

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a web page.](#)



A Note from the Director

While I list my hobbies as biking, fishing, hiking, cross country skiing, and anything that gets me outdoors, those activities are, and have become, much more than hobbies for me and for millions of others in recent months. Outdoor recreation is a way of life and one that impacts our economy and benefits us physically, socially, and emotionally.

Outdoor recreation is an economic driver for Wisconsin contributing \$7.8 billion to the state's gross domestic product and supporting over 93,000 jobs, according to the [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#).

While the COVID-19 pandemic has without a doubt had far-reaching consequences on the economy, we can look for the silver lining in segments of the outdoor

recreation sector that are experiencing positive trends. As people remain committed to social distancing, they have turned to the wide-open spaces offered by the outdoors. And [record retail sales](#) and manufacturing output of paddlesports, fishing, boating, and biking equipment have followed.

Leveraging increased participation and demand with investments in outdoor recreation will help jumpstart the recovery of our economy. Last month, Congress passed the [Great American Outdoors Act](#) which addresses funding for backlogged maintenance at National Parks and other federal lands as well as makes the funding for the [Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\)](#) permanent.

Over its 54-year history, LWCF has provided funding for federal, state, and local projects that have touched all 72 of Wisconsin's counties. From protecting land and providing habitat for the once-endangered bald eagle that now thrives in the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge to constructing Madison's first skatepark as part of an urban revitalization effort of a former industrial area, projects large and small have benefited every corner of the state.

As these opportunities present themselves, it will be prudent for our industry to seize them with thoughtfulness to support economic recovery and provide opportunities for all to participate in their favorite, perhaps newfound, hobbies.



Mary Monroe Brown
Director, Office of Outdoor Recreation

Wisconsin Outside is a monthly newsletter from Wisconsin's Office of Outdoor Recreation. Please share it with friends or colleagues with a vested interest in Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry and partners by forwarding this email or [subscribing here](#). You may also update your subscription preferences [here](#).

Project Investments Show ROI

A recent [study](#) conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater estimated that the Ice Age National Scenic Trail generates \$355 million in annual economic impact. That's a big number. Then consider that over the years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has contributed \$14.5 million to permanently protecting sections of the trail. It's hard to argue the return on that investment (ROI).

Since the trail is still under construction and total project cost remains unknown, a return on the total project can't be calculated. But thanks to the recent study, we now know the economic impact (or return) is significant and will most certainly far exceed the project costs over time. [Another study](#) showed that for every \$1 of

LWCF invested in federal lands another \$4 in economic value was returned, supporting these indications.

Additionally, LWCF has been crucial in leveraging other public and private dollars at [a rate of 2.5 to 1](#) for the Ice Age Trail. “It is also a very important source of funding for capital development in State Parks,” explains Jennifer Gihring, DNR Federal Aid Coordinator. “For example, the renovated pool and new splash pad at Blue Mound State Park were funded with LWCF, expanding outdoor recreation opportunities for park visitors during the summer.”



The new pier at Erickson Park provides for accessible fishing for up to 50 anglers. Photo courtesy of Andrea Zani.

An important source of funding, most LWCF grants support capital improvements and recreation projects in state and local parks. The community of Chippewa Falls recently benefited from the largest LWCF grant ever given in the state. What started as an idea to create an accessible fishing pier for large groups turned into an entire park plan creating a recreation destination for the Chippewa Falls area. The \$2.1 million project also included a renovated boat ramp, trails, parking, restrooms, and a pedestrian bridge connecting Erickson Park to the Irvine Park and Zoo. The park opened in 2019.

We're All In for Wisconsin's Outdoors

Time spent outside has wide-ranging health benefits, and during the time of COVID-19 the outdoors also provides safe spaces for recreating and for local businesses. Recognizing the importance of our natural places and the safe ways to engage in them is more important than ever, and that's why #WeAreAllIn for Wisconsin's outdoors.

The [Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation](#) developed the We're All In campaign to provide business resources to inform customers and citizens how we can work together to slow the spread of COVID-19 and speed up the economic recovery. Businesses can download posters and social media graphics on the [We're All In website](#) to help reinforce the message.



To complement We're All In and ensure safe adventures in Wisconsin, Travel Wisconsin created the Travel Pledge. Read the pledge [here](#) and join the campaign. Follow along on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use the hashtag #WeAreAllIn when you share pictures of how you are innovating and keeping the well-being of Wisconsinites and visitors a top priority.

Industry & Community News

Milwaukee's Bradford Beach Now Most Accessible in America Completing the five-year initiative RampUp MKE, The Ability Center in partnership with the County unveiled new pathways, mats and wheelchairs that make the sand and water accessible to persons in wheelchairs or with mobility issues. [Read the article.](#)

“Women Who Inspire” Features Washburn Marina’s Michelle Shrider One of only 15 female Certified Marina Managers, Michelle Shrider is also Chair of the Wisconsin Marine Association and shares her love for watersports and boating through her role as Chair of the Bayfield Rec Center. [Read the article.](#)

Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association Seeking Director The non-profit organization responsible for creating and maintaining the internationally recognized CAMBA Trail System is seeking an executive director to lead the organization. [Learn more here.](#)

Events

Chris’ Slow Roll | August 1 - 29 The fifth annual fundraiser honoring the late Chris Kegel, founder of Wheel & Sprocket, will be a “slow roll...on your own.” Free and open to anyone, riders can donate to support the Chris Kegel Foundation and their mission to improve lives through cycling. [Learn more and register.](#)

WATVA Northwest Regional Meeting & Ride | August 14 Hosted at the Weyerhaeuser Community Park, statewide updates and issues will be discussed. Following the meeting, join in an optional group ride. [More information here.](#)

Routes to Roots | Now – September 20 With a newly created custom tour app, the popular Bike the Barns event is an interactive at-your-own-pace event this year that features routes for biking, walking, and running. [Learn more and register.](#)

Resources

MORE ADDED! Adventure Travel Guidance for Destinations & Operators The Adventure Travel Trade Association, consulting with the Cleveland Clinic, has created robust COVID-19 guidance for the industry overall as well as for trekking, cycling, rafting, camping, skiing, snowboarding, and more. [Download the free guides here.](#)

Wisconsin Coastal Management Program Refunded for 2021-2022 Request for proposals will be announced in August. Types of initiatives in the Great Lakes counties that may be eligible include public access and historic preservation projects, in addition to restoration, education, pollution control and resource and community planning. [Learn more here.](#)

The [Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation](#) is housed within the Wisconsin Department of Tourism.



Wisconsin Department of Tourism | 201 W Washington Ave | Madison, WI 53703