

Jim Doyle, Governor

Jim Holperin, Secretary

To: Committee on State Trails Policy

From: Jim Holperin, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Tourism

Date: 10/4/2006

Re: State Trails and Traveler Spending

Clearly, high quality outdoor recreation opportunities are crucial for the success of Wisconsin tourism businesses. Traveler spending in Wisconsin in 2005 totalled nearly \$12 billion and recreation, including state trail use, comprised 24% or \$2.8 billion of that total. (See attached booklet: Tourism's Economic Impact.)

Trail use typically ranks near the top when visitors to Wisconsin from Chicago and the Twin Cities (Wisconsin's two major out-of-state markets) are asked to identify their most memorable activity while vacationing in our state. Hiking, snowmobiling, park/forest use and nature viewing all ranked in the top 20 most memorable activities.

While it is often difficult to obtain accurate and reliable economic impact data for some types of trail users, it is possible to collect fairly accurate data for trail use which involves the use of licensed machines. Therefore, the Department has recently researched the expenditures of snowmobilers (2001) and ATVers (2003). Please see the attached survey summaries.

Our state trails provide a tremendous opportunity for Wisconsinites and out-of-state visitors alike to pursue their favorite activities and will most certainly continue to have a direct and positive economic impact on this state and its tourism businesses. In Wisconsin – "Life's So Good" and safe, well-maintained trails that are used for complementary activities is one key reason why that's so.

Best wishes for productive meetings, and please do not hesitate to call upon Abbie Hill, the Department's liaison to your Committee at 261-6272 or ahill@travelwisconsin.com with any questions or comments.

Travelers spend \$12 billion in Wisconsin every year.