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— OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION —




A Note from the Director

A new year means new opportunities, and we're pleased to kick off 2022 with more resources to support growing the outdoor recreation industry in Wisconsin. As national interest in the outdoors continues, more Wisconsinites and visitors will continue seeking places outside to escape to and rejuvenate. Communities with outdoor amenities and infrastructure benefit from the ability to welcome outdoorists and reap the economic impacts from their visits. Residents and businesses also benefit from improved quality of life which helps attract workforce talent.

The sheer number of people seeking the outdoors, an [increase that would normally take a decade](#) but spiked in the matter of the last two years, sometimes meant crowded trailheads and visitors needing to seek alternative locations. Disbursement is an important management tool, but it requires options. Many communities have inquired about how to improve and/or expand their outdoor recreation infrastructure, and the Office has worked with industry partners to produce new resources. The Office is here to help communities understand and harness the potential of outdoor recreation. The road map to developing new trails and a panel discussion about how to be an outdoor recreation community are discussed further in the two stories below.

I'm also happy to introduce the "Meet Your Wisconsin Outdoor Industry" feature in this newsletter. We are building on the success of the first [Outdoor Business Directory](#) for Wisconsin we created to help you learn about and connect with fellow businesses and organizations that make up our robust outdoor industry. Make sure your business or

organization [is listed](#) with accurate information and feel free share your interest in being featured via this [email link](#). Your feedback and input helps direct our strategic initiatives.



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](#).

A New Guide for Building New Trails

Bicycling is one of the top five favorite outdoor activities of Wisconsinites, according to the [Wisconsin State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2019-2023 \(SCORP\)](#). Nationally, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, all types of cycling were seeing growth over the five-year period leading up to the pandemic with magnified growth since. With more people on bikes, places to ride are sought after more than ever.

Nationally, there is a significant increase in bicycling and bicycling infrastructure to meet the growing demands. To keep up with the volume of new outdoorists, infrastructure improvements need to keep up, too. Communities across Wisconsin can tap the into this growth.

Bike paths, routes and trails add immense livability benefits to communities from safe transportation routes to places to play. They also offer economic benefits. Consumer spending on bicycle-related expenses was estimated to be [\\$1.42 billion in 2017](#), translating to \$83 million in state and local taxes.

The Office of Outdoor Recreation has partnered with the [Wisconsin Bike Fed](#), [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#), the [International Mountain Biking Association \(IMBA\)](#), and [Wheel & Sprocket](#) to help communities navigate the process of bringing new outdoor infrastructure to life, fulfilling a need that surfaced during the Office's virtual state tour. A common theme emerged that developing new projects can be overwhelming. Outlined in nine basic phases, [The Path to Developing New Trails](#) provides general direction as well as resources for more in-depth guidance.



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- The Path to Developing New Trails**
- Define the Vision**
Describe the future successful state once the project is complete. What is it? What needs will it address? Who will benefit from it? A clear vision is the foundation of any successful project.
Resource: *Rails to Trails - Rails to the Border*
 - Form a Team**
Rally your champions into action. Include representatives from major stakeholder groups. An effective team builds momentum and moves the project forward.
Resource: *Rails to Trails - Rails to the Border*
 - Community Engagement**
Rally your champions into action. Include representatives from major stakeholder groups. An effective team builds momentum and moves the project forward.
Resource: *Rails to Trails - Rails to the Border*
 - Establish Roles**
Define roles and responsibilities of partners to ensure a well-managed project as it unfolds with clear assignments for future management, programming, and stewardship.
Resource: *Rails to Trails - Management Models*
 - Seek Funding**
Develop a budget and pursue funding support through public or private partnerships, grants, individual donations, and events. Fundraising often occurs in phases throughout the project timeline and beyond.
Resource: *International Mountain Biking Association - Trail Acquisition Grant*
 - Plan & Design It**
Consider engaging trail professionals through a "Request for Proposal" advertisement to lead the planning and design process. Select professionals that will continue to engage the public and land manager's and ensure the design reflects the community's interests and needs while considering funding, timing, construction approach, permitting, and maintenance requirements.
Resource: *International Mountain Biking Association - Trail Life*
 - Build It**
Determine a construction approach that utilizes professional trail builders, volunteers, youth conservation corps, and in-kind services. A construction manager or client representative may be needed to oversee construction or check if those management skill sets are not on your team.
Resource: *International Mountain Biking Association - Trail Solutions*
 - Maintain It**
Carry out the previously determined operations and maintenance plan that was developed during design and construction. Engage partners, volunteers, and the community in this work to develop a sense of ownership and pride.
Resource: *American Trails - Building Trail Stewards*
 - Promote It**
Activate your trails with events and programming to drive community engagement and promote the finished project to increase economic activity. Work with local organizations, the chamber of commerce, the convention and visitor's bureau, and tourism entities to promote the trails to both residents and visitors.
Resource: *Trail Wisconsin - Trail Promotion*
- Brought to you in partnership by the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation, the Wisconsin State Trail System & Council, the International Mountain Biking Association, and Rails to Trails Conservancy

Get the downloadable, educational flyer with active links [here](#). Stay tuned over the next months for a breakdown of each phase of the process that provides additional insights and tips to guide you along the way.

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 will share information about the industry, so you can get to know your peers across the state and see how each of you contribute to the collective success and diversity of the valued outdoor recreation industry in Wisconsin. Here are your February industry highlights:



Non-Profit: [Namakagon Trail Groomers Association](#)

- The Namakagon Trail Groomers Association was founded in 1974 to engage in nonprofit activities within Bayfield County. They encourage and promote the safe and courteous sport of snowmobiling, construct, maintain, and improve snowmobile facilities and trails, and engage in social and fund-raising activities in line with these purposes.



Manufacturer: [Redfeather Snowshoes](#)

- Redfeather Snowshoes are completely handcrafted in La Crosse and have been since 1988 with the creation of the first lightweight aluminum V-Tail design snowshoe that helped revolutionize the sport. Redfeather Snowshoes are manufactured and owned by [ORC Industries](#), a not-for-profit company whose sole organizational mission is to provide job opportunities for people with disabilities. And one of those opportunities is to make the best snowshoes in the world.



Guides & Tours: [Adventure North Snowmobile Tours & Rentals](#)

- Adventure North Snowmobile offers guided snowmobile services in Northern Wisconsin minutes from the world visited resort town of Minocqua. Tours are tailored for the beginner rider to the more advanced. First time snowmobilers and beginners will enjoy the attention and care required to introduce new riders to a wonderful life-long sport.



Dealership: [Ecklund Motorsports of Appleton](#)

- Ecklund Motorsports has been serving the Fox Valley area for more than 24 years. They are a leader in the motorsports industry and located in Appleton, WI. They are a full-line retailer of Yamaha, Ariens, Can-Am, Spyder, Sea-Doo and Ski-Doo. In fact Ecklund Motorsports been recognized as the largest Ski-Doo dealer of parts, accessories and clothing in the country!

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 update your information. If you are already listed, feel free to send us an [email](#) with your interest to be featured in the newsletter.

Becoming an Outdoor Recreation Community

A group of friends from out of state travels north with their snowmobiles trailers in tow. They're headed for snow and miles of trails to explore. On their way, they stop to fuel up their vehicles and sleds and maybe stop for a sandwich. They check in at a hotel where they'll spend a couple of nights because they plan to take part in a ride event hosted by a local club, dine at a restaurant and visit local hangouts. Their trip to Wisconsin, ignited by a desire to snowmobile,

has economic ripple effects for the communities in which they choose to spend their time and money.

Every community has unique opportunities, and understanding how the dollar grows when people recreate in Wisconsin is important to leverage your special outdoor recreation assets. Communities that have successfully grown their economy through outdoor recreation and are known for their outdoor offerings often have a few things in common.

Two of these communities, each at different stages of achieving the “outdoor mecca” moniker, will join the Office of Outdoor Recreation for a session at the annual [Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism](#). Join us March 13-15 at Monona Terrace in Madison to hear their secrets. ([Register](#) by February 4 for early bird discounts.)



The Tour of America's Dairyland attracts over a thousand riders from across the U.S. and several countries for the 11-day, multi-community race series, generating over \$2 million in visitor expenditures. Photo courtesy of Karl Hendriske, Official Resident ToAD Photographer.

From basic infrastructure to amenities to promotion, the breakout session “How to Be an Outdoor Recreation Community & Draw Visitors” will outline the elements that led the community of Hayward to become an outdoor mecca and explain how the Wausau area is fostering collaborations that are moving outdoor recreation planning forward to attain the same status. The session will also include the nation's largest competitive cycling series, [Tour of America's Dairyland](#), and how it creates a boon for host communities.

The Office of Outdoor Recreation is pleased to be able to bring this session to tourism industry partners, sharing inspiration and practical tools for harnessing the opportunities in outdoor recreation that can grow our collective economic success. To register for the conference or view the full schedule, visit the conference website [here](#).

Wisconsin Waterfalls Loop Wins Best New Route on Bikepacking.com

Local bicycling advocate and author Dave Schlabowske crafted the 380-mile, mostly gravel and dirt route that takes riders on a weeklong adventure to view 28 waterfalls and experience several off-the-beaten-path taverns and eateries. [See the winners.](#)

CORBA Honored for Bicycle-Boosting Efforts

The City of Eau Claire's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee announced the winners of its second annual Bicycle Pedestrian Community Service Awards. The Chippewa Off Road Bicycle Association (CORBA) won in the nonprofit category for their efforts to create and promote trails in the area. [Read the story and see all the winners.](#)

Winter Issue of DNR's Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine Released

From winter day trips to beautiful ice creations to ice fishing tips, the newest issue is full of winter inspiration for getting outside. Get the details on how time spent outside benefits your health. [Read the magazine online.](#)

Winter Recreation & Ice Safety Reminders from the DNR

The Wisconsin DNR reminds snowmobile riders to "think smart before you start" with [safety courses and tips available online](#). [Ice safety reminders](#) can also be found for snowmobilers, anglers, skiers, snowshoers, or hikers along with a [special advisory for the Bay of Green Bay](#).

Forest Service Fee-Free Days

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest will waive fees on the following days in 2022: February 21 (Presidents Day), June 11 (National Get Outdoors Day), September 24 (National Public Lands Day) and November 11 (Veterans Day). [Learn more.](#)

Resources

REI's New Path Ahead Ventures Support BIPOC-owned Outdoor Businesses

Two new programs, Embark and Navigate, will provide funding and expert resources to meet BIPOC entrepreneurs in the outdoor industry where they are and accelerate their success. [Learn more.](#)

AARP's Community Challenge Grant Program

Funding is awarded for projects that create vibrant public spaces, address accessibility, ensure a focus on diversity and inclusion, and increase civic engagement among other outcomes that support livable communities. The 2022 application window opens in February. [Learn more.](#)

Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) Grant

The Angler R3 grant program from the Wisconsin DNR provides funding for programs or projects that help grow the number of anglers in Wisconsin. Deadline to apply is February 15. [Learn more.](#)

Upcoming Funding Opportunities from the Natural Resources Foundation

- [David and Joyce Weizenicker Fund for State Parks](#) for projects by Friends groups to facilitate accessibility for senior citizens. Due March 1.
- [Norma & Stanley DeBoer Quiet Trails Fund](#) to create, enhance, maintain and promote quiet trails. Due March 1.

- [Go Outside Fund](#) to cover costs to facilitate getting kids outside for nature-based learning experiences. Quarterly awards; next applications due March 31.

Events

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

Friday, Feb 4	Snow Bully Fat Bike Race	Iola
Saturday, Feb 5	Snow Crown Series - Fat Camp	Suamico
Sat-Sun, Feb 5-6	World Series of Snowmobile Racing	Eagle River
Mon-Sat, Feb 7-12	Winter Carnival at UW-Madison	Madison
Fri-Sun, Feb 11-13	Sturgeon Spectacular	Fond du Lac
Saturday, Feb 12	Hugh Jass Race Series #5	Appleton
Saturday, Feb 19	Snow Crown Series - Fattyshack	De Pere
Saturday, Feb 19	Book Across the Bay	Ashland - Washburn
Saturday, Feb 19	Northern Pines Sled Dog Race	Iron River
Sat-Sun, Feb 19-27	Sweaty Yeti - Semi Virtual	Neillsville
Wed-Sun, Feb 23-27	American Birkebeiner	Hayward-Cable
Fri-Sat, Feb 25-26	Arctic Derby Dash	Eagle River
Saturday, Feb 26	Hugh Jass Race Series #6	Madison
Saturday, Feb 26	Turtle Flambeau Ice Fishing Jamboree	Butternut

You can help 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



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