

**Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation  
Vermont Outdoor (SCORP) Recreation Plan**

**Key Findings of the 2005-2009 Plan**

Many factors continue to influence the outdoor recreation industry in Vermont at this time. Vermont recreation providers need to be aware of these factors so that they may be considered when outdoor recreation projects are being developed.

**Increasing Participation**

The increasing popularity of and participation in outdoor recreation activities have created enormous demands that, in most situations, have outpaced efforts to make improvements.

- Dramatic increases in numbers of kayakers, snowmobilers, wildlife viewers, ATV riders, hikers, backpackers, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, and mountain bikers have led to user conflicts and resource degradation in some places.
- Many new outdoor recreation organizations have sprung up recently in the state including the Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association (VASA), Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA), Vermont Trails and Greenways Council, Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Lake Champlain Paddlers Trail, Keeping Track, Inc., Climbing Resource Access Group (CRAG), and Vermont River Conservancy.
- Conflicts have continued to occur between motorized and non-motorized recreation activities, especially between snowmobiles and cross-country skiers in winter and between users of personal watercraft and those who prefer more quiet experiences on lakes and ponds. There are many complaints throughout the state regarding illegal ATV use on both private and public lands and a call for better enforcement of the law in this regard.

**Social Changes**

Some social and demographic changes are contributing to the need for changes in outdoor recreation opportunities made available in Vermont.

- People over the age of 60 increased by more than 13,000 individuals between 1990 and 2000, and this trend is expected to continue.
- The number of people with disabilities is expected to increase, especially with an aging population.
- U.S. Census figures indicate that 19,000 more individuals in Vermont were below poverty level in 2001 than in 1996.
- Changing lifestyles are resulting in more people desiring recreational experiences in a stress-free environment with better, more convenient services. Such demands are impacting the camping industry, for example, with need for more RV hook-ups and cabins.
- Hunting license sales provide the primary source of revenue and match dollars for the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. The net decline of both resident and non-resident hunting license sales between 1994 and 2003 is projected to continue and, if it does, will negatively impact wildlife management by the state. Changes in family structure, the aging population, and increasing urbanization may prove challenging to the long-term survival of the sport of hunting in the U.S. as well as the culture of hunting in Vermont.

**Limited Financial Resources**

State support for managing recreation and public lands has not kept pace with land acquisition and public demand for recreation, and there is no prospect of it doing so in the near future.

- Major efforts should be made toward facilitating and coordinating activities of non-governmental organizations which provide and manage many of these opportunities.
- In 1998, the infrastructure improvements needed in the State Parks System were found to exceed \$31 million, with just \$4 million appropriated since that time for this purpose.
- There is need for improvement generally to analyze funding needs and allocations to determine where more emphasis is needed.

### **Use of Private Lands**

Privately-owned lands represent about 85 percent of Vermont's land base. Given the insufficient state resources for acquisition and management of recreational opportunities and the increasing demand for these services, more efforts should be made to assure access to private lands.

- Additional efforts to make more landowners aware of Vermont's liability protection would be helpful.
- Discouraging fragmentation of ownership of private land is of critical importance.
- A more consistent application of permits required for trail development is desirable.

### **Local Community Resources**

The number of outdoor recreation participation days that occurs at the local level likely exceeds the numbers at the state and federal levels. More resources are needed to assist local communities in meeting their outdoor recreation needs.

### **Performance Indicators**

Vermont outdoor recreation providers need to develop performance indicators or numbers to help measure progress in resolving outdoor recreation issues. At a minimum, some coordinated staff and volunteer resources need to be directed toward this purpose.

### **Balance between Demand for Use and Resource Conservation**

A balance is needed between the demand for outdoor recreational opportunities and conservation of the natural resources which support these activities. Protection of lands along rivers and lakeshores is needed to provide scenic views, maintain water quality, offer diverse recreational opportunities, and conserve wildlife habitat.

### **Recreation Connections to Energy and Physical Fitness**

Outdoor recreation is connected to energy and physical fitness concerns in a number of ways.

- Vermont needs to place more emphasis on developing facilities for walking and bicycling because transportation alternatives encourage physical fitness as well as reduce the need for commuting by motor vehicle.
- The possibility of using certain ANR lands for large-scale wind energy development has been the subject of much controversy and debate in Vermont. Issues included potential impacts on wildlife and degradation of mountain views.

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**Providing Issues and Strategies for the Plan**

Please use key findings from the related handout, re-phrase them, or state other issues, problems, and threats in the table below or on additional pages. If you have mapped information that can help highlight the problems--please indicate that in the middle column. Provide strategies and actions you and your organization or agency can provide resources toward in the third column.

Send responses by June 30, 2009 to: Linda Henzel ([linda.henzel@state.vt.us](mailto:linda.henzel@state.vt.us))  
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Name/Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Address/ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Resource Problem/Issue/Threat</b>	<b>Regional Mapped Data Available (if you have knowledge or ideas)</b>	<b>Strategies and Actions to be done by Stakeholders</b>