A special publication by

WISCONSIN
OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

TALIESIN PRESERVATION

Live + Work Where You Play

OUTSIDE IN WISCONSIN

Here, Outdoor Recreation Thrives

Bordered by two Great Lakes and the mighty Mississippi River, Wisconsin is home to more than 15,000 inland lakes and crisscrossed by 84,000 miles of rivers and streams. It is nearly half covered by forests, dotted by rocky outcroppings and alive with abundant wildlife. Wisconsin's spectacular natural assets just beckon us to come out and play.

And play we do. No matter the season, Wisconsinites find a way to go fast, take it slow, discover something new, push our boundaries, reconnect and refresh in Wisconsin's great outdoors.

Here, outdoor recreation is a way of life. It's the preferred way we spend our free time, and for many, it is also a livelihood. The lure of Wisconsin's outdoors and our people's hardworking and friendly nature is an unbeatable combination for businesses and visitors alike, who are drawn to experience this lifestyle. It's why world-class outdoor brands have taken root and flourished here alongside Fortune 500 companies and entrepreneurial start-ups. It also nurtures countless professional athletes and Olympians who are raised in this outdoor recreation culture where Wisconsin's natural playground is their training ground.

Wisconsin is a place where community is built around a passion for the outdoors and the quality of life it provides. We invite you to join us outside in Wisconsin!

Mary Monroe Brown
Director, Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation

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Live and Work Where Others Vacation

The outdoors is consistently a top reason for visiting Wisconsin, but when you live here, your vacation can begin every day before or after work. For some, vacation even happens on lunch break. It's common to see a group of coworkers out for a midday stroll or lunchtime ride, and often these amenities are found right on the worksite because employers value the outdoors. They understand the mental and physical benefits the outdoors provides, which helps keep employees happy, healthy and productive. From a simple walking path to fully developed mountain bike trails, Wisconsin businesses understand the importance of investing in ways to help employees balance work, life and play.

"I go to nature every day for inspiration in the day's work."
-Frank Lloyd Wright

Escape the mundane and surround yourself with the land that inspired Frank Lloyd Wright's organic architecture. Learn about America's most iconic architect and his strong connections to nature and Wisconsin, all while at work.

Depending on your position, you can enjoy the vast expanse of the natural landscape on the 800-acre property, unparalleled architecture or breathtaking water views at Riverview Terrace, a.k.a. the Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center.

Discover the flora and fauna of the surrounding Driftless Region on the Welsh Hills Trail, accessible from our parking lot. Unwind from the day on a hike in the valley, a bike ride along a paved path or while sitting on the beach along the Wisconsin River - the choices are endless!

Human Resources. Taliesin Preservation
Spring Green, WI

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Well-Kept Secret Because There Are No Big Egos Here

Why Wisconsin? It's the people. We're down-to-earth, humble and friendly. We say "hi" on the trail, wave "hello" from the boat and give a nod from the bike seat. We're not going to judge you based on the gear you're sporting or the skills you're demonstrating. Chances are, we're right there with you, just doing something we love and having fun.

We're outdoors all four seasons enjoying the countless adventures in our scenic landscapes and along our freshwater shoreline. But it is our spirited nature and our understanding that a shared experience makes a lasting memory, that is above all else, what sets Wisconsin apart. So, when you come off the trail or out of the lake, pull up a chair, join us for a cold one, share your adventure and toast to the fun.

Photo: St. Croix Rod

$7.8 Billion Outdoor Industry is Big Business in Wisconsin

Outdoor recreation has long been part of the Wisconsin story as a favorite pastime and as a solid business endeavor - from the early development of the Northwoods as an outdoor vacation destination to the hatching of one of the world's leading bicycle manufacturers. Wisconsinites have long known there is something special outside that adds to the quality of life.

Outdoor recreation manufacturers know it, too. World-renowned brands have planted their roots here, making outdoor recreation big business. Meaning, we don't just ride bikes. We build bikes. And we're not just "gone fishin'," we're busy handcrafting the rods. And we make paddles, boats, binoculars, bows, lures, outdoor apparel, yachts, snowmobile engines and more.

Outdoor recreation inspires the gear we make, the guides who teach us, the retailers who outfit us, the visitors we attract, the relationships we form and the quality of life we enjoy.

Photo: St. Croix Rod

Photo: Canoe There

WISCONSIN RANKS 5TH among U.S. states for the share of all jobs that are in outdoor recreation-related manufacturing.

Photo: Trek Bicycle

"Basing our global headquarters in Wisconsin provides Trek the opportunity to recruit world-class talent and employees with a strong work ethic, as well as access to excellent road and mountain biking right out the back door."

Bob Burns
Vice President
Trek Bicycle
Waterloo, WI

The 1,200-mile Ice Age National Scenic Trail traces the state's unique landscapes carved by glaciers.

The nation's largest competitive road cycling series, Tour of America's Dairyland, takes place over 11 days in 11 communities in Southeastern Wisconsin.

Photo: Tour of America's Dairyland

Photo: Trek Bicycle

The Trek CX Cup in Waterloo was the first UCI Cyclo-cross World Cup Series race to offer equal payouts to the men's and women's fields.

Thousands of miles of dedicated ATV/UTV trails and routes await.

The Wisconsin State Park system offers equine-dedicated campsites and over 700 miles of trails for horseback riding.

Hit the Trail

There's no better way to explore Wisconsin than from a trail. And there are endless opportunities to do so. Two of the nation's 11 National Scenic Trails make their way through Wisconsin's landscapes. The North Country Trail traverses 220 miles in the northern reaches of the state, while the 1,200-mile Ice Age Trail is contained solely within our borders. The 32-mile Elroy-Sparta State Trail, considered the nation's first rail-to-trail, takes hikers and bikers through three historic tunnels. Whether you like to go fast or take it slow, Wisconsin's trails have something for everyone.

You can take in Wisconsin's varied terrain by foot, bike, horse or ATV. The state boasts thousands of miles of dedicated ATV/UTV trails, even more miles of road routes to get you from point A to B, as well as terrain parks for adrenaline-packed riding or off-roading. The state park system offers equine-dedicated campsites and over 700 miles of trails for horseback riding. Even an aspiring climber can find a trail, or route, up. Wisconsin's rocky outcroppings and bluffs are more than fitting for climbers seeking an approachable summit. You'll even find routes over frozen waterfalls in winter.

There is no shortage of cycling opportunities in Wisconsin, perhaps due to the state's historic dairy and forestry industries which we credit for the paved countryside roads perfect for touring and the lesser traveled, but no less exciting, logging roads for gravel riding and bikepacking. The popular CAMBA Trails in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest are a Bronze-level Ride Center as designated by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) for its 300-plus-mile network. But cycling doesn't end at the trail, Wisconsin is also home to world-class cycling events that embody the spirited nature of Wisconsinites with festival-like atmospheres and community togetherness felt by competitors, volunteers and spectators.

Explore More

Nearly 20% of Wisconsin's lands are open to the public - some 7.5 million acres for exploring. Whether a day outing to hunt or a camping trip to escape the daily grind, Wisconsin's public lands are remarkably accessible. Popular funding programs like the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program (named after Wisconsin Governors Warren Knowles and Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day) ensure these natural places remain preserved and open to outdoor recreation for future generations to enjoy.

Each year, the state draws the second most resident and nonresident hunters of any state for whitetail deer, turkey, bear, waterfowl and more. Wildlife watchers flock to Wisconsin, too, where 800 miles of Great Lakes shorelines attract migrating birds, the bluffs along the Mississippi Flyway are a hot spot for bald eagle sightings, and the 32,000-acre Horicon Marsh is the nation's largest freshwater marsh hosting over 300 bird species annually. Along the Wisconsin River, birders can view the thousands of iconic sandhill cranes staging in preparation for fall's southerly migration. To ensure you get the best view, Vortex Optics tests their binoculars and spotting scopes on the nature conservancy lands adjacent to its facility in Barneveld.

Immerse yourself to take it all in. With more than 6,000 campsites in the Wisconsin State Park System alone, plus thousands more in national forests, county forests and private campgrounds, you can find a place to suit your needs. You can take your pick: a remote backcountry plot for a backpacking adventure, a rustic site for tent camping or a park with more modern amenities for RVs, trailers and the conveniences of swimming pools, restaurants and grocery stores.

Photo: @felicia_fullwood

The Wisconsin State Park System offers more than 6,000 campsites.

Horicon Marsh hosts over 300 bird species each year.

Photo: Arterra Media

Photo: Jackson Newman, Aldo Leopold Foundation

7.5 million acres of public lands can be explored.

Nearly half of the state is covered by forests.

Photo: Lee Ilagan of Ann Ilagan Photography

"It's the perfect place to live if you love the outdoors. With easy access, we can be on the trails in about five minutes and don't even have to get in a car. It's the perfect training ground to get better at all these outdoor sports with a world-class whitewater course right downtown, ample canoeing and kayaking on rivers and lakes and amazing trail running and hiking. The mountain biking, we think, is second to none in the Midwest."

Anna Nummelin and Tim Buccholz
Race Directors
Rib Mountain Adventure Challenge
Wausau, WI

When they're not planning races, Anna works as a nurse practitioner and Tim as a music professor.

Make a Splash

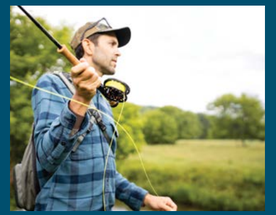
On it, in it or near it - there's no wrong way to take in Wisconsin's abundant waters. Get a feel for big water on one of the two Great Lakes. Board a sailboat from Milwaukee's Yacht Club, a charter fishing boat or one of the ferries that travel from mainland to the smaller islands of the Door County Peninsula or the National Scenic Lakeshore of the Apostle Islands. For a more immersive experience, go swimming at the ocean-like Bradford Beach - the country's most accessible beach - try freshwater surfing near Sheboygan in the Malibu of the Midwest or scuba dive in the newly designated Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary.

No matter what region of the state you're in, you're never far from one of 15,000 inland lakes or 84,000 miles of rivers and streams. The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, one of the nation's first Wild & Scenic Rivers, is a peaceful place to paddle, or try canoeing, kayaking or paddleboarding one of six state park water trails or dozens of other local and regional water trails. Many anglers find the Driftless region's concentration of coldwater trout streams second to none. Wisconsin sells the third most nonresident fishing licenses of any state, drawing anglers to tie a fly over babbling brooks or sink a lure in hopes of landing a musky.

But lake life isn't just an expression around here, it's really a thing. Mercury Marine and other boat makers have anchored their businesses here to take advantage. Boating is a popular activity where families and friends enjoy soaking up the sun, cooling off while water skiing and tubing and making memories along the way.

Enjoy 84,000 miles of rivers and streams and 15,000 inland lakes.

Class II - IV rapids on Northern Wisconsin rivers provide an adrenaline-pumping rafting experience.



Fishing guides in Wisconsin are plentiful, from the diverse talent of Driftless Anglers to Black Earth Angling Co., Tight Lines Fly Shop or Milwaukee River Fly Fishing, a veteran-owned business giving back through the therapeutic activity of fishing. Wisconsin sells the third most nonresident fishing licenses of any state, no doubt because of our pristine waters and knowledgeable guides.

Photo: ©2020 American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation

"Being outdoors was always part of my upbringing. As our children began to grow up, we decided that there is no better place to raise children than in Northern Wisconsin. I love that we have a state where my kids will get a great education, I can pursue my professional career, and we can live a lifestyle with endless outdoor opportunities."

Ben Popp
Executive Director
American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation
Hayward, WI

Photo: ©2020 American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation

The Birkie Trails host North America's largest Nordic ski race every winter.

Wisconsin has over 25,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails and over 600 snowmobile clubs across the state.

Wisconsin has the third most ski resorts in the country.

Have Snow Much Fun

When the snow falls, a winter wonderland emerges, and magical experiences await. Wisconsinites don a few extra warm layers, pack a thermos of hot cocoa and choose their own winter adventures. We say there's no such thing as a cold day, just the wrong coat. Enjoy cross-country skiing on the Birkie Trails where North America's largest Nordic ski race is held, or the groomed and lit trails at Minocqua's Winter Park, the Kettle Moraine State Forest's Lapham Peak or Nine Mile Forest. If skinny skis aren't your thing, many state and local parks also offer snowshoe and winter hiking trails. And don't bother storing the bike in winter, switch out the tires or bring your fat bike for winter riding on hundreds of miles of groomed trails found throughout the state.

If the mountains are your calling, Wisconsin may not have the peaks of the West, but we have the third most ski resorts - as many as Colorado and more than California. Descend the slopes on two skis, a board or a tube for a fun-filled day on the hill.

Living up to our legacy as the birthplace of the snowmobile, Wisconsin has over 25,000 miles of groomed trails that traverse public and private lands and are largely maintained by the volunteers of 600 snowmobile clubs across the state. On the sled you can log some serious miles and see a truly unique side to Wisconsin's landscape. It's even the chosen terrain for Yamaha's snowmobile test facility, located just outside of Minocqua.

And don't forget the lakes; you can't count them out when they freeze over. Solid water is perfect for ice fishing, ice sailing, ice skating and pond hockey. It also creates a more direct route for snowmobilers, skiers and snowshoers, and it is a perfect location for many a winter festival. Here, we celebrate winter and the variety it brings with merriment and snow much fun.

Savor Four Seasons, Outdoors and In

In Wisconsin, we're united by our passion for the outdoors, and we celebrate each season's passage with fun ways to play outside. And just as the changing season's deepen our appreciation for each one, our time spent outside deepens our appreciation for the things we find indoors: a good meal, a craft beer, live music, great art and more.

A vibrant arts scene lives here with countless museums, galleries and theaters. In fact, some of the best art sculpture tours and music festivals like Summerfest, Blue Ox and even parts of Mile of Music are held outdoors. The stunning architecture of Wisconsin-born Frank Lloyd Wright is on display in the rolling green hills of the Driftless Region where he was raised. The designated motor route, the Frank Lloyd Wright Trail, spans nine stops, including the UNESCO World Heritage site Taliesin, Wright's 800-acre home, studio and school.

Many more museums recognize the history and cultures of Wisconsin. You can learn about the first stewards of the land at Frog Bay Tribal National Park (the first Tribal National Park in the country), the Ojibwe Museum & Cultural Center or by joining a public powwow. America's Black Holocaust Museum gives light to the life experiences of African Americans and the Milton House Museum preserves a stop of the Underground Railroad, while the Jewish Museum Milwaukee explores the history and heritage of the Jewish community of southeastern Wisconsin.

The state's agricultural heritage enriches our fresh take on culinary experiences. More than just our nationally renowned craft breweries and award-winning master cheesemakers, Wisconsin produces more than half the world's cranberries, over 95% of the country's ginseng and a lot of snap beans, potatoes, maple syrup, apples, cherries and more. With one of the greatest concentrations of organic farms in the nation, farm-to-table isn't just a trend. We call it eating well. From farmers markets to pizza farms, supper clubs to fine dining - local ingredients and farm-fresh provisions are commonplace on menus.

11 **Experience the culture of Wisconsin's 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations.**

Sip local flavors from our 410+ craft wineries, hard cideries, distilleries and breweries.

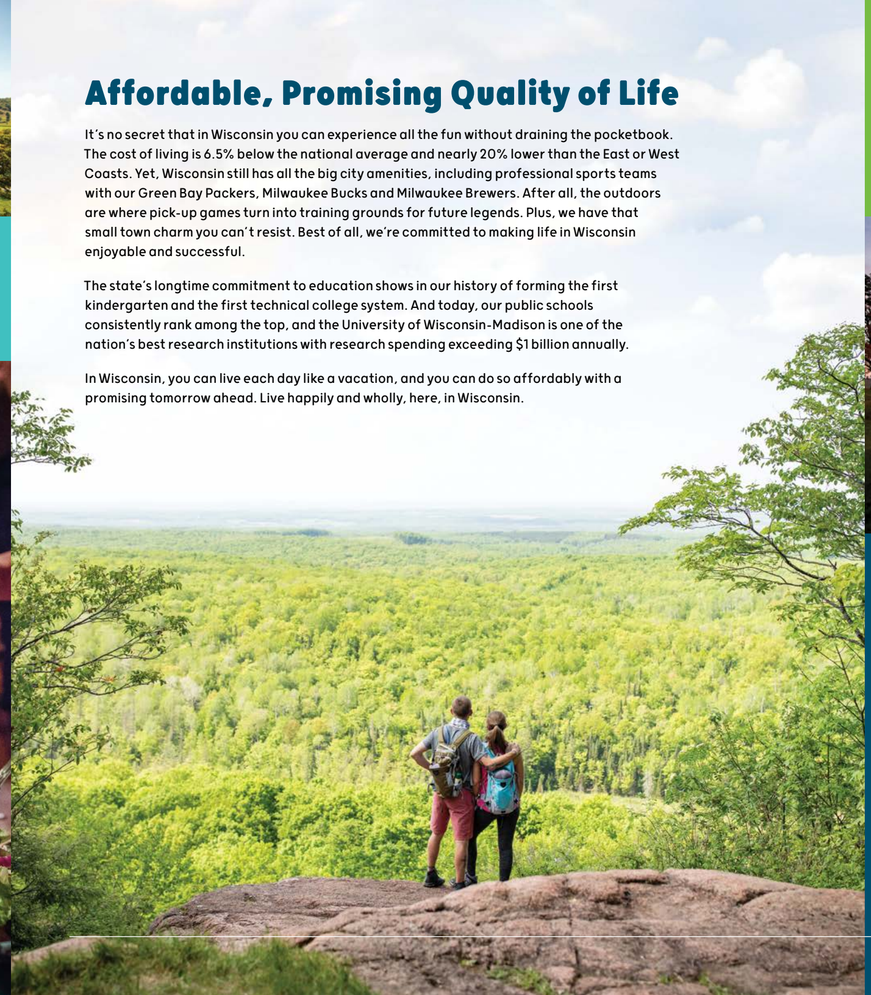
Tour 9 architectural wonders along the Frank Lloyd Wright Trail.

Affordable, Promising Quality of Life

It's no secret that in Wisconsin you can experience all the fun without draining the pocketbook. The cost of living is 6.5% below the national average and nearly 20% lower than the East or West Coasts. Yet, Wisconsin still has all the big city amenities, including professional sports teams with our Green Bay Packers, Milwaukee Bucks and Milwaukee Brewers. After all, the outdoors are where pick-up games turn into training grounds for future legends. Plus, we have that small town charm you can't resist. Best of all, we're committed to making life in Wisconsin enjoyable and successful.

The state's longtime commitment to education shows in our history of forming the first kindergarten and the first technical college system. And today, our public schools consistently rank among the top, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison is one of the nation's best research institutions with research spending exceeding $1 billion annually.

In Wisconsin, you can live each day like a vacation, and you can do so affordably with a promising tomorrow ahead. Live happily and wholly, here, in Wisconsin.



Wisconsin is home to ten public golf courses in the Top 100 as ranked by *Golf Digest* and *Golf Magazine*.

"I was drawn to the area for the beautiful landscape and outdoor recreation options. Our family canoes, bikes, hikes and plays here. As we recruit new employees from all over the world who care about people, animals and the environment, our rural setting exemplifies this and enables them to pursue their personal and professional passions."

Eric Hartwig
Director of Workplace Services
Organic Valley
La Farge, WI

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The Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation works to uplift the outdoor recreation industry and its partners for the economic health and overall well-being of the state and its residents. As the industry's central hub in Wisconsin, the Office provides resources, tools, guidance and support to outdoor businesses, manufacturers, guides and nonprofits.

OutdoorRecreation.wi.gov

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Memories to last a lifetime are made in Wisconsin. Discover the unexpected as you start your next getaway where your new home awaits.

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