



The formation of state offices of outdoor recreation and an analysis of their ability to partner with federal land management agencies



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ABSTRACT

Over the past five years, political leaders and representatives from the outdoor recreation industry in the United States have actively advocated for an increased recognition of the economic importance of outdoor recreation to local and state economies. These efforts have resulted in several offices being created within state government to advocate for the outdoor recreation industry; acknowledging the industry is just as important to states' economies as more traditional sectors like agriculture or health care. By early 2018, 11 states had established state offices of outdoor recreation. These offices, though embedded within various sectors of state government, often coordinate across or blend the functions of economic development, tourism, and land management, ultimately providing innovative opportunities for collaboration. While the state offices universally seek to develop the outdoor recreation economy, that economy fundamentally relies on access to natural landscapes, the majority of which are managed by federal land management agencies in the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture. Through a mixed-methods investigation, we describe the formation of state offices of outdoor recreation and analyze their ability to partner with federal land management agencies. Through the collection of secondary data, we provide a systematic description of the characteristics that define these newly formed offices. Additionally, by conducting and analyzing 22 interviews with individuals in leadership positions within state offices of outdoor recreation, we are able to provide a framework that describes how these offices conceptualize their role in state government. Our discussion focuses on the possibility of future collaborations between state offices of outdoor recreation and federal land management agencies to promote and enhance the economic, social, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation.

Management implications: State offices of outdoor recreation are uniquely positioned to influence how outdoor recreation is managed across the US. They can blend the functions of economic development, tourism, and land management, ultimately providing innovative opportunities for collaborative management. These state offices should advocate for and collaborate with, federal land management agencies to improve the ability of outdoor recreation to contribute significantly to public life.

1. Introduction

In 2018, nearly half (49%) of the U.S. population participated in some form of outdoor recreation (The Outdoor Foundation, 2018). This proportion has steadily increased over the past decade (Cordell, 2012, p. 167). As Americans hike, bike, climb, and engage in other outdoor recreation activities, they purchase apparel and equipment, travel to new communities, stay in campgrounds and hotels, and frequent restaurants – ultimately infusing capital into local and state economies. With growing evidence of the economic, social, and environmental

benefits of the outdoor recreation industry, many individuals and organizations have argued the industry should receive support and recognition on par with other more traditional economic sectors such as agriculture and health care (Sanford, 2018). As recently as 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis formally defined the outdoor recreation industry by tracking it separately (as it does other economic sectors); preliminary statistics indicate that the outdoor recreation economy accounts for 2% of national gross domestic product (Highfill & Howells, 2018). Another national study determined the industry accounts for \$887 billion in consumer spending and 7.6 million jobs

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(Outdoor Industry Association, 2017, p. 20). Visits to federal lands alone accounted for nearly \$51 billion in spending and 880,000 jobs in 2012 (White et al., 2016, p. 46). Spurred by mounting economic data, and with the support of industry and other stakeholders, states across the country have begun creating offices or initiatives to advocate for the outdoor recreation industry and the benefits of conservation and outdoor recreation to communities.

In 2013, Utah led this charge by creating the first Office of Outdoor Recreation (Outdoor Industry Association, 2016). As of the spring of 2018, ten states have followed suit, establishing temporary or permanent offices, commissions, collaboratives, or policy positions, with additional states considering the idea (Outdoor Industry Association, 2016; Haroutunian, 2017; Lown-Hecht, 2017; Outdoor Industry; Scott, 2017). Although organizational structures vary widely by state, hereafter they will be described as 'offices.' Broadly speaking, each state office seeks to further support outdoor recreation to: (1) foster economic growth; (2) improve citizens' quality of life; and (3) enhance the experiences of tourists (Outdoor Industry Association, 2016).

These initiatives, though embedded within various sectors of state government, often blend the functions of economic development, tourism, and agencies that manage natural resources (Outdoor Industry Association, 2016; Lown-Hecht, 2017; Outdoor Industry; Scott, 2017). The formation of these offices requires a greater dedication of limited state resources and coordination of additional stakeholder interests, signifying a shift in how states perceive outdoor recreation and its management. Moreover, as unique organizations with distinctly new priorities, these offices provide new opportunities for collaboration with federal land management agencies. The creation of state offices provides a new opportunity for federal land management agencies to directly partner with states in an effort to achieve more locally relevant and meaningful goals (e.g., improving access to public lands for states with urban populations). Because the offices are so new, with many still in the conceptualization phase, academic research has yet to describe their functions, location within the government, organizational structures, missions, programs, modes of communication and operation, or interactions with federal land management agencies.

1.1. Study purpose

The purpose of this research was to provide a thorough baseline understanding of the 11 current state offices of outdoor recreation as well as to assess their ability to partner with federal land management agencies to improve shared economic, social, and environmental outcomes. This study was guided by two broad objectives: (1) describe the goals, objectives, and operations of state-level outdoor recreation offices; and (2) ascertain how these offices interact and collaborate with federal land management agencies. Through the collection of secondary data, we were able to provide a systematic description of the characteristics that define these newly formed offices. By conducting and analyzing 22 interviews with individuals in leadership positions within state offices of outdoor recreation, we were able to provide a framework that both describes how these offices conceptualize their role in state government and illustrates challenges and opportunities for collaboration involving state offices and federal land management agencies. We draw on previous research on collaboration within federal land management agencies to guide our analysis; by doing so we are able to make several contributions to this body of literature.

1.2. Previous Research on Collaborations Involving Federal Land Management Agencies

Federal land management agencies such as the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, manage vast landscapes for a variety of different uses such as conservation, resource development, and outdoor recreation (Wilson, 2014). Given the variety of resources under their stewardship, and an

increased understanding that actions occurring outside an agency's jurisdictional boundaries can influence cultural, ecological, and recreational resources under their control, many agencies are establishing collaborative relationships with other federal land management agencies, state agencies, interest groups, and local communities in an effort to meet their management objectives (Seekamp, Barrow, & Cervený, 2013; Weddell, Fedorchak, & Wright, 2009; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000).

Historically, collaborative relationships have emerged to overcome the limited budgets of federal agencies (McCreary, Seekamp, Cervený, & Carver, 2012a,b, pp. 160–166). Beyond serving as a way to pool limited resources, collaborative relationships can also help reduce confusion or conflict while also facilitating information exchange and providing a way for an agency to access the skills and/or expertise of other agencies or organizations (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). We review the benefits and challenges of collaborative relationships which have been identified through previous research on federal land management agencies; this body of literature will guide our analysis of if, and how, state offices of outdoor recreation can collaborate with federal land management agencies.

1.3. Benefits and challenges of collaboration

We define collaboration as coordinated efforts amongst two or more entities in which those entities share management responsibility and/or mobilize resources such as money and volunteers to achieve mutually desirable outcomes (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Ultimately, collaboration builds understanding, support, and capacity, enabling decisions that are more likely to be implemented than litigated. Collaboration can moderate the top-down bureaucratic organization of federal agencies that often disempower local interests, and it can provide a framework for ongoing public involvement rather than one-time outreach. Recurring collaboration grants stakeholders ownership of the issue and prepares all entities for future challenges. In many ways, the intangible benefits of collaboration – increased trust, synergy, interdependence, and communication – far outweigh the tangible benefits, such as a management plan (Seekamp & Cervený, 2010; Selin, Schuett, & Carr, 1997).

Despite the necessity for and long-term benefits of collaboration, federal land management agencies often struggle to invest in the process of collaboration fully. Collaboration contradicts traditional decision-making, shifting the center of information and authority from agencies to partners, even as agencies remain responsible for final outcomes. Moreover, it requires a significant investment of time, effort, and resources for uncertain outcomes, especially given the lack of training, administrative support, or rewards for agency employees. Barriers to collaboration are inherently built into the decision-making processes of federal land management agencies; these institutional barriers are then exacerbated by attitudinal barriers of agency employees (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000).

Institutional barriers include the lack of opportunities or incentives for federal land management agencies to partner; these include top-down decision-making processes, conflicting goals and missions between different agencies, inflexible policies such as employee performance evaluation criteria that do not account for time spent on collaborative engagements, and limited personnel, time, and money to sustain what are often multi-year, ongoing efforts (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Many federal land management agencies have experienced both a loss of resources and an overall loss of capacity, especially when personnel are burdened with other professional duties, when collaboration-related responsibilities are added onto separate jobs, or no training is provided; many are not able to meet the added administrative effort, reporting requirements, and communication necessary for maintaining collaborative relationships (McCreary, Seekamp, Cervený, et al., 2012a,b, pp. 160–166; Seekamp & Cervený, 2010; Weddell et al., 2009). These barriers are likely magnified when

government agencies partner with each other, which is often; for example, the Forest Service's most frequent type of partner is another government agency (Seekamp et al., 2013). Moreover, even though leadership of federal land management agencies emphasize collaborative relationships, actual development of them remained largely driven by individual employee initiative, making attitudinal barriers all the more relevant (Seekamp et al., 2013).

Attitudinal barriers include agency personnel's lack of trust, identity-based attitudes such as stereotypes, disciplinary biases, organizational norms and culture that stifle creativity and breed fear of loss of control or failure, and a lack of support for collaboration from upper management especially in periods of fiscal restraint where the agency must first address core activities (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Even though collaborative relationships are overwhelmingly utilized in federal land management agencies, a survey of Forest Service personnel indicated that while they were essential to completing critical tasks, they did not view them as the most efficient way to achieve agency goals (Seekamp et al., 2013). In order to engage in collaborative relationships, the ties between federal land management agencies and partners require a mixture of trust, power sharing, and interdependence (Seekamp & Cerveny, 2010). As Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) note, collaborative relationships are built first and foremost on people, and therefore personnel's perceptions of collaborative relationships have enormous potential to either foster or sabotage relationships.

Other threats to successful collaboration include a lack of familiarity or expertise with the process, where the time requirements are underestimated and not enough effort is focused on process management (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Additionally, skills necessary to support collaboration, such as facilitation, communication, and outreach techniques, are often not taught, despite the prevalence of collaborative relationships in federal land management agencies (Absher, 2009; Seekamp et al., 2013; Selin et al., 1997; Weddell, Fedorchak, & Wright, 2012). Given the lack of training and reward structures, some federal employees may worry about being penalized for a failed collaboration (Selin et al., 1997). Collaborations can also be threatened by interactions outside of the process, such as when stakeholders are in conflict on additional issues or when politics impacts partner relationships (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000).

Collaboration involves dynamic relationships and evolving processes that can improve institutional capacity and decision-making (Seekamp & Cerveny, 2010). Despite the challenges for federal land management agencies to build and maintain collaborations, they remain a common tool and a management strategy in their own right. In this research, we investigate the challenges and opportunities for collaborations involving federal land management agencies and the many newly-formed state offices of outdoor recreation that have been created around the U.S.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

Our investigation utilized two traditional approaches within qualitative research – a collective case study in conjunction with a narrative approach to qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2012). State offices comprise cases with well-defined boundaries (the office, task force, commission, etc.) that were comparable given their similar purposes, structures, dates of creation, and interactions with each other. A collective case study allows us to provide a detailed description of each case as well as make comparisons across them, identifying and comparing salient themes (Stake, 2006). However, case study research typically relies on an extensive amount of information from multiple, varied sources, which is almost entirely absent for state offices. Therefore, we also relied on a narrative approach given that participants' experiences were the best data source. In seeking to better understand how and why state offices were created, we utilized narrative

techniques to tell the story of how the offices have emerged as well as the experiences or challenges they have faced when trying to partner with federal land management agencies.

2.2. Data collection

Secondary data collection. We compiled as much externally-accessible information as possible on each state office from online sources, consolidating it into a table for greater ease of comparison between states (Online Supplementary Material). Online sources consisted primarily of the websites of each state office of outdoor recreation as well as major news media outlets. Topics of interest compiled in the table were guided by the study's objectives and include: date and method of establishment; physical and organizational location; mission; program areas; organizational structure; and amount and source of the budget. Other relevant information was collected on the significance of outdoor recreation to the state (e.g., type and amount of public land, levels of resident and non-resident participation in outdoor recreation, and its economic impact). The comparative table was used to develop interview questions, and interview participants were asked to verify all the secondary data collected.

Primary data collection. The leadership within the state offices includes directors, policy advisors, program managers, and specialists. Those individuals were interviewed given their role in directing the course of the new organization. If a director had not yet been hired, those closest to the office – such as an office advocate or the senior official in the hiring department – was asked to participate. A director or representative from each of the 11 state offices was contacted, and as more state offices were established throughout the period of data collection, their leadership was contacted as well. Additional participants were selected if their relationship with the office added further insight (e.g., when a director was not involved in the creation process), but no more than two representatives from an office were invited. Data collection ceased when at least one member of the leadership within each state office had been interviewed.

Interviews were centered around five key concepts: 1) the offices' backgrounds; 2) their goals and programs; 3) their internal organization and resources; 4) their external collaborations; and 5) best practices in overcoming challenges in existing and future collaborations. The questions pertaining to state offices' external collaborations specifically addressed existing and/or potential collaborations with federal land management agencies. More explicitly, we asked "How does [state name] [office name] collaborate, partner, and/or interact with federal land management agencies?" Depending upon interviewees' responses, we followed up with one of three probes: 1) "Are there any barriers that prohibit the [state name] [office name] from effectively collaborating with federal land management agencies?"; 2) "Are there any resources needed to enable more effective collaboration with federal land management agencies?"; 3) "How would the [state name] [office name] expect or desire to interact with federal land management agencies in the future." The full semi-structured interview script is provided in the online supplementary material.

The use of semi-structured interviews allowed questions that were tailored to the unique level of development of each office and the differences inherent in each state effort. Interviews were conducted over the phone due to the wide geographic dispersion of the participants. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

2.3. Data analysis

The collection and analysis of interview data was integrated as described in Creswell's iterative "data analysis spiral" (2012, p. 183). The spiral denotes an iterative and flexible approach to qualitative analysis, in which the researcher repeatedly touches on: *data managing; reading and memoing; describing, classifying, and interpreting; and presenting and visualizing* the data. Integrating analysis with collection

Table 1
A priori codes from the collaboration literature.

Motivations to partner	Benefits of collaboration	Challenges of collaboration	Reference
Limited resources; employee motivations varied with individuals	Enhanced capacity	Not enough administrative support or time; limited recognition; not part of employee job description	Barrow et al., (2012)
Necessity due to high demand for public involvement; interdependence; expanding mission	Improved stakeholder relations; increased agency capacity; increased agency legitimacy	Evolving structures and missions over lifetime of the collaboration; NPS's new role as facilitator rather than landowner	Barton (2016)
Interpersonal, intrapersonal, and institutional			McCreary, Seekamp, Cervený, et al., (2012)a,b
Necessity; dependent on individual employee's motivation; varied institutional support		Lack of organized support; personnel burdened by other duties; high public demand to partner	McCreary et al. (2012a,b)
		Mission alignment; trouble sustaining momentum; lack of resources; bureaucratic NPS policies; partners' limited capacity	McPadden and Margerum (2014)
Funding backlog; shifting demographic landscape; changing societal expectations of philanthropy	Greater private support; improved services	Institutional barriers in creating and maintaining formal collaborations; centralized authority at higher organizational levels; lack of recognition or consideration in performance reviews	National Park System Advisory Board (2014)
	Long-term, ongoing assistance; synergistic outcomes	Extra time and energy; lack of institutional support; job compression	Seekamp and Cervený (2010)
	Matching funds	Not enough time or resources for collaboration; lack of organizational support; not accounted for in performance; inability to share decision-making; lack of internal recognition	Seekamp et al., (2013)
Mandated by laws such as NEPA	Resolve conflicts; shared vision; "intangible" benefits such as greater trust and information sharing; reduced litigation	Collaborations inconsistently used throughout agency	Selin (1995)
Improved stakeholder relations; better support for the park or NPS mission; better coordination; better decision-making		Lack of training, support, or incentives; concern over violating laws; concerns about politics; institutional barriers; sharing control	Selin et al., (1997)
	Greater innovation, effectiveness, and efficiency; better decision-making; greater capacity; improved communication and coordination	Difficulty planning for collaborative commitments; difficulty establishing structures; lack of training or reward structure; bureaucracy; rigid policies	Weddell et al., (2009)
Necessity; loss of capacity; duty; interdependence; shared vision	Better decision-making; greater effectiveness; improved stakeholder relations; improved communication; improved coordination; increased capacity; greater efficiency; greater stakeholder buy-in	Lack of training; complex or rigid agency reporting policies	Weddell et al., (2012)
		Loss of control; mistrust; uncertainty; fear; additional time, resources, and effort required; lack of incentives, rewards, training, or support structure; bureaucracy; complex requirements; job compression	Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000)

enabled constant refinement of the research instrument and improved probes as well as intellectual connectivity from one interview to the next, ensuring higher quality data.

Data managing involved converting recordings into transcripts (Creswell, 2012). *Reading and memoing* the transcripts allowed us to identify topics for further inquiry, develop themes, refine categories, and constantly compare new data to previously-collected data. A data accounting sheet, created at the beginning of the analysis, was used to record individual codes as they appeared with each case, illuminating individual responses and variations in a concise, comprehensive format while avoiding generalizations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The master table (Online Supplementary Material), originally used to help design interview questions, continued to provide context for state offices and organize relevant variables in a tabular format. Next, we *described, classified, and interpreted data* into codes and themes and explored their relationships using a deductive-inductive approach (Creswell, 2012). Open coding allowed for the inductive emergence of themes, and a priori codes from the collaboration in natural resource management research reviewed above were used in a deductive manner (see Table 1). Transcripts were coded line-by-line, and a general accounting scheme was used to organize codes around key domains such as processes, challenges, and strategies (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Codes were kept in context by consistently using the transcripts to stay fully immersed in the data; they were periodically re-read and re-examined as they become more salient. After utilizing first-level coding to summarize data, pattern-level coding strategies were used to inform

inferences (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 70). Lastly, *representing and visualizing the data* allowed for further interrogation and refinement of the themes, both within and across cases (Creswell, 2012).

3. Results

3.1. Characterizing the state offices

Each office was formed through the support of multiple interest groups, underwent a political process to be placed in state government, hired leadership, defined or further expanded their goals, developed programs, and built collaborations – all of which had transformative effects for each office in defining their niche within outdoor recreation management. Many states recognize outdoor recreation as a principal reason why people come to live, work, or relocate businesses to their states, and many states perceive a disconnect between the economic impact of outdoor recreation and the investments to support it. Without exception, each state office is tied to economic development, and each office also explicitly recognizes the inherent benefits of outdoor recreation to other public sectors such as conservation, tourism, community planning, transportation, and health. Given the inherently intersectional nature of outdoor recreation (refer to Sausser and Smith (2018) for more details), and each office's role as a coordinator, offices balance representing the industry's needs with improving outdoor recreation outcomes throughout other sectors. Offices are nuanced in how they perceive their role in providing those benefits, and their names,

Table 2
Comparing state offices across the conceptual framework.

Framework Category	Description	Archetypal Quote	State Offices, Location within Government
<i>Industry First</i>	Outdoor recreation is perceived as a means to economic development, where conservation is primarily seen as a necessary component of infrastructure maintenance, and benefits beyond economic development are desired but not targeted. Offices often act as an extension of the state's economic development arm (even when not directly situated within it), and their mission and origins are rooted in the economic benefits of outdoor recreation.	"This office is here to support, promote, and expand...the outdoor recreation employment opportunities in the state. And ... this office is here to support and promote those things that make North Carolina unique that allows the outdoor recreation industry to thrive here and that also attracts new outdoor recreational businesses."	Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic Commission, chaired by the Dept. of Natural Resources and the Division of Tourism, Film, and the Arts North Carolina Office of Outdoor Industry Recruitment, Dept. of Commerce Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Office, Division of State Parks
<i>Industry And</i>	The perception of outdoor recreation is transitioning from a means to economic development to an end in and of itself. Offices support not just the outdoor economy but also conservation, education, or other benefits of outdoor recreation such as improved health or greater quality of life. Most are housed in the state's economic development arm and justify non-economic goals for the benefits they bring to the economy. Many of their origins lie in economics, but they have since expanded their scope of work.	"... Our mission is to really inspire industries and communities to come to life through Colorado's great outdoors...We see ourselves supporting the outdoor industry...[but] at the same time...it has to be an effort that goes hand-in-hand with...environmental stewardship, education and workforce training, and health and wellness...[because] the outdoor industry is not going to thrive without [their] support."	California Office of Sustainable Outdoor Recreation, Natural Resources Agency (legislation proposed, which has since been vetoed) Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation, Office of Economic Development Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation, Governor's Office of Economic Development Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Recreation Dept. Rhode Island Outdoor Recreation Council, chaired by the First Gentleman, Dept. of Environmental Management, and the Dept. of Health Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative, chaired by the Dept. of Forests, Parks, and Recreation and the Dept. of Tourism and Marketing Washington's Policy Advisor on Outdoor Recreation and Economic Development
<i>Industry After</i>	Outdoor recreation is perceived as an end in and of itself. Offices or initiatives adopt more expansive goals related to conservation, health, and communities, where economic development is a natural outcome more than its own priority. Their origins trace back to more than just economics, and they are housed in other departments rather than the state's economic development arm.	"In our view, outdoor recreation is an amplifier of all those other social goals. It can take education and make it better; it can take community well-being and health and make it better; it can take um the economy and make it better. Those are all outcomes that when viewed through the lens of outdoor rec, become more intense...it's not a matter of one or the other; it's let us help show you how outdoor rec can achieve these greater social aims."	

locations, or even their mandates fail to fully capture any diversity or subtle gradations. However, our data suggest the states do differ in how they conceptualize their relationship to the outdoor recreation industry – with some states seeing outdoor recreation as a means to economic development and others seeing outdoor recreation as an end in and of itself. Our analysis suggested state offices of outdoor recreation can be described and categorized as either *Industry First*, *Industry And*, or *Industry After* (see Table 2).

Industry First. *Industry First* offices prioritize economic development before conservation efforts. While these offices believe conservation is necessary to maintain the quality of outdoor recreation opportunities within their state, it remains outside their direct scope. Many offices were created solely out of the desire for state governments to amplify the economic benefits of the outdoor industry. For example, "Wyoming is known to be a boom-and-bust [economy]" and had been "hurting pretty hard," and the outdoor industry, which had always been considered a "secondary" component of the state's economy, was seen as an opportunity for economic diversification. In Maryland and North Carolina, the outdoor industry was a largely overlooked sector and a "new concept" to many decision-makers. Even the outdoor industry members themselves had "realized that they are bigger, and more important, than maybe even they've realized" (Quote from North Carolina; the source of future quotes will be identified by state abbreviations, e.g., NC). Advocating for representation for the outdoor industry in North Carolina was an "awareness campaign" because economic development professionals inside state government had not "spent their careers thinking about, well, how do hiking and biking and hunting and fishing, how does all of that...combine together to create revenue for the state?" In Maryland, it was difficult for the outdoor industry to gain access to capital, because "the bankers didn't understand that there was actually the opportunity...to make money." State offices served as a formal recognition of the outdoor industry's role within the state,

changing the conversation about outdoor recreation and facilitating greater state investment.

While *Industry First* offices recognize that "our outdoor assets are amazing" and they "can't kill the golden goose," they have to "[think] about infrastructure from an outdoor recreation standpoint" (WY) and on improving access to those resources with the goal to improve the economy. *Industry First* offices recognize the role of conservation in supporting the economy, but their overarching priority is to develop the economy through outdoor recreation.

Industry And. For states classified as *Industry And*, the impact of the outdoor industry was already widely recognized; rather than focusing attention on a small or fledgling industry, offices served to maintain the industry's status and provide support equivalent to that which other economic sectors enjoyed. In Utah, "there'd been task forces for a number of years pushing for something like this." In Montana, the director has,

found that the *idea* for this office or for the stated need for something *like* this office, has...been documented...[and] identified [that] there needs to be one congealing point for the outdoor recreation industry and economy. And so it has been identified in not so many words. It wasn't identified as 'Office of Outdoor Recreation' and this is where it lives, this is what it does...but definitely the need for it has been demonstrated over the years.

An advocate for California's office found a similar need to support what data had already proven to be a vital sector of the state economy, The realization that is slowly coming is, the outdoor economy is so robust...[in] California, at \$92 billion plus, and we need to take full advantage and try to prop up and enhance that economy in ways maybe we haven't done in the past.

Colorado's office emerged due to "external momentum about the

size and shape of [their] economy, more than anything else"; after the office was created, the director started with the existing industry, traveling to "regions that already had a footprint in the outdoor industry" and to those towns who were "invested in the conversation as opposed to just being interested." The well-established and well-known outdoor industries in these states justified the need for an office, allowing outdoor recreation to have more "center-stage importance" (VT) and to also take on more meaning beyond improving economic outcomes.

While the motivations of the *Industry And* offices overlap with those of the *Industry First* offices in terms of maintaining "infrastructure" and supporting access, they expand beyond merely improving access to support the economy to improving access to support the outdoor lifestyle. Although Utah's office promotes access for outdoor businesses to test new gear, they also promote access to activities such as an "afternoon bike ride" or a "noon run" that would allow employees to "still have that after-work lifestyle that makes it nice living here." For example, the leadership in Utah's office explained,

It's our belief that if you, as a resident, are truly happy with the recreational outlets you have, that are in your backyard, you're not only going to want to stay and live here, it's going to create a wonderful, happy active lifestyle for you and your family...you're going to tell your friends, you're going to tell people that are going to come visit, you're going to tell people that are maybe going to move here or businesses that might do the same. So, it all starts with making sure we have this amazing place...where residents can kind of be our biggest advocates.

Industry And states also support a much broader range of issues, explicitly defining additional program areas beyond economic development. In addition to supporting "those folks that are, you know, making the gear, making the goods, making the experience" (MT), offices such as Colorado also formally support conservation and stewardship, education and workforce training, and public health and wellness. Montana's office has five similar "roots" to guide its efforts. Mission statements are phrased broader, such as "[championing] communities, organizations, and people to come to life through Colorado's great outdoors." Collectively, *Industry And* offices see and promote the connections between the outdoor industry and other sectors, though not entirely to the extent as those state offices described as *Industry After*.

Industry After. For some *Industry After* states, the outdoor economy is well-established, and state offices seek to capitalize on the overall outdoor culture and also achieve improved economic outcomes as an extension of that culture. Both economic need and the desire to improve other social outcomes played a significant role in creating these state offices. For these states, economic outcomes are seen as a byproduct of the larger suite of social benefits that come from outdoor recreation. For example, legislation defines the role of Washington's policy advisor as achieving "job growth" and "economic development" but also explicitly includes increasing "opportunities" for, and "participation" in, outdoor recreation. In Rhode Island, the office was part of a broader gubernatorial initiative that highlighted the economic benefits of outdoor recreation but in reality, catered more to the needs of the state parks system and the opportunities for improved physical health outcomes. Another director noted the connection between a vibrant outdoor culture and the opportunity for the industry to address larger social needs,

People in Vermont...most people aren't a one-season, one-activity person. They're, you know, year-round, multiple sports. They hunt, they mountain bike, they ski...they do all kinds of things. It's just kind of what the lifestyle is like here...My job is to help get people outside and make it a pleasant and enjoyable experience...But I also see that there is...a landscape now. We need people. We need people my age. We need families. We need young people to stay here, to live here, to move here...There is sort of a renaissance of outdoor recreation related businesses...We already rely very heavily on our

tourism trade here in Vermont...it's time to take that to the next level.

One leader in Oregon noted that "the economics should be a natural outcome of well-run outdoor recreation in the state," but that it was not "the only goal." Instead, outdoor recreation could be a tool to "achieve broader social aims" (OR) or to solve "problems that we have as a society" (WA). As a leader from Oregon further explained of outdoor recreation,

It's the one thing that everybody agrees either improves your life, or it improves the economy, or it improves community health; take your pick, you're going to find somebody who agrees there's at least one benefit that they're willing to get behind.

Leadership close to Washington's office echoed,

Things like, public safety...education...those are big overarching priorities that are always going to trump something like outdoor recreation. So the huge challenge is, how do you continue to get adequate funding in a policy environment like that? I think part of the solution is showing how well outdoor recreation is a low-cost tool to generate economic activity and health and quality of life outcomes for relatively little in expenditures...I think you can show with public land, everything from parks to national monuments, that the money we're investing in public land and by extension outdoor recreation, we get some really great outcomes ...

The detailed rationale and the comprehensive benefits that advocates were able to incorporate enabled the *Industry After* offices to include larger mandates "independent of economic development goals and what the governor wants to do in that moment or not" (OR). While still recognizing and promoting the contributions of outdoor recreation to the economy, *Industry After* offices best capture the connections of outdoor recreation with conservation, health, and other sectors. Given the role of all state offices as coordinators, the goals and programs pursued by *Industry First*, *Industry And*, and *Industry After* offices will influence the collaborative relationships each office develops.

3.2. The ability of state offices to collaborate

Rather than operating their own programs, many offices have chosen to focus their limited resources on developing collaborative relationships with other local, state, and federal entities (e.g., businesses, organizations, agencies, etc.) involved in outdoor recreation. Offices participate in collaborations for many reasons, including limited resources, the intersectional and bipartisan nature of outdoor recreation, high demand from stakeholders, and to maximize their impact by working with other entities that share similar goals. Like many new state programs, offices operate with limited, if any, resources. Funding sources include states' general funds, state economic development entities, or state parks. The three council-like offices in Maryland, Rhode Island, and Vermont have received no funding. Offices are similarly limited in terms of human resources; more than a third have only one dedicated employee without administrative support, and some offices have asked for but failed to receive additional staffing support. Some larger offices are augmented by university interns or external grants, while council-like structures generally have 15 or more people involved. In the case of Vermont's collaborative, they readily welcomed outside stakeholders, noting that if "you want to be in VOREC, you're in VOREC" and that "we will help you find a task to take on, because, well, we need it." Utah's office summarizes their staffing constraints by noting:

We're a \$12 billion industry, and we have the largest office of outdoor recreation in the nation, and we have three people. *Three* people. When it comes to partnership, we have to work with pretty much everybody.

In addition to constrained resources and capacity, offices often develop collaborative relationships out of a need to be connected to the whole spectrum of actors involved in outdoor recreation. Many offices have taken a broader view of the economy and termed it an “ecosystem” (CO) that expands “beyond the buyers and sellers” (CA) to include other economic sectors as well as those who manage the land or provide access to it. For example, an advocate for California’s potential office described the breadth of the industry, stating, “There’s no such thing as the outdoor industry. The outdoor industry is a collective of many smaller industries that all play in the same sandbox.” The outdoor economy is naturally interlaced with other sectors such as land management, transportation, health, energy development, and more; outdoor recreation management “doesn’t exist in a vacuum” (WA) and necessitates coordination of diverse stakeholders and agencies. Offices therefore must assume a broader role and flexible approach: “if the word recreation can come into a sentence, we could be incorporated” (UT).

Given their resource constraints, their overlap with other public sectors, and the demand for stakeholder engagement, some offices also seek to partner in order to broaden their impact. For example, they noted relying on partners to deepen their knowledge in areas outside their immediate domain, such as looking to the economic development agency to help the new office learn which outdoor businesses were even present in the state. Partners can also help to “wave the flag” and communicate the value of outdoor recreation to new and broader audiences, ultimately becoming “additional boots on the ground to tell our story for us” (UT). Those “boots on the ground” vary given the different benefits of outdoor recreation each office seeks to amplify.

3.3. Collaboration between state offices and federal land management agencies

Each office engages with federal land management agencies, given the agencies are the primary land managers and providers of recreation in many of the states. The extent of collaboration varies from state to state, with some of the older offices having more experience collaborating directly with federal land management agencies. Federal land management agencies present challenges both new and old when collaborating with state offices; these challenges include limited resources, bureaucracy, and politics.

Limited resources. Federal land management agencies operate under similar staffing and financial constraints as state offices. State offices identified that many agency partners were subject to cycles in which positions were eliminated, left unfilled, or postponed due to a hiring freeze. Repeated staff turnover required continuous effort to maintain connections and often delayed already lengthy processes when new personnel would have to be filled in. Leadership close to Washington’s office explained this hindrance,

...functionally, they’re just, they have either eliminated positions or they have positions that have just not filled. In EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], in Forest Service, in all these different agencies that impact what we do with outdoor recreation...especially things like fishing, or salmon recovery, are hugely negatively impacted because of that kind of administrative neglect that’s going on right now...It’s almost like there’s a willful attempt to prove that these agencies are somehow broken by not hiring key positions.

Oregon’s office described the challenge of “getting the right people to the table,” noting that while the office might build a good relationship with local staff and make headway, suddenly there would “be a retirement or a reassignment” that would at times force the office “to start over again.” Wyoming’s office also noted that “staff turnover” ultimately “made it hard to get approvals” because “by the time you get an approval” and “everyone’s fine with the language” then a “new person would come in.” Staffing challenges within federal land management agencies were at times both a cause of and contributor to

bureaucratic difficulties.

Bureaucracy. The complicated structures, size, and policies of federal land management agencies made it difficult for state offices to discern who to build relationships with and also lengthened the time commitment of collaborative processes. Montana’s office director described each agency as a “sea of resources and knowledge,” but that beneficial characteristic could also be a daunting hurdle for offices to try to “maneuver.” When discussing challenges with staff turnover, Wyoming’s office leadership said, “I’m not even sure who controls that,” implying that while problems can be recognized, it is difficult to find the right personnel or path for correcting them. Additionally, given the decentralized structure of many of the federal land management agencies, formal agreements have to “go through a pretty long process just to get approval...basically [you have to get] every Forest Service attorney and everyone else in D.C. blessing this” (WY). The bureaucratic structures and policies of many federal land management agencies contributed to the political challenges many state offices noted in maintaining collaborative relationships.

Political ties. Forming collaborative relationships at the state level was difficult when lower administrative units lacked control over decisions – “so it may be something that a local person really wants to do, but then we have to sit there and go through a pretty long process just to get approval” (WY). Local staff “may be tied, they may be bound, by things going on over in Washington that have nothing to do with what’s happening on the ground here” (WA) in terms of policy direction and funding. Other political crises at the national level further complicated collaborations with state offices, especially with *Industry And* offices and those *Industry After* offices that coordinate with federal land management agencies on outdoor recreation policy. Washington’s office described the impact of national policy decisions within the state, describing longer and more intense wildfire seasons, and noting that “any time that happens, the Forest Service sweeps their recreation budgets and puts it towards firefighting...until that gets solved in Congress, and they end fire borrowing, that’s a big impediment to what we do here.” Washington’s office also described the “gridlock in Washington” as well as the recent proposals to “almost triple national park entrance fees while at the same time slashing the national park budget” as creating tension between states and federal land management agencies. In Utah, with its “Mighty Five” national parks, the government shutdown in 2013 “[hurt] the tourism industry,” leading the state to “[pay] the national government to open them up,” with the money yet to be repaid. Oregon’s office described political challenges on a broader level, saying,

There are, the things that they have flexibility on, they’re terrific to work with. But you eventually run into that wall, where it’s like, our federal partners locally can’t engage in something without getting crosswise with federal policy. And it’s an unfair position to put them into, and we don’t expect them to suddenly go rogue, you know, and start bucking federal policy on things. But when we reach that point, we just have to be understanding and look for different ways of getting our work done.

Strategies going forward. In recognizing the challenges presented by collaborations with federal land management agencies, state offices also commended them for working “within the constraints that they have” and “making it happen” (VT). Despite the challenges in partnering with federal land management agencies, all state offices look to partner to some extent in the future, ranging from maintaining an “open dialogue” and participating in “round-table discussions” to having a “presence in their planning processes” and developing formal agreements. Leadership within Utah’s office summarized, “We want to support them. We know they’re having challenges; they have challenges with not enough money, [and] they have challenges with not enough capacity.” While several state offices are new to directly collaborating with federal land management agencies, they highlighted several opportunities to improve their collaborations, including maintaining open

communication, utilizing agency staff as liaisons or gatekeepers, and encouraging policies that afford more authority to local personnel. Ultimately, state offices recognized the opportunity to develop a more collaborative mindset, noting that,

Part of the problem with some of the federal agencies is...their mission has been very clear, very clearly given to them to not look outside the specific borders of their land...And that can be a big problem. Some people are really sticklers about not looking across the border of their land ownership boundaries, and other people in federal agencies are really, really open to working hard, to understand how their piece of land management interacts with the surrounding community and the entire state. And we need a little bit more of an entire state or even a regional approach to a lot of these issues (OR).

Utah's office leadership further explained the need for a more collaborative approach, stating that "you have to trust that everyone's done due diligence." For example, there is an opportunity going forward to "teach everybody truly what the art of collaboration is – it's not just sharing data, but really trying to find a solution together."

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the newly-established state offices of outdoor recreation which have recently been formed around the country. The investigation was guided by two broad objectives: (1) describe the goals, objectives, and operations of state-level outdoor recreation offices; and (2) ascertain how these offices interact and collaborate with federal land management agencies. Our discussion briefly reviews the typology of state offices of outdoor recreation that emerged from our descriptive analysis and then more substantively addresses how the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge pertaining to collaborations in state/federal natural resource management.

Our collection of secondary data and analysis of 22 interviews with leadership of state offices revealed these offices vary in how they conceptualize their relationship to the outdoor recreation industry. Some offices, dubbed *Industry First*, focus primarily on growing their states' economy through outdoor recreation. Others, described as *Industry And*, focus on developing their states' economy through outdoor recreation while simultaneously focusing on other public policy issues, such as transportation and healthcare, that intersect with outdoor recreation. The last type of state office, characterized as *Industry After*, sees outdoor recreation as a means to achieve desirable social goals (e.g., improved quality of life, better physical and psychological health, etc.). Our analysis also yielded additional insights related to the formation, organization, and types of programs administered by these offices; we do not detail these findings here, but point interested readers to Sausser and Smith (2018) for specifics.

Regarding our second objective, our analysis revealed there are a variety of opportunities for state offices to partner with federal land management agencies due to their shared goals of supporting outdoor recreation and conservation. While collaboration is not mandated, state offices – especially those in western states with large amounts of public land – will likely need to coordinate with the federal land management agencies to be effective in meeting their mandates. The type and level of collaboration will vary to suit state priorities since offices are meant to work at the state level. Many factors increase the likelihood of future collaboration, including: shared missions; interdependence; interpersonal, intrapersonal, and institutional motivations; and current collaboration status (Barrow, Seekamp, & Cerveny, 2012; Barton, 2016; McCreary et al., 2012a,b, pp. 160–166; McCreary, Seekamp, Cerveny, et al., 2012a,b, pp. 160–166; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000).

Most, if not all, federal land management agencies support outdoor recreation and conservation even without specific or primary mandates to manage for them. For example, even though the Army Corps of

Engineers inherited recreation unexpectedly after building dams for flood control, and it leases its recreation facilities to other organizations, it still provides for millions of outdoor recreation experiences through large multi-purpose reservoir projects (Patterson, Doyle, & Kuzma, 2018). Similarly, all state offices support outdoor recreation; even those state offices categorized as *Industry First* support conservation to the extent that it serves the outdoor economy. In addition to pursuing complementary missions, state offices and federal land management agencies are to varying degrees interdependent; many states depend on access to public land for outdoor recreation, and state offices are designed to coordinate rather than manage their own lands.

Federal land management agencies would likely benefit from collaborating with state offices because these state offices hold a substantial amount of political clout with state land management agencies whose management actions can directly and indirectly affect the management of federal lands. Because federal land management agencies and state offices of outdoor recreation have the same constituents – outdoor recreationists and the broader public – collaborations between the two types of organizations could lead to mutually-beneficial outcomes. Federal land management agencies such as the National Park Service provide funds, technical assistance, and incentives to outdoor recreation projects that are not on federal lands (Barton, 2016). For example, the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program provides funds to improve outdoor recreation infrastructure. These types of programs are ripe to serve as initial collaborations between federal land management agencies and state offices.

As described by McCreary et al. (2012a,b), federal land management agencies have interpersonal, intrapersonal, and institutional motivations to partner with state offices. Interpersonal motivations – such as a partner's passion, desire for civic engagement, to be part of the community, or to build support for agency actions – are present within federal land management agencies and state offices. Federal land management agencies frequently partner to build support for agency programs, and many state offices expressed a desire to partner more often or more consistently. State offices also have intrapersonal motivations to partner – those described as a sense of accomplishment or enjoyment, etc. – as reflected in interviewee comments about working overtime, their passion for their jobs, or wanting to "tell the story" (UT) of their partners, or even as indicated by the years of experience in the greater field of outdoor recreation. State offices also overwhelmingly have institutional motivations to partner, as noted in our findings. These interpersonal, intrapersonal, and institutional motivations to partner have likely contributed to those relationships already established between state offices and federal land management agencies.

Some state offices already have extensive connections with federal land management agencies, such as Utah's grant workshop being hosted with the assistance of the National Park Service. Even for those with predominantly consultative relationships, all state offices favorably reviewed their existing relationships with federal land management agencies, and many expressed a desire for continued or intensified interactions. Continued involvement is likely, especially given federal land management agencies have a long history of partnering and public involvement. In addition, state offices were created to implement outreach and coordination efforts. Future collaboration with federal land management agencies will be made easier by the creation of networks spanning multiple state offices. Common actors were involved in the creation of multiple states (such as Recreational Equipment, Inc. and the Outdoor Industry Association), and state offices are already organizing to support a national platform following a Confluence Summit (Confluence of States, 2019). Additionally, a representative from the Outdoor Industry Association described the organization as willing to be a "hub" and a "central convener...not just in creating these positions but also in interacting with them."

Existing collaboration will likely intensify in the future; McCreary et al. (2012a,b) state that internal commitment fosters employee

motivation to partner, while external factors influence the type and number of partners, both of which are increasing. First, leadership of the Department of Interior has already expressed a desire for more state offices to be created (J. Snyder, personal communication, July 20, 2018), and the National Park Service is considering its own office of outdoor recreation (Ratcliffe, Sherwood, & Milnor, 2017). Organizational support would be positive for collaborative relationships considering that previous studies have recognized a lack of organization support or reward structure as a barrier to effective collaboration (Barrow et al., 2012; McCreary, Seekamp, Cerveny, et al., 2012a,b, pp. 160–166; Seekamp et al., 2013; Selin et al., 1997; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Second, state offices are a new type of partner, with plenty of variations, and more and more are being created, providing a new demand for collaboration. However, in order for collaborations to be productive, state offices and federal land management agencies must overcome several challenges.

4.1. Challenges to address

The type and degree of engagement between state offices and federal land management agencies varied widely. For many offices, interactions were limited to information sharing given their newness. Offices that were more engaged with federal land management agencies tended to be older and in western states with extensive amounts of federal land. State office leadership, whether based on their current role or previous experience in other positions, emphasized many challenges for collaborating with federal land management agencies previously identified in the literature.

Staffing. State offices recognized staffing as a barrier to working with federal land management agencies, which has already received extensive attention in the literature, including concerns about turnover and vacancies (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). While states did not explicitly mention more fine-grained staffing challenges noted in the literature – such as job compression (Barrow et al., 2012; Seekamp & Cerveny, 2010; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000) and lack of training (Weddell et al., 2012, 2009; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000) or support (Barrow et al., 2012; McCreary et al., 2012a,b, Seekamp & Cerveny, 2010; Seekamp et al., 2013; Selin et al., 1997; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000) or time (Barrow et al., 2012; Seekamp & Cerveny, 2010; Seekamp et al., 2013; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000) – this is not surprising given that interactions have been somewhat limited so far. Yet the current delays and frustration caused by turnover and vacancies alone could still lead to burnout in partners, and the anticipation of additional staffing problems could preclude development of deeper collaborations. Adequate staffing is important given that collaborations require extra time, effort, and internal support (Seekamp & Cerveny, 2010; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000), and collaborations struggle when developing them is not part of individuals' job descriptions or when they cause job compression (Barrow et al., 2012; McCreary et al., 2012a,b; Seekamp & Cerveny, 2010; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). This ultimately leads to collaborations being inconsistently used throughout the agency (Selin, 1995). Leadership in Utah's office recognized the potential for staffing challenges on both sides, saying, “people transition so fast out of state, local, and federal government that it's hard to stay on everyone's radar.”

Yet collaborations are fundamentally between people, not institutions (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000) and their utilization can largely depend on individual employee's motivations to partner (Barrow et al., 2012; McCreary et al., 2012a,b; McCreary, Seekamp, Cerveny, et al., 2012a,b; Selin, 1995). If collaborations are to remain an effective tool for agencies to increase capacity or achieve goals, then agencies must first invest in staff, providing adequate positions, time, training, recognition, and support. Their staffing difficulties are not unknown to them (e.g., National Park System Advisory Board, 2014), but having other partners, and especially other government agencies, publicly recognize these challenges can help justify additional investments in

federal land management agencies staff. However, staffing is a function of resources allocated to an agency, which is inherently a political outcome.

Politics. State offices recognize the lack of control of lower federal administrative units in decision-making processes as well as rigid policies that disempower local interests (National Park System Advisory Board, 2014; Seekamp et al., 2013; Selin et al., 1997; Weddell et al., 2009, 2012). These barriers are inherent to the hierarchical structure of most federal land management agencies, and political challenges are to be expected given their hierarchical structures and the frequency of changes in administration at regional and national levels. Reduction of barriers would require systemic change to traditional agency policies and structures, but efforts to improve stakeholder input processes, streamline the development of formal agreements, and provide more local control would improve collaborations with state offices while also reducing bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy. Similar to political challenges, state offices recognized another widely acknowledged barrier to collaborating with federal land management agencies: bureaucracy (National Park System Advisory Board, 2014; McPadden & Margerum, 2014; Selin et al., 1997; Weddell et al., 2012, 2009; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Bureaucracy is to be expected given the large, decentralized nature of most federal land management agencies. In terms of collaborations, the complexity of navigating laws and agency policies, personnel, and resources can slow group momentum (McPadden & Margerum, 2014). State offices have limited resources and bandwidth to devote to the complex, time-intensive process of establishing formal collaborative arrangements, reducing the likelihood that they will partner with federal land management agencies to their desired level if conditions do not improve or worsen.

Parallel challenges. When developing collaborative relationships, state offices must overcome several internal challenges and the federal land management agencies must do the same with their own challenges of staffing, politics, and bureaucracy. Both sets of challenges bear marked similarities; state offices struggle with limited staffing, no or limited funding, and while state offices only recognized staffing issues in federal land management agencies, it is likely a result of those agencies' chronic underfunding (similar to state offices' limited resources). State offices cope with mission alignment and tension in representing the governor as well as competition with fellow state agencies. Similarly, federal land management agencies are politically tied to decisions made in regional or national offices and, given multiple mandates, theoretically face the same struggle in balancing private interests and the public good. State offices struggle with bandwidth given limited resources and a high demand to partner, while federal land management agencies are similarly active in collaborations with hundreds of organizations, but burdened by bureaucratic structures and policies that then limit their ability to provide support. Moreover, the staffing, political, and bureaucratic challenges state offices identified are largely beyond the control of any agency to change at the unit or regional level at which most collaborations would likely occur.

Given these similar and complex challenges, collaborations could theoretically magnify and compound the parallel challenges faced by state offices and federal land management agencies – or, given that federal land management agencies have a long history of collaboration despite similar challenges, state offices could adopt strategies to succeed despite them. And while state offices could theoretically be perceived as a burden to federal land management agencies, in that they are yet another partner to be added to an already extensive list of partners, collaborations with state offices could be worth the additional investment of time, resources, and energy, because they could: capitalize on mutually beneficial networks; support overtaxed and underappreciated agency personnel; provide an ongoing collaborative framework to increase capacity in the long-term; and engender state-level support for decisions on federal lands (Sausser, 2019).

4.2. Limitations and future research

Limitations. State offices of outdoor recreation ranged widely in their levels of development, with some having years of experience and others having been active for only a few months, while even other offices (OR, MD, CA) had not hired a director or additional staff. The variability in development and leadership across offices made it hard to compare certain characteristics, such as established programs and collaborations, that require time and experience to fully develop. Additionally, while our narrative approach leveraged the perspectives of state office leadership, their insight comprises only half of the evidence; the leadership of state offices may have introduced potential bias given we did not interview federal agency collaborators. Including agency staff in future research would contribute greatly to the limited body of research on collaboration in federal land management agencies.

Future Research. Future work on this topic should adopt and expand upon the framework we present for classifying offices as *Industry First*, *Industry And*, and *Industry After*. Future research should also analyze how the original offices have evolved over time and responded to changes in leadership (both within the office and with a new governor) and to each other; eight of the 11 state offices in this study have adopted common principles that provide an additional opportunity to analyze office development (Confluence of States, 2019). Future research could also analyze how successful state offices have been, factors predicting their success, and which type of organizational structure is most effective. Future research could also utilize more quantitative techniques to evaluate the development and operations of state offices. For example, social network analysis could help determine whether state offices act as “umbrella” organizations which unite other outdoor recreation interests (McCreary et al., 2012a,b). Such an analysis could provide insight into the overall connectivity of the outdoor recreation “ecosystem” within a state, including which stakeholders state offices are connected to and if state offices act as a bridge or were central to relationships between other stakeholders and federal land management agencies.

5. Conclusion

Over the last five years, more than 11 states have established state offices of outdoor recreation across the country. These offices – in the form of offices, task forces, policy advisors, councils, etc. – were created due to several broad economic, political, social, and physical dynamics in each state, with the goal of advancing the outdoor recreation economy and its inherent benefits to quality of life, health, conservation, and more. State offices blend the functions of state parks, tourism, and economic development agencies, developing collaborative relationships with other stakeholders to elevate outdoor recreation across sectors. The mission, organizational structure, and position within state governments customizes each office to the needs and priorities of its state, influencing its available resources, constraints, contexts, and longevity and ultimately what collaborative opportunities it pursues and for what purpose.

Future collaboration between state offices and federal land management agencies is likely given their shared support of conservation and outdoor recreation. State offices are closely tied to state land management agencies whose actions directly and indirectly impact the lands managed by federal agencies; state offices also share many of the same constituents. Recent trends in public lands management have encouraged federal land management agencies to look beyond their boundaries and engage with stakeholders to improve decision-making and outcomes, and state offices can help federal land management agencies better accomplish these goals through collaboration. Because collaborative relationships require additional investments of time, energy, and resources, and the development of specific skills, they can present similar challenges for both state offices and federal land management agencies. State offices, despite their need to partner, struggle

with mission alignment, limited resources, and bandwidth. Federal land management agencies were not designed with collaboration as a priority, and lack the infrastructure or expertise to support it, leading to struggles related to staffing, politics, and bureaucracy. However, collaboration between state offices and federal land management agencies is well-worth the investment; state offices can utilize existing networks established and maintained by personnel within federal land management agencies, support overtaxed and underappreciated federal land management agencies’ personnel, and advocate on behalf of federal land management agencies. Most importantly, state offices can provide a centralized conduit through which state-federal collaboration on public lands management can be organized.

State offices of outdoor recreation are a formal recognition of the immense role outdoor recreation has to play in providing robust economies and an exceptional quality of life. State offices are looking through the “lens of outdoor recreation” to “step up and do right by the environment” and to “grow the economy in a way that represents their values,” even as support for federal land management agencies and conservation is declining. The varied connotations of outdoor recreation, whether it is a means for economic development or an end in and of itself, clearly resonate with states across the country – and the message is not likely to fade. Leadership from Oregon’s office of outdoor recreation explains the significance of state offices and what they mean for the future of outdoor recreation:

It is rare for any state to support outdoor recreation over the long-term. We just, we don't compete well enough in state priorities and budgets...There's always going to be some critical human need - education, healthcare, employment, corrections - that's going to supersede outdoor rec. Because outdoor rec is leisure, and when you look at it that way, well it's just what you do for fun. It's what you do after you have affordable housing, and healthcare for everybody, and a well-educated population...So when it comes time to provide budget and resources and thinking and power and governor support and legislative support, it's like, yeah, yeah, yeah, we'll get to it... You need some sort of stable group whose mission it is, day-in, day-out, year-in, year-out, administration to administration, to advance the cause and elevate outdoor recreation, not just for the economic benefits, but because of the way it improves people's lives...But that's why we think just the establishment of an office like this is important, independent of economic development goals and what the governor wants to do in that moment or not. It's important to have, to start setting something in place that will provide a legacy.

State offices of outdoor recreation are uniquely positioned to influence how outdoor recreation is managed across the U.S. They can blend the functions of economic development, tourism, and land management, ultimately providing innovative opportunities for collaborative management. Our investigation illustrated there are many reasons why these state offices should advocate for, and collaborate with, federal land management agencies to improve the ability of outdoor recreation to contribute to nearly every facet of public life - whether it is growing the economy, safeguarding natural resources, or facilitating a higher quality of life.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

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