

America the Beautiful: Collaborating with the Outdoor Recreation Industry

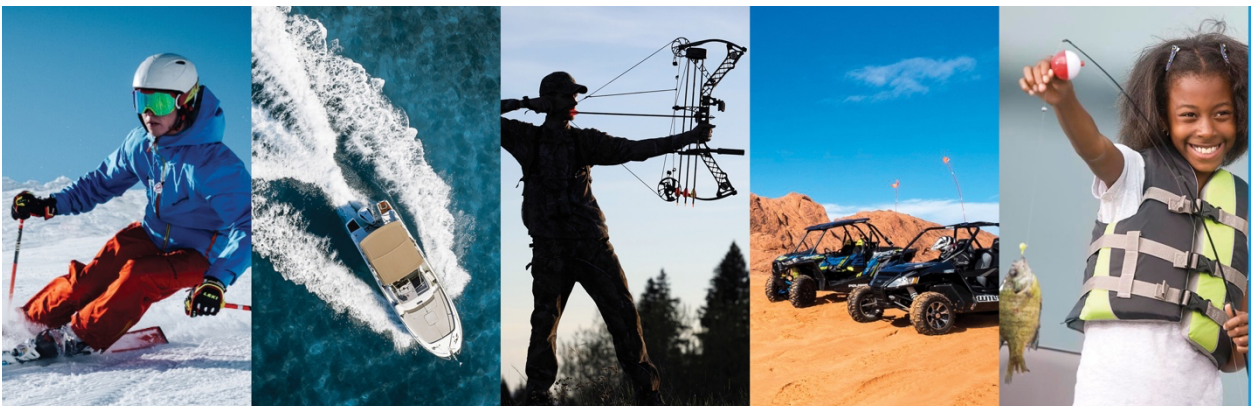
The outdoor recreation business community is proud of our longstanding commitment to conservation that has helped establish the United States as a global leader in natural resource and biodiversity protections. We recognize and embrace the overlap between our collective work to support natural resource conservation and the Biden Administration’s ‘Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful’ (AtB) report, and especially appreciate the Administration’s recognition of the essential role outdoor recreation plays in conservation, from backyards to the backcountry.

Sustainable access to all forms of outdoor recreation allows the public to connect with lands, waters and wildlife, providing social, economic, health, quality of life and conservation benefits to the nation. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the outdoor recreation industry generates \$788 billion in economic output, comprises 2.1% of U.S. GDP and supports 5.2 million jobs. Accompanying that access and enjoyment is a need for strong, science-based natural resource management that ensures our outdoor spaces are healthy and conserved for current and future outdoor recreationists and for sustainable ecosystems.

Well-managed and sustainable outdoor recreation activities, working in harmony with conservation goals and policies that ensure continued outdoor recreation access for all, are imperative to the success of AtB goals.

Consider that:

- Conserving lands and waters for their outdoor recreation qualities also protects carbon sinks and biodiverse habitats, which helps mitigate negative impacts of climate change.
- Maintaining current access and connecting new communities to our abundant resources and their unrivaled natural beauty is essential to creating healthy communities and ensuring the next generation of passionate stewards for natural resources and biodiversity.



- Investing in outdoor recreation assets and related economic development strategies can provide a bright economic future and quality of life to communities transitioning from traditional extractive industries.

To implement the thoughtful concepts outlined in the 2021 America the Beautiful report and achieve our shared conservation, recreation, climate and economic objectives, the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable recommends that the Biden Administration:

1. Ensure the outdoor recreation business industry has a seat at the table (stakeholder advisory group) to collaborate and share expertise

- a. Designate diverse land- and water-based outdoor recreation user groups (e.g., human-powered, equine, hunting and angling, youth corps, motorized, and hospitality) as leaders in planning and implementation of AtB efforts.
- b. Work with public sector outdoor recreation planners, outdoor recreation business leaders, state offices of outdoor recreation, GIS specialists, tribes, natural resource professionals, ecologists, outdoor recreation and conservation nonprofits, academics, and other community-based groups to determine the best locations for all types of outdoor recreation.

2. Ensure expanded and equitable access for outdoor recreation

- a. Engage with public sector outdoor recreation planners, outdoor business leaders, state offices of outdoor recreation, GIS specialists, tribes, natural resource professionals, ecologists, outdoor recreation and conservation nonprofits, academics, and other community-based groups to expand accessible and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities for diverse user groups.
- b. Partner with transit agencies and NGOs to support transit-to-trails programs (e.g., nature shuttles, bike pathways, improved education and signage) to connect people from the urban core to regional outdoor recreation destinations, prioritizing populations who have historically been most disconnected from parks and open spaces.
- c. Engage underserved communities through youth corps and other local organizations by working with the existing network of over 230 active member organizations recognized as part of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to ensure safe and equitable opportunities for all Americans to explore the great outdoors. These partnerships should prioritize recruitment, training, and employment of people from diverse backgrounds to work on projects that



enhance ecosystem function and support equitable access to outdoor recreation.

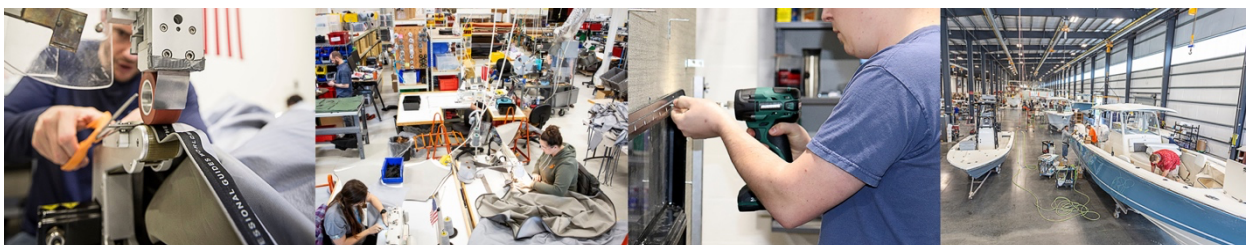
- d. Utilize the \$900 million Land and Water Conservation Fund to provide protection and access in communities across the country by acquiring new outdoor recreation locations for federal land management agencies or to provide funds to states to utilize for land acquisition or development of outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- e. Consider partnerships with the Department of Education, school districts and outdoor industry groups to identify curriculum focused on the importance of open space, public lands, and getting outside.

3. Bolster economic data and resources for outdoor recreation communities (both urban and rural) to clearly connect land and water protection with economic development

- a. Create and distribute toolkits, success stories, accessible lists of federal grants, technical assistance and other resources related to the development of sustainable outdoor recreation economies in communities across the United States.
- b. Share economic data (e.g., economic output, jobs created, job types, visitor spending) in outdoor recreation communities via the Bureau of Economic Analysis Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account and other agency data.
- c. Collect studies on other land and water conservation-related public benefits (e.g., improved health and wellness and associated healthcare savings) in outdoor recreation communities.
- d. Work collaboratively across agencies and programs (National Park Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, U.S. Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency and others) to expand grant programs and technical assistance to support outdoor recreation as a rural economic development engine (e.g., Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program).

4. Work to improve management of existing conserved lands and waters

- a. Prioritize outdoor recreation-related management decisions, funding and staff where outdoor recreation may be the highest use/asset of lands and waters.
- b. Utilize existing protected areas to measure progress toward stated goals.
- c. Include protected area definitions in 30x30 that allow for well-managed and sustainable outdoor activities.



- d. Maintain outdoor recreation access that already exists and work with groups to ensure that access can be maintained sustainably into the future by creating transparent channels and support collaboratives for communication between stakeholder groups at federal, regional, state, and local levels.
- e. Support studies that investigate the effects of climate change on outdoor recreation locations and develop strategies to mitigate these impacts.
- f. Understand on-the-ground needs at various outdoor recreation sites and work proactively to identify and address potential user conflicts before they occur.
- g. Use an objective, science-driven, stakeholder-engaged and input-friendly process to determine the appropriate level of management necessary to meet biodiversity, climate, and conservation goals while supporting sustainable outdoor recreation.

We believe sustainable management of our great outdoors is paramount for us to address climate change while further bolstering the outdoor recreation economy. We also appreciate the report's acknowledgment of the connection between healthy places, healthy communities, and jobs. We plan to work with the administration on the implementation of 'America the Beautiful' and to have outdoor recreation representatives advise in this effort. Together, we can continue to build on Americans' love for the outdoors and outdoor recreation for generations to come.

*"The bottom line is that access to healthier public lands and waters means more opportunities for Americans to recreate outside and for communities' economies to thrive," said **Jessica Turner, executive director of Outdoor Recreation Roundtable**. "ORR supports the administration's 'Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful' effort and we are encouraged by its goals to conserve and protect our nation's lands and waters through science-based, locally led efforts that create access to motorized, non-motorized, fishing and hunting recreation opportunities for all. We are also particularly pleased that this report prioritizes recreation access that already exists, while recognizing that access needs to be maintained sustainably in the future as places are conserved."*

Glenn Hughes, president of the American Sportfishing Association added, *"The 30 by 30 initiative has generated a lot of attention within the recreational fishing community. We are pleased that the Biden Administration is approaching 30 by 30 with an understanding of the significant cultural, economic and conservation benefits that recreational fishing provides the nation, and emphasizes the value of increasing access for outdoor recreation."*

“As a community dependent on clean water, healthy fisheries, and reasonable and responsible access to our natural resources, implementing this plan will put us on a trajectory toward maintaining and advancing these conservation objectives,” said **Frank Hugelmeyer, president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association**. *“We appreciate the administration’s balanced approach to 30 by 30, and on behalf of the uniquely American-made recreational boating industry, NMMA strongly supports this collaborative effort.”*

“The conservation of more of our public lands means more places for RVers to visit for generations to come,” said **Jay Landers, vice president of government affairs at the RV Industry Association**. *“We applaud the 30 by 30 efforts and look forward to working with the Biden Administration to ensure these efforts include balanced land use and increased access to recreation activities.”*



ABOUT ORR

The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable promotes the growth of the outdoor recreation economy and outdoor recreation activities and is the leading recreation coalition with 33-member associations serving over 110,000 businesses. ORR's members represent America's hunting, fishing, RVing, biking, hiking, camping, ATVing, diving, horseback and skiing communities among many more.