

## POLICY PRIORITIES 2025 SUMMARY

The \$1.1 trillion outdoor recreation economy relies on healthy public lands and waters and favorable business policies to thrive. Outdoor recreation contributes 5 million jobs across the country and stimulates health and wellness, conservation, and economic opportunities—especially in rural America. Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) supports investing in recreation access, infrastructure, and funding, and advancing balanced trade policies to support the health of local communities and people and the growth and resilience of American jobs and businesses.

### FUNDING



In June 2024, ORR released [“Recreation Funding in America: Current Results and Future Insights,”](#) a comprehensive study aggregating and analyzing current federal funding streams for outdoor recreation. The topline takeaway is alarming: outdoor recreation across the United States faces a future funding gap of nearly \$35 billion dollars without intervention. Additionally, future impacts on recreation funding could make this funding gap even more significant. There is a pressing need for innovative solutions to ensure sustainable funding for the recreation economy and the millions of Americans and communities who rely on it.

Additionally, many rural communities around the country see outdoor recreation as an important cornerstone around which they can strengthen their economic and community resilience. Communities with recreation infrastructure or natural assets have the ability to recruit and retain businesses and workers with focused planning and support.

**To ensure a future for outdoor recreation where recreation funding is prioritized, and communities can benefit from access to the outdoors, ORR will work to:**

- **Establish** a Presidential Commission on Outdoor Recreation.
- **Fund** federal land and water management agencies adequately through appropriations.
- **Ensure** fees collected from recreation at all agencies are used for recreation improvements and that the Recreational Trails Program is fully funded.
- **Support** rural communities planning resilient economies and addressing the growing technical gap between in-demand skills in order to foster rural economic development through recreation.

## ACCESS



Outdoor recreation is not only a necessary economic development tool, but also a meaningful health and wellness solution. Time outside and the benefits of staying active have proven to be vital for everyone, especially for strengthening physical and mental well-being, saving on health care expenses, and fostering connection. Policymakers at all levels should prioritize equitable and meaningful access to outdoor recreation as a health and wellness solution and consider its importance in all communities.

**To guarantee outdoor access for all and create a healthier population engaged with the Great Outdoors, ORR will work to:**

- **Increase access** to recreation for veterans, the disability community, as well as communities who have traditionally not had access to outdoor recreation.
- **Elevate research** on the impact of nature and outdoor recreation on health and connect grants and incentives for communities with lower health outcomes to recreation.
- **Balance access with development** on America's public lands and waters to ensure healthy ecosystems and that energy development decisions include recreation industry input and are informed by the best available science and data.

## INFRASTRUCTURE



Outdated infrastructure can turn people away from recreation. Fixing the maintenance backlog and modernizing infrastructure is needed to meet future demands and will help propel this vital sector of the economy forward. The federal government should prioritize sustainable recreation infrastructure and mitigate the impact of natural disasters and extreme weather on recreation assets to fuel growth in rural economies and create jobs.

**To help build and maintain the best, sustainable outdoor recreation infrastructure in the world for all types of outdoor recreation activities, ORR will work to:**

- **Reauthorize the Great American Outdoors Act Legacy Restoration Fund** to support the maintenance backlog on lands and waters across the federal system.
- **Address the need** for technology infrastructure in and around public lands and waters to accommodate industries and consumers moving towards decarbonization of their outdoor vehicle technology through sustainable fuels, electric, hydrogen, or other fuel alternatives.
- **Create** resilient recreation infrastructure to mitigate the impact of natural disasters and extreme weather on outdoor recreation and local economies.



## BUSINESS CERTAINTY



Keeping U.S. outdoor recreation businesses globally competitive relies on balanced trade to create jobs and provide consumers with outstanding outdoor recreation products and gear. While large sectors of the outdoor recreation industry manufacture in the United States and are looking for additional opportunities to manufacture domestically, many rely on international supply chains. Therefore, the outdoor recreation industry needs a trade policy rooted in certainty that provides meaningful incentives to onshore manufacturing and diversifies manufacturing footprints with allies and trusted trading partners. Our sector relies on resilient supply chains and a stable business environment to remain competitive and support well-paying jobs in the United States.

**To ensure a balanced and effective trade landscape for outdoor businesses that keeps U.S. outdoor recreation businesses globally competitive, ORR will work to:**

- **Support diversification of manufacturing beyond China** by retroactively extending the Generalized System of Preferences, reforming the application of Section 301 Tariffs, and reducing the de minimis threshold.
- **Encourage innovation** by removing the new tax provision that forces businesses to deduct their R&D costs and redirecting tariffs to conservation and business innovations.

