



# Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative

## *Phase One Summary Report*

September 2017

TRAVEL  OREGON







**IMAGINE A CHILD, THE APPLE OF YOUR EYE.** It is your pleasure just to gaze on her, to hear her laugh, to marvel at her marvelous qualities as they are now. And it's your responsibility to look ahead for her, consider what you can do to see her grow up to be even stronger, more radiant, more delightful than she already is.

This is what Oregon is for us. Our joy and our responsibility. So, if we look ahead and try to imagine this, our home, a generation from now, we can see all the charms and strengths we know in Oregon today, but matured and developed into something even more remarkable. Here is a land of diverse geography, the perfect playground for so many outdoor activities, drawing people from near and far. We see the result of so much thoughtful, proactive investment in the sustainable recreation infrastructure. We see stewardship that extends from our public lands through our communities, from the smallest rural town to the biggest urban center. A seamless transportation network connecting sea to mountain to high desert. We see our most popular destinations and treasured wildlife protected by intelligent management, while our lesser-known gems are brought more fully into the light.

The work we do today — the partnerships we forge, the incremental victories, the little triumphs — these add up to a future Oregon we can look to with pride, a place that has room for everyone, trails to hike, pristine rivers to fish and raft upon, killer waves that break on long, unspoiled beaches and an outdoor culture that extends from city to town to village. It's not just about making Oregon a wonderful place to visit; it's about more livable communities filled with happier, healthier Oregonians, each and every one of us proud of and responsible for this place we call home.

# *Looking Ahead*









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## Introduction

For Oregonians, a strong connection to our great outdoors is in our DNA and is part of our identity. From hikers to anglers, mountain bikers to hunters, loggers to biologists, ranchers to miners, to outfitters, guides, mountain lodge operators and outdoor equipment producers, many of us rely on Oregon's bountiful natural resources for our livelihoods and recreation.

Oregon's bountiful natural resources are cornerstone to our legacy, our identity, and our economy. As an industry, outdoor recreation significantly impacts the well-being of Oregon's economy, its communities, its residents and its natural resources. Developing a shared vision with a common agenda for how we focus our efforts to improve the outdoor recreation economy will ensure that our impacts are positive and inclusive of all.

This is the impetus for the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative, a statewide effort to bring together businesses, agencies, land managers, conservation groups and recreational user groups around the goal of expanding access to outdoor recreation and increasing the economic impact and sustainability of Oregon's outdoor recreation economy.

Through a coordinated and collaborative effort, we will: build capacity and synergy to expand outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, create sustainable economic vitality for Oregon's communities and make Oregon a world-class outdoor recreation destination for all.





## Leadership Team

### A FOUNDATION FOR STATEWIDE COLLABORATION

To jumpstart this initiative, Travel Oregon convened a leadership team comprised of 24 members that represent stakeholder groups from key sectors of the outdoor recreation economy. The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative leadership team members are listed below and include of a mix of public officials, public land agencies, retailers and manufacturers, guides and outfitters and outdoor advocacy groups.

Bonnie Lippitt  
*U.S. Forest Service Regional Office*

Chris Havel  
*Oregon Parks and Recreation Department*

Dan Little  
*First Gentleman of Oregon*

Frank Burris  
*Outdoor Recreation Action Team Leader  
& Oregon State University*

Jon Tullis  
*Timberline Lodge*

Jorge Guzman  
*Vive Northwest*

Kenji Sugahara  
*Oregon Bicycle Racing Association  
& Oregon Tourism Commission*

Kevin Gorman  
*Friends of the Columbia Gorge*

Kirk Richardson  
*KEEN*

Kristin Dahl  
*Travel Oregon*

Lee Davis  
*The Mazamas*

Lindsey Shirley  
*Oregon State University*

Louis Geltman  
*Outdoor Alliance*

Rep. Mark Johnson  
*Oregon House of Representatives Dist. 52*

Mia Sheppard  
*Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership*

Natalie Inouye  
*Travel Lane County & Willamette Valley  
Visitors Association*

Roger Fuhrman  
*Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife*

Sally Russell  
*Bend City Councilor*

Stan Hinatsu  
*U.S. Forest Service Columbia River Gorge  
National Scenic Area*

Stephen Hatfield  
*REI*

Todd Davidson  
*Travel Oregon*

Van Schoessler  
*Oregon Outdoor Alliance & Stanley Products*

Zach Collier  
*Oregon Outfitter & Guides Assoc.  
& Northwest Rafting Company*

Zach Jarrett  
*U.S. Bureau of Land Management*

#### **Travel Oregon Project Staff:**

Kristin Dahl  
*Project Director*

Scott Bricker  
*Project Manager*

Andrew Grossmann  
*Project Coordinator*

## 2016

- JUN** Travel Oregon initiates the leadership team for the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative; Meeting 1 held in Portland
- JUN 2016 – MAR 2017** Planning process: leadership team members develop a 15-year vision for the industry, five-year outcomes and two-year strategies to advance Oregon's outdoor recreation economy
- AUG** Leadership Team Meeting 2 in Government Camp
- SEP** Leadership Team Meeting 3 in Cascade Locks
- OCT** Leadership Team Meeting 4 in Camp Sherman
- NOV** Leadership Team Meeting 5 in Corvallis

## 2017

- FEB** Leadership Team Meeting 6 in Troutdale
- APR–MAY** Public Outreach Process: input is gathered from the public in an online survey and through five public engagement sessions:
  - Ashland (112 attended)
  - Eugene (87)
  - Portland (99)
  - La Grande (42)
  - Bend (91)
- JUN–AUG** Vision and priority strategies modified based on public input and a roadmap is developed to mobilize action teams around priority strategies
- JUL** HB 3350 creating an Office of Outdoor Recreation passed in the Oregon legislature
- JUN** Leadership Team Meeting 7 in Salem
- AUG** Leadership Team Meeting 8 in Portland
- SEP** HB 3350 signed into law by Governor Kate Brown  
Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative report released
- SEP–DEC** Action teams begin work on priority strategies in an effort to gain short term wins over the next 2-3 years

# Timeline and Process

From June 2016 to February 2017, the leadership team worked to develop a 15-year vision, critical five-year outcomes and two-year strategies for expanding access to outdoor recreation and increasing the economic impact and sustainability of Oregon's outdoor recreation industry.

Travel Oregon shared draft versions of the vision, outcomes and strategies during five public outreach meetings held statewide in April and May 2017 which brought together 431 civic and business leaders, agencies, land managers, conservation groups and recreational user groups to share their perspectives. Attendees had the opportunity to learn more about the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative, discuss their vision for outdoor recreation in Oregon, weigh in on what strategies would be important to them and network with other stakeholders in the regional industry.

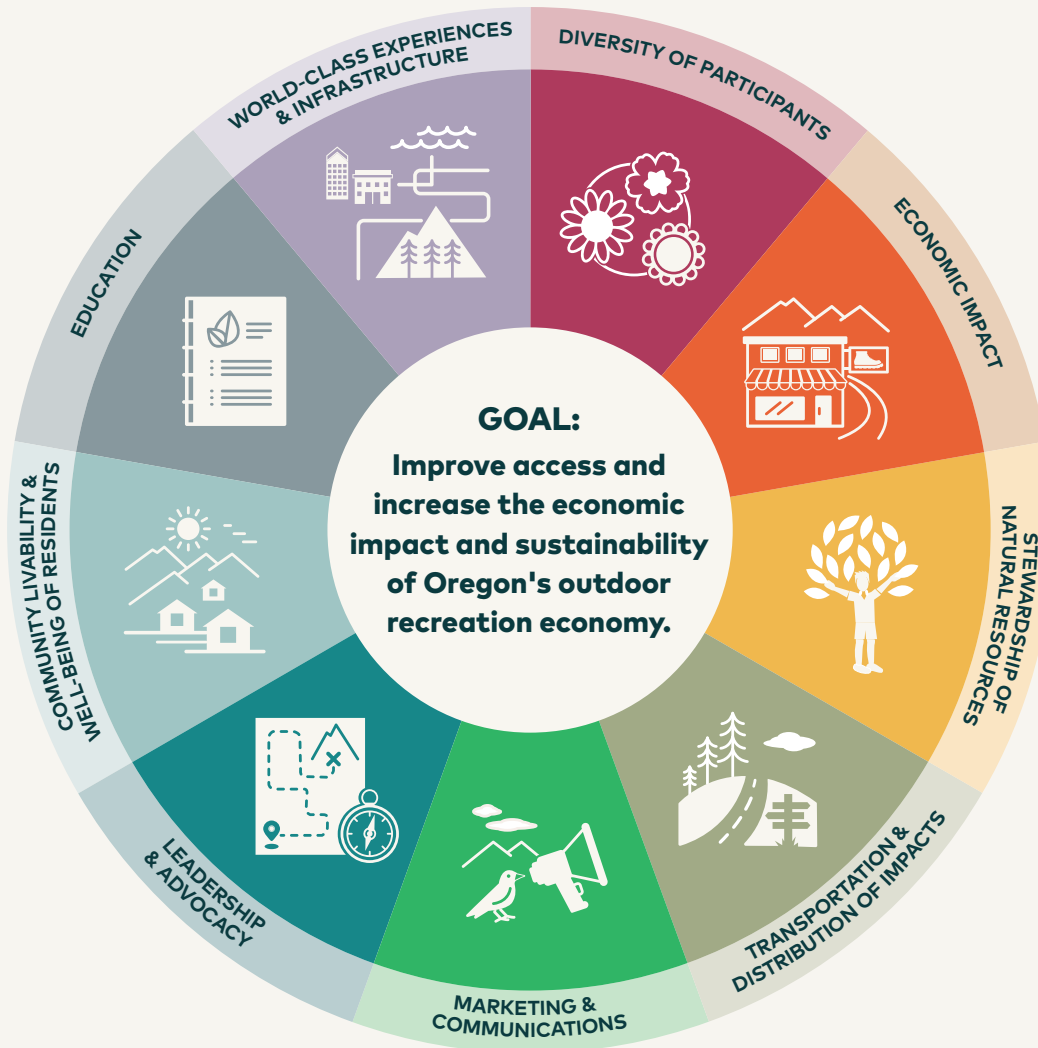
In addition to the public meetings, Travel Oregon distributed an online survey that gathered similar information from 188 respondents.

The public outreach processes involved many data points, including quantitative voting or ranking processes and offered many opportunities to provide editorial feedback requiring additional qualitative analysis. The leadership team then used this information to fine-tune the vision, outcomes and strategies for the following nine impacts areas:

- World-class Experiences & Infrastructure
- Diversity of Participants
- Economic Impact
- Stewardship of Natural Resources
- Transportation & Distribution of Impacts
- Marketing & Communications
- Leadership & Advocacy
- Community Livability & Well-being of Residents
- Education



## THE NINE IMPACT AREAS FOR THE OREGON OUTDOOR RECREATION INITIATIVE



*Soon after beginning its work, the leadership team recognized that in order to impact the entire outdoor recreation economy, a range of facets would need to be considered. As a result, nine impact areas were identified as a way to develop a comprehensive vision and complementary strategies that recognize the interdependency of these aspects.*

Based on the variety of analysis done on the quantitative and qualitative input collection techniques, the leadership team identified the top statewide themes and key regional differences. These themes and differences provided insight on the recommendations for prioritization of action strategies.

## TOP THEMES

The majority of workshop attendees and survey respondents were passionate about the possibilities and the opportunities for outdoor recreation and desired to see growth and improvements in the outdoor recreation industry. In general, the public agreed with and reinforced the top strategies proposed by the leadership team. Four top themes emerged as priorities throughout the workshops and survey:

- **Stewardship of Natural Resources** — create a legacy of high quality outdoor recreational resources while balancing resource conservation with use/access; cultivate a culture of stewardship
- **World-class Experiences and Infrastructure** — build new iconic trails and maintain existing trails as the top asset for outdoor recreation in the state
- **Economic Impact** — improve the economic impact of the outdoor recreation industry and actively communicate the economic benefits of outdoor recreation to build support among decision makers
- **Diversity of Participants** — create recreational opportunities for all demographics and user types (e.g.: hikers, runners, bikers, hunters, horseback riders, off-road vehicle riders, etc.), while reducing conflicts and barriers to access



Not surprisingly, in both the workshops and the online survey, people from each region prioritized the strategies differently based on local context. For example, on the survey “Funding for Conservation of Natural Resources” was the top strategy choice in the Central Oregon region while it was sixth for Eastern Oregon and ranked tenth for the Coast. In another example, participants at the workshops in Portland and Bend ranked “Statewide Transportation Strategy” as first with 40 and 56 votes respectively, while La Grande and Eugene ranked this strategy as last and second to last in priority with zero and 13 votes respectively.

The leadership team was able to use this important feedback — strong support for the vision and priority strategies, four consistent themes found throughout the state and the regional variations of specific strategy priorities — to fine tune the 15-year vision and hone in on the strategies that would be acted upon first.



# 15-Year Vision for Outdoor Recreation

## WORLD-CLASS EXPERIENCES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Our state is cherished locally and renowned globally for its world-class outdoor recreation experiences — from the abundant wild and scenic Rivers, powerful Columbia Gorge winds, Pacific Northwest surf, welcoming urban trails, volcanic mountain peaks, protected sand dunes and endless scenic backcountry rural roads. We are a standout due to the variety of terrain, diversity of bountiful ecosystems and climates and outdoor recreation experiences that are accessible from all our communities year-round. Not only is the physical outdoor experience exceptional, the local culture and story is integrated throughout. Local enthusiasts and adventure-seekers from around the globe can experience Oregon’s great outdoors in a wide variety of ways — from fully guided luxury eco-tours to rustic off-the-grid solo wilderness treks — all ending in feet-up relaxation time at pristine and incredible locations. All people are welcome and can find the outdoor recreation activities they crave in Oregon. Our state has become known for its spectacular cross-country trail systems that provide access to all skill levels. Oregonians and visitors alike enjoy well-maintained multi-day adventures on the Pacific Crest Trail, Willamette River Water Trail, Gorge Town to Trails, the Oregon Timber Trail, Joseph Branch Rail Trail and Salmonberry Trail, among others. Our wild areas remain wild, complete with scenic vistas, abundant fish and wildlife and dark, starry skies with opportunities for solitude and discovery. The locally derived culinary delights offered at the end of any long journey, from a hoppy microbrew to a glass of local wine to a bacon-blue cheese-chanterelle elk burger, make for an unparalleled experience.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The outdoor recreation industry is embraced by communities and leaders as a sector that can provide robust, year-round economic opportunities across Oregon. Investments in sustainable outdoor recreation create a reinforcing cycle of enriched lives and new economic opportunities through distributed visitation and local business development, adding to the livability of the community. As a result of proactive support for this sector, passionate and community-minded private sector businesses and entrepreneurs choose Oregon as their home, which in turn raises the standards for product development, manufacturing and access to world-class guided experiences. These businesses positively impact every corner of the state. Rural communities, in particular, are experiencing significant economic benefits from the outdoor recreation economy, resulting in even greater community vibrancy.

## LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

Oregon is a global leader for its pioneering efforts in outdoor recreation. A network of diverse user groups, community leaders and advocates for outdoor recreation effectively collaborate to create a sector that supports recreation access and sustainable business development by addressing the policy environment that once generated significant barriers. As a result of public-private and local, state and federal partnerships and advocacy, funding and support for public lands are robust. Public land management agencies prioritize recreation and collaborate with community leaders to create destination-level experiences that benefit local economies, improve livability and ensure sustainability. The private sector is an integral collaborator with public sector agencies, providing innovative solutions and educational outdoor experiences.



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## **COMMUNITY LIVABILITY & WELL-BEING OF RESIDENTS**

By investing in outdoor recreation infrastructure, our communities are more enjoyable and healthier places to live. We have fully embraced outdoor recreation as an integral way of life. From a young age and throughout our lives, Oregonians are encouraged to explore our backyards, our communities and beyond; as a result, we value the environment and the role that outdoor experiences play in the health and well-being of individuals and communities. We have made significant improvements on key health and well-being indicators, and as a result, Oregon outperforms the national average.

## **DIVERSITY OF PARTICIPANTS**

Oregon inspires, engages and provides outdoor recreation experiences for all user-groups that are accessible for a broad demographic to get outdoors, from backyard to backcountry. Institutions and organizations partner to support diversity in the outdoors, starting with an educational system that engages students in outdoor education, providing every child with skills and experiences that will last a lifetime and continuing with intergenerational learning opportunities. Information about outdoor recreation opportunities is provided in multiple languages and the experiences themselves are accessible to people of all income and ability levels. Oregon derives its comparative advantage, in part, by the volume of diverse users that span a wide range of ability levels, ages, cultures, activity types and economic well-being.



## **STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

As a result of our local stewardship practices, Oregon's diverse landscapes boast healthy ecosystems that are rich with biodiversity. Recognizing that these systems are integral to the outdoor experience, Oregon has placed a high value on restoring natural systems that were once threatened, protecting wild places, conserving fish and wildlife and supporting working landscapes. Instilled through our education system, stewardship is a value that all Oregonians embrace and is something extolled as part of the Oregon experience. For example, all educational and guided outdoor recreation experiences have integrated sustainability practices and messaging to educate those enjoying the great outdoors. Recreation areas that experience seasonal overuse have strong visitor management and maintenance programs in place. Living with a future focus, our commitment to outdoor recreation and conservation can be exemplified by dam removal, river restoration, landscape restoration and robust volunteer stewardship.

## **EDUCATION**

Oregon leads the way in starting outdoor skills education programming early as an important component of the public education system to increase diverse participation and ensure that no child is left inside. Educational and professional development opportunities in the outdoor recreation sector are available throughout the educational system to provide clear workforce development avenues as well as pathways and support networks for entrepreneurs. Responsible recreation behavior is taught through these educational programs and via compelling marketing strategies that are seen while planning trips and on the trail.

## **TRANSPORTATION & DISTRIBUTION OF IMPACTS**

Congestion in recreation hotspots has been alleviated by an increase in infrastructure that draws users to the multitude of wonders Oregon offers. Intuitive and high-quality car-free transportation options are available for access to recreational opportunities and destinations. These new opportunities allow a broad demographic to participate sustainably and improve livability for communities where many people visit. The transportation network for getting to and from outdoor recreation destinations is seamless. Visitor impacts are well distributed across the state.

## **MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

Robust and quality trip-planning information is provided in one integrated platform that is easy to find, intuitive to navigate and available in multiple languages, drawing people across the state and educating them to recreate responsibly. Once on the ground, the experience is seamless and enjoyable with complete town-to-trails signage that helps guide the user. Wayfinding signage has been developed with consistency of brand and information with the end-user in mind and users are educated on conservation practices. Frontline staff in visitor centers and in guest-service businesses are hospitable and knowledgeable about where to guide people for the outdoor recreation experiences they seek.

# Priority Strategies for Collective Action for Outdoor Recreation in Oregon

The priority strategies for collective action are those that garnered strong support from the leadership team and the community. They are strategic actions that we believe we can make significant progress on in the next 2-3 years and will lead us closer to achieving the vision for outdoor recreation.

		IMPACT AREA
<b>Manage for World-class Outdoor Recreation</b>		
<b>A</b>	Identify and collectively support the development and ongoing maintenance of priority signature trail systems that have the potential to be world-class and, when completed, will make a major difference in Oregon. For example, trails such as the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail, Gorge Towns to Trails, the Willamette Water Trail, Oregon Coast Trail, Oregon Timber Trail, Salmonberry Trail and Joseph Branch Rail Trail. Developing priority trail systems into world-class assets and maintaining them over the long-term will create a ripple effect that will generate additional activities and investments.	World-class Experiences & Infrastructure
<b>B</b>	Develop a funding strategy to invest in the conservation and restoration of Oregon's diverse ecosystems that are comprised of wild areas abundant with fish and wildlife, as well as farms, actively logged forests and other working landscapes. To maintain healthy ecosystems and fish and wildlife populations, reference the Oregon Conservation Strategy and other data as guidance to prioritize areas for investment. Consider public-private partnerships in this funding strategy.	Stewardship of Natural Resources
<b>C</b>	Conduct a statewide inventory of outdoor recreation infrastructure to determine what exists, what needs to be improved and where demand is high and low, possibly leveraging the methodology developed for BLM's <i>2015 Outdoor Recreation Scarcity and Abundance in Western Oregon: A Spatial Analysis</i> report and/or the recreation inventory from the <i>Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)</i> planning process.	World-class Experiences & Infrastructure
<b>D</b>	Complete a statewide transportation strategy that in phase one defines tourism and outdoor recreation transportation solutions to assist with mitigating transportation in high use areas. Ensure that transportation and tourism professionals and advocates representing local, regional and statewide perspectives and organizations are present. Priority solutions will initially focus on linking population centers to high use recreation areas.	Transportation & Distribution of Impacts
<b>E</b>	Develop and deploy a statewide communications plan for responsible recreation in Oregon. This plan will include a communications toolkit to ensure messaging can be adopted and easily integrated within regional, local and agency communication. This messaging will have a consistent tone of voice, photography and branding. The communications toolkit will accommodate the discovery of new resources and can be easily updated with accurate information, maps and online resources. An example of a communications tool for this strategy is the Deschutes National Forest National Interagency Recreation Information Database (RIDB), which would provide real-time updates for outdoor recreationalists. If the pilot phase of this tool is successful, it may be considered for implementation in other national forests.	Marketing & Communications



## Improve Economic Impact

F	Conduct a statewide economic impact study of outdoor recreation in Oregon. Demonstrate how economic development from outdoor recreation contributes to quality of life and allows people to live and work where they want without job relocation. Ensure that the study captures the diversity of outdoor activity participants and is set up to measure change over time.	Economic Impact
G	<p>Address barriers to improve the climate for businesses in the outdoor recreation sector (broadly inclusive of travel and tourism, manufacturing, retail and education). Initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and update Oregon's liability statutes to identify inherent risks of recreation activities and validate the standard use of pre-activity liability releases by recreation providers. This initiative is important to manage the cost of recreation and encourage business growth and innovation.</li> <li>• Improve the special-use permitting processes and federal land managers' ability to provide a higher level of customer service to their constituents.</li> <li>• Clarify and clearly communicate requirements and business permits needed to operate in this sector in Oregon.</li> </ul>	Economic Impact

## Develop State Leadership Capacity & Local Networks

H	Cultivate and regularly convene a network of outdoor recreation stakeholders (businesses in the industry, community leaders working on projects, tourism, policymakers, etc.) throughout the state. A leadership team will be empowered to help carry out priority statewide strategies and take steps toward fulfilling the 15-year vision for outdoor recreation in Oregon. The network may work towards supporting the development of regional networks around Oregon to collaborate on regional solutions. These networks, combined with other established partnerships, will be a core force to growing outdoor recreation in Oregon.	Leadership & Advocacy / Economic Impact
I	Implement legislative strategy to form and staff an "Office of Outdoor Recreation" so that someone wakes up every day living and breathing our collective impact areas. Office would be charged with helping stakeholders make progress on the vision.	Leadership & Advocacy
J	Complete a diversity audit of outdoor recreation participants and those in the industry to better understand preferences, usage, employment and opportunities to increase engagement; this should be done through planning sessions in coordination with a diverse group of stakeholders. Develop a plan to identify and reduce barriers for people getting outdoors and increase the engagement of non-traditional users through strategies that include improved infrastructure, transportation, education and marketing.	Diversity of Participants

*To see how these priority strategies fit within the vision and address five-year outcomes, please reference the Outcomes and Priority Strategies by Impact Area section of this report that starts on pg. 19.*

## What's Next

In the summer of 2017, the leadership team refined the vision and priority strategies and began to mobilize action teams to advance priority strategies. In August 2017, the leadership team developed a roadmap that outlines a timeline for getting action teams underway to support priority strategies, conveners for each and organizations interested in playing a supporting role. Six action teams will be launched during September-December 2017, with other action teams envisioned to follow.

In July 2017, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3350 that established an Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation housed within the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The passage of this bill was celebrated by the leadership team, as it was a top priority action strategy and by many other advocates including the Outdoor Industry Association and affiliated businesses in the outdoor recreation retail and manufacturing sector. Since the passage of HB 3350, Travel Oregon has been working closely with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to envision how the organizations' leadership capacity will dovetail to support the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative priorities that have already gathered momentum.

Another one of the top strategies is to galvanize a statewide network of community and business leaders interested in advancing this part of Oregon's economy. The first step in galvanizing this network will be the inaugural Oregon Outdoor Leadership Summit to be held October 16-17, 2017 in Corvallis, Ore. Oregon State University, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and Travel Oregon have teamed up to host this event and create an environment for education and collaboration.

The past 18 months have proven to be a pivotal time for advancing outdoor recreation in Oregon. A broad set of leaders and community members have emerged through this extensive process to support an ambitious vision and aligned strategic action. As demonstrated above, organizations are already in motion to implement these strategies and other action teams are now underway with the strong support of a diverse set of partners and positive momentum. We are excited for the next steps — phase two — of the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative and we hope you will come along side us to accomplish incremental victories.















As part of its early work, the leadership team compiled an understanding of what key five-year outcomes might look like for each impact area and what strategies could be deployed to advance the outcomes over a two to three year time period. Ten criteria were applied to help determine five-year outcomes and two-year strategies, including:

Is it catalytic in nature?

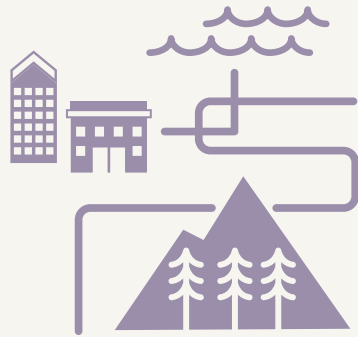
Will it positively affect multiple impact areas?

Does it create focus for collection action?

Can it make significant progress within 1-3 years?

The five-year outcomes and two-year strategies shared on the following pages represents a framework for expanding outdoor recreation in Oregon that can be referenced during the coming years.

# *Outcomes and priority strategies by impact area*



## WORLD-CLASS EXPERIENCES & INFRASTRUCTURE

### FIFTEEN-YEAR VISION

Our state is cherished locally and renowned globally for its world-class outdoor recreation experiences – from the abundant wild and scenic Rivers, powerful Columbia Gorge winds, Pacific Northwest surf, welcoming urban trails, volcanic mountain peaks, protected sand dunes and endless scenic backcountry rural roads. We are a standout due to the variety of terrain, diversity of bountiful ecosystems and climates and outdoor recreation experiences that are accessible from all our communities year-round. Not only is the physical outdoor experience exceptional, the local culture and story is integrated throughout. Local enthusiasts and adventure-seekers from around the globe can experience Oregon’s great outdoors in a wide variety of ways – from fully guided luxury eco-tours to rustic off-the-grid solo wilderness treks – all ending in feet-up relaxation time at pristine and incredible locations. All people are welcome and can find the outdoor recreation activities they crave in Oregon. Our state has become known for its spectacular cross-country trail systems that provide access to all skill levels. Oregonians and visitors alike enjoy well-maintained multi-day adventures on the Pacific Crest Trail, Willamette River Water Trail, Gorge Town to Trails, the Oregon Timber Trail, Joseph Branch Rail Trail and Salmonberry Trail, among others. Our wild areas remain wild, complete with scenic vistas, abundant fish and wildlife and dark, starry skies with opportunities for solitude and discovery. The locally derived culinary delights offered at the end of any long journey, from a hoppy microbrew to a glass of local wine to a bacon-blue cheese-chanterelle elk burger, make for an unparalleled experience.

### FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

Oregon’s outdoor recreation experience offers one consistent look and feel (One Oregon) by way of consistent wayfinding and interpretive signage and consistency of high quality amenities.

Oregon has improved outdoor recreation infrastructure in areas of high visitation and in areas where infrastructure is ailing and currently not meeting the demands of the users.

Oregon has a dedicated funding stream for outdoor recreation infrastructure.

The “Oregon Story” is an integral component of Oregon’s outdoor recreation experiences.

Diverse recreation opportunities are available for a wide variety of user groups, defined through activity interests, skill level, seasonality and location.

Newly created (or curated) outdoor recreation experiences motivate user groups to visit less traveled areas of the state, thereby decreasing the impact on current high-use areas.



## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Develop world-class outdoor recreation experiences in Oregon that will further enhance our reputation as a premier recreation destination.

When ranking this impact area, we wanted to lead with the most visionary and inspirational strategies, believing that implementation of the remaining strategies will be most effective if we can generate collective motivation at the outset.

- 1 Identify and collectively support the development and ongoing maintenance of priority signature trail systems that have the potential to be world-class and, when completed, will make a major difference in Oregon. For example, trails such as the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail, Gorge Towns to Trails, the Willamette Water Trail, Oregon Coast Trail, Oregon Timber Trail, Salmonberry Trail and Joseph Branch Rail Trail. Developing priority trail systems into world-class assets and maintaining them over the long-term will create a ripple effect that will generate additional activities and investments.
- 2 Develop/expand hut-to-hut systems in Oregon — something akin to New Zealand’s “Great Walks.” Ideally, these structures would be placed along the completed trails in the No. 1 infrastructure strategy (above).
- 3 Assets like these take the concept of a shared experience to the next level for users.
  - a. Oregon has an opportunity to take a leadership role nationally on the completion of these types of hut-to-hut experiences.
  - b. This has the potential to create transformational experiences with the connectivity to nature also serving to connect people to each other.
- 4 Create two to three pilot demonstration areas that invite collaboration between public land management agencies and community leaders to cooperatively identify signature outdoor recreation projects that are feasible and sustainable over the long-term, prioritize

investments in these projects and bring them to reality. These demonstration areas would serve as testing grounds before offering a state- or region-wide program.

- 5 Conduct a statewide inventory of outdoor recreation infrastructure to determine what exists, what needs to be improved and where demand is high and low, possibly leveraging the methodology developed for BLM’s 2015 *Outdoor Recreation Scarcity and Abundance in Western Oregon: A Spatial Analysis* report and/or the recreation inventory from the *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)* planning process.



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## ECONOMIC IMPACT

### FIFTEEN-YEAR VISION

The outdoor recreation industry is embraced by communities and leaders as a sector that can provide robust, year-round economic opportunities across Oregon. Investments in sustainable outdoor recreation create a reinforcing cycle of enriched lives and new economic opportunities through distributed visitation and local business development, adding to the livability of the community. As a result of proactive support for this sector, passionate and community-minded private sector businesses and entrepreneurs choose Oregon as their home, which in turn raises the standards for product development, manufacturing and access to world-class guided experiences. These businesses positively impact every corner of the state. Rural communities, in particular, are experiencing significant economic benefits from the outdoor recreation economy, resulting in even greater community vibrancy.

### FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

The economic impact of the outdoor recreation sector in Oregon has been measured.

A quantifiable baseline is established to compare future data.

Diversity of outdoor recreation participation is measured.

Regional impacts are broken out.

Jobs and visitor spending are included.

Minority and women owned businesses are quantified.

Communities prioritize outdoor recreation as a viable economic development strategy and actively pursue opportunities.

With reduced barriers, such as those for special use permits and increased protection from liability, small businesses are able to more easily excel in the outdoor recreation sector.

New world-class outdoor recreation opportunities exist.

More incentives are available to establish outdoor recreation businesses in Oregon, including tax advantages and credits.



## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Enhance the economic impact (and awareness of the positive impact) the outdoor recreation industry can bring to every corner of the state in the following ways:

- 1 Conduct a statewide economic impact study of outdoor recreation in Oregon. Demonstrate how economic development from outdoor recreation contributes to quality of life and allows people to live and work where they want without job relocation. Ensure that the study captures the diversity of outdoor activity participants and is set up to measure change over time.
- 2 Ensure that Travel Oregon’s future Tourism Studios include an adventure travel and outdoor recreation component; create a stand-alone adventure travel and outdoor recreation studio; and expand the number of training options for tour operators, guides and outfitters working in the adventure travel space in Oregon.
- 3 Address barriers to improve the climate for businesses in the outdoor recreation sector (broadly inclusive of travel and tourism, manufacturing, retail and education). Initiatives include:
  - a. Enhance and update Oregon’s liability statutes to identify inherent risks of recreation activities and validate the standard use of pre-activity liability releases by recreation providers. This initiative is important to manage the cost of recreation and encourage business growth and innovation.
  - b. Improve the special-use permitting processes and federal land managers’ ability to provide a higher level of customer service to their constituents.
  - c. Clarify and communicate requirements and business permits needed to operate in this sector in Oregon.



DAVID LANE



## LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

### FIFTEEN-YEAR VISION

Oregon is a global leader for its pioneering efforts in outdoor recreation. A network of diverse user groups, community leaders and advocates for outdoor recreation effectively collaborate to create a sector that supports recreation access and sustainable business development by addressing the policy environment that once generated significant barriers. As a result of public-private and local, state and federal partnerships and advocacy, funding and support for public lands are robust. Public land management agencies prioritize recreation and collaborate with community leaders to create destination-level experiences that benefit local economies, improve livability and ensure sustainability. The private sector is an integral collaborator with public sector agencies, providing innovative solutions and educational outdoor experiences.

### FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

Collaboration is visible across the state (no more silos).

A set of agreed-upon statewide and regional outdoor recreation priorities are publicly available in Oregon.

Capacity and funding is available to support task force-type level of effort. Everyone knows who is going to do what when the rubber hits the road.

Jobs and economic impact remain on track with educational opportunities for the industry.

Seasonal jobs become career-oriented positions. All recreation staff can find short-, medium- and long-term benefits from their employment and learn valuable customer service skills to bolster their careers.

Diverse interests are represented.

## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Build momentum behind the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative with the following strategies:

- 1** Implement legislative strategy to form and staff an “Office of Outdoor Recreation” so that someone wakes up every day living and breathing our collective impact areas. Office would be charged with helping stakeholders make progress on the vision.
- 2** Cultivate and regularly convene a network of outdoor recreation stakeholders (businesses in the industry, community leaders working on projects, tourism, policymakers, etc.) throughout the state. A leadership team will be empowered to help carry out priority statewide strategies and take steps toward fulfilling the 15-year vision for outdoor recreation in Oregon. The network may work towards supporting the development of regional networks around Oregon to collaborate on regional solutions. These networks, combined with other established partnerships, will be a core force to growing outdoor recreation in Oregon.
- 3** Develop and maintain a permanent fund to develop and promote outdoor recreation in Oregon.
- 4** Focus on achieving priority outcomes and avoid re-creation of the same structure/process over and over again.







## COMMUNITY LIVABILITY & WELL-BEING OF RESIDENTS

### FIFTEEN-YEAR VISION

By investing in outdoor recreation infrastructure, our communities are more enjoyable and healthier places to live. We have fully embraced outdoor recreation as an integral way of life. From a young age and throughout our lives, Oregonians are encouraged to explore our backyards, our communities and beyond; as a result, we value the environment and the role that outdoor experiences play in the health and well-being of individuals and communities. We have made significant improvements on key health and well-being indicators, and as a result, Oregon outperforms the national average.

### FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

This impact area (community livability & well-being) is perceived as a seminal priority for Oregon's initiative to improve outdoor recreation.

Engagement in outdoor recreation is seen as a benefit in and of itself, i.e. we don't forget the fun factor of outdoor recreation by trying to justify its necessity all the time.

User groups have the ability to both discover and return to Oregon's recreation assets.

Oregonians have necessary skills to actively enjoy outdoor recreation.

## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

We recognize community livability and well-being of residents will be impacted by many of the strategies suggested throughout this initiative. In order to understand the positive ways these strategies may impact the quality of community and well-being in Oregon, Strategy No. 1 has been suggested as a foundation:

- 1** Establish baseline metrics for health, community livability and residential well-being and assess changes in this data over a five-year period. The primary focus of this effort should be connecting public health outcomes to outdoor recreation activities.
- 2** Work with health insurance companies to provide incentives for outdoor recreation experiences.
- 3** Help employers offer outdoor recreation programs and incentives.
- 4** Develop more parks in communities.



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RUSS ROCA





## DIVERSITY OF PARTICIPANTS

### FIFTEEN-YEAR VISION

Oregon inspires, engages and provides outdoor recreation experiences for all user-groups that are accessible for a broad demographic to get outdoors, from backyard to backcountry. Institutions and organizations partner to support diversity in the outdoors, starting with an educational system that engages students in outdoor education, providing every child with skills and experiences that will last a lifetime and continuing with intergenerational learning opportunities. Information about outdoor recreation opportunities is provided in multiple languages and the experiences themselves are accessible to people of all income and ability levels. Oregon derives its comparative advantage, in part, by the volume of diverse users that span a wide range of ability levels, ages, cultures, activity types and economic well-being.

### FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

Measurement exists for the number of multiple cultures that participate in outdoor recreation activities in Oregon.

The demographics of outdoor recreationalists are consistent with the diversity of Oregon.

The outdoor recreation economy workforce is intentionally diverse, inclusive and reflective of the demographics of Oregon.

### PRIORITY STRATEGIES

We recognize the diversity of enthusiasts will be impacted by many of the strategies suggested throughout this initiative. In order to understand the positive ways these strategies may impact diversity of outdoor recreation participation in Oregon, Strategy No. 1 will serve as the strategic foundation:

- 1** Complete a diversity audit of outdoor recreation participants and those in the industry to better understand preferences, usage, employment and opportunities to increase engagement; this should be done through planning sessions in coordination with a diverse group of stakeholders. Develop a plan to identify and reduce barriers for people getting outdoors and increase the engagement of non-traditional users through strategies that include improved infrastructure, transportation, education and marketing.
- 2** Increase diversity of employees in outdoor recreation businesses and organizations from retail/manufacturing to guides/outfitters to land management agencies to conservation and advocacy organizations.
- 3** Reduce barriers to outdoor recreation for people of color and/or disenfranchised populations. Offer incentives and opportunities for them to become more engaged and to continue to recreate.







# STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## FIFTEEN-YEAR VISION

As a result of our local stewardship practices, Oregon's diverse landscapes boast healthy ecosystems that are rich with biodiversity. Recognizing that these systems are integral to the outdoor experience, Oregon has placed a high value on restoring natural systems that were once threatened, protecting wild places, conserving fish and wildlife and supporting working landscapes. Instilled through our education system, stewardship is a value that all Oregonians embrace and is something extolled as part of the Oregon experience. For example, all educational and guided outdoor recreation experiences have integrated sustainability practices and messaging to educate those enjoying the great outdoors. Recreation areas that experience seasonal overuse have strong visitor management and maintenance programs in place. Living with a future focus, our commitment to outdoor recreation and conservation can be exemplified by dam removal, river restoration, landscape restoration and robust volunteer stewardship.

## FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

A statewide outdoor recreation office is established to promote greater coordination among outdoor recreation stakeholders.

Consistent educational content related to natural resource stewardship and protection is developed and is widely available.

The concept of "Protect the Best, Restore the Rest" (focus on preserving and protecting high quality ecosystems, while restoring and improving others) is embraced by all of Oregon.

Oregon has a conservation strategy that should serve as a foundation for implementing this impact area.

Oregon has strong management teams tasked with planning resource protection.

The stewardship ethos is thoroughly embraced by visitors and residents. This includes valuing how healthy ecosystems are integral to successful recreation experiences.

## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

- 1** Develop a funding strategy to invest in the conservation and restoration of Oregon's diverse ecosystems that are comprised of wild areas abundant with fish and wildlife, as well as farms, actively logged forests and other working landscapes. To maintain healthy ecosystems and fish and wildlife populations, reference the Oregon Conservation Strategy and other data as guidance to prioritize areas for investment. Consider public-private partnerships in this funding strategy.
- 2** Once outdoor recreation assets are inventoried, facilities in under-utilized locations throughout Oregon are prioritized for restoration or development in order to alleviate the pressure on over-utilized recreation zones.
- 3** Visitor use in highly desirable and heavily utilized locations is regulated to maintain site sustainability and high quality visitor experiences.
- 4** Develop a learning network among land management agencies to increase knowledge of sustainability practices and how to increase access while improving conservation.
- 5** Develop a plan to improve educational, interpretive and directional signage at natural resource-based outdoor recreation facilities throughout Oregon. Introductory signs will clearly show where funds have come from to develop, manage and maintain the facilities.





## EDUCATION

### FIFTEEN-YEAR VISION

Oregon leads the way in starting outdoor skills education programming early as an important component of the public education system to increase diverse participation and ensure that no child is left inside. Educational and professional development opportunities in the outdoor recreation sector are available throughout the educational system to provide clear workforce development avenues as well as pathways and support networks for entrepreneurs. Responsible recreation behavior is taught through these educational programs and via compelling marketing strategies that are seen while planning trips and on the trail.

### FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

Through exposure to formal and informal outdoor education and recreation, Oregonians will:

Know and understand our state's natural and cultural history.

Develop habits of outdoor activity, stewardship and/or choose outdoor recreation as their career.

Have institutions and programs that support professional development across many aspects of outdoor recreation.



## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Increasing awareness of all outdoor recreation possibilities, outdoor education for youth and building ways to access education to build the outdoor recreation industry is an important aspect to implementing many of the outdoor recreation strategies.

- 1** Complete a needs assessment to identify what education opportunities already exist and what gaps exist across the learning continuum (youth, K-12, post-secondary, community, etc.).
- 2** Based on findings from the needs assessment, create a statewide education plan that provides formal and informal learning experiences to learners of all ages (youth, K-12, university, community) utilizing a variety of formats: online, face-to-face, credit, non-credit, professional development workshops, etc. The education plan should integrate the statewide outdoor recreation education priorities and include elements from the existing strategies identified by the leadership team.
- 3** Develop a funding structure to strategically support the findings of the needs assessment and the implementation of an education plan.



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## TRANSPORTATION & DISTRIBUTION OF IMPACTS

### FIFTEEN-YEAR VISION

Congestion in recreation hotspots has been alleviated by an increase in infrastructure that draws users to the multitude of wonders Oregon offers. Intuitive and high-quality car-free transportation options are available for access to recreational opportunities and destinations. These new opportunities allow a broad demographic to participate sustainably and improve livability for communities where many people visit. The transportation network for getting to and from outdoor recreation destinations is seamless. Visitor impacts are well distributed across the state.

### FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

Transportation in Oregon connects recreation users to assets.

Recreation users are aware of the best transportation resources in each region through a clear communication of options and an understanding of the best routes.

Recreation users can easily access underserved recreation areas.

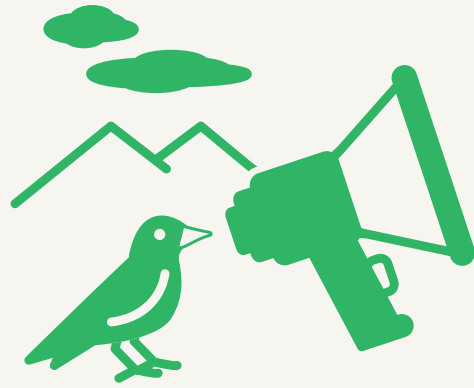
Congestion issues from recreation access are mitigated, in part, by distributing use throughout the state.

## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

- 1** Complete a statewide transportation strategy that in phase one defines tourism and outdoor recreation transportation solutions to assist with mitigating transportation in high use areas. Ensure that transportation and tourism professionals and advocates representing local, regional and statewide perspectives and organizations are present. Priority solutions will initially focus on linking population centers to high use recreation areas.
- 2** Determine one to two transportation demonstration projects that, if completed, would provide a better outdoor recreation experience in Oregon and solve issues of congestion and overuse. Select project(s) that would serve as inspiration.
- 3** Raise awareness of existing transportation options. Communication should focus on planning, booking and the diversity of options available for travelers.
- 4** Advocate to expand on-demand services like Lyft or Uber beyond urban centers.







## MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

### FIFTEEN-YEAR VISION

Robust and quality trip-planning information is provided in one integrated platform that is easy to find, intuitive to navigate and available in multiple languages, drawing people across the state and educating them to recreate responsibly. Once on the ground, the experience is seamless and enjoyable with complete town-to-trails signage that helps guide the user. Wayfinding signage has been developed with consistency of brand and information with the end-user in mind and users are educated on conservation practices. Frontline staff in visitor centers and in guest-service businesses are hospitable and knowledgeable about where to guide people for the outdoor recreation experiences they seek.

### FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

People are able to find the perfect place to participate in their activities of choice and trip planning is easy.

People have information on how to recreate responsibly.

## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Once priority strategies are determined, these marketing and communication strategies can become more targeted. We will want to determine how to disseminate robust, quality and up-to-date information. There is no one silver bullet here but it could consist of:

- 1 Establish a comprehensive collection of robust statewide outdoor recreation content and photography into one single location. The industry will be able to access these assets on an API usable on diverse digital platforms to ensure consistent, accurate information is distributed.
- 2 Develop and deploy a statewide communications plan for responsible recreation in Oregon. This plan will include a communications toolkit to ensure messaging can be adopted and easily integrated within regional, local and agency communication. This messaging will have a consistent tone of voice, photography and branding. The communications toolkit will accommodate the discovery of new resources and can be easily updated with accurate information, maps and online resources. An example of a communications tool for this strategy is the Deschutes National Forest National Interagency Recreation Information Database (RIDB), which would provide real-time updates for outdoor recreationalists. If the pilot phase of this tool is successful, it may be considered for implementation in other national forests.
- 3 Train people most likely to engage with outdoor enthusiasts, such as visitor center and frontline staff to:
  - a. Effectively use the print and online resources that give real-time or current information.
  - b. Share priority messages from appropriate impact areas.
  - c. Understand the nuances of matching users to the experience best suited for them and to be mindful of maximizing economic benefit to communities while minimizing environmental impacts.

- 4 Develop inspirational videos to introduce outdoor experiences that are seasonally appropriate and able to sustain the impact of traffic. Align messaging with industry partners and share directly with visitors through social media and other channels.



SCOTT KLEES









*“Oregon is an inspiration. Whether you come to it, or are born to it, you become entranced by our state’s beauty, the opportunity she affords, and the independent spirit of her citizens.”*

**Governor Tom McCall**



**For more information about the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative contact:**  
Kristin Dahl, Vice President, Destination Development, [Kristin@TravelOregon.com](mailto:Kristin@TravelOregon.com), 971.717.6201



319 SW Washington St. Suite 700 Portland, Oregon 97204  
[TravelOregon.com](http://TravelOregon.com) • [Industry.TravelOregon.com](http://Industry.TravelOregon.com)