

WISCONSIN SENATE REPUBLICANS

ISSUE BRIEFS FOR THE 2015-16 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

TOURISM AND SPORTING HERITAGE

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HISTORY

Wisconsin is well known for having a rich sporting heritage and ample hunting, fishing, trapping, and other wildlife opportunities. Additionally, Wisconsin has a wealth of tourist destinations from the north woods to the cosmopolitan cities of Madison and Milwaukee and everywhere in-between. Both of these activities contribute greatly to the strong state of Wisconsin's economy.

DNR STATS ON ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SPORTING FROM US FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

- All hunting-related expenditures in Wisconsin totaled \$2.5 billion in 2011
 - Trip-related expenses, such as food and lodging, transportation and other trip expenses totaled \$358 million — 14% of total expenditures
 - Hunters spent \$1.5 billion on hunting equipment — 58% of all hunting expenditures
 - For all types of hunting in 2011, the average expenditure per hunter was \$2,833
- Hunting brings more than 130,000 non-resident hunters to our state – behind only South Dakota. These visitors generate over \$310 million in sales during their visits
- There are over 760,000 Wisconsin residents who hunt – behind only Texas. These hunters generate over \$2.2 billion in sales during hunting seasons
- Sport fishing annually generates \$2.3 billion in economic benefits and supports 22,000 jobs in Wisconsin
 - Sport fishing annually generates \$148 million in state and local tax revenues
- Sport fishing brings more than 330,000 nonresident anglers to our state - behind only Florida and Michigan

DNR STATS ON STATE PROPERTY ECONOMIC IMPACT

Table 4. Summary of State Properties, Visitor Spending, and Percentage of Total Visitor Spending by Property Type

Property Type	Number of Properties	Visitor Spending			
		Non-Local Spending	Local Spending	Total Spending	Percent of Total Spending*
State Park	45	\$439,443,000	\$256,726,000	\$696,169,000	68.9%
State Recreational Area	4	\$34,454,000	\$35,110,000	\$69,564,000	6.9%
Southern State Forest	6	\$65,094,000	\$75,356,000	\$140,450,000	13.9%
State Operated Trails	14	\$40,582,000	\$63,813,000	\$104,395,000	10.3%
Total All Properties*	69	\$579,573,000*	\$431,005,000*	\$1,010,578,000*	100.0%

* May not sum to totals due to rounding.

DEPT. OF TOURISM STATS ON VISITORS' ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Tourism had a \$19.3 billion impact on the state's economy in 2015, up nearly \$1 billion, or 4.4% from \$18.5 billion in 2014.
 - The total five year growth of tourism activity is up more than \$4.5 billion, a 30% increase from \$14.8 billion in 2010.
- For every \$1 the Department spent on summer and fall advertising in 2015, \$8 was returned to the state in additional tax revenue.
- Visitor growth topped 105.2 million in 2015, an increase of 12.7 million since 2010.

- Per trip spending increased 4.4% in 2015, led by lodging with 7.3% growth from 2014.
- The tourism economy generated \$1.5 billion in state and local revenue saving Wisconsin taxpayers \$640 per household.
- Tourism directly and indirectly supports 190,717 jobs in Wisconsin, adding more than 18,700 jobs to the state's total employment since 2010, an increase of 11%.
- Visitor spending grew by \$500 million in 2015 – an increase of more than \$57,000 for every hour of 2015.

RECRUITING/RETAINING SPORTSMEN AND SPORTSWOMEN

As Wisconsin's sportsmen and sportswomen population ages it is a top priority of the legislature to retain and attract new sportspeople to all of the activities that Wisconsin has to offer. In the last session we tried to modernize and streamline the hunting and fishing process in order to appeal to younger generations and expand the populations able to hunt with the following efforts:

LICENSE TRANSFERS- SB 20, enacted into law as **2015 WI Act 98**, allows individuals with a bonus deer hunting permit, a bobcat hunting and trapping permit, a wild turkey hunting license, a Class A bear license, and a sturgeon spearing license to transfer their permits, free of charge, to person with disabilities pending DNR approval.

HUNTER HARASSMENT- SB 338, enacted into law as **2015 WI Act 346**, expands the prohibitions in current law so that a person may not interfere or attempt to interfere with an activity associated with lawful hunting, fishing, or trapping by engaging in prohibited conduct

LETHALLY WOUNDED ANIMALS- AB 257, enacted into law as **2015 WI Act 225**, provides that if a youth mortally wounds an animal while lawfully hunting, and if the youth requests that the adult shoot to kill the animal, the adult may do so as long as the adult has any valid hunting approval

BLAZE PINK- AB 291, enacted into law as **2015 WI Act 131**, allows the highly visible color mandated to be worn during hunting to be the color commonly referred to as bright pink or fluorescent pink, instead only blaze orange, as was previously allowed

NO BACK TAGS- SB 289, enacted into law as **2015 WI Act 222**, eliminates the requirement that DNR issue a back tag with any of these licenses and the requirement that the licensee attach a back tag to any garment while hunting.

DISABLED TROLLING PERMITS- SB 298, enacted into law as **2015 WI Act 363**, requires the DNR to issue free trolling permits to persons whose eyesight is impaired

LICENSING/REGISTRATION OVERHAUL- AB 434, enacted into law as **2015 WI Act 89**, makes a number of changes to the registration and certification requirements for ATVs, UTVs, boats, and snowmobiles and to approvals for hunting, fishing, and trapping. The bill allows the DNR to designate alternative forms of proof of certain registration, certification, and approval documents; authorizes DNR to issue reprints of certain approvals and recreational vehicle safety certificates; authorizes DNR to use a system for accessing information about an individual's approvals or safety certificates electronically; and allows for certain receipts to provide proof that a person holds a recreational vehicle registration, certification, trail pass, or trail use sticker until official documents are received.

GOWILD LICENSING SYSTEM- GoWild is the DNR's modernized licensing system. The new system, accessible at GoWild.Wi.Gov, allows customers to get licenses, tags and other DNR products through more than 1,000 vendors statewide, at DNR Service Centers and offers easy access on mobile devices through the website. The new system secures licensing and registration information electronically and enables customers to use a variety of methods for providing proof of purchases while out enjoying Wisconsin's exceptional natural resources. New proof of purchase opportunities provided through Go Wild include an optional personal conservation card, an authenticated Wisconsin driver's license, a plain paper copy or a pdf display on a mobile device such as a smartphone.

ROOM TAX

- Wisconsin's municipal tourism funding is largely provided by the room tax. The tax is imposed on hotels, motels, and other establishments that rent short-term lodging and was first introduced in the 1990s.
- The Wisconsin Legislature altered the room tax in both the 2015-17 biennial budget and with **AB 714**, enacted into law as **2015 WI Act 301**. The changes in the biennial budget phased in more stringent limitations on municipalities' ability to keep room tax revenues not distributed to a tourism entity. The bill changes the definition, and membership of the governing body, of a tourism entity under the room tax.
- For more detailed information, read the Legislative Council's Memo on the changes here: http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/information_memos/2015/im_2015_13.pdf