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WISCONSIN

— OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION —



A Note from the Director

Wisconsin continues to have much to celebrate when it comes to the outdoors. We're fortunate to have incredible places and endless options to be active outside, and the future potential in the growing number of people connecting with the outdoors is exciting. As the state's outdoor recreation industry continues to innovate around challenges and step up to meet opportunities, we see strong signs that Wisconsin's outdoor industry is one of the most resilient in the country, and that is something to celebrate.

Last month, the [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) released its data on the outdoor recreation economy for 2020, which showed the industry generated [\\$689 billion in economic output and supported 4.3 million jobs nationally](#). Despite being one of the hardest hit sectors of the economy impacted by shutdowns, supply chain shortages, and reduced travel, the industry as a whole looks poised to regain the growing traction we witnessed in the years leading up to 2020. Read more about the new data release below for the big takeaways.

As the story of increased participation and demand for gear continues, Wisconsin's strong outdoor recreation industry is set to continue to shine. The state's history and lifestyle are steeped in outdoor recreation, as you'll see highlighted in the second story on hunting's economic impact, and we are honored to be your resource and partner welcoming the opportunities ahead.

Enjoy your holidays,



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.

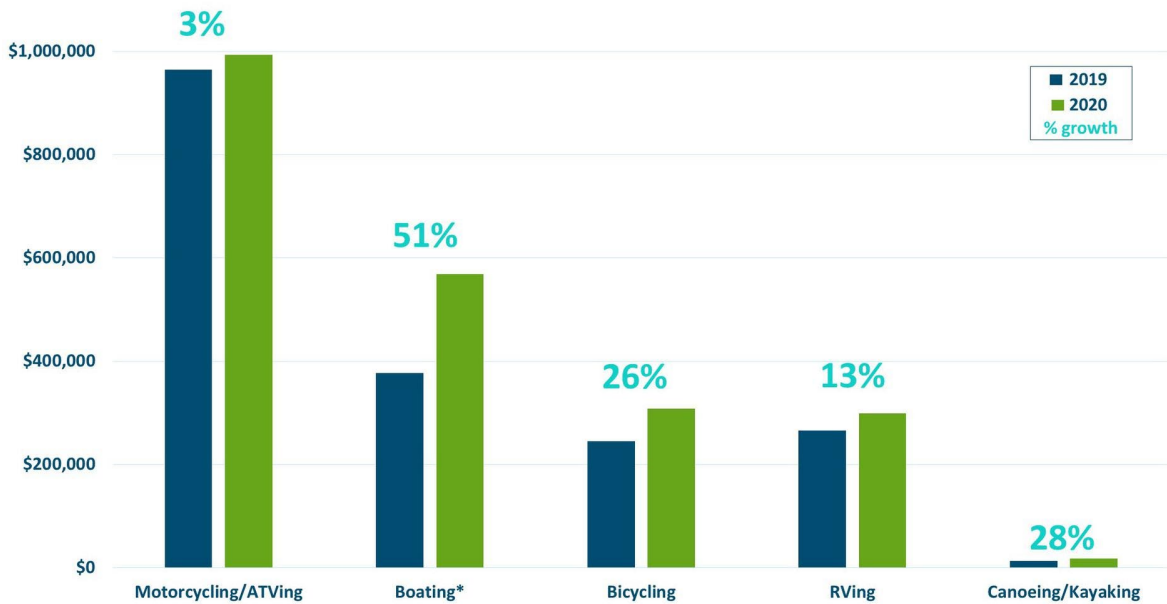
Wisconsin Outside is a monthly newsletter from the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation. Please share it with friends or colleagues with a vested interest in Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry by forwarding this email or [subscribing here](#).

Data Shows Wisconsin's Outdoor Industry Among Nation's Most Resilient in 2020

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released the much-anticipated 2020 data for the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account which measures the industry's contributions to the nation's economy primarily through gross domestic product (GDP). As the data is analyzed, promising trends emerge. The new data reveals the strength of the outdoor recreation industry, and Wisconsin leads among the states most resilient to the challenges of an unprecedented year.

Select Value Added (GDP) Activities in Wisconsin

(in thousands of dollars)



*Labeled by U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis as "Other Boating," a subcategory, it consists primarily of motorized boating and excludes canoeing/kayaking, fishing.

Figure 1

In Wisconsin

The state's outdoor recreation industry continued to be robust, contributing \$7.8 billion outdoor to the state's GDP. Among all states, Wisconsin ranked third for GDP growth. Motorcycling and ATVing, Wisconsin's largest category, was up 3.5%, contributing \$994 million. Wisconsin leads all states in this category.

Other highlights include the top growth categories for Wisconsin (Fig. 1):

- Boating was up 51%, contributing \$569 million
- Canoeing/kayaking was up 28%, contributing more than \$17 million
- Bicycling was up 26%, contributing \$309 million
- RVing was up 13%, contributing \$299 million



Bending Branches, located in Osceola, is the world's largest paddle manufacturer.

Powerhouse manufacturing and strong tourism activity, the two largest sectors contributing to the outdoor recreation economy in Wisconsin, were key factors leading to Wisconsin's good showing. While tourism faced declines, Wisconsin's vast outdoor offerings provided wide-open spaces and safe activities during the pandemic and people took advantage of these opportunities in droves. Wisconsin was one of only seven states to see an increase in local trip spending for outdoor recreation related trips.

Breaking Down the National Data

Nearly [7 million more Americans](#) spent time in the outdoors in 2020. This increase in participation, which led to record sales of outdoor gear and equipment, helped the outdoor recreation industry weather the impacts of the pandemic. One of the hardest hit sectors, the outdoor recreation industry still contributed over \$374 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP, also known as value added) despite being down compared to last year.

In correlation with increased participation, items manufactured and sold in the U.S. contributed largely to the growth seen in several categories. Boating/fishing was up 28%, bicycling was up 7%, and RVing was up 5%.

Growth in these categories helped offset the decreases seen in supporting activities like outdoor concerts and festivals, water parks and amusement parks, sporting events, and travel expenses including air fare and lodging for outdoor recreation-related trips that all factor into the industry's overall GDP contribution.

The Upshot

The BEA figures for 2020 are just one element of the outsized role of the outdoor recreation industry. Almost two years into the pandemic, participation remains strong. According to the Wisconsin DNR, more visitors have attended state parks this year through September 30 than all of 2019, and attendance is on pace to surpass 2020's record. Moreover, interest for purchasing gear remains extremely high with retailers seeing the light in being able to fulfill pent up consumer demand.

Investments in outdoor recreation and the industry have proven to support Wisconsin's rural and urban communities, especially during these challenging times. Continued investments to meet the demand and cultivation of new participants into lifelong outdoorists will be key to fueling a growing, healthy industry into the future. Wisconsin's resilient outdoor recreation industry stands on solid ground to keep this momentum moving forward.

“ What We're Hearing ”

“A big dream of mine was to spread the love and see the Fat Bike World Championships go to another fat bike hot spot and visit other destinations like ‘Worlds’ races should do. I’ve wanted the race to end up in Michigan, Minnesota, or Wisconsin where fat biking has a huge presence. Chris Stevens and his Wisconsin-based team have been coming to Crested Butte. When we asked Chris and his crew to host, he was 150% in and said: ‘Yes, we’d love to host Fat Bike

Worlds and we'd love it in New Richmond.' And thus, the Wisconsin race location was set!"



**-Dave Ochs, Race Director, Fat Bike World Championships,
Crested Butte, CO**

This January, Wisconsin will host Fat Bike Worlds in New Richmond. The 7th annual championship race began in Crested Butte, CO where it took place for five years before traveling to Pinedale, WY last year. Chris Stevens will be the 2022 Race Director, supported by many volunteers from local teams and clubs.

**2022 Borealis Fat Bike World Championships presented by Pure Fuel
January 28-30
New Richmond, WI
[More Race Info and Activities](#)**

Hunting: More Than Tradition in Wisconsin

Open season dates occur almost every month of the year in Wisconsin, providing many opportunities to hunt throughout the state. According to the [US Fish and Wildlife Service](#) in 2020, Wisconsin sold the most hunting licenses, tags, permits, and stamps in the nation coming in at over 4 million, nearly 1.5 million more than the next state, Pennsylvania. Wisconsin also attracted more non-resident hunters than any other state. These hunters and their trips contribute significantly to the overall economic impact of Wisconsin. A 2013 study, the most recent economic compilation for hunting, showed the activity provides [nearly \\$2.5 billion dollars to the state's economy annually](#).

From younger to older generations, to new and expanding demographics, a diverse range of people are joining in the hunt. A promising trend is the increase in female hunters, which remains the largest growing demographic in Wisconsin by nearly

12%. According to licensing data provided by the DNR, of the nearly 70,000 deer hunters last year aged 17 and under, 14,000 of those were girls. Even more impressive, 30% of all new registered hunters identify as female. As recruitment and retention efforts continue working to reverse the decline in hunting nation-wide, this diversity and increased interest by female hunters is a boost to both participation and spending, supporting Wisconsin communities, local manufacturers, retailers, and outfitters.



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin DNR

Wisconsin's rich hunting heritage includes several world-class outdoor brands that make products for the activity, including leaders in both archery and rifle and shotgun manufacturing in [Mathews](#) and [Henry Repeating Arms](#), respectively. The latter just announced an expansion, with plans to add a second facility in Wisconsin and 100 new jobs over the next three years.

In Barneveld, [Vortex Optics](#) makes binoculars, range finders, spotting and riflescopes, and red dot sights. It employs more than 300 in a facility adjacent to the Barneveld Prairie State Natural Area which employees can access. In Madison, apparel maker [DSG Outerwear](#) began making hunting clothing for women and spearheaded the Blaze Pink Bill that when passed in 2015 made Wisconsin the first state in the nation to allow a color other than blaze orange on gear when hunting. (Wisconsin law requires at least 50% of each article of clothing above the waist to be

the highly visible blaze orange or blaze pink color during an open hunting season for deer with firearms.)

With its access to vast outdoor spaces and its long tradition of hunting, Wisconsin is a top destination for hunters from both near and far, creating deep economic impacts. Growing the participation and impacts continues with the efforts by sporting and conservation organizations alongside businesses who are working together to make the activity more accessible, welcoming, and diverse.

In Case You Missed It

You can still register to receive the webinar recording “Creating Welcoming, Enjoyable Trails for All” hosted by the Office of Outdoor Recreation. Discover ways and resources to promote positive trail experiences. Hear from the national coalition behind **Trails are Common Ground** whose goal is to create a respectful, inclusive, safe, and enjoyable environment every time anyone steps, rides, or rolls onto the trail. Then hear from local groups who weave trail etiquette into their education and programs.

Register now and get the recorded webinar emailed to you!

Register

Webinar panelists include **Dave Wiens** (Executive Director, International Mountain Biking Association), **Melanie Radzicki McManus** (Hiker and Author, *Thousand-Miler*), **Kricket Jewett** (Chair Trails Committee, Wisconsin Horse Council), **Christopher Kilgour** (Founder, Color in the Outdoors), **Alex Bub** (Coach, Wisconsin Off Road Adventures), **Brigit Brown** (Natural Resource Program Manager, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources).

Industry & Community News

\$1 Trillion Infrastructure Bill Signed, Provides Outdoor Recreation Funding

The bill includes \$100 million in outdoor recreation infrastructure support, reauthorizes the Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund, among other programs. [Read the story.](#)

Holiday Pheasant Stocking Increases Hunting Opportunities

The Wisconsin DNR announced it will stock an expanded 25 state properties with nearly 3,000 additional pheasants beginning the week of December 20, 2021. [Read the release.](#)

Events

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

Global Fat Bike Day Celebration | December 4 | Hayward

With guided 7-mile and 14-mile rides, fat bike rental available, and gourmet soup and refreshments, the event helps fund CAMBA's winter trail grooming budget. [Learn more and register.](#)

Hugh Jass Fat Bike Series| December 11 | Waterloo

Race 2 of the six-part series takes place at the Trek Headquarters, one of the few opportunities to ride the private cyclocross trails. [Learn more and register.](#)

Tuscobia Winter Ultra | December 31 – January 2 | Rice Lake

The self-supported winter run, bike, or ski ultra-race is back on with 80-mile and 160-mile options traversing the Tuscobia and Wild Rivers State Trails. [Learn more and register.](#)

Resources

Tourism's Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant for Nonprofits

Grant funding is available to help an event or promotion come to fruition. The next grant deadline is February 1 at 11:59 pm CST. [Learn more.](#)

Clean Diesel Grant for Vehicle Fleets

Funding for projects to reduce diesel emissions and improve air quality is available by a competitive grant process supported by the EPA and administered by Wisconsin DNR. Public, private, and nonprofit entities are eligible. Deadline to apply is January 7 at 5:00 pm CST. [Learn more.](#)

Do-It-Yourself Trail Research You Can Start Right Away

This three-part online course by the Harbinger Consultancy aims to show attendees how to pull together a plan for a trail study, analyze the results, and present findings to catalyze action. [Learn more.](#)

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



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