



Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) greatly appreciates this opportunity to share comments on the American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas (Atlas), a resource that has great potential to expand and maintain a central component of our national identity – sustainable recreation access for all Americans.

ORR is the nation’s leading coalition of outdoor recreation entities representing more than 110,000 American outdoor businesses and the full spectrum of outdoor activities. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the recreation industry generated \$689 billion in economic output, accounted for 1.8 percent of GDP, and created 4.3 million American jobs in 2020, despite industry slowdowns and access restrictions caused by COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, outdoor recreation was growing faster than the economy as a whole in every indicator.

Outdoor recreation has never been more critical than it is today. The past two years have illustrated the important role that recreation plays in community and personal health, conservation, job creation, and in economic development. Outdoor recreation is how people come to care about our shared lands and waters, how they understand climate change and endangered species, and it supports jobs in every corner of the country. The Atlas can help us harness this desire to connect to our lands and waters by ensuring and supporting sustainable and equitable recreation access for generations to come. And the solution isn’t just “more acreage,” it’s also increasing accessibility, providing a diversity of recreation activities, and creating opportunities for climate mitigation on existing public lands and waters.

The attached framework, which we shared with an interagency group of leaders from the Department of the Interior, Council on Environmental Quality, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and U.S. Forest Service late last year, outlines a full array of considerations for the Atlas to include in collecting and measuring data to evaluate progress. The framework features categories including “Public Land & Water Designations & Outdoor Recreation Access Level,” “Equitable Consultation for Underrepresented Communities,” “Public-Private Partnerships,” “Outdoor Recreation Economy Development Potential,” and “Climate Resilience,” among many others to help agencies drive America the Beautiful solutions that benefit communities, economies, and environments alike. In selecting metrics that align with these categories, agencies will help recognize that outdoor recreation is much more than simply having a place to spend time outside—it is a driver of economic development, public health, environmental ethics, and community connection in countless locations around the United States.

We are eager to convene with your leadership again soon in support of this work and expect to see outdoor recreation well-represented at the table for future planning and implementation to ensure recreation access is preserved and enhanced.



Outdoor Recreation Industry Framework for America the Beautiful

This framework, developed by the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR), is intended to support implementation of the America the Beautiful (AtB) initiative by considering various categories related to future public land and water conservation decisions and sharing preferable approaches from the perspective of the outdoor recreation industry.

These goalposts will ensure the climate and conservation goals of AtB are met while contributing to the growth and success of the outdoor recreation economy, which sustains 4.3 million American jobs, \$689 billion in economic output, powers urban and rural economies, provides countless health, wellness and quality of life benefits, and helps create the next generation of diverse environmental stewards on our public lands and waters.

Background on this framework:

- The framework is divided into three categories:
 - o Process for Designation/Public Engagement
 - o America the Beautiful Conservation Locations
 - o Design/Infrastructure
- Outdoor recreation industry stakeholders include:
 - o Outdoor supply chain: manufacturing, supplier and retail businesses
 - o Guides/outfitters and campground, lodge and marina operators
 - o State offices of outdoor recreation
 - o State and local governments
 - o Gateway communities
 - o Community economic development groups
 - o Tribal nations
 - o Local, state, and federal natural resource agencies
 - o Outdoor recreation advocacy groups
 - o Service corps
 - o Advocacy and trade associations
 - o Education institutions

We hope this framework helps the Biden Administration execute the goals of AtB and measure its impact on our natural resources, communities, and economies around the United States.

Process for Designation/Public Engagement

| Category for Evaluation/ Measurement | Preferred | Not Preferred | Examples of Preferred Approach |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Outdoor Recreation Industry Involvement in Decision-Making</p> | <p>Outdoor recreation industry stakeholders are included in the AtB decision-making process around land and water management, outdoor recreation infrastructure, funding, access, and designations, and the benefits of outdoor recreation-based economies are considered by in all decisions.</p> | <p>Outdoor recreation industry stakeholders are not included in the AtB decision-making process. The benefits of outdoor recreation-based economies are not considered by the administration.</p> | <p>e.g. State level : Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative Colorado Outdoor Partnership Oregon Governor’s Task Force on the Outdoors</p> |
| <p>Public Land & Water Designations & Outdoor Recreation Access Level</p> | <p><i>Existing public lands and waters</i> are managed for outdoor recreation where appropriate by federal / state / local agencies and maintain or expand outdoor access with funding and management priorities aligned for sustainable future access (e.g. funding, staffing, education, maintenance, infrastructure). <i>New access to public lands and waters</i> is acquired through LWCF and other programs by federal / state / local agencies to expand conservation and diverse types of outdoor recreation access for the American people.</p> | <p>Conservation status of existing federal lands closes off outdoor recreation opportunities. <i>Regarding ski areas</i>, ensure that designations do not result in additional management overlay for acres permitted and that valid existing rights are protected.</p> | <p>e.g. Existing BLM areas could be designated as National Recreation Areas and managed to support sustainable outdoor recreation of all kinds, inviting new communities to recreate, and enhancing rural economies with more people living, visiting and working near quality recreation assets. Proposed Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary</p> |
| <p>Equitable Consultation for Underrepresented Communities</p> | <p>Communities who have been historically underrepresented and underserved in outdoor recreation (e.g. Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, Rural, Low-Income, Disabled) are included in the decision-making process of determining areas for conservation and outdoor recreation and how they are managed. Particular attention should be provided to meaningful and timely consultation of Tribes near new public land/water designations. Designations should not proceed if the majority of nearby Tribes are against the designation.</p> | <p>Communities who have been historically underrepresented in outdoor recreation are excluded from the decision-making process of determining areas for conservation and outdoor recreation and how they are managed. Tribes near new public land/water designation are not included in planning process or a majority are against designation.</p> | <p>e.g. October 2021 DOI Listening Sessions in support of Executive Order 13985. A Detailed Plan to Improve Interior’s Implementation of E.O 13175</p> |
| <p>Public-Private Partnerships: Civilian Climate Corps & Other Integration and Investment</p> | <p>Conserved lands provide an opportunity to make use of the 130 existing youth and veteran conservation corps to build and maintain outdoor recreation infrastructure and connect to workforce opportunities in the outdoor recreation economy. Land management agencies utilize other nonprofit and private sector partners to optimize access, technical assistance, infrastructure and funding.</p> | <p>Conserved lands provide no opportunity for youth and veterans to engage with construction and maintenance of outdoor recreation infrastructure, and nonprofit and private sector groups are not included in areas of potential partnership.</p> | <p>e.g. California Conservation Corps Pennsylvania Youth Conservation Corps NOAA Fisheries Corps Baileys Trail System (OH)</p> |

America the Beautiful Conservation Locations

| Category for Evaluation/ Measurement | Preferred | Not Preferred | Examples of Preferred Approach |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Accessible Outdoor Recreation for All | <p>Proximity to underrepresented and underserved communities, particularly those in urban areas, is a measurement used in new protections / designations.</p> <p>New transportation accessibility to existing public lands and waters counts towards AtB goals. These areas have or plan to have a transportation plan, easily accessed map, transit-to-trails programs, directions and trail and/or outdoor recreation information online and in person.</p> | <p>Proximity to new and existing outdoor recreation opportunities for underrepresented and underserved communities is not considered in new designations or not improved in/around exiting protected lands and waters. New outdoor recreation areas are inaccessible (e.g. due to distance, lack of accessible information or public transit programs) for underrepresented and underserved communities.</p> | <p>e.g. San Gabriel National Monument outside of Los Angeles. Los Angeles is one of the most disadvantaged counties in terms of access to park and open space for people of color, particularly children. According to USACE, much of Los Angeles is park-deficient, with less than 3 acres of green space per 1,000 residents. Park access is lowest in areas with the highest number of families below an annual household income of \$47,331.</p> <p>Crissy Field Promenade (NPS), California</p> <p>Questa, NM</p> |
| Outdoor Recreation Economy Development Potential | <p>Communities surrounding new/existing public land and water designation have support for, substantive plans, and bandwidth (e.g. steering committee, grant writing, long-range planning) to develop, or has already developed, a sustainable outdoor recreation economy and its associated benefits.</p> | <p>Communities surrounding new/existing public land and water designation have minimal support for/no plans for sustainable outdoor recreation economy development.</p> | <p>e.g. Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership</p> <p>North Carolina Growing Outdoors Partnership</p> <p>Mon Forest Towns Partnership</p> <p>USFS/EPA/NBRC Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Program</p> <p>Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary</p> |
| Business Incentives | <p>State/locality where new/existing public land and water designation occurs offers outdoor recreation business-oriented incentives and programs (e.g. market expansion services, international export advice, rural manufacturing incentives, business relocation incentives, innovation grants, product testing, patent expertise) to support creation of new business opportunities for guides, outfitters, campgrounds, lodging/resort opportunities, retail, manufacturing and outdoor businesses.</p> | <p>State/locality where new and existing public land and water designation occurs does not offer outdoor recreation business-oriented incentives and programs to support creation of new guides, outfitters, and outdoor businesses.</p> | <p>e.g. Utah Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity</p> <p>Colorado Office of Economic Development and Trade</p> |
| Climate Resilience | <p>New/existing public land and water designations add significant climate resilience (e.g. carbon sink, wildfire reduction, restoration of forest cover) alongside outdoor recreation benefits, or has mitigation plan to lessen the significant impact of drought, flooding or wildfire. Climate resilience at ski areas should be a high priority given their economic role in local communities.</p> | <p>No plans are made to mitigate climate impacts on the resource or outdoor recreation activities/economies from drought, flooding, or wildfire.</p> | <p>e.g. Carbon Sequestration in the U.S. National Parks Study (Harvard Kennedy School)</p> |
| Public Health Benefits | <p>New/existing public land and water designations consider the potential health benefits (e.g. reduced blood pressure/ obesity/ diabetes) of outdoor recreation to surrounding communities.</p> | <p>Health benefits of outdoor recreation to surrounding communities not included or acknowledged.</p> | <p>e.g. Healthy Parks Healthy People (NPS)</p> <p>NatureScore</p> |

Design/Infrastructure

| Category for Evaluation/ Measurement | Preferred | Not Preferred | Examples of Preferred Approach |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Quantity/ Diversity of Outdoor Recreation Activities Enabled | <p>Many diverse outdoor recreation activities (e.g. human-powered, equestrian, hunting/angling, motorized) are supported where appropriate by land/water designations and management plans to disperse users and ensure everyone can experience the outdoors in their own way.</p> <p>When possible, new public land/water designation guarantees healthy habitat for game and fish whose hunting/fishing permits and excise taxes on equipment generate significant conservation benefits.</p> | <p>No new outdoor recreation activities are supported by new public land/water designation and any outdoor recreation activities are closed down or taken away.</p> | <p>e.g. San Rafael Swell Recreation Area (BLM), Utah</p> <p>Delaware Gap National Recreation Area (NPS), Pennsylvania</p> |
| Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure | <p>Improving outdoor recreation infrastructure for climate resiliency and the green economy counts towards AtB goals.</p> <p>AtB designations contain sufficient, high quality outdoor recreation infrastructure (e.g. trails, camping/lodging, shooting ranges, boat ramps, signage, parking areas, electrical, roads, ADA accessibility, shelters, water treatment, waste management, Internet access, charging stations for renewable-powered outdoor recreation products) and investments in human resources for planning and management.</p> | <p>Existing infrastructure is not updated to reflect greening economy or climate resiliency.</p> <p>New public land/water designation needs significant new infrastructure or human resources investment to be fully operational (e.g. will need a multi-million dollar capital campaign to enable access).</p> | <p>e.g. Public land/water trailheads/campgrounds are equipped with Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, tree thinning for wildfire mitigation is utilized to create high-quality trails, parking lots are designed with durable permeable surfaces to accommodate flooding potential and groundwater recharge, new roads are built with materials that do not buckle at high temperatures, etc.</p> <p>Climate.Park.Change provides helpful examples of climate-resilient outdoor recreation infrastructure.</p> |
| Accessibility and Interpretation | <p>Agencies consult underrepresented communities around accessibility and interpretation at recreation sites to ensure that locations are both physically and culturally accessible to the maximum extent possible.</p> | <p>New outdoor recreation locations are designed without input from underrepresented communities on accessibility and interpretation.</p> | <p>e.g. Willamette Partnership Accessibility Toolkit</p> <p>Evaluation Research to Support National Park Service 21st Century Relevancy Initiatives</p> |
| Overnight Camping/ RV Accessibility | <p>New land and water designations provide diverse overnight opportunities (from RV hookups to dispersed camping) and necessary infrastructure (e.g. full hookups and EV charging opportunities when appropriate) to support RVs where appropriate.</p> | <p>New land and water designations lack opportunities and related infrastructure for overnight camping, RV accessibility and EV charging.</p> | <p>e.g. Diversity of options at Yellowstone National Park</p> |

About ORR: The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable is the leading business coalition advancing a sustainable and growing outdoor recreation economy for the benefit of all Americans.