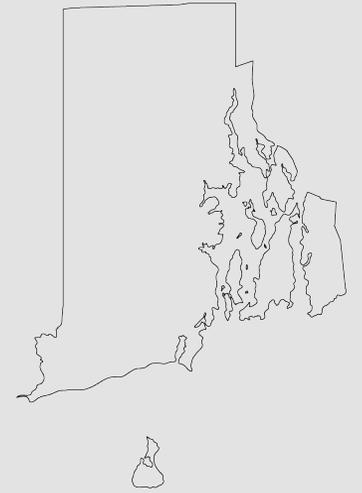




a new vision for R.I. outdoor recreation

connecting & investing in people,
places & play to move Rhode
Island forward



**A Final Report of the
Rhode Island Outdoor
Recreation Council**

December 2016

our goal

Develop an actionable vision for outdoor recreation that promotes **health**, connects people with **nature**, highlights and preserves Rhode Island's **unique character** and **assets**, and supports growth of our recreational **economy**.



alignment

Our work on the R.I. Outdoor Recreation Council supports the state's broader efforts to:

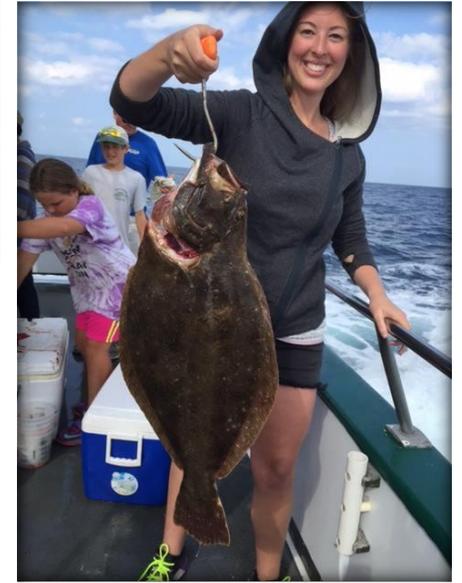
- Grow our green economy
- Build a healthier Rhode Island
- Protect & strengthen families



our strengths

Diversity & Proximity of Facilities

You can do it all in a day – from hike to kayak to fish in salty or freshwater. We have an outstanding network of resources & programming – recognized nationally and internationally.



8,500+

acres of park land -
across 68 areas



200+

boat ramps &
fishing areas



88,000+

acres of state
conservation land



400+

miles of hiking, biking
& walking trails

our strengths

Access

The majority of Rhode Islanders live within minutes of an outdoor recreational facility or opportunity.

85% of residents live within **1/4 mile (city) or 5 miles (non-urban)** of an outdoor public recreation facility.



our strengths

Strong Partnerships

We have a robust network of dedicated partners – government, business & community [ex. Health Equity Zones] – making progress possible.



passes with

67%

voter approval!



Governor Raimondo announces \$4 million in community recreation grants during the Yes On 6 Kick-Off Rally in September. Another \$2.16 million was conditionally awarded, pending bond approval.

our strengths

Economic Dividends

Our focus on preserving and developing recreational resources has paid significant dividends for Rhode Island's economy.

\$316.7M economic impact
of Rhode Island's
state park network

Local jobs: 3,770



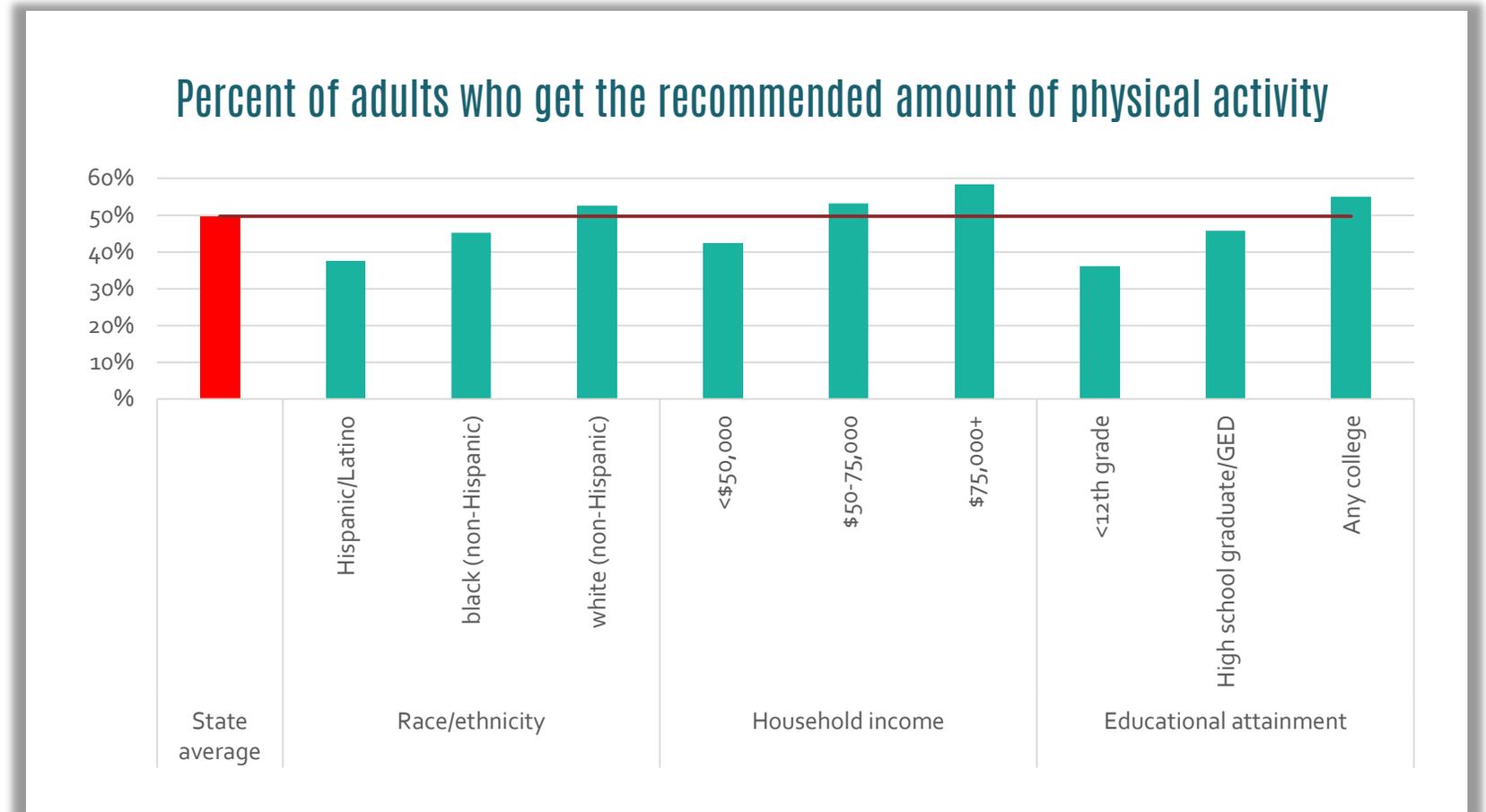
\$47M

contributed
to economy
>130,000 fans

the challenges

Health Impacts

Too few Rhode Islanders are regularly engaged in physical activity. **Less than half** of adults get the recommended (150 minutes/week) amount. And significant disparities exist between groups.

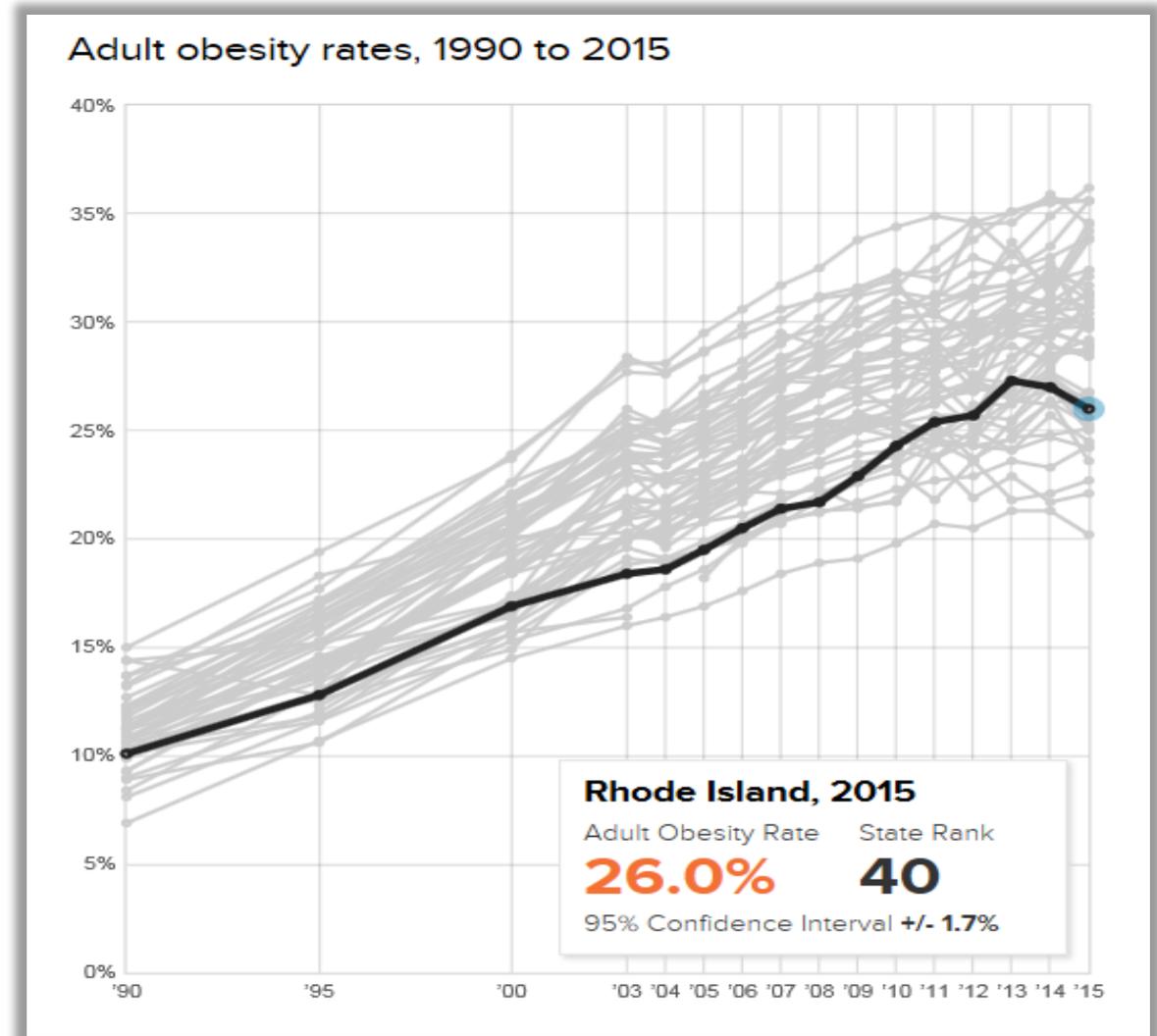


Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2011-14

the challenges

Cost to Rhode Island

Between 1990 to 2015, obesity rates in Rhode Island adults have **risen from 10 to 26%**. Rates have plateaued recently; however, the related healthcare costs topple **\$500 million**.



Source: Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, State of Obesity, 2015

the challenges

Aging Infrastructure

Many of our facilities require attention and are not fully connected or properly funded. Lower-income communities face unique challenges supporting maintenance and upgrades.

Demand Exceeds Supply

Community recreation grant opportunities are consistently oversubscribed.

2016 grant round:

92 rec applications submitted worth **\$16M** to cities & towns

\$4M awarded in grants to **18** cities & towns

Unmet need:

\$12M



the challenges

Decentralized Information

Information on the breadth of outdoor recreation is not readily available in a central location.

Poor Connectivity

Transportation connections within and between facilities are inadequate or lacking. Facilities and road systems do not accommodate all users.

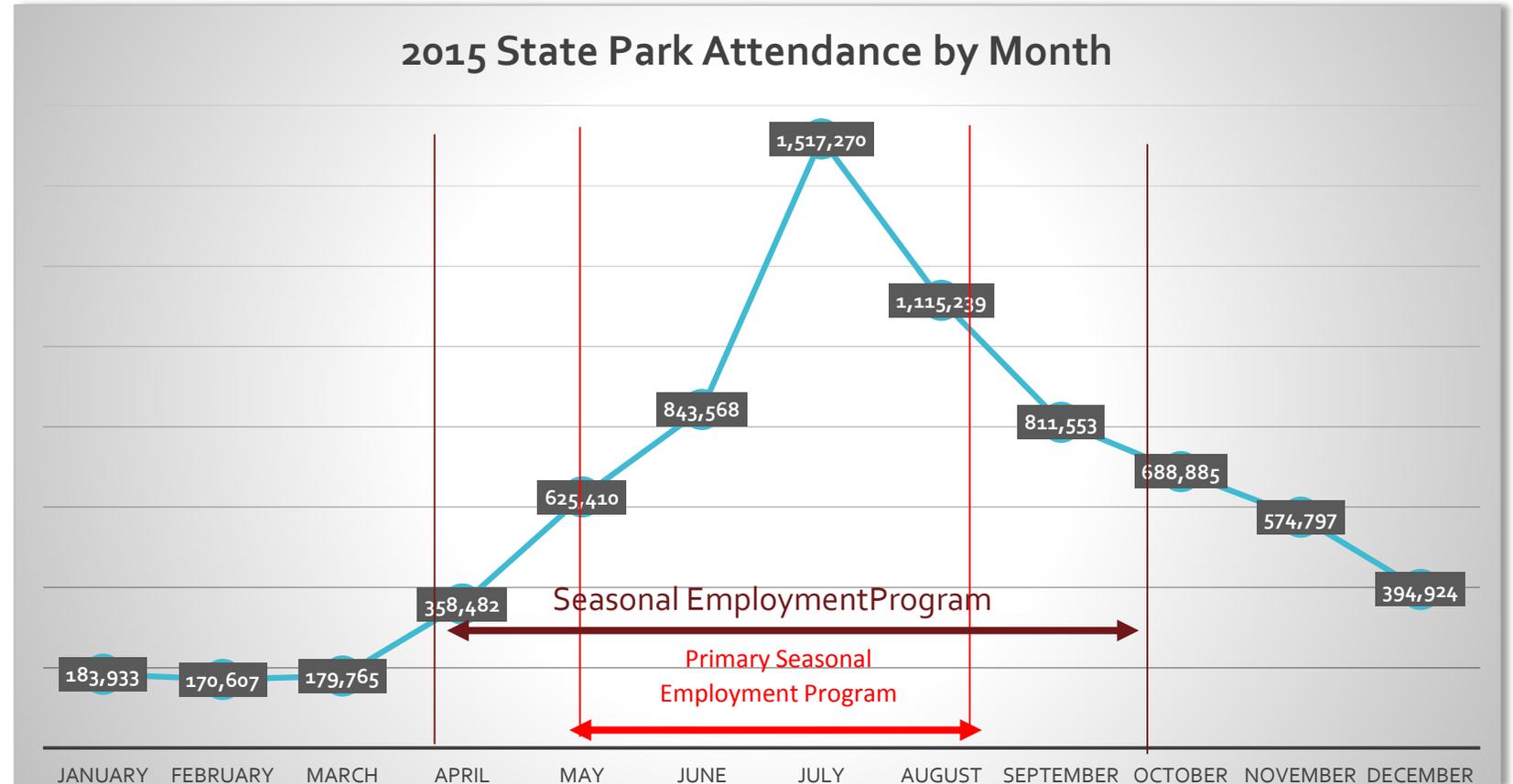


Many roadways in Rhode Island do not safely support all user groups – from bicyclists to walkers and vehicles.

the challenges

Economic Potential Unrealized

Rhode Island is not recognizing the full economic potential of the outdoor recreation sector to generate business activity & attract potential residents to the state.



Severe understaffing during the “shoulder” season continues to stifle growth. Impacts include over-reliance on seasonal support, lost event opportunities, and limited hours of operation across state facilities.

where we're headed: our vision

All Rhode Islanders **regularly use** our recreational facilities & can **easily access** information about the array of opportunities available. Our facilities are attractive, **well-maintained** and **connected** – supporting health and our economy.



how we get there

Stewardship

Our recreational network must be adequately funded, staffed & maintained.



Lifestyle

Recreation must be more meaningfully integrated into our lifestyles.



Promotion

Marketing must be improved & aligned with broader tourism efforts.



Access

Connectivity between people, places & opportunity must be enhanced.



how we get there

Constituency

Work together to protect our natural resources & promote and expand outdoor recreation.

Johnson & Wales
Town of Bristol
Trust for Public Land
Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association
Save The Bay
Roger Williams University
R.I. Canoes and Kayaks Association
City of Warwick
Up RI
Mt. Hope Neighborhood Association
Shape
R.I. Department of Environmental Management
United Healthcare
Coastal
U.S. Medical
Neighborhood Builders
City of Central Falls
Fish & Wildlife
life of City
THE Rhode Island R.I. Commerce Corporation
Jamestown
Nature Land Trust Council
R.I. Foundation
Conservancy
R.I. Department of Transportation
R.I. Department of Health
Coastal Resources Management Council

how we get there

Stewardship

Dedicated funding & additional investment in the network.

Key Actions:

- Identify a sustainable funding stream for recreational infrastructure & programming.
- Conduct gap analysis of facilities, staffing to prioritize investment.



POTENTIAL METRIC FOR SUCCESS:

- Increase the number of usable recreational facilities, including trails.

how we get there

Lifestyle

Health equity & expanded programming at facilities.

Key Actions:

- Adopt the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights in 2017.
- Work with partners to promote & expand park programming and Park Rx.
- Review recreation grant criteria to ensure under-resourced communities are prioritized.
- Work with health industry to increase access to employee-wellness programs for small and mid-sized businesses.
- Support food system initiatives, including development of the state's first food strategy.

POTENTIAL METRIC FOR SUCCESS:

- Increase rates of physical activity by all populations, regardless of socioeconomic status.



how we get there

Promotion

Integrated marketing approach.

Key Actions:

- Create a comprehensive outdoor recreation website.
- Align marketing efforts with broader state tourism campaign.
- Establish an “outdoor recreation” day in Rhode Island.



POTENTIAL METRIC FOR SUCCESS:

- Increase in-state & out-of-state visitation to outdoor recreation facilities.

how we get there



Access

Improved connectivity within & between facilities.

Key Actions:

- Prioritize capital investments that improve transportation within, between recreational places & support all users.
- Complete the Statewide Bicycle Plan.
- Accelerate adoption of “Complete Streets” principles at the local level.
- Explore ways to improve public transit to major recreation facilities.



POTENTIAL METRIC FOR SUCCESS:

- Increase the number of miles of bike lanes and off-road bike paths.

how we get there



Constituency

A dedicated stakeholder group for outdoor recreation.

Key Actions:

- Create a permanent structure to facilitate ongoing collaboration among stakeholders & monitor implementation of key initiatives.
- Secure support from stakeholders for a staff position to implement the vision & promote recreation in Rhode Island.



thank you

We have the **assets** and momentum. And now we have the **blueprint**. Our **vision** of a modern, accessible network of facilities and programming that supports our families, health, and economy is **within reach**.

