

Vermont Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2019-2023





Outdoor recreation includes all recreational activities undertaken for pleasure that occur outdoors.

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Vermont Forests, Parks, and Recreation Collective Vision Statement



Vermont is the premier provider of a wide variety of exceptional, sustainable, and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities.

FPR leads the state in proactive provision, support and management of these outstanding recreational opportunities for the diverse Vermont public and visitors, while acknowledging the value and fundamental need for conserving the ecological integrity of our natural landscape for future generations. FPR's recreation management decisions are driven by science and experience and our best knowledge and interpretation of public needs and interests at large.

FPR leads a robust network of statewide recreation partners, while supported by overwhelming public support and abundant funding. FPR

provides recreational user groups with productive, consistent and responsive processes and interactions with staff to accomplish mutually beneficial goals.

FPR is the statewide clearinghouse for information, education, and communication for outdoor recreation.

FPR's recreation leadership results in healthy and safe residents, vibrant communities, a thriving economy, and healthy ecosystems. Through our leadership, Vermonters and visitors recognize that a healthy society has a strong ethical connection to the land.



PHILIP B. SCOTT
Governor



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

December 9, 2019

Gwenevere P. Smith
Chief, Recreation Programs Branch
National Park Service
100 Alabama Street, SW 1924 Bldg.
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am pleased to present you with Vermont's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2019 (SCORP). This SCORP reflects not only extensive public outreach and input, but also the priority my Administration has placed on outdoor recreation in Vermont. The SCORP is important for Vermont's economy, as well as the well-being and health of Vermonters and their connection to the stewardship of our lands and natural resources. During my tenure, through the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR), additional resources have been deployed for recreation on our state lands, and in supporting outdoor recreation initiatives led by outdoor recreation businesses and other stakeholders and our Vermont cities, towns and villages.

In addition, in June of 2017, I issued an Executive Order which created a Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC). The VOREC, chaired by the Commissioner of FPR, was created to identify and engage outdoor recreation businesses and other stakeholders to collaboratively promote prudent stewardship of state recreation assets and market the outdoor recreation values and attributes of Vermont to effectively foster economic growth. Through VOREC, we have heard from and connected with hundreds of Vermonters who believe in the power of outdoor recreation for their communities. The input we received through the VOREC outreach process is reflected in this SCORP as well as input from focus groups, one-on-one interviews with state lands staff, advice from a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and thousands of public survey responses.

The SCORP will help guide how Vermont continues to provide world-class outdoor recreation assets, opportunities and experiences. The action plan in this SCORP is an exciting opportunity because not only will it result in the best use of Land and Water Conservation Funds and Recreational Trails Program funding, but in a better Vermont for residents and visitors alike.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Philip B. Scott", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

109 STATE STREET ♦ THE PAVILION ♦ MONTPELIER, VT 05609-0101 ♦ WWW.VERMONT.GOV
TELEPHONE: 802.828.3333 ♦ FAX: 802.828.3339 ♦ TDD: 802.828.3345



State of Vermont
Commissioner's Office
Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2
Montpelier, VT 05620-3801
<http://fpr.vermont.gov>

Agency of Natural Resources
Michael C. Snyder, Commissioner

[phone] 802-828-1534
[fax] 802-828-1399

Dear Vermonters,

I am pleased to share with you the culmination of five years of increased attention and energy for outdoor recreation through our Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). This plan was prepared under the direction of the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and with significant assistance from the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont. The preparation of this plan was financed in part through a planning grant from the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, as amended).

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been key to providing outdoor recreation assets to Vermonters and visitors alike: nearly every town in Vermont has a park, playground or other public outdoor recreation facility conserved and/or developed with these funds. In order to continue to receive these funds, each state must complete a SCORP every five years. While this is a requirement for this federal funding assistance, these plans also offer an important opportunity to hear from the public, recreation professionals, municipal staff, and non-profit organizations about which priorities we should embrace for the next five years for outdoor recreation.

When I wrote a letter presenting the previous SCORP, we were just beginning to understand the breadth of heightened interest, need, and excitement for outdoor recreation coordination and resources in the modern age here in Vermont. While we've always embraced a tradition of vigorous outdoor activity, from our tried and true passions for hunting, fishing, hiking and skiing, among others, there is more recent and significantly growing interest in mountain biking, backcountry skiing and trail running to name just a few. Add to that the fact that the sheer numbers of people in all activity areas are going up, and this is a perfect time to take stock of our collective interests and priorities through the SCORP.

We have heard from thousands of Vermonters over the past few years about their hopes and dreams for outdoor recreation, and the opportunity is clear: now is the moment to tell the story of how important it is to individuals, communities, volunteers, and Vermont's future. To make real the enormous potential related benefits—from local economic development to health and wellness and environmental awareness—we must implement the Action Plan in this SCORP with a professional and science-driven approach to best achieve the power of outdoor recreation's potential in all aspects of Vermont life.

I thank you again for your interest and assistance and I encourage all of you to engage with us in this effort and look forward to what the next five years will bring for outdoor recreation—and its many important positive outcomes—in Vermont.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael C. Snyder".
Michael C. Snyder



Acknowledgements

The production of this plan was made possible through the cooperation and assistance of many individuals, organizations, and agencies. The State of Vermont thanks and appreciates the efforts of all who participated in developing this plan. The SCORP is a better document as a result, and we are grateful for all input received.

Due to the large number of participants and organizations, acknowledgement of individual efforts is not possible. It is our hope that these planning efforts will result in continued growth in and improvements to outdoor recreation in Vermont.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Members:

Richard Amore (ACCD)
Melissa Cate (VRPA/Burlington Parks and Recreation and Waterfront)
Holly Knox (USFS)
Walter Opuszynski (VTFPR)
Gannon Osborn (VTFPR)
Hannah Phillips (VHCB)
Tom Stuessy (VMBA/VTGC)
Craig Whipple (VTSP)
Kathryn Wrigley (VTFPR)
Bob Zaino (VT FWD)
Vermont Trails and Greenways Council

Prepared for:

Vermont Department of Forests,
Parks and Recreation

Phil Scott,
Governor of the State of Vermont

Julie Moore, *Secretary of the Agency of
Natural Resources*

Michael C. Snyder,
*Commissioner of the Department of
Forests, Parks and Recreation*

Rebecca Washburn, *Director of Lands
Administration & Recreation*

Jessica Savage,
*Recreation Program Manager,
Vermont Department of Forests, Parks
and Recreation*

Prepared by:

The Center for Rural Studies at the
University of Vermont

Jane Kolodinsky, *Director*

Amy Kelsey, *Research Specialist*

Kelly Hamshaw, *Research Specialist*

Steven Kostell, *Assistant Professor*

Kati Gallagher, *Research Assistant*

Special thanks to:

Lisa Chase,
University of Vermont Extension

The preparation of this plan was financed in part through a planning grant from the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, as amended).

Executive Summary

Vermont's landscape of forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, farms, and human communities provides a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities. These natural and recreational assets draw people to visit and live in Vermont. It is essential that these assets are wisely managed and strengthened to support ecological integrity, to enrich Vermonters' quality of life, and to sustain and enhance the value of the Vermont brand. Climate change, globalization, and economic challenges threaten Vermont's working landscape of family forests and farms. Understanding how these trends and challenge will impact recreation priorities for residents and visitors alike is critical to ensuring a sustainable future for outdoor recreation that is inclusive, accessible, and resilient. The Vermont SCORP for 2019-2023 outlines priorities and goals to guide outdoor recreation planning, policies, programs, and investments.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) oversaw the development of this SCORP. The Committee included a range of members representing outdoor recreation users and providers. The Committee provided input into the methodology and survey instruments and assisted in the identification and development of the final priorities, objectives, and strategies outlined in the plan.

Strong evidence from the public recreation user and recreation provider surveys, public meetings, and the recreation manager focus group illustrates that outdoor recreation is an important driver of Vermonters' wellbeing, community connections, and economic vitality. More than 60% of public user survey respondents indicated that outdoor recreation was "essential" to their household while nearly one third indicated that it was "very important." Vermonters enjoy a variety of recreation opportunities; when asked to report their most favorite recreation activity, hiking, hunting, and mountain biking emerged as the top three favorite

activities. Respondents also identified barriers that affect their ability to recreate. These barriers include a lack of time due to work and family obligations, time and distance required to recreate, and the expense of equipment.

On the recreation provider side, limited resources to fund organizational budgets (77.7% of respondents), concerns about budget stability on a year-to-year basis (67.7% of respondents), and having a limited capacity to serve increased demand (64.5% of respondents) were rated the top three management challenges. A majority of provider respondents reported increased funding for capacity building within recreation provider organizations (63.3%) and supporting ecological and conservation goals (62.1%) as being either "very important" or "essential" priorities. Among Vermont Forests, Parks, and Recreation's (VT-FPR) public recreation managers, strategies related to the stewardship of natural resources and recreational areas is of greatest significance (42%). The second priority area for VT-FPR Recreation Managers was stakeholder communication, coordination, and engagement (20%).

The input garnered through the 2019 SCORP development process, including public meetings, and resident and provider surveys, forms the foundation of the 2019 SCORP and the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan. This SCORP identifies five key priority areas, as well as objectives and strategies to advance Vermont in the priority areas. It is the task of VT-FPR, Vermont residents, visitors, and other recreation providers to carry these actions and ideas forward to enrich outdoor recreation opportunities for all. Objectives and strategies have been developed as guidelines for each priority for achieving an inclusive, accessible, and resilient future for Vermont's outdoor recreation assets.

2019 Vermont SCORP Priorities and Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan

This Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan focuses on five priority areas and identifies 18 objectives and 80 strategies for the 2019-2023 planning period.



Priority 1: Stewardship of Natural Resources and Recreational Areas

- Objective 1: Support ecological integrity, conservation goals, and environmental quality in recreation planning and management
- Objective 2: Manage recreational assets and resources
- Objective 3: Cultivate political and public support for funding new and existing recreation and conservation efforts



Priority 2: Stakeholder Communication, Coordination, and Engagement

- Objective 1: Cultivate a Land Ethic/Recreation Ethic for all Vermonters and visitors
- Objective 2: Facilitate clear communication regarding recreation assets
- Objective 3: Ensure clear and transparent regulations, policies, permitting, and decision-making processes
- Objective 4: Continue to provide strong support for trail and recreation based non-profit groups and their volunteers



Priority 3: Public Participation and Access for All

- Objective 1: Provide resources to Vermont's outdoor recreation organizations to implement diversity and equity strategies to meet the needs of all Vermonters and visitors
- Objective 2: Engage new and underserved audiences in outdoor recreation activities
- Objective 3: Expand and strengthen public-private partnerships with private enterprises, schools, and other youth development agencies to introduce all youth to a range of outdoor recreation opportunities
- Objective 4: Provide support and remove barriers to private landowners hosting public recreation access and/or amenities such as trails on their lands



Priority 4: Community Connections, Health, and Wellness

- Objective 1: Enhance opportunities for community health and wellness through outdoor recreation
- Objective 2: Strengthen livability of communities through outdoor recreation
- Objective 3: Increase community capacity for outdoor recreation



Priority 5: Economic Vitality and Tourism

- Objective 1: Pursue marketing and branding initiatives to promote Vermont's outdoor recreation assets
- Objective 2: Provide professional support to regional and statewide outdoor recreation initiatives
- Objective 3: Develop public/private partnerships with businesses and with Vermont education and community-based providers to cultivate the outdoor recreation talent pipeline, and to promote compelling career pathways.
- Objective 4: Provide continued and increasing support for VOREC and related outdoor recreation economy initiatives

Introduction

Outdoor recreation plays an essential and outsized role in the lives and livelihoods of Vermonters, and has for decades, if not centuries. Vermont depends upon its environment for the positive health and well-being outcomes of outdoor activity as well as for the quality of life and economic activity that Vermonters associate with natural and working landscapes. Today, Vermont boasts an impressive range of recreational activities that reflect both cultural traditions as well as modern innovations- especially given the state's relatively small size. Outdoor recreation has an important role in generating economic activity within the state, leveraging public and private funds, and attracting tourists from all over the world.

The Long Trail, built by the Green Mountain Club between 1910 and 1930, is the oldest long-distance hiking trail in the United States. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) undertook a wide range of recreation projects in Vermont in the 1930s and 1940s. State Forester Perry Merrill utilized the help of the CCC to cut ski trails, build parks and roads and increase access to state lands throughout Vermont, including construction of skiing facilities, picnic and camping areas, and beaches on state forests and parks. When Vermont's Trapp Family Lodge opened its cross-country ski center in 1968, it was the first commercial cross-country ski center in the nation. Jake Burton Carpenter personally made the first Burton snowboards by hand in his garage in Londonderry, Vermont in the late 1970s.



It is important to recognize that the unique assets and conditions that support Vermont's outdoor recreation opportunities require thoughtful stewardship, coordination, and investment. Shifts in statewide demographic trends point toward an older resident population. Simultaneously, national demographic trends reflect a more racially and ethnically diverse population. These trends emphasize the importance of an inclusive Vermont, one that removes barriers to participation in outdoor recreation so that people of all ages and backgrounds may take part. Climate change, globalization, and economic challenges threaten Vermont's working landscape of family forests and farms. Understanding how these trends and challenge will impact recreation priorities for residents and visitors alike is critical to ensuring a sustainable future for outdoor recreation that is inclusive, accessible, and resilient. Many communities across Vermont have embraced outdoor recreation as an important component of their economic development and rural viability efforts. This SCORP presents priorities, objectives, and strategies to reinforce and enhance Vermont's standing as a premier outdoor recreation location for Vermonters and visitors, by supporting its strengths and identifying opportunities strengths and identifying opportunities for improvement and innovation.



Vermont 2019 Outdoor Recreation Action Plan Priorities

- Priority 1: Stewardship of Natural Resources and Recreational Areas
- Priority 2: Stakeholder Communication, Coordination, and Engagement
- Priority 3: Public Participation and Access for All
- Priority 4: Community Connections, Health, and Wellness
- Priority 5: Economic Vitality and Tourism

Why SCORP

The SCORP assesses the need for and provisioning of outdoor recreation in Vermont and sets forth a plan of action for achieving a desired vision for outdoor recreation. States are required to update their SCORP every five years to remain eligible to receive federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Recreational Trails Program. The Vermont SCORP outlines priorities and objectives to guide outdoor recreation policies, programs, and investments to achieve those objectives. The state's many public recreation providers will reference this document in grant-funding requests to demonstrate alignment with the SCORP's priorities, objectives, and strategies.



LWCF

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF) became effective in January 1965 to create parks and open spaces, protect wilderness and forests, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Funds are derived from federal recreation fees, Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) revenues from leasing oil and gas sites in coastal waters, federal surplus real property sales, and a portion of federal motorboat fuel taxes. Funds are apportioned to federal agencies, and to the 50 states and 6 territories through the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS). In Vermont, LWCF is administered by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation. LWCF grants provide

up to 50% matching assistance to the state and local governments for acquisition of land for parks and public outdoor recreation, development of new facilities, and renovation of existing facilities for outdoor recreation.

Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal assistance program of the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), administered at the State level, providing funding for development and maintenance of recreational trail projects. Both motorized and non-motorized trail projects may qualify for assistance. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR) provides RTP grants for a wide range of recreational trail activities such as hiking, mountain biking, walking, running, paddling (water-based trail use), cross-country and back-country skiing, nature-based interpretive trail use, equestrian, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicular riding or other off-road motorized recreational uses.

How the SCORP Impacts Vermonters

The SCORP offers providers, planners, and users a roadmap for supporting inclusive, accessible, and resilient recreation opportunities within the state for the five-year period and beyond. It presents insights gained from the public and provider surveys specifically fielded for the development of this SCORP and summarizes additional planning



processes and initiatives. The Action Plan identifies priorities, objectives, and strategies for guiding decision-making and investments in Vermont's outdoor recreation sector--from capacity and programming to facilities and infrastructure.

Accomplishments since the Last SCORP

This section of the SCORP highlights a selection of VT FPR's accomplishments since the 2014 SCORP, as well as those of a few key partner organizations. This is not an exhaustive list, rather it is a sample of activities reflecting a concerted effort to enhance outdoor recreation in Vermont. These accomplishments reflect numerous collaborative initiatives involving public, private, and non-profit stakeholder groups.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Funded Projects

Since the last SCORP, Vermont has continued to select projects on both state lands and in communities, with roughly half of its apportionment going to each side of the program. Overall, Vermont has improved recreational access on state and municipal lands with LWCF funds, and seen innovative and important projects funded. (Additional details on Vermont wetlands and Vermont's open project selection process are available in Appendix A and B.)

Highlighted projects include:

- 2014: FPR received \$62,500 towards a \$125,000 mountain bike multi use trail construction project at Little River State Park
- 2017: The town of Lincoln improved the Potato Hill Park Playground at the Lincoln Community School to include more diverse and accessible natural playground elements. The school was awarded \$100,000 towards the estimated \$230,000 project.
- 2019: The City of Winooski received \$147,750 towards part of the renovations at the Meyers Park Pool.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Funded Projects

Between 2010 and 2020, more than \$5 million of RTP funds have been allocated to trail projects in Vermont State Parks and State Forests, and another

\$5 million has been allocated to municipalities and non-profit organizations for community trail projects, resulting in over \$10 million federal dollars coming into Vermont during this 10-year period, and helping leverage close to \$30 million in total project costs. Of the municipal and non-profit projects that took place within a single county, Washington and Chittenden counties had the most projects during this time period (19 and 15, respectively) and the most funding granted through RTP (\$252,250 and \$172,245, respectively). Bennington and Essex Counties each had one project, and an additional project shared with another county.

Changes within Vermont Forests, Parks, and Recreation

The 2014-2019 Vermont SCORP identified a need for additional recreation capacity within state government. That need was communicated both by user groups and by FPR staff, management, and leadership. Despite limited state funding, FPR found an opportunity through the Lintilhac Foundation to hire a statewide recreation coordinator. The purpose of the recreation coordinator was to help support, re-emphasize, and professionalize recreation services for state lands, and to support partnerships with volunteer recreation and trails groups operating on private lands. Over the next few years, the department continued to review systems, policies, and capacity to better realize its mission and goals. FPR hired its first two Field Recreation Specialists in 2017 and followed by adding another Field Recreation Specialist in 2018. The Recreation Specialists brought new skill sets to the department and share those beyond the boundaries of their districts. There is now a Recreation Management Team that meets quarterly, better connecting state lands staff across the state.

Since the last SCORP was drafted, FPR has restructured its Lands Administration Division to create a Lands Administration and Recreation Division, effectively restoring a Recreation Division that was removed in the 1990s under budget constraints and different leadership. LWCF and RTP Funds are now both managed by this Division. As additional hires are made throughout the department, recreation is a greater focus, infusing

The Outdoor Recreation Industry Confluence Accords (The Accords)

Recognizing a growing confluence of states creating outdoor recreation offices with the purpose of cultivating a strong outdoor recreation industry within their respective states, directors and delegates from the founding eight member states drafted and signed the Outdoor Recreation Industry Confluence Accords (The Accords) in 2018.

The Accords enumerate four pillars of the outdoor recreation industry and twelve common principles to which the Confluence States have adopted and committed to work collectively toward. These four pillars work in synergy to promote not only the outdoor recreation economy, but also the quality of life of each of our state's residents and visitors:

1. Conservation and stewardship
2. Education and workforce training
3. Economic development
4. Public health and wellness

*excerpted from Outdoor Recreation Industry Confluence of States Charter and Governance at <https://www.confluenceofstates.com/new-page>

the department with new energy, skills, and capacity. The Lands Administration and Recreation Division is an evolving unit and its structure will continue to be responsive as demands and trends change.

2016 Recreation Summit Summary and Action Plan

On April 27, 2016, the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) hosted a Recreation Partners' Summit in Waterbury, Vermont. Over 80 people attended, representing recreation and trails' nonprofits, state and federal recreation staff and other interested parties. These partners engaged in facilitated activities in order to craft a Recreation Action Plan for Vermont, and especially VTGC and FPR staff.

Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative

In June of 2017, Governor Phil Scott issued an Executive Order creating the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) to:

- Contribute to efforts to market the outdoor recreation values and attributes of Vermont to effectively foster economic growth;
- Examine and promote laws, policies and initiatives that encourage outdoor recreation

- business;
- Strengthen stewardship of outdoor recreation resources and the organizations that support them;
- Mobilize the members of the VOREC to develop and implement the initiatives of the VOREC Committee; and
- Encourage, incentivize and guide the development of community-oriented outdoor recreation assets increasing economic impacts.



A steering committee, chaired by the Commissioner of FPR, and made up of Vermont businesses and nonprofits including outdoor manufacturers, retailers, brand representatives, trail and user groups, conservation organizations, and state government guides VOREC's work. The committee's purpose is to engage with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including the public, to identify specific outcomes that promote business opportunities, increase participation opportunities, and strengthen the quality and stewardship of our recreational assets.

As part of the eight founding states with "Offices of Outdoor Recreation," Vermont has been a national leader in the movement to focus on the multiple benefits of outdoor recreation economies. The VOREC steering committee assisted in drafting the Confluence Accords, of which Vermont is an original signatory.

The steering committee hosted seven public meetings across the state in 2018 to gather input from Vermonters on four broad themes, or pillars and guiding principles of the initiative, including:

- Strengthening the stewardship of Vermont's recreational resources;
- Strengthening the quality and extent of recreational resources in Vermont;
- Increasing opportunities for diverse individuals and groups to participate in, lead, and "own" Vermont's recreation industry and culture;
- Promoting entrepreneurial and business opportunities in both outdoor recreation and other businesses, including for-profit and nonprofit pursuits.

And in 2018, VOREC added a focus on health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation, adopting the Confluence Accords Wellness Principle.

The steering committee took the insights gathered through public meetings and formulated a set of recommendations that was presented to the governor. Those recommendations have informed this SCORP and have also informed the surveys and public meetings that occurred to assist in drafting the SCORP.

While VOREC is a relatively new initiative, numerous accomplishments have already been achieved including:

- Establishment of a competitive Grant Program with \$100,000 in funds available to communities for outdoor recreation related projects in its first year and \$200,000 in year two.
- Establishment of the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA)
- Creation of the First-Time Happy Camper Loaner Program, a partnership between Vermont state parks and a local outdoor retailer (and its gear manufacturers) to provide new campers with the equipment they need to enjoy first-time camping in Vermont's state parks.

Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance

In January of 2018, Governor Scott endorsed a VOREC recommendation for a private sector-led initiative to increase and expand the outdoor sector. Outdoor recreation businesses held a series of focus groups throughout 2018 and in November 2018 established the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA) as a non-profit organization that would operate independently from, but work with, state government and VOREC. A Board of Directors developed a mission and established a structure for how VOBA will be led, coordinated, and organized. VOBA became a 501(c) non-profit organization with a charitable purpose to educate Vermonters on outdoor recreation and Vermont outdoor recreation businesses on business development, collaboration opportunities and outdoor recreation economy policy.

In 2019, over 150 outdoor recreation industry leaders attended three VOBA Roundtables to explore ways to support and grow the sector, specifically in the areas of financing, workforce development, infrastructure, and sector branding. Workforce initiatives are supporting the recruitment, retention, and development of industry talent and marketing efforts are elevating new Vermont entrepreneurs and the overall industry. In October 2019, VOBA and VOREC co-hosted the first annual Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economy Summit with VOREC 115 businesses, non-profits, and state departments

to network explore strategies for Vermont's future outdoor recreation economy culture in workforce, financing, marketing, infrastructure, stewardship and conservation.

Forest Action Plan

In 2017, the VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation completed the 2017 Vermont Forest Action Plan. The plan is a proactive, comprehensive, and balanced approach to the management of Vermont's forests. It provides an assessment of conditions and trends of the forest resources in the state, discusses threats, and identifies priority areas on which to focus resources. The plan notes that in Vermont, forest-based recreation has outpaced forest products in economic value. While encouraging from an economic perspective, the growing demands on public land stretches staffing and raises resource concerns. Much of the work done to complete the Forest Action Plan is relevant to SCORP, as it focuses on working lands economic vitality, water quality protection, forest-based recreation, forest fragmentation and parcelization, and policies, rules, and laws- all of which play a role in recreational use of forested public lands.

Vermont Trails and Greenways Council

The Vermont Trails & Greenways Council (VTGC) is a non-profit organization established by the Vermont Legislature in 1995 whose mission is to ensure that people will always have access to adequate land and water-based trails and greenways in Vermont. The Council's driving force is the diverse membership of organizations managing recreational trails systems and infrastructure, and the cohesiveness that results from bringing these groups together under a unified voice. The VTGC assists the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in shaping recreation policy and fosters partnerships with private organizations, municipalities, and trail-based communities. In 2016, VTGC conducted an economic impact report. The report found that four trail networks alone generate \$29.6 million in economic activity annually in the State of Vermont. The study was the first of its kind to look at the direct economic impact

from a sample of Vermont's premier regional trail networks, uniquely combining multiple forms of motorized and non-motorized recreation managed by non-profit organizations.

Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife's mission is the conservation of all species of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont. Since the last SCORP, this Department has created a Wildlife Action Plan as well as a Strategic Plan, both of which create the structure for wildlife-based recreation in Vermont. Specifically, the Department is addressing changes in Vermont's demographics, increases in posted land as well as wildlife population needs by proactively creating policies, education and outreach programs. Strategies for increasing and attracting wildlife-based recreationists include the popular Let's Go Fishing program, youth programming as well as wildlife-viewing strategies (Vermont leads the nation in wildlife-viewing and especially bird-watching).

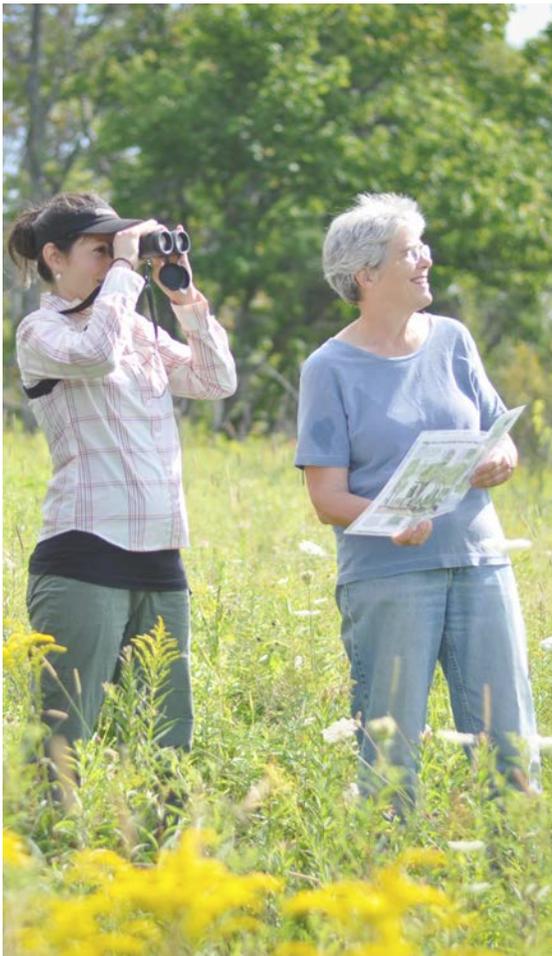


Process & Methodology for this SCORP

This SCORP incorporates a number of changes in both process and presentation since our 2014 SCORP. These changes reflect a renewed effort to create a planning document that is comprehensive, useful, and accessible to all who may refer to it in their planning efforts.

Use of Online Surveys

On a national basis, telephone and mail surveys were once the primary means of data collection in SCORP planning process. Response rates to telephone and mail surveys continue to decline, while the costs associated with conducting them are substantial. Nationwide, there is a trend to move toward other data collection methods, particularly those utilizing online surveys, forums, and other online data collection platforms. This is the first Vermont SCORP that has used online survey tools as one of several forms of data collection employed, to collect input from the public and from recreation providers. More detail on the use of online surveys is provided in the Methodology section.



Methodology

Technical Advisory Committee

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to oversee the development of the SCORP. The committee included a range of members representing outdoor recreation users and providers. (See Acknowledgements for a full list of TAC Members.) The Committee provided input into the methodology and survey instruments and assisted in the identification and development of the final objectives and actions outlined in the plan.

Public User Survey

To prepare this SCORP, Vermont residents were encouraged to participate in an online survey, at one of two public meetings, and/or via written comments, from mid-August until mid-September, 2019. The goals of the survey were to understand use patterns, level of demand for certain activities, and perceived benefits and barriers to recreating. Recruiting efforts used existing outreach channels such as Vermont's Front Porch Forum, a free online forum organized by community across the state, press releases in local newspapers, and municipal email lists. Additional outreach channels included the Vermont State Parks Facebook page, Vermont Recreation and Parks Association newsletters, and recreation user-groups' social media outlets. Given a limited timeframe and budget, the survey methodology selected was a non-probability-based convenience sample, for which participants "opt-in." The primary advantages of this approach include timely and inexpensive access to participants. The primary disadvantages include possible bias and sampling error. The survey included 23 questions, both closed and open-ended. All questions were optional and logic was employed to direct respondents to only those questions that were relevant based on earlier responses. Several of the questions asked respondents to rate or evaluate multiple activities or statements.

Provider Survey

Organizations, municipalities, outdoor recreation businesses, and relevant state agencies were invited to take part in an online survey developed to gather perspectives, priorities, and insights from the range of entities that provide or support outdoor recreation in Vermont. The goal of this survey was to better understand the opportunities and challenges from the outdoor recreation supplier's perspective. The sample was not designed to be representative. The survey included a total of 40 questions, both closed and open-ended. All questions were optional and logic was employed to direct respondents to only those questions that were relevant based on earlier responses. Invitees



were given the option to complete the survey as a group on behalf of their organization or to direct it to certain individuals whose roles would be most relevant. Several of the questions asked participants to rate or evaluate multiple activities or statements.

Public Meetings

Two public meetings were held in August 2019 to engage community members in facilitated conversations and to gather input about their experiences and priorities. The first public meeting was held in Brattleboro on August 19, 2019 and the second public meeting was held in Waterbury on August 27, 2019. A total of 35 community members participated in the two public meetings. Participants submitted their contributions via written comment cards regarding the key themes and had the opportunity to provide their priorities on the plan's draft objectives using a dot survey technique.



VT FPR Recreation Managers

Center for Rural Studies staff facilitated an interactive exercise with representatives from the FPR Recreation Management Team during a staff meeting on September 25, 2019. After a brief background presentation, the managers were asked to work in small groups to brainstorm specific actions needed to make progress in each of the five key theme areas. Their work generated 81 potential actions that they later prioritized using a dot survey technique.

Other Sources of Public & Provider Input

Please see the Action Plan for detail on additional sources of public and provider input used in the development of this plan.





Municipal, State, Federal, and NGO Recreation Facilities and Resources

Municipal Resources

Many of Vermont’s municipalities provide programming and maintain infrastructure to support a variety of recreation opportunities at the local level. From managing parks, playgrounds, and trail systems to operating field sport and water-based recreation facilities, municipal recreation departments have an important role in providing access to recreation resources for Vermonters in their local communities. Many municipalities provide programming that increases access to recreation at no or low costs for local residents. Beyond the resources of local recreation departments, municipalities across the state also manage town forests, conserved open spaces, and river and lakefront access points.

A 2015 report by the University of Vermont’s Center for Rural Studies and the Greater Burlington YMCA inventories community health-related resources across the state. A total of 157 municipalities completed the survey, representing 62% of the state’s 255 municipalities. Municipalities were asked to indicate the number of municipal land assets in their community. More than one fifth of those towns responding reported having no land assets that support recreation within their local community--most of which were smaller, more rural communities. Of those reporting at least one municipal land asset that provides recreation, the most frequently reported assets were public parks, playgrounds, and conservation lands.

Table 1: Municipal Land Assets

Municipal land assets	% Yes
Public Parks n=158	56.3
Playgrounds n=160	57.5
Conservation Lands n=148	53.4
Beaches n=151	27.2
Off-leash dog parks n=147	8.2
Other park resources n=128	25.0

Municipalities were asked to report the number of municipal assets that support sports (playing fields, rinks, courts, etc.). More than one quarter of the responding municipalities reported not having any sports-related assets. Nearly two thirds of the municipalities responding that they had at least one sports-related asset had a baseball field, while half had basketball courts and soccer fields. However, tennis courts, golf courses, and swimming and skating facilities, all lifetime sports that appeal to a broad range of age levels, are available in less than one-quarter of towns.

Table 2: Sports Infrastructure

Sports field and rink infrastructure items	% Yes
Baseball field	63.6
Basketball court	53.0
Soccer field	51.6
Tennis court (outdoor)	37.7
Ice rink (outdoor)	26.0
Swimming Pool	13.0
Track	12.4
State parks	11.0
Golf	6.3
Ice rink (indoor)	5.6
Tennis court (indoor)	2.2
Other n=129	8.5



The survey also asked municipalities about active transportation infrastructure. Active transportation is self-propelled or human-powered transportation, such as walking and bicycling and can link transportation choices and healthy lifestyles. The majority of towns reported not having sidewalks, cross-walks, or off road bike and pedestrian paths, emphasizing an opportunity to enhance planning and funding for more active transportation options, which simultaneously enhance outdoor recreation.

Table 3: Active Transportation Infrastructure

Active transportation items	% Yes
Reduced Speed Zones n=179	77.1
Foot paths n=174	55.7
Ped safety-related signage n=178	49.4
Sidewalks n=182	41.2
Crosswalks n=180	38.9
Off-road bike/ped paths n=169	29.6
Bike racks n=173	28.3
Ped stoplights n=172	12.2
Protected bike lanes n=170	6.5
Speed Bumps n=172	6.4
Other paths n=159	2.7

Additional insights on the outdoor recreation strengths and needs of Vermont municipalities is available on page 27 of this report, under the title “Vermont Recreation and Parks Association Survey and Municipal Perspectives.”

State Resources

A number of state agencies and departments support and manage outdoor recreation facilities. This section offers a brief summary of the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), and the resources and facilities managed by three ANR Departments-- Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR), Environmental Conservation (DEC), and Fish and Wildlife (F&W), as well as programs administered by the Agency of Transportation (VTrans).

Table 4: State Outdoor Recreation Resources & Facilities

Resource/Facility	State-managed Total
Parks/open space (acres)	360,000
Picnic Areas	38
Horse Riding Areas	2
Swimming Pools/Water Parks	1
Boat Ramps/Launches	166
Boat Docks	31
Swimming Areas/Holes, Rivers	30
Fishing Piers	18
Multi-use Trails	750
Hiking only trails (miles)	249
Cross country skiing/snowshoeing trails (miles)	941
Campgrounds	38
Campsites	2200*
Lean-tos	605
Cabins and cottages	50
Hunting lands, public (acres)	360,000
Wildlife viewing areas (acres)	360,000
Downhill skiing areas (acres)	10,000**
Ice/Rock climbing areas	3
*47 of these campsites are remote campsites ** Seven downhill ski areas, partially located on state land	

Land Acquisitions

Between 2011 and 2020, the state of Vermont acquired 17,316 acres of land. The majority of these additional lands created or added to existing river corridor easements, Wildlife Management Areas, State Forests, or State Parks. Funding sources for these acquisitions were varied, and included donations, Duck Stamp Funds, Forest Legacy Funds, Program Income, UFSW, Vermont River Conservancy, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, local and regional land trusts, and private





Public Lands Management: Emerging Trends and Approaches

Since the last SCORP, Vermont's public land managers, especially state and federal staff, have been working to understand both the increase in demand for and diversification of outdoor recreation activities. Backcountry (non-resort) skiing, connecting and/or expanding mountain bike and horse trails, providing opportunities for accessibility for wheelchairs and Other Power Driven Mobility Devices, Fat (winter) Biking and Climbing Area Management have emerged as areas needing resources and attention. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation as well as the Green Mountain National Forest have partnered often to convene groups of stakeholders and staff in order to become more proactive recreation managers for sustainable use of state and federal lands and facilities. This has resulted in national precedence for approaches such as the Backcountry Ethic for Leave No Trace and the first pilot managed backcountry skiing zone on a National Forest at Brandon Gap. These efforts continue with projects such as the Velomont (Vermont's vision for an end-to-end mountain bike trail) and a Vermont Hut Network.

In order to support these efforts on state lands, FPR has increased staff professional support and development and hired specialized staff, such as Forest Recreation Specialists, to create trail monitoring programs, identify solutions for challenges with parking area management, and respond to recreation project proposals on state lands through a pre- and full proposal process. Current efforts include crafting a state lands Electric Bicycle Policy and addressing the recreational use of drones. In Vermont, the overall approach must be proactive and coordinated in order to meet and exceed public expectations for experiences on public lands. Vermont is looking to the national model of Visitor Use Management Plans in order to guide its approach for the next five years.

fundraising efforts. The addition of this diversity of lands and waters ensures conservation, ongoing stewardship, and new opportunities for public access and outdoor recreation where appropriate. In addition, these lands offer people the opportunity to appreciate natural areas and the value of continued conservation.

Table 5: State Land Acquisitions, 2011-2019

State Lands Acquisitions 2011-2020	Acres
Acquired in Fee	17,316
Conserved via Easement	9995
Sold or Transferred	1161

Use Value Appraisal Program (Current Use)

Vermont’s Use Value Appraisal program (UVA) is another program that helps to preserve the working landscape and rural character of Vermont. The program allows enrolled land (parcels of at least 25 acres) to be taxed at its value for forest or agricultural use, rather than its fair market value. Through this program, owners of undeveloped land can realize significant tax savings. From 2011 to 2018, both the number of parcels enrolled in the UVA program, and total acreage increased steadily (Figure 1). In 2018, 18,910 parcels, comprising nearly 2.5 million acres, were enrolled under UVA, which constitutes over a third of Vermont’s land area. The UVA program does not require a landowner to open their land for public recreational uses, but does prohibit a landowner with enrolled forest land from charging a fee for someone to hunt on that land. Though access is not guaranteed, enrollment of agricultural, forest and conservation

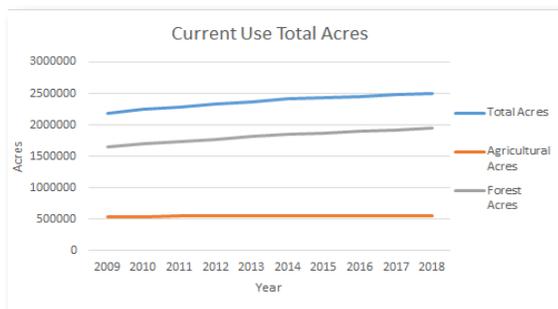


Figure 1: Total Acres Enrolled in Current Use

lands, through UVA may conserve recreational opportunities on enrolled lands and enhance public recreation on abutting or adjacent parcels.

Educational Programming

Throughout the summer months, Vermont State Parks’ certified interpretive guides offer guided walks and hikes, presentations, and outdoor activities for youth and adults in a number of state parks. Thirteen nature centers offer interpretive displays and programs at state parks. Attendance at State Park interpretive programs has been steadily growing. In 2019 nearly 50,000 people participated in State Park interpretive programs. In addition, the Outdoor Family Weekend, run in partnership with UVM Extension, has introduced families to outdoor activities for the past 22 years. In 2019, more than 170 people attended the program.

Figure 2 shows attendance in hunter, trapper, and bow education courses since 2011. Starting in 2008, combo hunter and bow hunter courses began to be offered. Taking a cue from national trends, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife (VDFW) is getting more creative in their outreach for hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation. Seminars that focus on local food, and weekends that get new adult hunters out in the woods are just some of the additions to the program.

VFWD also offers “Let’s Go Fishing” courses and “Let’s Go Fishing in Vermont State Parks” through the Reel Fun program. Park interpreters are trained to teach Let’s Go Fishing clinics to park goers, and then lend equipment so that park goers can fish. Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VFWD) also offers Green Mountain Conservation Camps for youth, which are attended by almost a thousand youth campers throughout the summer’s nine one-week sessions. DEC staff conducts “Project Wet” (Water Education for Teachers) workshops, an interdisciplinary water education program for kindergarten through twelfth graders designed to facilitate and promote awareness, appreciation, knowledge and stewardship of Vermont’s water resources. FPR sponsors Project Learning Tree (PLT). PLT is an award- winning interdisciplinary environmental education curriculum for preschool through high school.

Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

The right to hunt and fish was included in Vermont’s original constitution, and since then, few states have been able to boast higher participation rates. One in five residents, for example, held a fishing license in 2018. This is a testament to the state’s quality year-round opportunities that are available to even the most urban residents at minimal expense. But this only part of the story. At least half of all resident anglers don’t purchase a license every year and youths age 15 and younger don’t even need one. As a result, the number of Vermonters who actually fish is much larger than yearly license sales suggest. Add to this the 40,000 nonresidents who travel here every year (Lake Champlain’s world class bass fishing is a primary draw) and it’s clear fishing remains one of the most popular outdoor pursuits in the state. In contrast, the state’s aging demographics are having an outsized impact on hunter numbers. Hunters are getting older and there are simply fewer young people to take their place. However, those that remain are more avid than previous generations. They hunt more seasons, hunt more days and spend more money too. Almost all of them (70,000 resident hunters; 9,000 nonresidents) hunt deer and almost every Vermonter knows when its deer season because of the breakfasts, game suppers and craft

fairs. More than just those 16 days in November, seasons for a number of other species, ranging from black bear to ruffed grouse, open in September, and a few, like snowshoe hare, stretch well into winter. Archery and muzzleloader deer and spring wild turkey are especially popular.

Another important contribution of hunting and fishing is the local, sustainable and healthy food provided through these activities. Hunting of the state’s big game species alone provided more than 4 million servings of food in Vermont in 2018, according to analysis conducted by VFWD. Despite the rich history and benefits of hunting, demand as noted above, has been in decline in recent years (Figure 3), not only in Vermont, but nationwide, while activities such as birdwatching, wildlife viewing, and photography are increasing. One of the greatest challenges of this decline is a loss of funding for fish and wildlife conservation, which have been largely supported by license sales and taxes on guns and ammunition. VFWD continues its outreach and educational opportunities to recruit and retain a diverse range of hunting and fishing enthusiasts.

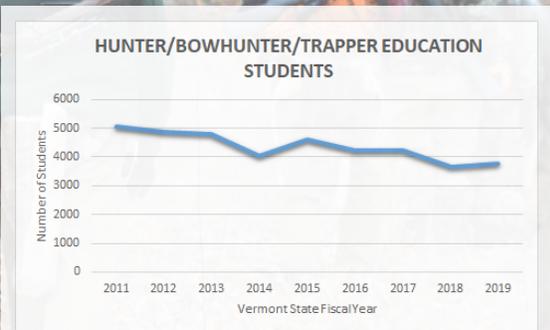
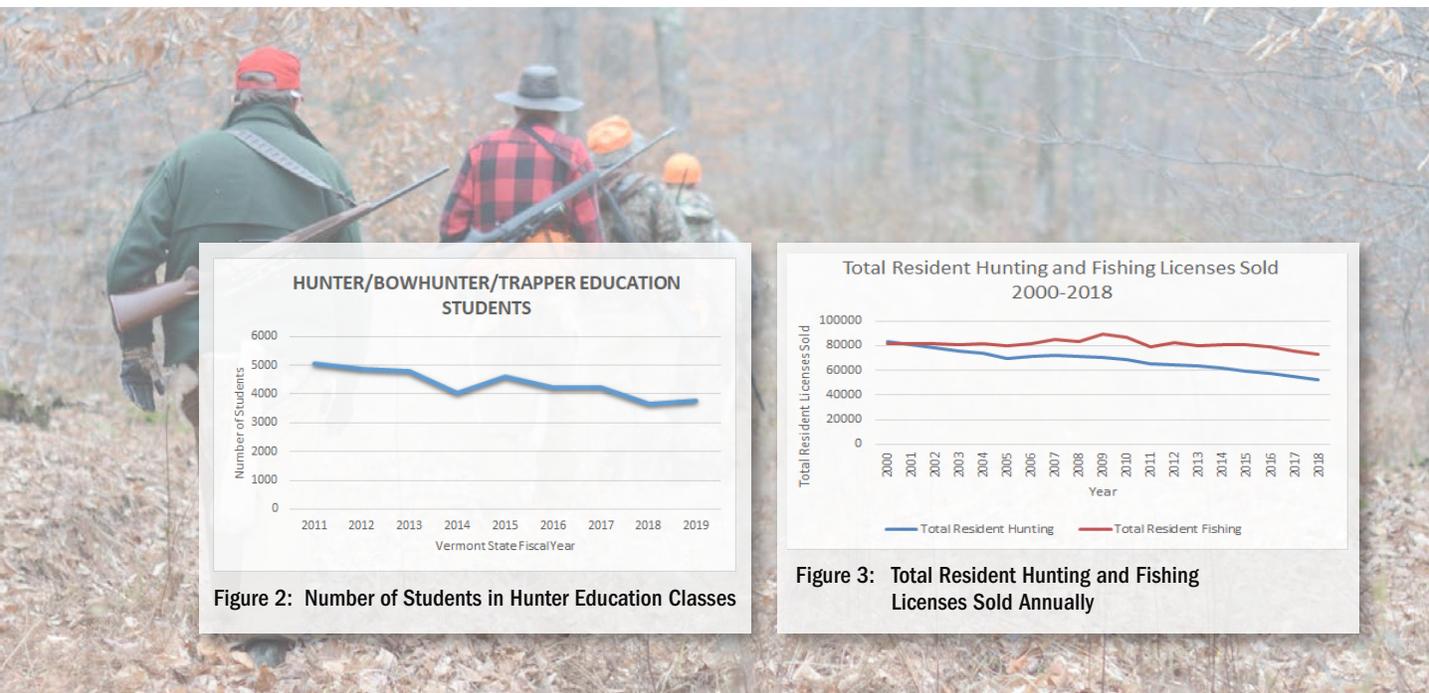


Figure 2: Number of Students in Hunter Education Classes

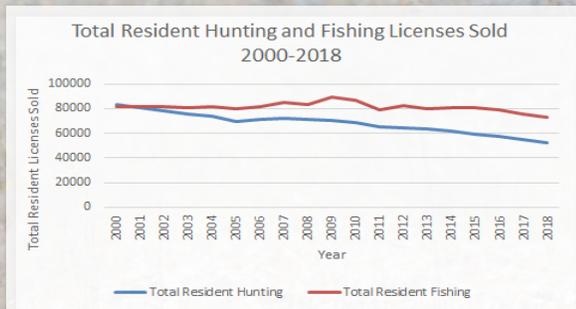


Figure 3: Total Resident Hunting and Fishing Licenses Sold Annually



Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

The VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program works to provide safe and convenient facilities for Vermonters to walk or bicycle. The program has completed a wide variety of projects that enable Vermonters to walk and bike safely on roads maintained by the state and by towns. These projects cover all parts of the state and range from safer pedestrian crossings to complex urban shared use paths. In addition to these construction projects, dozens of municipal projects have been the subject of scoping studies to determine feasibility and cost. Many of these scoping projects will apply in subsequent rounds of grant funding for design and construction. Since 2015, the annual grant program has consisted of \$3 Million in Federal funds for scoping, design and construction projects and \$300K in state funds for construction of small scale improvements (Table 6).

Table 6: Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Projects Completed through 2018

Type of Project	Miles	Number of projects	Cost
Shared Use Paths	24.9	21	\$23.5M
Pedestrian Facilities & Sidewalks	22.8	58	\$23.5M
Rail Trails	71.7	10	\$11M
Safe Routes to School Projects	2.3	19	\$3.7M
On-Road Facilities	5.0	3	\$2.1M

*Note VTrans owns the rail trail corridors in the state. All other projects listed are municipally driven.



Vermont Recreation and Parks Association Survey and Municipal Perspectives

*excerpted from the State of Recreation Survey Summary Report compiled by SE Group
In collaboration with Vermont Recreation and Parks Association, October 2019*

In May 2019, SE Group—a Vermont-based recreation and planning consultancy—working in collaboration with the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association (VRPA), distributed a survey to Vermont towns to better understand the current state of recreation at the municipal level. The survey was tailored to Vermont recreation departments, commissions, and committees with questions primarily focused on the operations of recreation departments and committees. The survey also asked about trails, forests, and other town recreational assets. Approximately 20% of Vermont towns participated in the survey. (The survey used a convenience sample and there were 49 complete and partial responses).

Major findings of the study

Smaller recreation agencies have limited capacity to provide recreational facilities and programs. It is unclear if this means residents of Vermont's smaller towns have less access to or are forgoing access to recreation. To some degree, other communities or providers may help to fill these gaps, however, this challenge is a significant one as we work to reduce barriers to participation for all Vermonters.

Regardless of whether they are small or large, all classes of recreation agencies rely on volunteers to help direct the delivery of recreation at the local scale - both managing resources and delivering programming. Volunteers are the backbone of Vermont's recreation infrastructure, and managing and maintaining strong volunteer teams is

demanding work. The reliance on volunteers in the management of local recreation may help direct the efforts to local needs. However, the report suggests a lack of local capacity to raise funds, plan for new programs, and other management activities.

The majority of respondents indicated that they had not applied for grants within the past five years. Based on comments received and further questions regarding grants, the report found that seeking grant funding is time-consuming, towns lack capacity to write grants, and the success rate is generally low.

The report suggests that while recreation at the local level is generally small-scaled, growth in recreation departments, programs, and facilities is happening. Agencies of all types want to keep adapting to local needs. When asked whether recreational agencies had become bigger in the past five years, more than 60% of both small and large agencies responded that they had grown. No respondent indicated that they shrunk. Most indicated some growth and expansion in programs, while growth in parks or other recreation facilities was largely limited to large agencies. It appears that this growth path is expected to continue with large percentages of respondents from all agency types indicating they expect growth in both programs and parks. Smaller and volunteer agencies are poised to expand both program offerings and their facilities (parks, etc.), although often lack adequate capacity to do so. Larger agencies are less sure about program expansion.



Federal Resources

Vermont is home to several federally-managed land units that offer opportunities for outdoor recreation, including two wildlife refuges, a national historical park, a national forest, and five Army Corps of Engineers lake sites.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) manages two wildlife refuges in Vermont, the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge and the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The Missisquoi NWR, located in the Northwest corner of Vermont, covers 6,729 acres. The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge consists of ecologically important lands in the Connecticut River Watershed, in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. The Nulhegan Basin, the refuge's section in Northeastern Vermont, covers 26,000 acres. Both refuges contain trails, and are mainly used for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

The National Park Service manages the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. The park covers 643 acres, most of which is forested, and which is one of the oldest professionally managed woodlands in America. The park maintains 20 miles of carriage roads that serve as horse/hiking trails in the warmer months and groomed ski/snowshoe trails in the winter.

The Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) consists of approximately 400,000 acres of land in Vermont, which is more than 6 percent of the land base in the state and comprises about 50 percent of the public land in the state. The GMNF manages 350 miles of hiking trails, and about 97 miles of mountain bike trails. There are eight designated wilderness areas within GMNF and together, the wilderness areas make up approximately a quarter of the National Forest's land. GMNF also contains three nationally designated trails: The Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Long National Recreation Trail, and the Robert Frost National Recreation Trail (Table 7).

The US Army Corps of Engineers operates five flood risk management project dams in the Upper Connecticut River Basin in the southeastern

part of the state. Together the sites provide recreational opportunities such as camping, picnicking, hiking, playgrounds, swimming, boating, hunting, snowmobiling, and fishing on 5,791 acres of land, 539 acres of water, and 23 miles of shoreline.

Table 7: VT Outdoor Recreation Facilities/Resources Provided by GMNF

VT Outdoor Recreation Facilities/resources provided by Green Mountain National Forest	
Resource/Facility	Count
Parks/forests/open space (acres)	400,000
Picnic Areas	6
Boat Ramps/Launches	5
Swimming Beaches/Lakes (1 designated swimming site (Hapgood) but many lakes and opportunities for swimming)	1
Hiking only trails (miles)	334
Bike/pedestrian trails (miles) (hiking is allowable on all trails so all mtn bike trails include hiking)	171
Mountain biking trails	171
Horse/hiking trails (miles)	212
Cross country skiing/snowshoeing trails (miles)	209
Snowmobile trails, groomed by VAST (miles)	348
Campgrounds with tent sites (# of sites)	125
Campgrounds with camper/RV sites (RVs can fit at many sites, but there are no hook-ups on USFS lands)	0
Hunting lands, public (acres)	400,000
Wildlife viewing areas (acres)	500
Shooting/archery ranges (number)	0
Downhill skiing areas (acres) Includes permitted acres on federal land: Bromley, Mt Snow, and Sugarbush	2825

NGOs & Other Organizations Supplying Recreational Resources

Scores of institutions, non-profits, and other agencies support, advocate for, and maintain outdoor recreation infrastructure and facilities throughout Vermont. Table 8 summarizes only a handful of the statewide organizations managing and maintaining recreational facilities on public and private lands. Many more exist at local and regional levels and would add significantly to the total trail miles and acres available for outdoor recreational pursuits. In addition to providing the land and infrastructure for outdoor recreation activities, many outdoor recreation organizations also provide educational programming and events, while attracting visitors and driving local economic activity. Common offerings include those focused on environmental education, outdoor and recreational skills, reaching new and underserved audiences, and safety. In addition to those organizations actively creating and maintaining outdoor recreation opportunities, there are many organizations providing outdoor recreation opportunities incidental to their primary purpose, such as local and regional land trusts. These agencies own land in fee or hold conservation easements on private land, much of which is open and available for public outdoor recreational use.

Table 8: Sample of Non-Governmental Agencies & Outdoor Recreation Resources They Provide

Organization	Count*
Green Mountain Club (GMC) (miles)	500
Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) (miles)	4700
Vermont Mountain Biking Association (VMBA) (miles)	950
Catamount Trail Association (miles)	300
Cross Vermont Trail	87
Northern Forest Canoe Trail (miles)	175
Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association (miles)	800
Vermont Huts Association (number of huts)	9 (founded in 2016)
Downhill Ski Areas (total number)	20 (not including community ski hills without infrastructure/staffing)
Nordic Ski Areas (total number)	30 (not including community xc ski areas without infrastructure/staffing)
*As reported by each organization	



Vermont's Ski and Snowboard Industry

According to Ski Vermont, its 20 alpine and 30 cross country member areas collectively form a \$1.6B industry, with two thirds of direct spending occurring in their surrounding communities. The ski industry is not only an important economic driver, it is an integral part of Vermont's history, culture and outdoor recreation lifestyle. Vermont recorded its best season ever with 4.7 million skier days in 2014-2015 (Figure 4), ahead of California and second best in the nation to Colorado. While ski resorts have greatly increased snowmaking efficiency and capacity over the years, and now offer more non-ski recreational activities and events to entice visitors during the winter, they face adverse weather conditions and the impacts of climate change. In early 2019, Ski Vermont joined six other state ski trade associations from across the country to express united support for the formation of the Outdoor Business Climate Partnership to advance the national conversation and to seek creative solutions.

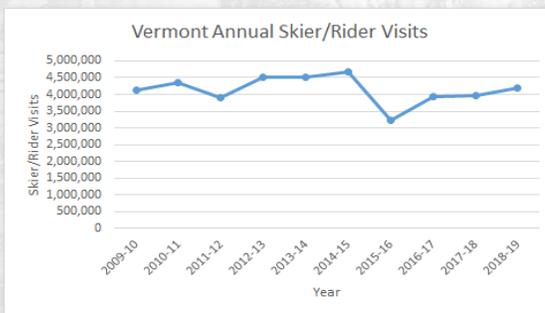


Figure 4: Annual Skier/Rider Visits to Vermont





VT Adaptive and Ski Sports

Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports is a nationally recognized organization that empowers people of all abilities through inclusive sports and recreational programming regardless of ability to pay. In addition to sports, year-round programming options integrate environmental, holistic wellness, and competitive training philosophies for people of all ages with cognitive, developmental, physical and emotional disabilities.

VT Adaptive is recognized nationally for its client-centered programs and for providing access and instruction to sports and recreational activities with the belief that these things provide a physical, mental and social experience that is immeasurable in promoting self-confidence and independence in an individual.

VT Adaptive promotes independence and furthers equality through access and instruction to sports and recreational opportunities including alpine skiing, snowboarding, and other winter sports; kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddle boarding, sailing, cycling, hiking, rock climbing, tennis, horseback riding, environmental programs, CORE Connections wellness retreats, and more. Many of its programs include environmental education, wellness, and special programs designed specifically for veterans.

Demand for Outdoor Recreation in Vermont

Demographic Trends

Understanding the state's current and projected demographic characteristics is important for informing decisions that impact Vermont's recreational services and infrastructure. According to total population estimates available from the U.S. Census Bureau, Vermont experienced only 0.1% population growth between 2000 to 2018, ranking 48th for having the slowest population growth in absolute numbers of people and by percentage. Vermont's population is 94.2% white, ranking it as one of the least racially and ethnically diverse states in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). It is important to note that Vermont has received nearly 8,000 refugees through the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program since 1989 from Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Many of these resettled families reside in Vermont's most populous and diverse county, Chittenden County where 90.1% of residents are white. The average Vermont household is 2.32 persons per household. Median household income is \$57,808 statewide with 11% of individuals considered to be living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

Looking ahead to 2030, there are two different projections offered by Vermont's Agency of Commerce and Community Development comparing the state's population from 2010 to 2030. The first scenario predicts a 7.1% increase from 2010 to 2030, adding approximately 44,000 people while the more conservative scenario predicts a slight decrease in population of -0.8%, a loss of approximately 5,200 people (Jones, 2013). Chittenden County is the primary location for anticipated population growth. While overall population growth rates vary, both projections forecast a significant increase in the number of residents age 75 or older reflecting the aging trends commonly found in rural communities. For example, both projections more than double the number of Vermont residents between ages 70 to 74 from 2010 to 2030. These projections underscore the importance of addressing the outdoor recreation needs of older Vermonters to ensure that they have access to recreation infrastructure that meets their needs within their communities.

Public Meeting Input

The two public meetings provided an opportunity for public recreation users and recreation providers alike to participate in facilitated conversations about their experiences and priorities. Facilitators from FPR and the Center for Rural Studies hosted mini-conversations on each of the five priority areas and participants could rotate through each of the five priorities. They were encouraged to provide written comment cards. In total, 35 participants generated 288 written comments in response to crafted questions such as: what is working in this area, what barriers exist in this area, and what should be prioritized going forward.

The participation priority garnered the most written comments from public meeting participants. Many of the comments concerned specific groups that could use more financial support and increased access to recreation opportunities, such as low and moderate households, youth, and older adults. Some comments specifically called for an effort to dismantle misperceptions about who recreates to promote a more inclusive image of who recreates while others recommended targeted actions such as increasing programs with schools, providing public transportation to recreation areas, and expanding equipment loaning programs.

Public Recreation User Survey Results

The Public Recreation User survey asked Vermont outdoor recreation users a variety of questions related to recreation patterns, experiences, and demographic data. A total of 5,410 individuals responded to the online survey. Of those, 1,598 responses were partially complete and 3,812 were fully complete. Of the 3,815 respondents who indicated their residence in the survey, 90 respondents (2.4%) indicated they were part-time residents, 95 respondents (2.5%) indicated they were non-residents, and 3,630 (95.1%) indicated they were Vermont residents. It is important to acknowledge that the survey used a non-representative sample. The results are likely reflective of users that are enthusiastic about the state's outdoor recreation offerings, and similarly, may be reflective of users

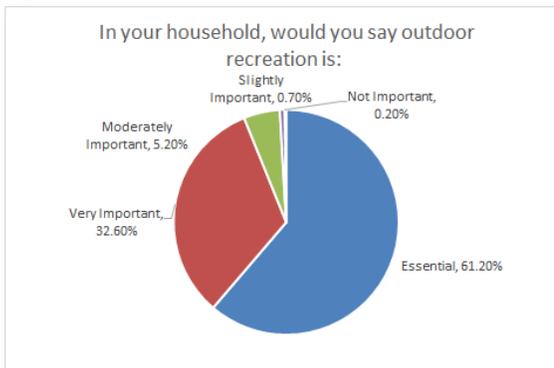


Figure 5: Household Importance of Outdoor Recreation

that are critical of particular recreation initiatives, practices, or policies. More than 60% of respondents indicated that outdoor recreation was “essential” to their household while nearly one third indicated that it was “very important.” Less than one percent of respondents indicated that outdoor recreation was either “slightly important” or “not important.” In the previous SCORP, 40.8% of respondents said that outdoor recreation was very important, 32.1% moderately important, 9.7% somewhat important, and 17.4% of respondents said that outdoor recreation was “not at all” important. The reason for this variation is most likely due to the fact that the data utilized for the 2014 SCORP was based on a random sample, in contrast to the convenience sample used for the 2019 SCORP. In 2019, respondents who felt outdoor recreation was important to them were probably more likely to choose to participate in the survey than those who did not.

Table 9: Quality, Quantity, and Diversity of Outdoor Recreation Activities

	% Quality of Opportunities	% Quantity of Opportunities	% Diversity of Opportunities
Poor	0.9	1.6	1.9
Fair	4.6	6.5	6.7
Average	11.5	15.3	18.1
Good	40.9	39.2	41.4
Excellent	40.9	37.2	31.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

A third of the respondents to the 2011 survey said the outdoor recreation facilities in Vermont were “very good” and another fourth said the facilities in the state were “excellent.” For the 2019 SCORP, respondents were asked to rate the quality, quantity, and diversity of outdoor recreation activities. Although the questions are not exactly the same, results do seem to track in keeping with the prior survey with a third or more of respondents ranking each as “good” or “excellent” (Table 9).

Table 10: Quality, Quantity, and Diversity of Outdoor Recreation Activities

On average, how often did you recreate outdoors in Vermont during the previous 12 months?		
Frequency	Count	Percent
2-4 times per week	2189	47.3
5 or more times per week	2097	45.3
Less than 1 time per week	286	6.2
Not sure	48	1
Never	12	0.3
Total	4632	100

Frequency with which Vermonters Pursue Outdoor Recreation

The majority of respondents (47%) participated in outdoor recreation 2-4 times per week while 45% participated more than 5 times per week over the past 12 months (Table 10).

Table 11: Frequency of Use of Local and Regional Assets

On average, how often do you use the parks, open space, or trails in your local or regional community during each season:				
	SPRING Percents	SUMMER Percents	FALL Percents	WINTER Percents
Never	4.1	2.6	2.2	6.7
Less than 1 time per week	13.7	9.3	7.9	16.9
1 time per week	19.5	11.5	11.3	19.6
2-4 times per week	39.9	40.6	43.1	34.3
Over 4 times per week	21.2	34.9	34.4	20.9
Not sure	1.7	1.1	1.1	1.7
Total	100	100	100	100

**Local and Regional Recreation Assets:
Frequency of Use**

Parks, open space, and trails are vital for meeting local and regional outdoor recreation needs throughout Vermont’s four distinct seasons. The majority of respondents reported using their local and regional parks, open spaces, and trails two to four times per week on average (Table 11).

Favorite Activity

Respondents were asked to write-in their favorite activity. Responses from 2011 and 2019 are compared below in Table 12. While there clearly appears to be some growth in certain activities, the 2019 results are also likely impacted by the fact that different sampling methodologies were employed in 2011 and in 2019. In addition to comparing changes between the 2011 and 2019 Vermont survey, it is also

Table 12: Favorite Activity

Favorite Activity (write-in response)	2019 Percents	2011 Percents
Hiking	17.0	16.0
Hunting	15.3	9.0
Mountain Biking	11.5	1.1
Walking	9.0	9.1
Downhill Skiing and Skiing (unspecified)*	5.9	4.7
Fishing	5.8	8.8
Fly Fishing	5.8	1.1
Bicycling	4.5	5.7
ATVing	3.7	1.2
XC Skiing	2.5	2.6
Snowmobiling	2.4	2.8
Running/Jogging	2.1	1.9
Camping	1.7	4.0
Kayaking	1.7	2.2
Swimming	1.6	6.7
Snowboarding	0.8	1.6
Snowshoeing	0.7	2.9
Boating	0.5	1.9
4-Wheeling (jeep, truck, OHV)	0.4	1.9
Golf	0.2	1.9
Gardening/Yard Work/ Farming	0.2	1.4

interesting to consider how these results contrast with national trends. The Outdoor Foundation (2018) found that the top five most popular outdoor recreation activities were: 1) Running, jogging, and trail-running; 2) freshwater, saltwater, and fly fishing; 3) road, mountain, and BMX biking; 4) hiking; and 5) car, backyard, backpacking, and RV camping.

Distance Travelled to Participate in Favorite Activity

Many Vermonters travel by car to reach their recreation destination and to participate in their favorite outdoor recreation activity with 38% traveling 5-25 miles and 27% traveling more

Table 13: Distance Travelled to Participate in Favorite Activity

On average, approximately how many roundtrip miles do you have to travel (by car) to participate in your favorite activity?		
	Count	Percent
Less than 1 mile	421	10
1-5 miles	691	16.4
5-25 miles	1614	38.3
25-50 miles	671	15.9
50-100 miles	282	6.7
Over 100 miles	200	4.7
I do not travel by car to participate in my favorite activity	334	7.9
Total	4213	100

than 25 miles roundtrip. Less than 8% were able to participate in their favorite activity without traveling by car. It is important to compare these findings to national data available from the Outdoor Foundation in 2018 that found 27% of respondents reporting access to outdoor recreation less than one mile or had immediate access from their home.

Table 14: Out of State Travel for Outdoor Recreation

On average, how often do you leave the state for an outdoor recreation trip during each season:				
	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER
Never	31.7	18.6	26	33.5
1 time	37.5	31.2	35.8	34
2-4 times	21.8	36.8	26.5	21.9
5 or more times	4.9	10.8	8.1	6.6
Not sure	4	2.5	3.5	4
Total	100	100	100	100

Out of State Travel for Outdoor Recreation

While some report never leaving the state for an outdoor recreation trip, many Vermonters do leave the state a few times of year to pursue outdoor recreation in other locations. Given Vermont is a small state and that bordering states and provinces are often within just an hour or two of driving, this may not come as a surprise. Overall, respondents travel out of state most frequently in the summer months, and least frequently in the winter and spring months (Table 14).

Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities

The survey provided an extensive list of outdoor recreation activities and asked respondents to indicate which of those activities they had participated in during the past 12 months. Walking was the most frequently participated in activity, with 87.6% of respondents replying in the affirmative. Walking was followed in participation by visiting public waterways, day hiking, swimming in outdoor settings, and paddling activities.

Table 15: Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities

Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities	
Activity	Percent of all respondents participating in the past year
Walking	87.6
Visit Lakes/Rivers/Pond	78.9
Day Hiking	75.3
Swimming (outdoors, natural area)	72.1
Canoeing/Kayaking/Row Boating	64.1
Scenic Driving	62.7
Wildlife Watching	60.9
Picnicking	57.4
Night sky viewing	57
Snowshoeing	56.5

Benefits from/Reasons for Participating in Outdoor Recreation

Vermonters reported valuing a range of benefits from their outdoor recreation participation. Table 16 shows the top 10 reported benefits from/ reasons for participating in outdoor recreation. Ninety-three percent of respondents reported their outdoor recreation activities as being “very

important” or “essential” for promoting their mental health and wellness. Having a connection to nature and promoting physical health and wellness were ranked closely behind with 89% and 88% of respondents respectively describing them as “very important” or “essential.”

Nearly 600 respondents provided write-in answers describing other benefits of or reasons for recreating outdoors. The most frequently noted benefits included:

- Protection and management of open space, wildlife and its habitat
- Harvesting one’s own food (forage/hunt/fish)
- Personal well-being
- Community
- Connecting with nature
- Quality time with family

Table 16: Benefits From/Reasons for Participating in Outdoor Recreation

Top 10 Reported Benefits of/ Reasons to Participate in Outdoor Recreation	
How important to you are each of the following potential benefits of outdoor recreation in Vermont?	Percent responding very important or essential
Mental health & wellness	93.1
Connection to nature	89.0
Physical health & wellness	88.4
Quiet/solitude/contemplation	84.7
Ecological conservation and protection	83.9
Sense of adventure/exploration	77.9
Safe places for youth and families to play	74.9
Outdoor and nature education	72.0
Sense of accomplishment/achievement	69.8
Historical and cultural heritage preservation	66.0

Barriers to Participating in Outdoor Recreation

Vermonters also reported on the barriers that prevent or deter them from participating in outdoor recreation within the state. To the extent possible, these barriers are addressed by the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan. Other barriers noted are beyond recreation providers’ ability to affect, but provide important information about the lifestyles and desires of respondents. For example, the most consistently cited barrier was

time constraints due to work, family, or other obligations. This finding is consistent with the Outdoor Foundation’s (2018) finding of being “too busy with family responsibilities” as the top barrier. The second most consistently cited barrier was time and distance required to travel

Table 17: Barriers to Participating in Outdoor Recreation

Top 5 Most Frequently Experienced Barriers to Participating in Outdoor Recreation	
Barrier	Percent responding occasionally, frequently, or always
Time constraints due to work, family, or other obligations	67.5
Time and distance required to travel to recreate	52.3
Cost of equipment/gear needed to participate	37.9
Availability of facilities or programs	30.2
Lack of knowledge/skills	27.6

Table 18: User Satisfaction with Recreation Infrastructure

User Satisfaction with Recreation Infrastructure			
Infrastructure	Percent responding “somewhat, very little, or not at all met”	Percent responding meeting to a great extent	Percent responding “I do not use”
Picnic areas, shelters	46.1	32.7	21.2
Fitness/bicycle paths	45.4	28.7	25.9
National wildlife refuges	43	38.1	18.9
Wilderness areas	41.1	50.1	8.8
National forests	39.9	52	8.1
Natural swimming areas (e.g. lakes, swimming holes)	38.2	51.9	9.9
State wildlife management areas	38.2	36.5	25.3
State parks	37.8	57.5	4.7
Outdoor swimming pools	36.6	8.8	54.6
Local/state waterways (e.g. lakes, ponds)	36.1	59.2	4.7

to recreate. While recreation providers may not be able to adjust individual work and family obligations, they can work to make more outdoor recreation opportunities available within a short distance of where Vermonters live and work. More than one third of respondents reported that the cost of equipment and gear needed to participate was a barrier; this finding is also consistent with the Outdoor Foundation’s third ranked barrier of “outdoor recreation equipment is too expensive.”

Over 700 respondents provided write-in answers describing other barriers. Nearly 10% of these responses fell into the category of “lack of access,” primarily as a result of posted land, unclear public land boundaries, parking congestion, and prohibitions on motorized vehicles. Other frequently cited barriers included:

- Safety (of 50 responses coded into this category, 33 of those responses, or 66%, noted feeling unsafe due to hunting and /or trapping activities)
- Lack of Access (of 60 responses coded into this category, 36 of those responses, or 60%, noted lack of access to land due to posting and /or development. 13% noted a lack of access for motorized vehicles.)
- Development/Crowding/Increased Use
- Lack of Time
- Lack of Bike and Pedestrian Friendly Roads and Paths
- Lack of Information and Navigational Aids
- Cost of Participating
- Health Challenges

To provide additional direct feedback to outdoor recreation providers, the survey asked respondents to indicate how well a number of recreation infrastructure elements were meeting their needs (Table 18). The results indicate areas that are for the most part meeting the needs of Vermonters (state forests and parks, national forests, local waterways, national forests), and areas that do not meet their needs as well (picnic areas and shelters, fitness/ bicycle paths).

Recreation Provider Survey Results

Vermont’s outdoor recreation offerings are supported by a web of varied providers: from state and municipal actors to mission-driven nonprofits, the private sector, and grassroots volunteer groups.

Previous versions of the state’s SCORP incorporated insights from individual interviews with selected recreation providers. This SCORP benefits from and builds upon a substantial amount of provider input garnered during the separate but related VOREC public meetings, as well as the two-day Grafton Conference attended by 60 stakeholders in a statewide summit in August 2017. Additional recommendations and perspectives were drawn from the 2016 Recreation Summit Summary and Action Plan. The Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) hosted a Recreation Partners’ Summit in Waterbury, VT attended by over 80 people representing recreation and trails’ nonprofits, state and federal recreation staff and other interested parties. These partners engaged in facilitated activities in order to craft a Recreation Action Plan for Vermont, and especially for VTGC and FPR staff.

To further augment outcomes from these stakeholder activities, a provider survey was conducted from early September to mid October 2019, targeting non-profit organizations involved in outdoor recreation, public land managers, municipal staff, and outdoor-related business owners. The total number of responses to the survey was 95; 40 of those were partial responses and 55 were complete. Seventy-two individuals indicated their affiliations, with the majority of individuals representing a nonprofit and membership-based organization (47%), while 14% were from private business entities, 13% from municipalities, and 11% from state agencies. The remaining 15% of individuals were from federal agencies, regional planning commissions, land trusts, and private entities.

Providers were asked to report for which audiences they currently provide or support access to outdoor recreation. They could respond with the options of “yes”, “no”, or “uncertain.” More than 80% of the providers reported affirmatively for youth, older adults, individuals with low or moderate incomes, members of multicultural /racial/ethnic backgrounds, and LGBTQ people. Fifteen percent of the respondents indicated that they did not provide or support access to outdoor recreation for individuals with physical disabilities or for individuals with cognitive disabilities.

Respondents were also asked to rate three different lists of challenges from “not significant” to “very

significant.” The lists featured challenges associated with 1) managing recreation resources, 2) providing access and organizational capacity, and 3) supporting inclusive opportunities. Table 19 presents the top five challenges for each category rated as either “moderately significant” or “very significant.”

Table 19: Challenges Encountered by Vermont’s Recreation Providers

Management Challenges	Access & Capacity Challenges	Inclusiveness Challenges
Limited resources to fund organization’s budget	Limited ability to offer access to recreation opportunities for people of all physical and cognitive abilities	Insufficient funding resources
Year-to-year stability of organization’s budget	Lack of capacity to address trail connectivity issues	Inadequate staffing capacity
Limited capacity to serve increased demand	Limited ability to access private lands	Lack of sufficient facilities
Maintaining facilities and infrastructure	Lack of resources to provide adequate trail and interpretive signage	Lack of appropriate equipment
Liability and risk management concerns	Lack of capacity to assess visitor experiences and usage	Lack of staff training

Limited resources to fund organizational budgets (77.7% of respondents), concerns about budget stability on a year-to-year basis (67.7% of respondents), and having a limited capacity to serve increased demand (64.5% of respondents) were rated the top three management challenges. Fifty percent of providers identified challenges with providing access and capacity to outdoor recreation resources including their limited ability to offer access to people of all physical and cognitive abilities and having a lack of capacity to address connectivity issues. Nearly 45% of providers reported challenges with accessing private lands, providing adequate trail and interpretive signage, and assessing visitor experiences. When asked to rate the significance of the challenges related to supporting inclusive recreation opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds and abilities, 70.5% of respondents reported having funding limitations while 65.5% identified inadequate staffing capacity. Forty-seven

percent reported lack of sufficient facilities while more than a third reported lack of appropriate equipment as challenges. Thirty-one percent rated lack of adequate staff training as a moderate or very significant challenge.

Providers were asked to rate the importance of 14 different potential priorities for the next five years (Table 20). Five priorities emerged from the survey as receiving ratings of “very important” or “essential.” More than 60% of respondents reported increased funding for capacity building within recreation provider organizations and supporting ecological and conservation goals as being either “very important” or “essential” priorities. Nearly 55% of respondents felt that advocating for policy to promote and steward outdoor recreation is a priority. Expansion of access to local and regional trail networks as well as securing easements and rights of way rounded out the top five priorities.

Table 20: Top 5 Outdoor Recreation Provider Priorities

Top 5 Priorities	Percent of Respondents Rating as “Very Important” or “Essential” Priority
Increasing funding available for organizational capacity building	63.3
Supporting ecological and conservation goals (e.g. water quality)	62.1
Advocating for policy to promote and steward outdoor recreation	54.2
Expanding access to local and regional trail systems	48.3
Obtaining public access easements, trail easements, or rights of way	47.5

To inform the development of the objectives and strategies within the Action Plan, providers were asked to rate the importance of 13 objectives that had emerged from a variety of public input processes since the previous SCORP was completed in 2014. Table 21 shows the ranked order by those who rated each objective as being either “very important” or “essential.” Objectives related to the intersection of stewardship of outdoor recreation and conservation goals were rated the most highly. Respondents also strongly rated the importance of engaging new and underserved audiences and promoting outdoor recreation as a driver of economic vitality. It is

significant to note that each of the objectives were rated as “very important” and “essential” by at least 50% of the providers.

Table 21: Top 5 Outdoor Recreation Provider Objectives

Objective	“Essential” or “Very Important”
Stewardship: Support ecological and conservation goals in recreation planning and management	72.4
Stewardship: Identify and pursue new funds available to organizations and management agencies that directly benefits outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources	70.2
Participation: Engage new and underserved audiences in outdoor recreation activities	69.0
Economic Vitality: Promote outdoor recreation activities as a driver of economic vitality	67.2
Communication: Provide current and accurate information about public outdoor recreation assets (maps, access, policies, trip planning tools, best management practices, etc.)	66.7
Community Connections: Enhance opportunities for community health and wellness through outdoor recreation	65.5
Stewardship: Incorporate climate change adaptation and resilience strategies in recreation planning and management]	64.9
Communication: Ensure clear and transparent processes concerning policies, permitting, and regulations	63.8
Community Connections: Strengthen livability of communities through outdoor recreation	63.8
Stewardship: Explore options to manage increasing use/overuse	62.1
Participation: Implement diversity and equity strategies to meet the needs of all Vermonters	57.9
Communication: Facilitate clear and consistent two-way communication between nonprofits and public land managers	52.6
Economic Vitality: Support outdoor recreation-related businesses	51.7

Vermont FPR Public Recreation Managers Focus Group

Recreation managers from FPR participated in an interactive exercise to brainstorm for each of the five priority areas. Their engagement resulted in the generation of 81 discrete strategies, which they later prioritized using a dot survey technique. While this group of professional managers identified strategies and assigned priorities across each of the five areas, it is clear that strategies related to the stewardship of natural resources and recreational areas is of greatest significance (42%). The second priority area was stakeholder communication, coordination, and engagement--garnering 20% of the prioritization. The results from this focus group were used to inform the development of the objectives and strategies included in the Action Plan.

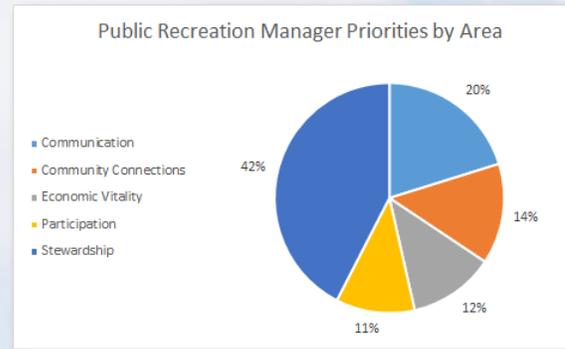


Figure 6: Top 5 Outdoor Recreation Provider Objectives



Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan

The development of the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan began with a review of public processes conducted in 2016, 2017, and 2018. These included the Grafton Conference Recommendations, VOREC Recommendations, the FPR Action Plan, and the 2016 Recreation Summit Summary and Action Plan. A 2019 poll of municipal recreation departments conducted by the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association was also consulted. This review led to the first draft of the five priority areas to be included in the SCORP, which was then presented for feedback at the public meetings and in the surveys. The next step included a review of the public user survey results, the provider survey results, and input gathered at public meetings. This analysis led to a refined list of priorities, an initial list of objectives, as well as to a better understanding of the most salient outdoor recreation benefits, barriers, and needs currently experienced by Vermonters. Vermont FPR Recreation Managers (State Parks Managers, Stewardship Foresters, Forest Recreation Specialists, State Lands Administrators, and Recreation Grant Administrators) came together to review the initial list of priorities and objectives, and to identify actions for the plan. Their work generated 81 potential actions and prioritized the most important actions. These actions, along with others generated from public meetings and surveys, formed the first draft of the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan. The Technical Advisory Committee and Vermont Trails and Greenways Council provided additional comments on the first draft of the Action Plan and revisions were made. Additional provider input was also considered and incorporated at this time, prior to a final review by the TAC. The full plan, including the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan, was made available for public comment from mid-November to mid-December 2019, after which final revisions were made.

The Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan features five key priorities for 2019-2023:

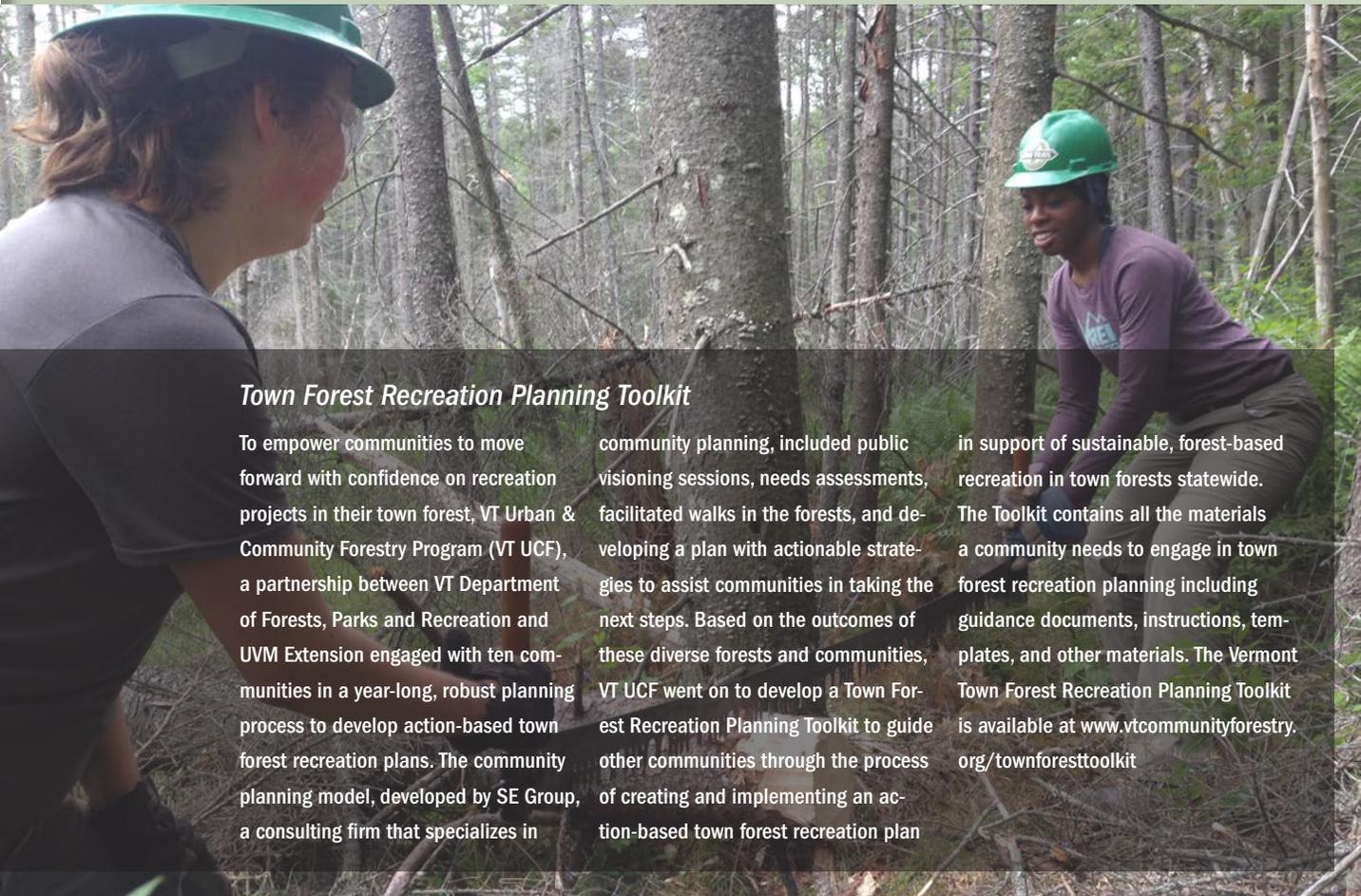
- *Stewardship of natural resources and recreational areas*
- *Stakeholder communication, coordination, and engagement*
- *Participation and access for all*
- *Community connections, health, and wellness*
- *Economic vitality and tourism*

Objectives and strategies have been developed as guidelines for each priority for achieving an inclusive, accessible, and resilient future for Vermont's outdoor recreation assets. While the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan is separated into five key priority areas, the priorities, objectives, and strategies are interconnected and interdependent. It is the task of Vermont FPR, Vermont residents, visitors, and other recreation providers to carry these actions and ideas forward to enrich outdoor recreation opportunities for all.

Priority 1: Stewardship of Natural Resources and Recreational Assets

Conserving Vermont's natural, cultural, and recreational assets ensures that the opportunities we enjoy now will continue to be available for future generations. By monitoring, restoring, and maintaining healthy soil and forests, clean water and air, high-quality habitat and biological diversity, we promote healthy, functional ecosystems while creating a foundation for sustainable access and recreation. Stewardship requires that we spend time outside observing and appreciating the natural world, that we create and implement good management plans, and that we actively and consistently nurture an ethic of land stewardship among all Vermonters (and visitors). Additionally, it requires that we consider the impacts of climate change and our adaptive actions in our planning

and conservation efforts. Opportunities to strengthen existing partnerships, expand visitor use management, and educate all users about the many values and uses of the lands they recreate on can help us reach our stewardship goals. More specifically, both residents and providers noted challenges with parking and maintaining existing recreation infrastructure, as well as limited capacity to manage existing uses and simultaneously address new and expanding uses. Research to help better understand and address the impacts of recreation and climate change on ecological values will also enhance long term stewardship goals. Finally, there is a need to identify new and diverse funding streams to support the research, management, and acquisition associated with stewardship.



Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit

To empower communities to move forward with confidence on recreation projects in their town forest, VT Urban & Community Forestry Program (VT UCF), a partnership between VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and UVM Extension engaged with ten communities in a year-long, robust planning process to develop action-based town forest recreation plans. The community planning model, developed by SE Group, a consulting firm that specializes in

community planning, included public visioning sessions, needs assessments, facilitated walks in the forests, and developing a plan with actionable strategies to assist communities in taking the next steps. Based on the outcomes of these diverse forests and communities, VT UCF went on to develop a Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit to guide other communities through the process of creating and implementing an action-based town forest recreation plan

in support of sustainable, forest-based recreation in town forests statewide. The Toolkit contains all the materials a community needs to engage in town forest recreation planning including guidance documents, instructions, templates, and other materials. The Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit is available at www.vtcommunityforestry.org/townforesttoolkit



Objective 1: Support ecological integrity, conservation goals, and environmental quality in recreation planning and management

- Strategy 1: Plan and adapt for climate change. Maintain Vermont's natural landscape and its ecological functions while adjusting to meet evolving outdoor recreation needs.
- Strategy 2: Support continued research to understand and address the impact of trails and other recreational pursuits on natural communities, rare species, water quality, and other ecological values.
- Strategy 3: Consider establishing trail-based recreation zones and trail-based recreation-free zones based on ecological values.
- Strategy 4: Construct and renovate recreation facilities with sustainable materials, to sustainable standards, and in appropriate locations to reduce ecological impacts.
- Strategy 5: Permanently conserve land (through fee acquisition and easements) to maintain ecological integrity and allow for public access.
- Strategy 6: Encourage landowners, agencies, and recreational organizations to participate in wetland restoration and conservation programs.
- Strategy 7: Implement the actions of the Vermont Wetlands Conservation Strategy, as presented in Appendix A.



Objective 2: Manage recreational assets and resources

- Strategy 1: Plan for resilience of recreation infrastructure and the recreation economy in the face of climate change.
- Strategy 2: Engage in visitor use management planning to address recreation challenges and opportunities, such as, but not limited to user-conflict, parking, plowing, and access concerns.
- Strategy 3: Promote energy efficient public transportation and ridership, such as shuttle buses, in heavy-use recreation corridors.
- Strategy 4: Expand staffing capacity (paid and volunteer) to bolster maintenance and public engagement.
- Strategy 5: Support non-profit partners and volunteer stewardship efforts and enhance the capacity of these entities to manage recreational assets.
- Strategy 6: Preserve the integrity of our recreation assets through interagency collaboration on policy, education, and enforcement activities.
- Strategy 7: Continue to engage with all recreation groups to conduct long- and short-term planning efforts which include measurable outcomes.



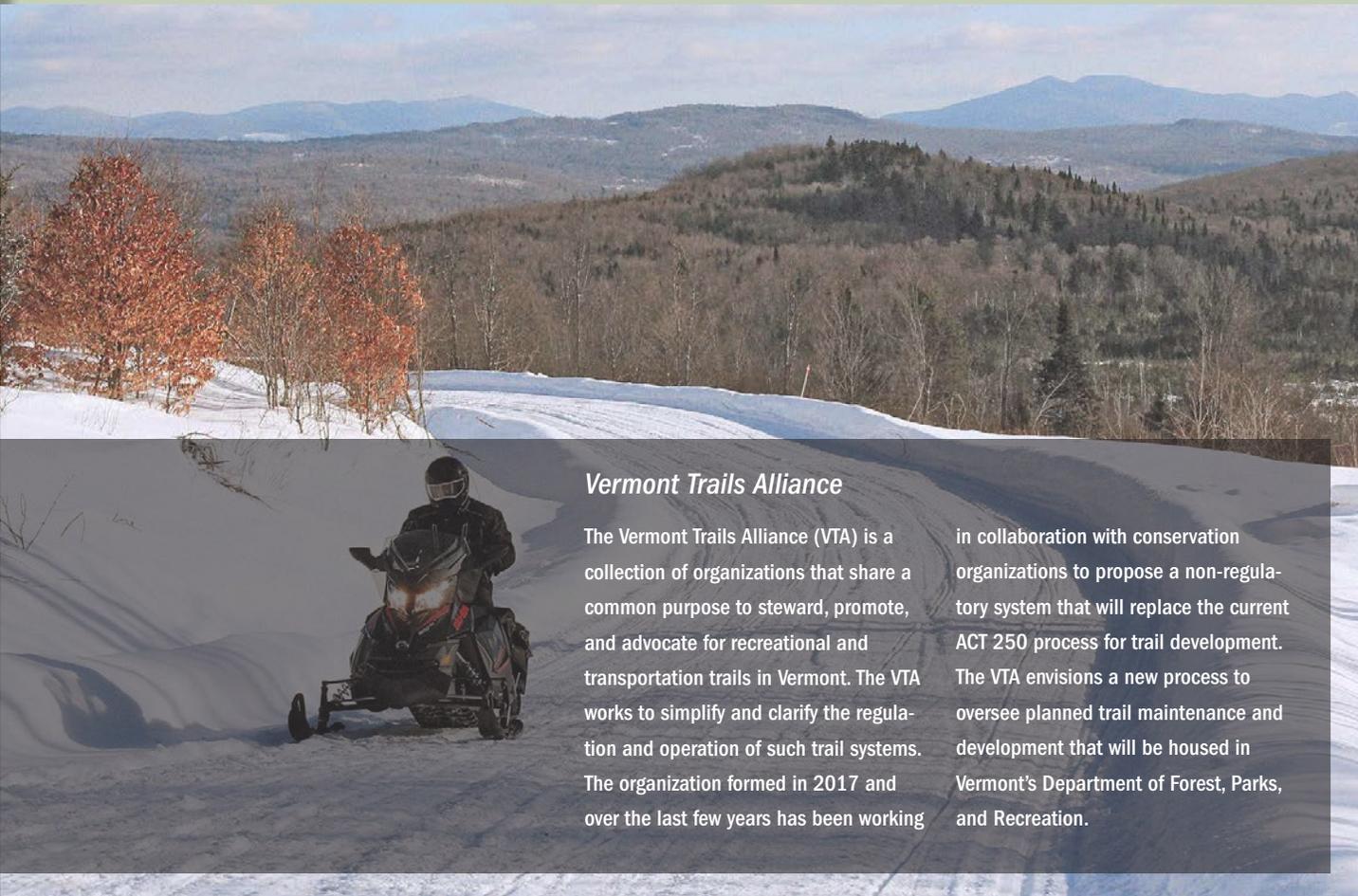
Objective 3: Cultivate political and public support for funding new and existing recreation and conservation efforts

- Strategy 1: Advocate for increased state and federal conservation and recreation funding sources.
- Strategy 2: Develop a long-range trail plan to help align funding sources among organizations and management agencies, and pursue new opportunities for funding that directly benefit outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources.
- Strategy 3: Explore creative public-private partnerships to increase funding resources for stewardship.
- Strategy 4: Establish a statewide voluntary funding mechanism to show pride and participation and to support land acquisition and stewardship (conservation stamp, license plate, etc.).
- Strategy 5: Establish a diverse work group to explore piloting fee-based programs and/or pay-to-park kiosks in appropriate high use areas, while maintaining equitable and affordable access.

Priority 2: Stakeholder Communication, Coordination, and Engagement

Vermont boasts a broad array of public, private, and non-profit partners who play active roles in supporting outdoor recreation across the state (and beyond it in some cases -- the Appalachian Trail, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, and Lake Champlain, for example). These independent but interdependent organizations plan for, provide, and manage land and water resources, human resources, and equipment, programming, and recreational infrastructure. While many people attend to our recreational landscape via their professional roles, Vermont would not be the recreation destination it is today without its long tradition of volunteerism. There is an enormous amount of energy, and an opportunity, through enhanced communication, coordination, and engagement, to empower this

stakeholder network to achieve the goals outlined in this SCORP, while also welcoming new participants. Vermont has the opportunity to nurture a Land Ethic for all Vermonters and visitors through unified outreach and messaging across stakeholders and user groups. The Land Ethic can serve as a foundation for communicating about recreation assets and opportunities. By promoting continued efforts and collaborations to make maps, planning information, wayfinding, signage, and relevant technology easily accessible for all, we will enhance participation. Finally, ensuring clear, consistent, and transparent regulations, policies, permitting, and decision-making processes will further empower the range of stakeholders as they collectively work to meet the state's recreation goals.



Vermont Trails Alliance

The Vermont Trails Alliance (VTA) is a collection of organizations that share a common purpose to steward, promote, and advocate for recreational and transportation trails in Vermont. The VTA works to simplify and clarify the regulation and operation of such trail systems. The organization formed in 2017 and over the last few years has been working

in collaboration with conservation organizations to propose a non-regulatory system that will replace the current ACT 250 process for trail development. The VTA envisions a new process to oversee planned trail maintenance and development that will be housed in Vermont's Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation.

Objective 1: Cultivate a Land Ethic/Recreation Ethic for all Vermonters and visitors

- Strategy 1: Reinforce support for local landowners, public access, “Vermont Lands for All,” and Land Ethic messages to all organizations and users.
- Strategy 2: Tell stories through outreach, and through sharing about history, management, future legacy, and adherence to a Land Ethic.
- Strategy 3: Educate the public on recreational planning tools and management strategies that consider the impacts of trails and other recreational pursuits on natural communities, rare species, water quality, and other ecological values.

Objective 2: Facilitate clear communication regarding recreation assets

- Strategy 1: Evaluate and adjust communication platforms and messaging to engage a broader audience in outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Strategy 2: Create, maintain, and link pertinent outdoor recreation information using currently available technology.
- Strategy 3: Through strengthening existing partnerships, better coordinate consistent communication among outdoor recreation stakeholders.
- Strategy 4: Proactively engage existing outdoor recreation stakeholders to establish performance benchmarks related to trail planning, conservation, permitting, and volunteerism.

Objective 3: Ensure clear and transparent regulations, policies, permitting, and decision-making processes.

- Strategy 1: Ensure that public input processes are clearly understood through communication and outreach activities.
- Strategy 2: Enhance consistency across districts and public land boundaries by developing clear policies and protocols that are easily accessible to the public.
- Strategy 3: In concert with outdoor recreation stakeholders, work with permitting, regulatory, and non-regulatory systems to create clear and consistent approval processes for recreation assets on public and private land across all management agencies.
- Strategy 4: Leverage informal user group organizations to share information about policies, regulations, ethics, and best practices with their constituents.
- Strategy 5: Host periodic regional Recreation Town Meetings open to the public to encourage understanding across stakeholder groups.

Objective 4: Continue to provide strong support for trail and recreation based non-profit groups and their volunteers.

- Strategy 1: Collaborate with trail and recreation based non-profit groups to provide trainings on Best Management Practices (ex. The Vermont Trail Symposium)
- Strategy 2: Explore volunteer support resources such as Nature Groupie (naturegroupie.org) and regional tool caches.
- Strategy 3: Continue to engage in long and short term planning efforts with non-profit groups for sustainable access on public lands.
- Strategy 4: Continue to explore options for modernizing and better resourcing the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council.

Priority 3: Participation and Access for All

The mental and physical health benefits of being outdoors are widely documented (See Priority 4). These benefits accrue whether sitting in a local park, fishing a streambank, or engaging in more physically active pursuits. Vermont residents participating in the SCORP survey identified other benefits of outdoor recreation as well, such as developing an appreciation for the natural world (a Land Ethic), spending high-quality time with family, and the satisfaction (and cost effectiveness) of harvesting one's own food. While Vermont provides exceptional recreation opportunities, access is not consistently available and not all Vermonters are able to participate. Vermont has the opportunity to bridge

this gap through, among other strategies, continued support of recreation access and opportunities in Vermont's downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods. This includes investing in neighborhood parks, playgrounds, community gardens, and bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly travel corridors to provide connectivity between these assets. Employing universal design principles will allow Vermont to increase ADA accessible sites while also serving older and younger generations. And through targeted collaborations across Vermont's network of mission-driven organizations, new participants can be exposed to recreational opportunities and welcomed to take part.



Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department's Education Programs

The VFWD's education programs continue to reach thousands of Vermonters every year, helping them connect with the state's natural resources in knowledgeable and skilled ways. Staff and certified volunteer instructors teach over 3,000 participants in Hunter Education and over 7,000 in Let's Go Fishing. The programs offered are a mix of basic courses in hunting, trapping,

and fishing as well as advanced clinics and seminars focusing on unique techniques and species specific training. Recently, Hunter Education partnered with several hunting organizations to provide extended training opportunities for new adult hunters that included one-on-one mentors and a hunting experience. Hunter Education and Let's Go Fishing continue to partner with a

local food initiative and outdoor organizations to provide wild game processing seminars as well as hunting and fishing storytelling events. In addition to hunting, trapping, and fishing education, staff continue to provide birding hikes, wildlife tracking seminars, school programs, and educators trainings to emphasize the importance of wild habitat conservation.

»» Objective 1: Provide resources to Vermont's outdoor recreation organizations to implement diversity and equity strategies to meet the needs of all Vermonters and visitors

- Strategy 1: Diversify boards, coalitions, and working groups engaged in the outdoor recreation sector, and support Vermont's outdoor recreation-based nonprofits in their efforts to diversify community leadership groups and recreation assets.
- Strategy 2: Encourage a diverse workforce in the outdoor recreation sector; create a diversity tool kit for Vermont based businesses seeking opportunities to diversify their professional culture.
- Strategy 3: Develop a working group to support land managers and other recreation providers in integrating accessibility and diversity into our public recreation resources.
- Strategy 4: Increase funding and support for accessible trails and facilities. Consider dedicating a predetermined portion of RTP and/or LWCF funding for refurbishing existing trails to meet ADA requirements each year.
- Strategy 5: Improve accessibility through the use of universal design principles to enable all Vermonters to access the state's recreation infrastructure.

»» Objective 2: Engage new and underserved audiences in outdoor recreation activities

- Strategy 1: Increase understanding of who is underserved and the barriers to participation.
- Strategy 2: Provide recreation access and opportunities to Vermont's downtowns, villages and neighborhoods to increase recreational assets within walking distance of where people live, and to increase equitable access.
- Strategy 3: Expand partnership programs with organizations to engage persons of all abilities in outdoor recreation.
- Strategy 4: Proactively invite/welcome individuals and communities who are unfamiliar with outdoor recreation to participate through teaching/mentoring and wrap-around support.

»» Objective 3: Expand and strengthen public-private partnerships with private enterprises, schools, and other youth development agencies to introduce all youth to a range of outdoor recreation opportunities

- Strategy 1: Explore additional opportunities for incorporating outdoor recreation experiences into elementary and secondary education curriculum.
- Strategy 2: Develop school partnerships to introduce youth to the Land Ethic, stewardship of resources, and a wide range of recreation opportunities.
- Strategy 3: Connect youth to land stewardship opportunities through community service work on recreation projects.

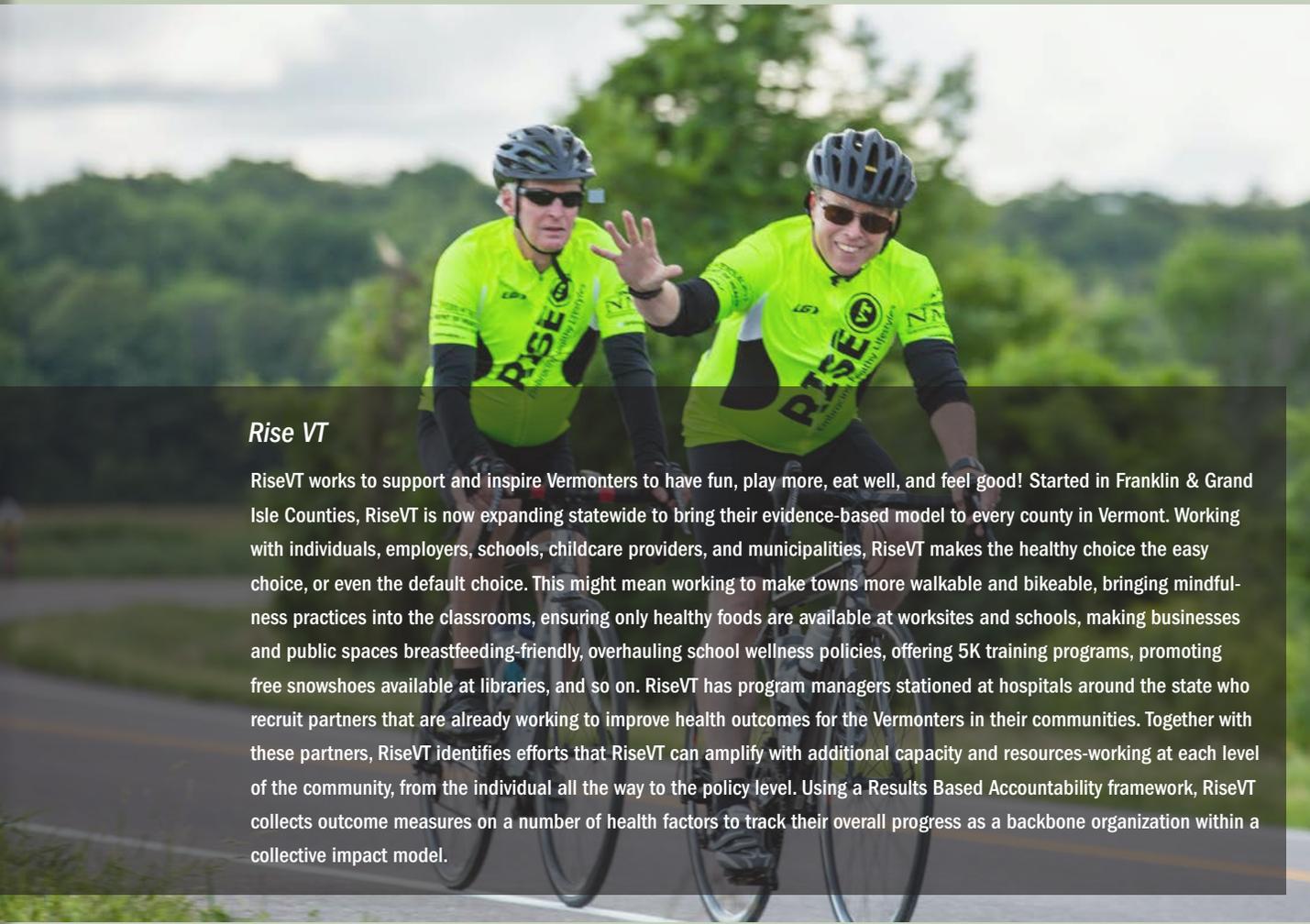
»» Objective 4: Provide support and remove barriers to private landowners hosting public recreation access and/or amenities such as trails on their lands.

- Strategy 1: Provide factual information about Vermont's Landowner Liability laws.
- Strategy 2: Explore options for removing extraneous permitting requirements for public trails on private lands managed by non-profits
- Strategy 3: Promote education about the benefits of wildlife-based and trail-based public recreation on private lands.
- Strategy 4: Explore options for providing resources and/or benefits to private landowners who offer public recreation on their lands.

Priority 4: Community Connections, Health, and Wellness

Outdoor recreation can be a vehicle for building strong community connections, improving physical and mental health, and promoting wellness for many Vermonters. There is a growing understanding and appreciation of the many benefits that such activities yield for individuals and communities alike. Findings from the Public Recreation User Survey demonstrate that Vermonters are experiencing benefits for their mental and physical health from participating in outdoor recreation activities. Initiatives like RiseVT and the Vermont Department of Health's 3-4-50 initiative are seeking to increase physical activity in order to reduce the risk of many chronic diseases. In 2017, 28% of Vermont adults age 20 or older were

found to be obese while 13% of adolescents in grades 9-12 were obese, a slight uptick since 2001). The Healthy Vermonters 2020 target for adults getting 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week is 65%; 2017 data show 60% of adults are achieving that threshold (VDH, 2019). Supporting and building connectivity between neighborhoods, community facilities, trail networks, and recreation infrastructure within communities will provide greater opportunities for promoting health and wellbeing. Focusing on the role of outdoor recreation in fostering livability can lead to benefits for multiple audiences, including the significant projected population increases for older adults.



Rise VT

RiseVT works to support and inspire Vermonters to have fun, play more, eat well, and feel good! Started in Franklin & Grand Isle Counties, RiseVT is now expanding statewide to bring their evidence-based model to every county in Vermont. Working with individuals, employers, schools, childcare providers, and municipalities, RiseVT makes the healthy choice the easy choice, or even the default choice. This might mean working to make towns more walkable and bikeable, bringing mindfulness practices into the classrooms, ensuring only healthy foods are available at worksites and schools, making businesses and public spaces breastfeeding-friendly, overhauling school wellness policies, offering 5K training programs, promoting free snowshoes available at libraries, and so on. RiseVT has program managers stationed at hospitals around the state who recruit partners that are already working to improve health outcomes for the Vermonters in their communities. Together with these partners, RiseVT identifies efforts that RiseVT can amplify with additional capacity and resources-working at each level of the community, from the individual all the way to the policy level. Using a Results Based Accountability framework, RiseVT collects outcome measures on a number of health factors to track their overall progress as a backbone organization within a collective impact model.

Objective 1: Enhance opportunities for community health and wellness through outdoor recreation

- Strategy 1: Connect local and regional trail and park systems to each other and to other community resources.
- Strategy 2: Strengthen partnerships between outdoor recreation providers and community stakeholders to promote health.
- Strategy 3: Encourage local parks and recreation initiatives to increase physical activity and improve public health.
- Strategy 4: Develop new sites and opportunities or improve transportation options to currently available recreation assets in areas lacking access.

Objective 2: Strengthen livability of communities through outdoor recreation

- Strategy 1: Identify opportunities to connect and increase access to recreation assets with existing community facilities, downtowns, and village centers.
- Strategy 2: Promote bike/pedestrian friendly travel corridors to connect communities and recreation assets.
- Strategy 3: Identify opportunities for communities to connect with their natural assets to provide recreation opportunities and improve livability, including through public transportation and development of new recreation opportunities.

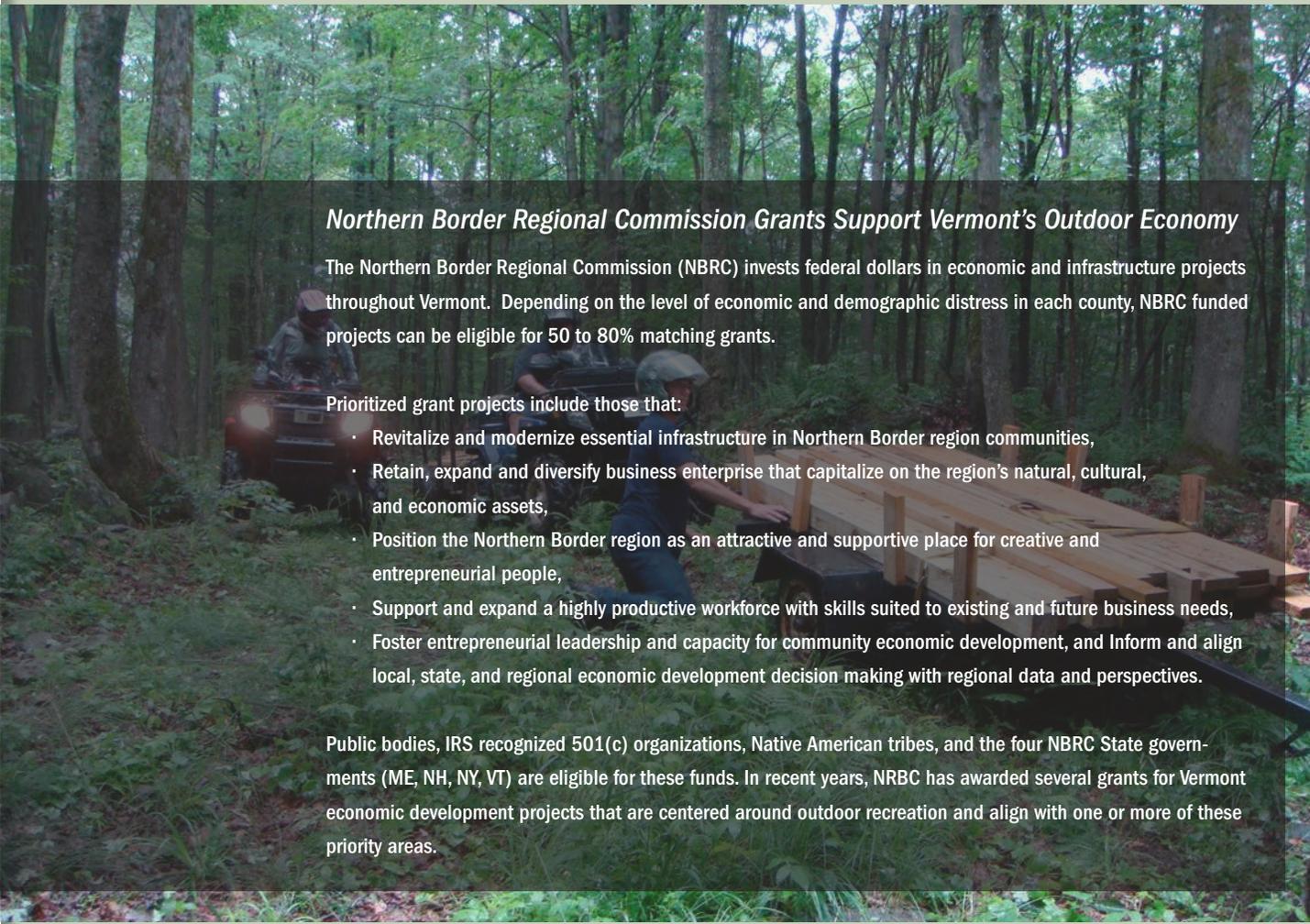
Objective 3: Increase community capacity for outdoor recreation

- Strategy 1: Increase support and capacity available for technical assistance to local communities.
- Strategy 2: Work with outdoor recreation organizations and businesses to measurably encourage/support volunteerism.
- Strategy 3: Develop technical guidance, information, and resources to support communities, local leaders, private landowners, and volunteers; research and expand existing resources such as the Town Forest Recreation Initiative tool kit.
- Strategy 4: Support the formation and function of municipal committees, such as Trail Committees and Conservation Commissions, through education, outreach, and technical assistance.
- Strategy 5: Support the establishment or expansion of municipal funding mechanisms to support development or stewardship of outdoor recreation assets; expand permitted use of a Town Conservation Fund, or establish a new Recreation Fund.

Priority 5: Economic Vitality & Tourism

Vermont's landscape of forests, farms, and human communities and their associated outdoor recreation opportunities are major reasons why people visit and live in Vermont. Outdoor recreation contributes to sustaining vibrant rural economies and strengthens the state's position as a premier tourism destination. According to a 2017 report by the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation accounts for 51,000 direct jobs and \$5.5 billion in annual consumer spending in Vermont. A slate of recreation providers have engaged in research to understand the economic

contributions of their activities including but not limited to: Vermont Greenways and Trails Council, Vermont Horse Council, and Vermont Association of Snow Travelers. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development periodically releases reports with the economic impact of tourism, with a special focus on winter visitation for ski sports. By encouraging, incentivizing, and guiding the development of community-oriented outdoor recreation assets we may increase economic impact to the benefit of Vermont's people and communities.



Northern Border Regional Commission Grants Support Vermont's Outdoor Economy

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) invests federal dollars in economic and infrastructure projects throughout Vermont. Depending on the level of economic and demographic distress in each county, NBRC funded projects can be eligible for 50 to 80% matching grants.

Prioritized grant projects include those that:

- Revitalize and modernize essential infrastructure in Northern Border region communities,
- Retain, expand and diversify business enterprise that capitalize on the region's natural, cultural, and economic assets,
- Position the Northern Border region as an attractive and supportive place for creative and entrepreneurial people,
- Support and expand a highly productive workforce with skills suited to existing and future business needs,
- Foster entrepreneurial leadership and capacity for community economic development, and Inform and align local, state, and regional economic development decision making with regional data and perspectives.

Public bodies, IRS recognized 501(c) organizations, Native American tribes, and the four NBRC State governments (ME, NH, NY, VT) are eligible for these funds. In recent years, NRBC has awarded several grants for Vermont economic development projects that are centered around outdoor recreation and align with one or more of these priority areas.



Objective 1: Pursue marketing and branding initiatives to promote Vermont's outdoor recreation assets

- Strategy 1: Leverage Vermont's brand as a nationally recognized recreation destination to support community economic development through attracting a diversity of residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Strategy 2: Create a campaign to communicate the work of public lands and outdoor recreation-based nonprofits in Vermont's outdoor recreation landscape.
- Strategy 3: Encourage communities to develop wayfinding signage to promote local and regional assets (recreational assets, amenities, and businesses).
- Strategy 4: Highlight Vermont's Land Ethic and thoughtful stewardship of natural resources as part of internal and external marketing campaigns such as securing and highlighting stewardship/conservation pledges by outdoor recreation businesses.
- Strategy 5: Develop a collaborative asset map or other system that integrates outdoor recreation assets, amenities and businesses to support authentic marketing and branding stories rooted in stewardship and local economies.



Objective 2: Provide professional support to regional and statewide outdoor recreation initiatives

- Strategy 1: Promote thoughtful coordination across recreational types and alignment with state recreation goals.
- Strategy 2: Develop, staff, and provide resources for continued focus on the Outdoor Recreation Economy in Vermont.
- Strategy 3: Prioritize investment in regional and statewide low-barrier recreational opportunities, such as ADA accessible trails and rail trails, to develop connections to villages and to improve rural economic development efforts.
- Strategy 4: Invest in backcountry infrastructure and activities (huts, backcountry ski zones, hunting/fishing areas, mountain biking trail networks, etc.), that link with existing multi-purpose trails and that will have recreational and economic benefits, balanced with protection and maintenance of remote areas without trails and infrastructure.



Objective 3: Develop public/private partnerships with businesses and with Vermont education and community-based providers to cultivate the outdoor recreation talent pipeline, and to promote compelling career pathways.

- Strategy 1: Research and analyze the barriers and opportunities experienced by employers and job seekers for current and future outdoor recreation industry jobs.
- Strategy 2: Engage with secondary and post-secondary educational institutions to align natural resources, parks, recreation, and tourism curricula with the workforce needs of the Vermont economy.
- Strategy 3: Increase the number of paid internships, apprenticeships, and fellowships that lead to full time jobs in outdoor recreation.
- Strategy 4: Measurably enhance technical and trade curricula to expose young people to a broad range of recreation business opportunities and jobs, and introduce youth to outdoor-minded Vermont employers that actively invest in their employees' professional advancement.



Objective 4: Provide continued and increasing support for VOREC and related outdoor recreation economy initiatives.

- Strategy 1: Support public trails and trail management organizations as part of continued support for VOREC initiatives.
- Strategy 2: Continue to engage VOREC's stakeholders in implementing its recommendations and in periodically updating the VOREC priorities and action plan to accelerate progress.
- Strategy 3: Enhance public communication and participation related to VOREC activities and initiatives.
- Strategy 4: Host an annual "Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economy Summit" to convene public land managers, businesses, non-profits, state agency representatives, and policy-makers to advance communication and create a future vision for Vermont's outdoor recreation economy.



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46	Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
48	RiseVT
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52/53	Vermont Huts Association

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Appendix A: Vermont Wetlands

This section is included in response to the requirements outlined in the LWCF Manual

Wetlands are places where land and water meet which may be inundated or saturated by water for a few weeks of the year to shallow water year round. Vermont's wetlands are defined as those areas of the state that are inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support plants and animals that depend on saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. These areas are commonly known as ponds, bogs, fens, marshes, wet meadows, shrub swamps, and wooded swamps. Wetlands often occur in association with lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams, creating transitional areas between dry land and open water. However, wetlands can also be isolated from any obvious connection to water when they occur where the topography collects surface water, or where ground water surfaces. The saturated or seasonally saturated conditions in wetlands create an environment that favors the growth of specifically adapted wetland plants (hydrophytic vegetation) and promotes the development of wetland soils (hydric soils). These three factors (hydrology, vegetation, and soils) are used in wetland identification and in the delineation of wetland boundaries.

Wetlands serve a variety of functions and values beneficial to the health, safety, and welfare of the general public. Some of the functions and values that wetlands provide include water storage, water quality protection, erosion control, fish and wildlife habitat, habitat for sensitive plants and animals, exemplary natural communities, education and research, recreation and economic benefits, and open space. The primary recreational values of wetlands include activities such as wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, and birding. While the degree to which a wetland serves these functions and values varies from wetland to wetland, each wetland works in combination with other wetlands as part of a complex integrated system.

Vermont contains a great diversity of wetlands, ranging from open water habitats to rich forested swamps. Wetlands vary because of differences in

hydrology, parent soil material, historical land use, topography and other factors. These differences make each wetland unique in its appearance, biota, and function in the landscape. Some general wetland types present in Vermont include open water wetlands, emergent wetlands, scrub-shrub wetlands, forested wetlands, wet meadows, fens, bogs, and vernal pools.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department tracks state-significant (a.k.a. "exemplary") occurrences of natural communities in its Natural Heritage Database. These natural community occurrences represent high-quality examples of each of Vermont's 97 natural community types, 50 of which are wetland natural community types. These include Silver Maple-Sensitive Fern Floodplain Forest, Red Maple-Black Gum Basin Swamp, Rich Fen, Wild Rice Marsh, and Alder Swamp. The database includes more than 1,400 individual state-significant occurrences of wetland natural communities. Because of their high ecological quality, these state-significant natural communities provide outstanding wildlife habitat, scenic values, and many recreational opportunities.

The State of Vermont protects wetlands which provide significant functions and values and also protects a buffer zone directly adjacent to significant wetlands. Many activities within wetlands or buffers require a State Wetlands Permit. Wetlands in Vermont are classified as Class I, II, or III based on the functions and values which they provide. Class III wetlands are not protected by the state. Class II wetlands are protected for the significant functions and values they provide.

Class I designation is a regulatory status which provides the highest level of protection for our most exceptional and irreplaceable wetlands in Vermont. In 2011, the legislature gave rulemaking authority involving wetlands to the Agency. Since then the Agency has initiated rulemaking for seven Class I designations and successfully passed six, more than doubling the number and acres of wetland protected as Class I. Those six are:

- Chickering Fen, Calais
- Dennis Pond Wetlands, Brunswick
- Sandbar Wetlands, Colchester and Milton

- LaPlatte River Wetlands, Shelburne
- Peacham Bog, Peacham
- Beaver Meadows, Ripton

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC), in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) updated a Lake Champlain Basin wetland restoration model in 2017. The Wetland Restoration Model Site Prioritization Map is publicly available and depicts the ranked potential wetland restoration sites based on various physical characteristics of an area. The intent of this layer is to identify land that has potential to be a priority for wetlands restoration and provide a quantitative prioritization rank of potential of a restoration site to mitigate phosphorus (P) loading to Lake Champlain. This model is being used by VTDEC and partners to develop potential wetland restoration projects.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VFWD) has a long, successful history of conserving, managing and restoring wetland habitat in Vermont. In fact, the first state-owned Wildlife Management Area (WMA) established in the eastern United States was Sandbar WMA, established as a refuge for migratory waterfowl in Milton, Vermont in 1920. Nearly 100 years later, VFWD has conserved roughly 30,000 acres of some of the largest, most significant wetland systems in Vermont and is the largest owner of wetland habitat in the state.

In 1986 VFWD established the Vermont Duck Stamp Program to enhance the Department's wetland conservation efforts. The Vermont Duck Stamp program has been responsible for some of our state's greatest wetland conservation success stories, raising \$4.5 million for the conservation of nearly 12,000 acres on 93 separate projects. Over the past 10 years, VFWD, in conjunction with partners such as the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), has restored nearly 50 acres of wetlands on WMAs. However, hundreds of acres of wetlands restored through NRCS via the Wetland Reserve Program, with the critical support of USFWS and Partners in Fish and Wildlife, have been added to WMAs to ensure long-term, effective stewardship. VFWD owns 98 WMAs constituting 145,000 acres

of outstanding wildlife habitat with the majority of those areas supporting wetland habitat. This illustrates a long-standing commitment by the VFWD for conserving, restoring and stewarding wetland habitat throughout Vermont.

In order to effectively utilize a new source of federal funding for wetland conservation and restoration, the VFWD has developed an initiative focused around wetland acquisition and restoration. This Environmental Protection Agency funding allows the VFWD to advance projects that will include land management changes resulting in water quality improvements and protection. This will include projects such as state acquisition of farmland in strategic areas where the specific acres are retired to implement wetland restoration in collaboration with our partners. VFWD staff and contractors responsible for implementing this effort will focus specifically on wetland conservation and restoration projects in priority areas in the Lake Champlain Basin. Project selection criteria include water quality values, and focus areas also consider VFWD's ability to steward the sites and other public values the sites contribute to VFWD's portfolio of public lands.

Statement of Compliance with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986:
This recreation plan is consistent with the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan, prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Preparation of this plan involved coordination with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources will continue to make the acquisition of wetlands for fish and wildlife habitat a priority as stated in the Vermont Wetlands Conservation Strategy, 1994.

For additional information see:
Vermont Wetland Rules. Vt. Code R. 12 004 056. Adopted February 7, 1990 (Amendments adopted July 27, 2018, Effective August 15, 2018) available at: https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/documents/wsmd_VermontWetlandRules_2018.pdf

Appendix B: Vermont's Open Project Selection Process

Public Notification –With a biennial funding cycle, FPR notifies the public in the fall about Community LWCF grant opportunities through a Press Release as well as through a recreation organization email list. All grant information is posted on the FPR website (<https://fpr.vermont.gov/land-and-water-conservation-fund>).

Community LWCF Project Selection:

Approximately one-half of Vermont's available LWCF apportionment (~ \$ 1.6 million per biennial) will be reserved for eligible municipal entities in Vermont. The Community grant solicitation process in Vermont has recently been moved to a biennial cycle, so that sufficient funds can accrue. Every other fall, the public grant solicitation process begins with a press release and updated webpage with all needed information. Between September and October, pre-applications are solicited which provide enough detail for program staff to arrange pre-award site inspections and provide individualized application support. The full applications are due in December. Projects are then reviewed by the Project Application Review Committee (PARC).

Project Application Review Committee (PARC):

A five-person selection committee is appointed by the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation to serve two-year, renewable terms. The committee will consist of two municipal parks and recreation

representatives, a conservation organization representative, an FPR representative and one at-large member. The committee will review all eligible applications received through the public grant solicitation round and score them based on each application's applicability to the Action Plan in the SCORP which includes a higher point scale for the application's relationship to the Action Plan Priorities and Objectives.

In January or February, the PARC committee meets to hear brief presentations from all eligible applicants, and to ask and answer any remaining questions. After the presentations, the PARC committee ranks projects based on scores from the criteria and presentations and makes a final funding recommendation to the Commissioner.

Projects will be scored and funding levels recommended until available funds are spent. These recommendations will then be presented to the Commissioner (SLO) for final approval.

All LWCF and RTP Projects in Vermont will be selected based on their relationship to the Action Plan in our SCORP and the project need; level of public involvement; relationship to state, regional and local planning efforts; efficient use of funds and accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Projects will be scored based on the following SCORP priorities and objectives:

LWCF Community Projects Selection Criteria:

A. Project Planning (22 pts)

1. 0-12 How does the project relate to the SCORP Action Plan overall?
2. 0-10 How does the project addresses local, regional & state needs?

B. Public and Stakeholder Communication, Coordination, and Engagement (13 Points)

1. 0-5 How well does this project improve opportunities for stakeholder and community engagement?
2. 0-8 How effective/ extensive was public input/ involvement in the project?

C. Stewardship, Participation and Community Connections (35 Points)

1. 0-5 Efficient use of funds
2. 0-10 How well does the project address Maintenance and Stewardship of Natural Resources and Recreational Areas?
3. 0-10 How well does this project improve accessibility to underserved populations?
4. 0-5 How well does this project enhance opportunities for community health and wellness?
6. 0-5 How well does this project increase participation and capacity for outdoor recreation?

D. Overall quality of application & process (30 pts)

1. 0-5 Quality & completeness of grant application
2. 0-10 Results of pre-award inspection
4. 0-15 PARC Presentation

State LWCF Project Selection: approximately one-half of Vermont's available LWCF and RTP apportionments will be reserved for state lands priority acquisition, development or combination projects. Project information is gathered from state land managers and entered into a database which weighs these priorities, with the entire process predicated on the SCORP Action Plan's **Priority 1: Stewardship of Natural Resources and Recreational**

Areas, and the other priorities and objectives in the Action Plan weighted heavier for all LWCF and RTP projects.

Projects recommended for LWCF funding on state lands are subject to the following applicable criteria:

The project:

- Is necessary to improve or sustain public access
- Will enhance the visitor experience or preserve visitation
- Will enhance recreational access and use by underrepresented populations
- Will meet unmet and documented sustainable recreational demand
- Creates, maintains or improves recreation related trails or direct support facilities
- Improves a negative environmental condition
- Eliminates recurring excessive operating and maintenance costs
- Corrects a condition that will soon cascade in scope
- Directly relates to the Action Plan in the SCORP

State LWCF projects are reviewed by VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation staff and recommended for funding to the Commissioner/SLO.

Amendments to add funds to existing projects:

Vermont may honor requests to amend active projects to increase the cost of a state or locally sponsored project, including the federal share, without further OPSP competition, if the project sponsor can clearly articulate in writing the justification for such an amendment and only when the increased costs are associated with project components approved in the original project scope. Cost increase requests will be evaluated by the ASLO on a case-by-case basis.

Funds may be added with Commissioner (SLO) and NPS approval only if such requests will not adversely impact available funding for other active or potential state or local priority projects.

The SCORP Action Plan:

Priority 1: Stewardship of Natural Resources and Recreational Areas

- Objective 1: Support ecological integrity, conservation goals, and environmental quality in recreation planning and management
- Objective 2: Manage recreational assets and resources
- Objective 3: Cultivate political and public support for funding new and existing recreation and conservation efforts

Priority 2: Stakeholder Communication, Coordination, and Engagement

- Objective 1: Cultivate a Land Ethic/Recreation Ethic for all Vermonters and visitors
- Objective 2: Facilitate clear communication regarding recreation assets
- Objective 3: Ensure clear and transparent regulations, policies, permitting, and decision-making processes
- Objective 4: Continue to provide strong support for trail and recreation based non-profit groups and their volunteers

Priority 3: Public Participation and Access for All

- Objective 1: Provide resources to Vermont's outdoor recreation organizations to implement diversity and equity strategies to meet the needs of all Vermonters and visitors
- Objective 2: Engage new and underserved audiences in outdoor recreation activities
- Objective 3: Expand and strengthen public-private partnerships with private enterprises, schools, and other youth development agencies to introduce all youth to a range of outdoor recreation opportunities
- Objective 4: Provide support and remove barriers to private landowners hosting public recreation access and/or amenities such as trails on their lands

Priority 4: Community Connections, Health, and Wellness

- Objective 1: Enhance opportunities for community health and wellness through outdoor recreation
- Objective 2: Strengthen livability of communities through outdoor recreation
- Objective 3: Increase community capacity for outdoor recreation

Priority 5: Economic Vitality and Tourism

- Objective 1: Pursue marketing and branding initiatives to promote Vermont's outdoor recreation assets
- Objective 2: Provide professional support to regional and statewide outdoor recreation initiatives
- Objective 3: Develop public/private partnerships with businesses and with Vermont education and community-based providers to cultivate the outdoor recreation talent pipeline, and to promote compelling career pathways.
- Objective 4: Provide continued and increasing support for VOREC and related outdoor recreation economy initiatives

Appendix C: Summary of Public Comments

Public Comment Process and Summary

The draft 2019 SCORP was posted on the VT FPR website for public review and comment from November 11 until December 11, 2019. Draft copies of the SCORP were also available by mail upon request. The comment period was announced via a statewide press release and through social media channels. Comments were received using a comment form on the VT FPR website and by email. VT FPR received a total of 65 comments in response to the draft from a range of individuals and organizations that submitted comments. Some stakeholder groups provided a template to their members and constituents, and as a result, approximately half of all comments received via the online form were similar in content.

Final revisions to the SCORP were made in response to the public comments received as well as comments from an initial review by the National Park Service. . Two new objectives and nine new strategies were added to the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan, focused on 1) supporting non-profit recreation organizations, and 2) private landowners who host the public on their land at no cost.

This section summarizes the primary themes noted in the public comments received and addresses how they were considered as part of the final version of this SCORP:

User Group Recommendations

A significant number of public comments were targeted recommendations from user groups pertaining to one or a limited number of specific outdoor recreation activities. The aim of this SCORP is to provide a cohesive vision for all outdoor recreation enthusiasts across Vermont and recognizes the importance of engaging with all user group representatives. An intentional effort was made to ensuring that the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan provides opportunity for users of all recreation activities to be recognized and supported. As such, when recommendations were provided by specific user groups, each

recommendation was carefully considered to ensure that they were addressed by the broader priorities, objectives, and strategies within the action plan.

Public Trails & Private Lands

Numerous comments recognized the importance of having access to trails on private lands for public recreation use. Some of the comments suggested exploring ways to reduce regulations on private landowners due to concerns about the Act 250 process being a barrier for expanding trail networks. Other comments focused on protecting landowners from liability and overuse of trail networks while others requested exploring incentives for providing benefits to private landowners hosting public recreation on their lands. These comments are acknowledged in the final version of the objectives and strategies under Priority 3: Participation and Access for All.

Protecting Ecological Resources

Many public comments affirmed the emphasis in the draft SCORP on effectively stewarding Vermont's natural resources. Some comments specifically identified habitat conservation and highlighted the incorporation of sustainable practices in stewarding our environment in ways that promote conservation goals and recreation opportunities. Conservation of ecological resources was directly cited as a way to mitigate climate change impacts on human and natural communities alike. The objectives and strategies under Priority 1: Stewardship of Natural Resources and Recreational Areas reflect the importance of ecological resources noted during the public comment period.

Access for All

Another key theme that emerged from the public comments was the importance of ensuring access to outdoor recreation resources for all Vermonters. Ensuring equitable access, inclusivity, and affordability in Vermont factor significantly into the objectives and strategies under Priority 3: Participation and Access for All and Priority 4: Community Connection, Health, and Wellness in

this SCORP. Some public comments suggested investing more resources in picnic areas and community as a way of increasing recreational infrastructure for community building for all Vermonters.

Survey Methodology

Several comments were submitted regarding the changed sampling methodology for the public survey. The methodology section within the SCORP summarizes the change from the previous representative sample and provides a description of the limitations associated with the convenience sample that was used for the 2019 SCORP.

Content of Plan

Some comments noted an initial lack of data on regarding certain types of recreational activities and associated facilities. These comments were addressed by enhancing the section of the SCORP dedicated to Municipal, State, Federal, and non-profit recreational resources.

Implementation Benchmarks and Timeline

Some commenters requested further details about implementation to the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan, which is an excellent suggestion. Priority 2: Stakeholder Coordination, Communication, and Engagement reflects FPR's commitment to working with partners to get to that level of detail through consensus-building (through Recreation Summits and other mechanisms). The SCORP itself is the five-year plan for outdoor recreation in Vermont. The strategies should be viewed with that lens and were identified to be deliverable at least to some extent within that time frame. Additionally, the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Action Plan will be used by communities and organizations when applying for RTP and LWCF funds, and those entities need flexibility in timelines and deliverables in order to respond to local priorities and capacity.

Appendix D: Public Survey Instrument and Summary Statistics

CHRBSS (Behavioral) #STUDY00000459 Approved: 8/9/2019



Vermont Outdoor Recreation Public Survey

Introduction

The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation is soliciting citizen input via this online survey to help understand resident views on outdoor recreation in Vermont, and for use in developing Vermont's next Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The survey is designed to measure current participation in a variety of outdoor recreation activities, current use of existing recreation facilities, reasons for recreating, and barriers to outdoor recreation, as well as demographic information.

This study is being conducted by the Center for Rural Studies (CRS) at the University of Vermont and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. We welcome citizen input; please share yours.

Study Procedures

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to complete the 21 question survey that follows. The survey should take 15 minutes or less to complete.

Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there may not be any direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit others involved in outdoor recreation in Vermont now or in the future.

Risks

We will do our best to protect the information we collect from you during this study. We will not collect any information that will identify you to further protect your confidentiality and avoid any potential risk for an accidental breach of confidentiality.

Costs & Compensation

There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study. You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be stored without any identifiers. No one will be able to match you to your answers. Only researchers will have access to the data. Information will be saved on the password protected UVM server. Any paper copies will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Morrill Hall on the UVM campus.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. You may choose not to take part in this study, and you may refuse to participate without penalty or discrimination at any time.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Amy Kelsey, Research Specialist at CRS, at (802) 598-4551. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact the Director of the UVM Research Protections Office at (802) 656-5040. This research has been reviewed according to UVM IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Vermont SCORP Resident Survey

Survey Purpose: To understand experiences, priorities, and challenges in outdoor recreation as experienced by Vermont residents. “**Outdoor recreation**” is defined for the purposes of this survey as any form of outdoor activity pursued within the state Vermont during your leisure time that provides personal enjoyment, satisfaction, or wellbeing.

Background: This survey is being conducted by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation in partnership with the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont to gather input from all Vermonters regarding outdoor recreation. Even if you do not regularly recreate outdoors, your voice is still needed!

Your input will be used to develop the next Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP is important for Vermont because it:

1. Allows Vermont to qualify for federal funds for municipal and state recreation and conservation projects;
2. Provides an opportunity to assess recreation supply and demand; and,
3. Helps to guide strategy for local governments, state government and other outdoor recreation providers.

For more information about the SCORP or for assistance with the survey, please visit:
fpr.vermont.gov/SCORP

Consent: Your participation in this survey is voluntary. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential and will never be associated with your name, nor will any identifying information will be collected. The survey questions will be about your experiences, priorities, and barriers to participation in outdoor recreation activities. The results of this survey will be used to develop the Vermont Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

By completing this survey you agree that:

1. You have read the above information
2. You have voluntarily agree to participate
3. You are at least 18 years of age
4. You have not previously completed this survey

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT!

Your Outdoor Recreation Participation

1. In your household, would you say outdoor recreation is... *Please circle the most appropriate answer.*

Not important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Essential
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2. On average, how often did you recreate outdoors in **Vermont** during the previous 12 months? *Please circle the most appropriate answer.*

Never	Less than 1 time per week	2-4 times per week	5 or more times per week	Not sure
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3. If you recreated outdoors in Vermont during the previous 12 months, on average, do you recreate outdoors in Vermont during... *Please circle all that apply.*
- a. Weekdays
 - b. Weeknights
 - c. Weekends

4. On average, how often do you use the parks, open space, or trails in your **local or regional community** during each season? *Please check the appropriate box for each season.*

	Never	Less than 1 time per week	1 time per week	2-4 times per week	Over 4 times per week	Not sure
Spring						
Summer						
Fall						
Winter						

5. On average, how often did you **leave the state** for an outdoor recreation trip during each season? *Please check the appropriate box for each season.*

	Never	1 time	2-4 times	5 or more times	Not sure
Spring					
Summer					
Fall					
Winter					

6. Please tell us your favorite outdoor recreation activity? *If Not Applicable, check the box below.*

Favorite Recreation Activity: _____

Not Applicable

If you indicated a favorite activity in Question 6, please answers questions a, b, and c. Otherwise, skip to Question 7.

- a. On average, approximately how many roundtrip miles do you have to travel (by car) to participate in your favorite activity? *Please circle the most appropriate answer.*
 - i. Less than 1 mile
 - ii. 1-5 miles
 - iii. 5-25 miles
 - iv. 25-50 miles
 - v. 50-100 miles
 - vi. Over 100 miles
 - vii. I do not travel by car to participate in my favorite activity

- b. On average, approximately how often do you participate in your favorite activity? *Please circle the most appropriate answer.*
 - i. Less than once per week
 - ii. Once per week
 - iii. 2-4 times per week
 - iv. Over 4 times per week
 - v. Not sure

- c. On average, approximately how much do you spend annually to participate in your favorite activity for each category listed below?

Expense Category	Dollar Amount
Licenses or registrations	\$
Membership	\$
Use Fees (Trail Pass, Greens Fees, Parking, etc.)	\$
Equipment	\$
Instruction or guide services	\$
Other (please describe):	\$

7. Please look at the following activities listed in the table below. Did you or any member of your household participate in any of these activities **in Vermont during the past 12 months?**

Activity Type	Activity	<i>Check if you participated during the past year</i>	<i>Check if someone UNDER 18 in your household participated during the past year</i>
Trail/Street/Road Activities	Walking		
	Interpretive Walking/Hiking		
	Jogging/Running		
	Trail running		
	Day Hiking		
	Off Trail Hiking/Bushwhacking		
	Backpacking		
	Horseback Riding		
	Road or Gravel Biking		
	Mountain Biking		
	Downhill mountain biking		
	E-Biking		
	ATV Riding		
	Other Off-Highway Vehicle Riding		
	Scenic Driving		
	Inline/Roller Skate, Skateboarding		
Other: _____			
Water-based Activities	Swimming (outdoors, natural area)		
	Swimming (outdoors, pool facility)		
	Motor Boating (including related activities, e.g. water skiing)		
	Canoeing/Kayaking/Row Boating		
	Diving/Snorkeling		
	Sailing		
	Stand Up Paddle boarding		
	Visit Lakes/Rivers/Pond		
	Fly Fishing		
	Lake/River/Pond Fishing		
	Other: _____		

Winter Activities	Downhill skiing/ snowboarding		
	Sledding/tubing		
	Cross-country skiing (on groomed trails)		
	Snowshoeing		
	Backcountry/AT skiing/snowboarding		
	Ice skating (outdoors)		
	Snowmobiling		
	Ice climbing		
	Fat Biking		
	Ice fishing		
	Other: _____		
Wildlife-related Activities	Hunting (big & small game)		
	Waterfowl Hunting		
	Trapping		
	Bird Watching		
	Tracking		
	Wildlife Watching		
	Other: _____		
Sports	Adaptive sports		
	Shooting Sports (target, skeet, etc.)		
	Golf		
	Baseball/Softball		
	Basketball (outdoors)		
	Lacrosse/Soccer/Football		
	Volleyball (outdoors)		
	Ultimate Frisbee		
	Disc Golf		
	Other: _____		
Other Outdoor Activities	Tent Camping		
	RV Camping		
	Picnicking		
	Playground		

Visiting nature centers		
Outdoor photography		
Night sky viewing		
Attending outdoor education program/activity (e.g. campfire program, guided hike)		
Caving/Spelunking		
Foraging/collecting (e.g. berries, plants)		
Rock climbing		
Nature Study		
Orienteering, geocaching		
Community gardening		
Other: _____		

Reasons to Recreate

8. How important to you are each of the following potential benefits of outdoor recreation in Vermont? *Please check the box that most accurately reflects your opinion.*

	Not important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Essential	Not Applicable
Physical health & wellness						
Mental health & wellness						
Quiet/solitude/contemplation						
Connection to nature						
Safe places for youth and families to play						
Ecological conservation and protection						
Historical and cultural heritage preservation						
Outdoor and nature education						
Sense of adventure/exploration						
Sense of accomplishment/achievement						
Community and social networks and interaction						
Community livability and sense of place						
Community economic development						
Alternative transportation opportunities						

Other: _____

Barriers to Recreation

9. Please indicate the frequency with which the following potential barriers prevent you from participating in outdoor recreation in Vermont. *Please check the box that most accurately reflects your opinion.*

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always	Not Applicable
Cleanliness and condition of recreation facilities						
Lack of knowledge/skills						
Safety & security of recreation areas						
Time and distance required to travel to recreate						
Lack of transportation						
Time constraints due to work, family, or other obligations						
Availability of facilities or programs						
Cost of equipment/gear needed to participate						
Accessibility for people living with disabilities						
Accessibility for older adults (65+)						
Costs associated with entrance, parking, or other user fees						
Don't feel welcome or included based on identity						
Don't feel welcome based on skill or ability						
Availability of cell phone/Wi-Fi coverage						
Inability to bring pets						
No one to go with						
General lack of interest or other priorities						
Other: _____						

Services and Types of Recreation Opportunities

10. Overall, how would you rate outdoor recreation opportunities in Vermont? *Please check the box that most accurately reflects your opinion.*

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Quality of opportunities					
Quantity of opportunities					
Diversity of opportunities					

11. To what extent does the following recreational infrastructure meet your recreational needs? *Please check the box that most accurately reflects your opinion.*

	Not at all	Very Little	Somewhat	To a great extent	I do not use these facilities
Hiking Trails					
Cross country ski/snowshoeing trails					
Fitness/bicycle paths					
Snowmobile trails					
OHV/ATV trails					
Picnic areas, shelters					
Playgrounds					
Sport fields (e.g. baseball, soccer, etc.)					
Outdoor sport courts (e.g. tennis, basketball, etc.)					
Outdoor swimming pools					
Natural swimming areas (e.g. lakes, swimming holes)					
Community garden sites					
Skiing/snowboarding areas					
Sledding areas					
Outdoor skating/hockey areas					
Boating access - Motorized					
Boating access – Non-motorized					
Stocked fishing areas					
Hunting/trapping areas					
State wildlife management areas					
National forests					

State parks					
Wilderness areas					
National wildlife refuges					
Local/state waterways (e.g. lakes, ponds)					
Other: _____					

12. Outdoor recreation providers often need to prioritize their efforts. How do you think that recreation providers should prioritize the following activities at recreation areas in Vermont?
Please check the box that most accurately reflects your opinion.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Essential
Expanding the amount of back country open space available for outdoor recreation					
Developing neighborhood, community, or special use parks (e.g. playgrounds, dog parks, pump tracks, etc.)					
Obtaining permanent access easements or rights of way to secure long-term access					
Developing team sports facilities					
Expanding opportunities for water-based recreation					
Expanding opportunities for hunting or fishing					
Expanding opportunities for trail-based recreation					
Stewarding existing outdoor recreational activities					
Connecting local and regional trail systems					
Improving outdoor interpretative/educational facilities or programs					

Reflecting on Key Themes

13. Stewardship, Communication, Participation, Community Connections, and Economic Vitality have emerged as key outdoor recreation objectives through a variety of public input activities since the last SCORP was completed in 2014.

How important is each objective for outdoor recreation in Vermont over the next five years?
Please check the box that most accurately reflects your opinion.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Essential
<i>Stewardship</i>					
Manage increasing use/overuse of recreational areas and resources					
Incorporate climate change adaptation and resiliency strategies in recreation planning and management					
Support ecological and conservation goals in recreation planning and management					
Identify and pursue new funds available to organizations and management agencies that directly benefits outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources.					
<i>Communication/Coordination/Engagement</i>					
Ensure clear and transparent processes concerning policies, permitting and regulations					
Facilitate clear communication between the public and recreation managers					
<i>Participation</i>					
Implement diversity and equity strategies to meet the needs of all Vermonters and visitors					
Engage new and underserved audiences in outdoor recreation activities					
<i>Community Connections</i>					
Enhance opportunities for community health and wellness through outdoor recreation					
Strengthen livability of communities through outdoor recreation					
<i>Economic Vitality</i>					
Promote outdoor recreation activities as a driver of economic vitality					
Support outdoor recreation-related businesses					

About You

Please circle the most appropriate answer.

14. What is your age?
- a. 18-24
 - b. 25-34
 - c. 35-44
 - d. 45-54
 - e. 55-64
 - f. 65-74
 - g. 75 and older
 - h. Prefer not to answer
15. With which gender do you most identify?
- a. Man
 - b. Woman
 - c. Transgender
 - d. Non-binary
 - e. Other: _____
 - f. Prefer not to answer
16. What is your highest level of educational attainment?
- a. Less than high school
 - b. High school graduate or GED
 - c. Some college or vocational
 - d. Associates degree or equivalent
 - e. Bachelor's degree or equivalent
 - f. Master's degree or equivalent
 - g. Doctoral degree or equivalent
 - h. Prefer not to answer
17. What is your current employment status?
- a. Employed, full-time
 - b. Employed, part-time
 - c. Not employed, looking for work
 - d. Not employed, not looking for work
 - e. Retired
 - f. Disabled, not able to work
 - g. Prefer not to answer
18. Approximately how many years have you resided in Vermont?
- a. Less than 5
 - b. 5-15
 - c. 16-30
 - d. Over 30

- e. Part-time resident
- f. Not a resident
- g. Prefer not to answer

19. If you are a Vermont resident, in which Vermont county do you currently live?

- a. If you are not a Vermont resident, in what state, country, or province do you reside?

20. With which race/ethnic background do you most identify? *Please select all that apply to you.*

- a. African American/Black
- b. American Indian/Alaska Native
- c. Asian/Pacific Islander
- d. White/Caucasian
- e. Hispanic/Latinx
- f. Other (*Please Specify*): _____
- g. Prefer not to answer

21. What category best represents your total annual household income before taxes:

- a. Less than \$25,000
- b. Between \$25,000 and \$50,000
- c. Between \$50,000 and \$75,000
- d. Between \$75,000 and \$100,000
- e. Between \$100,000 and \$150,000
- f. Between \$150,000 and \$200,000
- g. Greater than \$200,000
- h. Prefer not to answer

22. How many adults and children reside in your household? A household consists of one or more people who live in the same dwelling and also share meals or living accommodations. It may consist of a single family or some other grouping of people.

Adults (18 and over)	
Children (under 18)	

Remaining Thoughts

Please elaborate on any responses or share other thoughts related to Vermont's outdoor recreation opportunities in the space below.

Thank you for your input!

To return this survey, please scan and email to amy.kelsey@uvm.edu, or mail to:

Amy Kelsey
Center for Rural Studies
Room 206 Morrill Hall
The University of Vermont
85 South Prospect Street
Burlington, VT 05401

Contact Amy Kelsey at UVM's Center for Rural Studies, amy.kelsey@uvm.edu or 802-598-4551, or Jessica Savage, Recreation Program Manager at Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Jessica.savage@vermont.gov or 802-249-1230 with questions about the SCORP or this research.

2019 SCORP Public Survey Results

Q1. In your household, would you say outdoor recreation is:	Frequency	Valid Percent
Essential	2840	61.20%
Very Important	1513	32.60%
Moderately Important	243	5.20%
Slightly Important	33	0.70%
Not Important	9	0.20%
Total	4638	100

Q2. On average, how often did you recreate outdoors in Vermont during the previous 12 months?	Frequency	Valid Percent
2-4 times per week	2189	47.3
5 or more times per week	2097	45.3
Less than 1 time per week	286	6.2
Not sure	48	1
Never	12	0.3
Total	4632	100
Missing	23	
Total	4655	

Q3. On average, do you recreate outdoors in Vermont during:						
	Weekdays		Weeknights		Weekends	
	Count	Valid Percent	Count	Valid Percent	Count	Valid Percent
Yes	3358	72.1	2442	52.5	4272	91.8
No	1297	27.9	2213	47.5	383	8.2
Total	4655	100	4655	100	4655	100

Q4. On average, how often do you use the parks, open space, or trails in your local or regional community during each season:	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER
Never	4.1	2.6	2.2	6.7
Less than 1 time per week	13.7	9.3	7.9	16.9
1 time per week	19.5	11.5	11.3	19.6
2-4 times per week	39.9	40.6	43.1	34.3
Over 4 times per week	21.2	34.9	34.4	20.9
Not sure	1.7	1.1	1.1	1.7
Total	100	100	100	100

Q5. On average, how often do you leave the state for an outdoor recreation trip during each season:	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER
Never	31.7	18.6	26	33.5

1 time	37.5	31.2	35.8	34
2-4 times	21.8	36.8	26.5	21.9
5 or more times	4.9	10.8	8.1	6.6
Not sure	4	2.5	3.5	4
Total	100	100	100	100

Q6. Please tell us your favorite outdoor recreation activity (open-ended)	Count	Valid Percent
Hiking-all	728	16.97%
Hunting (includes bird, bow, deer, etc.)	655	15.26%
Mountain Biking	493	11.49%
Walking - all (includes Dog Walking & Nature/Forest/Woods Walks)	385	8.97%
Downhill Skiing	253	5.90%
Fishing	249	5.80%
Biking & Bike Touring	192	4.47%
ATV	160	3.73%
Bird Watching	112	2.61%
XC & Nordic Skiing	106	2.47%
Snowmobiling	101	2.35%
Backcountry Ski/Snowboard	94	2.19%
Running & Trail Running	88	2.05%
Kayak	73	1.70%
Camping-all	73	1.70%
Swimming	70	1.63%
Horseback Riding	45	1.05%
Snowshoeing	28	0.65%
Boating	23	0.54%
Nature & Wildlife Observation	22	0.51%
Shooting Sports	21	0.49%
Canoe	18	0.42%
Rockclimbing	18	0.42%
OHV (Dirt Bike, Jeeping, Motorcycle Trail Riding, Mudding)	18	0.42%
Paddling	15	0.35%
Water Activities (General, Water sports, water skiing)	15	0.35%
Backpacking	12	0.28%
Rowing	2	0.05%
Beach	2	0.05%
Bouldering	1	0.02%
Snowboarding	33	0.77%
Golf	10	0.23%
Gardening/work	10	0.23%

Q7. On average, approximately how many roundtrip miles do you have to travel (by car) to participate in your favorite activity?	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than 1 mile	421	10
1-5 miles	691	16.4
5-25 miles	1614	38.3
25-50 miles	671	15.9
50-100 miles	282	6.7
Over 100 miles	200	4.7
I do not travel by car to participate in my favorite activity	334	7.9
Total	4213	100
Missing	442	
Total	4655	

Q8. On average, approximately how often do you participate in your favorite activity?	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than once per week	412	9.8
Once per week	816	19.4
2-4 times per week	1863	44.2
Over 4 times per week	1043	24.7
Not sure	81	1.9
Total	4215	100
Missing	440	
Total	4655	

Q9-Q14. Please look at all the activities in the table below. Did you or any member of your household participate in any of these activities in Vermont during the past 12 months?	percentage who participated during the past year	percentage reporting someone UNDER 18 in household participated during the past year
Walking	87.6	25.5
Visit Lakes/Rivers/Pond	78.9	22.9
Day Hiking	75.3	20.5
Swimming (outdoors, natural area)	72.1	24.3
Canoeing/Kayaking/Row Boating	64.1	17.7
Scenic Driving	62.7	12.8
Wildlife Watching	60.9	13.6
Picnicking	57.4	17.1
Night sky viewing	57	13.1
Snowshoeing	56.5	11.3
Outdoor photography	49.1	8.7

Visiting nature centers	47	14.6
Off Trail Hiking/Bushwhacking	46.6	9.3
Road or Gravel Biking	45.8	12.8
Interpretive Walking/Hiking	45.4	12.7
Tent Camping	45.2	15.9
Bird Watching	44.2	7.6
Foraging/collecting (e.g. berries, plants)	44	11.3
Lake/River/Pond Fishing	40.9	14.4
Downhill skiing/ snowboarding	39.5	15.5
Cross-country skiing (on groomed trails)	35.2	8.3
Sledding/tubing	35	19.7
Jogging/Running	34.8	11.1
Hunting (big & small game)	33.7	7.3
Swimming (outdoors, pool facility)	32.4	16.9
Motor Boating (including related activities, e.g. water skiing)	32.1	10.8
Mountain Biking	31.7	10.4
Shooting Sports (target, skeet, etc.)	30.4	7.2
Backcountry/AT skiing/snowboarding	29.2	5
Playground	25.7	17.6
Backpacking	25.5	5.8
Trail running	25.4	7
Tracking	24.9	5.8
Nature Study	24.4	5.4
ATV Riding	21.5	6.6
Attending outdoor education program/activity (e.g. campfire program, guided hike)	20	6.8
Ice fishing	19.2	6.5
Ice skating (outdoors)	18	9.1
Fly Fishing	17.5	3.7
Stand Up Paddle boarding	17.1	6.4
Golf	16.2	3.6
Other Off-Highway Vehicle Riding	14.4	4.1
Snowmobiling	14.3	4.5
RV Camping	14	4.6
Downhill mountain biking	12.9	3.8
Sailing	10.4	2.7
Fat Biking	9.9	1.3
Community gardening	9.4	2.2
Diving/Snorkeling	9	3.3
Waterfowl Hunting	8.7	2.3
Disc Golf	8.3	2.6
Baseball/Softball	8	6.9
Rock climbing	7.3	2.9

Horseback Riding	6.9	4
Orienteering, geocaching	6.9	2
Lacrosse/Soccer/Football	6.7	9.7
Basketball (outdoors)	5.2	5.9
Ultimate Frisbee	4.7	2.6
Inline/Roller Skate, Skateboarding	4.4	3.4
E-Biking	4.3	0.5
Trapping	3.9	1.3
Volleyball (outdoors)	3.8	1.8
Adaptive sports	2.7	1.1
Ice climbing	2.5	0.2
Caving/Spelunking	2.3	1.1

Q15. How important to you are each of the following potential benefits of outdoor recreation in Vermont?	% of people responding very important or essential
Mental health & wellness	93.12
Connection to nature	89.00
Physical health & wellness	88.43
Quiet/solitude/contemplation	84.71
Ecological conservation and protection	83.96
Sense of adventure/exploration	77.98
Safe places for youth and families to play	74.90
Outdoor and nature education	72.08
Sense of accomplishment/achievement	69.83
Historical and cultural heritage preservation	66.00
Community livability and sense of place	63.24
Community economic development	51.85
Community and social networks and interaction	45.01
Alternative transportation opportunities	37.84

Q16. Please indicate the frequency with which the following potential barriers prevent you from participating in outdoor recreation in Vermont.	% of people responding occasionally, frequently, or always
Time constraints due to work, family, or other obligations	67.5
Time and distance required to travel to recreate	52.3
Cost of equipment/gear needed to participate	37.9
Availability of facilities or programs	30.2
Lack of knowledge/skills	27.6
No one to go with	25.4
Inability to bring pets	23.6

Costs associated with entrance, parking, or other user fees	22.9
Cleanliness and condition of recreation facilities	21.1
Safety & security of recreation areas	18.5
Availability of cell phone/Wi-Fi coverage	16.1
General lack of interest or other priorities	13.1
Accessibility for older adults (65+)	12.6
Accessibility for people living with disabilities	10.4
Lack of transportation	8.8
Don't feel welcome based on skill or ability	8.6
Don't feel welcome or included based on identity	5.2

Q17. Overall, how would you rate outdoor recreation opportunities in Vermont? [Quality of opportunities]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Poor	38	0.95%
Fair	186	4.63%
Average	464	11.55%
Good	1643	40.91%
Excellent	1685	41.96%
Total	4016	100.00%
Missing	639	
Total	4655	

Q17. Overall, how would you rate outdoor recreation opportunities in Vermont? [Quantity of opportunities]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Poor	64	1.60%
Fair	264	6.58%
Average	614	15.30%
Good	1574	39.23%
Excellent	1496	37.29%
Total	4012	100.00%
Missing	643	
Total	4655	

Q17. Overall, how would you rate outdoor recreation opportunities in Vermont? [Diversity of opportunities]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Poor	79	1.97%
Fair	270	6.74%
Average	725	18.10%
Good	1661	41.47%
Excellent	1270	31.71%
Total	4005	100.00%

Missing	650	
Total	4655	

Q18. To what extent does the following recreational infrastructure meet your recreational needs?	% who say "I do not use"	% of people whose needs are somewhat, very little, or not at all met	% of people saying infrastructure meets their needs to a great extent
Local/state waterways (e.g. lakes, ponds)	4.7	36.1	59.2
State parks	4.7	37.8	57.5
Hiking Trails	5.9	26.8	67.3
National forests	8.1	39.9	52
Wilderness areas	8.8	41.1	50.1
Natural swimming areas (e.g. lakes, swimming holes)	9.9	38.2	51.9
National wildlife refuges	18.9	43	38.1
Picnic areas, shelters	21.2	46.1	32.7
State wildlife management areas	25.3	38.2	36.5
Fitness/bicycle paths	25.9	45.4	28.7
Boating access – Non-motorized	26.9	36	37.1
Cross country ski/snowshoeing trails	28.8	30.6	40.6
Skiing/snowboarding areas	43.4	15.3	41.3
Sledding areas	46.3	35.9	17.8
Playgrounds	51.3	31.4	17.3
Outdoor swimming pools	54.6	36.6	8.8
Stocked fishing areas	55.1	27.9	17
Sport fields (e.g. baseball, soccer, etc.)	55.6	27.7	16.7
Boating access - Motorized	57.6	22.5	19.9
Hunting/trapping areas	58.5	22.3	19.2
Outdoor skating/hockey areas	58.7	31.5	9.8
Outdoor sport courts (e.g. tennis, basketball, etc.)	59.3	29	11.7
Snowmobile trails	67.9	17.6	14.5
Community garden sites	68.4	24.3	7.3
OHV/ATV trails	69	22.8	8.2

Q19. Outdoor recreation providers often need to prioritize their efforts. How do you think that recreation providers should prioritize the following activities at recreation areas in Vermont?	% of people responding very important or essential
Stewarding existing outdoor recreational activities	66.47

Obtaining permanent access easements or rights of way to secure long-term access	65.90
Connecting local and regional trail systems	62.15
Expanding opportunities for trail-based recreation	54.06
Expanding the amount of backcountry open space available for outdoor recreation	48.62
Expanding opportunities for hunting or fishing	35.08
Developing neighborhood, community, or special use parks (e.g. playgrounds, dog parks, pump tracks, etc.	30.81
Improving outdoor interpretative/educational facilities or programs	29.27
Expanding opportunities for water-based recreation	26.55
Developing team sports facilities	10.12

Q20. How important is each objective for outdoor recreation in Vermont over the next five years?	% of people responding very important or essential
Stewardship: Identify and pursue new funds available to organizations and management agencies that directly benefits outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources.	74.28
Stewardship: Manage increasing use/overuse of recreational areas and resources]	72.01
Stewardship: Support ecological and conservation goals in recreation planning and management	69.86
Communication: Facilitate clear communication between the public and recreation managers	67.62
Communication: Ensure clear and transparent processes concerning policies, permitting and regulations	67.56
Economic Vitality: Promote outdoor recreation activities as a driver of economic vitality	62.65
Stewardship: Incorporate climate change adaptation and resiliency strategies in recreation planning and management	60.14
Economic Vitality: Support outdoor recreation-related businesses	60.01
Community Connections: Strengthen livability of communities through outdoor recreation	59.67
Community Connections: Enhance opportunities for community health and wellness through outdoor recreation]	57.22
Participation: Implement diversity and equity strategies to meet the needs of all Vermonters and visitors	55.14
Participation: Engage new and underserved audiences in outdoor recreation activities	54.43

DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your age?	Frequency	Valid Percent
18-24	52	1.4

25-34	428	11.2
35-44	628	16.5
45-54	722	18.9
55-64	984	25.8
65-74	825	21.6
75 and older	177	4.6
Total	3816	100
Missing	839	
Total	4655	

With which gender do you identify?	Frequency	Valid Percent
other, with comment	27	0.7
Man	2238	58.7
Woman	1527	40.1
Transgender	3	0.1
Non-binary	15	0.4
Total	3810	100
Missing	845	
Total	4655	

What is your highest level of educational attainment?	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than high school	14	0.4
High school or GED	303	8
Some college or vocational	525	13.8
Associates degree or equivalent	314	8.2
Bachelors degree or equivalent	1363	35.8
Masters degree or equivalent	1001	26.3
Doctoral degree or equivalent	288	7.6
Total	3808	100
Missing	847	
Total	4655	

What is your current employment status?	Frequency	Valid Percent
Employed, full-time	2264	59.5
Employed, part-time	374	9.8
Not employed, looking for work	40	1.1
Not employed, not looking for work	77	2
Retired	981	25.8
Disabled, not able to work	67	1.8
Total	3803	100
Missing	852	

Total	4655	
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Approximately how many years have you resided in Vermont?	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than 5	283	7.4
5-15	635	16.6
16-30	796	20.9
Over 30	1916	50.2
Part-time resident	90	2.4
Not a resident	95	2.5
Total	3815	100
Missing	840	
Total	4655	

County of Residence				
Vermont County	County Population	Percent of VT population	Frequency of SCORP responses from each county	Percent of SCORP responses from each county
Addison	36825	5.90%	299	8.04%
Bennington	36054	5.77%	148	3.98%
Caledonia	30576	4.90%	174	4.68%
Chittenden	160985	25.77%	795	21.39%
Essex	6203	0.99%	45	1.21%
Franklin	48816	7.82%	234	6.30%
Grand Isle	6950	1.11%	49	1.32%
Lamoille	25191	4.03%	269	7.24%
Orange	28901	4.63%	174	4.68%
Orleans	26951	4.31%	179	4.82%
Rutland	59676	9.55%	232	6.24%
Washington	58691	9.40%	654	17.59%
Windham	43332	6.94%	212	5.70%
Windsor	55485	8.88%	253	6.81%
Total	624636	100.00%	3717	100.00%

Nonresident respondents	
State/Country	Frequency
MA	30
NY	21
CT	13
NH	8
PA	3
RI	2

QC	2
VA	2
CA	1
DE	1
FL	1
IN	1
ME	1
MI	1
NC	1
NJ	1
OH	1
Peru	1
TN	1
TX	1
Total	93

With which race/ethnic background do you most identify?	Frequency	Valid Percent
other, with comment	126	3.3
African American/Black	4	0.1
American Indian/Alaska Native	25	0.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	9	0.2
White/Caucasian	3593	95.2
Hispanic/Latinx	19	0.5
Total	3776	100
Missing	879	
Total	4655	

What category best represents your total annual household income before taxes:	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than \$25,000	188	5.2
Between \$25,000 and \$50,000	591	16.3
Between \$50,000 and \$75,000	725	20
Between \$75,000 and \$100,000	802	22.1
Between \$100,000 and \$150,000	775	21.4
Between \$150,000 and \$200,000	304	8.4
Greater than \$200,000	240	6.6
Total	3625	100
Missing	1030	
Total	4655	

How many children under 18 reside in your household?	Frequency	Valid Percent
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1	418	40.7
2	462	45
3	111	10.8
4	24	2.3
5	7	0.7
6	4	0.4
10	1	0.1
Total	1027	100
Missing	3628	
Total	4655	

Resident Survey Open-Ended Responses

Several questions on the resident survey offered the opportunity to write in a response. Do to the volume of responses noted in the table below, they are not included here. To receive a copy of open ended responses, please contact Jessica Savage, Recreation Program Manager at Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Jessica.savage@vermont.gov.

Question with Open-Ended Response	Frequency of Write-in Responses
Q9-14: Other activities you or any member of your household participated in during the past 12 months (over 18)	718
Q9-14: Other activities you or any member of your household participated in during the past 12 months (under 18)	202
Q15: How important to you are each of the following potential benefits of outdoor recreation in Vermont? (Other)	601
Q16. Please indicate the frequency with which the following potential barriers prevent you from participating in outdoor recreation in Vermont.	711
Q22. Please elaborate on any responses or share other thoughts related to Vermont's outdoor recreation opportunities in the space below.	1537

Appendix E: Provider Survey Instrument and Summary Statistics

Vermont SCORP: Recreation Provider Survey

A survey hosted by the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation to gather input on the next Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Survey Purpose

To understand experiences, priorities, and challenges in outdoor recreation as experienced by Vermont's public and private land managers, outdoor recreation providers (non-profit, municipal, and private) outdoor recreation private enterprises, and other key stakeholders. "Outdoor recreation" is defined for the purposes of this survey as any form of outdoor activity pursued within the state Vermont during your leisure time that provides personal enjoyment, satisfaction, or wellbeing.

Background

This survey is being conducted by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation in partnership with the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont to gather input from outdoor recreation providers.

Your input will be used to develop the next Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP is important for Vermont because it:

1. Allows Vermont to qualify for federal funds for municipal and state recreation and conservation projects;
2. Provides an opportunity to assess recreation supply and demand; and,
3. Helps to guide strategy for local governments, state government and other outdoor recreation providers.

For more information about the SCORP or for assistance with the survey, please visit: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/SCORP> (<https://fpr.vermont.gov/SCORP>) and review the survey information sheet (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ilCcr3MM1_VCD6Fwqcwph6xb9_p4lo6q/view?usp=sharing).

Consent

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. This online survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey questions will be about your experiences, your priorities, and barriers to participation in outdoor recreation activities. The results of this survey will be used to develop the Vermont Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

By completing this survey you agree that:

1. You have read the above information
2. You have voluntarily agreed to participate
3. You are at least 18 years of age
4. You have not previously completed this survey

Thank you for your input!

There are 39 questions in this survey

Organization Background and Characteristics

[] Please indicate which description best represents the entity for which you are responding:

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Federal Agency
- State Agency
- City/Town
- Regional Planning Commission
- Land Trust
- Private Business
- Private Institution
- Nonprofit/Membership Organization
- Other

[] Please indicate which best represents your current job title:

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Executive Director
- Program Director
- Program Coordinator
- Lands Manager
- Planner
- Owner-Operator
- Volunteer
- Other

[] Please provide the name of the organization for which you are responding.

Please write your answer here:

[] How many of the following employee types are employed at your organization in a typical year? Please only include those with outdoor recreation related duties.

Please write your answer(s) here:

Full-time, 12-month staff members

Full-time, seasonal staff members

Part-time, 12-month staff members

Part-time, seasonal staff members

[] Does your organization use volunteers?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

[] Approximately how many volunteers support your organization in a typical year?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes' at question '5 [Q4Volunteer]' (Does your organization use volunteers?)

Only numbers may be entered in this field.

Please write your answer here:

[] Does your organization track volunteer hours?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes' at question '5 [Q4Volunteer]' (Does your organization use volunteers?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

[] How many hours of volunteer time does your organization account for in a typical year?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes' at question '7 [Q4\VolunteerHours]' (Does your organization track volunteer hours?)

Only numbers may be entered in this field.

Please write your answer here:

[] Please indicate all of the funding sources that currently support your organization:

Check all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Federal budget/taxes
- State budget/taxes
- Municipal budget/taxes
- Federal grants
- State or regional grants
- Private foundation grants
- Program fees
- Membership fees
- License, permit, special use, or event fees
- Payment for goods and services (including entrance fees)
- Sponsorship
- Donations
- Other:

[] Is your organization responsible for outdoor recreation activities occurring on any of the following types of land:

Check all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Public federal lands
- Public state lands
- Public municipal lands
- Private lands
- Private lands with public access agreements
- Trail or path networks on private lands
- Trail or path networks on public lands
- Public waterways
- Other:

[] Please select the types of land, park, open space, etc. your agency/organization is responsible for managing:

Check all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Neighborhood or community parks
- Special use parks (dog parks, skate or bike parks, playgrounds, etc.)
- State parks
- Wildlife management areas
- Open lands (open space, natural areas, mountain areas)
- Conservation or access easements
- Federal lands (national forests, national parks, national wildlife refuges, etc.)
- Regional or local trails and/or greenways
- Outdoor sports facilities (baseball fields, soccer fields, pools, etc.)
- Beaches/Outdoor swim areas
- Boating/fishing access points
- Other:

Outdoor Recreation Activities

[] Please select the trail/street/road activities that your organization currently provides and/or supports.

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Check if provided/supported by your organization in the past year
Walking	<input type="radio"/>
Interpretive walking/hiking	<input type="radio"/>
Jogging/Running	<input type="radio"/>
Trail running	<input type="radio"/>
Day hiking	<input type="radio"/>
Off trail hiking/bushwhacking	<input type="radio"/>
Backpacking	<input type="radio"/>
Horseback riding	<input type="radio"/>
Road or gravel biking	<input type="radio"/>
Mountain biking	<input type="radio"/>
Downhill mountain biking	<input type="radio"/>
E-Biking	<input type="radio"/>
ATV riding	<input type="radio"/>
Other Off-Highway Vehicle riding	<input type="radio"/>

Check if provided/supported by your organization in the past year

Scenic driving	<input type="radio"/>
Inline/Roller skate, skateboarding	<input type="radio"/>

[]

Please select the water-based activities your organization currently provides and/or supports.

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

Check if provided/supported by your organization in the past year

Swimming (outdoors, natural area)	<input type="radio"/>
Swimming (outdoors, pool facility)	<input type="radio"/>
Motor boating (including related activities, e.g. water skiing)	<input type="radio"/>
Canoeing/Kayaking/Row Boating	<input type="radio"/>
Diving/Snorkeling	<input type="radio"/>
Sailing	<input type="radio"/>
Stand Up Paddle Boarding	<input type="radio"/>
Visit Lakes/Rivers/Ponds	<input type="radio"/>
Fly Fishing	<input type="radio"/>
Spin/Bait Fishing	<input type="radio"/>

[]

Please select the winter activities your organization currently provides and/or supports.

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

Check if provided/supported by your organization in the past year

Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	<input type="radio"/>
Sledding/Tubing	<input type="radio"/>
Cross-country Skiing (on groomed trails)	<input type="radio"/>
Snowshoeing	<input type="radio"/>
Backcountry Skiing/Snowboarding	<input type="radio"/>
Ice skating (outdoors)	<input type="radio"/>
Snowmobiling	<input type="radio"/>
Ice climbing	<input type="radio"/>
Fat biking	<input type="radio"/>
Ice fishing	<input type="radio"/>

[]

Please select the wildlife-related activities your organization currently provides and/or supports.

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

Check if provided/supported by your organization in the past year

Hunting (big & small game)	<input type="radio"/>
Waterfowl Hunting	<input type="radio"/>
Trapping	<input type="radio"/>
Bird Watching	<input type="radio"/>
Tracking	<input type="radio"/>
Wildlife Watching	<input type="radio"/>

[]

Please select the sport activities your organization currently provides and/or supports.

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

Check if provided/supported by your organization in the past year

Adaptive Sports	<input type="radio"/>
Shooting Sports (target, skeet, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>
Golf	<input type="radio"/>
Baseball/Softball	<input type="radio"/>
Basketball (outdoors)	<input type="radio"/>
Lacrosse/Soccer/Football	<input type="radio"/>
Volleyball (outdoors)	<input type="radio"/>
Ultimate Frisbee	<input type="radio"/>
Disc Golf	<input type="radio"/>

[]

Please select the outdoor activities your organization currently provides and/or supports.

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

Check if provided/supported by your organization in the past year

Tent camping	<input type="radio"/>
RV camping	<input type="radio"/>
Picnicking	<input type="radio"/>
Playground	<input type="radio"/>
Visiting Nature Centers	<input type="radio"/>
Visiting scenic Viewpoints	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor Photography	<input type="radio"/>
Night Sky Viewing	<input type="radio"/>
Attending Outdoor Education Program/Activity (e.g. campfire program, guided hike)	<input type="radio"/>
Caving/Spelunking	<input type="radio"/>
Foraging/Gathering (e.g. berries, plants)	<input type="radio"/>
Rock climbing	<input type="radio"/>

Check if provided/supported by your organization in the past year

Nature study	<input type="radio"/>
Orienteering, Geocaching	<input type="radio"/>
Community Gardening	<input type="radio"/>

[] Please list any other outdoor recreational activities your organization provided/supported during the past 12 months in Vermont:

Please write your answer here:

[] Does your organization track visitation or participation data for any of your users, clients, or members?

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes, for all recreation activities
- Yes, for some recreation activities
- No
- Not applicable to my organization

[] What metrics does your organization collect to track visitation/participation?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes, for all recreation activities' or 'Yes, for some recreation activities' at question '19 [Q15Participation]' (Does your organization track visitation or participation data for any of your users, clients, or members?)

Please write your answer here:

Examples of metrics include (but are not limited to) annual members, trail or path counts, day use visits, event participants, registrations, licenses or permits sold, etc.

[] Could the visitation or participation data that your organization collects be made available to the SCORP Team?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes, for all recreation activities' or 'Yes, for some recreation activities' at question '19 [Q15Participation]' (Does your organization track visitation or participation data for any of your users, clients, or members?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

Benefits & Challenges of Providing Outdoor Recreation

[]

How much do you agree that the outdoor recreation opportunities your organization provides or supports deliver the following benefits to the public?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Physical health & wellness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health & wellness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quiet/solitude/contemplation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safe places for youth and families to play	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ecological conservation and protection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historical and cultural heritage preservation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor and nature education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of adventure/exploration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of accomplishment/achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community, social networks, and social interaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community livability and sense of place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community economic development and vitality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[]

If there are other public benefits your organization provides or supports via outdoor recreation, please explain:

Please write your answer here:

[]

How significant are the following management challenges to your organization's ability to provide or support access to outdoor recreation?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Not significant	Slightly significant	Moderately significant	Very significant	Not applicable
Year-to-year stability of organization's budget	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited resources to fund organization's budget	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Liability and risk management concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing conflicts between user groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining facilities and infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordination with other recreation entities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited capacity to serve increased demand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vandalism or damage to infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited access to public lands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulty navigating policies and regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[]

If there are other management challenges that impact your organization's ability to provide or support access to outdoor recreation, please explain:

Please write your answer here:

[] How significant are the following challenges to your organization's ability to provide or support access to outdoor recreation?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Not Significant	Slightly Significant	Moderately Significant	Very Significant	No applicable
Limited ability to offer interpretive/outdoor recreation programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited ability to access facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited ability to access public lands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited ability to access private lands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited ability to offer access to recreation opportunities for people of all physical and cognitive abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of capacity to maintain visitor/recreator safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of capacity to enforce responsible use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not Significant	Slightly Significant	Moderately Significant	Very Significant	No applicable
Lack of resources to provide public information about facilities and programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of resources to provide adequate trail and interpretative signage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of capacity to address trail connectivity issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of capacity to assess visitor experiences and usage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[] If there are other challenges to your organization's ability to provide or support access to outdoor recreation, please explain:

Please write your answer here:

[] Does your organization have a formal inclusion policy that ensures community members and visitors of all backgrounds and abilities can access and enjoy outdoor recreation activities?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

[] Does your organization provide or support access to outdoor recreation to any of the following groups?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Yes	Uncertain	No
Youth (under 18 years of age)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Older adults (65+ years of age)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Yes	Uncertain	No
Individuals with cognitive disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals with physical disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals with low-moderate incomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Members of multicultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Members of LGBTQ communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Members of New American communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[] How significant are the following challenges to your organization in providing/supporting inclusive outdoor recreation opportunities for community members and visitors of all backgrounds and abilities?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Not significant	Slightly significant	Moderately significant	Very significant	Not applicable
Inadequate staffing capacity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of staff training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient funding resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of sufficient facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of appropriate equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Private Enterprise

[] As a private enterprise in Vermont's outdoor recreation business sector, how much do you agree that the following issues and concerns are important for your business?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Private Business' at question '1 [Q1Org]' (Please indicate which description best represents the entity for which you are responding:)

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Public access to public lands for recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public access to private lands for recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visitor safety, liability and risk management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Conservation of natural resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private-public partnerships and collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting community, non-profit organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting the organizations that build/maintain much of VT's outdoor recreation infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connecting my employees to the stewardship/maintenance of VT's outdoor recreation infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[] Which of the following best describes your business?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Private Business' at question '1 [Q1Org]' (Please indicate which description best represents the entity for which you are responding:)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Guide services provider
- Retail gear supplier
- Rental gear supplier
- Recreation facility owner/operator
- Other

Priorities & Needs

[] Over the next five years, how important are each of the following priorities to your organization?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Essential
Increasing funding available for organizational capacity building	<input type="radio"/>				

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Essential
Expanding the amount of local parks available for outdoor recreation	<input type="radio"/>				
Expanding the amount of backcountry available for outdoor recreation	<input type="radio"/>				
Expanding the amount of neighborhood, community, or special use parks (playgrounds, dog parks, pump tracks, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
Obtaining access easements, trail easements, or rights of way	<input type="radio"/>				
Developing team sports facilities	<input type="radio"/>				
Expanding opportunities for water-based recreation	<input type="radio"/>				
Expanding opportunities for hunting or fishing	<input type="radio"/>				
Expanding access to local and regional trail systems	<input type="radio"/>				
Developing local agriculture (community gardens)	<input type="radio"/>				
Improving outdoor interpretative/educational facilities or programs	<input type="radio"/>				
Developing local services to support tourism/expanded recreation opportunities	<input type="radio"/>				
Advocating for policy to promote and steward outdoor recreation	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting ecological & conservation goals (e.g. water quality)	<input type="radio"/>				

[]

Drawing on the priorities you identified above, which are your **top three** outdoor recreation priorities for the next five years?

All your answers must be different and you must rank in order.
Please select at most 3 answers

Please number each box in order of preference from 1 to 14

Please choose no more than 3 items.

Increasing funding available for organizational capacity building

Expanding the amount of local parks available for outdoor recreation

Expanding the amount of backcountry open space available for outdoor recreation

Expanding the amount of neighborhood, community, or special use parks (playgrounds, dog parks, pump tracks, etc.)

Obtaining access easements, trail easements, or rights of way

Developing team sports facilities

Expanding opportunities for water-based recreation

Expanding opportunities for hunting or fishing

Expanding access to local and regional trail systems

Developing local agriculture (community gardens)

Improving outdoor interpretative/educational facilities or programs

Developing local services to support tourism/expanded recreation opportunities

Advocating for policy to promote and steward outdoor recreational resources

Supporting ecological & conservation goals (e.g. water quality)

Reflecting on Key Themes

[] Stewardship, Communication, Participation, Community Connections, and Economic Vitality have emerged as key outdoor recreation objectives through a variety of public input activities since the last SCORP

was completed in 2014. How important is each objective for your organization over the next five years?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Essential
Stewardship: Explore options to manage increasing use/overuse	<input type="radio"/>				
Stewardship: Incorporate climate change adaptation and resiliency strategies in recreation planning and management	<input type="radio"/>				
Stewardship: Support ecological and conservation goals in recreation planning and management	<input type="radio"/>				
Stewardship: Identify and pursue new funds available to organizations and management agencies that directly benefits outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources.	<input type="radio"/>				
Communication: Ensure clear and transparent processes concerning policies, permitting, and regulations	<input type="radio"/>				

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Essential
Communication: Facilitate clear and consistent two-way communication between non-profits and public land managers	<input type="radio"/>				
Communication: Provide current and accurate information about public outdoor recreation assets (maps, access, policies, trip planning tools, best management practices, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
Participation: Implement diversity and equity strategies to meet the needs of all Vermonters and visitors	<input type="radio"/>				
Participation: Engage new and underserved audiences in outdoor recreation activities	<input type="radio"/>				
Community Connections: Enhance opportunities for community health and wellness through outdoor recreation	<input type="radio"/>				
Community Connections: Strengthen livability of communities through outdoor recreation	<input type="radio"/>				

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Essential
Economic Vitality: Promote outdoor recreation activities as a driver of economic vitality	<input type="radio"/>				
Economic Vitality: Support outdoor recreation-related businesses	<input type="radio"/>				

[] Are there other, high level outdoor recreation themes or issues not captured in this survey that should be? Please share your thoughts here.

Please write your answer here:

Remaining Thoughts

[] Please share with us a key success from your organization's experience in providing or supporting outdoor recreation.

Please write your answer here:

[]

Please share your vision for the future of your organization as part of Vermont's outdoor recreation sector.

Please write your answer here:

[]

Please elaborate on any responses or share other thoughts related to Vermont's outdoor recreation opportunities.

Please write your answer here:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT!

Contact Amy Kelsey at UVM's Center for Rural Studies, amy.kelsey@uvm.edu (<mailto:amy.kelsey@uvm.edu?subject=SCORP>) or 802-598-4551, or Jessica Savage, Recreation Program Manager at Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Jessica.savage@vermont.gov (<mailto:Jessica.savage@vermont.gov?subject=SCORP>) or 802-249-1230 with questions about the SCORP or this research.

10-21-2019 – 00:00

Submit your survey.
Thank you for completing this survey.

2019 SCORP Provider Survey Results

Q1. Please indicate which description best represents the entity for which you are responding:		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Nonprofit/Membership Organization	34	47.2
Private Business	10	13.9
City/Town	9	12.5
State Agency	8	11.1
Federal Agency	3	4.2
Regional Planning Commission	3	4.2
Other	2	2.8
Land Trust	2	2.8
Private Institution	1	1.4
Total	72	100

Q2. Please indicate which best represents your current job title:		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Executive Director	18	25
Other	12	16.7
Program Director	9	12.5
Lands Manager	8	11.1
Owner-Operator	8	11.1
Volunteer	8	11.1
Program Coordinator	7	9.7
Planner	2	2.8
Total	72	100

Q2. Please indicate which best represents your current job title: [Other]
Board member
Board Member
Board President
Chair
Chair of the Board
Chief Finance and Operations Officer
Executive
Parks & Recreation Director
President (Volunteer)
teacher naturalist
Vice President of the Board

Q2. Please provide the name of the organization for which you are responding.	
	Frequency
Missing	3
Audubon Vermont	1
Bird Diva Consulting	2
Brewster River Mtn Bike Club	1
Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront	1
Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront	1
Burton	1
Catamount Trail Association	3
Cedar Ridge Farm	1
Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission	1
Craftsbury Outdoor Center	1
Cross Vermont Trail Association	1
Dummerston Conservation Commission	1
Fellowship of the Wheel	1
FGI RISEVT	1
Figure 8 Riding at Vermont Firefly Farm	1
Friends of Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge	1
Grafton Trails & Outdoor Center	1
Green Mountain Club	2
Green Mountain Draft Horse Association	1
Green Mountain Club, NEK Section And Friends of the Willoughby State forest.	1
Green Mt Appaloosa Horse Club	1
Hinesburg Recreation Department	1
Hinesburg Trails Committee	1
Kingdom Trail Association	1
Lake Champlain Basin Program/Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership	1
Lake Champlain Byway	1
Mad River Path	1
Mad River Riders - Vermont Mountain Bike Association	1
Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge	1
Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association	1
Newport Parks & Recreation	1
Northern Forest Canoe Trail	1
Northshire area trail systems	1
Revitalizing Waterbury	1
St. Albans Recreation Department	1
Stowe Trails Partnership	1
Strafford Saddlery	1
SWCRPC	1
The Bunkhouse	1
The Nature Conservancy	1
The Trust for Public Land	1

Town of Waterbury	1
TRORC	1
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	1
U.S. Forest Service	1
Umiak Outdoor Outfitters	1
Upper Valley Trails Alliance	1
Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sport	1
Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports	1
Vermont Bikepackers	1
Vermont Department of Forests, parks and Recreation	1
Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department	1
Vermont Fish and Wildlife Conservation Group	1
Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department	1
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board	1
Vermont River Conservancy	1
Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Inc.	1
VMBA	1
VT Fish & Wildlife Department	1
VT FPR	2
VT FPR District 2	1
Waterbury Area Trails Alliance	2
Windham County Trails Alliance	1
Total	72

Q3. How many of the following employee types are employed at your organization in a typical year? Please only include those with outdoor recreation related duties.		Full-time, 12-month staff members	Full-time, seasonal staff members	Part-time, 12-month staff members	Part-time, seasonal staff members
	Valid	55	40	41	34
	Missing	17	32	31	38
Mean		12.518	14.75	1.329	4.18
Median		2	2.5	1	1
Std. Deviation		53.9278	33.545	1.9862	10.752
Range		400	200	12	60
Minimum		0	0	0	0
Maximum		400	200	12	60

Q4. Does your organization use volunteers?		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
N	14	20
Y	56	80

Total	70	100
-------	----	-----

Q4. Does your organization track volunteer hours?		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
N	24	42.9
Y	32	57.1
Total	56	100

Q4. How many hours of volunteer time does your organization account for in a typical year?		
	Valid	28
	Missing	44
Mean		4725.79
Median		1800
Std. Deviation		7446.211
Range		29998
Minimum		2
Maximum		30000

Q5. Funding Sources	% reporting use
State or regional grants	54.2
Donations	54.2
Membership Fees	44.4
Private foundation grants	43.1
Federal grants	41.7
Payment for goods and services	36.1
Sponsorship	36.1
Program fees	34.7
License, Permit, special use, or event fees	30.6
Municipal budget/taxes	19.4
State budget/taxes	18.1
Federal budget/taxes	12.5

Other Funding Sources Listed (open-end)
Fundraising Events
RPC funds
NMC Hospital
sales

Q6. Land Type	% providing outdoor recreation on this land type
Private lands with public access agreement	59.7

Trail or path networks on public lands	59.7
Public State Lands	52.8
Trail or path networks on private lands	48.6
Public Municipal Lands	45.8
Private Lands	40.3
Public Federal Lands	30.6
Public waterways	25

Q6. Land Type- Other
fair grounds lands
GMHA
Land Trust
Promotion of byway sites
Ski areas
we are responsible for permanently conserving public and private land with excellent recreation

Q7. Type of Land Managed	% of respondents responsible for managing this type of land
Regional or local trails and/or greenways	38.9
Conservation or access easements	36.1
Open lands, open space, natural areas, mountain areas	25
Wildlife Management Areas	16.7
Boating/Fishing access points	15.3
Neighborhood or Community Park	12.5
State Parks	12.5
National forests, national parks, national wildlife refuges, etc.	12.5
Outdoor sports facilities (baseball fields, soccer fields, pools, etc.)	12.5
Beaches/Outdoor swim areas	12.5
Special use parks (dog parks, skate or bike parks, playgrounds, etc.)	11.1

Q7. Type of Land Managed - Other
Indoor riding arena
Mountain bike trails
Mountain biking
No direct mgt authority
none
Our towns operate a number of parks in most of these categories but we don't.

Pool and Cemeteries
state forests
State Forests
Trail networks
we only manage GPS data

Q8. Trail/Street/Road Activities	% of respondent organizations providing/supporting
Walking	66.7
Day Hiking	61.1
Interpretive walking/hiking	55.6
Trail Running	50.0
Mountain Biking	48.6
Jogging/Running	45.8
Road or Gravel Biking	36.1
Horseback Riding	29.2
Backpacking	26.4
Scenic Driving	22.2
Off Trail Hiking/Bushwhacking	20.8
E-Biking	13.9
Downhill Mountain Biking	12.5
Skating	6.9
ATV Riding	5.6
Other Off-Road Vehicle	5.6

Q9. Water-Based Activities	% of respondent organizations providing/supporting
Canoe/Kayak/Rowboat	44.4
Visiting Lakes/Rivers	43.1
Swimming (Natural Area)	36.1
Stand-up Paddle Boarding	27.8
Spin/Bait Fishing	27.8
Fly Fishing	26.4
Swimming (Pool Facility)	13.9
Motor Boating	13.9
Sailing	13.9
Diving/Snorkeling	5.6

Q10. Winter Activities	% of respondent organizations providing/supporting

Snowshoeing	61.1
XC Skiing	37.5
Backcountry Ski/Board	34.7
Fat Biking	34.7
Downhill Ski/Board	19.4
Sledding/Tubing	18.1
Ice Skating	18.1
Snowmobiling	18.1
Ice Fishing	15.3
Ice Climbing	11.1

Q11. Wildlife-Related Activities	% of respondent organizations providing/supporting
Bird Watching	52.8
Wildlife Watching	50.0
Hunting big and small game	31.9
Tracking	30.6
Waterfowl hunting	23.6
Trapping	19.4

Q12. Sport Activities	% of respondent organizations providing/supporting
Adaptive Sports	25
Baseball/Softball	9.7
Disc Golf	9.7
Shooting Sports	8.3
Lacrosse/Soccer/Football	8.3
Ultimate Frisbee	8.3
Volleyball	5.6
Golf	2.8

Q13. Outdoor Activities	% of respondent organizations providing/supporting
Outdoor Ed. Program	54.2
Visiting Scenic Viewpoints	50
Outdoor Photography	45.8
Picnicking	44.4
Nature Study	38.9
Tent Camping	33.3
Visiting Nature Centers	30.6
Night Sky Viewing	30.6

Foraging/Gathering	29.2
Playground	23.6
Orienteering	19.4
RV Camping	15.3
Rock Climbing	12.5
Community Gardening	9.7
Caving/Spelunking	1.4

Q14. Please list any other outdoor recreational activities your organization provided/supported during the past 12 months in Vermont:
accessible trails for persons with physical limitations/disabilities
anything related to horses
bikepacking
Citizen science projects related to the environment
Competitive races for Nordic skiing, mountain biking, fat biking, and trail running. Festivals celebrating fat biking and mountain biking.
Dog sledding and carting
equine events
Events, Tours on Trail and in Managed Zones, Youth Learn to Ski Programs
From May to September, the Mad River Riders host a free weekly guided ride for kids ages 2-16.
Horse ride and drive events, clinics, horse powered field work demos and clinics
I listed the activities that we are directly involved with. Most of these activities are probably provided by our towns, but I couldn't say for sure.
Mounted Archery, Summer Horsemanship Camps, Mounted Police Training, Mounted Parade support
Region Recreation Group in Franklin Grand Isle County meets 3 X year next Meeting Sept 25 2019 530pm Swanton Village Complex
Summer camp, youth sports (track, field hockey, tennis), adult sports (field hockey, pickle ball)
The Byway does not own any assets or lands. We merely promote the activities we noted in the above questions.
Ultra Running; Yoga;
youth track and field

Q15. What metrics does your organization collect to track visitation/participation?
1. # chapter memberships (fee-based, annual renewal.) 2. # website memberships (free, cumulative, required to download route data.) 3. number of riders registered for group ride, "campout ride," or bikepacking "grand depart."
Annual members, day use visits, event participants counts
annual members, day use visits, event participation and registration.
Annual membership, trail counts along Catamount Trail and at some managed backcountry zones.

Annual memberships Day use visits Event participation Volunteer service Youth served through programming
attendance counts at visitor education events, site counts at some back-country locations and trail access points, long distance hiker counts (voluntary), group use permits and counts, annual membership
Attendance for hikes, snowshoeing
Day use visits, event participants, registrations, permits, annual members.
Event participants Trail counts
Event participants, registrations for events, licenses sold
For some recreation programs participants must register online through Civic Rec, which tracks counts
Grant awardees must submit the amount of people participating in events in final reports.
In partnership with FPR we have a trail counter at the Perry Hill Trail Head. We also utilize Trail Forks Ride Logs which captures Strava data and merges it with our trail maps. This is useful to track what trails see the most use, track user trends including growth in ridership, busy times of day and year, average ride distance and times etc. Here is the overview for Waterbury: https://www.trailforks.com/region/waterbury/ridelogstats/
Membership, Tour Participation, Event Participation, Trail Counters
National Visitor Use Monitoring protocol available at https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/ Occasional trail counters in cooperation with partners
Our point of sale system to track purchases and geography. And surveys associated with raffles.
park visits - number of visitors trail counters - number of trail users
Per year: total number visitors 85,000 participants in outreach programs 1,400 participants in interpretation programs:200 participants in education programs: 550 Visitor/Nature Center attendance: 25,000 hunting visits 510 Fishing visits 40,000 Trail use: 25,000 Boating visits: 50,000
Registration
Registration (name, age, address, etc.) Sign-in/Sign-out
state park attendance and special use permit and license use information
Strava data, trail counters, trail sits, annual members, event participants.
Surveys - Sign-in sheets -
The Department conducts a variety of phone surveys mainly targeting hunting, fishing, and trapping license holders. I believe there are also non-license holders who are also surveyed.
Trail counters, sign-ins, event participation, membership, volunteer hours and projects
Trail counts along the Catamount Trail and at some managed backcountry zones.
trail or path counts
Trail sign in boxes, members, event participants
trailhead surveys and trailhead register sign-in sheets
Unique individuals Total activities by type and location Individuals by disability
Unique visitors Total activities Total activities by type Total activities by location total activities by disability
Vehicle visits (estimates), hunter and angler visits (estimates)
We have a membership list. We list all participants in our clinics and pass attendance sheets at most of our gatherings

We have limited trail counter data.
We have trail counters at several locations and sign-in logs at others.
We keep eBird lists with the number of participants

Q15. Could the visitation or participation data that your organization collects be made available to the SCORP Team?	Frequency	Valid Percent
Y	31	79.5
N	8	20.5
Total	39	100

Q15. Does your organization track visitation or participation data for any of your users, clients, or members?	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes, for some recreation activities	28	40.6
No	18	26.1
Yes, for all recreation activities	12	17.4
Not applicable to my organization	11	15.9
Total	69	100
Missing	3	
Total	72	

Q16. How much do you agree that the outdoor recreation opportunities your organization provides or supports deliver the following benefits to the public?	% Providers Responding Strongly Agree
Physical Health and Wellness	84.4
Sense of Adventure/exploration	84.4
Mental Health and Wellness	82.8
Sense of Accomplishment/Achievement	76.6
Quiet, solitude, contemplation	74.6
Community livability and sense of place	71.4
Community, social networks, and social interaction	66.7
Safe places for youth and families to play	64.1
Community economic development and vitality	57.8
Outdoor and Nature Education	56.3
Ecological Conservation and Protection	54.7
Historical and Cultural Preservation	34.4

Q16. If there are other public benefits your organization provides or supports via outdoor recreation, please explain
--

Equitable/affordable access to outdoor recreation through free pedestrian access protected in every conservation easement. - Rural economic development due to compatibility between outdoor recreation and working landscape. - Preservation of Rural traditions/ sustainable acquisition of food/meat through hunting.
aesthetic benefits of undeveloped forestlands, mountains, waters, etc.
Contribution to citizen science focused on birds & biodiversity through eBird & iNaturalist. This data has the potential to benefit specific sites and communities. Support to landowners and communities about managing habitat for birds and other wildlife.
I'm not sure what questions will follow about the economy, but MTBing has been the catalyst for dozens of new outdoor-minded businesses in all parts of Vermont. VT's volunteer effort invested in trail building has become VT's great rural equalizer and will remain the bedrock of every outdoor economy discussion going forward. Riding also grows existing businesses. VMBA has a formal partnership with 20+ shops across VT and nearly all of them have added staff, in large part, due to increases in MTBing participation.
Inclusion and Diversity
Inclusion Social Inclusion Veteran support Human Services
Mental and physical therapy for schools. Education and vocational education in Equine science
Outdoor ethics
Outlets for personal growth (learning new skills both physical and social)
Regional Recreation meetings 3x a year gives them the opportunity to share resources, network, we bring in speakers on marketing, gardening, multi-generational activities, kayak and canoe sharing, adaptive recreation, Trail Hub -
Securing permanent access to the public, and permanent protection of land important for recreation.
sense of connection to outdoors/nature
Some of our recreation facilities provide alternatives (biking, walking) to single occupancy vehicle travel for commuting and other trips.
We have been building youth programs including, a weekly after school group and a day camp program offered on days that there is no school (in-service days). Both programs focus around outdoor recreation to provide more opportunities for involvement. In addition, we offer 6 weeks of Mountain Bike camps during the summer.

We strongly believe that WATA hits the trifecta: health and wellness, community/economic development and conservation. Over the past four years we have largely focused on transforming Perry Hill from a rogue network to one of the top networks in the state that serves a wide range of users. Our Pump Track, and Trails like S'mores and the Little River Network have provided opportunities for families and new riders to hone their skills. Reroutes on Disney land created a unique riding experience that helps riders transition from "flow trails" to more natural rooty and rocky trails. Our Trails Joes and Burning Spear are widely regarded as some of the top in the state and attract visitors from all over the east coast and Canada. Continuing to build upon this progression will be a major focus of WATA of the coming years. Not simply building the same machine built flow trail over and over again, but creating opportunities that serve all riders, whether they be new to the sport or top-level professionals. Beyond physical infrastructure, we promote stewardship by leading trail days every two weeks throughout the summer. At these trail days we teach people best practices and educate them on what goes into building and maintaining a thoughtful network. We have been consistently complemented that our trail days are some of the best run trail days in New England. With a focus on education, and skills development. This better connects users not only to the trail network but the surrounding forest and natural resources as they understand why a trail is laid out the way it is to protect resources. Through our community partnerships, we also aim to directly tie our world-class trails to our historic downtown. We work closely with local businesses throughout the year to host events in town to turn out trail users at local businesses. Our marquis event the Annual Gravel Grinder attracts 400 riders to town in the quiet spring season. It also raises roughly \$25,000 per year we are able to invest back into the trails.

When on an excursion, bikepackers spend \$15-50/day on food at general stores.

Q17. How significant are the following management challenges to your organization's ability to provide or support access to outdoor recreation?	% respondents reporting moderately or very significant
Limited resources to fund organization's budget	77.7
Year to year stability of organization's budget	67.7
Limited capacity to serve increased demand	64.5
Maintaining facilities and infrastructure	62.9
Liability and risk management concerns	47.6
Coordination with other recreation entities	42.8
Limited access to public lands	41.9
Difficulty navigating policies and regulations	37.1
Managing conflicts between user groups	33.9
Vandalism or damage to infrastructure	21.4

Q17. If there are other management challenges that impact your organization's ability to provide or support access to outdoor recreation, please explain:

To emphasize 'Difficulty navigating policies and regulations' - There needs to be an alternative oversight review process from trails that is not ACT250. The majority of trails in VT are on private land and private landowners do not want ACT250 jurisdiction on their property. This will deter outdoor recreation, trails, and the economic and health impacts that coincide with these in the state of Vermont.

The cost of managing the permitting process through the State is difficult for a volunteer run non-profit organization which is trying to build non-motorized recreational trails for public use.
Physical and sensory accessibility
Permitting process for use of state lands and wildlife management areas is a bit clunky & has the potential to limit access due to the cost. For a single guide like me, it would be great to pay an annual guide fee for access to these areas rather than applying each time I would like to guide a trip to a state-owned site.
Perhaps our biggest challenge is encouraging a low income population to become involved in recreation. It seems that the long-term cost of participation in many sports (mountain biking & skiing specifically) is expensive and therefore local families do not have the extra resources of time & money to be involved.
Not clear what types of permits, etc. I need as a bird guide in Vermont i.e. insurance, guide certification, permitting to use state/federal lands. I've received different information from different people in different state departments, none of it clear about what I need as a guide.
No clear timelines for decisions regarding trail planning from the State or FPR. This makes funding and land use planning very difficult, if not impossible.
Increasing costs to rent appropriate facilities in which to hold events that can turn a profit.
Increased recreational usage leading to greater demands and impacts on public lands and facilities
I think it's important to observe the nuanced intersection between "challenges with maintaining facilities and infrastructure" and groups' attempts to gain more access to public land as a means to disperse use. Please don't allow a response of "significant" as an indicator that groups can't "handle" more trails.
Hiring a seasonal workforce has been an increasing challenge.
Greatest challenge is that there are so many different organizations / land managers involved. Hard to provide a seamless program or cohesive identity to visiting traveler. Also, some towns and land management organizations promote their attractions/lands to tourists while others are a little more reticent.
Grant funding availability - our RPC works on on-the-ground outdoor recreation projects as funding allows although we support access consistently through municipal planning efforts.
Demand for funding for conservation easements exceeds available funds.
Accessibility and usability by diverse user groups and abilities
ability to manage type and volume of visitation in some popular locations

1) Clear Process for larger projects - We have a very clear process that helps to move forward smaller projects such as re-routes or single short trails. But it is difficult to move forward larger projects. Such as connectors, or expanding networks to meet user demand. We see WATA as a partner to help address to a problem the state faces. In a relatively short amount of time completely new user group as exploded. While Biking was once a fringe group, it now rivals that of hiking, or skiing as far as interest and how it is being marketed. The state currently doesn't have the infrastructure to meet the demand or the specialized expertise in what this new user group is looking for. We hope that we can develop a clear process that leverages both FPRs extensive knowledge on sound natural resource management, with our resources (money, volunteers + expertise on mountain biking specifically) to meet this growing demand. 2) Timber Harvesting - Mad River Valley to Stowe represent a massive recreation corridor. Between locals, regular visitors from Burlington, and out of state visitors, it is a huge destination. However, huge swaths of the Mount Mansfield State Forest and Camel's Hump State Forest have been closed off to new trail development due to timber harvesting. WATA strongly maintains that timber harvesting and mountain bike trails are ideal shared uses to make our working landscape more productive and keep trails out of environmentally sensitive areas. We don't have to look far to see the proof this works. Much of KingdomTrails network is on land that is actively managed for timber harvesting. Despite this, they have never once lost a trail to a harvest. WATA strongly advocates that land dedicated for timber harvesting be also opened up for recreation uses. We feel with thoughtful planning this is an ideal use of the land that is a win-win. 3) Winter Access - Perry Hill is used by hundreds of users per month who snowshoe, Nordic ski, run, dog walk, and even Fat Bike. It is a vital community resource. We strongly advocate it should be officially opened up for managed winter use after hunting season concludes until the spring thaw. This will greatly improve the user experience and safety as well as provide access to this vital community resource.

Q18. How significant are the following challenges to your organization's ability to provide or support access to outdoor recreation?

Challenge	% respondents reporting moderately or very significant
Limited ability to offer access to recreation opportunities for people of all physical and cognitive abilities	50.8
Lack of capacity to address trail connectivity issues	50.8
Limited ability to access private lands	44.3
Lack of resources to provide adequate trail and interpretive signage	44.3
Lack of capacity to assess visitor experiences and usage	44.3
Lack of capacity to enforce responsible use	40
Limited ability to access public lands	36.1
Lack of resources to provide public information about facilities and programs	33.9
Limited ability to offer interpretive/outdoor recreation programs	26.3
Limited ability to access facilities	25.4
Lack of capacity to maintain visitor/recreator safety	13.1

Q18. If there are other challenges to your organization's ability to provide or support access to outdoor recreation, please explain:
The sport of bikepacking is gaining popularity in the East. The single biggest barrier for riders to adopt the sport of bikepacking in Vermont is finding places to camp. A bikepacker camp is very low-impact. Often there is no fire. The current infrastructure of state parks seems favored towards car-camping, which is more resource-intensive than bikepacker camping.
Please see above - Connectivity is likely going to be something that you hear a lot of about. We are keen to address this, not only connecting networks, but connecting communities to networks. Particularly larger projects that cross different kinds of parcels (State Park, State forest, etc.) it is challenging to figure out the best process to move forward a project.
Parking access can sometimes be a challenge due to lack of space or because the lot is not plowed during the wintertime.
It's interesting - when on the TAC and helping with this survey, I didn't see the confusion that some may have regarding the word "capacity." VMBA has office capacity issues - not chapter capacity issues. The chapters have public land manager relationship and access issues. The 3rd item on the above list is a big deal for our most productive, organized and capable chapters. (<i>limited capacity to access public lands</i>)
It is possible that all of the above are issues for our Town's on their facilities but I don't know that for sure. I do know some of our town's lack the resources (money, staff, site control, etc.) to establish trail networks on private land for strictly recreational purposes and/or safe ways for people to get around without cars (examples include: kids biking to school in Westford, alternative ways for folks to get from Richmond Village to the Park and Ride without a car, alternative to biking on Route 7 in Milton, private land networks in Underhill, a way to bike from Essex to Burlington without being on Route 15, etc.). There seems to be great interest in expanding our off road trail networks for both in town, cross town and regional connections.
Historical and Conservation easements on our property are a barrier to offering more public access.
Federal Highway Administration ran the National Scenic Byway program from late 1990s through Federal Fiscal Year 2012. Good flurry of grants available for brochures, interp signage, portable toilet shelters, etc. Obama administration and Congress defunded NSB grant program (and also closed NS Byways Resource Center which used to organize trainings, conferences, etc.). Regional Planning Commissions still provide some admin support for VT's ten Byways, maintain byway websites (e.g. www.lakechamplainbyway.com) and FB pages but other than that there is no funding to update brochures or maintain or build new amenities to serve travelers.

PQ19. Does your organization have a formal inclusion policy that ensures community members and visitors of all backgrounds and abilities can access and enjoy outdoor recreation activities?	Frequency	Valid Percent
No	33	55.9
Yes	26	44.1
Total	59	100
Missing	13	
Total	72	

Q20. Does your organization provide or support access to outdoor recreation to:	Yes	Uncertain	No

Youth (under 18 years of age)	90.0	8.3	1.7
Older adults (65+ years of age)	88.3	6.7	5.0
Individuals with low-moderate incomes	83.3	11.7	5.0
Members of multicultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds	83.3	13.3	3.3
Members of LGBTQ communities	80.0	16.7	3.3
Members of New American communities	76.7	18.3	5.0
Individuals with physical disabilities	66.7	18.3	15.0
Individuals with cognitive disabilities	58.3	26.7	15.0

Q21. How significant are the following challenges to your organization in providing/supporting inclusive outdoor recreation opportunities for community members and visitors of all backgrounds and abilities?	% responding moderately or very significant
Insufficient funding resources	70.5
Inadequate staffing capacity	65.5
Lack of sufficient facilities	47.6
Lack of appropriate equipment	34.4
Lack of staff training	31.1

Q22. Private Enterprise Questions, directed only to respondents (n=8) engaged in private enterprise.

PQ22. As a private enterprise in Vermont's outdoor recreation business sector, how much do you agree that the following issues and concerns are important for your business? [Public access to public lands for recreation]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Neither agree nor disagree	1	12.5
Somewhat agree	2	25
Strongly agree	5	62.5
Total	8	100
Missing	64	
Total	72	

PQ22. As a private enterprise in Vermont's outdoor recreation business sector, how much do you agree that the following issues and concerns are important for your business? [Public access to private lands for recreation]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Somewhat disagree	1	12.5
Neither agree nor disagree	2	25
Strongly agree	5	62.5
Total	8	100
Missing	64	
Total	72	

PQ22. As a private enterprise in Vermont's outdoor recreation business sector, how much do you agree that the following issues and concerns are important for your business? [Visitor safety, liability and risk management]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Somewhat agree	4	50
Strongly agree	4	50
Total	8	100
Missing	64	
Total	72	

PQ22. As a private enterprise in Vermont's outdoor recreation business sector, how much do you agree that the following issues and concerns are important for your business? [Conservation of natural resources]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Somewhat agree	2	25
Strongly agree	6	75
Total	8	100
Missing	64	
Total	72	

PQ22. As a private enterprise in Vermont's outdoor recreation business sector, how much do you agree that the following issues and concerns are important for your business? [Private-public partnerships and collaboration]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Neither agree nor disagree	1	12.5
Somewhat agree	1	12.5
Strongly agree	6	75
Total	8	100
Missing	64	
Total	72	

PQ22. As a private enterprise in Vermont's outdoor recreation business sector, how much do you agree that the following issues and concerns are important for your business? [Supporting community, non-profit organizations]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Neither agree nor disagree	1	12.5
Somewhat agree	3	37.5
Strongly agree	4	50
Total	8	100
Missing	64	
Total	72	

PQ22. As a private enterprise in Vermont's outdoor recreation business sector, how much do you agree that the following issues and concerns are important for your business? [Supporting the organizations that build/maintain much of VT's outdoor recreation infrastructure]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Neither agree nor disagree	1	12.5
Somewhat agree	1	12.5
Strongly agree	6	75
Total	8	100
Missing	64	
Total	72	

PQ22. As a private enterprise in Vermont's outdoor recreation business sector, how much do you agree that the following issues and concerns are important for your business? [Connecting my employees to the stewardship/maintenance of VT's outdoor recreation infrastructure]	Frequency	Valid Percent
Neither agree nor disagree	2	25
Somewhat agree	3	37.5
Strongly agree	3	37.5
Total	8	100
Missing	64	
Total	72	

Q23. Over the next five years, how important are each of the following priorities to your organization?	% Providers responding Essential or Very Important
Increasing funding available for organizational capacity building	63.3
Supporting ecological and conservation goals (e.g. water quality)	62.1
Advocating for policy to promote and steward outdoor recreation	54.2
Expanding access to local and regional trail systems*	48.3
Obtaining access easements, trail easements, or rights of way	47.5
Developing local services to support tourism/expand recreation opportunities	32.2
Expanding the amount of backcountry available for outdoor recreation	28.1
Expanding the amount of local parks available for outdoor recreation	22.0
Improving outdoor interpretive/educational facilities or programs	19.0
Expanding the amount of neighborhood, community, or special use parks (playgrounds, dog parks, pump tracks, etc.)	15.3
Expanding opportunities for water-based recreation	15.3
Expanding opportunities for hunting or fishing	10.5
Developing local agriculture (community gardens)	3.4
Developing team sports facilities	3.3

Q23. Drawing on the priorities you identified above, which are your top three outdoor recreation priorities for the next five years?	Total count of respondents who ranked each item one of their top 3 priorities.	Valid Percent n=60
Increasing funding available for organizational capacity building	34	56.67%
Supporting ecological & conservation goals (e.g. water quality)	23	38.33%
Advocating for policy to promote and steward outdoor recreational resources	22	36.67%
Obtaining access easements, trail easements, or rights of way	22	36.67%
Expanding access to local and regional trail systems	20	33.33%
Developing local services to support tourism/expanded recreation opportunities	15	25.00%
Expanding the amount of backcountry open space available for outdoor recreation	14	23.33%
Expanding opportunities for water-based recreation	7	11.67%
Improving outdoor interpretative/educational facilities or programs	7	11.67%
Developing team sports facilities	6	10.00%
Expanding opportunities for hunting or fishing	5	8.33%
Developing local agriculture (community gardens)	2	3.33%
Expanding the amount of local parks available for outdoor recreation	2	3.33%
Expanding the amount of neighborhood, community, or special use parks (playgrounds, dog parks, pump tracks, etc.)	2	3.33%

Q24. Stewardship, Communication, Participation, Community Connections, and Economic Vitality have emerged as key outdoor recreation objectives through a variety of public input activities since the last SCORP was completed in 2014. How important is each objective for your organization over the next five years?	% of Providers Responding Essential or Very Important
Stewardship: Support ecological and conservation goals in recreation planning and management	72.4
Stewardship: Identify and pursue new funds available to organizations and management agencies that directly benefits outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources	70.2
Participation: Engage new and underserved audiences in outdoor recreation activities	69.0
Economic Vitality: Promote outdoor recreation activities as a driver of economic vitality	67.2
Communication: Provide current and accurate information about public outdoor recreation assets (maps, access, policies, trip planning tools, best management practices, etc.)	66.7
Community Connections: Enhance opportunities for community health and wellness through outdoor recreation	65.5

Stewardship: Incorporate climate change adaptation and resiliency strategies in recreation planning and management]	64.9
Communication: Ensure clear and transparent processes concerning policies, permitting, and regulations	63.8
Community Connections: Strengthen livability of communities through outdoor recreation	63.8
Stewardship: Explore options to manage increasing use/overuse	62.1
Participation: Implement diversity and equity strategies to meet the needs of all Vermonters	57.9
Communication: Facilitate clear and consistent two-way communication between non-profits and public land managers	52.6
Economic Vitality: Support outdoor recreation-related businesses	51.7

Q24. Are there other, high level outdoor recreation themes or issues not captured in this survey that should be? Please share your thoughts here.

A top priority needs to be building a proactive partnership with Vermont's active Non-profits. The state is lucky to have such engaged user groups who are willing to take their nights weekends and even days off to help making our state a better place to live. This is something that is unique Vermont. These organizations could be a huge capacity boost in FPR's ability to serve growing user groups such as mountain bikers, and backcountry skiers if appropriately leveraged.

Accessibility.

As the population of Chittenden County and the number of people participating in mountain biking continue to increase, it is imperative that the state breaks down barriers for using both public (state) and private land for multi-use trails. The amount of private land available for multi-use trails continues to shrink in Chittenden County while the population grows. Our best option is to open state lands, such as the Camels Hump State Forest in Huntington, to outdoor recreation such as mountain biking. Furthermore, volunteer orgs such as Fellowship of the Wheel who maintain hundreds of miles of multi-use trails, make this a desirable and healthy place to live, and thereby attract talented workers and drive the economy, need to be considered in town and state budgets. We cannot sustain on our current model. We will run out of both land/trails and the money it takes to maintain those trails and our advocacy efforts. Thank you. Tom Kupfer, president of the Fellowship of the Wheel, a 1,300-member trail advocacy organization serving Chittenden County.

Because this study is driven by Forest Parks and Rec. Most of the survey is oriented towards land trail base recreation. Vermont needs to work harder on protecting and maintaining public access to Vermont's River Trail systems (as well as Lake Champlain).

Concerns over permitting for local pedestrian trails: Act 250 jurisdiction re trails is inconsistent across the state. For many local trails, Act 250 and much state permitting is inappropriate, daunting, and discouraging for those trying to create and maintain community trails. Local trails should be reviewed at the local level, probably by the Development Review Board if it exists in a municipality.

I encourage the FPR leadership team to consider the economy when it comes to outdoor-minded businesses. .COMS' of all types seek to hire and employ people that are recruited, or inspired to stay here, because of access to quality outdoor recreation. Most often - this translates into access to great trails. A local Country Store selling more sandwiches because a new trail was constructed nearby is every bit as much a part of the outdoor economy as Mammut selling another jacket at OGE.

Need to explore potential fees for users (who through no fault of their own) do not currently pay for use of trails, parks, etc. in offseason. E.g. we need a system like Washington-Oregon-Idaho snow park https://www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv/pages/vehicle/sno_park_permits.aspx or simple low-cost annual pass that enables you to park (in small designated areas) during off-season at State Parks or Simple Pass for paying for parking at State Fishing Access to capture fees from non-fishermen who use these Accesses
recruiting and maintaining a volunteer base post baby-boomer generation
Stewardship: develop guidance docs for municipal/non-profit owned lands about "best practices" for outdoor recreation planning that reduces the impact of outdoor recreation on sensitive natural resources and complements the ecological/conservation goals of Vermont Conservation Design.
Support deferred maintenance issues at the neighborhood, municipal level of parks. Many parks are aging and need additional funding to help bring them back to an acceptable level. It is important we don't lose sight of the importance of neighborhood parks in getting youth outdoors.
This could be captured in the climate change piece - acknowledgement of the ability for recreation facilities to help get people out of their cars for most trips which will greatly reduce our energy use (transportation is the biggest energy user in VT).
Vermont has a lot of emerging outdoor recreation opportunities and there is a need for businesses and qualified workers to support the emerging industry. I'd love to see focus on the state level to encourage school systems to integrate more trade-based curriculum at the high school level that include specialized training that is directly relevant to the emerging recreation industry to begin grooming students at the high school level to be prepared and inspired to pursue enterprise that is fueled by the outdoor recreation movement. Not all students are cut out for college, and with the rising cost of post-secondary school the popularity and need for qualified trade workers is rising. Giving students an outlet to explore these opportunities is a great way to fill the emerging need, not to mention reaching a variety of "undeserved audiences" by accessing them directly through the public school system. Programs and funding might go a long way to motivate schools to adjust high school curriculum in a creative and productive new direction... and will help keep students here after graduation if they can see the opportunities and feel they have the skills to take advantage of them.

PQ25. Please share with us a key success from your organization's experience in providing or supporting outdoor recreation.
Broad collaborative partnership between a multitude of recreational user groups
Completion of the Kingdom Heritage land, trail
Completion of a three field recreation area with little to no tax dollars.
Creating more inclusive programs in order to ensure everyone has a chance to participate.
Facilitating discussions among different recreation groups to develop common outdoor recreation goals
Getting hundreds of kids and adults into a healthy and life-changing sport -- mountain biking. Involving the community in healthy outdoor recreation by providing quality multi-use trails, hosting volunteer trail workdays, and free community events.
I am in a niche market, birding. I have had success by breaking down the barriers to participating in birding and bird watching in the state by offering outreach opportunities to build skills, to learn about where to bird in different parts of the state, and I've provided the needed basic equipment, binoculars, for folks to get into birding/bird watching on my trips.

Identifying and then breaking down the barriers to participation in enjoying birds. And this will be true I think for many recreational pursuits, a provider or organization needs the capacity to build relationships in order to change a behavior like getting people outside. Feeling comfortable outside is not natural to everyone so how do we take some of that fear away. Other barriers include the investment in equipment to pursue an outdoor activity. As a small business, I made it a priority to budget for binoculars that my clients can use on walks or other birding excursions. Libraries and conservation commissions are finding ways to provide gear like snowshoes or canoes & kayaks for folks to borrow in order to get them outside. I also talk about the power of place, how unique Vermont is in what it offers in terms of birding and birdwatching. So, an inspiring & empowering message that says this can be for anyone can be very effective when trying to encourage folks to try something new.

One of VHCB's foundational tenets for land conservation for outdoor recreation is that conservation of municipal/non-profit owned lands offer free pedestrian access. We are exploring how we may expand/modify this policy to promote equitable/affordable access for all, recognizing that we are using public funds for land conservation. This baseline tenet feels particularly rewarding as we see the cost of entry to certain types of gear-dependent outdoor recreation increase.

Our commission is dedicated to giving people the information they need to make good decisions about our natural resources into the future. To that end it sponsors monthly public environmental education programs that are popular and well-attended. We have these programs videotaped, they are shown repeatedly on our public TV station and are available through our website. We also have a twice monthly e-newsletter that advertises our programs with a list of 500 people and a website that is filled with information about natural resources in our community. We raise the funds to support intensive environmental education in our public school, provided by the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center. In addition we provide stewardship for a state park, a town forest and trail system and a property owned by the Nature conservancy. .

Out Key successes following the CDC strategies to ensure we are meeting the needs of our communities

Partnerships have been a key to our success across Vermont, to permanent protection of important recreation resources, such as the recent protection of Catamount Community Forest, which engaged Vermont Land Trust, VHCB, VT ANR through LWCF-Stateside, Town of Williston, and many foundations, donors, outdoor businesses and recreation users.

Providing access to miles of remote trails for horseback riding has attracted guests from many states, including Vermont. Common feedback is that it is rare to find such nice riding in New England. Also using a GPS trail map app (for off-grid use) for Smart phones has helped.

Renovated bike path has increased use Supporting a conservation team in our parks division

Securing easements and purchasing property for greenway corridors to make links among local trails with the ultimate goal of a statewide, four season, interconnected trail network.

Seems that citizens and visitors in our area are eager to receive outdoor recreation as means of achieving economic development. It falls in alignment with what NEKers see as a sustainable method for development that values land stewardship and their rural way of life. In a word where everything seems to generate controversy, pursuing outdoor recreation as a community goal has been surprisingly well received. A relief and encouraging feeling to those of us who are working to pull the ship forward.

Supporting expanding use of Brown OBDS signs for more locations besides State Parks.

<p>The Hinesburg Trails Committee has developed and maintains a network of roughly 30 miles of pedestrian trails on public and private land. Our motto is: Adventures Close to Home. Collaboration with other entities (municipal planning and zoning office, local snowmobile club, local public library, VT Fish & Wildlife, Fellowship of the Wheel, various state and local land trusts).</p>
<p>The Mad River Riders have focused on building beginner and intermediate trails for the last 7 years, in order to increase the accessibility of our trail networks. We went from having 35 members in 2011 to nearly 500 in 2019. Our free weekly kid's rides attract 30-40 kids, plus parents, and would not have been possible without the new beginner and intermediate trails.</p>
<p>The Nature Conservancy has found success in providing recreation opportunities on our conserved lands. Conservation of Vermont's lands and waters is critically important for tourism and outdoor recreation.</p>
<p>This year we were able to invest over \$30,000 back into our trails. The response to the work has been tremendous. We exploded from 700 members to over 1100 members in one year, have been featured in national publications and international brands marketing campaigns. We have new sponsors jump on board, and existing sponsors increase their support. It's clear that when we are able to tackle significant projects the community responds positively. There is a ton of enthusiasm around mountain biking that extend beyond just our ridership in Waterbury. Let's do more!</p>
<p>Through my riding program many young people have developed skills and independence, responsibility and confidence to be successful in college and careers.</p>
<p>Vermont is only second to Alaska in participation rates of wildlife-based outdoor recreation.</p>
<p>We are currently in the beginning stages of creating a trail network in Bellows Falls and working to build community relations which will encourage outdoor recreational opportunities for the community which is mostly low income.</p>
<p>We are currently supporting efforts to study the economic impact of the proposed Velomont Trail and Hut to Hut Network.</p>
<p>We give back to local organizations within our community and support through in-kind contributions--both recreational, sport teams, and non-profits. We believe in these organizations and the benefits of the work they do and of course they are also part of our customer base and we hope to service and expand that customer base. It is very challenging to be an independent retailer in today's marketplace. We offer many programs and services that make it worthwhile to shop locally but we still cannot compete with on-line vendors that often sell the same product for less or can deliver it quickly. Local ties certainly help support the business and if we did more business we in turn could find innovative ways to work with local organizations.</p>
<p>We have 32 years of experience and success as Vermont's only year round provider of accessible outdoor recreation for people of any ability or disability.</p>
<p>We have always been a choice for local schools Winter Sports program. When I first started at the center Nordic skiing was the only sport offered to the schools. Throughout the program we had many students not engaged and lots of time sitting inside. The following year we changed the program and offered skiing, snowshoeing & tubing as options. This has resulted in an increase in individual participation and also an increase in the number of schools that participate in our program. By providing a variety of activities, students of varying athletic abilities have found a way to be active and enjoy themselves.</p>

We have been able to host events that empower Vermonters and bikepackers from out-of-state to use Vermont's existing infrastructure of ancient roads and Class 4 highways to stage multi-day adventures. This is a success because it capitalizes on a resource that the state already has. Last year we hosted a "campout ride" in Windham, VT, with ~16 riders. This year we are hosting a Grand Depart in Montpelier, with >20 riders. Riders will travel on Class 4 highways and dirt roads through Vermont for periods lasting up to 14 days. We have provided detailed maps and resource information to riders so that riders know where camping and resupply points are.

We have built and maintain over 8 miles of mountain bike trails in the Northshire area

We have gained significant support from local business owners while developing paths and trails that connect downtown businesses and link to greater trail networks.

We will soon complete the construction of a one mile long trail along the North Branch of the Winooski River in Elmore and Worcester. This is significant because most of the trail is universally accessible, a rarity along rivers in Vermont. Often, accessing a river requires a steep scramble down a bank. This trail will be accessible for wheelchairs and will have grades that will make it approachable for those with mobility concerns. There are seven cascading waterfalls and swimming holes along the trail, and there are benches and picnic tables.

Without a doubt, the CTA's biggest success has been the completion of the Catamount Trail itself. But it has also been rewarding to be a part of the further expansion of backcountry skiing in the state through the development of managed ski terrain via our chapters in the last five years.

Working with partners and volunteers enables us to have a sustainable recreation program that is responsive to shifting public demands. We could not do it alone!

Year after year, our membership has grown. Since 2013, when we first began, our membership has now tripled in size and we have more folks using the trails than ever before- mountain bikers, trail runners, walkers, hikers. Tourists are coming to our town specifically to utilize the trails and mountain bike, and local businesses are taking notice. Through mostly volunteer efforts, over 35 miles of trails have been built and maintained in our area for the general public to use without cost or fees associated to access.

PQ26. Please share your vision for the future of your organization as part of Vermont's outdoor recreation sector.

A new trail, running east to west across north central Vermont. family friendly recreation for people of all ages and abilities safe travel to school and work for non-motorized commuters convenient location for daily exercise and healthy outdoor activity a permanent greenway for easy local access to the natural world The Cross Vermont Trail will be a 90 mile path connecting towns across the state from Lake Champlain to the Connecticut River - already 30 miles are built and open to the public. The Cross Vermont Trail Association is a formal organization of people who want to help make this trail complete. We are an incorporated nonprofit, 501(c)(3), member based and volunteer driven, with two part time staff members. Our mission is to assist municipalities, recreation groups, and landowners in the creation and management of a four-season, multi-use trail across the state of Vermont for public recreation, alternative transportation, and awareness of our natural and cultural heritage.

An essential partner in planning for outdoor recreation and the outdoor recreation-based economy for this region of the state

<p>Bikepacking is a growing sport across the world. I would like for Vermont Bikepackers to scale sustainably. My vision includes increased public awareness of ancient roads and class 4 highways so that landowners whose land abuts these rights-of-way understand and accept bikepackers as recreators who are adding value to the local economy, are traveling lightly and leaving no trace, and who are genuinely thrilled to be sharing in the natural resources that the landowners call home (or second-home, as the case may be). I would also like to see increased visibility at the ANR and FPR level of bikepacking and bikepacker-camping as legitimate forms of outdoor recreation. I would like to see designated low-maintenance camping areas where bikepackers can safely and securely camp. It means a lot to a bikepacker to have her experience validated by a posted sign, or some other physical marker that tells her that what she is doing (stopping to camp) is safe, permissible, and encouraged.</p>
<p>Continue to provide guests with miles of riding trails, and expanding and adding more trails. Also creating better maps and trail marking.</p>
<p>Creating an expanded. Network of trails that connect with other communities in the region</p>
<p>Economically and environmentally sustainable spaces within the community.</p>
<p>Formalizing the natural trails in our city to encourage more people to explore our parks. Re-introducing outdoor programming beyond sports Enhanced small boat access to Lake Champlain Focused efforts on improving the playgrounds in all of our neighborhood parks</p>
<p>From community paths, to adaptive trails to pro-line level riding our goal is to make Waterbury a premier recreation destination on the east coast. Our Top Three Priorities over the coming years are: 1. Velomont- Connect from the Mad River Valley to Stowe via Singletrack - Connect from Perry Hill to Little River State Park - Connect from Little River State Park to Stowe (In Partnership with Stowe Trails Partnership) 2. Increase options with a focus on sustainable hand-built trails at Perry Hill to disperse traffic and continue to elevate it as a marquis trail network in the region. 3. Work with Vermont State Parks on expanding options at Little River State Park. We view this as a key opportunity for more family-friendly riding, progression and adaptive riding.</p>
<p>The Missisquoi NWR provides outdoor recreation for a variety of interests - from waterfowl hunting to bird watching and just taking a quiet stroll on a walking trail. Whether you hunt, fish, paddle or hike you can find an outdoor recreational experience at Missisquoi NWR.</p>
<p>I am hoping to expand my Therapeutic Riding Program and develop a Vocational/Co-Op work program for school age Children for Equestrian Science</p>
<p>I would like to see birding tourism grow in Vermont and be a vital part of attracting new & return visitors to the state.</p>
<p>In the future, we see The Trust for Public Land as a vital partner to bring about permanent protection of the best areas for recreation, whether its backcountry skiing, mountain biking, and hiking in the Green Mountains, to Community Forests, to protecting the Catamount Trail and the last sections of the Long Trail.</p>
<p>Increase collaboration across town-state-federal boundaries to address recreation supply and demand holistically across public lands.</p>

Increases in user demand are putting a lot of pressure on not only our trails but all trails in the area and in Vermont. More trails are needed to help keep up with demand, decrease the pressure on the volunteers that maintain the trails and also to help drive the State's tourism ambitions. We hope to continue our partnership with FPR and better align our organizations to grow a culture of trail stewardship in Vermont. Our main vision is to connect all of our existing trail pods in our area, and also connect to surrounding towns and trail organizations. Based on our membership survey, connector trails are the main goal- longer rides and hikes and decreasing the usage of cars in the downtown area to deal with increased traffic. We also are planning on progression trail areas: beginner, intermediate, advanced and pro-line mountain bike trails. Tourists and locals alike are looking for diversity in their trail experiences and having only beginner trails will only get us so far in the outdoor recreation sector. Vermont is primed to offer a recreation destination for locals and out of state/out of country visitors. We hope to capture this momentum by creating a trail system that fits these needs.

Local Recreation - Our mission is to develop diverse, affordable, recreational programs and activities for the community, in a safe and welcoming environment. RiseVT is a community initiative to embrace healthy lifestyles. RiseVT motivates, inspires and works with individuals and families to help them make small changes in their lives that will have a big impact on their health. In addition, RiseVT has strategically placed Health Advocates around Franklin and Grand Isle to work with schools, businesses and municipalities to wrap around our residents to create an environment where the healthy choice is the easiest choice.

Newport City is working to promote itself as an outdoor recreation friendly community as a hub for residents of the towns that surround us AND to visitors as part of the NEK that's emerging as a regional destination. We believe that recreation is part of a healthy and positive lifestyle and our goal is to encourage family cohesiveness through engaging programs and beautiful places to play.

Our vision is to continue to support programs and outdoor recreational areas in our community that will insure that these resources are available to people now and in the future.

Our vision is to grow our organization and expand educational offerings in conjunction with other local organizations. We have a fantastic trail network connecting to a scenic town center and existing infrastructure to become a leader in outdoor recreation education opportunities.

The Byways (supported by RPCs) can provide good info about a lot of places that get overlooked. State Parks are great but there are lots of municipal parks and trails as well as lands managed by land trusts out there that need to be promoted.

The CTA is committed to working towards sustainable and equitable access to Vermont's backcountry through work on trails and terrain, conservation, and youth programs focused on introducing youth of all incomes and backgrounds to skiing and the backcountry.

The Green Mountain Club is founder and maintainer of Vermont's Long Trail, one of the first long-distance hiking trails in the country. The NEKGMC Section focuses on the mountains and trails of Northeast Kingdom region – leading hikes, maintaining trails and educating the public. Provide, and preserve hiking opportunities as well as support land and wildlife stewardship in the Northeast Kingdom.

The Long Trail system is a well maintained, sustainably built trail system; that provides a desirable hiking experience to all humans at no cost and is supported by a volunteer-driven professionally staffed organization that manages humans as part of the natural landscape. The organization is supported financially and through volunteerism by the trail using public. Every person that wants to use the trail system will be able to find a way for it to play a part in their life.

<p>The mission of the Hinesburg Trails Committee is to create an interconnected network of sidewalks, unpaved roads, and pedestrian trails throughout our town. Most of our existing trails are located on public land of one type or another. The challenge (and our vision) is to better connect the trail networks located on public land with trails crossing private land.</p>
<p>The Nature Conservancy plays a unique role in helping to conserve the lands and waters that recreation depends on in Vermont. We can provide walking, hiking, birdwatching and hunting opportunities for the public in some of these beautiful and important areas.</p>
<p>To continue to increase access and usability of our recreational assets.</p>
<p>To continue to maintain and advocate for trails, but to expand the number of trails, trail connectivity, and introduce more people of all backgrounds to the sport of mountain biking.</p>
<p>VRC will continue to protect special places along Vermont's rivers for fishing, swimming, boating, camping and more. VRC protects public access such that people from all economic backgrounds can enjoy all that our rivers have to offer.</p>
<p>We are an integral member of the VT trail community, with federal, state, town and private land access throughout the Mad River Valley, and plans to connect our network to our neighbor chapters. We are working to link the Mad River Valley's communities and special places with healthy, fun, sustainable, low impact, accessible trails for both recreation and commuting. We believe that excellent trails help make the Mad River Valley and Vermont a great place to live and to visit.</p>
<p>We hope to be able to expand our organizational capacity support and viability business planning services to outdoor recreation organizations; this expansion will depend on access to funds. We hope to further refine our outdoor recreation policies to provide clearer guidance to our conservation partners about how VHC's goals for outdoor recreation will be advanced through land conservation grants. This policy work will continue in parallel to SCORP planning efforts, with a hope to complete this work by the end of 2019.</p>
<p>We hope to grow our base of support and work with other local organizations to create and map trails to link together the trails throughout Windham County.</p>
<p>We plan to promote recreation and a healthy natural environment as regional assets, and to plan development in a way that will ensure that those assets are sustainable.</p>
<p>We want to continue to grow, build partnerships, provide access and develop two new adaptive recreation facilities.</p>
<p>We will become more inclusive of multiple outdoor recreation activities beyond those of hunting, fishing, and trapping. This is not to say that all lands will be open to all outdoor activities, but we need to become more inclusive and less exclusive.</p>
<p>While we continue to connect trails and conserve trail networks that engage people with the outdoors and the natural world, we will take it a step further to more actively connect with their surrounding ecosystem via programming and activities for all ages. We plan to collaborate with partners more than ever, and we will expand our toolbox to help accomplish our mission.</p>

PQ27. Please elaborate on any responses or share other thoughts related to Vermont's outdoor recreation opportunities.

A five-year SCORP process should include a commitment from the state to put the reflective number of miles of trail on state land. This will help keep trail expansion expectations in line with a representative plan and help trail groups keep their local communities involved in fundraising for new trail projects. Forestry and Recreation should go hand-in-hand in Vermont. There are hundreds of examples from around the world and in the US and Vermont where recreation and forestry goals are not at odds but work together. Vermont should do the same. The state needs to effectively advocate for legislative changes to Act 250 that encourage private landowners to partner with trail-based nonprofits, decrease the over regulatory, expensive and inappropriate permitting process. If we want an outdoor economy, then we need the support of private landowners.

As noted earlier, please don't forget our neighborhood parks. The focus seems to be on larger trail networks outside of municipalities. We need to be able to have safe, well-maintained places that people can be outdoors on public land within 10 minutes of their home.

Can't think of any...

Feedback on the survey: Some of the bullets earlier in the survey (re: activities that your organization provides/supports) wouldn't allow us to "unselect" the bullet if we accidentally chose something that was irrelevant.... so we learned not to be too trigger happy. :-)

Horse sports require land. Losing land is a threat to the future of some of the horse disciplines. We are also falling behind the level of other areas within select sports in terms of services and show quality and no longer draw competitors from the south. Years ago we did draw southern competitors in various sports in order to stay in Vermont during the summer months. That ability benefits the local economy.

I personally am a young -ish person who has recently found a job and moved to Vermont largely because of the strength of outdoor recreation infrastructure. Vermont is growing on me as a place I will very likely call home, and this is due in part to the sense of endless adventure I have living here due to the recreation opportunities. Please continue to prioritize responsible outdoor recreation. You will continue to build community and to attract people who will live here because they want to be here.

I would like to see the state identify niche recreation opportunities like birding/bird watching and look at ways to promote it to both residents and tourists. Then come up with strategies on how to connect guides with businesses. I think birding tourism is an untapped opportunity in Vermont, and yet, we're rich in bird species and wonderfully scenic places to see and experience birds.

In addition to providing clear access and wayfinding on the ground, we must ensure that digital wayfinding is accessible. If possible, we need to maintain online consistency for trails mapping. Additionally, we must promote a positive light on hunting and fishing as outdoors activities and combat the opposition that exists to the Vermont hunting tradition.

Our vision is to have Missisquoi NWR fully recognized as an important part of the state's recreational opportunities especially to communities in the northern part of the state. Visitors would come to understand the refuge's conservation goals and purposes and support them. Outdoor enthusiasts would come to the refuge to enjoy the unique habitat and abundant wildlife and see our trails and paddling as truly unique recreational opportunities in the state.

Please do not encumber trail making in the state with regulations like act 250

Please increase funding for multi-use trails and the Vermont Mountain Bike Association. We are already the best return on investment of any outdoor recreation opportunity in Vermont and a relatively small amount of additional support will go a long way to ensure the health and well-being of our citizens, visitors, economy and overall communities.

Thank you for all of your good work and taking the time to listen! Looking forward to continuing to grow our partnership!

Thanks for taking our thoughts into account.

The benefits of Therapeutic Riding are growing immensely but cost the main limiting factor. Federal and State funding are so needed

Through Hinesburg's subdivision regulations we have a mechanism that allows the town to acquire pedestrian easements across private land. Other communities may be interested in creating and taking advantage of a similar regulation if they are not already doing so.

VHCB continues to see a strong need for an outdoor recreation planning toolkit for municipal/non-profit projects to help guide outdoor recreation development that does not adversely impact sensitive natural resources or undermine the goals of Vermont Conservation Design. We see ANR as the appropriate venue for this work to be completed since it can draw on the expertise of both FPR and F&W staff, with the input and support of a technical advisory team. State expertise/guidance on these matters is more likely to be embraced than if the tool were to come from an independent entity. VHCB may be able to support this work, and is open to proposals for how this work could be completed.

We hope that the next SCORP will highlight the importance of conservation efforts to protecting the lands and waters that are critical for outdoor recreation in Vermont, as well as the importance of good stewardship of these resources. Dedicated capacity and funding to support stewardship of this recreation is critical.