

A Framework For Outdoor Industry Growth



Context - Outdoor Rec as Industry.

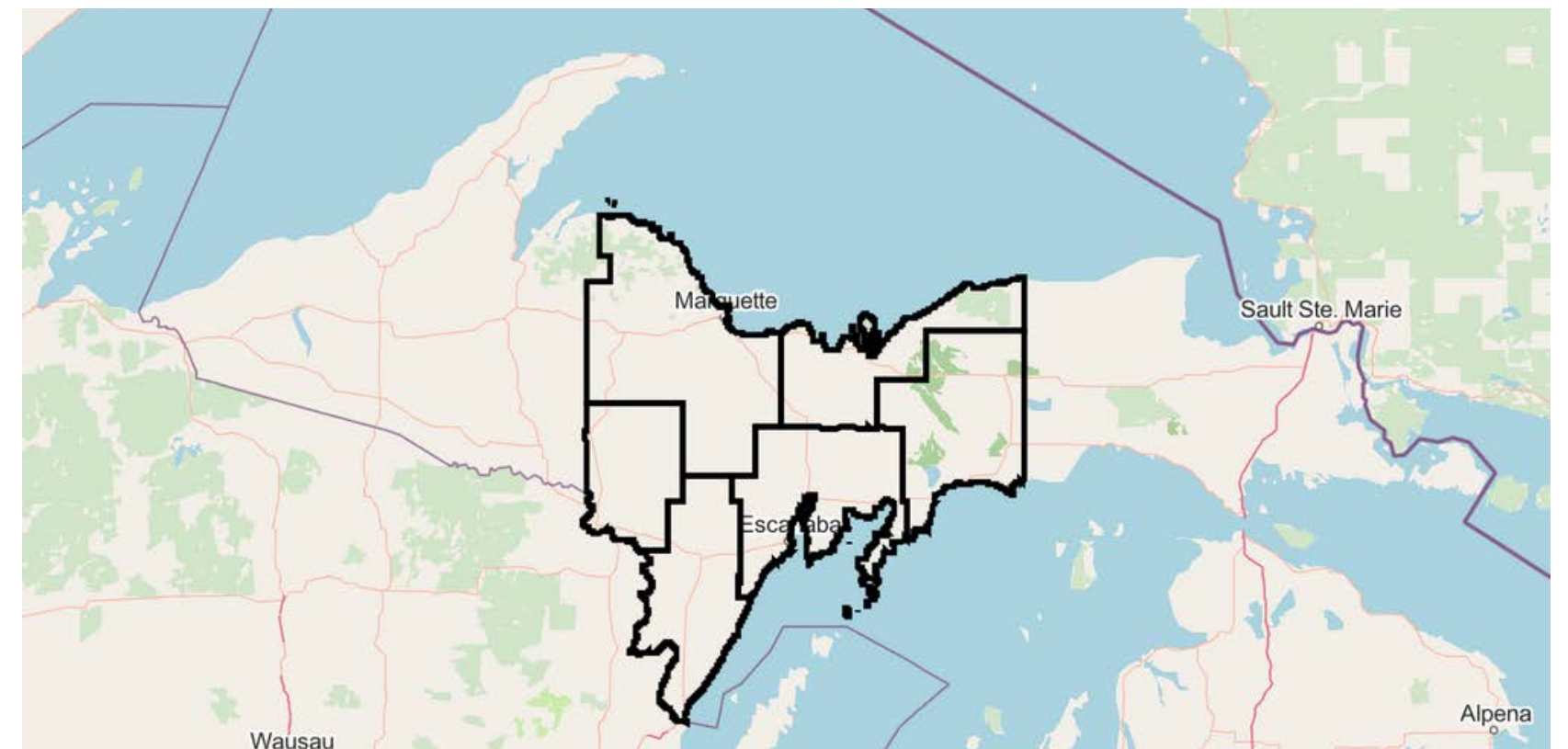
\$13.9 Billion in MI (2023)

118,000 jobs in MI (2023)

\$1.2 Trillion Nationally (2023)

Outdoor Recreation Innovation Action Network (ORIAN)

- Three main components
 - Pull together ORIAN
 - Outdoor Recreation Industry Growth Strategy
 - Electrified Trails Feasibility Study

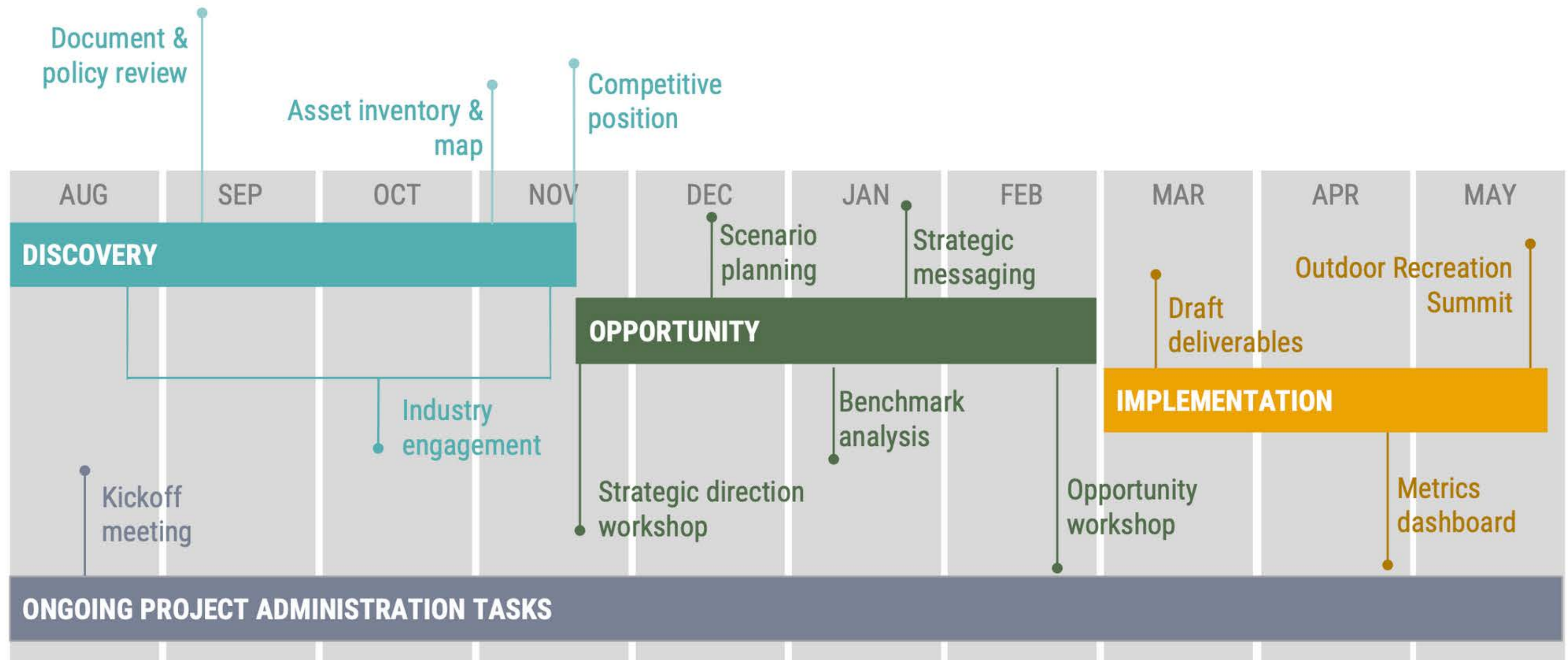


ORIAN Steering Committee

- Public/Private Stakeholders
- Main roles:
 - Oversee consultants
 - Build relationships
 - Share information



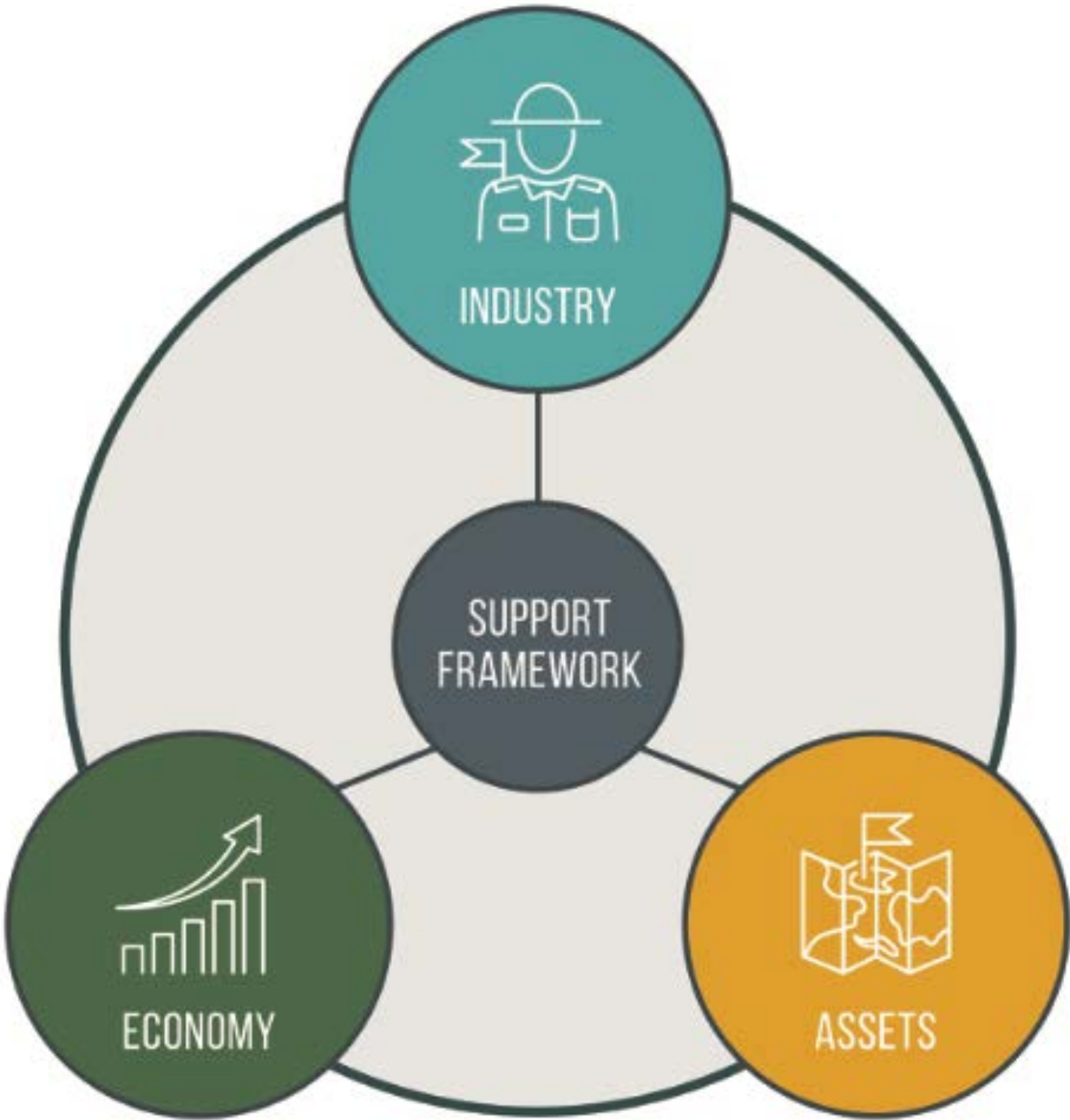
UP For Adventure



UP For Adventure



FIGURE 1. OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY FRAMEWORK



Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc.

UP For Adventure

Goal 1 - Industry “Foster a dynamic ecosystem that supports innovation, attracts and grows businesses, enhances workforce capabilities, and drives commercialization of new technologies to strengthen the industry’s long-term economic impact.”

Goal 2 - Economy “Cultivate a resilient and diversified outdoor recreation economy that enhances regional competitiveness, attracts visitors, supports infrastructure development, and maximizes the industry’s economic and community benefits.”

Goal 3 - Assets “Enhance, maintain, and expand the region’s recreation infrastructure to support economic growth, attract visitors, and improve community access to outdoor experiences.”

Goal 1. Outdoor Recreation Industry

Foster a dynamic ecosystem that supports innovation, attracts and grows businesses, enhances workforce capabilities, and drives commercialization of new technologies to strengthen the industry's long-term economic impact.

The outdoor recreation industry goal is designed to encourage innovation, support scalable enterprises, and strengthen the industry's economic foundation. It aims to position the region as a competitive hub by advancing technology commercialization, leveraging the Central UP's workforce capabilities, and cultivating entrepreneurship. The strategy also builds a robust ecosystem that accelerates innovation, connects entrepreneurs with critical resources, and supports the growth of high-potential ventures through commercialization pathways, research collaborations, and niche industry clusters.

- 1.1. BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION (BRE).** Strengthen the outdoor recreation industry by ensuring existing businesses have the resources, connections, and policy support needed for long-term stability and growth.
 - 1.1.1.** Support the growth of existing outdoor recreation businesses by facilitating access to capital, workforce development and training programs, and industry-specific technical assistance.
 - 1.1.2.** Maintain a database of companies in the outdoor recreation industry. Organize the database to ensure that traded sector companies are easily identifiable to ensure they are prioritized for assistance and support.
 - 1.1.3.** Create a BRE survey specifically tailored to the outdoor recreation industry to ensure consistency in business development initiatives. Identify and track the specific needs of outdoor recreation companies.
 - 1.1.4.** Establish a network for outdoor recreation companies to connect, share resources, and collaborate on market expansion opportunities.

Kootenay Outdoor Recreation Enterprise

The Kootenay Outdoor Recreation Enterprise (KORE) is a nonprofit organization based in British Columbia's Kootenay region, dedicated to fostering the outdoor manufacturing sector. Founded to attract investment and support local gear makers, KORE has implemented several initiatives to bolster the industry. The KORE Cluster aims to attract and nurture outdoor industry startups or relocations to the Kootenays, cultivating a vibrant community of gear makers and product designers. KORE Discovery introduces potential brands, designers, and media to the region, showcasing its lifestyle amenities and industry support to entice businesses. KORE Connection facilitates quarterly meetups for networking, idea sharing, and collaboration among outdoor industry professionals. To address workforce development, KORE WorkForce collaborates with educational institutions to identify labor market needs and develop training programs, ensuring a skilled workforce for the outdoor industry. Additionally, KORE Fab Labs provides access to fabrication technology for product design and rapid prototyping in partnership with local colleges. KORE also expands industry knowledge and engagement through an outdoor speaker series featuring experts from the field and a podcast that offers insights from industry leaders to support entrepreneurs. Through these initiatives, KORE has significantly contributed to the growth of the outdoor manufacturing sector in the Kootenays, supporting local businesses and enhancing the region's economic and cultural landscape.

Goal 2. Outdoor Recreation Economy

Cultivate a resilient and diversified outdoor recreation economy that enhances regional competitiveness, attracts visitors, supports infrastructure development, and maximizes the industry's economic and community benefits.

A strong outdoor recreation economy, including tourism and hospitality, creates market conditions that drive demand for new products, services, and experiences. This demand fuels innovation and growth for designers, engineers, and manufacturers. Investments in destination development, local business support, and workforce training strengthen the ecosystem, allowing consumer-facing and industry-focused businesses to thrive and reinforcing the Central UP's leadership in outdoor recreation.

- 2.1. TOURISM.** Strengthen the outdoor recreation tourism sector by enhancing visitor experiences, leveraging digital tools, and aligning offerings with user preferences.
 - 2.1.1.** Improve wayfinding through consistent signage, interactive kiosks, and multilingual information to enhance accessibility for visitors, as well as encourage or direct visitors to lesser-known areas in the Central UP.
 - 2.1.2.** Develop and maintain digital mapping tools that provide real-time information on trails, recreation sites, and nearby businesses and amenities. This should include maps for experiences, like gravel riding and paddleboarding, that may not use traditional trail infrastructure.
 - 2.1.3.** Conduct user profile research to better understand visitor demographics, interests, and spending patterns, ensuring targeted marketing and service improvements (see Appendix C. User Profiles, page 44).
 - 2.1.4.** Continue to develop and expand coordinated marketing efforts that highlight the Central UP's assets and boost talent attraction. Examples include leveraging the state's highly regarded Pure Michigan (tourism) and Pure Opportunity (business development) campaigns.
 - 2.1.5.** Utilize earned media or film and television partnerships to build awareness of outdoor recreation in the Central UP through authentic storytelling. Leverage niche publications, such as *Midwest Vertical Journal* (regional) or *Mountain Gazette* (national) to reach targeted audiences, as well as local writers and content creators.
- 2.2. EVENTS.** Expand the role of outdoor recreation events in driving economic activity, attracting visitors, and strengthening industry connections. Prioritize niche outdoor recreation activities where the Central UP has a competitive advantage (see Appendix B. Niche Outdoor Recreation, page 41).
 - 2.2.1.** Develop and promote signature outdoor recreation events that showcase the region's assets and attract participants from local, national, and international markets.

User Profiles

The Central UP attracts a diverse range of outdoor recreation participants, each with unique interests, needs, and spending patterns. Understanding characteristics and demographics of these user groups can help inform marketing strategies, infrastructure investments, and business development efforts to better serve visitors and residents while maximizing the economic impact of the outdoor recreation industry. Appendix C outlines 10 profiles that represent key segments engaging in outdoor activities across the region (see page 44). By tailoring services, amenities, and promotional efforts to these groups, the Central UP can enhance visitor experiences, support local businesses, and strengthen its reputation as an outdoor recreation destination.

Electrified Trails Feasibility Study

- GIS data
- Community engagement - surveys & interviews
- Evaluation criteria
 - Accessibility
 - Flexibility
 - Land Use
 - Rider Experience

Electrified Trails Feasibility Study

- Key Findings (from Executive Summary):
 - ORV and snowmobile riders typically recreate for 2+ hours, with almost half riding for 5+ hours, so connectivity to longer routes is preferred.
 - Riders desire to feel 'disconnected' when recreating, so there are concerns about how certain technological amenities might impact their experience on the trails.
 - There is mixed confidence and awareness among those we spoke with about the future adoption of electric ORVs and snowmobiles.

Electrified Trails Feasibility Study

- “Low-hanging fruit” trails:
 - ORV Routes C and A
 - Snowmobile Routes UP 8 and UP 2



UP Outdoor Summit



Lessons Learned

- Collaboration is key, and also where the opportunities are
- Build bridges across niches
- Meet stakeholders where they are, not everyone gets paid to go to meetings

What's Next

- Finding a home for ORIAN
 - Implementation
 - Avoiding “real nice pdf”
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Thanks!

<https://innovatemarkquette.org/orian/>

"The hardest part is the decision to act. The rest is merely tenacity."

~Amelia Earhart

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