

WISCONSIN

— OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION —



A Note from the Director

During April and May outdoor outings, one can't help but notice the newness springing up all around. It's an exciting time to see renewal in the forests and fields, and it adds a little positivity and energy to our days. We hope you're outside experiencing these wonders of spring, and at the Office of Outdoor Recreation, we are excited to share some of the new things popping up around here, too.

Wisconsin Trail Report

Launched in partnership with Travel Wisconsin, the new [Wisconsin Trail Report](#) brings together a collection of trail networks all across the state and from a range of land managers including the Wisconsin State Park System, various county and municipal parks, as well as private and nonprofit organizations like nature centers. No other resource showcases the vast trail offerings in Wisconsin with current condition reports. Thanks to stakeholder feedback sharing this industry need and the dozens of volunteer reporters, we were able to bring this vision to life. We encourage you to share this resource with your customers, clients, and networks to encourage exploration of Wisconsin's vast hiking and biking trail options, so folks can easily

follow current conditions to prepare for a great day on the trail! It's the perfect tool for celebrating **National Bike Month this May**.

Outdoor Business Directory

For the very first time, the outdoor recreation industry is united by a single comprehensive directory. The new [Outdoor Business Directory](#) exists to connect outdoor recreation-related businesses, manufacturers, organizations, agencies, and entities who make up the outdoor recreation industry in Wisconsin. Highlighting Wisconsin's large and diverse outdoor industry, the directory aims to strengthen the network by facilitating relationships between industry leaders and organizations. Please help us grow the Outdoor Business Directory. [Search the directory](#) and review your listing. [Submit a request](#) to add your business or organization or to update information in the listing.

Office of Outdoor Recreation Website

A new online home, the Office of Outdoor Recreation website is full of resources for you, including the Outdoor Business Directory. Find research, educational webinars, the popular Outdoors COVID-19 Toolkit, and ways to engage with the Office. Find us now at: outdoorrecreation.wi.gov.

With so much new to explore – from resources to trails – we hope you'll find yourself enjoying Wisconsin's outdoors and collaborating with partners as we continue to grow the industry together.



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](#).

Bike Programs & Partnerships Address Equity and Access

Through numerous efforts, Wisconsin's bike leaders are showing their commitment to creating a more diverse future for cycling by addressing systemic problems with innovative programs and partnerships.

The recently launched [Pathfinders](#) program, announced last summer, is part of [Trek's All In](#) action plan to work toward racial equity. The program will provide scholarships to up to 250 students from underrepresented communities to participate in the [National Interscholastic Cycling Association \(NICA\)](#). Pathfinders will equip students with the bike, gear, funding, and resources they need to be successful in the league.

[Wisconsin's High School Cycling League](#), a NICA affiliate formed in 2013, is teaming up with the [Wisconsin Bike Fed](#) to form mountain bike teams in underserved communities. The partnership will utilize the Pathfinders program to bring this opportunity to kids who might otherwise be unable to find a bike, the gear, and transportation to the trails.



Trek's Pathfinders scholarship program aims to diversify cycling's future and provide opportunities for students in underrepresented communities. Photo courtesy of Aaron Puttcamp Photography, NICA, and Trek.

The Wisconsin League also participates in NICA's [GRIT](#) program to encourage more girls to ride and coach. Girls Riding Together (GRIT) seeks to achieve a 33% female participation rate by 2023 by empowering current female riders to become ambassadors of the sport in their communities and at races.

While more women have taken up the sport over the years, as female riding groups formed to support each other in the traditionally male-dominated sport, they are still a minority. A similar effort, [Black Girls Do Bike](#), was founded to combat that bias and show specifically women of color participating in the sport and to welcome and mentor new riders. Now with over 90 clubs and with three in Wisconsin – Madison, Milwaukee, and Washington County – the organization is being recognized for being inclusive, welcoming, and committed to growing bicycling and was awarded the League of American Bicyclists 2020 “Club of the Year.”



Students at Lincoln Avenue School in Milwaukee learn about traffic calming infrastructure as safety improvement techniques and budget needs to suggest improvements to the Department of Public Works. Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Bike Fed.

Another award-winner, the Wisconsin Bike Fed, the nation's largest statewide advocate for people cycling, continues to weave equity and access into its programs including how and where those programs are deployed. The organization is committed to creating better bicycling for all people on bikes, from its collaboration with the JUST Bikes Coalition to install bike stands and tools in bike shop deserts and providing a paid technician to staff them, to Mobile Bike Repair that trains and hires teenagers to set up shop for a week in public spaces in underserved neighborhoods. The Bike Fed's long-standing Safe Routes to School program (which [recently won a national award](#)) works in schools to teach children safe biking skills, routes, and the students even advocate to their local officials for safety improvements. Collaborating with nearby community centers, the program ensures support for young riders after the classroom curriculum ends and enables the whole neighborhood to ride.

United by the common goals to make communities bicycle-friendly for all and create a more inclusive and reflective cycling community, these organizations and projects like Rails-to-Trails Route of the Badger (30th Street Corridor) are at the forefront of moving the needle.

“ *What We're Hearing* ”

“Interest in the Pathfinders Scholarship has been unbelievable. We have received hundreds of applications for NICA’s fall season, and we will begin announcing the award recipients this month. This program will provide kids from underserved and underrepresented communities with the equipment and funding they need to join NICA teams and become part of the larger cycling community. Kids learn so much about life through NICA’s emphasis on its core values of Fun, Inclusivity, Equity, Respect, and Community, and we are very proud to be a small part of that.”

Bob Burns, Trek Bicycle, Director of Advocacy

Biking = Big Impacts for Wisconsin

This is part of a series diving deep into the impact of Wisconsin’s outdoor recreation economy and providing a closer look from our recent report [Outdoor Recreation: A Top Driver of Wisconsin's Economy](#).

Wisconsin is second in the nation for the value bicycling contributes to the state's gross domestic product, an impressive \$261 million. With two global cycling leaders headquartered in Wisconsin and another dozen-plus smaller bike and bike accessory manufacturers, it shouldn't come as a surprise. (Check out the new [Outdoor Business Directory](#) on our new website to learn more about these companies.) However, the economic impact of cycling goes far beyond the products made and sold in Wisconsin.

A [recent report](#) prepared for the Governor's Bicycle Coordinating Council showed \$1.42 billion was spent by consumers on bicycle-related expenses in 2017. And deepening the story of bicycling's economic impact are the communities that embrace the activity by providing safe infrastructure, linking destinations by routes and trails, and developing off-road alternatives for recreation. In 2018, the La Crosse area published [a report](#) that showed the impacts of completing the remaining 40 miles of the City's 2012 Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan which would grow city access by 210%. Over 20 years, the investment in the remaining bikeway network could provide residents nearly \$300 million in economic benefits – approximately \$200 million in health and safety alone. It also showed roughly \$70 million in transit and air quality benefits and \$27 million in economic and property benefits.

In Wisconsin's Northwoods, the development of bike trails, both mountain bike and paved trails, has anecdotally resulted in just as many bike racks on cars as trailers pulling boats. (Explore the trail options and their conditions on the new [Wisconsin Trail Report](#).) The spending of visitors to the area doesn't go unnoticed, and the [Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association \(CAMBA\)](#) released a report that aimed to measure these impacts. The [report](#) found that nearly three-quarters (73%) of CAMBA trail users resided outside of the local counties, and two-thirds stayed overnight using lodging accommodations other than a friend or relative's home. The average out-of-towner stayed two nights and spent about \$200. The total economic contribution estimated was \$7.8 million to Bayfield and Sawyer counties.



Bikers enjoy the surroundings on the Heart of Vilas Trail in the Crystal Lake Campground area.

A bit to the east, the [Heart of Vilas County Bike Trail](#) offers a paved alternative and connects five communities, passing through forests, parks, and around several lakes. It was recently named a National Recreation Trail in recognition of its design to link communities, providing benefits for both travelers and residents.

In the La Crosse report, AJ Frels, Executive Director of Explore La Crosse explained, “What is good for tourism is usually also good for the local quality of life.”

A [new study](#) just out by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Global Health Institute supports the second half of that statement, showing that if U.S. cities increase their share of cycling trips to 6% approximately (the current rate in Madison) 20,000 deaths due to chronic disease could be averted annually. It would also save nearly \$780 million in health costs due to clean air improvements.

The economic impacts show the value of the bicycling sector to the state. With companies, organizations, and communities leading the way, the state is well-positioned to further leverage the benefits of cycling.

Industry & Community News

WI DNR Seeking Parks & Recreation Management Bureau Director

Excellent career opportunity to lead a team dedicated to providing high quality recreational and educational opportunities and programs through the Wisconsin State Park System. Deadline to apply is 5/10/2021. [Learn more.](#)

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Opens Most Campgrounds & Trails

The forest opened trails to ATV/UTV traffic, bicycles, and horses on April 23, about a week ahead of its anticipated reopening. Most campgrounds reopened for the season on April 29. For more information about the forest trails, campgrounds, and other recreation offerings, [visit their website.](#)

Non-Resident OHM Trail Passes Now Available

As of April 1, 2021, non-residents can purchase an off-highway motorcycle trail pass to ride designated trails and corridors. An annual or day pass is available to be purchased through [Go Wild](#), the Wisconsin DNR's online license and registration portal. [Learn more.](#)

Events

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

Lake Talks: Great Lakes Outdoor Tourism | May 6 | 7 – 8 PM

Tourism Acting Secretary Anne Sayers and Office of Outdoor Recreation Director Mary Monroe Brown will join Sea Grant's Lake Talks for a virtual event to discuss how the Great Lakes help drive outdoor recreation and tourism in Wisconsin. [Learn more and register.](#)

Friends of WI State Parks Explore Challenge | Now – September 22

The Friends of Wisconsin State Parks are encouraging people to get out and explore the Wisconsin State Park System including parks, recreation areas, forests, trails, and waterways. A list of 20 challenges from taking a scenic photo to picking up litter awaits. [Explore the Challenge.](#)

International Boating & Water Safety Summit | May 17 – 19

A global networking and educational opportunity for anyone interested in boat safety, IBWSS-

goes virtual this year and is free. The 24th annual conference will focus on “Partnerships for Progress.” [Learn more and register.](#)

Resources

New Outdoor Participant (COVID and Beyond) Report by OIA

The Outdoor Industry Association just released a new report revealing characteristics of those who turned to outdoor recreation for the first time during the pandemic. [Read the report.](#)

White Paper on Potential Health & Environmental Benefits of Cycling

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Global Health Institute published a white paper that estimates the number of deaths that could be averted by increasing the share of cycling transportation in U.S. cities. [Read the paper.](#)

Find more research like these reports in the [Research Library](#) on the Office of Outdoor Recreation’s new website at outdoorrecreation.wi.gov.

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



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