



AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative

# Vermont's Outdoor Recreation Economy

**Jackie Dagger**

**Program Manager, Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC)**

Date: April 7, 2023

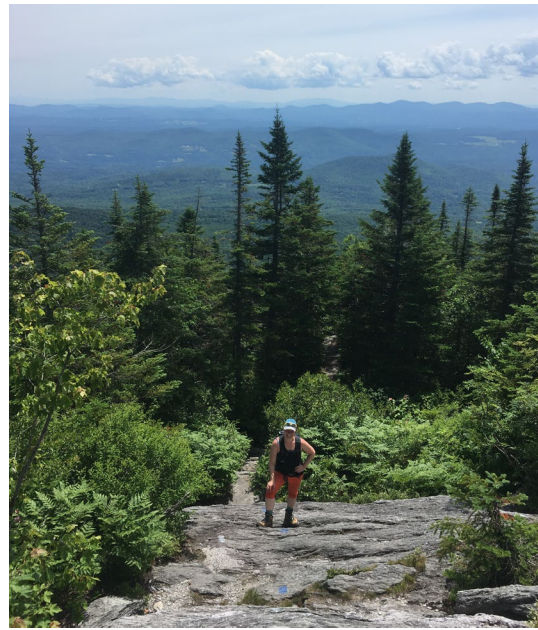


# VOREC

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AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES



## Jackie Dagger

Vermont

Avid Outdoor Recreationalist & Gardener

### Professional Experience

Program Manager, Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative

EnvirolIssues, Inc.

- Associate specializing in facilitation and municipal planning
- Developed meaningful public engagement processes
- Project focus areas: Wastewater, transportation, energy, environmental conservation

Retail Sales Associate, REI

Retail Sales Associate, The North Face, VF Group

### Education

Antioch University Seattle, MA from Center for Creative Change, Food Systems and Permaculture Design

George Washington University, BA in Anthropology

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# What is the outdoor recreation economy?

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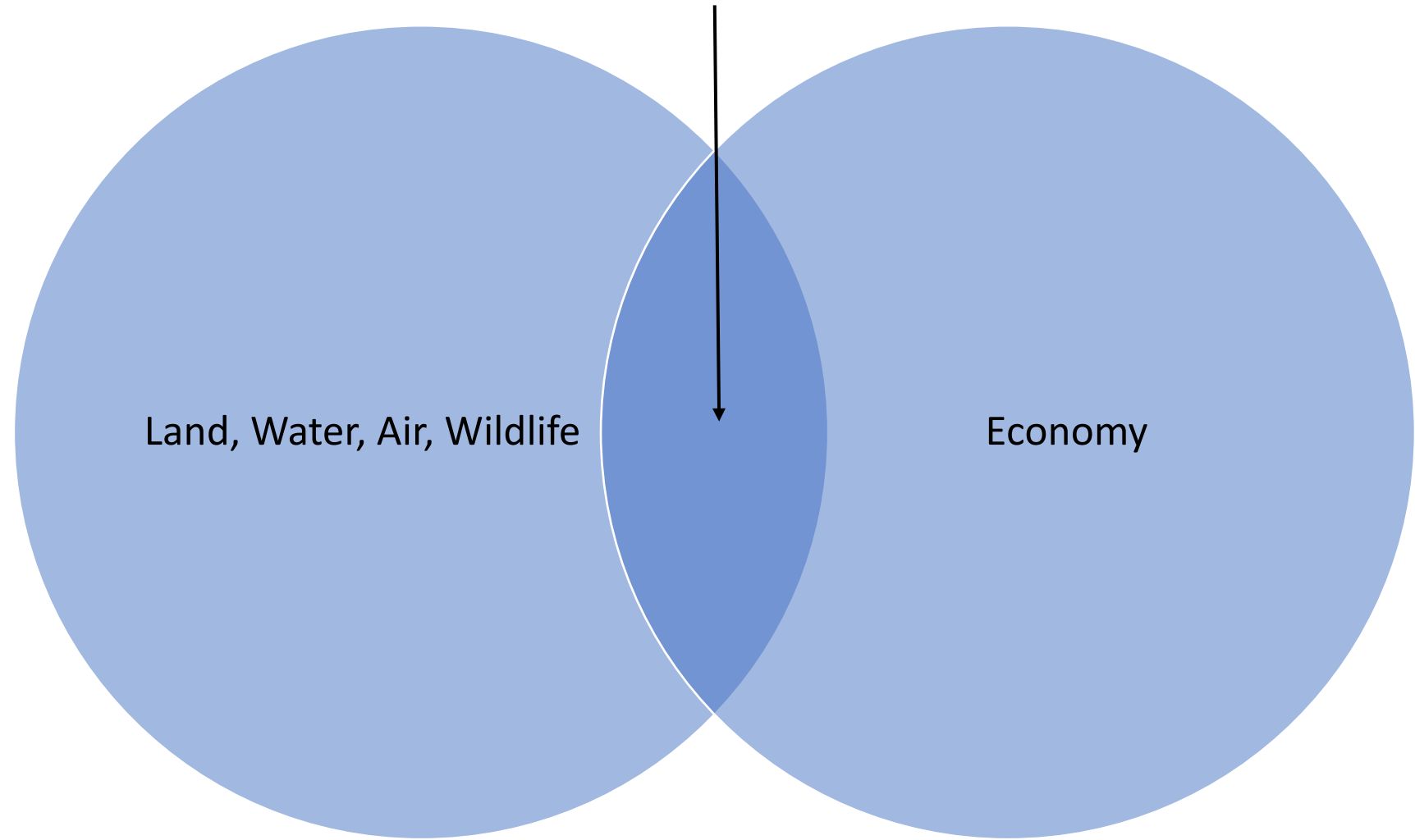


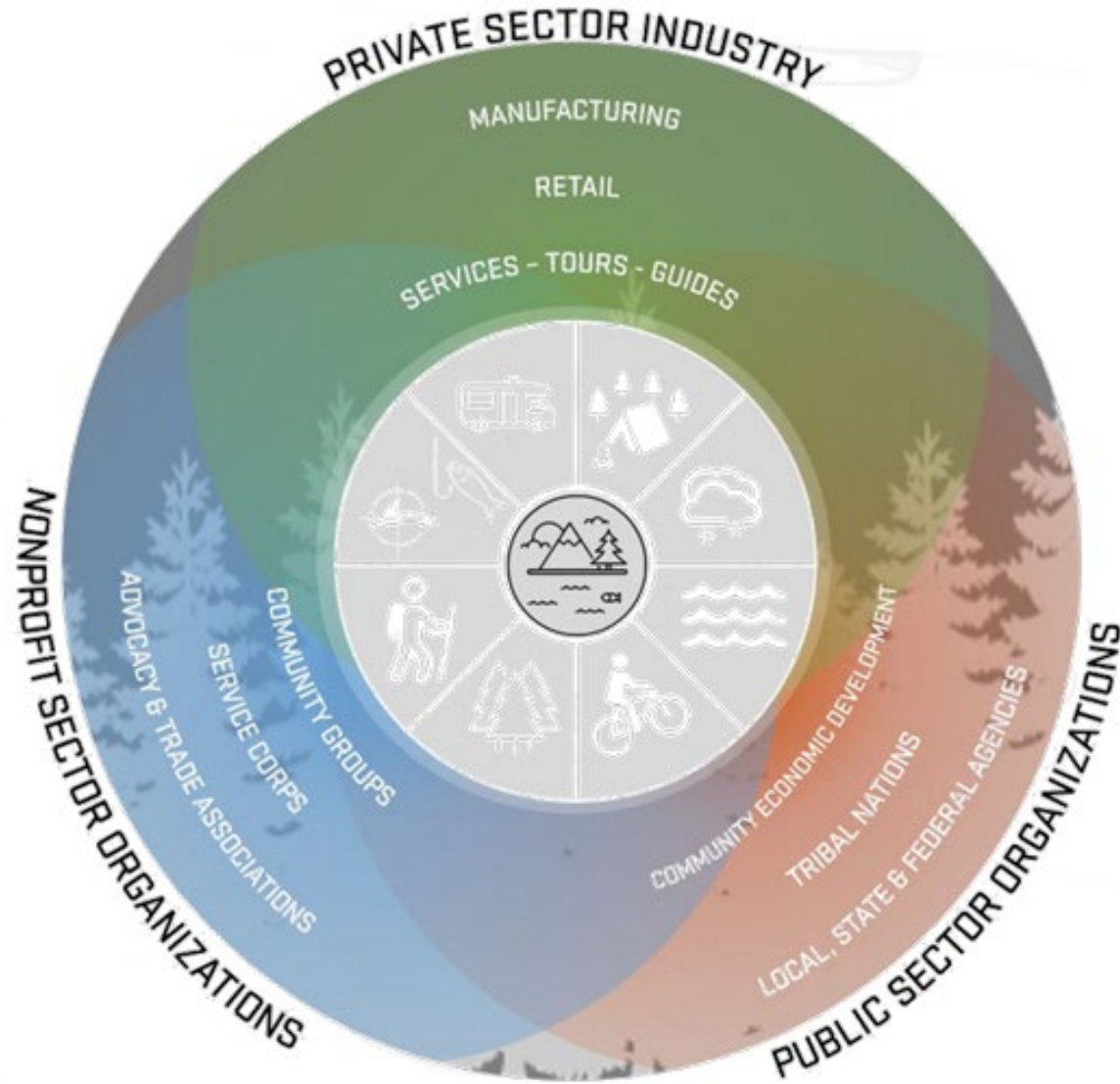
**What do you see?**

Photo Credit: Ming Poon

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# Outdoor Recreation Economy





# Outdoor recreation contributes to economic success in many ways.

## TOURISM

Visitors who come to enjoy the outdoors spend money on lodging, restaurants, and other services, creating jobs and putting money into the community.

## ENTREPRENEURS + TALENT

Access to the outdoors and a high quality of life attracts and retains new businesses and skilled workers.

## RETIREMENT + INVESTMENT INCOME

Wealth from retirees and investors—who are drawn to live near outdoor access—helps boost the local economy.

## TAX REVENUE

Spending at local businesses and increased property tax revenue contribute to the tax base.

## NEW RESIDENTS

Places with recreation amenities on federal public lands have higher rates of in-migration, helping fuel jobs for teachers, doctors, construction workers, and more.

## MAIN STREET BUSINESSES

Restaurants, grocery stores, gear stores, and other local retailers benefit from visitors and new residents.

## GEAR MANUFACTURING

Companies that make outdoor equipment tend to locate in places with outdoor amenities, providing jobs and investment in the community.

## HEALTHIER RESIDENTS

Access to the outdoors improves public health and reduces costs of chronic conditions, especially for impoverished and under-resourced neighborhoods.



# THE LANDSCAPE

## What makes Vermont a World-Class Outdoor Recreation Destination

- 8,000+ miles of public access trails
  - Growing trail-serviced hut system
  - 7000+ miles of river and over 800 lakes & ponds
  - More than 40 alpine and cross-country ski areas
  - Over 6 million acres of land for hunting
  - 150 miles of accessible rail trails
  - Dozens of outdoor recreation-oriented communities
  - Access to natural, often conserved landscapes
  - A vibrant and highly diversified outdoor recreation business sector
- ... All within a 5-hour drive of 80+ million people**





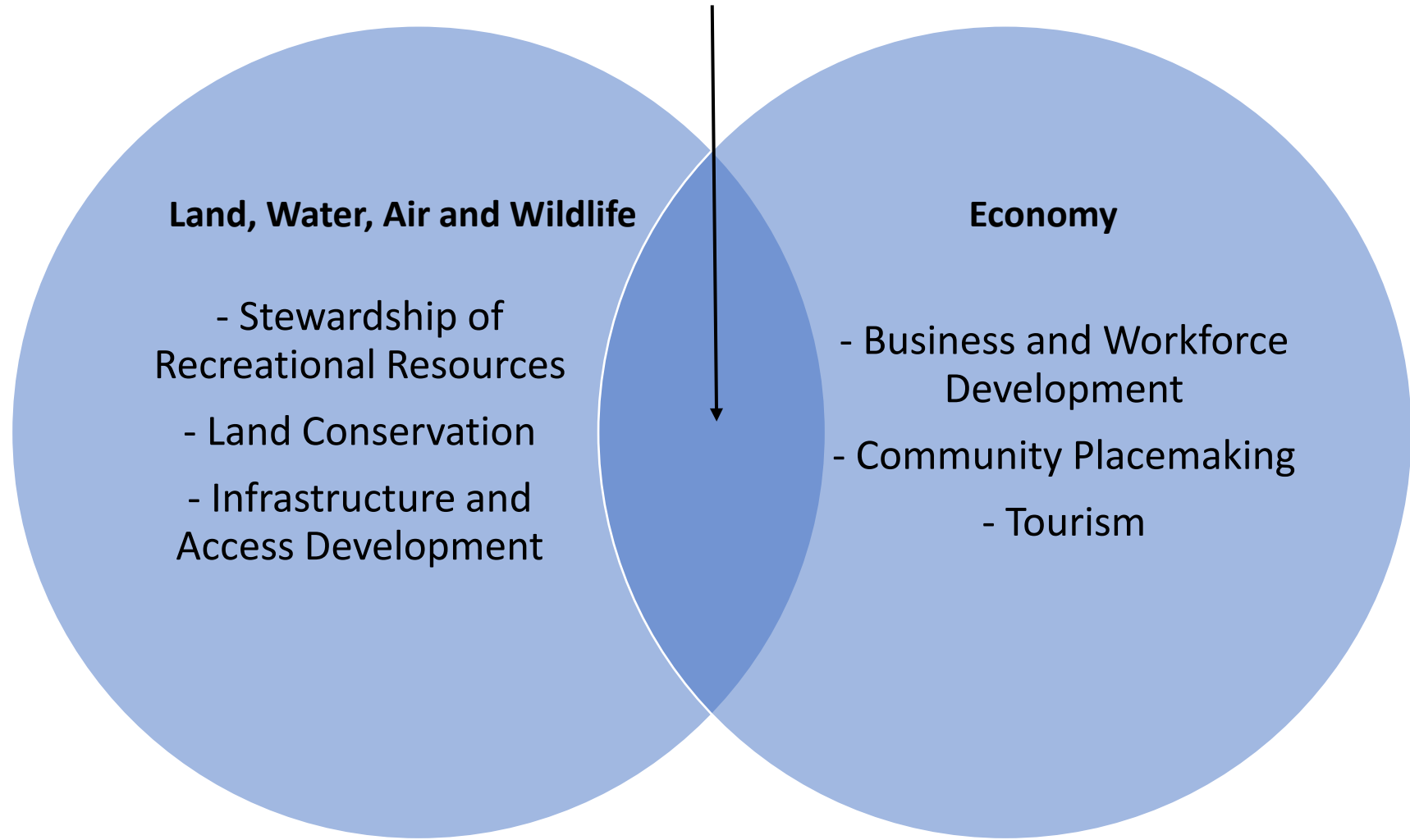
# Outdoor Recreation’s Economic Impact | STATEWIDE

## 2021—Vermont

Value added [gross domestic product]		Employment		Compensation	
ORSA total	Share of state	ORSA total	Share of state	ORSA total	Share of state
\$1.5 billion	4.1%	14,582 jobs	4.7%	\$0.6 billion	3.0%

According to the BEA, in 2021, Vermont had a **22.3%** increase in GDP, a **17.6%** increase in employment, and a **17%** increase in wages.

# VOREC Program





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## Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC)

We are a collective impact network organized by the state to champion Vermont's outdoor recreation sector and seize opportunities to build sustainable development in Vermont by leveraging outdoor business, participation, recreation resources, environmental quality, and community health and wellness.

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## PILLARS OF OUR WORK



**Grow OR-  
related  
businesses**



**Increase participation  
in OR activities  
among all  
demographics**



**Strengthen the  
quality and extent  
of OR resources**



**Increase OR  
stewardship and  
environmental  
quality**



**Promote and  
enjoy the health  
and wellness  
benefits of OR**

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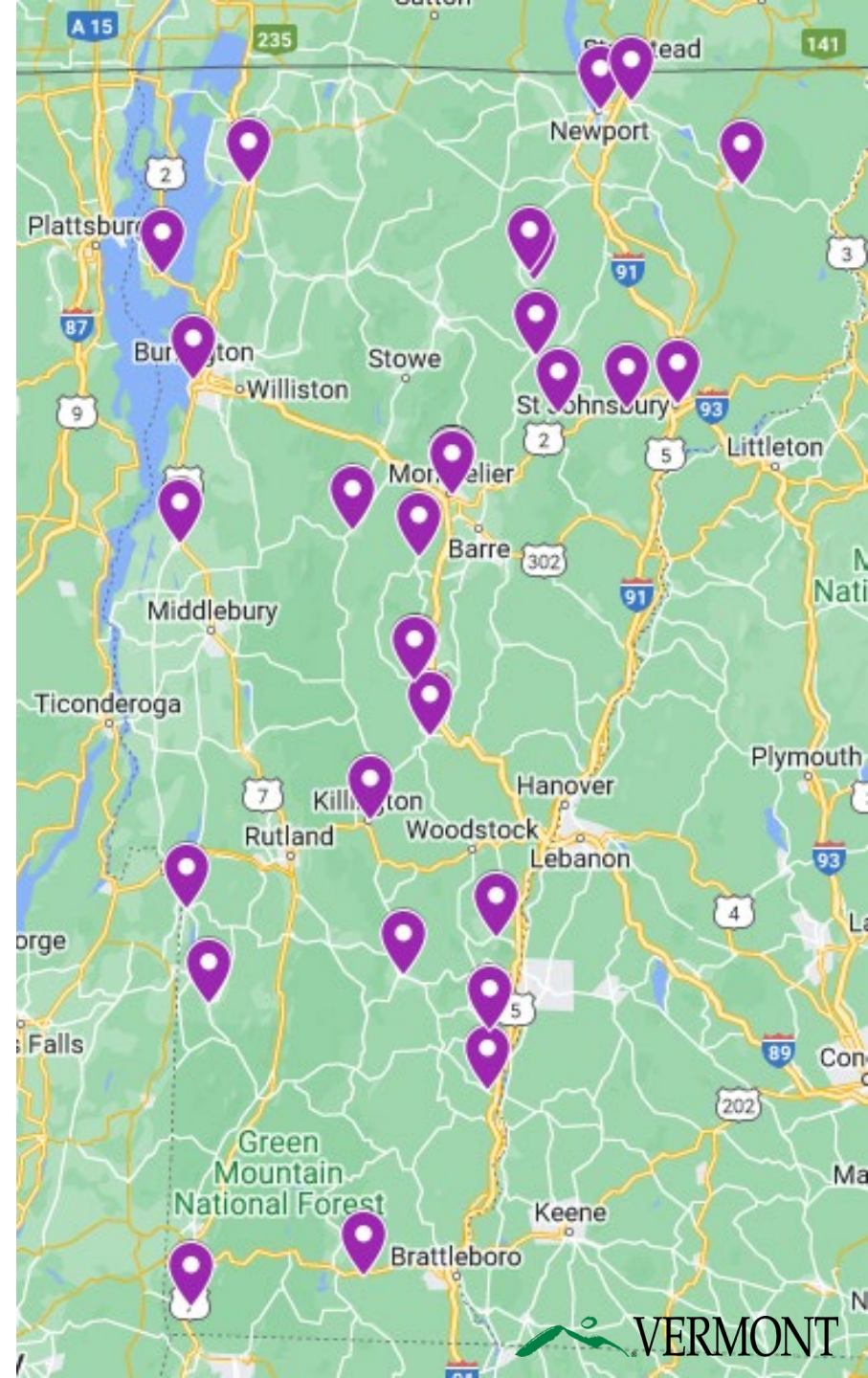


### FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION VERMONT



AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## VOREC Community Grant Recipients Fiscal Year 19 - 22



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# VOREC Community Grant Program

Building local economies with outdoor recreation at the center

Fiscal Year	\$\$ granted	Projects Funded	# of Applicants
2019	\$100,000	2	29
2020	\$200,000	7	18
2022	\$4.5M	24	104
2023	\$5M	TBD	TBD



# VOREC Partnerships







**BECCA WASHBURN**  
VOREC Chair  
FPR Director, Lands Administration and  
Recreation



**JOSH HANFORD**  
VOREC Vice Chair  
ACCD Commissioner, Housing and Community  
Development

## Steering Committee

Mike Debonis, Green Mountain Club

Frazier Blair, Orvis

Hal Ellms, Pinnacle Outdoors Group

Jeanne Gervais, Island Pond Chamber

Danny Hale, VT ATV Sportsman's Association &  
Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Co-Chair

Abby Long, Kingdom Trails

Kim Rupe, Vermont Council on Rural Development

Josh Ryan, Timber and Stone, LLC

Shelby Semmes, Trust for Public Land

Marc Sherman, Outdoor Gear Exchange,

Drew Simmons, Pale Morning Media

Frank Stanley, VT Traditions Coalition

Karrie Thomas, Northern Forest Canoe Trail

“Working closely with the VTGC, VOREC helps strengthen the stewardship of outdoor recreation resources and the organizations that maintain them. Our partnership is helping to increase the professionalization of both the VTGC and our member organizations who build and maintain Vermont’s public access recreation infrastructure.”

—Nick Bennette, VTGC Chair, VMBA & Danny Hale, VTGC Co-Chair, VASA



# Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA)

VOREC stimulates local economies that depend on healthy places and access to the outdoors. VOREC and the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance's partnership has increased the availability of business and workforce resources leading to positive economic and social impact by Vermont's outdoor sector to Vermonters and visitors."

– Kelly Ault, VOBA Executive Director



“VOREC’s grant program was the first grant Newport received that gave us the ‘street credibility’ to prove we were serious about the City’s transformation from the failed EB-5 projects to an outdoor destination. Newport now has many reasons to visit and the grant was essential to our transformation. We are deeply appreciative and thrilled.”

– *Laura Dolgin, Town of Newport City Manager*



# Town of Randolph

“Funds from VOREC planted a critical seed to help create outdoor recreational opportunities in and around Randolph. Our downtown is thriving. Business opportunities are expanding as a result of increased activity, healthy living, and a budding nightlife including music, theater, galleries and fantastic award-winning restaurants.”

– Mark Rosalbo, Town of Randolph Economic Development Director

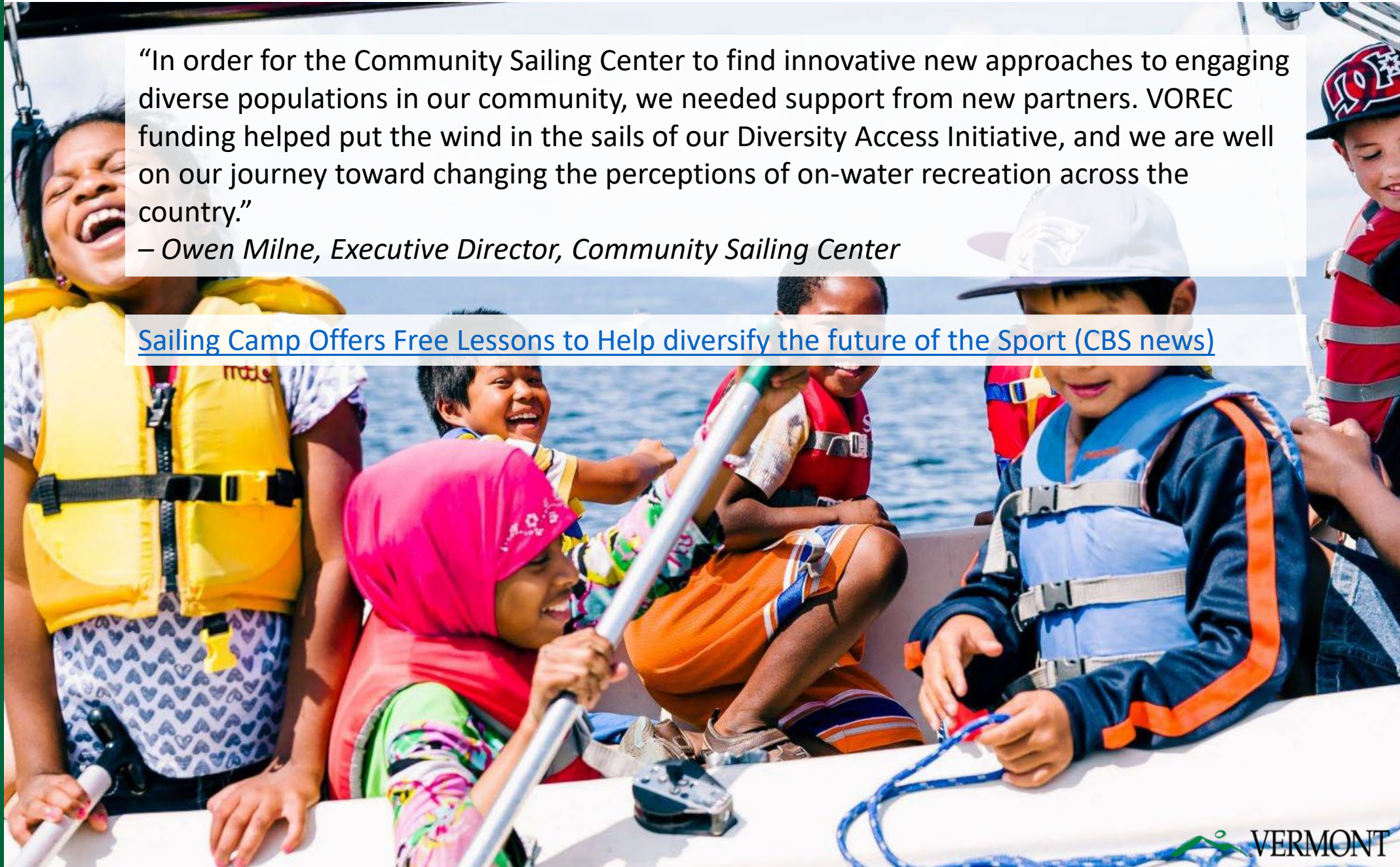


# City of Burlington: Community Sailing Center

“In order for the Community Sailing Center to find innovative new approaches to engaging diverse populations in our community, we needed support from new partners. VOREC funding helped put the wind in the sails of our Diversity Access Initiative, and we are well on our journey toward changing the perceptions of on-water recreation across the country.”

– Owen Milne, Executive Director, Community Sailing Center

[Sailing Camp Offers Free Lessons to Help diversify the future of the Sport \(CBS news\)](#)



## What's next

- Develop a shared roadmap of prioritized actions, working agreements with network partners, and a 10-year vision for outdoor recreation in Vermont.
- Identify emerging complex issues, define bottlenecks & gaps, opportunities and recommendations for moving forward.
- Track data that demonstrates outdoor recreation's contribution to local and regional economies.
- Provide a reliable funding source to communities who identify outdoor recreation as an economic driver and help them navigate funding pathways.

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Photo Credit: Ming Poon





BONUS SLIDES



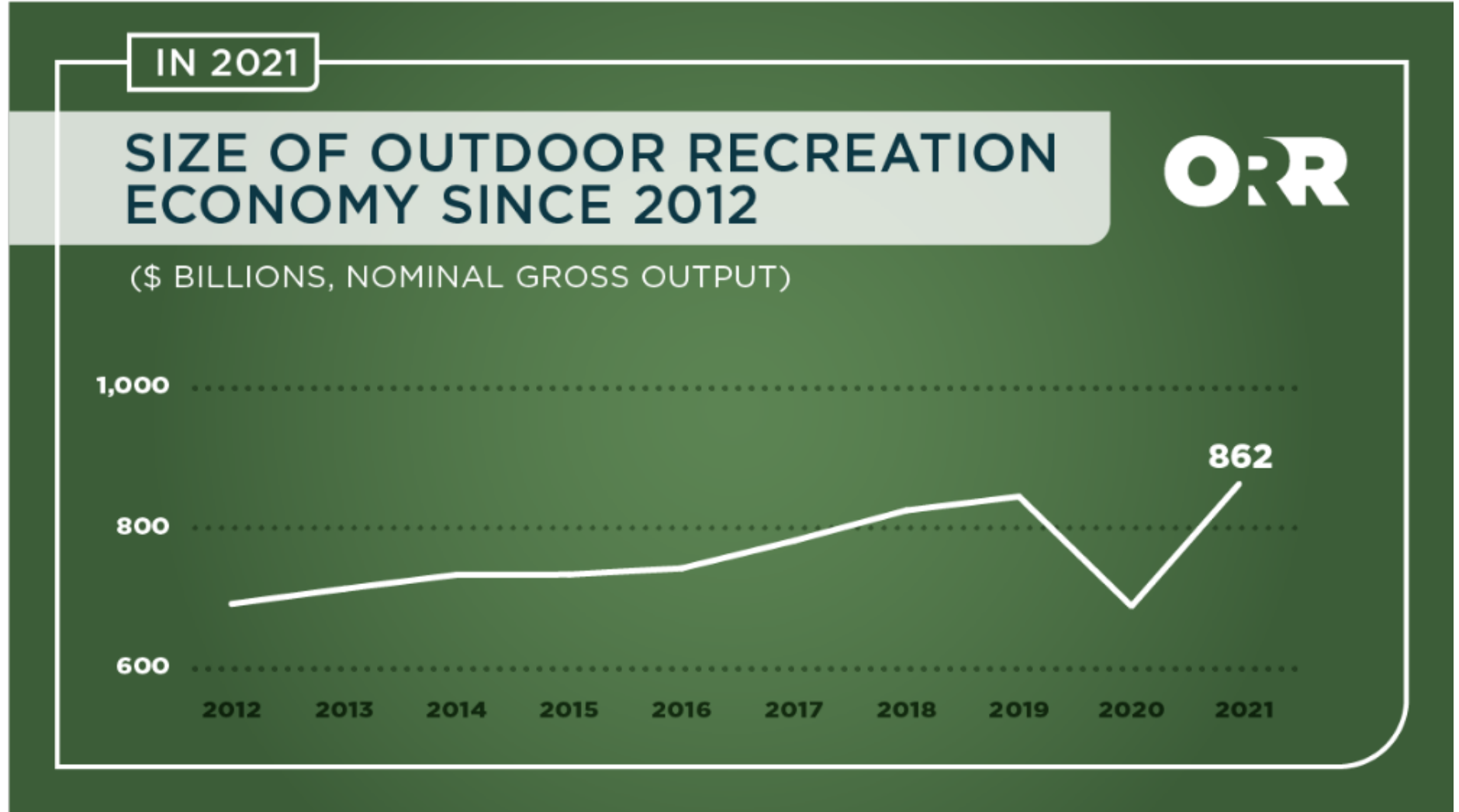
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9anUnjyFly0&embeds\\_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fhubblecontent.osi.office.net%2F&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9anUnjyFly0&embeds_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fhubblecontent.osi.office.net%2F&feature=emb_logo)

## How is outdoor recreation defined by the BEA?

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) defines outdoor recreation as “**all recreational activities undertaken for pleasure that occur outdoors.**” See appendix for activities considered.

Core Outdoor Recreation Goods and Services	Supporting Outdoor Recreation Goods and Services
<p><b>Gear &amp; Equipment</b> (e.g. boats, fishing rods, helmets, backpacks)</p> <p><b>Concessions</b> (e.g. food and drinks sold by outdoor recreation site operators, like at outdoor sporting events)</p> <p><b>Maintenance &amp; Repair</b> (e.g. upkeep of outdoor recreation equipment, as well as vehicles and bicycles)</p> <p><b>Fees</b> (e.g. expenditures on storage and docking, equipment rental, lessons, event admission, insurance, financing, veterinarian services)</p> <p><b>Fuel</b> (e.g. for recreation vehicles, ATVs, boats, planes, and others)</p>	<p><b>Travel &amp; Tourism</b> (e.g. spending on food, beverages, lodging, transportation, souvenirs, shopping as part of an outdoor recreation trip)</p> <p><b>Local Trips</b> (spending on outdoor recreation travel occurring less than 50 miles from home)</p> <p><b>Construction</b> (e.g. infrastructure like tennis courts, trails, campsites, sports fields, and marinas)</p> <p><b>Government Expenditures</b> (federal, state, and local government spending that support outdoor recreation activities)</p>

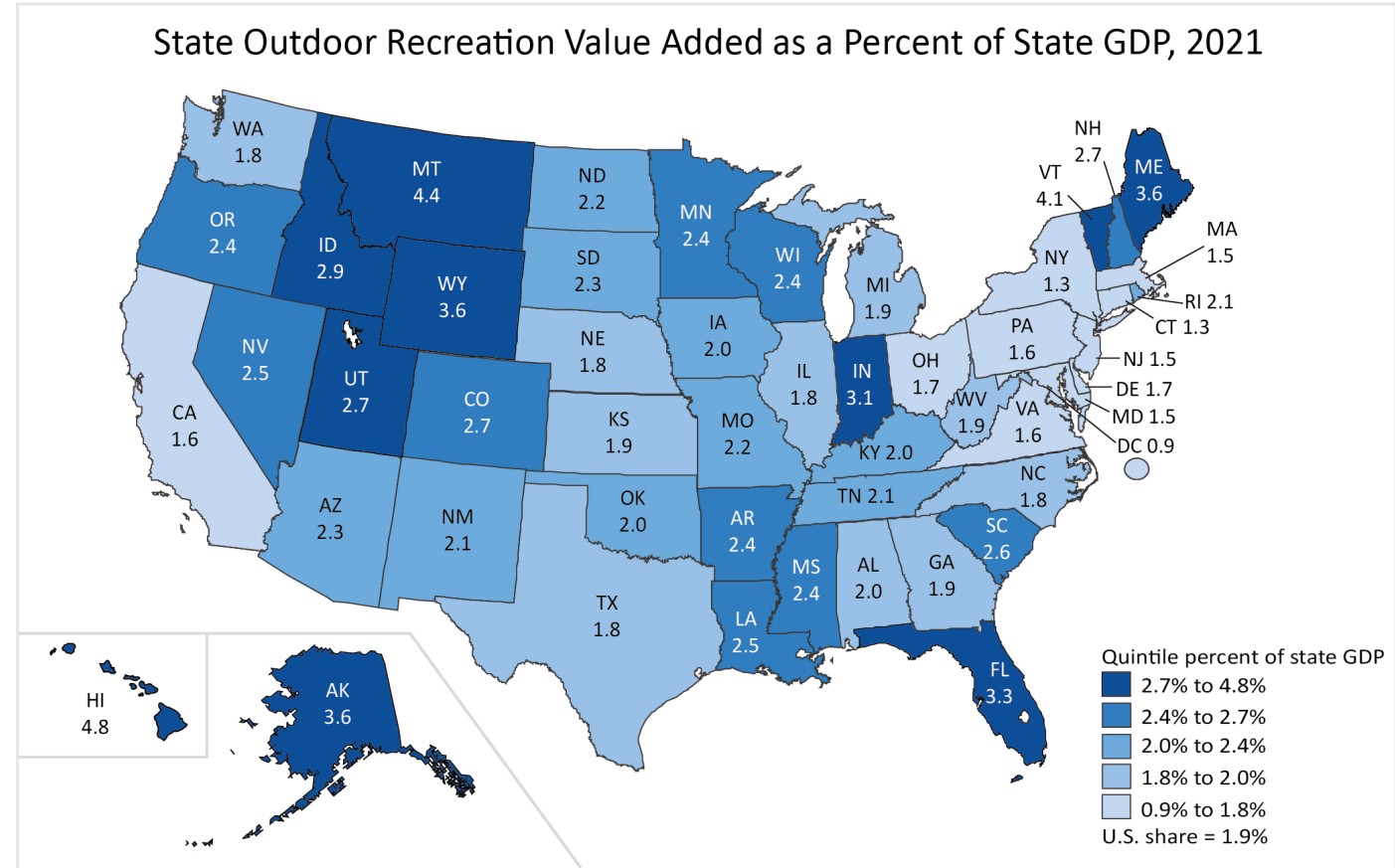
# Outdoor Recreation's Economic Impact | NATIONAL



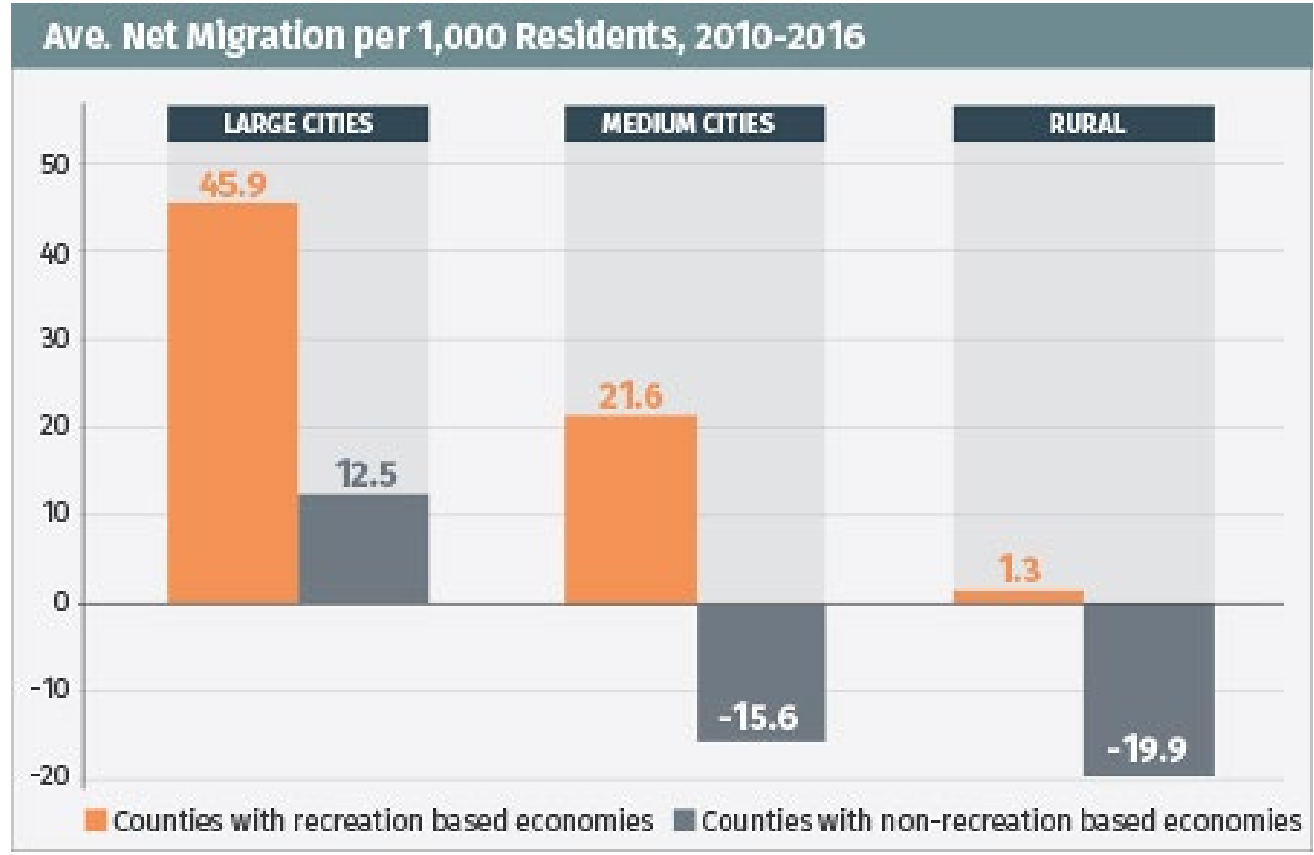
# Outdoor Recreation's Economic Impact | NATIONAL

The Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates that outdoor recreation generates **\$862 billion** in gross output and supports **4.5 million jobs**.

In 2021, outdoor recreation comprised **1.9%** of the United States GDP.



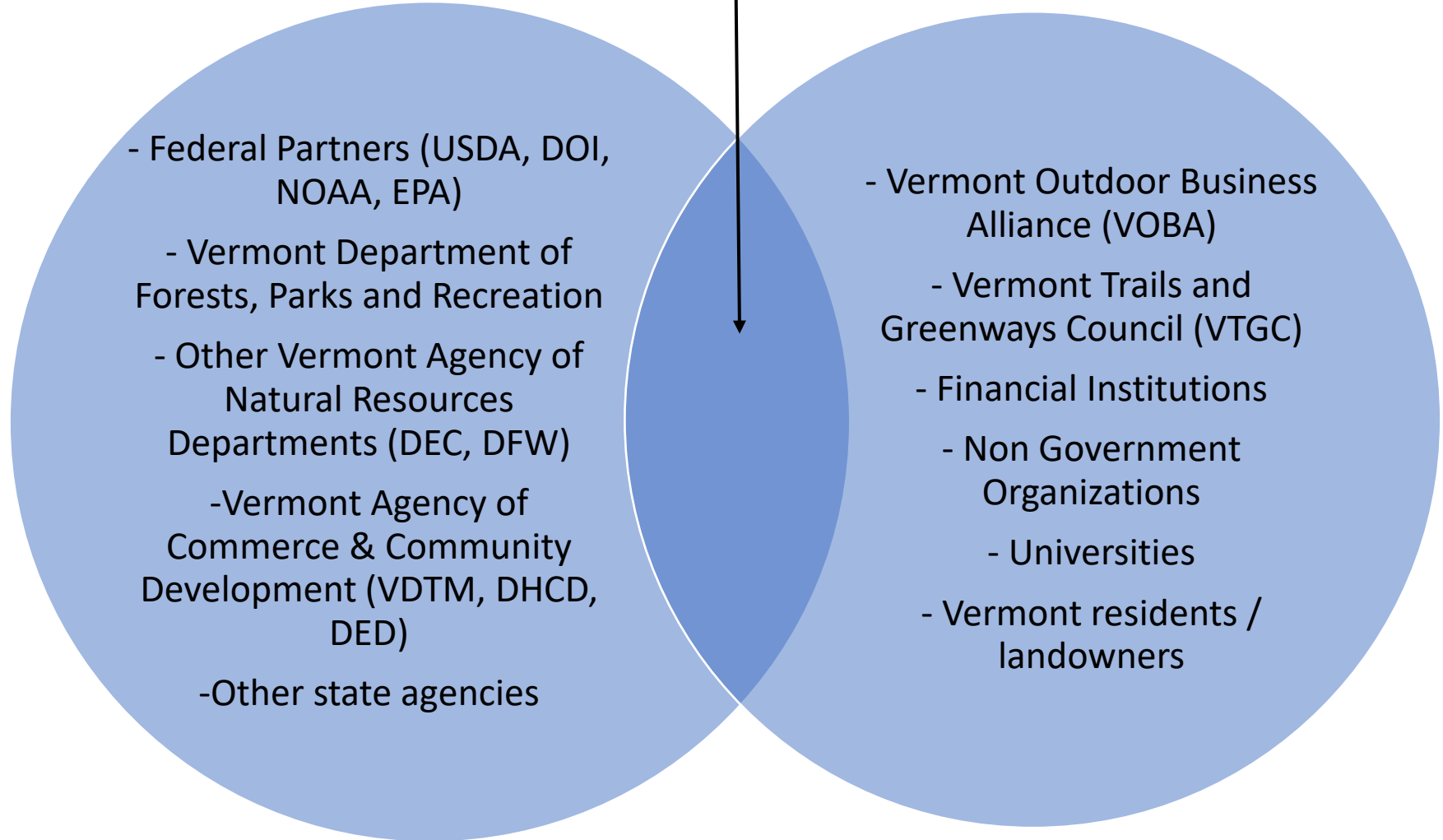
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



Source: Headwaters Economics, *Recreation Counties Attract New Residents*.

Communities with outdoor recreation-based economies attract entrepreneurs and new residents, including retirees and people with investment income.

## VOREC Program



## 2017 Community Conversations

What strategies should VOREC employ to strengthen Vermont's Outdoor Recreation Economy?

