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WISCONSIN

— OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION —



WISCONSIN OUTSIDE | June 2021

A Note from the Director

After a long holiday weekend that unofficially marks the beginning of summer, there is renewed excitement to get out and discover something unexpected in Wisconsin's great outdoors.

The Office is pleased to share with you a new video showcasing just that. In addition to raising the profile of Wisconsin's outdoor offering, we felt it was important to communicate the importance of the industry and how the Office of Outdoor Recreation supports it in a way that is understandable and digestible. [Watch the video](#) that beautifully tells Wisconsin's outdoor recreation story, highlights the robust industry, and explains the role of the Office.

The Office is also proud to have connected with many of our outdoor recreation stakeholders to establish trusted relationships which has allowed us to work collaboratively showcasing the state's outdoor industry in Travel Wisconsin's upcoming campaigns. It's just one of the many ways a central supporting organization like the Office helps make connections that lift up the entire industry.

[Watch Travel Wisconsin's new summer ad](#) that prominently features the state's natural wonders as well as some Wisconsin-made gear we use to enjoy it.

This June as we recognize Great Outdoors Month and National Trails Day on Saturday the 5th, we celebrate you – the people and industry that make experiencing outside a memory-making adventure not to be forgotten. Read on to see how you can share in this celebration of our fellow Wisconsinites in the outdoor recreation industry by nominating a business or organization to be recognized in a special edition of *Wisconsin Outside* for their work inspiring, educating, outfitting, or guiding new or lifelong enthusiasts in their outdoor pursuits.



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](#).

Promoting Safe & Responsible Riding Cultivates Community

In a year when participation is skyrocketing among off-highway vehicle (OHV) users and with many new riders, education becomes critically important to ensure safety. Learning the rules and regulations, which can vary by vehicle type, locality, or trail, can be somewhat of a daunting task, but in Wisconsin many local clubs take a supportive and social approach to helping riders enjoy the activity responsibly.

The [Wisconsin ATV Association \(WATVA\)](#) provides programming, tools, resources, and support for local clubs to foster community relationships and promote safe riding and a positive image of the sport. Through their nearly 20-year-old [Trail Ambassador](#)

program, WATVA has trained over 1,000 volunteers who provide a respected, knowledgeable presence on the trail. Teams of volunteers patrol the trails, reassuring other users and communities that watchful eyes are monitoring the trails. Other volunteer ambassadors set up informational tents to welcome and engage riders around safety precautions and regulations as well as share additional opportunities and ways to enjoy riding.



A WATVA Trail Ambassador Welcome Center is set up trailside in Shell Lake to offer maps and information on where to ride, rules and regulations, and free vehicle safety checks.

The local club structure, of which trail ambassadors also promote, allows for social interaction and peer-to-peer information exchange and even informal mentoring of new riders. Through events such as group rides, where experienced, knowledgeable leaders model safe and responsible riding and map-out legal routes, new riders are welcomed into a community supportive of learning and growth. Trail ambassadors who meet new riders always encourage them to join their local ATV/UTV clubs for this reason.

WATVA also provides support for municipalities and their clubs to navigate local ordinances and bring clarity on legislation that impacts riding access, as well as direct

website users to those local entities where they can find information and maps on where to ride. As a central organization, WATVA provides support, fostering relationships between riders and their communities in the name of safe, responsible, and enjoyable riding.

“ *What We're Hearing* ”

June is Great Outdoors Month – Nominate a Business or Organization

With so many new people recreating outside over the past year, we have an even greater appreciation for the businesses, organizations, and people that inspire and prepare individuals for a great experience in the outdoors.

Do you know an outstanding retailer, outfitter, guide, or education program that does exceptional work connecting people to the outdoors through recreation?

Submit a Nomination by June 15

Help us recognize the outstanding service of these businesses and organizations who are the gateway to experiencing Wisconsin's great outdoors. All nominees will be included in a special edition of Wisconsin Outside.

OHVs Infuse Dollars into Communities

This is part of a 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](#).

Wisconsin leads the nation in value added to the economy by motorcycling and ATVing with [approximately \\$1 billion contributing to the state's total gross domestic product annually](#), according to the 2017 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis numbers. The headquarters and manufacturing facilities of Harley-Davidson, as well as the drive-train facility of Polaris are pillars of this significant contribution. In addition to the

economic output numbers, Wisconsin also offers premier destinations for motorcycle and off-highway vehicle owners looking to ride.

Two local studies investigated the demographics and habits of ATV and UTV riders in 2011 and 2015 as off-highway riding was becoming increasingly a leisure activity versus utilitarian. A [yearlong study in 2011 of the Cheese Country Trail](#) in Green, Lafayette, and Iowa counties of southwestern Wisconsin estimated over 98,000 trail visits by ATV/UTV riders. It also found two-thirds of riders came from outside the three-county region, validating the assumption the trail was drawing tourists. They spent an average of \$175 - \$220 per trip on gas, food, lodging, and entertainment. Spending of all motorized trail users (local and non-resident) during the 12-month period was estimated to inject \$15 million to the three-county region that year (2011).



UTV and ATV riders explore a trail near Hurley.

A [similar study in Jackson County in 2015](#) also found that most motorized users on the trails were from outside the region – 91% traveled from other Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri counties – spending an average of \$355 - \$427 per trip. Most (81%) were return users who reported visiting the trails two or three

times per year, approximately two-thirds of whom stayed overnight an average of two to three nights at a hotel or campground. All told, non-local spending was estimated to inject \$7.6 - \$9.2 million to Jackson county businesses.

As interest in OHVs has grown in the last ten years, especially with UTVs or side-by-side units, communities recognize trail and route connectivity translates to welcoming riders to their local businesses. Some municipalities and counties, such as [Grant County](#), have opened specific roads as designated ATV/UTV routes as increasingly OHV riding has become a way for people to get from one place to another – from home to a neighbor’s house or out for dinner.

Industry & Community News

Dan Small and Ice Age Trail Alliance Honored at WIGCOT

Winners of the Governor’s Tourism Awards were announced during the last session of the Wisconsin Governor’s Conference on Tourism. Congratulations to the Ice Age Trail Alliance for their Mammoth Hike Challenge, receiving the Stewardship Award, and to the outdoor industry’s Dan Small, the esteemed TV producer and host of Outdoor Wisconsin, receiving the Legacy Award. [Read about the award recipients.](#)

Outdoor UW-Madison Resumes Rentals, Yoga, and Group Classes

Equipment rentals and group classes resumed on May 31st after last season’s hiatus due to COVID-19. [Learn more.](#)

Solo Canoeist Paddles Entire St. Croix River to Raise Awareness

Jeff Butler, National Park Service Ranger, Vets on the River Guide, and member of the Office of Outdoor Recreation committee, spent two weeks in May paddling the 170 miles of the St. Croix River in memory of his brother and to raise awareness of the North Woods and Waters of the St. Croix Heritage Area. [Read about the journey.](#)

DNR and Vortex Optics Present 2020 Wisconsin Hunter Ethics Award

This year, two hunters received the award in recognition of their actions exemplifying responsible hunter ethics during the 2020 season. [Read about the winners.](#)

Events

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

Free Fun Weekend | June 5-6 | Statewide

Explore Wisconsin's state parks and trails or go fishing for free. No admission fees or fishing licenses will be required. For ideas on what to see or do, check out the [Friends of Wisconsin State Parks Explore Challenge](#). [Learn more](#).

Borah EPIC | June 5 | Cable

Singletrack and gravel races on the CAMBA trails are nothing short of epic. The proceeds from the event support trail work. [Learn more and register](#).

Ironring River Float | June 26 | Wausau

Float down the Wisconsin River by kayak, canoe, paddleboard, or tube. Lifeguards will be stationed along the route. [Learn more and register](#).

Resources

DNR Offers Funding for ATV/UTV Safety Training

Organizations recruiting and training ATV/UTV safety instructors and volunteer trail ambassadors are encouraged to apply to this program to receive funding. [Learn more](#).

2021 North American Camping Report by KOA

Kampgrounds of America just released their seventh annual report detailing who is camping, how, where and why they're camping, and more. [Read the report](#).

Find more research like these reports in the [Research Library](#) on the Office of Outdoor Recreation's new website at outdoorrecreation.wi.gov.

Wisconsin Department of Tourism

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