

Wisconsin State Park System Facts

- **Wisconsin has 59 operating state parks and 30 operating state trails** comprising 132,456 acres of state park lands and 1,154 miles of trail.
- **Wisconsin has 5,050 campsites**, 1,407 picnic areas, 32 beaches, 50 boatlandings, 113 shelters, 7 cabins for lodging, one ski hill, one pool, and one golf course.
- **Wisconsin State Parks and Trails have 15,539,987 visitors annually.**
- **The Wisconsin State Park System earns \$16,170,352 annually.** Just under half of this is from park admission fees and trail passes.
- The Wisconsin State Park System employs 907 positions. Of this, 214 are full time equivalent employees, and 692 are limited term seasonal. **In other words, greater than 2/3 of the workforce is limited term seasonal.**
- **In 1997 nearly 50% of State Park operations costs were taxpayer funded; in 2004 that amount has shrunk to 32%.**
- **Wisconsin was a finalist for "Best State Park System in the United States"** in the last two competitions.
- **27% of Wisconsin residents, or 1.5 million citizens,** visit State Parks.

Economic Impacts of the Wisconsin State Park System

Visitor spending on outdoor recreation related to Wisconsin parks and trails exceeds \$650 million.

- The economies of local communities (restaurants, retail sales, lodging, tourism, etc.) will be greatly affected if the State Parks program pulls back its services at any of its properties.

- On average, out-of-state park users spend \$55.60 per person/per day, comprising \$17,707,000 in annual spending. (For example nearly 60% go to restaurants, 43% shop, and 37% take in outdoor recreation and other local attractions).
- **If both direct and indirect economic impacts of Outdoor Recreation are taken into account, spending exceeds \$7.50 billion annually in Wisconsin.**
 - This includes boating (\$1.8 billion), motorized vehicle (snowmobile / ATV - \$2.2 billion), passive recreation land use (which includes camping, hiking, and wildlife watching - \$2.15 billion) as well as campers/RVs/transportation (\$700 million). These numbers do not include hunting and fishing impacts.

Importance of the Wisconsin State Trail System

- There are over 2,000 miles of trails in the State Park System.
- **Wisconsin is currently ranked first in the nation in railbanked trail miles with 1,432.8 miles railbanked.**
- In the last three years, there has been a sharp percentage increase (of at least 6% each year) in both revenue from trails and number of trail users.
- **Wisconsin's State Trail Pass Program is unique nationwide, and provides over \$1.3 million** each year in user fees to help provide quality maintenance to state operated trails.
- **Wisconsin State Trails do not receive any taxpayer dollars directly,** and sufficiently rely on the income received from its State Trail Pass Program.
- **The number of users on state operated trails averaged 965,600 each of the last four years, or more than a 44% increase** from the previous four year average attendance.

Health Benefits of Using the Wisconsin State Park System

- According to the CDC, "**increasing opportunities for physical activity, including multi-use trails, will help more people be active.**"
- More than 50% of American adults do not get enough physical activity.
- **22.7% of adults in Wisconsin are overweight.**
- **Wisconsin is ranked 26th in the nation in obesity of its adult population.**
- **A full 21% of Wisconsin adolescents rank below the target for regular physical activity.**
- Unhealthy diet and physical inactivity play an important role in many chronic diseases and conditions, including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, breast cancer, colon cancer, gallbladder disease, and arthritis.
- **Wisconsin ranks first in alcohol consumption** among adults with 25.7 % of adults reporting having five or more drinks on an occasion one or more times in the past month.
- Nationwide, in 2000, health care costs associated with physical inactivity were more than \$76 billion. **If 10% of adults began a regular walking program, \$5.6 billion in heart disease costs could be saved.**

Other Supporting Statements

According to the University of Wisconsin Gateway Communities survey conducted in 2000 for Wisconsin State Parks, "**safety is both important to visitors and well provided across state parks and trails. In large part, this is due to the presence of well-trained and vigilant staff.**" Offering customer protection should continue to be a high concern.

State Parks would nearly double the amount of taxpayer dollars received currently if the percentage remained the same from 1997 to 2004 in amount of revenue given annually to the parks program.

- In 1997 taxpayer funding comprised 46.55% of State Parks costs, but by 2004 has come down to 31.69%
- **In other words, the State Park System has already endured budget reductions and slimmed its operations on an ongoing basis for nearly a decade.** Yet business continues to grow along with the number of properties and the number of incidents in parks that are health and safety related.

Three-Fourths of Wisconsin citizens surveyed prefer natural, undeveloped areas or lightly developed nature-oriented parks for recreating over other highly developed areas. State Parks continue to be the choice of those wishing to recreate and enjoy the outdoors.