

# Modernizing America's Outdoor Recreation Areas & Infrastructure

As Congress looks towards economic recovery, infrastructure remains a key lever for rebuilding our country from the health and economic crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Policymakers should prioritize outdoor recreation infrastructure given the significant economic benefits recreation plays in our economy.

## Why Outdoor Recreation?

Led by the recreational boating industry, the outdoor recreation economy is a major contributor to the U.S. economy, accounting for:

- 2.1% of GDP
- \$788 billion in economic output
- 5.2 million American jobs

Recreational boating in particular has grown more significant in recent years: the industry sold more boats in 2020 than in the past 13 years combined.

## Top Challenges Facing Recreation Infrastructure

Despite the immense role that outdoor recreation has played in supporting regional economies throughout the pandemic, there is a dire need to modernize our Eisenhower-era infrastructure. Without robust investment in our country's outdoor recreation infrastructure, these economic contributions—along with pastimes enjoyed by the vast majority of Americans—will be in jeopardy.

**There are three critical challenges facing the outdoor recreation industry:**

- Lack of sufficient outdoor access to meet demand
- Aging existing infrastructure
- Environmental impacts exacerbating issues affecting existing infrastructure

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**Outdoor recreation** is a major contributor to the **U.S. economy.**

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Boat sales reached **record levels** in 2020.

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Investment in outdoor recreation infrastructure is **critical to meet the challenges** facing the industry.

## Recreation Infrastructure Priorities

Targeted investment and modernization, including a robust \$2 trillion infrastructure plan, can equip America's outdoor recreation areas and infrastructure for the challenges and opportunities they face now, and in the years to come.

### The recreational boating industry is advocating for:

- Prioritized access projects and streamlined regulations
- Resiliency and restoration programs
- Increased funding to support outdoor recreation public access

## Prioritized Access Projects and Streamlined Regulations

Recreational boaters and anglers experience and treasure our nation's waterways firsthand, and the industry is working diligently to make every aspect of boating cleaner and more efficient.

### NMMA advocates for:

- **Amending U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) challenge cost sharing cooperative management agreements** to allow USACE to handle partner collected fees and return to the partner after processing the contract fees. Additionally, expand the authority to the private sector to facilitate opportunities for businesses and nonprofit organizations to supplement investments in USACE recreation infrastructure.
- **Streamlining the permitting process to remove barriers to recreation**, including improving interagency coordination to expedite projects in a transparent, timely, and environmentally responsible manner and passing the Recreation Not Red Tape (RNR) Act to make it easier for Americans to experience recreation opportunities.
- **Directing the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a public boating access survey** to provide an inventory all federally managed recreational boating infrastructure and facilities and more.

## Resiliency and Restoration Programs

### NMMA advocates for:

- **Modernizing boating infrastructure and access projects** by amending the Tier 2 (national competitive) Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG) project applications to include a statement on how the proposed project construction can adapt to rising water levels in the surrounding environment.
- **Growing an electric boat charging network** by developing a grant program to determine where electric recreational vessel charging stations are needed and establish a program to support electric and solar charging station installation at private and public docks and marinas to meet the increasing demand for electric boats.
- **Prioritizing increased funding for navigation projects** that support recreation activity in communities vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- **Enacting the PREPARE Act** to reauthorize a Small Business Administration loan program that provides small businesses with low-interest, fixed-rate loans of up to \$500,000 to invest in their properties to protect facilities, real estate, and contents from natural disasters.

## Increased Funding to Support Outdoor Recreation Public Access

### NMMA advocates for:

- **Reauthorizing the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund**
- **Establishing a Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) dedicated USACE set-aside** to ensure critical infrastructure needs are met.
- **Extending Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) Fee Retention Authorities to USACE**
- **Repairing aging, high-hazard potential dams** by investing \$45 billion to repair aging, yet critical, high-hazard potential dams.
- **Enhancing and expanding opportunities for NMS recreation and tourism** by supplying an additional \$10 million dedicated for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS) and \$28 million to enhance the agency's small boat fleet.