

STATE LEADERSHIP ROLES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION:

A PROMISING TREND

ENSURING THE GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY



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STATE LEADERS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION & THE OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY

Historically, Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) has focused its advocacy efforts in Washington D.C., as critical decisions affecting public lands, recreation and our members' bottom lines are made inside the Beltway. Increasingly, OIA is investing in complementary work close to home – in states and cities across the country where our members work, live and play.

A recent development within state governments – namely Colorado, Utah and Washington – is the creation of and investment in high-level positions charged with the dual role of supporting the outdoor industry and improving outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the state. Each of these states has identified outdoor recreation as a core priority for the health of their citizens and their economy. Elevating the importance of the outdoors is a trend that was echoed in the "Recreation Not Red-Tape Act" introduced by Sen. Ron Wyden and Rep. Earl Blumenauer that reads, in part:

"Congress supports the creation of outdoor recreation sector leadership positions within the economic development offices of States or in the office of the Governor, as well as coordination with recreation and tourism organizations within the State to guide the growth of this sector, as evidenced by recent examples in the States of Colorado, Utah, and Washington."¹

OIA and our members encourage states across the nation to craft similar leadership positions, either as policy advisors to Governors or within state economic development entities. To that end, this brief serves as an overview of the existing state leadership positions for the outdoor recreation industry as they exist now in Colorado, Utah and Washington.

“ Any state that puts an office of outdoor recreation in place is showing a real commitment to the recreation economy and its value to their state.”

– Jennifer Mull, former OIA Board Chair and CEO of Backwoods

“ Nearly half of all Americans — 48.4% — participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2014. This equates to 141.4 million participants, who went on a collective 11.8 billion outdoor outings.”

– *Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2016*

TABLE 1: THE SIX W'S OF STATE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS FOR THE OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY.

	WHO	WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	WHY	HOW
COLORADO	Luis Benitez	Outdoor Recreation Industry Office	Office of Economic Development & International Trade	2015	Dual focus of economic development and outdoor recreation, with unique priorities depending on the state	Announced by Governor & OEDIT — no legislation
UTAH	Tom Adams	Office of Outdoor Recreation	Office of Economic Development	2013		Announced by Governor, then legislation
WASHINGTON	Jon Snyder	Senior Policy Advisor, Outdoor Recreation & Economic Development	Office of the Governor	2015		Through legislation

Any state that looks to establish an outdoor sector leadership position will do so in a way that matches the needs and opportunities unique to their economic and environmental landscape. The three states so far demonstrate several routes to creation of an office – task force recommendation, legislation, or appointment.

They also all share a focus on both traditional economic development – incentives, workforce development and related work – as well as outdoor recreation through legislation, education, and public lands management.

ABOUT OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Outdoor Industry Association is 501(c)(6) non-profit trade association that unites and serves over 1,300 suppliers, manufacturers and retailers of outdoor products across America. We work to ensure the growth and success of the outdoor industry from offices in Boulder, CO, Washington, D.C., and work across the nation.

To learn more about OIA's work or if you have questions on this report, please contact ga@outdoorindustry.org or Cailin O'Brien-Feeney, Local Recreation Advocacy Manager at 303.327.3511.

COLORADO

The Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office is housed within the Office of Economic Development & International Trade (OED),² The office has been led by renowned mountain guide and leadership guru Luis Benitez since its inception in June 2015.

The mission of the Outdoor Recreation Industry office is:

“We champion industry, communities, and people to come to life through Colorado’s great outdoors.”

This mission is pursued through work in economic development, recreational access, funding for conservation and workforce development. The office is advised by a stakeholder Outdoor Recreation Advisory Group, leadership within the Office of Economic Development & International Trade, and members of the Governor’s staff.



COLORADO

Key Duties and Responsibilities, as defined by OED, include:

- The Director will work closely with the Executive Director and peer senior leaders to collaboratively define, direct and execute the strategy of the Outdoor Industry agenda for the next term, including setting and achieving clear goals and reporting on the goals regularly.
- Act as senior advisor to the Governor and State Cabinet on the Outdoor Industry.
- The Director will be required to:
 - Understand and advocate for the Outdoor Industry within the State.
 - Engage with and act as the liaison to State agencies and resources to support foster and support the growth of businesses based in the State that provide services and products in the Outdoor Industry.
 - Identify key leaders throughout the Outdoor Industry ecosystem, leveraging their experience and relationships and partnering to assist in advancing the industry.
 - Work closely with other State and local agencies to leverage their assets and infrastructure for the benefit of the Outdoor Industry.
 - Work closely with communities across the State to plan for and foster a vibrant outdoor recreation ecosystem.
 - Utilize OED's analytical resources to publish an annual report on the economic, social and community impact of the Outdoor Industry across the State.
 - Work with OED's communication team to devise and execute a plan to raise awareness of the value and impact of the Outdoor Industry to the State's healthy economy.

“ Outdoor recreation is one of our prime and best sources for ongoing employment growth. We wanted the industry to have a voice at the state and federal level.”

– **Fiona Arnold, executive director of the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade**

Key priorities include:

- Economic Development – Who is here and isn't here? If they are struggling, can we help? If they are successful, can we help? Strategic recruitment.
- Conservation and Stewardship – Understanding how to define protection for the natural resources that help our [Outdoor Recreation] economy grow.
- Education and Workforce Training – How do we remain competitive with our [Outdoor Recreation] workforce and move from just a seasonal employee base to a year round employee base?
- Industry Anchors – What new industry sectors do we want to attract to the state?³

²<http://www.advancecolorado.com/business-colorado/outdoor-recreation-industry>

³L. Benitez, personal communication, March 25, 2016



UTAH

Governor Gary Herbert unveiled Utah's "Outdoor Recreation Vision" in January 2013, which among other recommendations included a first-ever Office of Outdoor Recreation.⁴ The Office of Outdoor Recreation Act, SB 73, passed in March 2013 formalizing the role. The office is currently led by Tom Adams, a competitive athlete and 20-year veteran of Utah's outdoor industry. Like Colorado's and Washington's, Utah's office is advised by a stakeholder committee.

The purposes of the Office of Outdoor Recreation, its position within the Office of Economic Development, and duties of the director were clearly defined in the enabling legislation.



UTAH

Key Duties and Responsibilities:

"Creation of office and appointment of director - Purposes of office.

1. There is created within the Governor's Office of Economic Development an Outdoor Recreation Office
2.
 - a. The executive director shall appoint a director of the office.
 - b. The director shall report to the executive director and may appoint staff.
3. The purposes of the office are to:
 - a. coordinate outdoor recreation policy, management, and promotion:
 - i. among state and federal agencies and local government entities in the state; and
 - ii. with the Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office created in Section 63J-4-602, if public land is involved;
 - b. promote economic development by:
 - i. coordinating with outdoor recreation stakeholders;
 - ii. improving recreational opportunities; and
 - iii. recruiting outdoor recreation business;
 - c. recommend to the governor and Legislature policies and initiatives to enhance recreational amenities and experiences in the state and help implement those policies and initiatives;
 - d. develop data regarding the impacts of outdoor recreation in the state; and
 - e. promote the health and social benefits of outdoor recreation, especially to young people."⁵

HB 52, "Office of Outdoor Recreation Amendments" created an Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Grant Program and was signed into law March 21, 2016.⁶ 2015 was a pilot year for these outdoor infrastructure matching grants to local communities, with 19 communities receiving funding.⁷

Key Priorities:

- Enhance our quality of life and economic vibrancy through balanced land management plans and policies. The Office will participate in creating solutions and policies that strike a sensitive balance between general development, motorized use, human powered activities, and preserving the unique natural experience that people seek in Utah.
- Promote Utah's natural beauty and the unmatched accessibility. Collaborate with the Office of Tourism to share the powerful and internationally recognized Utah-Life Elevated brand, while encouraging Utahns, and especially our youth, to experience the benefits of recreating right outside our back doors.
- Act as a clearinghouse of communication for the outdoor related stakeholders. Create effective forums for communicating recreation-based initiatives, sharing best practices, and generating new recreation management strategies.
- Grow and foster a vibrant recreation economy. Strategically partner with the counties to proactively enhance their recreation infrastructure, develop programs that support outdoor related start-ups, and provide support through GOED's business outreach services for the existing outdoor industry.⁸

Key Accomplishments from 2015 Annual Report:⁹

- Extended the Outdoor Retailer Show in Salt Lake City to 2018, which has resulted \$468 million by attendees and \$43.6 million in city, county and state taxes since 1996.
- Saw passage of HB 324, which created the Utah Search and Rescue Assistance card. Funds from voluntary purchase reduce financial burden to search and rescue teams.
- Vista Outdoor, Armada Skis, Osprey Packs are among the outdoor industry companies moved to or expanded operations in Utah. The Office recorded 205 new outdoor recreation jobs in FY2014-2015.
- Outdoor Recreation Summits held in 2014 and 2015 brought together hundreds of thought-leaders, industry members, user groups and agencies.

⁴<http://www.utah.gov/governor/docs/OutdoorRecreationVision.pdf>

⁵<http://le.utah.gov/~2013/bills/sbillenr/SB0073.htm>

⁶<http://le.utah.gov/~2016/bills/static/HB0052.html>

⁷<http://business.utah.gov/programs/office-of-outdoor-recreation/office-of-outdoor-recreation-grant-program/>

⁸T. Adams, Personal Communication, April 12, 2016

⁹<http://business.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/Corrected-Final-20153.pdf>



WASHINGTON

The position of Senior Policy Advisor for Outdoor Recreation & Economic Development was created when SB 5843 was passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Jay Inslee mid-2015. Jon Snyder, a former Spokane city councilman, founder and former editor of outdoor publication *Out There Monthly*, and an all-conditions bike commuter, has served in this role since January 2016.

Washington took a similar route as Utah in creating the position through legislation, though it differs from both Utah and Colorado in that the position serves within the Office of Governor, not as an entity within the state's economic development agency. The recommendation for this position also came through a task force.¹⁰ The Big Tent Coalition – a group of recreational user groups, businesses and non-profits – was an important voice in the passage of this legislation.

The purposes of the Senior Policy Advisor for Outdoor Recreation & Economic Development were clearly defined through the enabling legislation.



WASHINGTON

Key Duties and Responsibilities:

1. "Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the governor must maintain a senior policy advisor to the governor to serve as a state lead on economic development issues relating to the outdoor recreation sector of the state's economy. The advisor must focus on promoting, increasing participation in, and increasing opportunities for outdoor recreation in Washington, with a particular focus on achieving economic development and job growth through outdoor recreation.
2. The success of the advisor must be based on measurable results relating to economic development strategies that more deliberately grow employment and outdoor recreation businesses, including:
 - a. Strategies for increasing the number of new jobs directly or indirectly related to outdoor recreation, with a short-term goal of increasing employment in the sector by ten percent above the one hundred ninety-nine thousand jobs estimated to be connected to outdoor recreation as of 2015; and
 - b. Strategies for increasing the twenty-one billion dollars of consumer spending in Washington, and the four and one-half billion dollars of spending from out-of-state visitors, estimated to be connected to outdoor recreation of 2015."¹¹

Key Priorities:

"I work for the Governor, but my job was created by the legislature at the urging of a wide variety outdoor recreation stakeholders. The legislature gave my position two main priorities:

1. Develop strategies to increase outdoor recreation employment in Washington state
2. Develop strategies to increase outdoor recreation participation and consumer spending

The unstated third priority is that if you achieve the preceding two you also help Washingtonians better appreciate and support our amazing outdoor places.

As a policy advisor it is my job to bring an outdoor recreation perspective to all policy discussions, including analysis of legislation. Right now the focus is outreach; to better understand the opportunities and the challenges in all corners of the state. Already major themes have emerged: access to public land, funding for ongoing maintenance and improvements, improving industry data, mitigating impacts of climate change, the need for increased planning, and the imperative of raising the next generation of diverse outdoor recreation users. The next year we will work on impacting these concerns through possible legislation, budget items, and partnerships and policy changes outside the legislative process."¹²

" It gives the array of stakeholders in the outdoor community an opportunity to work with a single point person at high levels of government in order to raise awareness of the importance of outdoor recreation to Washingtonians, to our quality of life and to our economy. "

– Marc Berejka, Director of Government and Community affairs for REI



¹⁰<http://rco.wa.gov/documents/ORTF/ORTF-Recommendations.pdf>

¹¹SB 5843, 2015-2016, "Concerning Outdoor Recreation" <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?year=2015&bill=5843>

¹²J. Snyder, personal communication, March 25, 2016