Outdoor Recreation

- Outdoor recreation is a growing sector that accounts for 2% of the nation’s GDP at $373.7 billion (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2018)
- Several states are creating outdoor recreation initiatives to support the outdoor recreation economy and its benefits to conservation, health, and quality of life
- New state entities rely on access to natural landscapes such as those managed by the National Park Service; a better understanding of their goals will inform any future NPS collaboration

Methods

- Qualitative research approach
- Purposive sampling of initiative leadership in eleven states
- Completed 22 semi-structured interviews
- Inductive coding to identify themes

Initial Results

- States recognize the center-stage role of outdoor recreation in the economy
  - “The industry itself...has realized that they are bigger, and more important, than maybe even they’ve realized.”

- States also realize there’s more to it than just the economy
  - “We have this added extra layer of infrastructure that is vitally important. And that is land, water, wildlife.”

- State offices look to partner with other state agencies, nonprofits, private sector, and federal agencies to maximize their impact
  - “We’re a 12 billion industry, and we have the largest office of outdoor recreation in the nation, and we have three people. Three people. When it comes to partnership, we have to work with pretty much everybody.”

Conclusions

- Other states and potential partners will have a better understanding of how these initiatives seek to elevate the outdoor recreation industry
- Findings will better inform the National Park Service and other federal land management agencies on opportunities to collaborate or support shared goals