



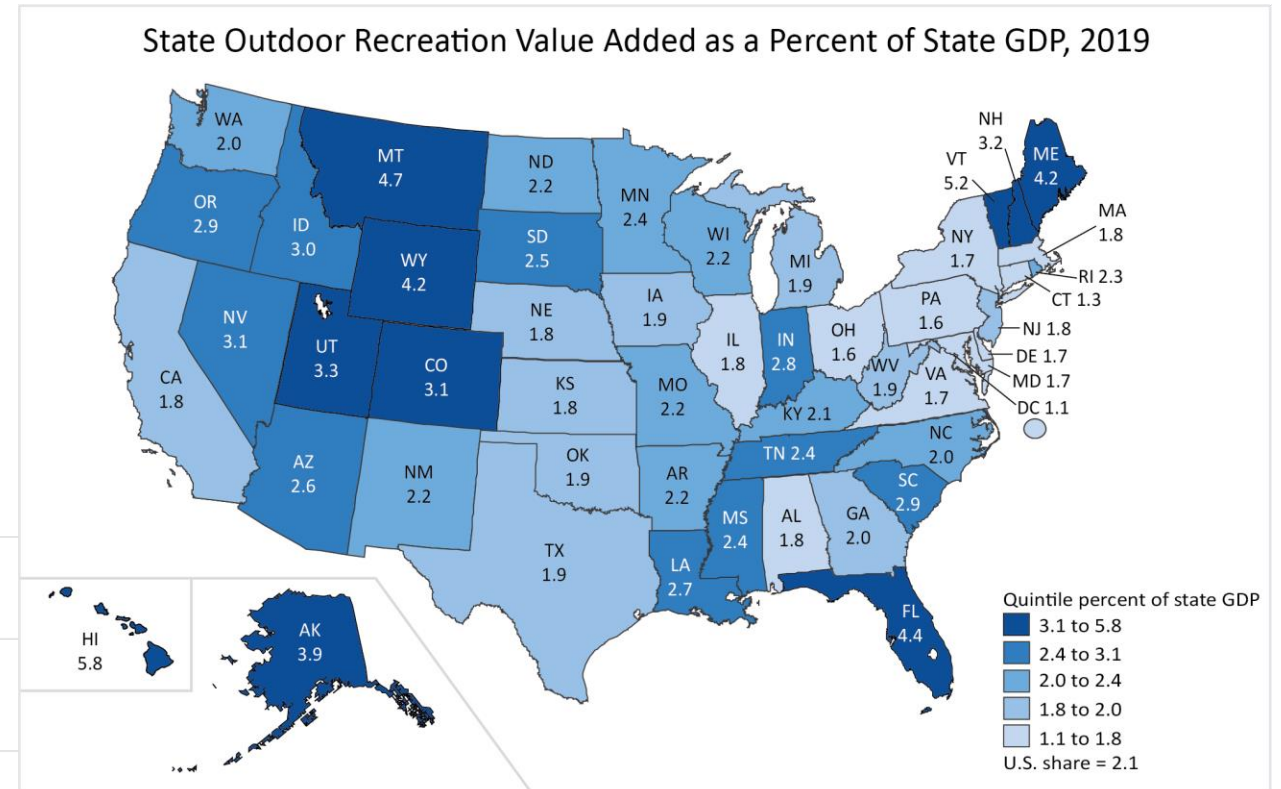
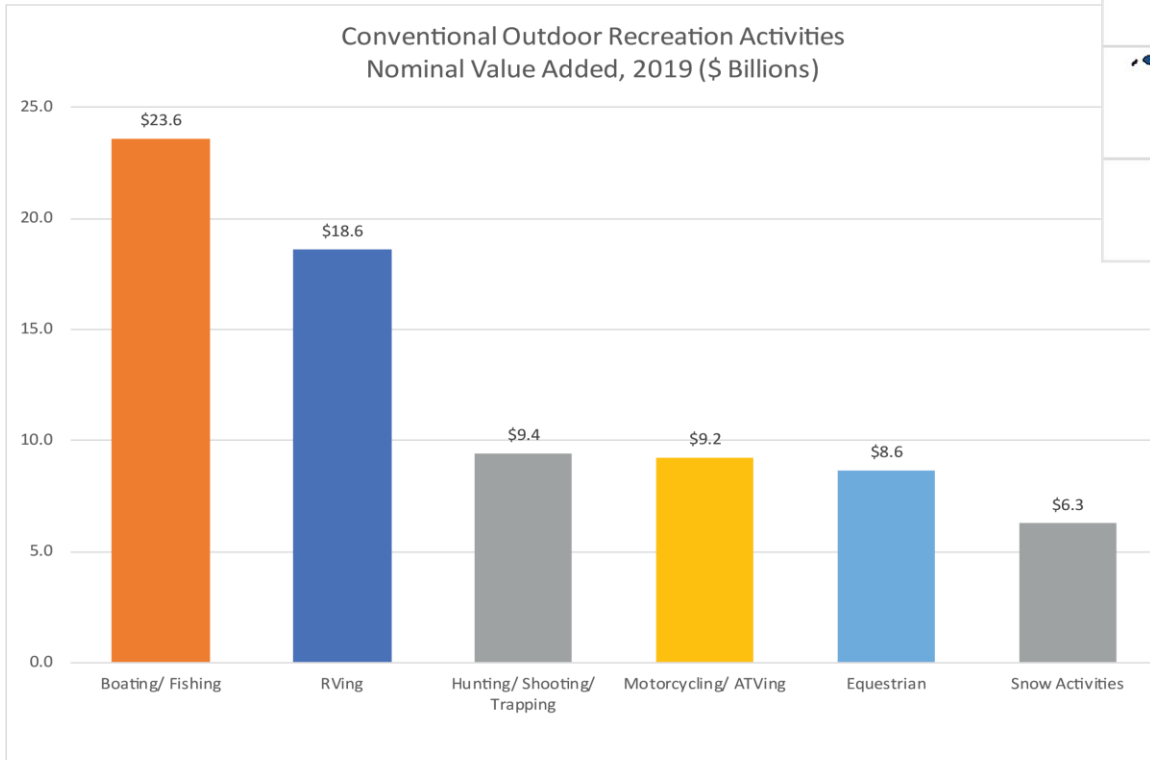
Wilkes County is the
Great State of Wilkes,
the Appalachian frontier
of innovation and
adventure.

**"With good planning we can grow,
but let's grow smart."**

B Townes, Community Advocate

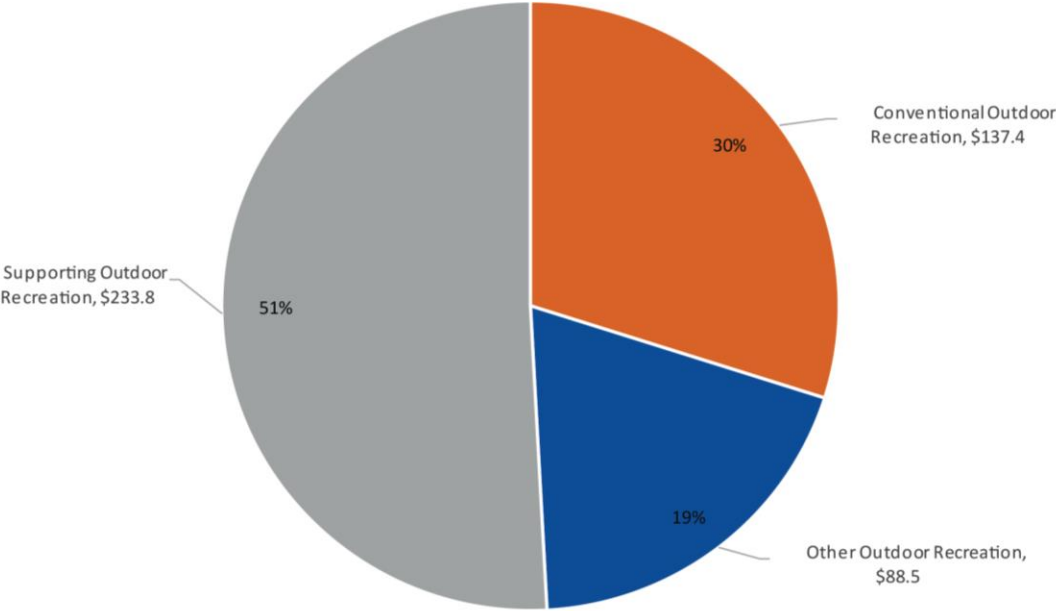
Nationally, outdoor recreation is a **\$788 billion dollar industry**, accounting for **2.1% of U.S. GDP** and **5.2 million jobs in 2019**.

Additionally, the outdoor recreation economy accounted for **2 percent (\$12.1 billion) of the GDP for the state of North Carolina** and **151,661 jobs in our state**.

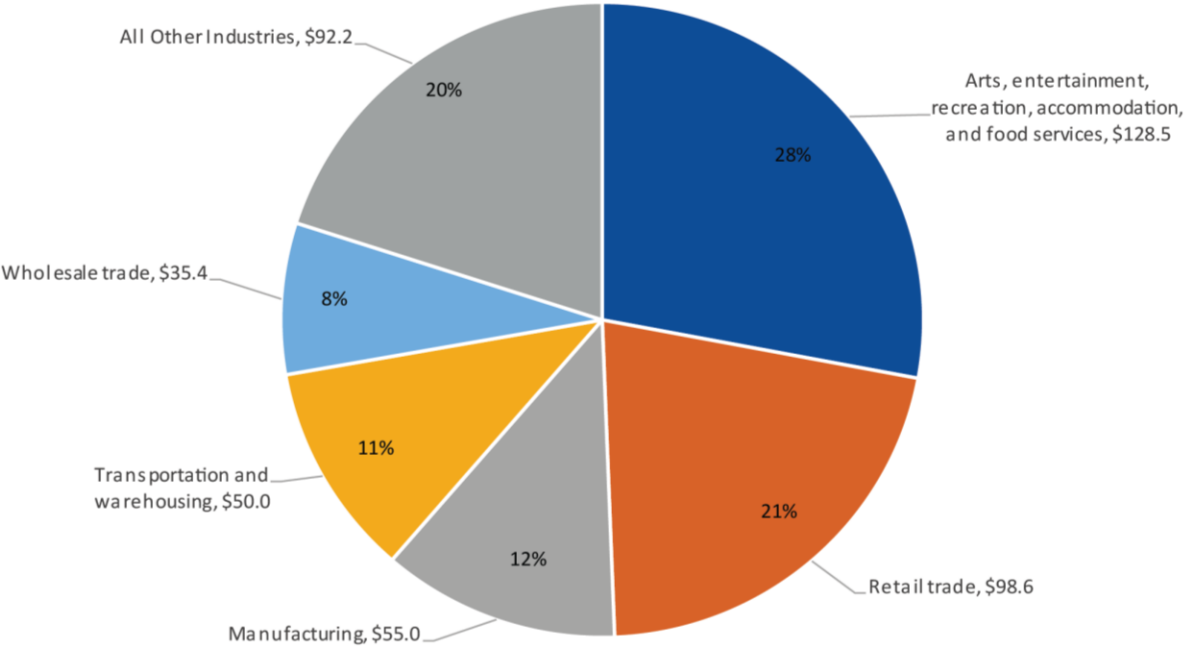


The Outdoor Economy sector was growing rapidly prior to the pandemic and where it can lead again as an economic growth engine presents a **great opportunity for Wilkes County.**

Major Outdoor Recreation Categories Nominal Value Added, 2019 (\$ Billions)



Industry Composition of Outdoor Recreation
Nominal Value Added, 2019 (\$ Billions)



Outdoor Economy Focus.

North Carolina State Budget

The North Carolina state budget contains a number of provisions related to the Outdoor Economy. The budget directs a new statewide “outdoor recreation industry action plan”.

Growing existing outdoor recreation companies and for **recruiting** new outdoor recreation companies to locate in the State.



Outdoor Economy Focus.

Increasing access to outdoor recreation through additional investments in the public lands, including State and local parks, greenways, game lands, and other public lands.

Growing the talent pool for the outdoor recreation industry through workforce development initiatives.

Encouraging healthy lifestyles through outdoor recreation activities.



Easier Investing.


North Carolina State Budget
Funding for Parks, Trails, and Land and Water
Conservation

The new state budget includes historic funding for the state's conservation trust funds. **In total the bill includes over \$300 million in new funding over the biennium.** These funds will help fund new parks, greenways, and other open spaces that serve as the infrastructure for North Carolina's outdoor recreation industry.

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund will receive over \$90 million in addition to the \$32 million in base budget funds. The North Carolina **Land and Water Fund will receive over \$115 million in addition to the \$26 million** in base budget funds.

Creates two new State Park units, the Roanoke River Paddle Trail and Bakers Lake State Natural Area. It also transfers a portion of **Rendezvous Mountain from the Department of Agriculture to State Parks.**



A light-colored dog, possibly a Weimaraner, is sitting on a mossy log in a dense forest. The forest is filled with tall, thin trees and thick green foliage. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect. The dog is looking towards the right side of the frame.

From 2010-16
nonmetropolitan America
lost population. But
counties that have
recreation economies
grew slightly over the
same period.



Rural counties with a strong recreation economy experienced a gain of 1.3 people per 1,000 residents. Non-recreation rural counties saw an average of 20 people move away per 1,000 residents.

New residents in rural recreation counties saw significantly greater incomes (\$48,828 per household) than non-recreation rural counties (\$36,550).



Covid Catalyst.

A recent poll showed 69% of Americans have gained a renewed appreciation for the outdoors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

People want to get outside for their physical and mental health. Now more than ever, we need the outdoors.



Covid Catalyst.

In many ways, the uptick in outdoor recreation activity during the pandemic only reinforces the findings in the 2018 and 2019 data, showing the strength of the outdoor recreation industry as a powerful economic driver.



The Partnership.



Outdoor Economy Conference in October 2019 began our work together.

Developed and agreed upon an MOU outlining working together towards a common vision.

The intent of our work together is **to benefit the health and quality of life of our residents while also enhancing visitor experiences and encouraging relocation of individuals, families, and businesses to the area.**



The Partnership.



County of Wilkes

Healthy Wilkes Action Team

The Health Foundation, inc.

Town of North Wilkesboro

Town of Wilkesboro

Wilkes County Health Department

Wilkes Economic Development Corporation

Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority

Yadkin River Greenway Council

Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor



The Partnership.

The banner is split into two vertical sections. The left section has an orange background with a white mountain silhouette at the top. Below the silhouette, the text "OUTDOOR ECONOMY CONFERENCE" is written in white, "New Dates!" in yellow, "April 4-7" in yellow, and "Cherokee | North Carolina" in white. The right section has a dark blue background with a light blue wavy pattern. It features the text "4th Annual Conference Theme:" in light green, "Stewards of Opportunity" in white, and "Place Driven Community & Economic Development" in light green.

**OUTDOOR
ECONOMY
CONFERENCE**

New Dates!
April 4-7
Cherokee | North Carolina

**4th Annual
Conference Theme:**

**Stewards
of
Opportunity**

Place Driven Community &
Economic Development

The Action Plan.



**ELEVATING QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE
ECONOMY THROUGH THE OUTDOORS**

HELPING CREATE A COMMUNITY-LED VISION AND
A 15-YEAR ROADMAP TO ENSURE STRATEGIC
DECISION MAKING THAT CULTIVATES THE OUTDOOR
ECONOMY AND ENCOURAGES ACTIVE LIVING IN
WILKES COUNTY.

The Action Plan.



The Great State of Wilkes Outdoor Action Plan is being led by the Outdoor Economy Workgroup.

The group is focusing on the planning and development of outdoor recreation infrastructure projects such as trails, greenways, destination-quality parks, multi-use public spaces, as well as attractive and convenient downtowns. These projects contribute significantly to the local quality of life. They help grow small businesses as well as attract new business, residents and visitors.

The Process.



1

RESEARCH AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

The consultant team will conduct a direction-setting meeting with the Wilkes Outdoor Economy Workgroup to discuss key opportunities and constraints, develop a database of all existing outdoor recreation assets, and conduct an extensive field analysis to assess the County's assets.

2

STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Conduct a series of interviews and focus group meetings with civic leaders, public health representatives, and outdoor-related businesses. Disseminate an online survey to be advertised on social media that encourages citizens to share their ideas and help establish the overall project direction.

3

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

With guidance from the steering committee, stakeholders, and citizens, the consultant team will create a plan framework that features preliminary recommendations for improving and expanding the County's outdoor recreation-related assets. The consultant team will then conduct another round of public engagement.

4

FINAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The final 15-year outdoor action plan will feature all recommendations, a phasing schedule, an estimate of probable cost, and an outline of grant funding sources. Copies of the plan will be available for the public to view on municipal and county websites.

Purpose.



Redefine the Great State of Wilkes as a **future-focused** campaign.

Help Wilkes County take its **rightful place as a premier WNC outdoor destination**


Position Wilkes County as a **conveniently-located and easily-accessible** outdoor destination.

Establish **equitable public health**, through outdoor recreation, as a centerpiece of the County's identity and economic development strategy.

Unify the community around the outdoor economy opportunity.

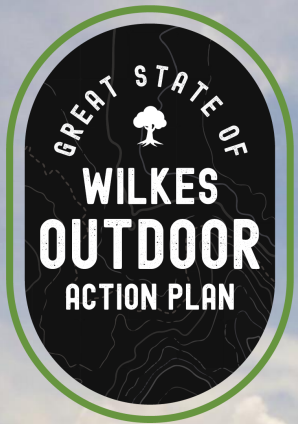
Positioning.






Between the outer rim of the NC High Country and the Yadkin Valley, Wilkes offers an array of outdoor activities with its trails, bike parks, and State Parks and Recreation Areas, including the Blue Ridge Parkway.





Many adventurers and their families are in search of places that have it all: stunning views, fun places for swimming, relaxing spots to cast a fly for some trout, and somewhere with both geographical and historical importance.

Luckily for us, Stone Mountain State Park covers all of that and more. With over 18 miles of trails and 20 miles or trout streams, there is something for everybody here.



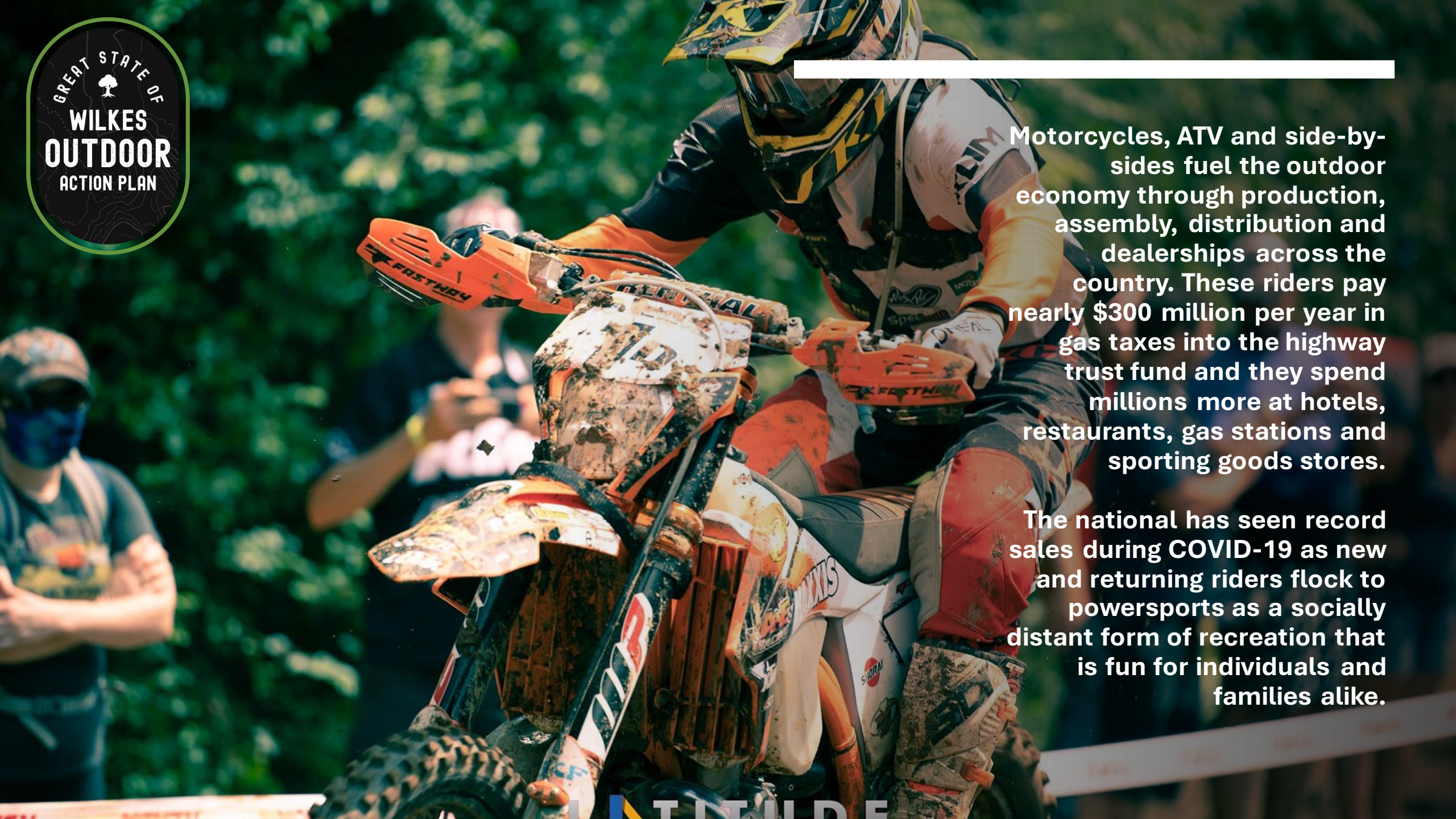
Boasting some of the nation's most sought-after mountain bike trails, pristine lake frontage, and untamed land, the Great State of Wilkes is still wild at heart, a frontier for adventurous souls.





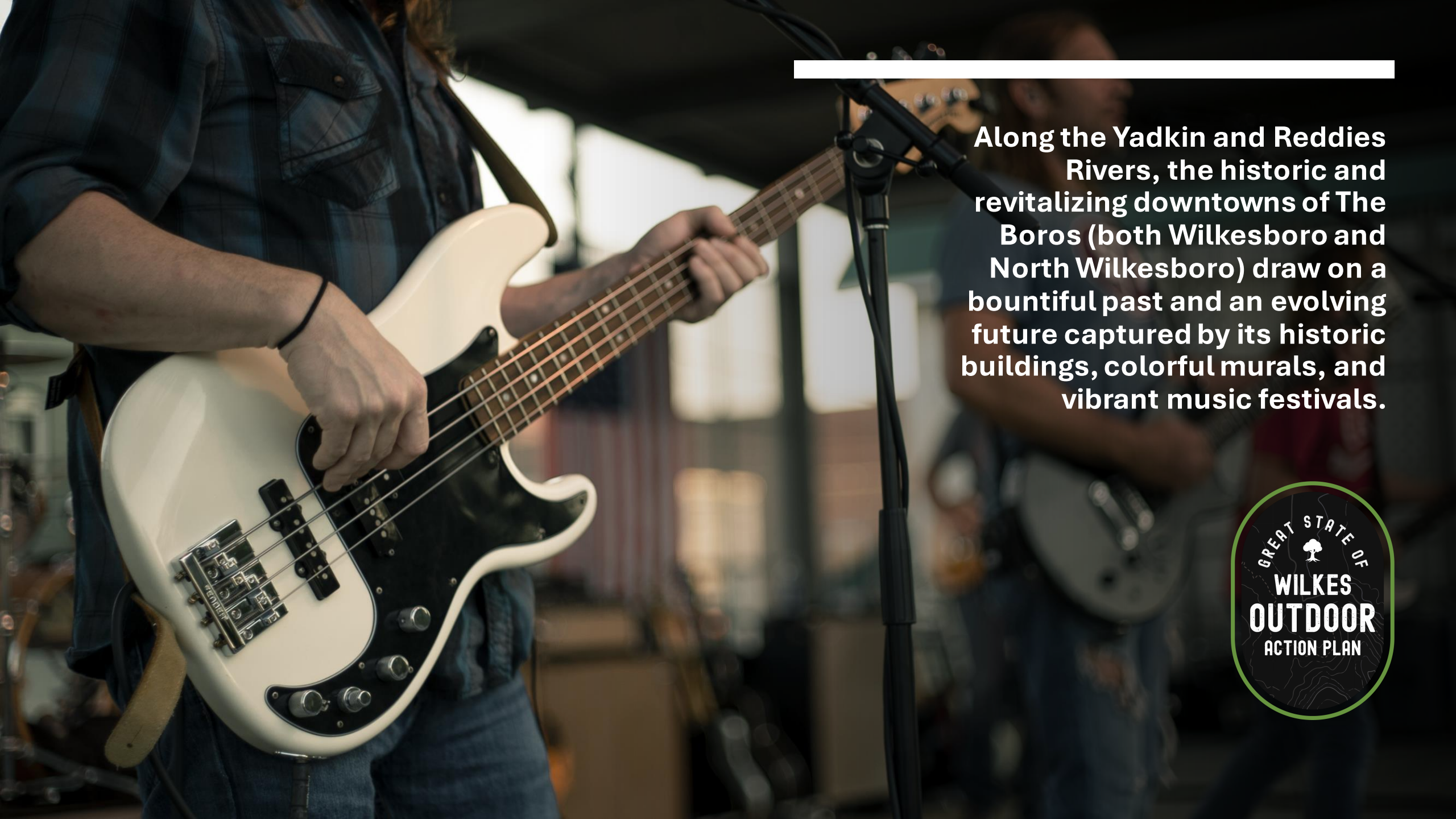
Motorcycles, ATV and side-by-sides fuel the outdoor economy through production, assembly, distribution and dealerships across the country. These riders pay nearly \$300 million per year in gas taxes into the highway trust fund and they spend millions more at hotels, restaurants, gas stations and sporting goods stores.

The national has seen record sales during COVID-19 as new and returning riders flock to powersports as a socially distant form of recreation that is fun for individuals and families alike.



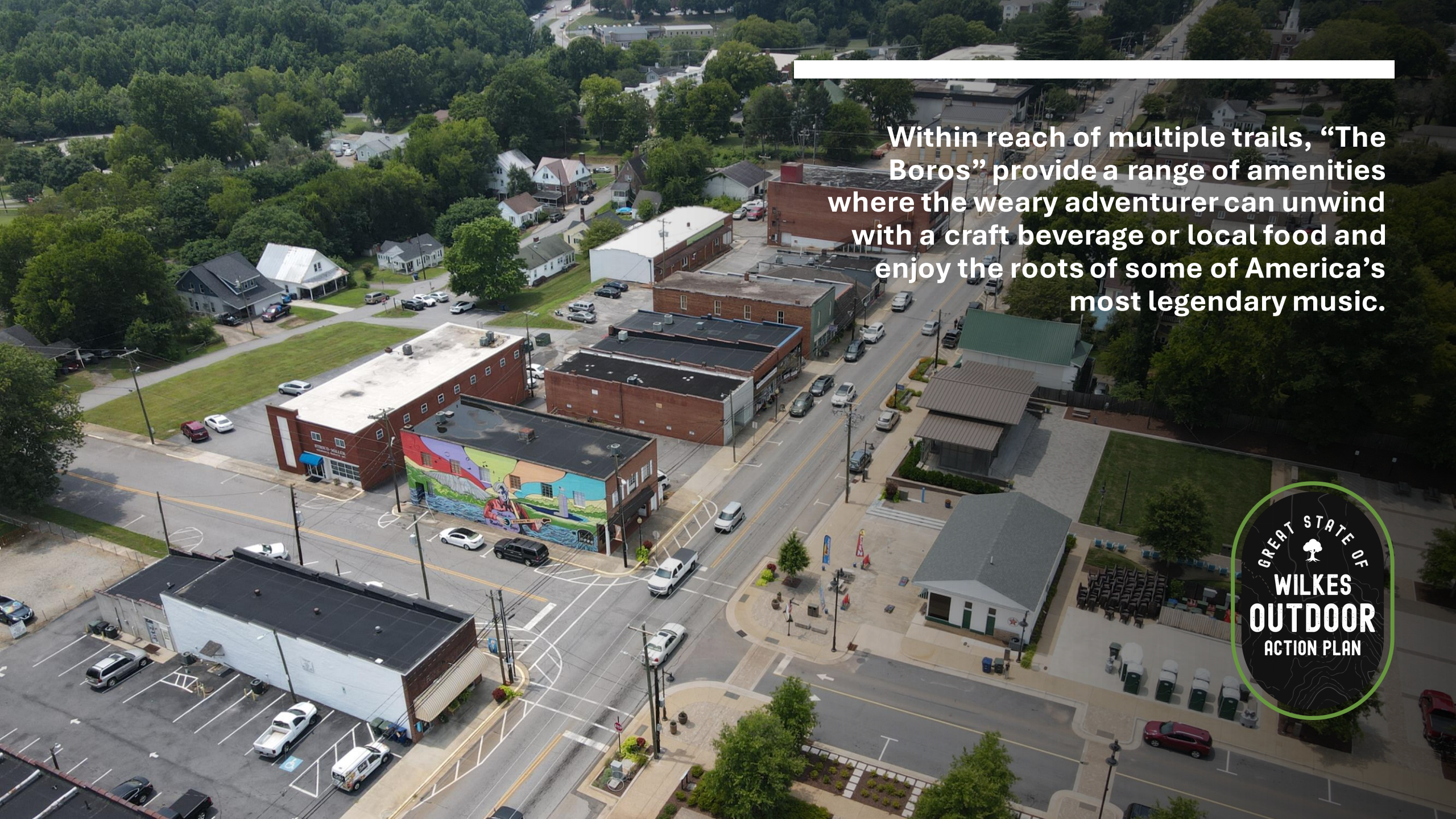
The Boros.



A musician with long hair, wearing a blue plaid shirt and jeans, is playing a white Fender Precision Bass guitar. The guitar has a black pickguard and four strings. The musician is standing on a stage, and a microphone on a stand is positioned in front of them. In the background, another musician is partially visible, playing a guitar. The scene is dimly lit, with stage lights creating a warm, atmospheric glow.

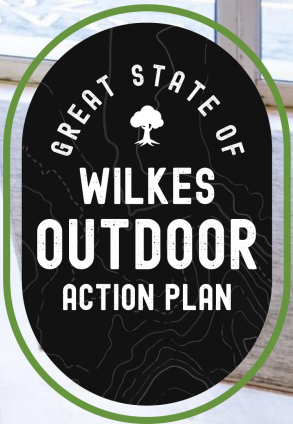
**Along the Yadkin and Reddies
Rivers, the historic and
revitalizing downtowns of The
Boros (both Wilkesboro and
North Wilkesboro) draw on a
bountiful past and an evolving
future captured by its historic
buildings, colorful murals, and
vibrant music festivals.**





Within reach of multiple trails, “The Boros” provide a range of amenities where the weary adventurer can unwind with a craft beverage or local food and enjoy the roots of some of America’s most legendary music.





We want you back.





PERKINS
EAST





Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor.



Yadkin River Greenway.



Walkability.



Parks & Rec.





The Music & Arts.





Fishing.



GREAT STATE OF
WILKES
OUTDOOR
ACTION PLAN

UNDER NORTH CAROLINA L
LIABILITY FOR AGRITOURISM BY T
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**NO SAMPLING
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LET US HELP YOU**

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2nd Annual
**PEACH & HERITAGE
FESTIVAL**

9th JULY 3PM



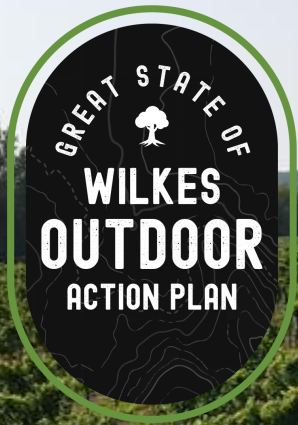
20 JULY 31

PLAY A MEXICAN FOODS - ACTING GROUP - VOT
CONVINCE YOUR VILLAGE COUNCIL TO GOING
BUTTERFLY GARDENS WILKINSON

BUSINESS
HOURS
MONDAY-
SATURDAY
9:00AM-
5:00PM

Half
Pinner
\$2.50

APPLE COLLEO



Shine & Vine.



Litter Clean Up Campaign.





Ongoing Work & Existing Assets.

We Want You Back Campaign

Yakin River Greenway

Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor

Municipal Park System Improvements

Blue Ridge Parkway & State Parks

Yadkin River Cleanup & Access

Downtown Revitalizations

Litter Programs

Fishing & Hunting

Walkability Improvements

Wineries & Distilleries

Music & Arts

Motorsports Park

Equestrian

Agrotourism

**Prosperous communities require
partnership to achieve long-term
strategic investment &
maintenance.**



American Rescue Plan & Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.



Steeped in the Appalachian traditions of outdoorsmanship, innovation, music & arts, the Great State name borrows from the history of Wilkes as the edge of the Appalachian Frontier but reimagines the story for today and the future.

Frontier State of Mind, a State of Being, a State of Play.



[Wilkes Outdoor
Economy Action Plan
Website](#)

"With good planning we can grow,
but let's grow smart." –
B Townes, Community Advocate



Plan Goals



ASSETS

Identify the County's existing outdoor recreation assets and evaluate their current condition and ability to provide for a quality experience.



PARTNERS

Engage government and community leaders to identify public capital infrastructure projects currently being planned and developed that will enhance quality of life.



GAPS

Identify new, compelling outdoor infrastructure projects to promote the outdoor economy.



UNITY

When possible, identify projects that support a variety of community goals, including improving quality of life to retain young adults and attract a skilled workforce, inspiring new small business growth and investment, improving and protecting environmental quality, and encouraging active lifestyles to support public health.



VISUAL

Create a plan that generates interest and casts an inspiring vision by creating compelling renderings, site master plans, 3-D illustrations, and other graphics to effectively communicate recommendations.



STRATEGY

Provide the Wilkes Outdoor Economy Workgroup and its partners with clear strategies and a prioritization schedule for implementing the 15-year action plan.