

# Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism: Announces new Office of Outdoor Recreation

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**Tourism Department Taking the Lead on  
Marketing the #1 Driver for Wisconsin Travel**

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**MADISON, Wis. (July 3, 2019)** – It's official, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism now has an Office of Outdoor Recreation. Funding for this new office was included in the state budget signed today by Gov. Tony Evers. The office will capitalize on the number one marketable driver for visits to the state, namely outdoor pursuits, with the creation of 3 new staff positions. "We consider this a game changer for the Wisconsin tourism industry," said Tourism Secretary-designee Sara Meaney. "With one unified voice and shared priorities among stakeholders and resources, the sky's the limit in growing this segment of the state's economy." According to the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), outdoor recreation in Wisconsin generates \$17.9 billion in consumer spending annually and directly creates 168,000 jobs. Further, OIA research indicates that 60% of all outdoor gear and apparel is purchased while on vacation. "We not only want Wisconsin to remain a top-notch four-season tourist destination, but we also want to create a climate that will spur business growth and attract new businesses to Wisconsin," said Meaney. "Our goal is to leverage the Office of Outdoor Recreation into more travelers, greater economic impact for local communities and new career opportunities for Wisconsinites."

Meaney explained the Department of Natural Resources will continue to be a valuable partner through its focus on conservation, preservation and licensing, while the Department of Tourism will now lend even more marketing muscle to growing awareness of Wisconsin's outdoor recreation getaways and economic impact. This new office also honors the state's much-lauded conservation legacy, tied to legendary conservationists who called the state home including John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Milly Zantow and Gaylord Nelson.

Wisconsin joins the small but growing number of states to create an Office of Outdoor Recreation, and leads the region as one of the first in the Midwest.

Also included in Gov. Evers' budget is a \$1,563,600 biennial increase in the general marketing budget for the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, with special efforts directed at new markets outside the Midwest. Next year, all eyes are expected to turn to Wisconsin as Milwaukee hosts the Democratic National Convention and Kohler hosts the Ryder Cup.

Last year, Wisconsin's tourism industry achieved a return on investment of 7 to 1, with \$7 in tax revenue realized for every \$1 in promotional spending. The tourism economy generated \$1.6 billion in state and local revenue and \$1.2 billion in federal taxes. Without tourism, each Wisconsin household would pay an additional \$680 to maintain existing services.

Visitors may access travel information and planning tools at [TravelWisconsin.com](http://TravelWisconsin.com).