

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor activities contribute over \$480 million dollars annually to our regional economy. Over eighty percent of Chelan County is publicly owned. The various government agencies with oversight of these lands have different responsibilities, engagement levels and incentives to improve access and management of these natural resources. Federal and state decision making processes, combined with fiscal challenges, are major impediments to action on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands. While streamlining of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is underway for restoration projects, actual change requires strong vocal support within the region.

Outdoor recreation in the Wenatchee Valley continues to attract increas-

ing numbers of full-time residents and tourists, especially given COVID-19 has driven people outdoors. Popular activities include hiking, skiing, bicycling, hunting, fishing, and off-highway vehicle use. These pursuits contribute millions to the health of the regional economy. A 2017 study of the outdoor economy in Chelan-Douglas Counties recognized the need for additional investment in the following to achieve Wenatchee Valley's economic potential: Coordination (e.g. planning and prioritizing recreation projects), infrastructure (e.g. trails and docks), information sources (e.g. signage and mapping), and amenities (lodging, facilities, pedestrian-friendly areas, goods, and services that complete the recreation 'experience'). Going forward as we learn to live with COVID-19 we need to ensure for safe use of our outdoor recreation including signage and other education to stay 6 feet apart and when to wear a mask.

Guiding Principles

- » The Chamber supports partnering with the USFS on community development efforts that will increase access to recreation activities for both motorized and non-motorized user groups.
- » The Chamber supports development of infrastructure that will allow locals and area tourists to access public lands and prevents over-tourism that is detrimental to our natural assets.
- » The Chamber supports public and private initiatives designed to increase the attractiveness of the Wenatchee Valley outdoor experience and strengthen local business and employment that serves the outdoor recreation industry.
- » The Chamber supports collaboration among private and public landowners, land managers, and recreational user groups to create a coordinated master plan for recreation that improves access and sustainability of recreational lands.
- » The Chamber supports the development of coordinated educational program for safe recreation in our region.
- » The Chamber supports the development of outdoor recreational events that highlight the regions natural assets and provide value to the greater community.