

OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

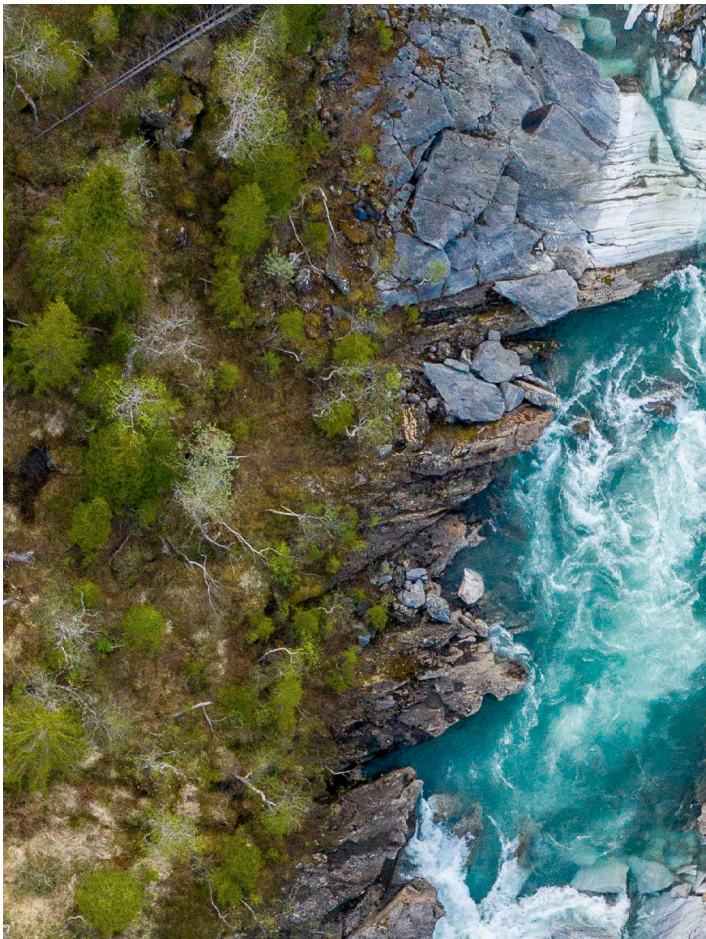
TOGETHER WE ARE A FORCE.

2021 RECREATION IN REVIEW: STATE POLICY

In 2021, governors and state policymakers across the nation made consequential investments in the outdoors and outdoor economies. These investments, coupled with deliberate policymaking, promote sustainable economic growth, reinforce the value of accessible public lands and waters, and create healthier communities.

THE SECRET IS OUT – THE OUTDOORS ARE IN

Bold budget and policy decisions at the state level were made in 2021 to lay the groundwork for continued success of the outdoor industry and outdoor economies. This momentum must continue in 2022 and 2023. See below for highlights from across the country and next steps for transformative opportunities in the coming years.



NOTABLE STATE INVESTMENTS IN RECREATION IN 2021

Sustainable state funding is pivotal for the health of the outdoor economy and recreation infrastructure. Audacious investment to increase equitable outdoor access is also pertinent. State investment can be a major boon to nature, the outdoor industry, and outdoorists.

- \$60 million was included for trails in Indiana's state budget in 2021.
- \$900,000 was added to further fund New Mexico's growing Outdoor Equity Fund grant program.
- Alaska's state budget included funding for improvements and connections on the Fairbank to Seward Multi-Use Recreation Trail.



- Colorado's Outdoor Recreation Industry Office was formally recognized in statute and the office was granted full funding.
- Washington funded the Parks Rx program at \$200,000; the No Child Left Behind Program received an investment triple the size of its previous allocation; and, \$100 million in funding was approved for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).
- California Governor Gavin Newsom announced \$548 million in funding to expand and create parks throughout the state.
- Former Virginia Governor Ralph Northam proposed \$245 million in investments in outdoor recreation.
- Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear directed \$5.3 million from state ARPA allocations to promote outdoor recreation, travel, and tourism.
- North Carolina's Governor Roy Cooper outlined \$500 million in the state budget for investments in parks, trails, and other outdoor recreation amenities.
- Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer recommended that the state legislature fund 100+ recreation and land acquisition projects across the state in 2022.

NOTABLE POLICY VICTORIES IN 2021

State offices continued to flourish

- Governor Larry Hogan announced the creation of the Office of Outdoor Recreation within the Department of Natural Resources. Daryl Anthony will be the first executive director. Mr. Anthony will work with DNR, the Maryland Department of Commerce, and other agencies and partners to grow the outdoor economy and enhance the state's outdoor amenities. He will also work to act on recommendations from the Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic Commission.
- Governor Asa Hutchinson announced an executive order establishing The Office of Outdoor Recreation, to be led by director Katherine Andrews, and the Arkansas Outdoor Recreation Advisory Board. Governor Hutchinson's order declared that "outdoor recreation is a major economic force."

States passed more policies bolstering the outdoor economy, outdoor education, and outdoor access

- In 2021, Colorado created an Outdoor Equity Grant Program and increased recreation funding through the Keep Colorado Wild Annual Pass.
- Leaders in Georgia established an Outdoor Learning Committee. The statewide effort seeks to understand how outdoor learning might benefit the state's youth.
- Nevada established an Outdoor Recreation Tourism Program, which will support the EV infrastructure needs of the outdoor economy in the state.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The coming years will bring increased opportunity for decisionmakers to further support outdoor recreation and outdoor economies. **Federal investment on its own is not enough. State leadership must ensure that these national investments are met with state funds and policies to carry out the on-the-ground work** of building stronger and more inclusive outdoor recreation assets and economies. There are ample options to explore in the future. Governors or legislators may consider one or more of the actions below:

- The creation of state-level outdoor recreation offices
- State-level annual appropriations for the development and maintenance of outdoor recreation assets and green infrastructure
- Innovative mechanisms to fund conservation and recreation
- Investments in outdoor education for youth and adults
- Funding and programs to eliminate barriers and to get more diverse users outside for sustained connections to nature
- Additional funding and technical assistance to outdoor businesses and outdoor economies

Learn more about [additional policy options here](#).

GET INVOLVED!

Reach out to OIA to learn more about how outdoor brands, grassroots stakeholders, policymakers, and community builders can work together at the state and local level to make pivotal investments in the outdoors and outdoor economies. Policymakers and advocates can also work with their state's [outdoor business alliance](#), and legislators can explore joining groups like the [National Caucus of Environmental Legislators](#). Let's work together to ensure that outdoor policy is a focus across the nation.



GET IN TOUCH

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