



MORE Annual Report 2024

Chairs of the Senate, Budget and Taxation Committee and
House Appropriations Committee

Joint Chairmen's Report page 92

Submitted by:

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Office of Outdoor Recreation
Annapolis, MD 21401

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King and Queens Seat at Rocks State Park. By Matthew Settle.

Introduction

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR)'s Office of Outdoor Recreation (OOR) works across DNR and with the Maryland Department of Commerce, and other agencies and stakeholders, to support and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and the economic benefits they produce throughout the state. This work includes implementing the 2019 recommendations of the Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic (MORE) Commission. OOR provides a central point of contact, advocacy, inclusion, and resources at the state level for the diverse constituents, businesses, and communities that rely on and enjoy the continued growth of the outdoor recreation economy and access to nature. DNR and OOR strive to make outdoor recreation in Maryland more inclusive, expand recreation options and opportunities, and amplify the numerous benefits of outdoor recreation across our beautiful and diverse state.

Outdoor Recreation in Maryland

Outdoor recreation is commonly known as leisure activities performed in natural settings - often in parks, forests, local waterways, and other public areas. For individuals or communities that engage in outdoor recreation, the benefits extend far beyond physical activity and include numerous mental and social health benefits, community-building opportunities, and chances to learn more about local natural and cultural resources while forming and strengthening connections to the outdoors. Outdoor recreation activities include fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, camping, skiing, horseback riding, birding, kayaking, boating, forest bathing, walking, and much more. In Maryland, we are fortunate to have a variety of outdoor landscapes to explore - from the mountains of western Maryland to the rivers, streams, Chesapeake and Coastal bays, and the Atlantic Ocean - as well as the opportunity to recreate in all four seasons. The varied activities, landscapes, and public lands and waters provide ample opportunities for everyone to enjoy connecting with the outdoors.



Mountain biking at Patapsco Valley State Park. By James Corbet.

Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation is a strong, significant industry in the United States and Maryland and plays a large role in the national and local job markets and revenue streams. In 2022, it was responsible for approximately 5 million jobs throughout the U.S.A., over eighty thousand of which were from Maryland. Nationally, the outdoor recreation economy generates nearly \$470 billion annually in gross domestic profit, \$8.3 billion of which is from Maryland ([Bureau of Economic Analysis](#)).

Maryland Outdoor Recreation and Economic Commission

The MORE Commission was formed in 2017 with a charge to study and make recommendations to the Governor for strengthening the outdoor recreation economy in Maryland. The commission included representatives from the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources and Commerce, local government, business leaders, manufacturers, non-profit leaders in the outdoor recreation field, and representatives from tourism, planning, and economic development. In December 2019, the Commission produced [the 2019 MORE report](#) that included 28 recommendations in five major categories: Enhancing and Strengthening the Business Climate; Enhancing Workforce Development and Job Creation Opportunities; Enhancing Maryland's Brand as a Premier Destination; Enhancing Recreational and Heritage Tourism Experiences; and Stewarding Maryland's Natural, Cultural, Historical and Recreational Resources.

In 2023, the Great Maryland Outdoors Act (GMOA) was passed, creating the Great Maryland Outdoors Fund to support the OOR in improving and expanding outdoor recreation and implementing the recommendations of the MORE Commission. This investment was not in perpetuity, but a one-time amount to support the Office of Outdoor Recreation in pursuing the MORE recommendations. In 2024, the GMOA was amended to include the support of environmental education and outdoor learning through the State, further developing the concept that access to nature leads to environmental connection, understanding, and stewardship.



Fly fishing in Savage River State Forest. By Stephen Farrand.

Status of MORE Recommendations

In 2023, DNR leadership temporarily assigned the OOR Director to act as Assistant Park Superintendent to address the critical and immediate needs of the Maryland Park Service. The Director retired from state service in late 2023 and a new OOR Director was appointed in December of 2023, followed by two new staff hires.

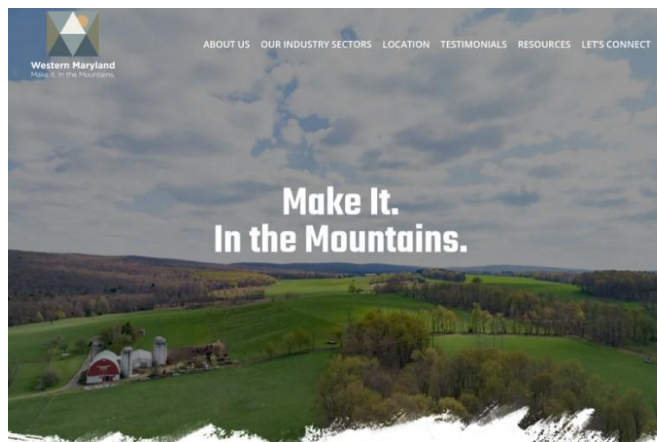
With limited funding and resources to address the 28 recommendations of the MORE Commission, as well as the tasks of the Great Maryland Outdoors Act, the staff worked with leadership to identify high-priority actions to be undertaken in this fiscal year and submitted two new Managing for Results (MFRs) to be included as part of the DNR strategic plan and annual tracking. This report contains highlights and updates on the status of those actions. Attached to this report is a strategic plan and analysis of the full set of recommendations, including the priority level, timeframe, potential partners, and resources needed to address the actions recommended by the MORE Commission to strengthen and expand the outdoor recreation economy in Maryland.

2024 Progress and Looking Forward

Enhancing & Strengthening the Business Climate

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Develop a recruitment plan to attract outdoor lifestyle manufacturers, such as kayak, boat, bicycle, and ATV companies to locate and grow in Maryland. Showcase Maryland's outdoor recreation lifestyle as an active recruitment tool when attracting non-recreational businesses to the state through the development of promotional materials for use by industry.*

In February 2024, Allegany and Garrett counties, supported by the Department of Commerce, announced the launch of their regional business and workforce attraction initiative – [Make It In the Mountains](#), a marketing initiative developed to attract lifestyle manufacturing companies to the region.



A screenshot of the webpage for the Make It In The Mountains initiative.

Funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), awarded to Allegany County Government and Garrett County Government, and supported by the Maryland Department of Commerce, the project fostered the development of a regional recruitment and strategic plan to attract outdoor recreation and lifestyle manufacturing to locate, expand, and grow in Western Maryland. The project addresses the MORE recommendations to develop a recruitment plan to attract outdoor lifestyle manufacturers, such as kayak, boat, bicycle, and ATV companies, to locate and grow in Maryland.



White water kayaking at Great Falls in the Potomac Area. By Bernard Stauffer.

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Create a Maryland Outdoor Industry Leadership Summit to gather stakeholders for education, training, partnership development, and advocacy.*

In 2024 DNR, led by OOR staff, created an intra-agency team to plan and coordinate the inaugural [Maryland Outdoor Recreation Summit](#) in October 2024. The summit will bring together more than 200 leaders from various sectors - including business, government, and nonprofits - to explore and expand upon the economic, health, and environmental benefits provided by Maryland's outdoor recreation opportunities. The multi-day gathering will be held at [Rocky Gap State Park](#) and will highlight the outdoor recreation economy of Western Maryland and other practices from across the state and region. Strands of sessions will include outdoor business development, community and inclusion, workforce development, and conservation and stewardship in outdoor recreation.



Outdoor Recreation Summit 2024 logo and image of Rocky Gap Resort and surrounding Rocky Gap State Park. Photo by Richard Dos Santos.

2025 and Beyond

In 2025, OOR plans to create an assessment of outdoor recreation stewardship best practices with a focus on Maryland organizations and businesses that promote them. Currently, OOR is an active participant in the [Confluence of States](#), through which they have gained support and a strong foundation for this future work.

In 2024, OOR met with Frostburg State University, the University of Maryland, College Park, and Morgan State University to explore opportunities to engage researchers and students in business and economic analysis projects.

Enhancing Workforce Development and Job Creation Opportunities

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Assess in-state and out-of-state workforce development platforms, high school and higher education curricula, certificate programs, apprenticeships, trade schools, etc. to identify opportunities for outdoor recreation and historic preservation training and degree programs.*

In September 2022, DNR in partnership with Project Green Classrooms (now the [Outdoor Learning Partnership](#)) published a [Guide to Conservation Careers in Maryland](#), which includes a comprehensive list of the training, workforce development, and academic programs that support the development of skills for conservation (including outdoor recreation) careers in the state.

In 2023, DNR hired a Green Jobs Network Coordinator to assess, enhance, and connect workforce development and training opportunities for outdoor recreation and environmental careers. The coordinator spent the first six months of their appointment doing an internal assessment and supporting workforce development programs and platforms across the state, as well as exploring workforce development models, training, curricula, and certificate programs in and out of the state related to outdoor recreation and conservation careers. They used this information to develop a plan for an Outdoor Recreation Apprenticeship program, as described below.



Members of the Fall 2024 Climate Crew Network cohorts kicking off their service with a team-building day at Outward Bound. By Outward Bound Staff.

In 2024, OOR is developing a plan to design and manage an outdoor recreation apprenticeship program. This includes assessing the existing and near-term workforce needs as well as training and instruction opportunities within the Maryland outdoor recreation ecosystem, then using that information to design an outdoor recreation School-to-Apprentice (STA) program that will benefit the DNR Maryland Park Service (MPS) workforce while encouraging participation from other outdoor recreation organizations.

A School-to-Apprentice program is a registered apprenticeship that begins during a student's senior year of high school. The program will be registered with the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program. Through this STA program, the apprentice receives 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and 144 hours of related instruction per year. The goal is to register a 3-year apprenticeship program in an outdoor recreation field (such as park maintenance, park management, trail design or environmental education) and leverage the Department of Service and Civic Innovations Service Year program by braiding it into year two of the apprenticeship.

It is anticipated that the research, design, and development of this initial apprenticeship program will take roughly 12 months and that the first round of apprentices will begin in Fall 2025. Once successful, DNR will explore offering additional apprenticeship tracks.

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Strengthen the outcomes of the Maryland Conservation Corps (MCC), Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC), and Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC) through agreements with partners to provide youth from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds with apprenticeships and other workforce career experience in natural resource professions.*

In 2023 and 2024 OOR formed a collaborative and supportive relationship with the Maryland Conservation Corps (MCC), Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC), and Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC). OOR seeks to highlight MCC's trail-building and trail-designing projects, such as the MCC and VCC projects at Tuckahoe State Park. OOR is also considering options for incorporating these programs into the outdoor recreation apprenticeship program.



MCC Tuckahoe Crew working on Tuckahoe Valley near "bridge to nowhere"

In partnership with the Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition, OOR has worked to provide youth from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds with workforce career experience in natural resource

professions through our coordination and support of the Maryland Climate Crew Network. The Climate Crew Network is a pilot green workforce development initiative that provides conservation job training, industry exposure, and networking opportunities to young adults in Baltimore City, Prince George's County, and Howard County through a network of community-based organizations.

2025 and Beyond

Creating a toolkit in the outdoor recreation industry that identifies educational opportunities, provides job application tutorials, and contains an inventory of public and private sector job vacancies in coordination with the Maryland Workforce Expressway is a high priority for OOR. Looking forward, OOR is developing a partnership with the [Outdoor Recreation Roundtable](#) (ORR), a national organization that has developed several resources for promoting and preparing for outdoor recreation careers nationwide. Our next step is to work with them to adapt their resources to create a Maryland-specific toolkit that can be incorporated into the Department of Labor's [Maryland Workforce Exchange](#) platform.

A study to inventory the state's existing outdoor recreation businesses, and to identify industry sectors with job-growth potential based on the implementation of the MORE Commission's marketing, visitor experience development, and stewardship recommendations will be done in coordination with the Governor's Workforce Development Board, the Department of Commerce, and outside partners including the new Outdoor Recreation Institute out of Frostburg State University. We are evaluating options for coordinating and partnering on this initiative and anticipate addressing this recommendation in 2025 or 2026.

Enhancing Maryland's Brand as a Premier Destination

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Identify potential funding sources for a campaign to highlight four-season outdoor recreation use and associated outdoor recreation businesses. Highlight off-season activities such as birding and year-round fishing experiences. Continue to build on the water trails system in the marketing positioning of Maryland as having "Trail System Second to None."*

DNR, through OOR, launched a social media campaign highlighting outdoor recreation in all seasons and throughout the various regions of Maryland. OOR has promoted a variety of activities highlighting a range of intensity: nature photography, hiking, shell-hunting, and cross-country skiing. The campaign draws attention to the variety of activities that are available to people as well as provides information on public amenities and where to find more information and resources. While much of this work has been done by social media and in-house, additional resources and partners would allow OOR to grow the campaign, reach new audiences, and welcome new audiences into the outdoor recreation realm.



Kayaking at Tuckahoe State Park. By Saki.

In addition, the Maryland Department of Commerce threads outdoor recreation experiences and businesses throughout all of its consumer-facing communications, including social media, and markets outdoor recreation during off-peak days and seasons. The Department of Commerce will be showcasing the state's water- and land-based trail system as part of its next three annual marketing focus areas: 25th Anniversary of Maryland Scenic Byways in 2025; America's 250th in 2026; and Rails, Trails and Waterways - Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of American Railroading in 2027.

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Work to better coordinate marketing and development programs supporting outdoor recreation and heritage tourism, and assess opportunities for grant programs to include state agencies as funding recipients.*

In 2024 OOR partnered with the MD Department of Agriculture to support [Maryland's Best Ice Cream Trail](#). The Ice Cream Trail is a campaign to support agriculture by releasing a list of 11-12 Maryland creameries that produce their own ice cream on-site, and visitors can travel to each creamery between Memorial Day and Labor Day and submit pictures to the Department of Agriculture to earn prizes. The Ice Cream Trail is in its 12th year and this year OOR partnered with them for the first time to [identify hiking trails](#) (mostly on state lands) near each creamery to add an outdoor recreation element to the experience.



One of the graphics used to promote the Maryland Ice Cream Trail on DNR's social media pages

If visitors go on the hikes and visit the creamery stops, they are entered to win additional prizes provided by OOR and our partnerships with Maryland Park Service and AllTrails. In addition to providing hiking trail pairings and prizes, DNR has promoted "Hike the Ice Cream Trail" on our website, social media page and at events.

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Deputize Outdoor Recreation Ambassadors. Work with business owners and associates to serve as ambassadors to create word-of-mouth/social media campaign. Cross promote amongst partners to amplify messages.*

In 2022, Outdoor Recreation Ambassadors were recognized and celebrated. These volunteers were recognized by MD DNR to assist with amplifying word of mouth and social media outreach and encouraging outdoor recreation across the state. OOR will continue to determine how to best utilize this program along with additional partners across the state. Many of the ambassadors were members that

provided critical input to the MORE Commission itself, including outfitters, environmental leaders, local government and community representatives.

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Identify an organization that can coordinate with businesses to provide shared resources (e.g., photography) that are needed for outdoor promotion, so that costs can be shared among the partners.*

Nature Forward (formerly Audubon Naturalist Society) has established a [Flickr photo bank](#) to showcase the experiences and images of Black community members enjoying the outdoors.



Images from Nature Forward photo bank.

This resource has been made available to conservation partners to use in publications, social media, and other product developments.



Image from Nature Forward photo bank.

2025 and Beyond

Building upon the ‘Hike the Ice Cream Trail’ initiative, OOR will highlight and promote other unique destinations in Maryland, such as champion trees across the state.

Enhancing Recreational and Heritage Tourism Experiences

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Conduct customer service surveys to assess the quality of experience and the needs of outdoor recreation users. Focus on engaging diverse constituents to ensure a systematic commitment to equitable access and addressing the needs of diverse communities.*

DNR has an internal “Recruit, Retain, Reactivate” (R3) matrix team staffed by representatives from various units including Fishing & Boating Services, Wildlife & Heritage Service, Parks Service, Chesapeake & Coastal Service, and Office of Outdoor Recreation. In 2020 and 2021, this team disseminated an outdoor recreation survey via email to collect data on demographics, participation in outdoor recreation activities, barriers to participation, resources desired, and communication preferences of outdoor recreators. The most selected reason for not recreating outdoors was “don’t know where to go” with over a third (36.9%) choosing that option. When the survey was re-distributed in 2023 and 2024, there were 91% less participants (1,275 responses instead of 14,904 in 2020 and 2021) and the most selected option for barrier to recreating outdoors was “don’t have the time” which resonated with 37.9% of participants.



Sandy waterfront recreation at Point Lookout State Park. By Stephen Badger.

In 2021, DNR received a grant from NOAA which funded a survey completed in partnership with the Chesapeake Conservancy to examine visitor use trends in nine Maryland state parks with water access: Bill Burton Fishing Pier, Cunningham Falls, Jane’s Island, Greenbrier, Gunpowder Falls, Sandy Point, Seneca Creek, Patapsco Valley, and Point Lookout. There was a specific interest in visitor suggestions for improvements to the park, frequency of visits, and preferred outdoor recreation activities. The survey found that the most popular types of recreation were swimming and picnicking (88.8% of parks had one of these as their most popular activity). This survey had 594 respondents and was distributed via flyers, signs with QR codes, and in-person surveying by park staff.

In the summer of 2024, DNR staff conducted park experience surveys at Greenbrier State Park in Washington County to gather information on visitors' preferred kinds of outdoor recreation, experiences in the park, and feedback on park amenities and services. OOR would like to work with the Maryland Park Service to expand the surveys to other parks.



Sandy waterfront recreation at Greenbrier State Park by Candy Thomson.

MORE Commission Recommendation: Provide training opportunities to outfitters and service providers on how to create better customer/user experiences.

During the [Outdoor Recreation Summit](#) (to take place in October of 2024), there are opportunities for participants to be trained by commerce and social media experts on how to best market and highlight their work and increase overall quality to enhance the customer/user experience. Specific sessions will address program creation, customer support, keeping your programs relevant and inclusive, and technical sessions including trail design.

MORE Commission Recommendation: Improve visitor experiences by providing more information about available experiences and better directing people to central gateway locations. Continue to improve and develop mapping, wayfinding, and interpretation for outdoor recreation areas, activities, and sites.



Sandy Point State Park staff at opening of bilingual Nature Center



An example of bilingual signs displayed in Maryland parks. By Candy Thomson

The Maryland State Parks Signage Database is a collection of signs found in Maryland state parks and includes those focused on interpretation, directions and safety warnings. OOR created Spanish and bilingual (English/Spanish) versions to be distributed through the Parks system to allow for better communication with Spanish-speaking patrons.

MORE Commission Recommendation: Implement an Outdoor Equity Program that provides funding to help eliminate barriers for low-income rural and urban youth and for cross-cultural communities to access outdoor recreation and education programs.



Fishing during the Es Mi Parque event at Sandy Point State Park. By Stephen Badger.

In 2024, OOR partnered with [Together Outdoors](#), (Outdoor Recreation Roundtable’s initiative to make the outdoors more inclusive and diverse), to establish the [Maryland Outdoor Equity Program](#). Through this program, OOR provided funding and support to award grants of up to \$7,500 to four organizations and initiatives that actively promote inclusion and diversity in outdoor recreation in Maryland. These grants supported a wide array of partners and projects: the [Live Water Foundation](#) created a paddling program for military veterans, [Defensores de la Cuenca](#) established a new outdoor gear library serving the Latin American community, [M.O.R.E. of Baltimore Homeschool](#) will create a program to provide camping equipment for children in Baltimore, and [Young Successful Leaders](#) will build a community garden and outdoor space in Baltimore’s Edmondson Village.



Life vest fitting during Es Mi Parque event at Sandy Point State Park. By Candy Thomson.

2025 and Beyond

OOR is partnering with MD Departments of Planning, Commerce, and other agencies. As resources and staff expand, efforts will increase to provide targeted planning and funding assistance to "Gateway" municipalities to develop and grow their outdoor recreation and heritage-based economies and develop "Trail Towns."

Stewarding Maryland's Natural, Cultural, Historical and Recreational Resources

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Increase the delegated procurement authority for DNR to reduce the critical maintenance backlog on public lands. Consider funding in-house construction crews to work on public land critical maintenance projects.*

In the 2024 legislative session, the delegated procurement authority was increased as part of the Great Maryland Outdoors Act (SB 259). The delegated authority was raised from \$250,000 to \$400,000 for critical maintenance projects and will greatly help DNR address the project backlog.

MORE Commission Recommendation: *Work with Maryland Historic Trust to make the Maryland Historic Revitalization Tax Credit Program available to tenants of historic properties owned by DNR.*

In 2021, the General Assembly voted to expand the definition of "certified historic structure" and "single-family, owner-occupied residence" to include a certain structure that is located on property owned by DNR or one of its units; and is occupied by someone in an agreement with the State to pay for the rehabilitation of a structure in exchange for occupancy. This update allows tenants to take advantage of the State's historic revitalization tax credit program, effective July 1, 2021.



Stephenson House in Susquehanna State Park. By Peter Morrill.

MORE Commission Recommendation: Explore opportunities for holding a statewide trail summit to bring together state, local, and nonprofit trail and recreational user groups.

The [Outdoor Recreation Summit](#), hosted by OOR in October 2024, will bring together leaders from various sectors - including business, government, and nonprofits - to explore and expand upon the economic, health, and environmental benefits provided by outdoor recreation opportunities. The multi-day gathering will be held at Rocky Gap State Park and highlight the outdoor recreation economy of Western Maryland and other practices from across the state and region.



Mountain Biking at Deep Creek State Park. By Jess Daddio.

MORE Commission Recommendation: Assess recreational trail opportunities in state forests.

Maryland's state forest lands are an important component of outdoor recreation in the State. There are over three hundred miles of trails, including some for Off-Road Vehicles, and by 2023 there were over 14,000 camping registrations on forest lands. To expand on this, OOR has supported the development and design of new and redesigned trails on Maryland forestlands. Some new features include the re-alignment of trails to better support forestry practices and the addition of adaptive trails. OOR assisted in the coordination and facilitation of stakeholder meetings and public engagement events conducted in western Maryland with the Maryland Forest Service and the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) in Allegany and Garrett counties in April 2024.



Cross-country skiers at Rocky Gap State Park.

2025 and Beyond

OOR is collaborating with partners to gather best practices for connecting recreation to stewardship (ex: Share the Trail Campaign, HipCamp’s camping guide and mountain biking rules for the road) as well as assessing opportunities to engage volunteers in stewardship projects woven into recreation activities. Future trainings, materials, and outreach will be conducted on how to recreate responsibly and highlight best practices for “leave no trace” and low-impact recreation.

Future Direction and Needs

OOR has generated significant momentum around outdoor recreation opportunities in Maryland and has worked to address many recommendations from the MORE Commission. There is much more work to be completed surrounding analysis, policy, and long-range planning, in addition to the remaining work in identifying partners, evaluating best practices, and launching collaborations.

The State Land Preservation and Recreation Plan is about to begin - the data and analysis from this plan, along with the Maryland State Park Strategic Plan, will inform the MORE strategic implementation as they are developed. DNR will continue to work with the MD Department of Commerce, National Park Service, and numerous local partners to provide analysis and identify opportunities for heritage tourism and the Chesapeake Bay Natural Resource Area in Maryland.

In FY25, funding will be used to carry out additional priority recommendations of the MORE commission - including holding the inaugural statewide [Outdoor Recreation Summit](#); establishing, directing, and promoting an outdoor equity fund; instituting an outdoor recreation apprenticeship program; and communicating the benefits of outdoor recreation and the power of the outdoor economy through presentations, articles, social media, interviews and more.

DNR is working to not only stimulate the outdoor recreation economy but to plan and accommodate for changing outdoor recreation conditions due to climate change. We also recognize the value of outdoor recreation as a gateway for individuals to develop an increased ethic of environmental stewardship and

equity. We strive for all Marylanders to have the opportunity to explore, recreate, and bond with our beautiful natural resources.



Potomac River view from Greenridge State Forest. By Tom Hamilton.

MORE Implementation Plan and Tracking Table

[MORE Implementation Plan](#) and tracking table for all 28 recommendations:

REC #	MORE Action	Lead/ Partners	Metric
<i>Enhancing and Strengthening the Business Climate</i>			
1	Conduct a study that inventories and assesses current in-state regulations, policies, and programs that impact the outdoor recreation economy, and identifies both in-state and out-of-state best practices. Include a return on investment analysis, and set implementation priorities based on MORE Commission recommendations for marketing, stewardship, and in support of the development of world-class visitor experiences.	DNR/ Commerce, Outside Partners	Status of regulation and policy study. Status of prioritization of implementation actions.
2	Assess opportunities and work with counties to support outdoor recreation businesses through the Opportunity Zone Enhancement Program, and More Jobs For Marylanders Program.		
	A. Enhance access and assistance for new business development and expansion of existing businesses through resources such as Maryland Business Express, the Opportunity Zone Information Portal, and available incentives.	Commerce	# of assistance to new or expanding businesses

	B. Determine where multiple incentive zones overlap. Conduct a case study to identify one or more locations that maximize the opportunity to establish outdoor recreation micro-manufacturing hubs. The study will assess geographic location, quality of life, workforce, financial, and other factors necessary to establish the hub and develop the manufacturing business recruitment strategy, including a list of viable candidates.	Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	# of case studies completed # of recommendations from case study
3	Develop a recruitment plan to attract outdoor lifestyle manufacturers, such as kayak, boat, bicycle, and ATV companies to locate and grow in Maryland. Showcase Maryland's outdoor recreation lifestyle as an active recruitment tool when attracting non-recreational businesses to the state through development of promotional materials for use by industry.	Commerce: Tourism	# or recruitment strategies # of recruitment materials
4	Assess emerging outdoor recreational use sectors such as birding and sika deer hunting, and develop economic impact studies in conjunction with local universities.	DNR/ University Partners	# of economic impact studies
5	Assess barriers and conduct trainings to further the inclusion of diverse and minority-owned natural resource and outdoor recreation businesses through state certification.	DNR/ Other partners to be identified	# of trainings and technical assistance materials
6	Create a Maryland Outdoor Industry Leadership Summit to gather stakeholders for education, training, partnership development, and advocacy.	DNR/ Tourism	# of people attending # of partners participating in Summit
<i>Enhancing Workforce Development and Job Creation Opportunities</i>			
7	Conduct a study to inventory the state's existing outdoor recreation businesses, and to identify industry sectors with job-growth potential based on the implementation of the MORE Commission's marketing, visitor experience development, and stewardship recommendations. Coordinate with the Governor's Workforce Development Board.	DNR, Gov Workforce Development Board/ Department of Commerce, Outside Partners	Status of study and analysis.
8	Assess in-state and out-of-state workforce development platforms, high school and higher education curriculum, certificate programs, apprenticeships, trade schools, etc. to	DNR	# of partnerships # of training and degree programs recommended for establishment

	identify opportunities for outdoor recreation and historic preservation training and degree programs.		
9	Create a toolkit to promote careers in the Outdoor Recreation Industry in coordination with the Maryland Workforce Expressway. The toolkit would identify educational opportunities, provide job application tutorials, and an inventory of public and private sector job vacancies.	DNR/ Department of Labor, University Partners	# of outdoor recreation partners using or posting on the MWE
10	Strengthen the outcomes of the Maryland Conservation Corps, Conservation Jobs Corps, and Veterans Conservation Corps through agreements with partners to provide youth from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds with apprenticeships and other workforce career experience in natural resource professions.	DNR	# of trainings/training materials developed or enhanced by OOR to support workforce experiences in natural resource professions for youth from underrepresented background
11	Work with the Department of Housing and Community Development to initiate the Recreation Industry's Live Near Your Work program to build and sustain affordable housing for the recreation industry workforce.	DHCD	Status of program
<i>Enhancing Maryland's Brand as a Premier Destination</i>			
12	Extend Maryland's marketing message by exploring best practices and funding strategies of out-of-state destinations that excel at marketing their outdoor resources.	Commerce: Tourism	# of best practices identified # of funding strategies
13	Identify potential funding sources for a campaign to highlight four season outdoor recreation use, and associated outdoor recreation businesses. Highlight off-season activities such as birding and year-round fishing experiences. Continue to build on the water trails system in the marketing positioning of Maryland as having "Trail System Second to None."	DNR, Commerce: Tourism	# of identified funding sources for marketing campaign Status of Four Season Campaign Status of water trail marketing campaign
14	Work to better coordinate marketing and development programs supporting outdoor recreation and heritage tourism, and assess opportunities for grant programs to include state agencies as funding recipients.	Commerce, DNR/ Other State Agencies	# of coordinated marketing programs to highlight outdoor recreation
15	Deputize Outdoor Recreation Ambassadors. Work with business owners and associates to serve as ambassadors to create word-of-mouth/social media campaign. Cross	DNR/ Outside Partners	# of social media partnerships

	promote amongst partners to amplify messages.		
16	Work with local guides and outfitters to maximize resources such as implementing cooperative advertising programs.	DNR/ Outside Partners	# of social media and other partnerships
17	Identify an organization that can coordinate with businesses to provide shared resources (e.g., photography) there are needed for outdoor promotion, so that costs can be shared among the partners.	DNR/ Outside Partners	Status of partnership identified
<i>Enhancing Recreational and Heritage Tourism Experiences</i>			
18	Conduct customer service surveys to assess the quality of experience and the needs of outdoor recreation users. Focus on engaging diverse constituents to ensure a systematic commitment to equitable access and addressing the needs of diverse communities.	Maryland Park Service (MPS)- 2024 Greenbrier Survey OR Summit	# of responses on survey # of counties where the survey was sent
19	Provide training opportunities to outfitters and service providers on how to create better customer/user experiences.	DNR, Commerce	# of trainings conducted # of businesses or outdoor rec professionals trained
20	Assess, develop, and market transportation from urban corridors to outdoor recreation and heritage tourism destinations for hikers, bikers, and boaters.	Commerce: Tourism, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)	Status of assessment # of strategies identified # of promotional campaigns
21	Improve visitor experiences by providing more information about available experiences and better directing people to central gateway locations. Continue to improve and develop mapping, wayfinding, and interpretation for outdoor recreation areas, activities, and heritage sites.	DNR: OOR, MPS, Maryland Forest Service (MFS)	# of communication/ mapping/ wayfinding planning efforts or projects # of places resources are provided
22	Implement an Outdoor Equity Program that provides funding to help eliminate barriers for low-income rural and urban youth and for cross-cultural communities to access outdoor recreation and education programs.	DNR: OOR	# of assistance projects or grants that advance equity and access
23	Develop and implement a Maryland "Outdoor Town" program to provide targeted planning and funding assistance to "Gateway" municipalities to develop and grow their outdoor recreation and heritage-based economies. The program could include: technical assistance, community engagement, planning and investing in improving outdoor and	MDOT, DHCD, Rails to Trails, The Progress Fund	Status of program

	heritage recreation experiences, improving municipal infrastructure, attracting and supporting new and existing businesses, workforce development, and beautification projects.		
<i>Stewarding Maryland's Natural, Cultural, Historical and Recreational Resources</i>			
24	Increase the delegated procurement authority for DNR to reduce the critical maintenance backlog on public lands. Consider funding in-house construction crews to work on public land critical maintenance projects.	DNR, Maryland Department of General Services (DGS)	Status of delegated authority
25	Streamline the DNR Lease Agreement Process to support public private partnerships that could:		
	A. Develop leasing models in cooperation with the Department of General Services in order to streamline the lease procurement process.	DGS	Status of new leasing model
	B. Assess potential for investment in the restoration and beneficial reuse of historic structures, with a focus on public-private partnerships.	DGS	Status of assessment
	C. Increase the delegated authority for concessionaire contracts to DNR in order to streamline the process and encourage private investment in outdoor recreation services on public lands and waterways.	DGS	Status of new delegated authority
26	Identify opportunities to expand the capacity of volunteer stewardship assistance by increasing volunteer management infrastructure, exploring new roles and opportunities for volunteers, and developing accessible volunteer opportunities to engage with youth and families.	DNR	# of volunteer opportunities identified status of volunteer management infrastructure
27	Work with MHT to make the Maryland Historic Revitalization Tax Credit Program available to tenants of historic properties owned by DNR.	Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)	# of historic properties /tenants contacted # of tax credits provided # of new historic properties contacted
28	Trail Initiatives		
	A. Task DNR and MDOT to identify and collaborate on the implementation of community-based trail projects that support local quality of life and tourism. Develop high-level feasibility studies of long-distance trails to identify additional needs in these larger trail networks.	MDOT	# of trail projects connected with # of feasibility studies of trails

	B. Prioritize and implement trail projects identified in DNR's Statewide Trails Plan.	MDOT	# of trail projects # of state park trail miles available (in KPIs) # of water trail miles available (in KPIs) # of forest/NRMA trail miles available
	C. Explore opportunities for holding a statewide trail summit to bring together state, local, and nonprofit trail and recreational user groups.	MDOT	# of trail focused meetings with local partners
	D. Assess recreational trail opportunities in state forests.	DNR: MFS, OOR	# Assessment completed # of trail opportunities identified
	E. Assess opening MDOT SHA's Recreational Trails Program grant funding to businesses, in order to encourage more public-private partnerships.	MDOT	Status of Assessment



Padding on Maryland waters. By Angela Multhup.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Office of Outdoor Recreation

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