreach.

A Training Ground for Elite Athletes

In city parks around the state, the constant, rhythmic thud of a basketball bouncing on the court and the occasional ring of it circling the hoop or the clanging of a net chain can often be heard on summer days. While they may not be activities that immediately come to mind when you think of outdoor recreation, basketball and other sports like baseball, soccer, football, tennis and golf are considered in the [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis's](#) figures and classified as 'field sports' or 'game areas' within outdoor recreation. They contributed over \$440 million to Wisconsin's GDP in 2017. Golf is likely responsible for the lion's share of this figure. Beyond the economic impact of these activities, parks and outdoor spaces provide the early and accessible training grounds for many aspiring athletes.

The [Trust for Public Land](#) includes the number of basketball hoops in its [ParkScore](#) rating, underscoring its importance as an element in metropolitan park systems. Milwaukee and Madison, the two Wisconsin cities ranked among the 100 largest cities, register in the 81st and 96th percentile respectively for number of basketball hoops. They were no doubt the place where pick-up games gave way to some of Wisconsin's native and notable pro players like Latrell Sprewell, Nick Van Exel, Devin Harris, Wesley Joel Matthews Jr., and Jordan Poole, not to mention thousands of youngsters connecting with the game and their outdoor surroundings.

Parks, natural spaces, and trails also provide the training grounds for countless Olympic sports such as rowing, triathlon, mountain biking, downhill and Nordic skiing, and more. And for those sports played indoors, a cross-training regimen often includes activities that take place outside, offering a change of pace.



Matt Scott plays wheelchair basketball with friends in Milwaukee. Scott is a five-time Paralympian originally from Detroit, Michigan who played at UW-Whitewater.

With Wisconsin's vast outdoor offerings, it's not hard to imagine how these [athletes representing the USA](#) at this year's Summer Olympics got their start: Molly Seidel of Hartland (marathon), Alie Rusher of West Bend (quadruple sculls), Madeleine Wanamaker of Neenah (rowing), Megan Kalmoe of St. Croix Falls (rowing), Stephanie Roble of East Troy (sailing), Emily Sission of Menomonee Falls (track & field), Kenny Bednarek of Rice Lake (track & field), Alicia Monson of Amery (track & field), and Madelynn Bernau of Waterford (trapshooting). [Several Wisconsinites](#) will be representing the USA in the Paralympics as well.

Cheering for these Olympic athletes and on the heels of a Milwaukee Bucks Championship has Wisconsin pride swelling. Whether from park courts to hard courts

or city parks to Olympic Park, Wisconsin's athletic roots are connected to the outdoors.

Industry & Community News

EDA Announces \$750 Million for Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation

As part of the \$3 billion allocated in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the U.S. Economic Development Association announced six programs to distribute funds to the areas of most need. One of the programs allocates \$750 million in funds for Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation. [Read the release](#). More information is forthcoming.

DNR Biologist Finds Rare Plant in State Natural Area

As if on cue to celebrate 70 years of Wisconsin's State Natural Areas (SNA), DNR Biologist Ryan O'Connor discovered a green violet, thought to be long gone from the state, in west central Wisconsin. [Read the article](#) or [sign up for more SNA stories here](#).

Events

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

National Water Ski Show Championships | August 13 – 15 | Janesville

The renowned Rock Aqua Jays will host and compete in the Division 1 National Championships, performing tricks and choreographed moves. Attendance is free. [Learn more](#).

12 Hours of Cycling at Road America | August 14 – 15 | Elkhart Lake

An epic bike and run race on the four-mile Road America track tests the endurance of racers in the 12-hour, overnight event. [Learn more and register](#).

Underdown Trail Races & Thunderdown | August 21 | Gleason

Set in the Underdown Recreation Area, three distances will be offered for trail runners – 50K, marathon, and half-marathon. The Wisconsin Endurance Mountain Bike Series will host its Thunderdown in the Underdown the same day with multiple distance options. Learn more and register to [run](#) or [bike](#).

Wisconsin Bike Week | September 12 – 19

Communities across the state organize events to promote cycling and have fun. [Learn more or host an event](#).

Resources

Outdoor Retailer Summer Education Series | July and August

The Outdoor Industry Association is hosting several sessions on topics related to this year's conference theme: Thriving People, a Thriving Planet, and a Thriving Outdoor Business. View past session recordings on practical steps toward climate action, addressing equity barriers in community programming, and implementing 30 x 30, or register for the upcoming session on the Climate Action Corps. [Learn more or register](#).

Inspiring the Future of Outdoor Recreation Report, Summer 2021

The State Outdoor Business Alliance Network (SOBAN) recently produced a report detailing the significance of the outdoor recreation industry on a national scale. [Read the report](#).

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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