



UW

Jay Kemmerer
WORTH Institute

REPORT ON OUTDOOR RECREATION



2026

OUTDOOR RECREATION: A PILLAR OF WYOMING'S ECONOMY

In 2024, outdoor recreation
in Wyoming generated

\$2.3 billion

growing .5% over 2023, slower than
the national average of 2.7%.¹

Visitors spent

\$4.9 billion

while traveling and recreating in
Wyoming in 2024. Direct travel
spending in 2024 increased 1.6%
over 2023 numbers. Travel spending
also generated \$277 million in travel-
related tax revenue, a 4.3% increase
over the previous year.²

Since 2014, Wyoming has seen a

3.9% increase
in direct travel spending
annually.

Outdoor recreation accounts for

4.5% of
Wyoming's GDP,
which is the 5th highest
share of GDP nationally.³

Outdoor recreation in
Wyoming employed

16,545 people

a .5% increase from 2023.⁴

Nationally, outdoor
recreation accounted for

5.2 million jobs

or 3.2% of national employment, and
\$1.3 trillion in economic output.⁵

Cover photo credits: Top-left and bottom photos Wyoming
Office of Tourism; Top-right Connor Burkesmith;
Bottom-right Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation

A NOTE FROM THE WYOMING OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

This is an exciting time for Outdoor Recreation in Wyoming. The term “Outdoor Recreation” appears in so many discussions throughout the state, from physical and mental health benefits to access on state lands to the creation of the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund. Across Wyoming, the discussions have been robust and inspiring.

Wyoming is truly blessed with America's greatest outdoor recreation opportunities. The remote Red Desert, picturesque Keyhole State Park, and majestic Grand Teton National Park are just three of the many places residents and visitors can enjoy.

I may be the Manager for the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation, but I am also an avid recreationalist. It's been a pleasure supporting our state's robust recreational opportunities professionally and enjoying them personally. Among my work travels this year, I have experienced more than in my 50+ years in the state combined.

It is an honor to have ridden OHVs around Albany Peak, fly-fished the trout-filled waters below Palisades Reservoir, snowmobiled within Yellowstone National Park, and camped in the Bighorn National Forest, among many other adventures. I am proud to continue advocating, alongside my team, for the advancement of funding mechanisms and sustainable growth of recreational opportunities, so others may enjoy our state's landscapes as much as I have.

My deepest respect and appreciation for those legislators, stakeholders, NGOs, and state agencies who have and continue to support our Office.



Sincerely,

Mark Tesoro, *Manager*
Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation

¹ Bureau of Economic Analysis. “Outdoor Recreation Economic Statistics, U.S. and States, 2024.” <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>

² Dean Runyan and Associates. “The Economic Impact of Travel: Wyoming, 2024 Calendar Year.” <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QNsBX4S0NW7q1p8RmgikUQy1PulmZVLN/edit>

³ Bureau of Economic Analysis. “Outdoor Recreation Economic Statistics, U.S. and States, 2024.” <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>

⁴ Ibid

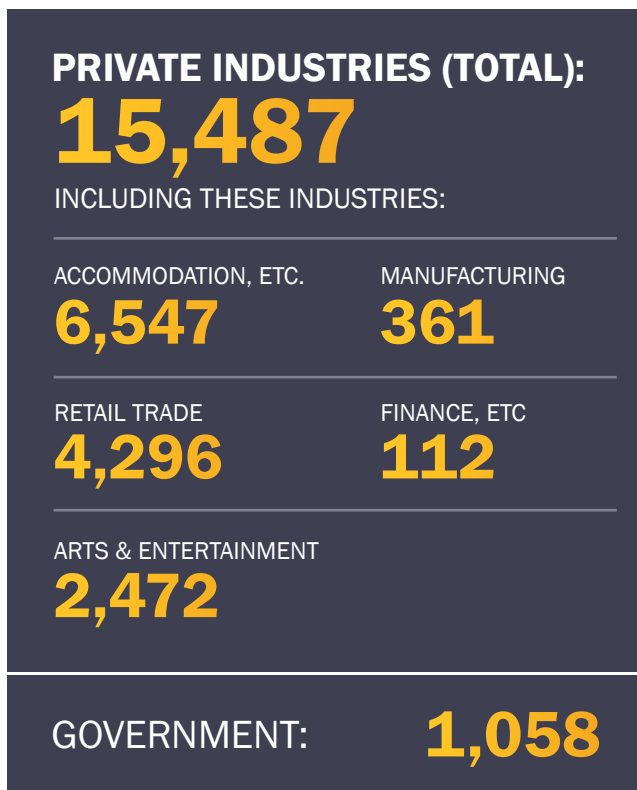
⁵ Ibid

OUTDOOR RECREATION CONTRIBUTIONS IN WYOMING

Outdoor recreation jobs: attracting and retaining the best and the brightest

The outdoor recreation industry relies on diverse economic sectors working together, each of which attract talented professionals to live, work, and play in Wyoming. Occupations in outdoor recreation range from operating lifts at the local ski resort or managing a gear store to guiding for hunting and angling trips. A broad retail and service economy is essential for fostering a vibrant outdoor recreation industry, attracting visitors, and retaining highly qualified workers.

Distribution of Wyoming's **16,545** jobs in Outdoor Recreation in 2024⁶



Contributions of Selected Outdoor Industries to Wyoming's Gdp in 2024⁷



Additionally, several core outdoor recreation activities saw significant increases in 2024:



Climbing, hiking, and tent camping:
6.5% increase



Guided tours and outfitted travel:
5.2% increase



Equestrian:
3.8% increase

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION COLLABORATIVES

The Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation connects people with resources that help communities thrive, facilitating 12 outdoor recreation collaboratives convened throughout the state that bring together local community members, stakeholders, and government agencies to support growth in the industry. These collaboratives encourage conversations aimed at identifying areas of opportunity, supporting projects addressing the maintenance of existing recreational areas and development of new infrastructure. In the map to the right are just a few of the examples where collaboratives have brought together stakeholders to accomplish specific projects.



Amy Crawford
Outdoor Recreation Coordinator,
Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation

NEWS

- **Natrona and Converse Counties** have merged into the Natrona Converse Outdoor Recreation Collaborative.
- **Sublette County** established a single-county collaborative in 2025 called the Mountain Man Outdoor Recreation Collaborative.
- **Platte, Goshen, Niobrara, and Laramie Counties** formed a multi-county collaborative known as the High Plains Outdoor Recreation Collaborative.
- **Lincoln and Uinta Counties:** This collaborative is officially established and named the Lincoln/Uinta County Outdoor Recreation Collaborative.
- **Teton County:** This collaborative is officially named the Teton County Outdoor Recreation Collaborative and has been established.



COLLABORATIVE PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



Rails to Trails Conservancy
Great American Rail Trail: Supporting Trail Planning and Construction in Wyoming. More at: <https://www.railstotrails.org/>



Sheridan Community Land Trust
Red Grade Trails, Tongue River Water Trail, Big Goose Natural Area: Supporting ongoing Trail Construction. More at: <https://sheridanclt.org/>



Clark Planning for the reconstruction of the Morrison Jeep Trail (PCORC):

Bureau of Land Management, Shoshone District of the USFS, Wyoming State Trails Program



Park County Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (PCORC)



Lander Sunnyside Trail at Sinks Canyon State Park (WRORC):

Wyoming State Parks, Wyoming State Trails, Lander Cycling Club, Wyoming Game & Fish Department

Mountain Man Outdoor Recreation Collaborative



Sweetwater County Outdoor Recreation Collaborative



Lovell Cottonwood Canyon Trail (BBORC):

Town of Lovell, Wyoming Pathways, Bureau of Land Management



3-Poles OHV Recreation Area (CPORC):

Wyoming State Trails, Sheridan County, Office of State Lands and Investments, Public Land Users Committee



Newcastle Bike Park (NEWORC):

Bent Sprockets, Inc, City of Newcastle

door
laborative



Cloud Peak Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (CPORC)



Northeast Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (NEWORC)

Bighorn Basin Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (BBORC)



Wind River Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (WRORC)



Natrona Converse Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (NCORC)



Douglas Mountain Trails and Bike Skills Area (NCORC):

Central Wyoming Trails Alliance, Outdoor Enthusiasts of Converse County, City of Douglas

etwater County
oor Recreation
laborative (SCORC)



Southeast Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (SWORC)



Ehlin Winter Parking Pilot Study (SWORC):

Snowy Range Snowmobile Club, USFS Medicine Bow National Forest - Laramie Ranger District, WYDOT, Medicine Bow Nordic Association



Green River Blueway (SCORC):

City of Green River, The Green River Greenbelt Task Force, Explore WY

The Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation facilitates ten outdoor recreation collaboratives throughout the state. These collaboratives bring together diverse private and public stakeholders to identify and prioritize grassroots opportunities for the growth and enhancement of outdoor recreation.

OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TOURISM TRUST FUND



Not long ago, investing in outdoor recreation infrastructure in Wyoming mostly meant doing what we could with the tools at hand — stretching limited dollars, leaning on volunteers, and building projects one determined shovel-full at a time. It's remarkable how much can change in just a few short years. With the passage of the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund (ORTTF) in 2023 (House Bill 0074) and its companion legislation in 2024 (House Bill 0067), Wyoming put real weight behind something we've always known: our communities deserve thoughtful, lasting investment.

Governor Gordon's appointment of a diverse and capable board — citizens who ride, hike, ski, hunt, guide, manage, and steward — means the voices shaping this fund know Wyoming's outdoor places not from maps, but from dirty shoes, tired legs, and well-used gear. Together, we've rolled up our sleeves, engaged stakeholders statewide, and crafted rules that do more than distribute dollars. They chart a path for strengthening Wyoming's outdoor recreation and tourism infrastructure while expanding economic opportunity, respecting landscapes and wildlife, and enhancing experiences for residents and visitors alike. We're not just preparing to fund projects; we're preparing to support the small towns behind the trailheads, the businesses behind the adventure, and the communities that make Wyoming's outdoor life possible.

As we look toward opening our inaugural grant cycle in 2026, I'm struck by how similar this moment feels to scouting a new trail: the promise is there, the line comes into focus if you squint a little, and the excitement is hard to hide. I hope that these investments lead people to new corners of the state — places that spark wonder, connection, and even a deeper sense of responsibility.

Wyoming's outdoor recreation future isn't something we inherit; it's something we build. And the first dusty step, it turns out, is already behind us.



Sincerely,

Jeremiah Rieman
*Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund
Board Chairman*



WHAT IS THE WY OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TOURISM TRUST FUND?

The Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund was finalized in the 2024 legislative session to help governments and nonprofits guide and grow responsible outdoor recreation amenities for their communities.

WHAT CAN IT FUND?

The program will provide grants for the “planning, design, improvement, construction, and maintenance of existing or new outdoor recreational infrastructure” and public access easements. Infrastructure is defined as “the physical facilities and structures that support outdoor recreational activities and experiences for residents and nonresidents, including, but not limited to, parking, staging areas, trails, campgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches, fishing piers, observation decks, wildlife viewing areas, and visitor centers.”

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Government entities
- Eastern Shoshone Tribe
- Northern Arapaho Tribe
- Non-profit organizations

WHAT'S THE TIMELINE?

Grant applications are due April 11, 2026, and projects will begin in July.

For more information <https://wyooutdoorrecreation.wyo.gov/index.php/funding/orttf>



Brynn Hirschman
Grant Coordinator
*Wyoming Office of
Outdoor Recreation*



2025 WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION SUMMIT RECAP

In partnership, the Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute and the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation hosted the third annual Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Summit in Laramie, WY. Each year, this event continues to grow and serves as a space for outdoor recreation professionals, advocates, and students to learn from and inspire one another. In 2025, the Summit was held from May 1st to 2nd. May 1st focused on general and breakout sessions, and May 2nd included conference sessions in the morning and field trips in the afternoon. Session topics centered on the theme “Outdoor Recreation in Wyoming Communities: Building partnerships, developing workforce, and accessing resources.” The event brought together 160 total participants, including speakers, attendees, and panelists.

In conjunction with this event, the second annual Search and Rescue Conference was held on May 3. This one-day event brought together over 100 attendees, including representatives from 18 Wyoming counties’ search and rescue programs, Wyoming county sheriffs, and other professionals in emergency management and outdoor recreation. The conference focused on providing relevant programming, increasing engagement and relationship-building, and highlighting experiences and resources for Wyoming’s search and rescue community.

The WORTH Institute and the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation are excited to continue this partnership and host the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Summit again in 2026; we hope to see you there.

RECORDINGS AND FULL SUMMARY AT:

<https://www.uwyo.edu/worth/events/wors.html>



By the numbers:

1.5 days

18 sessions

Over 44 speakers



JOIN US!

WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION
Summit

April 30—May 1, 2026

Platte Valley Community Center | Saratoga, Wyoming

TO REGISTER, VISIT:
<http://bit.ly/4a9lnrU>



FOR QUESTIONS,
COMMENTS, AND
SUGGESTIONS
PLEASE CONTACT:
tkruger@uwyo.edu

TO VIEW MORE
INFO:
<https://www.uwyo.edu/worth/events/wors.html>



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OUTDOOR RECREATION IN WYOMING



Economic contribution of outdoor recreation and percent change from 2023*

Impact	Employment	% +/-	Labor income	% +/-	Value added	% +/-	Output	% +/-
Direct	16,546	0.5%	\$900M	5%	\$2,141M	0.5%	\$4,790M	8%
Indirect	6,636	5%	\$393M	13%	\$790M	8%	\$1,589M	16%
Induced	3,920	11%	\$183M	14%	\$361M	17%	\$671M	20%
Total	27,102	3%	\$1.476B	8%	\$3.292B	4%	\$7.050B	11%

Tax receipts contribution of outdoor recreation and percent change from 2023*

Impact	Local	% +/-	County	% +/-	State	% +/-	WY TOTAL	% +/-
Direct	\$59M	15%	\$37M	45%	\$169M	-12%	\$266M	-1%
Indirect	\$16M	35%	\$10M	69%	\$48M	3%	\$75M	16%
Induced	\$8M	35%	\$5M	70%	\$23M	4%	\$36M	16%
Total	\$84M	20%	\$52M	51%	\$240M	-8%	\$376M	3%

Establishments and direct employment in outdoor recreation by county

County	Employers ⁸	Employees ⁹	County	Employers	Employees	County	Employers	Employees
Albany	53	217	Hot Springs	19	16	Sheridan	63	268
Big Horn	24	19	Johnson	25	24	Sublette	24	28
Campbell	43	127	Laramie	101	526	Sweetwater	38	235
Carbon	28	23	Lincoln	37	52	Teton	180	1,668
Converse	26	19	Natrona	94	829	Uinta	20	10
Crook	25	17	Niobrara	4	ND**	Washakie	12	ND**
Fremont	98	219	Park	88	298	Weston	4	ND**
Goshen	14	10	Platte	17	13			

Total outdoor recreation economic activity is the sum of direct, indirect, and induced activity. Direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts are estimated using data from IMPLAN, an economic impact software tool.

* M signifies millions; % +/- shows the percent change from 2023

** Counties with an "ND" have insufficient data to provide information.



< TYPES OF ECONOMIC IMPACT

Direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts represent the ripple effects of a project or business on a local economy.

- **Direct** effects are immediate changes (e.g., jobs/spending at the firm).
- **Indirect** effects are supply chain purchases.
- **Induced** effects are changes in spending from households due to increased wages.

< ABOUT THE DATA

County-level establishments and employment estimates are not based on the BEA's outdoor recreation satellite account, but on proprietary establishment data⁸ linked with data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.⁹ Only establishments that are directly related to outdoor recreation are included. County level employment does not sum to state employment because the BEA includes employment that is indirectly or only partially related to outdoor recreation, like food service and accommodations.

“ The Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation is eager to invite you to the lineup of exciting events in 2026. These events offer invaluable opportunities to network with peers, gain cutting-edge insights, and collaborate on the future of our state’s thriving outdoor community. ”



Frances Schaetz, *Outreach Coordinator*
Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation



WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION SUMMIT

APRIL 30 - MAY 1, 2026

Platte Valley Community Center, Saratoga, Wyoming

“Building capacity for tomorrow.” WORS aims to serve Wyoming’s outdoor recreation community with relevant, representative, and engaging programming with the Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute and the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation.

View the details:

UWYO.Edu/Worth/Events/WORS.html



MOUNTAIN WEST TRAILS CONFERENCE

MAY 19 - MAY 20, 2026

Sweetwater Events Complex, Rock Springs, Wyoming

Find yourself in Wyoming. We are bringing together trail professionals, advocates, and enthusiasts from across eight Western states to collaborate, learn, and celebrate the power of trails to connect people and places.

View the details: MountainWestTrailsConference.com



WYOMING FIREARMS & OUTDOOR RECREATION EXPO

JULY 18, 2026

David Street Station, Casper, Wyoming

Wyoming based manufacturers, brands, and industry leaders are invited to participate in this exciting public exhibition to display products, gear, and demos.

View the details: WyoOutdoorRecreation.wyo.gov



Jay Kemmerer
WORTH Institute

ABOUT THE WORTH INSTITUTE

The Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute supports industries across the state through applied research, educational products, services, and extension.



RESEARCH

Provide timely and relevant research to address industry opportunities and challenges.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Supply opportunities for students and working professionals to develop the skills and knowledge to thrive in the tourism, hospitality, and outdoor recreation industries.



STATEWIDE ENGAGEMENT

Produce impactful programs and services for communities, businesses and stakeholders across Wyoming.

This report was prepared by the WORTH Institute in partnership with the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation. For more information about the WORTH Institute, please visit: www.uwyo.edu/worth. For more information about the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation, please visit: www.wyorec.com.

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