

# A (water) trail to economic prosperity through the outdoors

Nathan Reigner, PhD  
Director of Outdoor Recreation  
Pennsylvania Office of Outdoor Recreation









Economic development

Vibrant communities

Physical & mental health

Environmental conservation

## Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

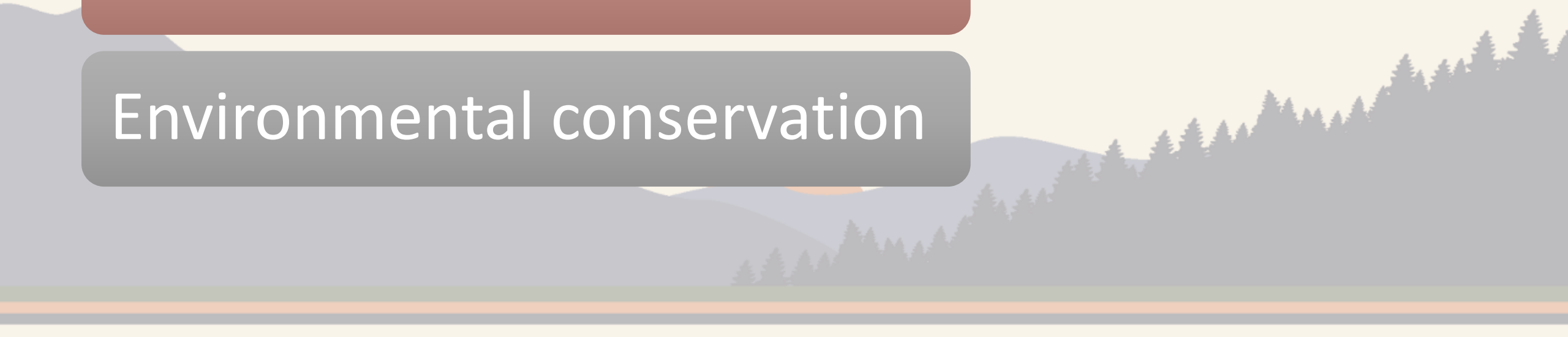
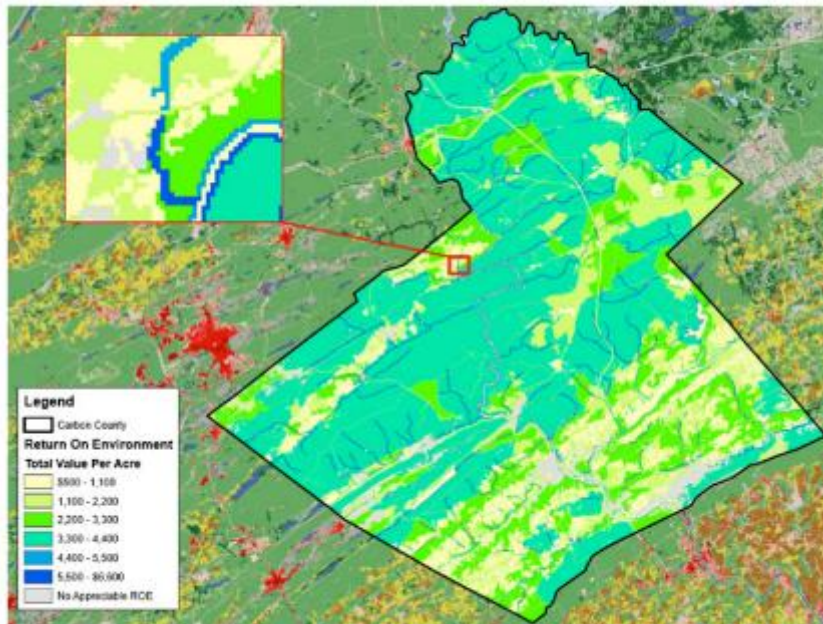


FIGURE 06 // CARBON COUNTY ROE MAP

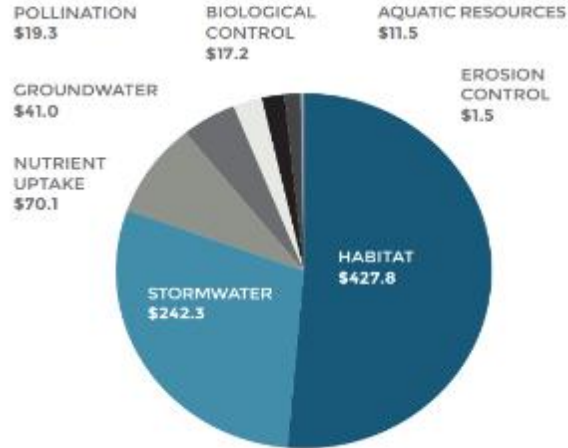


While difficult to see from a map at this scale, the highest ROE is in green corridors along streams and creeks, with the second highest being ridges and slopes. See the map cutout.

**\$830.6** MILLION IN ANNUAL SAVINGS

**NATURAL SYSTEM SERVICES** 💧

Source: Costanza et al (2006)



Lehigh Valley  
Return on Environment

## Outdoor Infrastructure is Green Infrastructure

- Stormwater management
- Temperature regulation
- Habitat connectivity
- Air & water purification



The Economic Value of Protected Open Space  
in Southeastern Pennsylvania



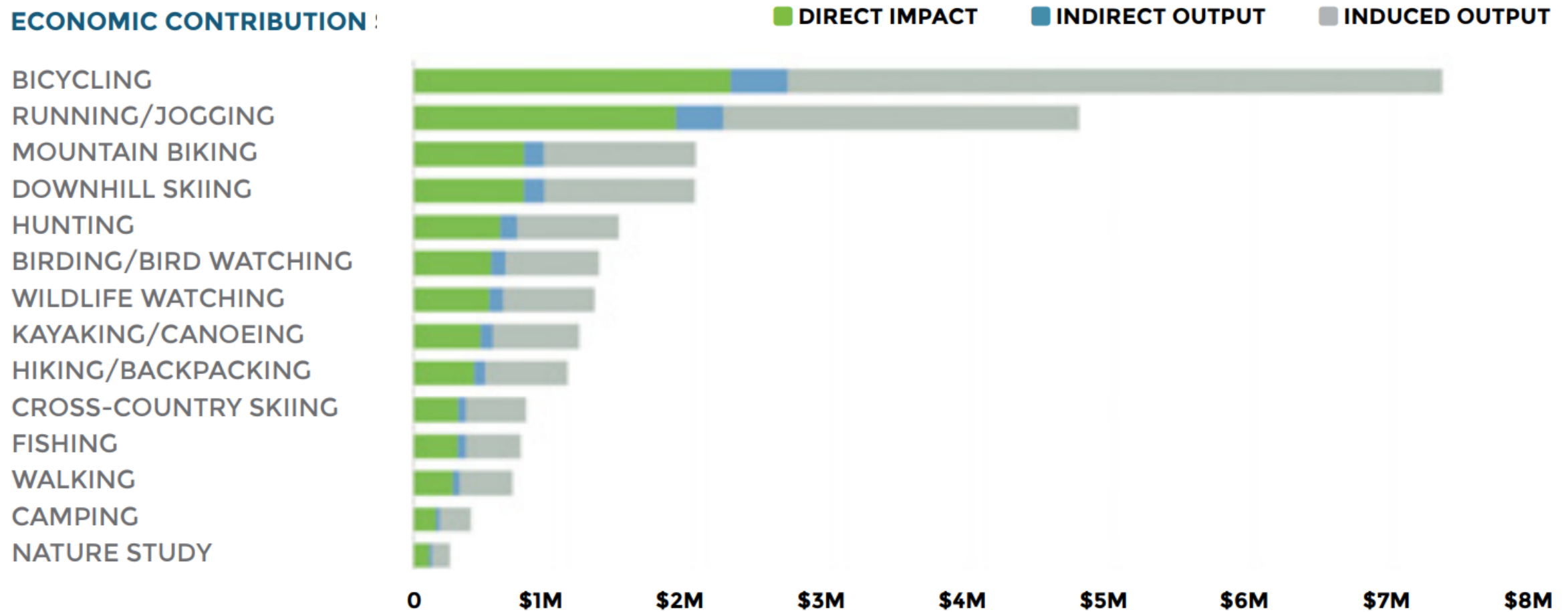
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission  
2014

## Return on Environment

- Ecosystem services
- Health & healthcare
- Property values
- Tourism & commercial opportunities

# Return on Environment – Carbon Co.

## ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION



# More fresh air. Less hot air.

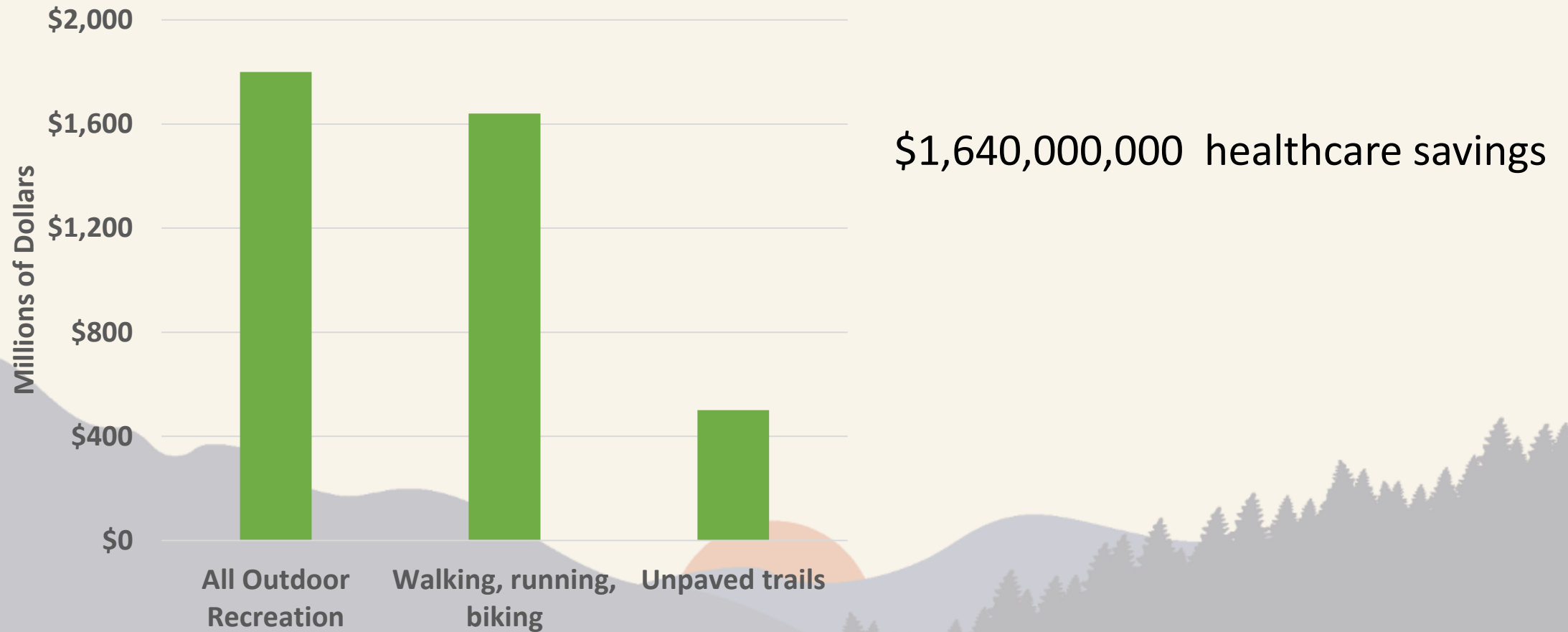
Capital Blue Cross



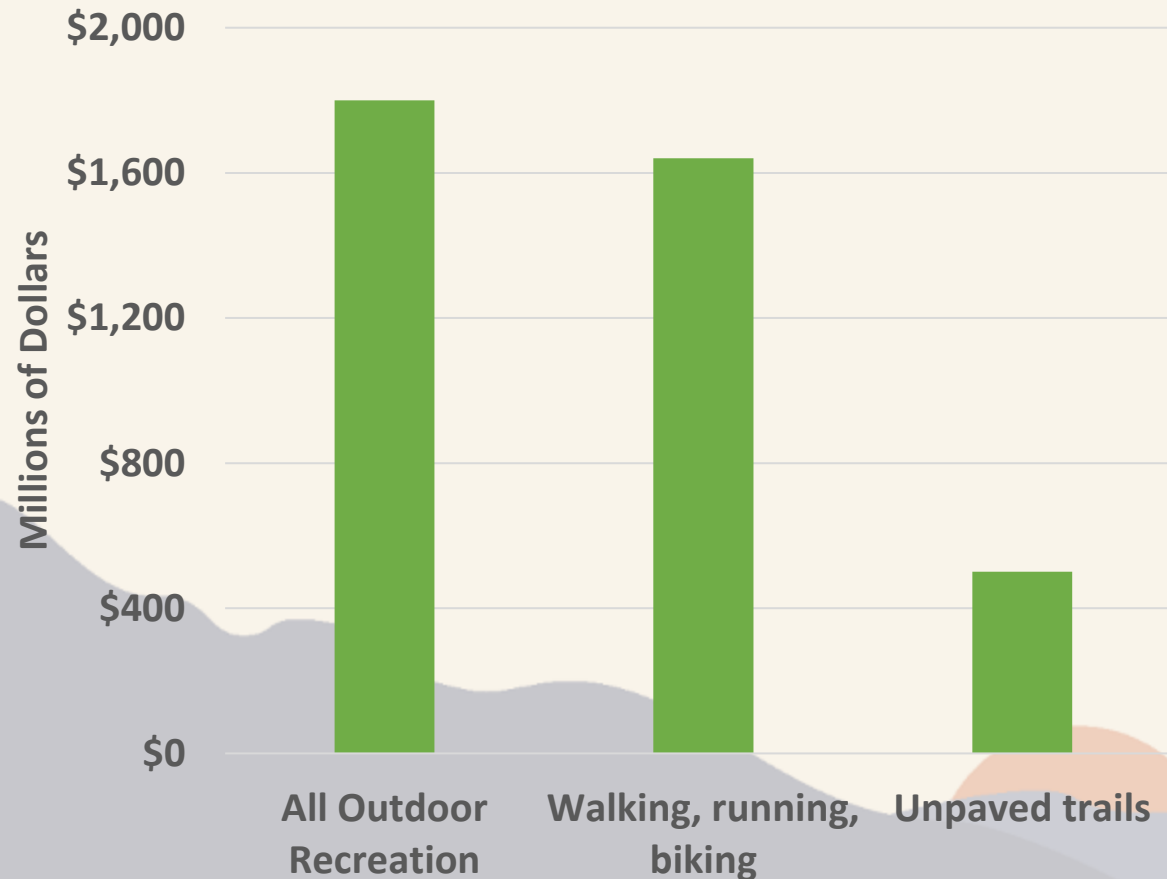
Health  
Benefits

$$\left( \text{Physical} + \text{Mental} \right) \times \text{Population} = \text{Public Health} = \text{Reduced healthcare costs}$$

# Michigan Healthcare Saving – OR Participation

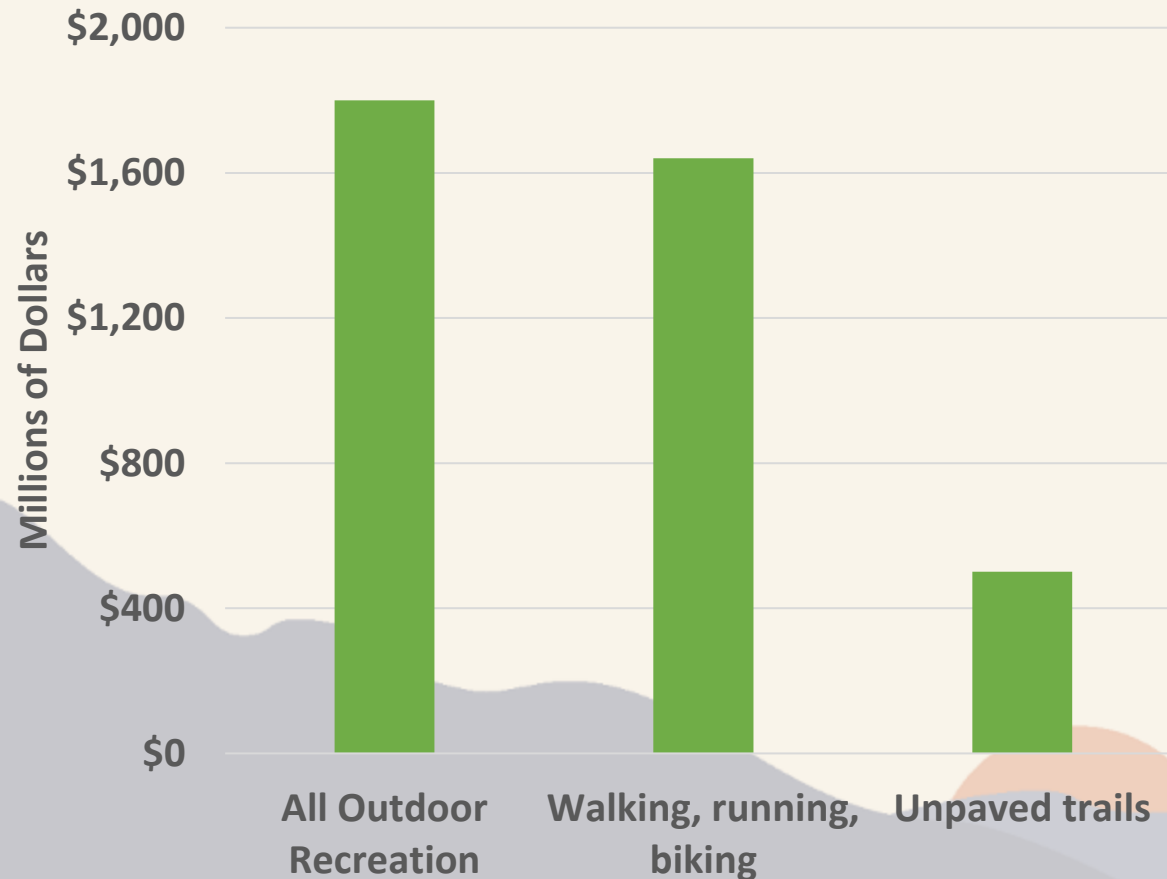


# Michigan Healthcare Saving – OR Participation



$$\frac{\$1,640,000,000 \text{ healthcare savings}}{10,140,459 \text{ Michiganders}} = \$161.73 \text{ per person annual saving}$$

# Michigan Healthcare Saving – OR Participation



\$1,640,000,000 healthcare savings

÷ 10,140,459 Michiganders

---

\$161.73 per person annual saving

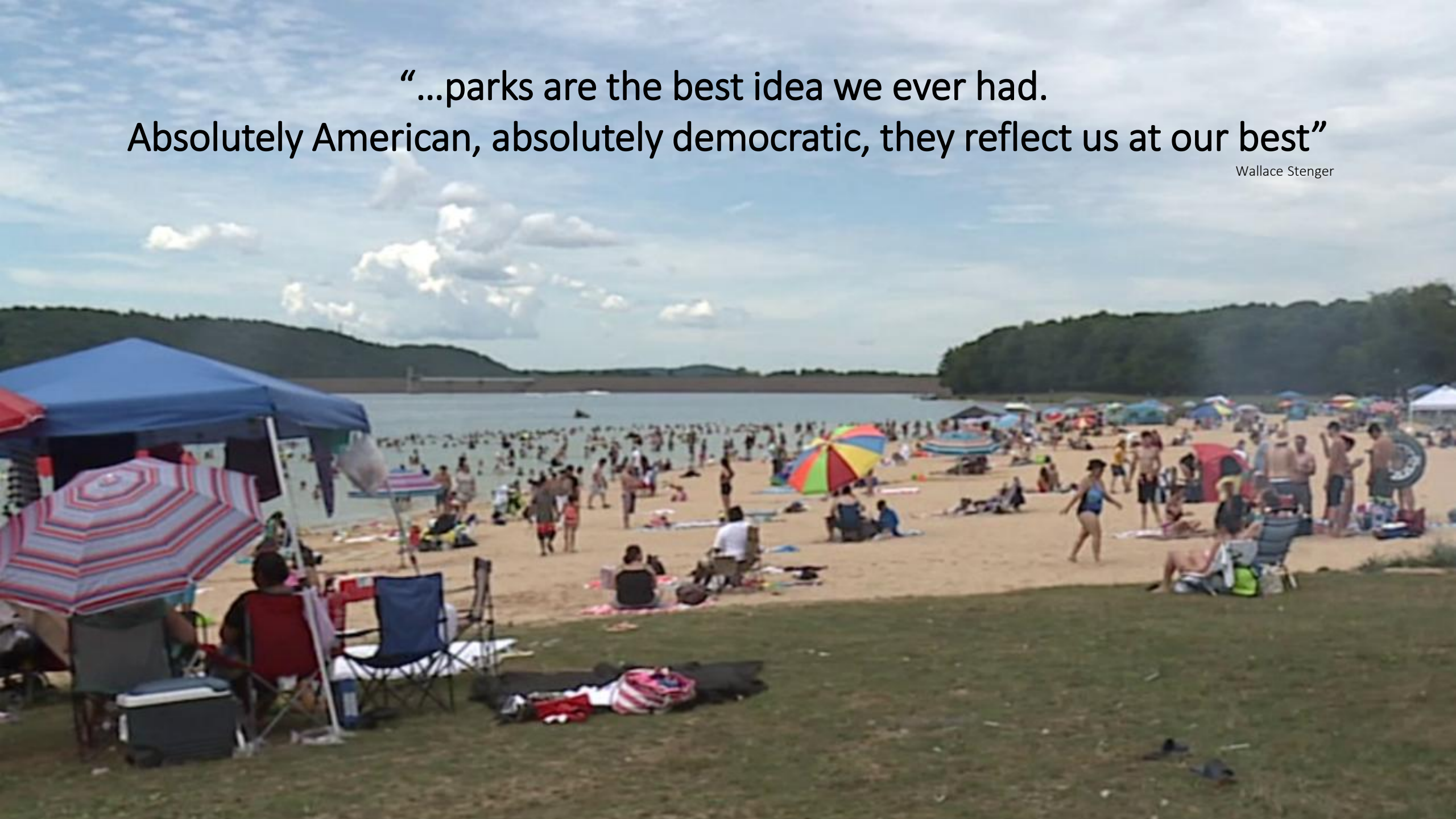
X 3.14 avg. American household size

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**\$507.83** annual savings per household

“...parks are the best idea we ever had.  
Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best”

Wallace Stenger



# Macroeconomics

## Outdoor Recreation Economic Statistics

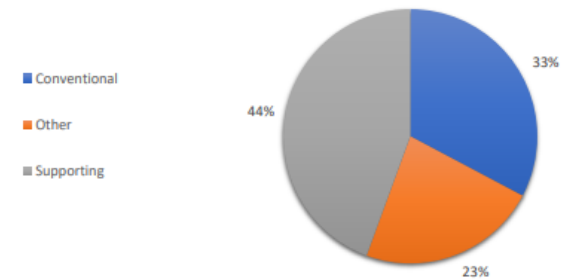


### 2024—Pennsylvania

| Value added              |                    | Employment               |                           | Compensation             |                             |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Outdoor recreation total | Share of state GDP | Outdoor recreation total | Share of state employment | Outdoor recreation total | Share of state compensation |
| \$20.4 billion           | 2.0%               | 176,752 jobs             | 2.8%                      | \$9.5 billion            | 1.7%                        |

| Value Added by Select Outdoor Recreation Activity<br>[Thousands of dollars] |         |         |         |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Activity                                                                    | 2022    | 2023    | 2024    | State rank 2024 |
| Boating / fishing                                                           | 819,008 | 933,637 | 938,912 | 16              |
| RVing                                                                       | 745,730 | 719,906 | 713,795 | 9               |
| Motorcycling / ATVing                                                       | 579,681 | 619,708 | 616,082 | 4               |
| Hunting / shooting / trapping                                               | 346,317 | 414,954 | 476,167 | 10              |
| Bicycling                                                                   | 114,750 | 239,393 | 251,124 | 2               |
| Climbing / hiking / tent camping                                            | 217,251 | 232,771 | 246,084 | 7               |
| Equestrian                                                                  | 209,970 | 238,636 | 240,710 | 6               |
| Snow activities                                                             | 182,061 | 207,044 | 198,246 | 11              |
| Recreational flying                                                         | 41,778  | 43,521  | 46,322  | 13              |

Value-Added Composition of Outdoor Recreation Activities



**Conventional** activities include traditional outdoor activities, such as camping, hiking, boating, and hunting.

**Other** activities include those that take place outside, such as gardening and outdoor concerts.

**Supporting** activities are those that contribute to the core activities and include such things as construction, travel and tourism, local trips, and government expenditures.

**\$20.4  
Billion**

value added  
to PA's GDP

**2%**

of PA's  
economy

**177,000**

Jobs directly in  
OR

**8th**

Largest OR  
industry in the  
US

# Macroeconomics

## Outdoor Recreation Economic Statistics

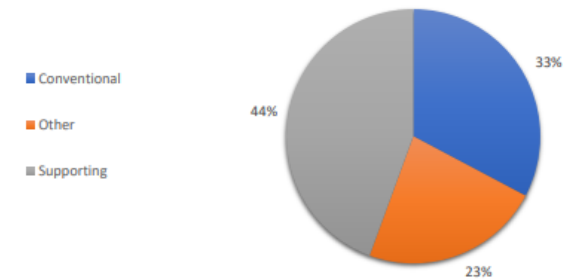


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growth '22-'24  
(5% over 10-years)

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**8th**

Largest OR  
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US

**Total Gross  
Output, 2024**

**\$ 1.3 Trillion**

**2024, National**

**2.4%** U.S. GDP

**5.2** Million Jobs

**3.2%** of U.S. Employment

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**TOP-LINE FIGURES**



## Producers

- design
  - manufacture
  - distribution
  - retail
  - repair
- of outdoor clothing, gear, and vehicles



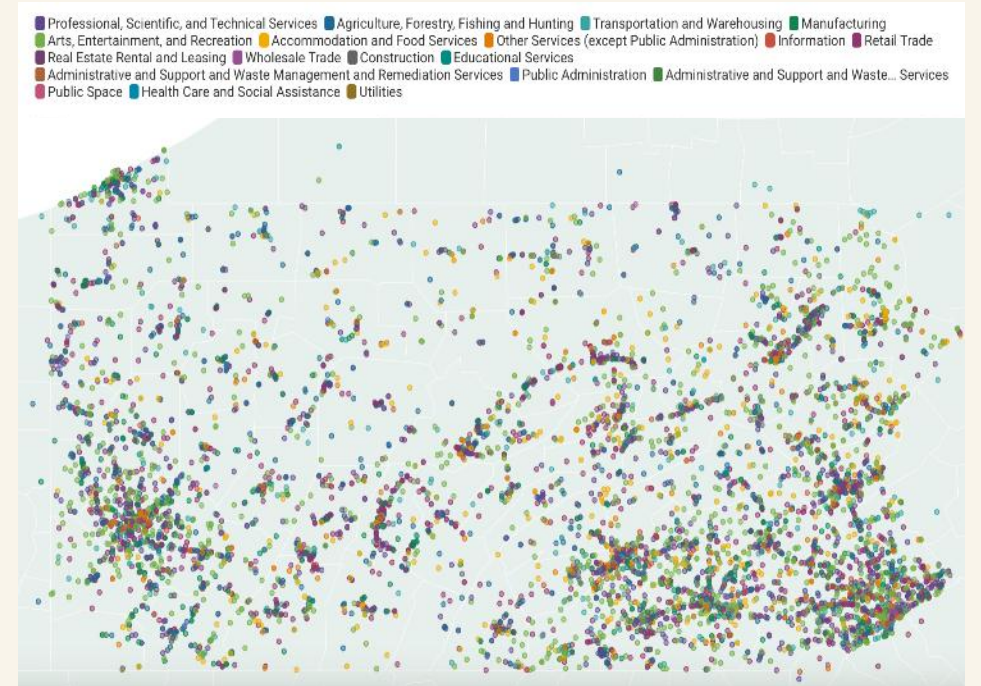
## Providers

- guides and trip planners
- outfitters and rental shops
- ski areas, campgrounds, adventure centers
- tours and excursions
- event organizers
- hospitality outdoor recreationists
- educators and trainers

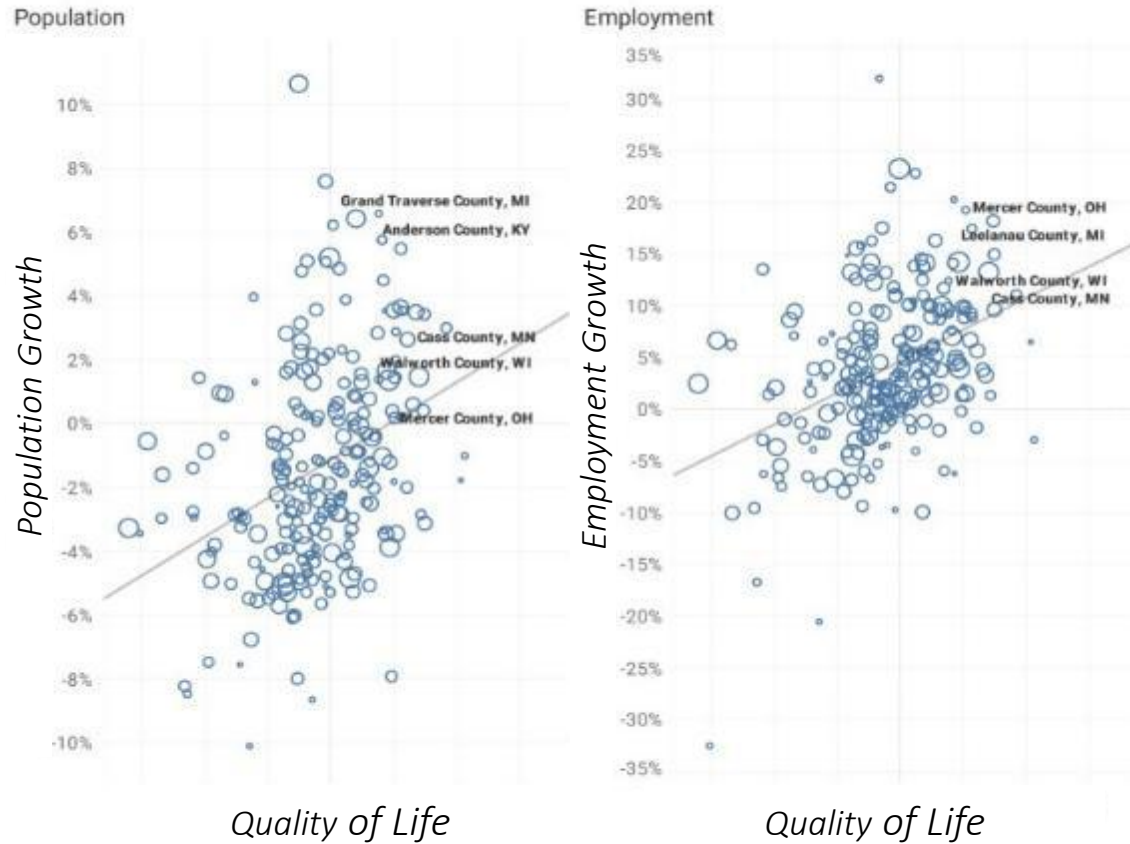


## Professionals

- planners and designers
- map and guidebook makers
- data providers and researchers
- photographers, videographers, journalists, artists
- accountants, attorneys, consultants
- community organizers and convenors

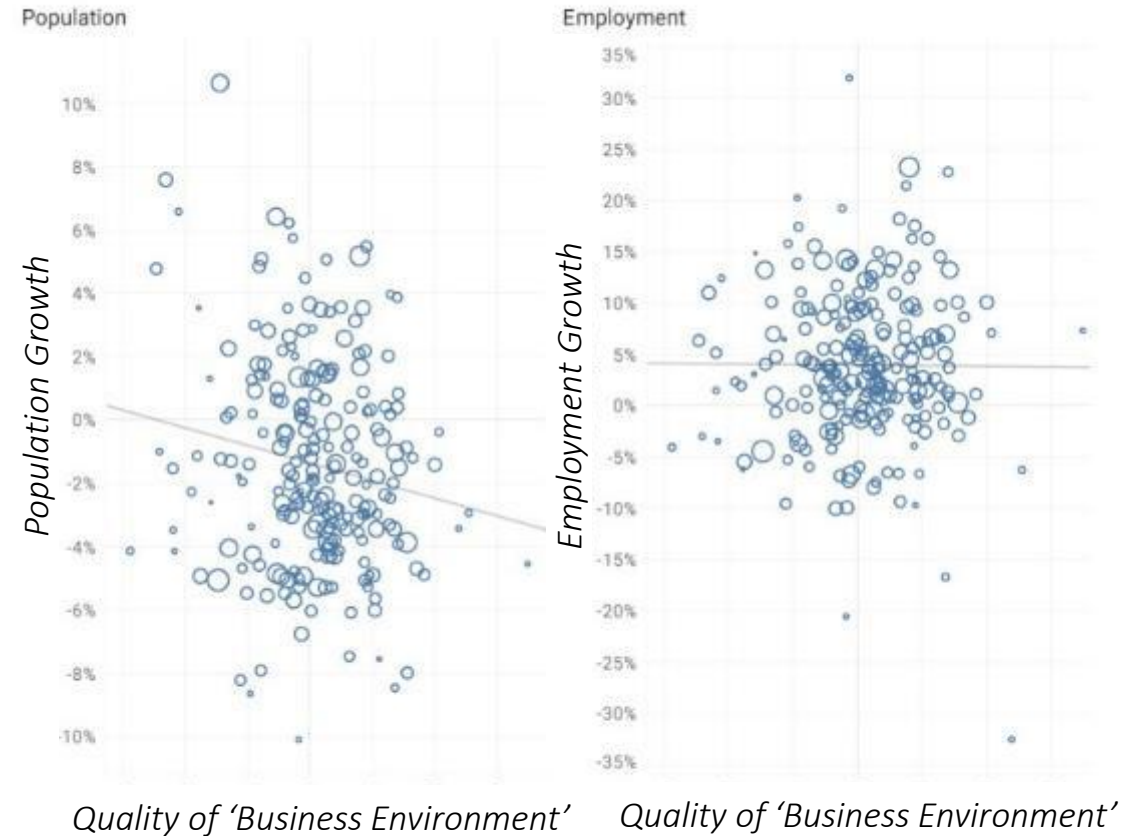


# Outdoors Communities



Source: Authors' calculations using Census Bureau data

**B** Brookings Metro



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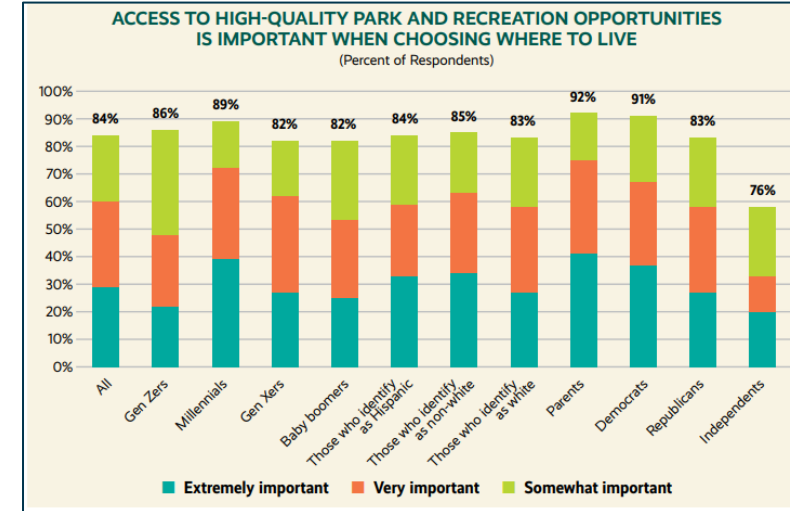
*Outdoor Recreation + Historic Downtown + Cultural Services = High Quality of Life*

*High Quality of Life = Population Growth + Employment*

# Outdoor Economy Paradigm Shift

## Talent and Business Attraction.

- Access to bike/walking paths is consistently a top 3 consideration for home buyers (National Realtors) across demographics and political persuasion (NRPA)
- 50% of recent college graduates say “place” is more important than job in their career search (HBJ)
- 87% of corporate site selectors consider “quality of life” amenities, such as trails and parks, to be “very important” to site selection (Site Selection Magazine)



| COMBINED RATINGS*<br>CORPORATE SURVEY |      |            |
|---------------------------------------|------|------------|
| Site Selection Factors                | 2022 | 2021       |
| Ranking                               |      |            |
| 1. Labor costs                        | 89.1 | 96.4 (1)** |
| 2. Quality-of-life                    | 87.1 | 82.1 (11T) |
| 3. Availability of skilled labor      | 85.8 | 94.9 (2)   |
| 4. Energy availability                | 82.3 | 94.7 (3)   |
| 5. Construction costs                 | 81.2 | 82.1 (11T) |
| 6. ICT/broadband                      | 80.7 | 36.8 (26)  |
| 7. Corporate tax rate                 | 79.7 | 87.7 (7)   |
| 8. Energy costs                       | 79.4 | N/A        |
| 9. Environmental regulations          | 79.0 | 82.5 (9)   |
| 10. Available land                    | 78.1 | 62.5 (19)  |



York County  
Economic  
Alliance



FIREFLY  
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

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## COMBINED RATINGS<sup>★</sup> CORPORATE SURVEY

| Site Selection Factors                 | 2025   | 2024      |
|----------------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Ranking                                |        |           |
| 1. Labor costs                         | 92.00% | 97.9 (3)  |
| 2. Quality of life                     | 90.19% | 98 (T2)   |
| 3. Energy availability                 | 90.00% | 100 (1)   |
| 4. Energy costs                        | 90.00% | 81.6 (T9) |
| 5. Skilled labor                       | 89.59% | 89.8 (T5) |
| 6. Responsive state & local government | 88.24% | 93.9 (4)  |
| 7. ICT, Broadband                      | 88.00% | 98(T2)    |
| 8. Environmental regulations           | 86.28% | N/A       |
| 9. Construction costs                  | 86.27% | 98 (T2)   |
| 10. Property tax                       | 84.31% | 89.8 (T5) |
| 11. Highway                            | 80.00% | 85.7 (T7) |
| 12. Corporate tax rate                 | 76.47% | 83.7 (8)  |

Area Development



York County  
Economic  
Alliance



**FIREFLY**  
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Mission

Unite, grow, and strengthen  
Pennsylvania's **outdoor economy**

## Outdoor Recreation Industry



## Community & Economic Development



## Green Infrastructure & Public Health Cost Savings



# Pennsylvania's Office of Outdoor Recreation



## Pennsylvania Office of Outdoor Recreation

Brought to you by, in cooperation with,



collaborating among,



and many more...

# Pennsylvania's Office of Outdoor Recreation



**Editorial: New Pa. outdoor recreation  
office is government done right**



THE EDITORIAL BOARD  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

*You see that you can actually strengthen a Main Street by investing more in outdoor rec and the outdoor economy, so we put more resources into it. We hired more people to do that work, partnering with local chambers of commerce, local outdoor organizations.*

*We're seeing a real positive ROI, a positive return on investment, there. We're going to continue to make those investments."*

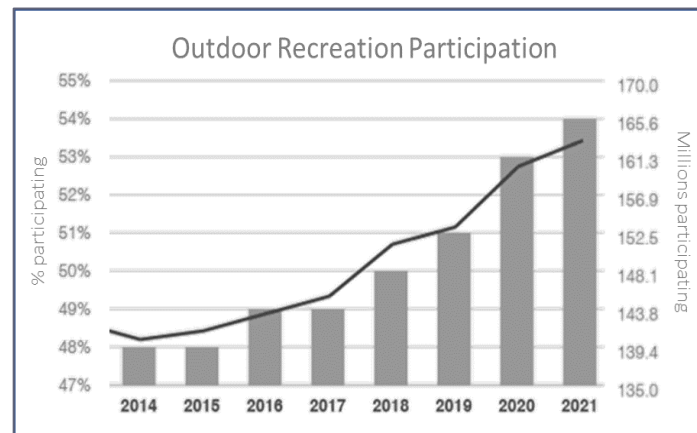
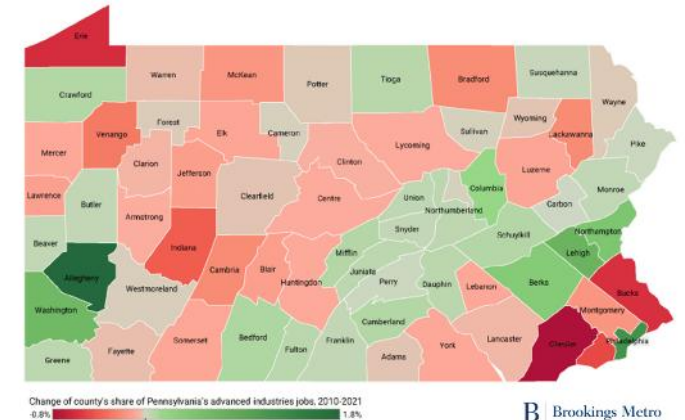
Governor Josh Shapiro, 1/15/25  
Tribune-Democrat

# Why Now?

Outdoor recreation is booming.

Quality of life has become a critical component of community and economic development.

We've seen early successes and have an opportunity to capitalize for more.

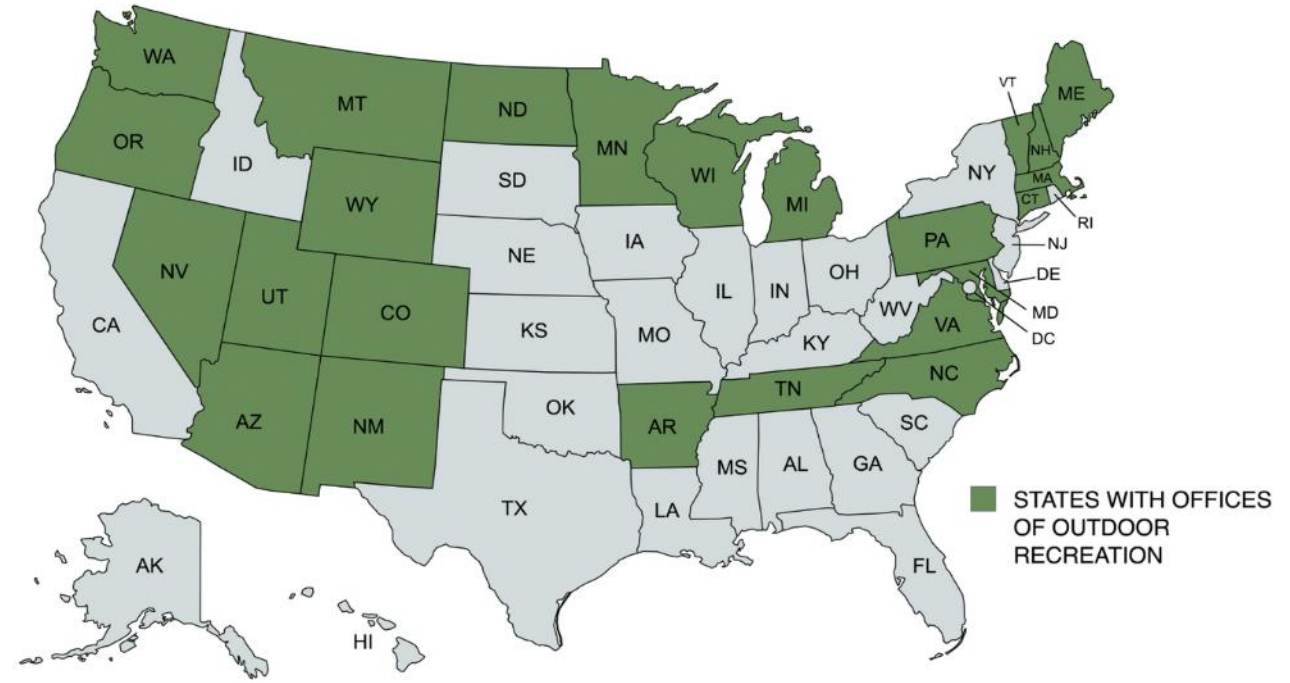


# Why Now?

Outdoor recreation is recognized and organizing as a significant industry.

Policy and funding needs and opportunities continue to increase.

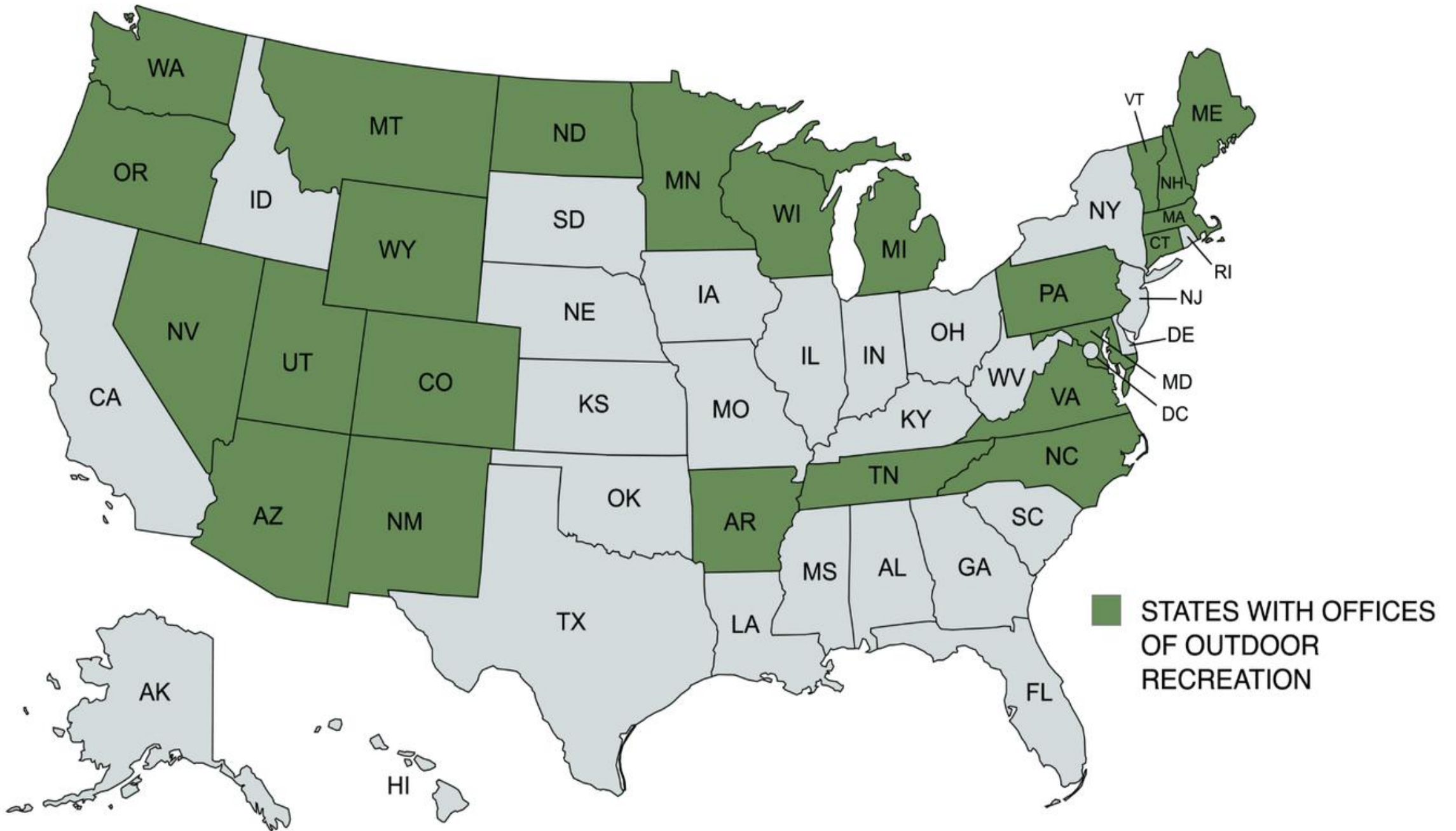
A national network of state offices is leading this movement and Pennsylvania should join.



## A BILL

To improve recreation opportunities on, and facilitate greater access to, Federal public land, and for other purposes.

- 1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
- 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
- 3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**
- 4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
- 5 “Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experi-
- 6 ences Act” or the “EXPLORE Act”.



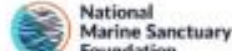
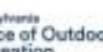


# CONFLUENCE OF STATES

## Five Pillars

- Conservation and Stewardship
- Education and Workforce Training
- Economic Development
- Public Health and Wellness
- Opportunity & Experience







[HOME](#)

[MEMBERS](#)

[EVENTS](#)



# SOBAN

State Outdoor Business Alliance Network

Outdoor business alliances across the country, from Alaska to New Mexico, North Carolina to Maine, Michigan to Idaho, have joined forces to elevate the vital importance of a thriving outdoor industry.





# OUTDOOR BUSINESS ALLIANCE — OF PENNSYLVANIA —



*Elevating Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation industry*

Stay in the know on developments and news of the OBA PA.



[Sign Up](#)

**OBAPA** | **WEBINAR**

# FUNDING YOUR OUTDOOR BUSINESS

**JULY 7 | 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM**



**ADAM KENNEY**  
CHIEF PROGRAMS OFFICER  
BRIDGEWAY CAPITAL



**NICOLE PEDRIANI**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
UNIVEST

## REGISTER FOR OUTDOOR BUSINESS WEBINARS



SCAN TO REGISTER!

- 📍 **JULY 27 | EMERGING OUTDOOR INDUSTRY TRENDS**
- 📍 **SEPTEMBER 28 | ENGAGING WITH YOUR TOURISM PROMOTION AGENCY & CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
- 📍 **NOVEMBER 30 | CREATING A WELCOMING & ACCESSIBLE BUSINESS**



## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

## RECORDING OF THE VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION

*Please direct all grant-related questions to  
[capital@obapa.org](mailto:capital@obapa.org).*



# A Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Development in Pennsylvania

2024-2033

**PENNSYLVANIA  
GETS IT DONE.**

## Goals and Strategic Initiatives



### **Invest in Our Economic Growth to Compete.**

We want our Commonwealth to be a place where we prioritize economic development investments, and where those investments result in real opportunities for our businesses, communities, and residents.

- Boost state investment in site development, preparedness, and marketing
- Expand support for small businesses with a focus on historically disadvantaged businesses and workers
- Streamline programs and increase funding for Pennsylvania's economic development toolkit
- Invest in tourism and recreational asset development to drive economic growth



### **Make Government Work at the Speed of Business.**

We want our Commonwealth to be a place where all companies find an attractive business environment to innovate and thrive.

- Cut through red tape and foster collaboration across state agencies
- Reform state permitting processes with a focus on customer experience
- Reinvent and Invest in the PA Department of Community and Economic Development



### **Open Doors of Opportunity for All Pennsylvanians.**

We want our Commonwealth to be a place where every Pennsylvanian can secure a family-sustaining job and a meaningful career.

- Keep Pennsylvanians in Pennsylvania through internships, apprenticeships, and experiential learning opportunities
- Double down on workforce training and pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs
- Realign Pennsylvania's higher education system to meet our workforce needs
- Provide second chances and grow our workforce



### **Innovate to Win.**

We want our Commonwealth to be a place where innovators become entrepreneurs and new discoveries enable our people and companies to succeed.

- Accelerate investments in priority industry sectors & entrepreneurial ecosystems through a newly established Pennsylvania Innovation Fund
- Launch Pennsylvania Problem Solvers startup competitions to find entrepreneurial solutions to our pressing challenges
- Establish industry & higher education innovation councils to provide government with real world counsel from business and thought leaders
- Start Buy Pennsylvania Initiative to align supply chain network and boost in-state collaboration



### **Build Vibrant and Resilient Regions.**

We want our Commonwealth to be a place where every community flourishes and provides for the needs of all their residents and businesses.

- Launch the Pennsylvania Regional Challenge to incentivize regional growth
- Support communities by investing in downtowns and main streets
- Compete for federal funding to improve infrastructure and support businesses and workers
- Expand availability of housing



## **Invest in Tourism and Recreation Asset Development to Drive Economic Growth**

*Renew focus on tourism and outdoor recreation to strengthen regional economies, create and enhance quality of life for Pennsylvania residents.*

As one of the largest industries in Pennsylvania, tourism generates over \$66 billion per year in total economic impact and accounts for more than 450,000 jobs across the Commonwealth.<sup>40</sup> The industry includes subsectors like hospitality, transportation, regional attractions and entertainment, and travel tours and serves as a powerful economic engine in every corner of Pennsylvania. With minority populations making up roughly 50% of workers employed in the tourism industry and small businesses making up 80% of tourism-based businesses, increased investment in the tourism industry will assist in bridging equity divides and help to lift up all Pennsylvanians.<sup>41</sup>

To realize the full potential of Pennsylvania's tourism industry, the state government will adopt a new and modern model of destination marketing through stakeholder engagement, distributed marketing, and catalytic destination development. With Pennsylvania's outdoor industry accounting for 1.8% of state gross domestic product and building on the success of the Office of Outdoor Recreation, we will continue to make significant investments in the outdoor economy to both amplify its economic output and enhance the quality of life for Pennsylvania residents.<sup>42</sup> With increased funding and a refreshed focus, we will create and implement a new tourism strategy that adapts to modern times to help the industry and those employed within it to thrive for years to come.

# OUTDOOR PLACES, SHARED SPACES

Pennsylvania's 2025-2029 Statewide  
Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan



## PRIORITIES AND GOALS



**Promoting Community and  
Economic Development**



**Advancing Health  
and Wellness**



**Supporting Access  
and Inclusion**



**Addressing Infrastructure  
and Maintenance**



**Progressing on  
Sustainability and Climate**



## Promoting Community and Economic Development

The benefits of outdoor recreation to community and personal wellbeing has long been understood. What is becoming clearer is how investment plays a significant role in a community's economic wellbeing. Pennsylvania's \$19 billion outdoor recreation sector is no longer quiet, and businesses, local governments, and visitors are seeing the positive communal and economic value of strong connections to natural resources. Regardless of these benefits and strong public support, there needs to be an intentionality in development where communities are prioritized, amenities are not only for tourists, new and existing businesses are supported, and infrastructure is maintained and well designed to lay lightly on the landscape.



Many people experienced the physical and mental wellbeing of stepping onto a trail or into a park during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Recreation areas, both rural and urban, exploded with the Outdoor Industry Association reporting the total number of outdoor recreation outings hitting an all-time high in 2021.<sup>12</sup> Even before the pandemic, people experienced the value of being outdoors. According to a 2018 study by Pew Research, "being outdoors" provided a great deal of meaning on par with spending time with friends, caring for pets, or listening to music.<sup>11</sup> Pennsylvania is understanding the social and economic value of outdoor recreation as well. According to the most recent federal data Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation economy is creating strong communities and grew at a faster rate than the general Pennsylvania economy (which also grew). In 2023 the Commonwealth's Outdoor Economy was worth \$19 billion, approximately 1.9% of State GDP, and growing at a rate of 9.6% from 2022. This translates to more than 168,000

jobs and puts Pennsylvania's outdoor industry in the top 10 largest in the country.<sup>13</sup>

Being a state rich in natural resources with close proximity to major population centers such as Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Cleveland, and New York City, (in addition to its own metropolitan regions of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia), Pennsylvania has the opportunity to translate those natural resources to visitor experiences. Extractive industries at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century took advantage of this proximity and generated immense wealth and shaped the modern labor class; however, they also changed the state's natural landscape. Now, after dedicated work from environmental pioneers and a conservation minded public, the state's natural resources, and its half-day drive proximity to more than 20% of the U.S. population make it a fantastic place for people to live, do business, **and** protect natural assets.

### Priority Area: Promoting Community & Economic Development

| Goal & Action Item                                                                                                                                                      | Key partners                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1) Support communities in creating vibrant and resilient regions through outdoor economic development.</b>                                                           |                                                                                                                            |
| A) Connect communities to local and regional outdoor recreation through trails, safe on-road networks, waterways, and other infrastructure.                             | DCED; DCNR; Economic Development Organizations; Municipalities/Counties; Statewide Conservation & Recreation Organizations |
| B) Provide best practices for recreation planning to create welcoming places and provide quality services for residents and visitors.                                   | DCED; DCNR; Economic Development Organizations; Municipalities/Counties; MPO/RPO                                           |
| C) Expand, enhance, and modernize the use of data to support recreation planning, management, and engagement.                                                           | DCNR; PGC; PFBC; DCED; DOH; PennDOT; Economic Development Organizations                                                    |
| D) Deliver outdoor recreation as a strategic tool for economic development.                                                                                             | DCED; Economic Development Organizations                                                                                   |
| <b>2) Further activate Pennsylvania as a hub for outdoor recreation and adventure for all people.</b>                                                                   |                                                                                                                            |
| A) Convene a commercial recreation summit to facilitate dialogue about best practices for events, guiding, and conducting business on public and private natural lands. | DCNR; PFBC; DCED; Statewide Conservation & Recreation Organizations                                                        |
| B) Build Pennsylvania's brand as a national leader in outdoor recreation through tourism, innovation, product development, and industry expertise.                      | DCED; Destination Marketing Organizations; Economic Development Organizations                                              |
| C) Develop a clear and cohesive agreement and permit process for special, commercial, and organized activities on DCNR managed lands.                                   | DCNR                                                                                                                       |
| <b>3) Develop and support Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation industry and its businesses and workforce.</b>                                                              |                                                                                                                            |
| A) Develop outdoor recreation incubators, accelerators, innovation hubs, and similar to support outdoor recreation business and workforce development.                  | DCNR; DCED; Economic Development Organizations                                                                             |
| B) Grow the capacity to assess, plan, design, build, and maintain natural surface trails.                                                                               | DCNR, Charitable Foundations; Statewide Conservation & Recreation Organizations; Municipalities/Counties                   |

<sup>12</sup> <https://outdoorindustry.org/article/2024-outdoor-participation-trends-report/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/11/20/where-americans-find-meaning-in-life/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.bea.gov/news/2024/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2023>



PNC FIELD

IT ALL  
STARTS  
HERE.

MPH AT BAT BALL STRIKE OUT TIME

100 56 6 10 6 6:10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 RUNS HITS

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

US.  
FOODS

PEPSI

#1 KIA DEALER IN NEPA  
PERFORMANCE KIA

TOMMY'S  
EXPRESS  
CAR WASH  
Opening soon!  
on City

Geisinger

HYUNDAI

Shur-Save

ESU

EAST STROUDSBURG  
UNIVERSITY

WhereWarriorsBelong.com

the River  
105 & 103.5  
FM. ROCK. RADIO.

ShopRite

JUST 2 MILES AWAY AT BIRNEY PLAZA!

PENNSYLVANIA  
THE GREAT AMERICAN GETAWAY

@VISITPA

PENNSYLVANIA  
THE GREAT AMERICAN GETAWAY

BOARD  
13

ROBINSON  
42

LEGG  
14

396



[DCED](#) > [Programs](#) > Marketing to Attract Tourists

## Marketing to Attract Tourists

[PDF Guidelines](#) [PDF Co-Op Grant Guidelines](#) [PDF Secure More in Sports Gra](#)

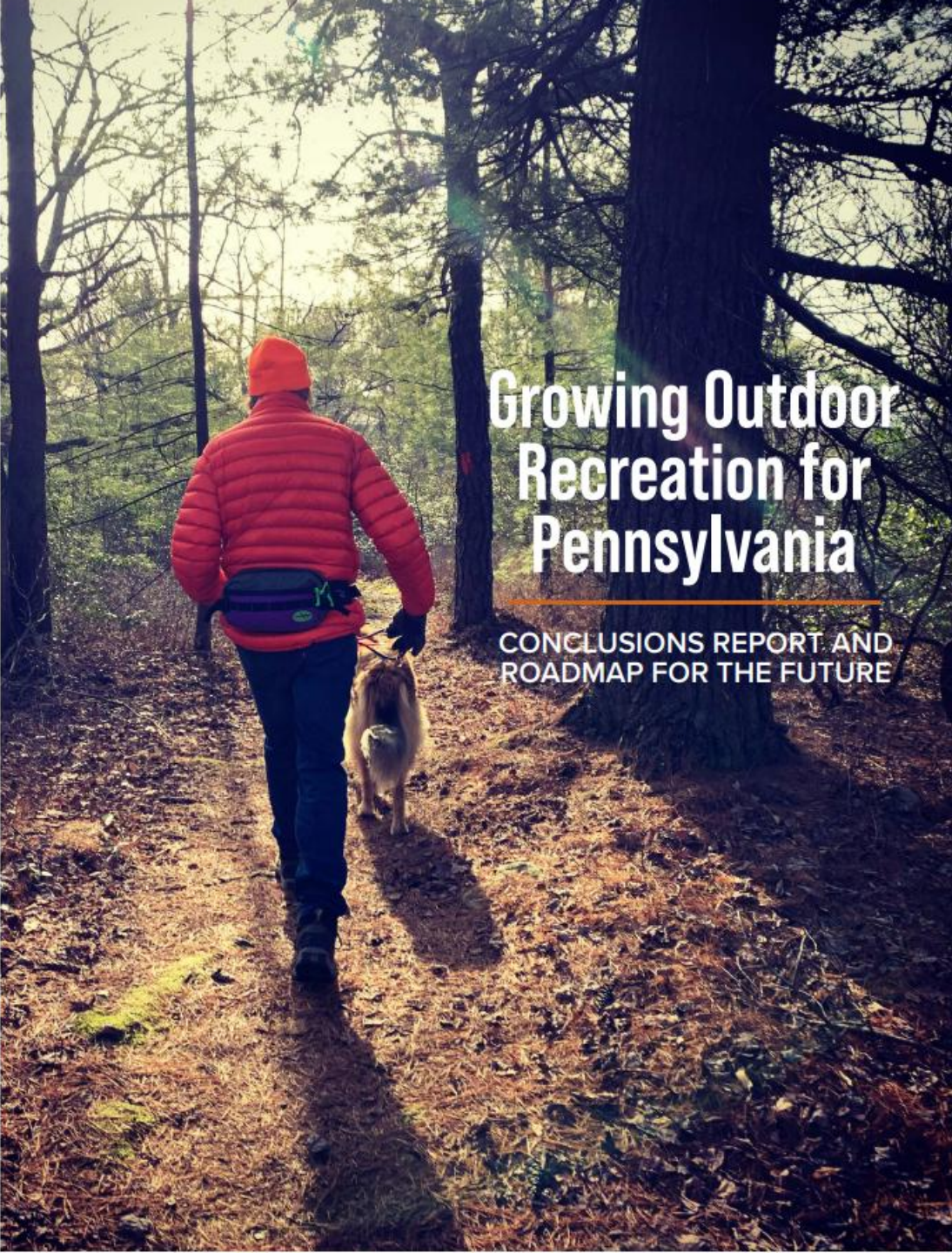
[PDF Big Stage Events Grant Guidelines](#) [Apply](#) [Contact Us](#)

### Overview

The Marketing to Attract Tourists Program provides funding to support the tourism sector throughout Pennsylvania in attracting the 72 million people who live within a four-hour drive of Pennsylvania to experience The Great American Getaway.

In order to increase awareness of the thousands of quintessential getaway experiences throughout Pennsylvania, the primary goal of the program is to fund projects that increase awareness of Pennsylvania's destinations and attractions through marketing and advertising initiatives.

- **The Great American Getaway Co-Op:** open to destination marketing organizations and tourism-related businesses who partner to develop an outdoor, culinary, historical/cultural, or urban travel experience that will inspire visitors to discover Pennsylvania: The Great American Getaway.
- **Secure More in Sports:** open to entities which attract and secure new consumer, league, youth, amateur or professional sporting events to Pennsylvania that will result in a large influx of visitors who will stay for two or more nights. Grants can be used for marketing and sales outreach, bid fees, rights, and other expenses associated with the ability to pitch and win a bid.

A person wearing a red puffy jacket and a red beanie is walking away from the camera on a dirt path in a forest. They are holding a leash for a small, light-colored dog. The path is covered in fallen leaves and pine needles. Tall trees line the path, and sunlight filters through the canopy.

# Growing Outdoor Recreation for Pennsylvania

## CONCLUSIONS REPORT AND ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

### Strategic Priority: Build Capacity within Pennsylvania's Outdoor Industry

In comparison to other industries of its size and impact in Pennsylvania, the outdoor industry is underdeveloped, undercoordinated, and under recognized as a sector of our economy. The Office will help foster organization within the outdoor industry, understanding and empowering our outdoor workforce, and more effectively communicating its value to Pennsylvania's economic competitiveness, quality of life, and sense of place.

#### ORGANIZE THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY

- Support the formation of an outdoor business alliance through which the outdoor industry can organize.
- Develop outdoor innovation hubs or clusters to achieve critical mass and synergy across production and value chains.
- Develop and maintain databases of Pennsylvania's outdoor businesses and foster communication and collaboration among them.
- Hold business pitch contests, incubator/hack events, and support 'leaps' in business growth.
- Identify gaps in Pennsylvania's outdoor industry and coordinate programs to support filling them.
- Expand access to capital and technical supports for outdoor businesses.
- Develop 'one-stop' and decision-tree resources to help outdoor businesses with permitting, regulations, access to entrepreneurship supports, and reduction of up-front barriers to participation in the outdoor economy.
- Support small business and local competitiveness in the outdoor economy.

#### DEVELOP THE OUTDOOR WORKFORCE

- Conduct a study of Pennsylvania's current outdoor workforce, needs for the future, and pathways to satisfying workforce needs.
- Support outdoor industry apprenticeship and mentorship programs.
- Foster connections between outdoor employers and educational institutions to enhance both professionalization and equitable inclusion in the outdoor workforce.
- Expand outdoor recreation knowledge within related professions (e.g., economic development, planning and engineering, conservation, health care) through professional development, continuing education, and bootcamp modules.
- Elevate and stabilize compensation, benefits, working conditions, and professional status of outdoor workers, especially those in seasonal, service, and field-based positions.
- Leverage outdoor workforce as a tool for retaining and attracting competitive workers in both urban and rural areas.



CC

I am very excited to see our state moving in this direction. Thank you for connecting with the user groups and outdoor community as a whole.

JOE FORTE, PALMERTON, EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA ALLIANCE OF CLIMBERS



# Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Appalachian Development Plan

June 1, 2024



George B. Stevenson Dam Reservoir  
Carbon County, PA



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Josh Shapiro, Governor

PA Department of Community & Economic Development  
Rick Siger, Secretary  
[dced.pa.gov](http://dced.pa.gov)



## ARC Goal 4 – Building Regional Culture and Tourism

Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the Region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.

### State Objective 4.1:

**Pennsylvania will invest in tourism and outdoor recreational asset development to drive economic growth.**

- PA Strategy (4.1.1) Develop initiatives to support tourism expansion, including heritage and eco-tourism development, through assessments, technical assistance, and marketing campaigns.
- PA Strategy (4.1.2) Promote asset-based development opportunities by encouraging economic and community development organizations to utilize their historical, environmental, and cultural resources.
- PA Strategy (4.1.3) Promote regional development, preservation and entrepreneurship along PA's vast river network, greenways, forests, trails, and other natural assets.
- PA Strategy (4.1.4) Promote asset-based entrepreneurial development based upon historical, cultural, structural, and geographic resources.
- PA Strategy (4.1.5) Increase domestic and international leisure travel to the Commonwealth to grow the tourism industry's economic impact.
- PA Strategy (4.1.6) Collaborate with industry stakeholders and partners to develop and implement cooperative marketing initiatives.
- PA Strategy (4.1.7) Preserve the natural, cultural, and heritage assets that abound throughout Pennsylvania and educate citizens on the value of our Appalachian region.

### State Objective 4.2:

**Pennsylvania will build capacity within the outdoor industry.**

- PA Strategy (4.2.1) Support outdoor business alliances to build capacity and organize the industry.
- PA Strategy (4.2.2) Develop outdoor innovation hubs or clusters to achieve critical mass and synergy across production and value chains.
- PA Strategy (4.2.3) Expand access to capital and technical supports for outdoor businesses.

### State Objective 4.3:

**Develop the outdoor workforce.**

- PA Strategy (4.3.1) Support outdoor industry apprenticeship and mentorship programs.
- PA Strategy (4.3.2) Foster connections between outdoor employers and educational institutions to enhance both professionalization and equitable inclusion in the outdoor workforce.
- PA Strategy (4.3.3) Expand outdoor recreation knowledge within related professions (e.g., economic development, planning and engineering, conservation, health care) through professional development, continuing education, and bootcamp modules.

### State Objective 4.4:

**Prepare the outdoors for Pennsylvania's future.**

- PA Strategy (4.4.1) Develop 'on-ramps' for individuals, including students, and organizations to develop toward leadership roles in Pennsylvania's future outdoor economy and recreation system.
- PA Strategy (4.4.2) Advance a long-term understanding of PA's outdoor needs and incorporate it into planning and development efforts.



# Forests for All

## A Plan for Pennsylvania's Forests and People

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Bureau of Forestry Strategic Plan 2025



Pennsylvania  
Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources  
Bureau of Forestry

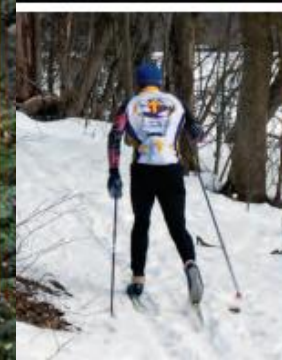


**Penn's  
Parks**



**FOR ALL**

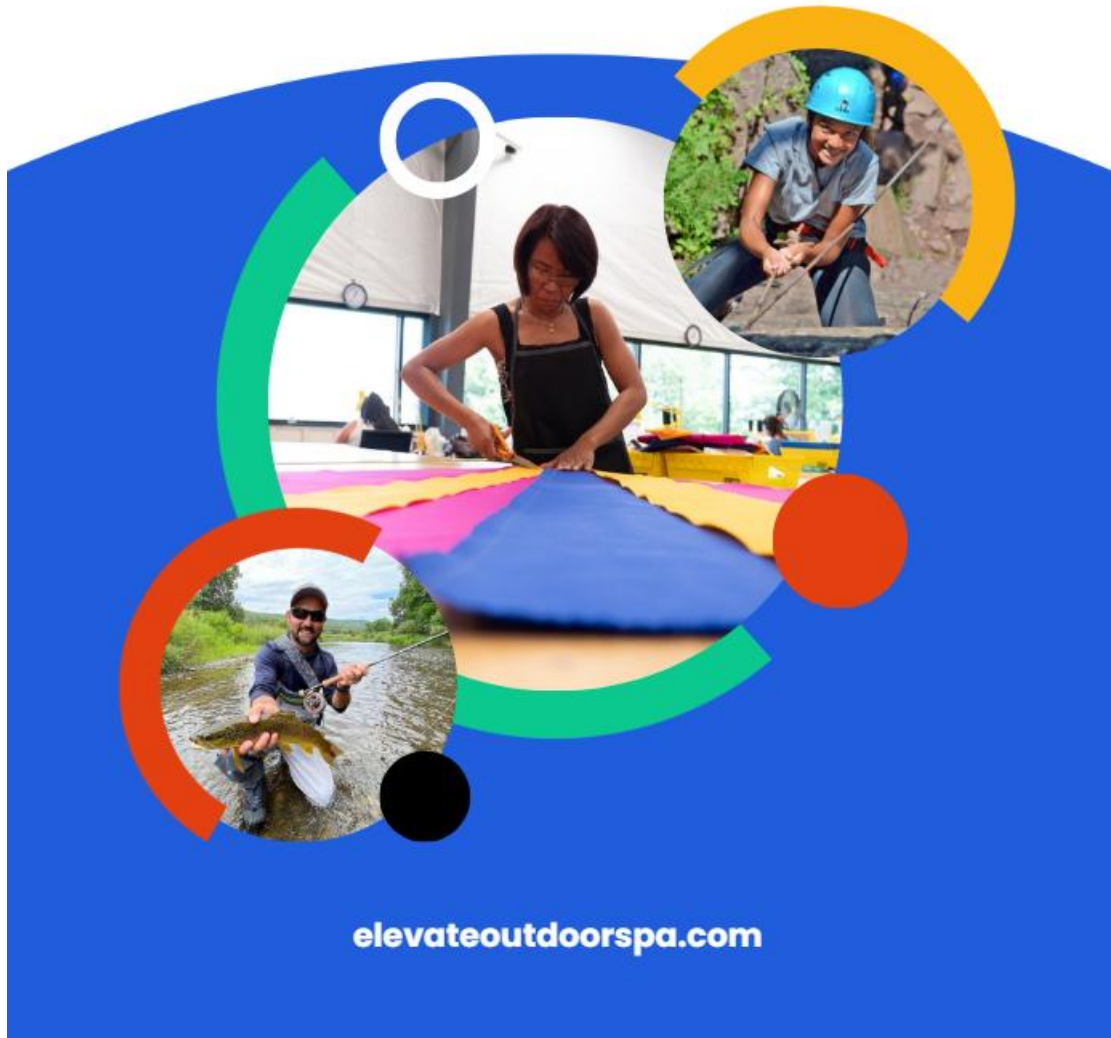
A Plan for Pennsylvania's  
**State Parks  
of Tomorrow**





## Business Engagement Workshop

March 2025



[elevateoutdoorspa.com](http://elevateoutdoorspa.com)

## Top Priorities for Consideration



### Business Growth and Development Services

*How might we increase services to directly support the creation and sustainability of outdoor recreation businesses?*



### Marketing Support

*How might we ensure that outdoor recreation businesses, and the state's outdoor industry as a whole, receive adequate marketing support and attention?*



### Workforce Attraction, Development, and Retention

*How might we ensure that Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation businesses are equipped with a skilled workforce, and that outdoor careers are aspirational and family-sustaining?*



### Advocacy

*How might we best support the outdoor industry in achieving a more favorable environment to do business in Pennsylvania?*



### Peer Networking with Other Businesses

*How might we better connect Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation businesses to share experiences, knowledge, and best practices?*



### Access to Capital, Funding, and Financing

*How might we ensure that Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation businesses have access to capital and financing opportunities that support business creation, continuity, and growth?*



Thank you very much

**Nathan Reigner, PhD**  
Director of Outdoor Recreation  
[nreigner@pa.gov](mailto:nreigner@pa.gov)

A photograph of three children walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a forest. The child on the left is a girl with long brown hair wearing a red t-shirt and blue jeans. The child in the middle is a younger child wearing a blue hoodie and blue jeans. The child on the right is a boy wearing a red hoodie and blue jeans. They are all holding hands and walking along a path that is flanked by green grass and trees. The background is a dense forest with many trees and green foliage.

**Thank you very much**  
**We are looking forward to walking this path with you...**

**Nathan Reigner, PhD**  
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