



# Oregon Outdoor Recreation Network

## *Sunset Report*

September 2021

TRAVEL  OREGON

*“What U.S. residents rate Oregon highest for — natural beauty and access to outdoor recreation— are among the top things Oregonians value about living in the state,”*

*—Adam Davis,  
DHM Research.*

## Introduction

From the Pacific Ocean to the high desert and diverse landscapes in between, Oregon is known for its unrivaled beauty and endless outdoor destinations. Outdoor recreation draws visitors, residents, and businesses to Oregon every year. Opportunities to hike and bike, camp and fish, and climb and paddle in Oregon’s beautiful landscapes makes Oregon an attractive home state for outdoor enthusiasts and businesses, and a top destination for visitors from all over the world. Oregon is also home to engaged community leaders, active outdoor recreation organizations, numerous outdoor brands, supportive agencies and elected officials with a common vision for Oregon that nurtures its recreation assets, values diversity and inclusion in the outdoors, and empowers local communities to sustainably develop their outdoor economies. Over the past five years, those outdoor recreation leaders came together through the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Network to support outdoor recreation priorities and grow Oregon’s outdoor recreation economy, which supported more than 224,000 jobs in 2019 and \$15.6 billion in consumer spending in 2019.



The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative was formed in 2016, bringing together multi-sector leaders to collaboratively develop a long-term vision and action plan to advance Oregon’s outdoor recreation economy. Convened by Travel Oregon, the initiative’s goals were to:

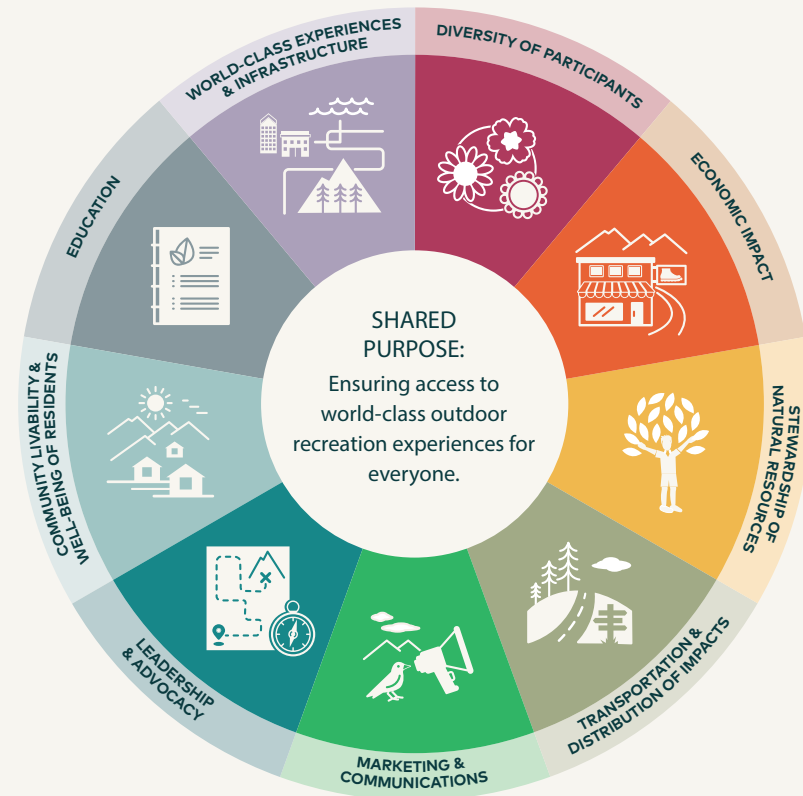
- Build capacity and synergy to expand outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Create sustainable economic vitality for Oregon’s communities.
- Make Oregon a world-class outdoor recreation destination for all.

Through active networking, collaborative priority setting, and consistent stakeholder engagement, the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative created a 15-year vision for outdoor recreation, identified nine key impact areas and a set of priority action strategies.

The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Network — a more formalized partnership with the shared purpose of ensuring access to world-class outdoor experiences for everyone — was formed in 2018 to advance the priority action plans identified by the initiative through collective action.

We are excited to celebrate the significant progress that the network has made on key outdoor recreation priorities in Oregon, and acknowledge the ways the outdoor recreation landscape has shifted, enabling the network to sunset and established leadership structures to continue advancing their critical work.

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





# Timeline

## JUNE 2016: FORMATION

The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative was kicked off by Travel Oregon and key partners through a statewide effort to convene a diverse set of outdoor recreation/industry stakeholders: businesses, agencies, land managers, conservation groups, and recreation user groups.

## JUNE 2016-FEBRUARY 2017: LEADERSHIP TEAM

The leadership team of 25+ members met six times over the course of nine months 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.



## APRIL-MAY 2017: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The leadership team gathered input from 431 Oregonians through an online survey and five public meetings. The leadership team used the feedback gathered to update the vision and priority strategies for the initiative.

## AUGUST 2017: NINE IMPACT AREAS

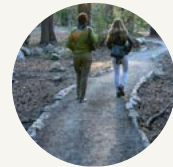
The result of the leadership team's work and the public engagement was the development of the vision, outcomes, and strategies for the nine impact areas.

## AUGUST 2017: OREGON OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

Governor Kate Brown signed HB 3350 into law, creating the [Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation](#), accomplishing a key priority of the initiative.

## SEPTEMBER 2017: PHASE ONE REPORT

Travel Oregon published the [Phase One Summary Report](#) to share the vision and priorities and lay out the work ahead. The Phase One Report detailed the work needed to make progress and achieve the 15-year vision.



CHRISTIAN HEEB

## OCTOBER 2017: OREGON TRAILS COALITION

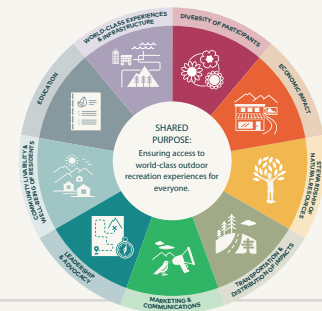
Following the 2017 Oregon Trails Summit, the [Oregon Trails Coalition](#) was launched to convene and coordinate the statewide trails community and advocate for trails funding in Oregon.

## OCTOBER 2017: OREGON OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The first Oregon Outdoor Recreation Summit was held in Corvallis.

## SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2017: PRIORITY ACTION AREAS

The leadership team finalized priority action areas and set strategies to advance them. Six action teams were formed to advance the following priorities: economic impact, communications, signature trails, transportation, network design, and developing an Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation.

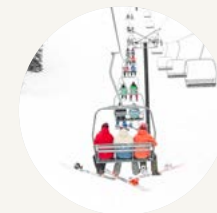


## NOVEMBER 2017: OREGON OUTDOORS COALITION

The [Oregon Outdoors Coalition](#) forms to bring a unified outdoor recreation voice to policy issues in Oregon and nationally.

## FEBRUARY 2018: ROADMAP TO THE OUTDOORS SYMPOSIUM

Hosted by Oregon's First Gentleman, Dan Little, and the Diversity of Participants Action Team, the symposium brought together 120 outdoor recreation stakeholders from diverse communities to discuss barriers to the outdoors and identify strategies to improve access and inclusion.



## FEBRUARY 2019: OSU OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY INITIATIVE

OSU launched its Outdoor Recreation Economy Initiative to build partnerships with the outdoor recreation industry and support outdoor recreation workforce development through research, education, and training.



## FEBRUARY 2020: TAKE CARE OUT THERE

The network, led by the Communications Action Team, launched the [Take Care Out There](#) public education toolkit to help Oregonians and visitors recreate more responsibly and sustainably in Oregon.

## MAY 2019: OREGON OUTDOOR RECREATION SUMMIT

The second [Oregon Outdoor Recreation Summit](#) held in Bend.

## MAY 2019: PHASE TWO UPDATE REPORT

Travel Oregon published the [Phase Two Update Report](#) to highlight OORN action team progress and accomplishments, including the creation of the Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation and the success of the Roadmap to the Outdoors Symposium.

## MAY 2020: COVID-19 RESPONSIBLE RECREATION MESSAGING TOOLKIT

An [updated Take Care Out There toolkit](#) was created in partnership with the Office of Outdoor Recreation in response to new messaging needs brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## OCTOBER 2020: OREGON OUTDOOR RECREATION VIRTUAL SUMMIT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Summit was held virtually, with [summit sessions](#) taking place online over the course of three weeks.

## JANUARY 2021: OREGON OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

[The study](#) was a priority of the Economic Impact Study Action Team and highlighted the significant impact of outdoor recreation on Oregon's economy.



JOEY HAMILTON

## MAY 2021: OSU CENTER FOR THE OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY

The OSU Outdoor Recreation Economy Initiative scaled-up to become the [Center for the Outdoor Recreation Economy](#), focused on applied research, curriculum development, and technical skills and leadership training programs to meet the needs and grow the potential of the outdoor recreation economy.



## Priority Action Area Accomplishments

Through partnerships, the work of the action teams, and coordination involving local, state, and federal government, private industry, and non-profit organizations, the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Network played a key role in tackling projects both large and small that will shape the future of outdoor recreation in Oregon. Overall, the network brought together the right leaders in the state at the right time to get the work done. The following is some of what was collectively accomplished.

### OREGON OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

In July 2017, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 3350, establishing the [Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation](#), housed within the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The creation of this office was a key initial priority, and the initiative played an active role in advocating for the creation of this position. In June 2018, Cailin O'Brien-Feeney became the first Director of the Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation and worked closely with the OORN to establish priorities and coordinate activities. At the direction of Governor Kate Brown, the Office of Outdoor Recreation convened a Task Force on the Outdoors to develop recommendations focused on economic development, outdoor access and natural resource protection, and increasing outdoor participation. The end product of the Task Force was a series of recommendations, compiled in [this report](#). A Governor-appointed advisory council will soon be established to help implement recommendations and guide the work of the Office.



## ROADMAP TO THE OUTDOORS

Oregon's First Gentleman, Dan Little, made equitable access to outdoor recreation a top priority and launched the "Roadmap to the Outdoors." This initiative focused on increasing engagement of youth and under-represented communities in outdoor recreation activities. The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Network's Diversity of Participants Action Team worked closely with the First Gentleman, who hosted the "Roadmap to the Outdoors Symposium" in February 2018. The symposium brought together a wide range of organizations, funders, and representatives from diverse communities for a dialogue focused on barriers to the outdoors. The symposium included working sessions and resulted in high-level recommendations and specific strategies to improve accessibility and inclusion in the outdoors.



## TAKE CARE OUT THERE

An increase in outdoor recreation participation in Oregon over the years highlighted the need to ensure Oregon's natural treasures are protected and that visitors and residents alike know how to experience them safely and responsibly. In response to this need, the network's Communications Action Team, comprised of federal and state land managers, regional and local tourism organizations, and outdoor industry representatives, launched the [Take Care Out There](#) public education and information toolkit in February 2020. The toolkit includes messages and tools designed to encourage behavior that protects and preserves Oregon's natural spaces, increases safety, and reduces damage. The messages are aimed at both residents and visitors and address topics such as "Leave No Trace" principles, stewardship, and preparation.

The Take Care Out There toolkit took on a new life and new purpose when the COVID-19 pandemic created uncertainty around outdoor recreation safety during the pandemic. As Oregonians ventured to trails, campgrounds, and beaches to find respite and solace during an uncertain time, outdoor recreation leaders in the state used the Take Care Out There toolkit as a template for communicating COVID-19 safe recreation and travel protocols to help Oregonians continue to get outdoors, ultimately creating an additional Take Care Out There toolkit for [COVID-19 responsible recreation messaging](#).



## OUTDOOR RECREATION SUMMIT

In-person networking and educational opportunities are highly valued amongst the Oregon outdoor recreation community. The network, with the leadership of the core team, organized three successful Oregon Outdoor Recreation Summits, bringing together outdoor industry stakeholders from across the state to learn, connect, and celebrate accomplishments. The summits were held in Corvallis in 2017, in Bend in 2019, and virtually in 2020 (due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The 2020 virtual summit was organized in conjunction with the Oregon Trails Coalition's Oregon Trails Summit and the Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation, bringing together the many partners that support and depend on access to the outdoors and investments in outdoor recreation in all corners of Oregon.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

In January 2021, the [Oregon Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Study](#) was released, a project led by Travel Oregon, in partnership with the Office of Outdoor Recreation, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; Earth Economics was the consultant lead. This baseline report details the economic impact of outdoor recreation in Oregon and highlights the importance of the outdoor recreation sector on Oregon communities, both urban and rural. The study found that in 2019, outdoor recreation supported more than 224,000 full- and part-time jobs statewide and generated \$9.3 billion in wages and compensation. The study is unique in the level of detail it provides for a state outdoor recreation economy report, with data available by county, legislative district and tourism district. This data shows the significant contributions of outdoor recreation to Oregon's economy and underscores the need for investments in this powerful sector going forward. Other key findings from the study include:

- Outdoor recreationists spent \$15.6 billion in Oregon in 2019, including spending on recreational trips, outdoor recreation gear, apparel, equipment, and repairs.
- Outdoor recreation generated \$13 billion in GDP contributions.
- Outdoor recreation generated \$552 million in state and local taxes.

# A Changing Landscape

The growth of Oregon’s outdoor recreation industry and its impact on Oregon’s overall economy has inspired the launch of several efforts to support the industry’s many interests. While these initiatives are not a direct output of the network, active partners played key roles in these efforts, and they are closely aligned with the nine impact areas.



The [Oregon Outdoor Alliance](#) (OOA) launched in 2012 to support outdoor businesses and foster networking, outdoor industry educational opportunities, and collaboration.



The [Oregon Trails Coalition](#) launched in 2017 to convene and coordinate the statewide trails community and advocate for trails funding in Oregon.



The [Oregon Outdoors Coalition](#) launched in late 2017 with the goal of bringing a unified voice for outdoor recreation interests to policy conversations in Salem and in Washington, D.C.



The [Outdoor Recreation Economy Initiative](#) (OREI) at Oregon State University launched in 2019 with input and support from the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative’s leadership team. In 2021, OREI launched a Center for the Outdoor Recreation Economy to further support the outdoor industry’s workforce development needs through research, education, and training.

Since the formation of the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative in 2016, the outdoor recreation landscape in Oregon has changed significantly. The Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation was a top priority for the initiative and has now been up and running since June 2018. In June 2020, Governor Brown’s Task Force on the Outdoors recommended the creation of an advisory council that will work with the Office of Outdoor Recreation to continue advancing shared outdoor recreation priorities. In June of 2021, [House Bill 2171](#) passed implementing several priorities recommended by the Task Force.

Given the robust landscape of organizations and initiatives, and the prominent role the Office of Outdoor Recreation’s advisory council will play in outdoor recreation priority setting for the state, the core team made the decision to sunset the OORN in 2021. New opportunities, like the advisory council, signal that it is time to adjust and ensure the right leaders are in place to continue this great work. With the leadership of a diverse advisory council, outdoor recreation priority-setting and project implementation can be streamlined to ensure efficient use of resources and effective communication and collaboration between all necessary stakeholders across Oregon.



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JOEY HAMILTON

## Legacy

The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Network provided the space and the structure to foster a strong and sustainable outdoor recreation sector in Oregon. The network cultivated relationships, organized around shared priorities, and empowered community leaders in our state, providing them with the support and tools to set bold visions and accomplish ambitious goals.

The work of the network will have a lasting impact. The 15-year vision, nine impact areas, action teams, and structured networking brought outdoor recreation stakeholders in Oregon together around a shared vision for our future and laid the groundwork for progress. It inspired participants, activated leaders, and launched a movement built on partnerships and collaboration to support an industry and a way of life for Oregonians, which will lead to healthier people and stronger communities.

## STAYING CONNECTED

Going forward, we are confident that the outdoor recreation community in Oregon will continue to collaborate, connect, and network, including at future Oregon Outdoor Recreation Summits. The summit will give Oregonians the opportunity to continue to learn about important initiatives, expand their networks, and connect with like-minded organizations on shared priorities. The location of the summit has changed every year, ensuring the involvement of outdoor recreation leaders throughout the state and the opportunity to highlight the outdoor recreation projects, priorities, and destinations in every Oregon community.

Additionally, the Oregon Outdoor Alliance (OOA) continues to provide regular networking opportunities in Bend, Southern Oregon, and Portland at their Beer:Thirty events. OOA is also looking for interested individuals or groups to start OOA chapters in Eastern Oregon and the Mt. Hood and Columbia Gorge region.

# Thank You

The accomplishments of the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative and the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Network would not have been possible without the active and enthusiastic participation of the individuals, companies, agencies, and organizations that support and encourage outdoor recreation in Oregon. The following core team, leadership team, and active partner members made significant contributions to launch the initiative and the network, form the action teams, and make progress on the network's priorities. Thank you to these outdoor recreation champions:

## CORE TEAM

*First Gentleman of Oregon  
Dan Little*

*KEEN Footwear*

*The Mazamas*

*Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation*

*Oregon Outdoors*

*Oregon State University Outdoor Recreation  
Economy Initiative*

*Timberline Lodge*

*Travel Oregon*

*U.S. Bureau of Land Management*

*U.S. Forest Service*

## OORI LEADERSHIP TEAM & OORN ACTIVE PARTNERS

*Bend City Councilor, Sally Russell*

*Confederated Tribes of the  
Warm Springs*

*Friends of the Columbia Gorge*

*KEEN Footwear*

*Northwest Rafting Company*

*Oregon Bicycle Racing Association*

*Oregon Department of Fish  
and Wildlife*

*Oregon Department  
of Transportation*

*Oregon House of  
Representatives District 52,  
Rep. Mark Johnson*

*Oregon Office of  
Outdoor Recreation*

*Oregon Outdoor Alliance*

*Oregon Outfitter and  
Guides Association*

*Oregon Parks and Recreation Department*

*Oregon State University*

*Oregon Trails Coalition*

*Oregon's First Gentleman, Dan Little*

*Outdoor Alliance*

*Real Oregon Experience Outfitters*

*REI*

*The Mazamas*

*Theodore Roosevelt  
Conservation Partnership*

*Timberline Lodge*

*Travel Lane County*

*Travel Oregon*

*U.S. Forest Service*

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

*Vive Northwest*

*Wallowa Resources*

*Willamette Valley  
Visitors Association*





## Indigenous Peoples Land Acknowledgement

*We would like to acknowledge the many tribes and bands who call Oregon their ancestral territory, including: Burns Paiute; Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw; Confederated Tribes of Cow Creek Lower Band of Umpqua; Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians; Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation; Coquille Tribe; and Klamath Tribes. We honor the ongoing relationship between the land, plants, animals and people indigenous to this place we now call Oregon. We recognize the continued sovereignty of the nine federally recognized tribes who have ties to this place and thank them for continuing to teach us how we might all be here together. Outdoor recreation occurs on the ancestral lands and waters of these original peoples and caretakers.*

**The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Network was managed by Travel Oregon's Destination Development team.**

Inquires should be submitted to [Development@TravelOregon.com](mailto:Development@TravelOregon.com)



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