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Vermont's Outdoor Recreation Leads Economic Recovery Across All Communities

Montpelier, VT (November 14, 2022) — As Vermonters receive the first snowflakes of the season, new national and state data shows that Vermont continues to lead the nation in outdoor recreation as a key linchpin of the State's economy.

On November 9th, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) released [data](#) on the economic impact of outdoor recreation in 2021. As the state continues to recover from the pandemic, the report shows that spending in Vermont generated by activities from snow sports to camping, hiking, boating, and biking continues to increase exponentially.

Nationally, outdoor recreation accounted for \$862 billion in consumer spending and \$1.53 billion in Vermont's spending. The contribution of Vermont's outdoor recreation to the state gross domestic product (GDP) jumped from 3.7% in 2020 to 4.1% in 2021, maintaining Vermont's rank of 3rd highest in the country behind HI and MT.

Skiing, snowboarding and other snow activities led to spending in Vermont of \$215 million in 2021, which is up from \$191 million in 2020. Conventional activities (defined by BEA as traditional outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, boating, and hunting) also grew to \$593 million in 2021, from \$505 million in 2020.

"The numbers showing retail trade growing to \$310 million in 2021, from \$268 million in 2020, along with increases in manufacturing, validates what Vermont's outdoor retailers and brands have been experiencing throughout the seasons. As businesses did better, they hired more workers, as the data shows Vermont's outdoor workforce increased by 17.6% in 2021, giving Vermont the largest increase

in the New England region,” said, Mike Schmidt, Vice Chair of VOBA and Co-Principal of Velocity Sales & Marketing.

“For the second year in a row Vermont saw well over 1 million visitors at state-owned parks and record-breaking participation in outdoor recreation activities. Participation numbers reaffirm the state’s recent historic investments in outdoor recreation, which include over \$25 million directed by Governor Scott to fund outdoor recreation grant programs.” said Michael Snyder, Chair of [Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative](#) (VOREC) and Commissioner of Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

Michelle Ramirez, Marketing Manager of Bolton Valley Ski Resort, said, “These metrics follow trends we’ve seen on the slopes at Bolton Valley. Acknowledging the barriers of those who have been historically excluded from outdoor recreation is the foundation for our inclusivity efforts, which has led us to partner with local BIPOC groups and to reduce costs to gear and lift access. Making safe spaces for underrepresented communities is pivotal to Bolton.”

On November 10, one hundred Vermont outdoor businesses gathered at HULA in Burlington for VOBA’s Fourth Annual Outdoor Economy Sessions, validating the wide-ranging impact of the BEA data through representation by the highly diversified sector across the state. Outdoor industry leaders in manufacturing, retail, resorts, media and marketing, and education envisioned a future for outdoor recreation by engaging in strategic discussions about business development, workforce, and marketing as well as approaches to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion and recreation infrastructure.

“This week’s report and event indicate Vermont’s future is full of opportunities for outdoor places, people, products and professions. A strong outdoor sector helps our urban and rural communities flourish and work towards equitable access to healthy landscapes and recreational communities across the Green Mountains,” said Kelly Ault, Executive Director of VOBA.

“Growth in participation includes those new to the outdoors and from historically underrepresented populations. Communities across Vermont are identifying new and better ways to provide outdoor recreation experiences that support tourism, incentivize stewardship of outdoor resources, and provide residents with better overall health and wellness,” said Jackie Dagger, Director of VOREC.

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ABOUT VOBA

The [Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance](#) (VOBA) is a nonprofit business organization that networks, educates, collaborates, and provides support to businesses, organizations, and individuals working to strengthen, expand, attract, and retain outdoor recreation economy businesses in Vermont.

VOBA's mission is to educate Vermonters about outdoor recreation and to educate Vermont outdoor recreation businesses about business development initiatives, outdoor recreation economy policy and justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. VOBA's priority areas for 2022 include financing, workforce development, infrastructure, and sector branding.

ABOUT VOREC

The [Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative](#) (VOREC) Is a network of public/private partners organized by the state to sustain, grow and drive development in Vermont's outdoor recreation sector by leveraging natural outdoor recreation assets, brand and culture.

VOREC's five organizing principles are to grow outdoor recreation-related businesses; increase participation in outdoor recreation activities among all demographics; strengthen the quality and extent of outdoor recreation resources; increase stewardship of outdoor recreation resources and environmental quality; and promote and enjoy the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation.