

Outdoor Recreation Blasts Records, Soars to a Whopping \$862B Industry



The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) has released economic data for 2021 exhibiting outdoor recreation's powerful and positive economic impact on the U.S. economy. These new numbers show outdoor recreation generates \$862 billion in economic output and 4.5 million jobs. This means the outdoor recreation economy contributes more to the U.S. economy

than oil and gas extraction, mining and farming. The report includes national and state level data.



This is the fifth consecutive year that BEA has released government data on this critical industry sector. The release

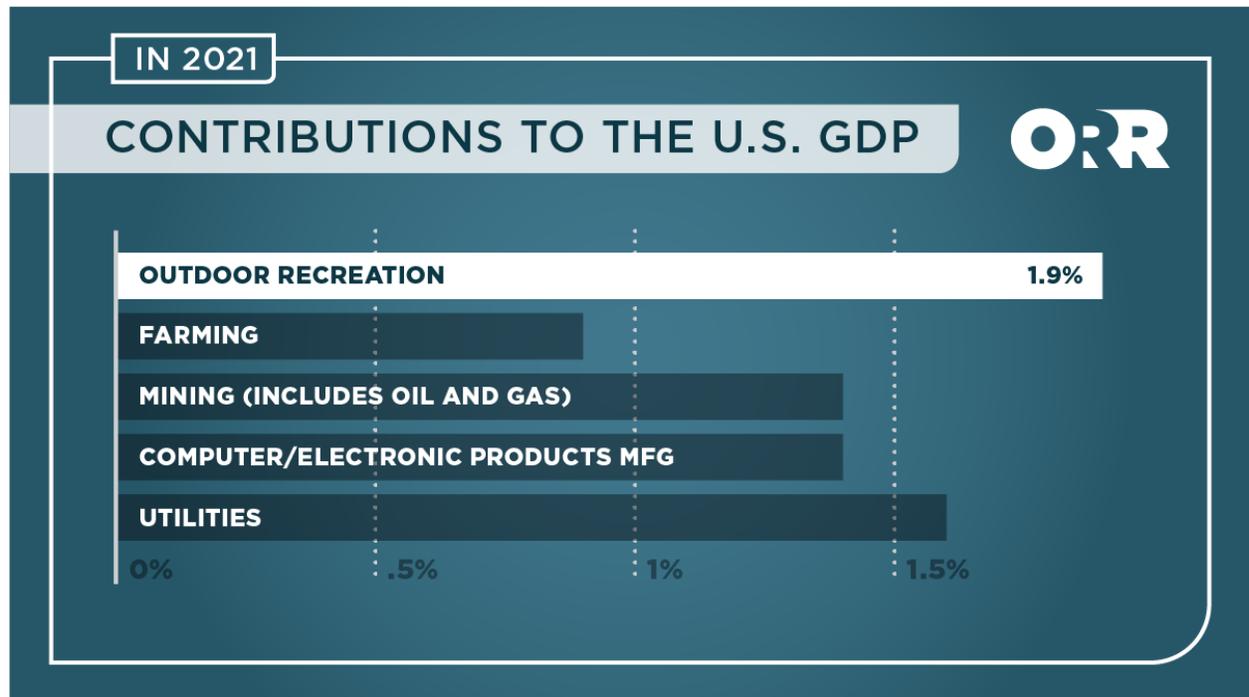
shows how the outdoor industry, which played a vital economic and social role throughout the pandemic, has since sustained remarkable growth, and continued to bolster local economies. The outdoor recreation economy came back stronger than ever after the COVID-19 pandemic and remains a steady source of strength nationally and a booming job creator locally.

Key highlights from the 2021 data on the outdoor recreation economy:

- *\$862 billion in economic output;*
- *1.9% of GDP;*
- *4.5 million jobs;*
- *Trips and travel coming back, record sales in many outdoor segments, manufacturing increasing, as well as the drive to continue*

to recreate for quality of life allowed our industry to bounce back from the effects of COVID-19 in 2020.

“The BEA data underscores how important it is to invest in public lands, waters and recreation infrastructure from coast to coast and for recreation activities of all types,” said Jessica Turner, President of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable. “From the creation of jobs and increased profit for small businesses in local economies, to larger boons to our national economy, this sector is a consistent driver, even in times of economic uncertainty. The strength of the outdoor recreation economy reflects what many in the industry have long known to be true: There are infinite benefits that come from more people spending time outdoors, and they’ll only grow with continued investment.”



“The RV industry has seen a record number of younger and more diverse customers flock to RVs as a way to fulfill their desire to get outdoors, take part in all kinds of outdoor recreation, and live an active outdoor lifestyle. (See related story at toystoragenation.com/generate-more-profits-from-generation-x/) RVs provide a basecamp for every form of recreation included in these new economic numbers, from boating and fishing to hiking, biking, and climbing,” said RV Industry Association President & CEO Craig Kirby. “What these new numbers show is that outdoor recreation is not just good for people’s physical and mental health, it is also a significant economic driver across the entire country.”

“We have seen record growth in camping and boating over the past couple years, with millions of people enjoying RVs and boats to connect with family and friends, to relax and recharge, and to experience nature,” said Michael Happe, President and CEO of Winnebago Industries. “The record economic impact in the BEA numbers



demonstrates the collective power of our industry to help people discover and experience the tremendous benefits of the outdoor lifestyle. We continue to welcome an increasingly diverse group of new participants, so we look forward to maintaining this momentum by developing recreation infrastructure and increasing access for all.”

“This data solidifies what we have seen over our 60-year history – that there is intrinsic value in the outdoors,” said Toby O’Rourke, President and CEO of Kampgrounds of America Inc. “Over 20 million new households started camping since 2020 with six in 10 planning to continue. We are increasingly seeing camping and outdoor-vacationing becoming a preferred form of travel. The

economic impact of camping and the greater outdoor industry underscores how critical natural spaces are to our communities. And, even more importantly, the outdoors remain vital for overall health and well-being and in fostering connection to others.”

"Last year proved to be a year like no other for the outdoor recreation industry, and today's Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account data release underscores the fact that boating and time spent on our nation's waterways is a favorite American pastime," said Frank Hugelmeyer, president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) and current Board Chair of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR). "Since 2020, the recreational boating and fishing industry and outdoor recreation economy at-large has led a national recovery, welcoming millions of families to experience the considerable health benefits of the great outdoors while being a vital economic contributor and job creator."



America's outdoor recreation community, represented by ORR, continues to support the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) – the project compiling and releasing this data. Just like is the case for many other industries, the goal is to provide annual data on the economic importance of national and regional outdoor recreation economies that can be tracked for years to come. To learn more about ORR and outdoor recreation's contributions to the economy, [click here](#). The link will also take you to information about each state's performance.



Arizona

\$9.8 billion in value added
100,514 jobs
2.3% of the state economy
3.3% of state employment