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A Note from the Director

Wisconsin's outdoors has provided so many of us with much needed escape and respite from the constant challenges brought forth this year. We are so fortunate to live in a state that has for generations prioritized and maintained our open spaces that act as retreats and places to restore. And, as we continue to care for our natural spaces and our neighbors, they will be here to care for us, too.

I'm reminded of a quote by Aldo Leopold, who believed, "Once you learn to read the land, I have no fear of what you will do to it, or with it. And I know many pleasant things it will do to you." In this moment as more and more people spend time outdoors, experience the mental and physical health benefits of time outside, and

strengthen their connections to these beautiful places through recreation, they create or deepen an appreciation of this reciprocal relationship.

While not all of us are able to get our hands in the dirt to care for the land like Leopold did, I am grateful for the many nonprofits whose work is to restore our great landscapes, create ways for us to meaningfully engage in the outdoors, and supply the expertise to enjoy adventures outside. Thinking about all of my favorite places to play in Wisconsin, there is most likely a nonprofit partner that helps makes those places so special. (We've featured a few in this issue and provide an opportunity for you to share your favorite. Read on to find out how.) I invite you to join me in recognizing their work and dedication to Wisconsin's outdoors.

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season,



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 Wisconsin's 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](#). You may also update your subscription preferences [here](#).

Collaboration Secures Missing Links

Public-private partnerships and participation of private landowners are a critical ingredient of successful trail projects.

The North Country National Scenic Trail stretches over 4,600 miles from central Vermont to central North Dakota, and Wisconsin is positioned to be the first state to complete its off-road trail construction from border to border with about 40% remaining. This success has grown because of the incredible public-private partnerships fused together through the nonprofit organization [North Country Trail Association \(NCTA\)](#).

Federal and state agencies provide critical administrative and funding assistance. A strong partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, exists because of the trail's State Scenic Trail designation, and much of the land acquired through purchase or easements is owned by the DNR. No other state has this level of

involvement from its state government agencies. The counties have also been instrumental partners in supporting the trail's development.



The 4,600-mile North Country National Scenic Trail crosses eight states, 200 miles of which are in Wisconsin. Inspiration for the national trail comes from the 60 mile section in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, once called the Northern Country Trail.

Thanks to this robust three-way partnership (between the DNR, National Park Service and NCTA) in Wisconsin, the NCTA has been able to understand land ownership across possible proposed routes and move forward with outreach to landowners. Often, the missing links to connecting segments of the trail are across multiple smaller, privately owned parcels, and permission for the trail to cross must be obtained from willing landowners.

For the Thewis family, providing an opportunity for others to find joy in the woods as their family has been doing for over 100 years was motivation enough. The five Thewis siblings, each with a parcel of their grandfather's former dairy farm, allowed the DNR to purchase easements on each of their properties for a 50-foot corridor so the trail could pass through, connecting Copper Falls State Park on the west to the Iron County Forest on the east. When completed, it will eliminate the less-than desirable-road section by connecting two large tracts of public land.

With the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act and full funding of the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), vital resources for land acquisitions and easement purchases will be accessible to pursue more missing links in the coming years. Wisconsin has another unique opportunity in the Knowles-Nelson

Stewardship program, a state granting program that can be used as matching funds for many LWCF projects that make outdoor recreation facilities a reality.

Once land or easements are acquired, the NCTA lends support in another essential way, with the management of a volunteer program responsible for the construction and ongoing maintenance of the trail. The North Country Trail Association is key to adding capacity to what public agencies can provide. Like so many nonprofits, their role in Wisconsin's outdoor recreation economy is indispensable.

“ What We're Hearing ”

From boots on the ground conservation work to trail building to creating educational and experiential opportunities – scores of Wisconsin nonprofits contribute to the success of the outdoor recreation industry.

What is your favorite nonprofit contributing to the success of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin?

Share Your Response

We're building our network of outdoor recreation-related businesses and organizations. Share your favorite, and we may include it in an upcoming issue.

Supporting Jobs Across Diverse Sectors

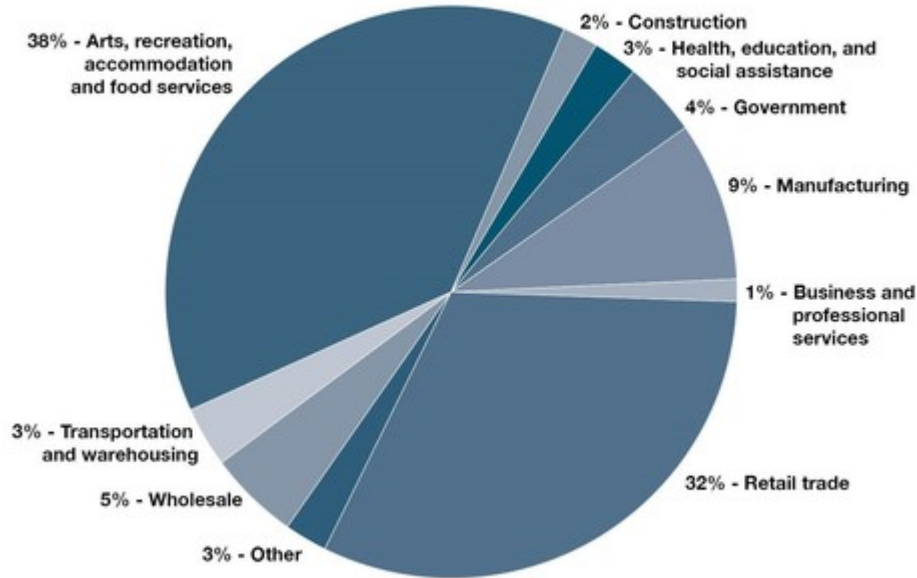
This is part of series diving deep into the impact of Wisconsin's outdoor recreation economy and providing a closer look from our recent report [Outdoor Recreation: A Top Driver of Wisconsin's Economy](#).

The outdoor economy in the state is diverse, employing over 93,000 people across a variety of sectors in both urban and rural areas. These jobs highlight the importance of the outdoor recreation industry in Wisconsin.

The economic impact of outdoor recreational activities in communities has been shown in report after report. When people travel to participate in outdoor recreation activities and events, they support local restaurants, shops, and lodging providers. In northwestern Wisconsin, 83% of visitors for the American Birkebeiner events arrive 2-3 days in advance of the race, and half of those surveyed paid for lodging during their stay, according to the [American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation](#). A similar study commissioned by [Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association](#) showed spending by trail users created the need for 118 jobs in Bayfield and Sawyer

counties. And the [Ice Age Trail Alliance](#) report estimated users supported 3,515 jobs accounting for over \$106 million in total wages.

OF THE 93,000 PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN OUTDOOR RECREATION IN THE STATE:



Data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis as included in the report, [Outdoor Recreation: A Top Driver of Wisconsin's Economy](#).

Retail trade follows in a close second making up 32% of Wisconsin's outdoor recreation jobs, somewhat unsurprising as nationally it ranks high. Where Wisconsin stands out, as mentioned in [November's newsletter](#), is in the manufacturing sector where 9 out of every 100 jobs is in outdoor recreation-related manufacturing.

As shown in the pie graph above, the other 21% of jobs are spread across many areas from the transportation and wholesale of outdoor recreation goods to construction and maintenance of outdoor recreation infrastructure to stewardship of the outdoor spaces where we recreate.

In total, these jobs account for over \$3.9 billion in salaries and wages for Wisconsin workers, meaning outdoor recreation is more than just a past-time and highlights that one in 40 Wisconsinites depends on the outdoor economy for their livelihood.

Industry & Community News

Outdoor Recreation Continues Growth, \$788 Billion National Industry The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released new data from its Outdoor Recreation

Satellite Account for the years 2018 and 2019 which continue to render a positive upshot. [Read the release.](#)

2021 WI State Park & Trail Passes on Sale Just in time for the holiday season, the new 2021 state park sticker and trail passes go on sale December 1. Purchase online or by phone by December 11 to ensure arrival before the holidays. [Read the release.](#)

WI Adds Three New National Recreation Trails The U.S. Department of Interior designated 30 new National Recreation Trails and three of them are in Wisconsin: [Heart of Vilas County Bike Trail System](#), [Chippewa River Water Trail](#), and the [St. Louis River Water Trail](#) which is shared with Minnesota. For the full list and more about the designation, [read the article.](#)

Retailers Rank Trek Among Top Manufacturing Partners In a national outdoor retailer survey asking respondents to write in their answers, Trek ranked second. Other Wisconsin manufacturers mentioned included Bending Branches, Aqua-Bound and Wigwam. [Read the article.](#)

Events

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

Vintage World Championship Snowmobile Races | Eagle River | Jan. 8-10
World Championship Snowmobile Derby | Eagle River | Jan. 14-17 Held every winter in the World Championship Derby Complex in Eagle River, the events are rooted in the community. [Find out more.](#)

Free Fishing Weekend | January 16-17 Try your luck ice fishing anywhere in Wisconsin without a license this weekend. All other fishing regulations apply. [Review the regulations](#) and these [winter water and ice safety tips.](#)

Seeley Hills Classic | Seeley | January 30 The 42K and 22K races take place on the American Birkebeiner Trails and are a fundraiser for the Seeley Ski Club which has contributed to trail developments and maintenance. Changes have been implemented to ensure a safe race. [Learn more and register.](#)

Resources

Virtual State Tour begins December 3 Join the Office of Outdoor Recreation out on the “trail.” Hear from Director Mary Monroe Brown in a live online meeting and share perspective on outdoor recreation from your business or organization. [Find the tour stop in your region and register to join.](#)

Mini-Webinar Series Continues Join the Office of Outdoor Recreation as we tackle some big issues – from outdoor tourism to resilient communities to funding – in bite-size fashion. [Learn more, register, or watch past programs.](#)

Wisconsin Snow Report Launches The regularly updated map-based report shows snow conditions across the state for winter sports including snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, as well as downhill skiing and snowboarding. [Check out the report.](#)

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



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