



UW

Jay Kemmerer
WORTH Institute

WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION REPORT



2025

OUTDOOR RECREATION: A PILLAR OF WYOMING'S ECONOMY

Outdoor recreation in Wyoming generated

\$2.2 billion

in 2023, growing 6.1% from 2022,
exceeding annual average growth.¹

Visitors to Wyoming spent

\$4.8 billion

generating \$263 million in travel-
related tax revenue. Direct travel
spending rose 6.5% from 2022.²

Since 2012, Wyoming has seen a

**4.5% increase
in outdoor recreation's
growth annually.**

Outdoor recreation accounts for

**4.1% of
Wyoming's GDP,
the 5th highest in the nation.³**

Outdoor recreation in Wyoming employed

15,798

in 2023, a slight increase from 2022.⁴

Nationally, outdoor recreation accounted for

5 million jobs

or 3.1% of national employment, and
\$1.2 trillion in economic output.⁵

Cover photo credits: Top: @medbowlodge_official;
Bottom: Andrew Muse

A NOTE FROM THE WYOMING OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

Credit: Wyoming Office of Tourism

Thank you to the Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute and the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation for creating this timely and compelling report. The numbers and stories here clearly show that the state's outdoor recreation economy continues to surge ahead. In the last five years, the recreation portion of Wyoming's GDP has increased by more than half a billion dollars! This powerful trend presents us with many challenges and opportunities to grow and manage outdoor recreation for the benefit of generations to come.

In an age of social media saturation, Wyoming is not a secret anymore. As we see increasing numbers of residents and visitors enjoying our great outdoors, we need to make sure the distinctly Wyoming character that we love so much remains a high priority as we plan for the future. Our history, culture, solitude, wildlife, wide open spaces, and the possibility of real adventure all make Wyoming an exciting place to visit and a special place to live. This report shows many of the ways that we are working to protect and improve Wyoming outdoor recreation through collaboration and grassroots driven infrastructure enhancements.

While we are making steady progress, we still have a ways to go. We need to keep pushing for more and better collaboration at all levels of government and among citizens and stakeholders. We need work on developing diverse and effective means of communication to get the word out about the challenges and opportunities that come with the growth of outdoor recreation. We need to identify robust and reliable funding sources to meet the needs of our communities and to protect our resources.

Speaking of which, we are excited about the creation of the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund, which will begin disbursing state recreation grants in 2026. It may become our most powerful tool for protecting and enhancing everything we love about recreation in Wyoming.

Thanks for reading this exciting report, and we'll see you down the trail!



Sincerely,

Chris Floyd
*Deputy Director of Wyoming State Parks
and Cultural Resources*

¹ Bureau of Economic Analysis. Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States 2023. <https://apps.bea.gov/regional/ORSAPdf/ORSAPdf%20-%20Wyoming.pdf>

² Adjusting for inflation, the increase in travel spending was 3.9%. From Wyoming Office of Tourism, <https://industry.travelwyoming.com/research/travel-economic-impacts/>. See also Dean Runyon Associates, "The Economic Impact of Travel: Wyoming. Calendar Year 2023"

³ Bureau of Economic Analysis. Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2023. <https://www.bea.gov/news/2024/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2023>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

OUTDOOR RECREATION CONTRIBUTIONS IN WYOMING

DISTRIBUTION OF WYOMING'S 15,798 JOBS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION IN 2023⁶



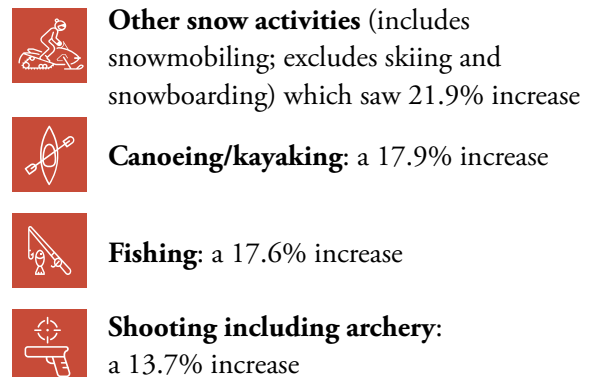
CONTRIBUTIONS OF SELECTED OUTDOOR INDUSTRIES TO WYOMING'S GDP IN 2023⁷



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.

Additionally, several core outdoor recreation activities saw significant increases in 2023:



⁶ Bureau of Economic Analysis. Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2023. <https://www.bea.gov/news/2024/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2023>

⁷ Ibid

COLLABORATIVE GRANT PROGRAM

In spring 2024, the Wyoming Office of Tourism allocated \$1.68 million to establish the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Collaborative Grant program. These grants are facilitated by the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation. Funding supports innovative projects from Outdoor Recreation Collaborative efforts and planning meetings.⁸

The \$1.68 million boosts Wyoming's outdoor recreation and tourism by supporting projects that:



Provide equitable access to users



Take advantage of innovative partnerships



Represent positive quality of life for users and beneficial economic impacts for the community

Outlaw Trails: \$300,000

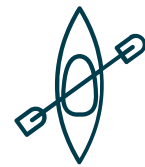
Park County Pedalers Inc.



The Outlaw Trails are just a few miles north of Cody, in the 2000-acre Newton Ridge Special Recreation Management Area. This project will revitalize a network of social trails and build new trails. It will also improve winter access by creating trails on the sunny side of the drainage.

Bighorn River Blueway Trail Access: \$150,000

Cody Field Office
Bureau of Land Management



Tongue River Water Trail- Fence Solution Pilot: \$9,600

Sheridan Community Land Trust

This project will improve the safety of the Tongue River Water Trail by piloting the installation of two fence crossings designed to be friendly to ranching and paddlers.)



Upton Gun Range: \$100,000

Upton Gun Club, Inc.

This project consists of installing a new trap house, installing a wastewater system for the existing bathrooms, the addition of concrete around the clubhouse, electrical work, and other groundwork.

Darnell Hills Open OHV Area Campsite Shade Shelters: \$100,000

Cody Field Office
Bureau of Land Management



Park County Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (PCORC)



Cloud Peak Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (CPORC)



Northeast Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (NEWORC)

Old Quarry Trails Improvement: \$68,660

Bent Sprockets Inc.



Trails Complex at Riverside Park: \$100,000

City of Worland

Funding will be used to develop a pathway to link features of the park for pedestrians and cyclists and for the addition of other features to Riverside Park.



Wind River Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (WRORC)



Natrona County Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (NCORC)



Casper Rail Trail Extension to Edness K. Wilkins State Park: \$100,000

Platte River Trails Trust

This project involves developing a soft surface, multi-use trail and replacing an unusable railroad bridge with a culvert on the existing City of Casper-owned abandoned rail line that extends to EKW State Park, with the ultimate objective of a pedestrian connection to the park and expansion of a section of the Great American Rail Trail.



Sweetwater County Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (SCORC)



Southeast Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (SWORC)

Stuckenhoff Shooting Complex Range Addition: \$52,535

The Casper Shooters Club



Skyline Trail: \$154,205

Green River Greenbelt Task Force

This trail will provide a hiking and biking experience for all users. It will be ADA-compliant. Funding will assist with the completion of the trail and an ADA parking lot.



Henry's Fork Rock Art Trail: \$100,000

Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism

Funding will be used to create parking, improve the access road, and create a pedestrian trail to view a unique site along Highway 530.

Hell's Half Acre Reopening: \$100,000


Natrona County Travel and Tourism Council


⁸ The Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation facilitates eight 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.



GRANT FUNDING

In November of 2023, the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation announced the first recipients of the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Grant Program under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).⁹ To be eligible, a project must occur within a Qualified Census Tract or Disproportionately Impacted Community as determined by the US Treasury. The allocated funding aims to fortify Wyoming’s outdoor recreation and tourism economy by supporting projects that:

 Address the impacts experienced by the COVID-19 pandemic

 Provide new recreational opportunities or maintenance to existing sites

 Impact the economy of local communities

To date, the grant program has awarded
\$20,332,258
for public outdoor recreation projects across the state.

21
projects around the state have been funded

Out of 150 pre-applications, the total funding requested was
\$119,079,068
exceeding available funds by over \$77 million dollars.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TWO ROUNDS OF APPLICATIONS INCLUDE:



YOUTH FISHING POND REHABILITATION FROM THE CITY OF KEMMERER FOR \$23,100.

This project will include upgrades to the recreation area including a new roof, tables, receptacles, and fencing.



NORTH PLATTE RIVER PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE FROM THE CITY OF CASPER FOR \$3.5 MILLION.

This project reroutes the pedestrian crossing on a vehicular bridge to a pedestrian bridge and pathway on Poplar Street. This will provide easier access to the North Platte River for recreation and safe access across the river for pedestrians.



SPRING CREEK TRAIL PHASE 2 FROM THE CITY OF LARAMIE FOR \$2,479,705.

This is a multi-phase project to establish an east/west bike path along Spring Creek. In Phase 2, the project includes the extension of the trail westward linking 23rd St to 9th St.



TRIBAL BUFFALO INITIATIVE FROM THE WIND RIVER DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR \$333,289.

This project will provide an outdoor education center (a circular pavilion-type structure) with a concrete base, picnic tables, directional & educational signage, and a public restroom.



ETHETE POWWOW ARBORS FROM THE NORTHERN ARAPAHO TRIBE FOR \$410,000.

This project is to improve and repair the Northern Arapaho Powwow Arbors and Ground TBI areas located at Ethete, Wyoming.

⁹ The Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Grant Program has been made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds appropriated by the Wyoming Legislature and approved by Governor Mark Gordon.



OUTDOOR RECREATION SUMMIT

For three days in April 2024, the WORTH Initiative and Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation convened the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Summit (WORS) to bring people together to discuss and share successes and challenges of outdoor recreation in Wyoming. The first two days of WORS programming focused on general outdoor recreation sessions, while the third day was centered on Wyoming Search and Rescue content (SARCON). Along with the growth of the outdoor recreation sector, program organizers supported the convening of Search and Rescue stakeholders to help address growing concerns in the outdoors.

Attendees and speakers alike were enthusiastic about the WORS and SARCON, saying that the outdoor recreation community needs a space to come together, air issues, celebrate and learn from success and challenges, and increase collaboration across the state. The Search and Rescue community was pleased to have the time and space to utilize some needed networking opportunities and is excited to make the SARCON an annual event in conjunction with the WORS. Supported by the WORTH Initiative and the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation, Wyoming's outdoor recreation community will continue to convene annually, bringing together members of the industry from across the state and region. Additionally, the program will continue to have a day focused on Wyoming Search and Rescue.

By the numbers:

WORS: over 180 attendees

SARCON: over 120 attendees

3 days | **36 sessions**

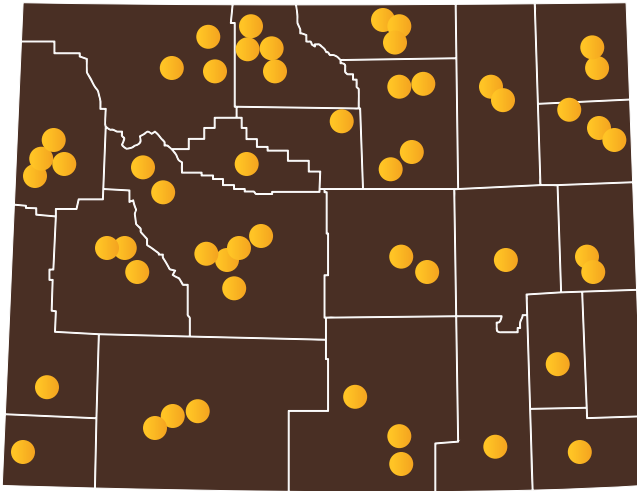
Over 70 speakers

4 student presentations from the University of Wyoming

RECORDINGS AND FULL SUMMARY AT:
<https://www.uwyo.edu/worth/outdoor-rec-summit.html>



ATTENDEES FROM ACROSS WYOMING:



The post-event survey received 114 responses. 75% of those survey respondents were extremely or somewhat likely to recommend the forum to a friend.

“I am so happy that I made it to this year’s summit... This is a great way to network and collaborate with others from around the state. Thank you for all the hard work. It was a pleasure to attend.” – FORUM PARTICIPANT

A graphic with a dark blue diagonal banner in the top left corner that says "SAVE THE DATE" in white. Below the banner is a stylized mountain range with a green line graph above it. Underneath the mountains are three circular icons: a teal circle with a white dollar sign, a dark blue circle with a white hiker icon, and a light green circle with a white leaf icon. Below these icons, the text reads "WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION Summit" in a mix of bold sans-serif and script fonts. Underneath that, it says "MAY 1ST -3RD, 2025" and "Marion H. Rochelle Gateway Center Laramie, Wyoming".

SAVE THE DATE

WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION
Summit

MAY 1ST -3RD, 2025

Marion H. Rochelle Gateway Center
Laramie, Wyoming

We heard you. Based on survey and in-person feedback, the 2025 summit will...

- Provide improved time and space for networking and relationship building
- Involve more small group work and roundtable discussions
- Include more voices, particularly tribal and other communities
- Possible topics: business-focused sessions, grant-writing workshops, and guide trainings/certifications

TO REGISTER, VISIT:
<http://bit.ly/3DIVKkW>



FOR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND SUGGESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:

tkruger@uwyo.edu

TO VIEW MORE INFO:





EIGHTH ANNUAL WYOMING GOVERNOR'S MATCH

The Wyoming Governor's Match is an annual shooting tournament held the third weekend in July and is facilitated by the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation. This year represented the eighth iteration of this event.

This national-level shooting sports competition originated in 2017 and has become a tradition for many, bringing together spectators, shooting sports organizations, legislators, and other elected officials to interact with some of the nation's greatest competitive shooters.

The Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation recognizes the importance of hunting and shooting sports in the outdoor recreation economy. In 2023, Wyoming's outdoor recreation economy increased to \$2.2 billion or 4.1% of the state's GDP according to the latest report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis with hunting and shooting sports ranked as the third-highest contributing activity.

For more information,
please visit:



Each year, the Governor's Match features up to **250 competitive shooters**

in a United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA) Level II match run by Casper Shooters Club at the Stuckenhoff Shooters Complex in Casper, Wyoming.



SECOND ANNUAL WYOMING FIREARMS & OUTDOOR RECREATION EXPO

In conjunction with the eighth annual Wyoming Governor's Match, the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation and local partners hosted the second annual Wyoming Firearms & Outdoor Recreation Expo on July 20th, 2024 in Casper, Wyoming.

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

In 2023, the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation worked with local partners to host the inaugural Wyoming Firearms & Outdoor Recreation Expo, a celebration of Wyoming's firearms and outdoor recreation industry in conjunction with the annual Wyoming Governor's Match.

For more information,
please visit:



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OUTDOOR RECREATION IN WYOMING

The two figures on this page explain and report direct, indirect, and induced economic activity from outdoor recreation in Wyoming. Direct economic activity comes from spending within the outdoor recreation industry.



THE CASE OF THE HIKING BOOTS



Direct Economic Activity:

The sale of a new pair of hiking boots by an outdoor retailer counts as direct economic output. Direct employment, labor income, and value added in outdoor recreation are directly reported from the BEA's outdoor recreation satellite account.



Indirect Economic Activity:

Results from demand for intermediate inputs used in the outdoor recreation industry. If the outdoor outfitter sources its hiking boots from a local manufacturer or wholesaler this results in indirect economic activity.



Induced Economic Activity:

Generated by the spending of employees and owners in the outdoor recreation business. For example, the business owner pays its salesperson a salary, which they spend on groceries at a local grocer, inducing economic activity in this retail industry.

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.

| WYOMING | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Direct | 23,128 | \$1.04 billion | \$2.14 billion |
| Indirect | 5,399 | \$304 million | \$637 million |
| Induced | 3,895 | \$180.5 million | \$346 million |
| Total | 32,422 | \$1.53 billion | \$3.125 billion |



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.



APPLIED RESEARCH

Delivering timely and relevant applied research for WORTH industries.



EDUCATION & TRAINING

Supplying diverse workforce training products and services to students and industry professionals.



EXTENSION & OUTREACH

Providing extension and outreach to the tourism industry 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.

Photos used with permission from Wyoming Office of Tourism and the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation.

