



Outdoor Recreation Initiative

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The Outdoor Recreation Initiative

The Outdoor Recreation Initiative was created in the [2023 General Session by H.B. 224 - Outdoor Recreation Initiative](#). Through partnership agreements and local input and collaboration, the initiative aims to support the state's partners in managing, maintaining, expanding, restoring, and improving outdoor recreation infrastructure on public lands within the state, including building new or expanding existing outdoor recreation infrastructure to address increased usage and to minimize overcrowding or overuse.

Funded through:

- appropriations made to the initiative by the Legislature, including any appropriation from the Outdoor Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account created in Section 51-9-902.
- contributions, including in-kind assistance, from public and private sources, including a federal agency, state agency, local government, or private entity.



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Program Goals

- Leverage State of Utah efficiencies to expedite outdoor recreation infrastructural development **for all user groups statewide**, and in line with program priorities.
- Establish Regional Recreation Councils for local communities' to come together to plan holistic recreation opportunities, create successful local strategies, identify and overcome barriers, and propose and rank project applications.
- Identify and address gaps in State support for local communities recreational development and maintenance..
- Use program funding to pursue project recommendations from from regional councils that are in line with the Outdoor Adventure Commission's Strategic Plan.



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Timeline Review of the First Year of the Program

July 1 - October 1, 2023

- Exploratory meetings with Federal, State, and local partners
- Solicitation of potential projects for FY2024 - **over \$65 million identified**
- Consult local regions for project support
- Update Outdoor Adventure Commission

November

- Refine list of projects.
- Collect detailed project information for those on the final list
- Submit projects for review to Outdoor Adventure Commission

December

- Outdoor Adventure Commission reviews and approves projects

January - March - 2024

- Legislative appropriation request submitted for approved projects.

April - July - 2024

- Contracts sent out and projects can be started



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Recommended Projects for FY 2024

Project Title	Applicant	Project County	Urban/Rural	Amount Awarded	Total Project Cost
Recommended for Funding					
Wasatch Trail Feasibility Study	Wasatch Trails Foundation	Wasatch Range Counties	Urban	\$111,060.00	\$111,060.00
Guacamole Mesa - NEPA and Trailhead Infrastructure	Zion Regional Collaborative	Washington	Rural	\$182,700.00	\$203,000.00
House on Fire Access Improvements	Bears Ear National Monument - BLM	San Juan	Rural	\$230,000.00	\$330,000.00
Spruces Campground	Dixie Ranger District - USFS	Kane	Rural	\$412,150.00	\$2,000,000.00
Duck Creek Campground	Dixie Ranger District - USFS	Kane	Rural	\$764,090.00	\$3,500,000.00
McCoy Flats New Campground	Vernal Field Office - BLM	Uintah	Rural	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,500,000.00
Sherman Hills Property Acquisition	Wellsville City	Cache	Rural	\$2,000,000.00	\$8,000,000.00
Completing the Colorado River Pathway	Moab Field Office - BLM	Grand	Rural	\$2,500,000.00	\$15,000,000.00
Calf Creek Recreation Site Improvements	Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument - BLM	Garfield	Rural	\$3,300,000.00	\$5,500,000.00
Puffer Lake Property Acquisition	Beaver County	Beaver	Rural	\$3,500,000.00	\$8,000,000.00
Experiential Corridor for the Zion National Park Discovery Center	Zion Forever Project	Kane	Rural	\$5,000,000.00	\$52,799,030.00
Meeks Mesa Campground	Fishlake Ranger District - USFS	Wayne	Rural	\$4,500.00	\$4,879,000.00
				\$19,000,000.00*	



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Regional Recreation Councils

Similar to the structure of the Watershed Restoration Initiative, the Outdoor Recreation Initiative looks to establish and facilitate **5 Regional Recreation Councils**. These councils will be tasked with identifying and developing regionally significant projects, ranking their importance and alignment with program priorities, and submitting these to the Division of Outdoor Recreation and the Outdoor Adventure Commission for funding consideration. These councils will have the potential to be the most meaningful component of the Outdoor Recreation Initiative, allowing significant, local-led collaboration to take place not just for specific projects submitted to this funding program, but for region-wide planning of recreation infrastructure and connections.

Membership will include, but not limited to representatives from: City, County, State, Federal, User-groups, Tribal, Non-Profit, and Private entities.



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Regional Recreation Councils

First Proposed Regions

Northern Region - Box Elder, Cache, Rich, Weber, Morgan, Summit, and Wasatch

Central West Region - Tooele, Davis, Salt Lake, Utah, Juab, and Sanpete

Central East Region - Daggett, Duchesne, Uintah, Carbon, Emery and Grand

Southwest Region - Millard, Beaver, Iron, Washington, and Kane

Southeast Region - Sevier, Piute, Wayne, Garfield, and San Juan



Regional Recreation Councils

Final Revision

After many discussions, AOGs are now kept as intact as possible:

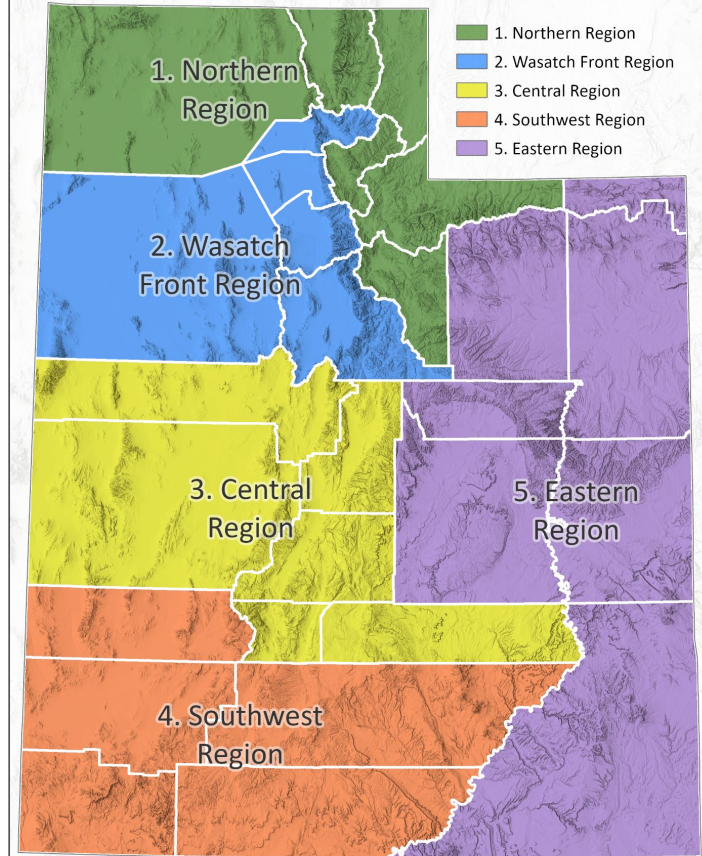
- Uintah Basin and SEUALG have been combined to make the Eastern Region,
- Five County and Six County will make up their own regions, Central and Southwest,
- BRAG and MAG are combined to make the Northern Region, with the addition of Morgan County.
- WFRC makes up the Wasatch Front region, pulling in Utah County from MAG.



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Utah Outdoor Recreation Initiative Regions



Project Prioritization

To be considered for funding, projects will be ranked by how well they address the following prioritization criteria:

Significant Scope: Projects are expected to have a regionally significant scope. With the Division of Outdoor Recreation offering funding programs covering all types of outdoor recreation, Outdoor Recreation Initiative projects should be large enough in scope that existing grants cannot cover the project costs.

Benefit to Local Utah Communities: With the expectation that federal partners will be active participants, projects should have the support of the local region and be of clear benefit to Utahns.

Addresses Overcrowding: Considering the recreation experience, projects should attempt to solve overcrowding issues through expanded infrastructural offerings to increase asset capacity, or through disbursement in adjacent areas or within the same area.

Addresses the Underserved: Whether population type or activity type, projects should look to support underserved communities.



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Project Prioritization (continued)

Cross-Jurisdictional: Through state involvement as facilitator, projects suffering from complexities of cross-jurisdictional planning and management will benefit from the State's active role in project management, procurement, contracting, and on-the-ground support through the Outdoor Recreation Initiative.

Addresses backlogged maintenance: Restoration projects of significant sizes on public land including state, federal and local, that cannot be supported by existing Division of Outdoor Recreation funding programs.

Aligns with the Outdoor Adventure Commission Strategic Plan: Projects should look to follow state investment guidelines established in this strategic plan: **1.** Build and support collaborative processes. **2.** Increase the economic and health benefits generated by outdoor recreation. **3.** Improve awareness and education about safe and responsible recreation. **4.** Increase access to outdoor recreation while protecting natural and scenic landscapes.

Shovel-ready: Planned projects that can be completed in a timely manner.



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Project Approval Flow

Solicitation Phase

General Public submits projects through Project Interest Form + Division staff solicit projects from partners + Regional Councils solicit and organize local projects



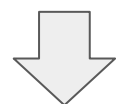
Ranking Phase

Division staff organize all project submissions. Send public submissions to regional councils. → Regional Councils discuss and rank local projects. → Outdoor Adventure Commission reviews project submission rankings



Approval Phase

Outdoor Adventure Commission approves projects



Funding Phase

Legislature approves appropriation for approved projects → Division staff create contracts and work begins



Future Development

Through countless discussions with recreation stakeholders from government to user-groups to private entities, it is clear that once again, the State of Utah is leading the way in recreation by the creation of the Outdoor Recreation Initiative. While the first year of this program will be abbreviated in scope and process, subsequent years will see the program expanded to include:

- Shared stewardship agreements with federal partners
- Project-specific planning, land acquisition and NEPA support
- Facilitated Regional Recreational Councils with quarterly meetings
- Increased in-kind support from the Division of Outdoor Recreation, including: project management, procurement, trail crew labor, and more



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