



North Country Rising is a planning effort led by North Country Council to develop strategies and solutions for a more resilient, inclusive, and caring economy that can withstand, adapt, innovate, and transform in the face of natural and human disasters.

Outdoor Recreation & Tourism Focus Group

The Outdoor Recreation Focus Group met in March and April 2021 and included participants from Appalachian Mountain Club, Conservation Fund, Cross Country NH, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, Littleton Parks and Recreation, Ski NH, Coos County Adventure LLC, Windon Water LLC, Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust, Mount Washington State Park, US Forest Service, Granite Outdoor Alliance, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, and the White Mountain National Forest.

Resiliency

Resiliency in the outdoor recreation and tourism industry begins with adopting a triple bottom line approach of people, planet, and profit. Without valuing and investing in the livelihood of the workforce within this industry and the environment where people recreate and visit, resiliency is not possible for outdoor recreation and tourism. Currently, investment and support for the industry is out of balance. Emphasis is placed on marketing and promoting the industry (demand) and not the workforce, infrastructure, and maintenance needs of the industry (supply). A resilient outdoor recreation and tourism industry would balance supply and demand, and work with regional outdoor recreation leadership to identify what is most needed for the industry. The industry itself is best served regionally through collaboration and working together. A resilient outdoor recreation and tourism industry serves all people and respects the traditional, indigenous, cultural, and natural stewardship and relationship to the land and the people of the North Country.

Assets

- Our natural environment is our greatest asset within the industry and within the region including our rivers, lakes, ponds, mountains, forests and viewsheds
- The region has a passionate, motivated, knowledgeable outdoor recreation workforce and strong, passionate, mission-driven organizations that value the region's environment and work to find a balance between stewardship and recreation
- There are great volunteers and local stewards of the land who provide so much support for the outdoor recreation industry
- The region has a strong arts and culture history
- The industry is supported by local land trusts, conservation commissions, and local recreation clubs that believe in the stewardship of the environment
- The region's trail systems and stream crossings are assets as well as the downtown and Main Street infrastructure that support a vibrant outdoor recreation economy
- The industry is served by hard-working trail crews and the trail clubs that maintain the region's trail systems
- The culture of healthy living and connection to nature through recreation and work is an important asset for the region



Needs

- Ongoing collaboration within the industry to support common needs and strategic planning for infrastructure, maintenance, and workforce support
- Consistent Messaging & Stewardship that educates guests on the importance of respecting the local environment, local people, and local communities. This includes consistent messaging on pandemic and safety practices and a brand that balances play and preservation.
- When upgrading infrastructure, ensure its sustainable/renewable/less impactful on the environment
- Support the quality of the environment and the recreation experience over quantity of people in the region recreating
- Supporting the basic needs of the industry's workforce including local, affordable housing, ensuring the industry has the capacity to meet demand, and fair livable wage.
- Not just growing the industry, but supporting those that work IN the industry
- Local/affordable housing
- A network of Welcome Centers with public facilities that are part of the region's larger travel and tourism infrastructure planning
- Ensure Diversity and Inclusion within the outdoor recreation industry including a culture that welcomes everyone to explore outdoors, access for everyone, and a variety of recreational experiences that can meet the needs of someone new to recreation as well as the seasoned recreationist

Project & Program Ideas and Solutions

- Develop a Regional Council for Outdoor Recreation that supports a shared purpose and mission across all outdoor recreation organizations in the region. The Council could develop an Endowment for Needed Infrastructure and a shared Strategic Plan and Resources for the region's outdoor recreation industry.
- Develop a stewardship ambassador program that includes outdoor recreation enthusiasts in the region who are willing to help develop and share the message of respect and care for the local environment, people and communities with our visitors and provide education and awareness on safe recreational practices.
- Develop an Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure and Resource Inventory and Plan that combines trail GIS data from all jurisdictions, creates a more robust natural resource inventory across the landscape, an existing infrastructure inventory and status report, and needs for infrastructure upgrades, new infrastructure, long-term sustainable maintenance, and conservation/stewardship.

If you have any questions regarding the economic recovery and resiliency planning work, please contact Stacey Doll, Community Resiliency Planner, at sdoll@nccouncil.org.



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