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WISCONSIN

— OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION —



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Flowers aren't the only things blooming this spring. Over the last month, the Office of Outdoor Recreation attended several meetings and events where the passion, energy and cooperation of partners underscored the budding potential of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin.

At the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Association's annual conference, it was impressive to see the growth of participation and access in recent years. Riders, businesses and government officials have been working together to open up more riding opportunities and to educate users on safe and responsible riding through classroom instruction and on-the-trail interactions. These coordinated efforts nurture the blossoming of ATV/UTV activity in Wisconsin, which generated a jaw-dropping \$5.4 billion in total economic impact to the state, according to a [new report](#).

Another encouraging moment came during a recent meeting of the State Trails Council. A diversity of user groups – motorized and nonmotorized – addressed challenges for specific user groups, as well as those faced by all user groups, and led to a constructive conversation that was beneficial for all, with potential for some exciting new projects in the works!

Finally, we offer our appreciation to the long list of panelists, presenters and attendees of the second Wisconsin Healthy Communities Summit. Taking time away from the important work they do every day, folks came together to share their expertise, to soak up new learnings and make new connections. Judging by the buzzing energy felt all day long, everyone walked away with new seeds planted, inspired and invigorated to go and do.

From leveraging outdoor recreation's economic potential to working across sectors to increase participation or create healthy communities, our industry comes together to coalesce around goals and action.

The story below highlights how Wisconsin's fishing opportunities are growing and how it plays an important and impactful role in our economy. With the upcoming fishing opener and the busy summer season ahead, there is a field of opportunity sprouting. Be sure to check out the resources below or reach out to the Office with your questions or needs. We are here to be your resource.



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](#).

Scaling Up Wisconsin Fishing

Wisconsinites love to celebrate the “firsts” during the opening of our many seasons. The first pitch during the Milwaukee Brewers’ home opener. The first sighting of a buck during hunting season. And, of course, the first cast during opening weekend of fishing!

To celebrate this season's opening weekend, Travel Northwest Wisconsin will host the [2024 Wisconsin Governor's Fishing Opener](#) to both celebrate and grow awareness of the culture, fun and economy of fishing in Wisconsin. This year's opener will be in Burnett County at Yellow Lake near Danbury on May 3-4. Dignitaries and media will celebrate the opener on Friday while Family Fishing Day festivities will take place at

Crooked Lake Park in Siren on Saturday, followed by a community fish fry open to the public.

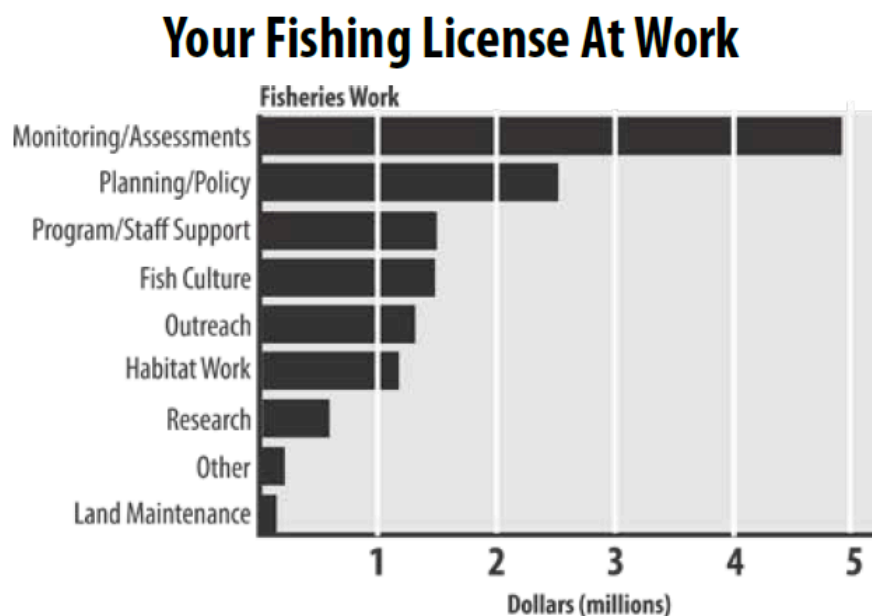
While northern Wisconsin is home to several prime fishing areas, every part of Wisconsin offers a lake, river, stream or other water body to fish in. Whether you're in urban or rural Wisconsin, young or old, opportunities abound for anglers of all types! The Wisconsin DNR offers a wide variety of [fishing licenses](#), depending on household makeup and age, making it easy to participate.

Not only is fishing prevalent across the state, it's big business. A [2023 study](#) found that over 2 million recreational anglers spent \$1.2 billion while fishing in Wisconsin. Fishing supports approximately 12,180 jobs across the state. These folks make fishing lures, sell gear and equipment, manufacture rods and guide people to the best fishing spots.

Licenses and Stamps

Fishing is intertwined with Wisconsin's culture and its economy. In 2022, Wisconsin sold over 1.3 million fishing licenses and stamps, with almost 450,000 of those sold to nonresident anglers, fifth in the country, according to [U.S. Fish and Wildlife license sales](#). A [2011 U.S. Fish and Wildlife survey](#) found that sportfishing annually generated approximately \$148 million in state and local tax revenues.

Funds from the sale of fishing licenses go back into the DNR's Fisheries Management Program for a variety of activities that support the long-term health and management of Wisconsin's fish populations. The DNR graphic below shows fishing license dollars at work for Wisconsin.



Other revenue streams help Wisconsinites access places to angle. For example, funding for two DNR-administered grant programs, [fishing pier grants](#) and [boat access grants](#),

come from federal excise taxes on fishing equipment and a portion of the federal gas tax.

Angling Industry

The Office's [Outdoor Business Directory](#) lists almost 350 fishing-related businesses and organizations across Wisconsin. This includes guides and outfitters, retailers, manufacturers, organizations and more.

Wisconsin manufactures some of the world's best-selling fishing equipment and also up-and-coming brands. Trusted [Mepps Fishing Lures](#) in Antigo sells over 3 million lures a year. [Musky Innovations LLC](#) in Cleveland, Wisconsin, specializes in musky lures, the most popular being the Bull Dawg. Into its 31st year, Musky Innovations now makes over 300 types of bait, employing 15 people.

Headquartered in Park Falls since 1948, [St. Croix Rods](#) is the largest maker of fishing rods in North America. Each rod is crafted, assembled and tested by 32 pairs of hands.

From trout fishing to Great Lakes fishing to ice fishing, guides help aspiring anglers learn the sport and take tourists to local haunts. Based in Wisconsin, [GoGuide](#) is an innovative business offering services to guides and outfitters to streamline their booking and marketing systems while also providing a platform for anglers to find a guide or trip that matches their interest. Some guides operate out of fly shops, like [Driftless Angler](#) ([learn more](#) about how Driftless Angler and [Shenanigans](#) are changing the face of fly fishing and empowering more women anglers), while others operate charter services.

Some anglers enjoy using a boat to fish, and Wisconsin makes those, too. The world headquarters of [Mercury Marine](#) in Fond du Lac employs almost 4,000 people making and overseeing production and sales of engines and propellers for boats. [MirroCraft Boats](#) has been making aluminum fishing boats in Gillett for over 60 years. [Loon Paddle Company](#) paddleboards and [Bending Branches](#) paddles are Wisconsin-based nonmotorized brands. Based in Cudahy, [Mod-U-Dock](#) marine docks are designed for motorized and nonmotorized boats. Dozens of retail outlets across the state sell new, refurbished and vintage boats.



Has it been a minute since you've been fishing? Check out the fun in the sun this summer, from shore or in a boat.

Expanding Access

Data from the [American Sportfishing Association](#) indicate more Wisconsinites fish today than in the past. The Wisconsin DNR and several organizations across the state offer opportunities for more individuals to try out and engage in fishing.

Free Fishing Weekends, one in January and one in June, waive the requirement for fishing licenses. The next [Free Fishing Weekend](#) is June 1-2, which coincides with Free Fun Weekend when admission fees to the Wisconsin State Park System are also waived. Check the [DNR's Events Calendar](#) for special programs and clinics for beginner anglers during this weekend.

Unlike some outdoor recreation activities, fishing doesn't require a significant investment in equipment, but it does require a rod, hooks and bait. The DNR's free [Tackle Loaner Program](#) stocks gear at 60 loaner sites across the state, many at state park offices.

Fishing can be an all-abilities activity, and several areas around Wisconsin offer excellent shorefishing opportunities for people with disabilities. Since the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), every fishing pier the DNR builds is accessible to people with disabilities, accommodating wheelchairs and having lower railings and rod holders. The DNR's [Open the Outdoors website](#) provides information about accessible and adaptive fishing. Some Wisconsin residents with disabilities are eligible for a

discount on an annual fishing license. Adaptive fishing equipment may also be available for individuals with disabilities.

Conservation

Wisconsin has over [160 species of fish](#). Each fish's habitat, food and spawning season is unique. Several factors affect the health of our fish populations, including [aquatic invasive species](#), water quality and loss of habitat. Groups like [Trout Unlimited](#) undertake on-the-ground work to improve fish and salmon habitat and raise funds for stream restoration projects, like the [Driftless Area Restoration Effort](#). Businesses looking to get involved in water quality can join the [Clear Water Business Consortium](#) as part of the Wisconsin River Alliance.

Fish Food

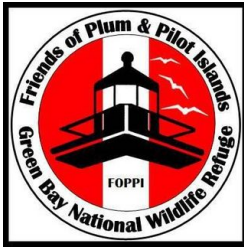
Even if you're not an angler, chances are fish still plays a role in your life. On a recent episode of the Wisconsin-based season of [Top Chef](#), the Wisconsin supper club and fish fry received a national spotlight. The fish fry is a [Wisconsin specialty](#), found in restaurants, taverns and concession stands from north to south. The satisfaction of catching, prepping and cooking your own dinner is rewarding and a culinary challenge. For the person who likes to fish but doesn't know what to do with their catches, the DNR offers a [Fishing for Dinner program](#).



Conservation and access efforts, coupled with fishing clinics and group activities, are scaling up opportunities to fish in Wisconsin and helping ensure a thriving fishing industry.

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 this month's industry highlights:



Nonprofit: [Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands](#)

- The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to preserve and protect the historic and wildlife resources on Plum and Pilot islands and provide quality wildlife-dependent recreation in Death's Door Passage.



Manufacturer: [LakeXLures](#)

- LakeXLures makes premier musky lures in Park Falls, which are sold at musky expos and fishing shops across the northern U.S.



Guides, Tours, Rentals: [Horicon Marsh Boat Tours and Blue Heron Landing](#)

- With immersive experiences and adventures that showcase the unique charm and ecological significance of the Horicon Marsh, Horicon Marsh Boat Tours and Blue Heron Landing offers birdwatching and sightseeing pontoon tours, as well kayak and canoe rentals.



Retailer: [Broken Spoke Bike Studio](#)

- Since 2010, Broken Spoke Bike Studio has been committed to meeting the needs of every cyclist. With four locations in the greater Green Bay area, the shop offers a variety of bikes for commuters, recreation riders, snow riders and mountain bikers.



Destinations: [Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum](#)

- The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum in Spooner is devoted to the acquisition, preservation and dissemination of materials and information relating to the history and heritage of canoe building, canoes and canoeing in North America. Visitors can explore the exhibits during the summer season, May 25-Sept. 29, 2024.

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.

INDUSTRY & COMMUNITY NEWS

Janesville to host 2024 Para-Cycling Road National Championships

USA Cycling announced Janesville will host the para-cycling national championships on June 11-13 in partnership with Tour of America's Dairyland on the three days leading up to the start of its 15th anniversary year of the 11-day competitive road cycling series. [Read the article.](#)

Healthy Parks Healthy You partners donate all-terrain wheelchair

Dean Health Plan, SSM Health and the Foundation for Dane County Parks donated an all-terrain wheelchair that is now available for use at [Capital Springs Recreation Area](#) to help people of all abilities benefit from time outside exploring the park. [Read the news story.](#)

BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin Distributes Birding Backpacks

The BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) Birding Club of Wisconsin will distribute 20 birding backpacks to neighborhood centers and schools in Madison and Milwaukee to increase access to birding for more Wisconsinites. [Read the news story.](#)

Menasha Receives Community Spark Grant for Bicycling

The League of American Bicyclists awarded Menasha a 2024 Community Spark Grant, one of only 15 communities around the country to receive \$1,500 toward their bike-friendly project "Bike-to-Park, Park Your Bike!" Learn more about all [this year's Spark grant recipients.](#)

WATVA Releases Economic Impact Report of ATV/UTV Industry

The Wisconsin ATV/UTV Association released an economic impact report on the industry and visitor spending of ATV/UTV riders in Wisconsin. [Read more here.](#)

Two new Rustic Roads announced

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation announced two new additions to the Rustic Roads Program, Rustic Road 125 and Rustic Road 126, which feature lightly traveled scenic routes throughout the state and connect travelers to outdoor recreation opportunities. [Learn more.](#)

RESOURCES

Join the Trail Workers of America Group

American Trails created this group for trail workers and volunteers to connect, ask questions and discuss trail-related issues. [Learn more.](#)

Wisconsin Bike Week planning

Wisconsin celebrates Bike Week June 1 - 9. This year's theme is Bikes Mean Business. Enthusiastic businesses, communities, nonprofit organizations and individuals are encouraged to participate in Bike Week events. [Learn how to get involved.](#)

Registration open for Wisconsin Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference

The inaugural conference on May 30 - 31 will bring together business leaders, economic development professionals, local leaders and community champions in Platteville for two days of programming about strategies for supporting entrepreneurship in Wisconsin's small towns.

[Learn more here.](#)

Apply by June 17 for the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)

Administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), this program strategically invests in projects that connect active transportation networks and spines, accelerating local and regional plans to create safe and convenient walking and biking routes to everyday destinations, and to fill gaps between communities. Eligible project sponsors or applicants include local or regional governmental organizations and tribal governments. [Learn more.](#)

JOB LISTINGS

Travel Wisconsin now hiring two positions

Senior Digital Marketing Specialist and Office of Group Travel Program Manager positions available. [Apply now or share with your networks.](#)

Wisconsin DNR has seasonal positions available

Peninsula State Park and statewide educator positions still available – apply now for this season. [Learn more.](#)

Brunswick Boat Group Hiring at Several Locations

Multiple positions open in Pewaukee, Milwaukee, Menomonee Falls and more. Seasonal, year-round, office and warehouse positions available. [Learn more.](#)

Girls on the Run Northeast

Now hiring an Executive Director. [Learn more.](#)

Parks positions open in Marathon County

Pool staff, mechanic and other positions available in Wausau. [Learn more.](#)

Corporate and Camping positions at Johnson Outdoors

Internships, sales, marketing and other professional opportunities available in Racine. [Learn more.](#)

Harley Davidson positions available

Engineering, manufacturing, museum, human resources, sales and more positions available at multiple locations. [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

Fri-Sun May 3-5	<u>La Crosse Omnium</u>	La Crosse
Sat May 4	<u>International Women's Mountain Bike Day</u>	Whitewater
Sat May 4	<u>Wild Rose Fish Hatchery Open House</u>	Wild Rose
Thurs-Sat May 9-11	<u>Treeland Challenge - Bass and Walleye Catch and Release</u>	Hayward
Thurs-Sun May 9-12	<u>27th Horicon Marsh Bird Festival</u>	Horicon
Sat May 11	<u>Migratory Birding Hike @ Sugar Creek Bluff</u>	Ferryville
Wed-Sun May 15-19	<u>Ice Age Trail Crew @ Hemlock Creek Segment</u>	Rusk Co.
Fri-Sat May 17-18	<u>Fishing Has No Boundaries</u>	Hayward
Sat-Sun May 18-19	<u>The Crystal Bear Bikepacking Trip</u>	Laona
Sat May 25	<u>New Volunteer Day</u>	Langlade Co.
Sat May 25	<u>Rib Mountain Adventure Challenge</u>	Rib Mountain
Sun May 26	<u>Chippewa Valley Century Ride</u>	Chippewa Falls
Mon May 27	<u>The Highground Honor Ride</u>	Nielsville

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.

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

Website | 1-800-432-8747 | [Unsubscribe](#)