

“ ! ”

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE:

Recreation as a
Driver of Economic
and Workforce
Development

JAYSON SEAMAN

CINDY HARTMAN

HANNAH FALCONE & KATE
MOSCOUVER

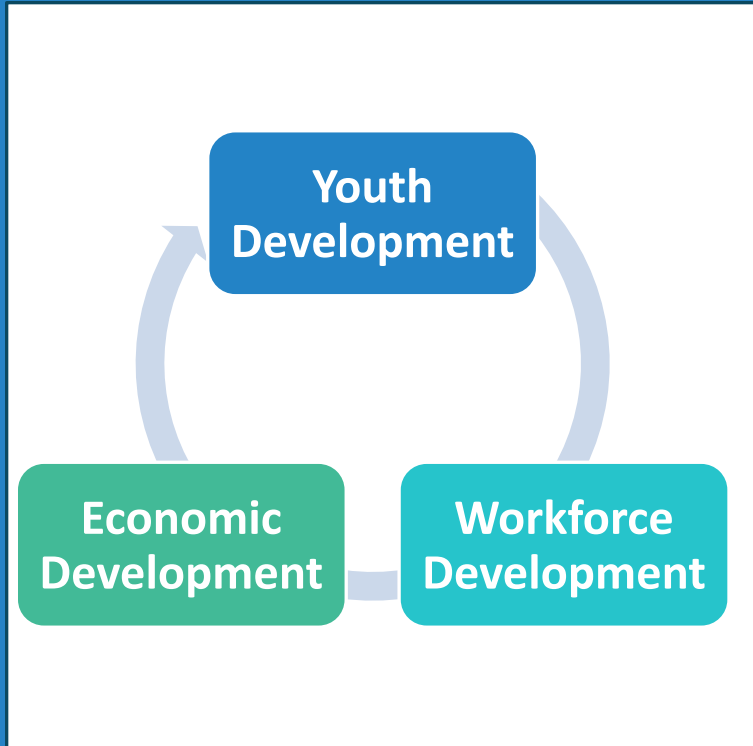


University of New Hampshire

College of Health and Human Services

Recreation Management & Policy

Our Current Focus



Youth Development

- Exploring NH youth's future orientation and decision making about residential futures in NH
- Understanding role of messaging from parents, teachers, employers, etc.

Workforce Development

- Exploring outdoor recreation as an important learning environment for STEM
- CTE pathways for STEM learning & outdoor recreation jobs

Economic Impact

- Collaborating with NH ORID office and Granite Outdoor Alliance to support economic and workforce development in NH
- Building secondary-postgraduate career pathway programs

Overview of Where We're Going Today



What's the Current Story about Recreation? (Empirical and Narrative Realities)



Developing Alternative Stories, as Told by Your Colleagues



Re-telling Our Story: Developing a Shared Narrative of Recreation



Workforce and Economic Empirical Data

WE'RE GOING TO GAMIFY THIS....

GET YOUR PHONES READY!

Recreation's economic impact

Local public park and recreation agencies in the United States generated nearly \$218 billion in economic activity in 2019 ([NRPA, 2022](#))

Recreation's economic impact

Value added by NNE state (local parks & recreation contribution to state GDP):

- MA: >\$757M
- CT: >\$301M
- ME: >\$106M
- RI: >\$78M
- NH: >\$74M
- VT: >\$51M

Recreation's economic impact

Outdoor Recreation in the United States generated more than \$1.1T in economic activity in 2022 ([Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, 2023](#))

OR's impact surpasses mining, utilities, farming and ranching, and chemical products manufacturing.

Recreation's economic impact

Value added by **outdoor recreation** in NNE state (contribution to GDP)

- VT: \$1.9B (4.6% of state economy)
- ME: \$3.3B (3.9% of state economy)
- NH: \$3.3B (3.2% of state economy)
- RI: \$1.7B (2.3% of state economy)
- MA: \$11.8B (1.7% of state economy)
- CT: \$4.6B (1.4% of state economy)

Recreation jobs

Recreation supported almost **1 million jobs** that boosted labor income by more than \$63 billion in 2021 ([NRPA, 2022](#))

of employees in **local parks and recreation agencies**: 385,000

By NNE state:

- CT: 4,647 (\$207M in compensation)
- ME: 1,887 (\$71M in compensation)
- MA: 8,462 (\$564M in compensation)
- NH: 1,286 (50M in compensation)
- RI: 1,063 (\$57M in compensation)
- VT: 854 (\$35M in compensation)

Recreation jobs

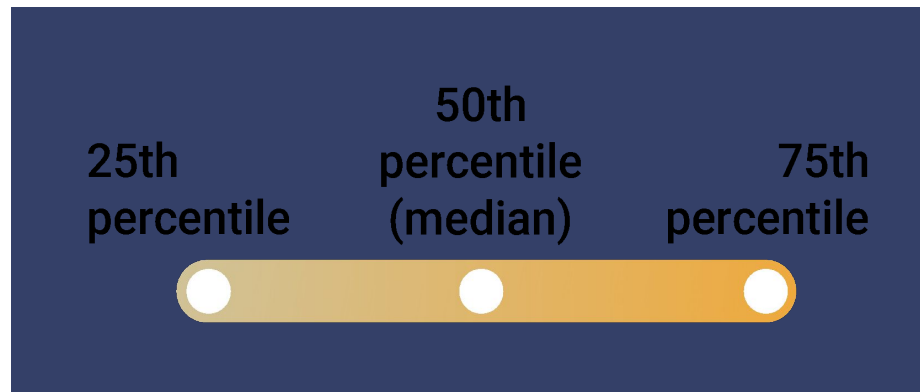
Outdoor recreation supported **4,978,516 jobs** nationwide in 2022 ([US Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2023](#))

By NNE state:

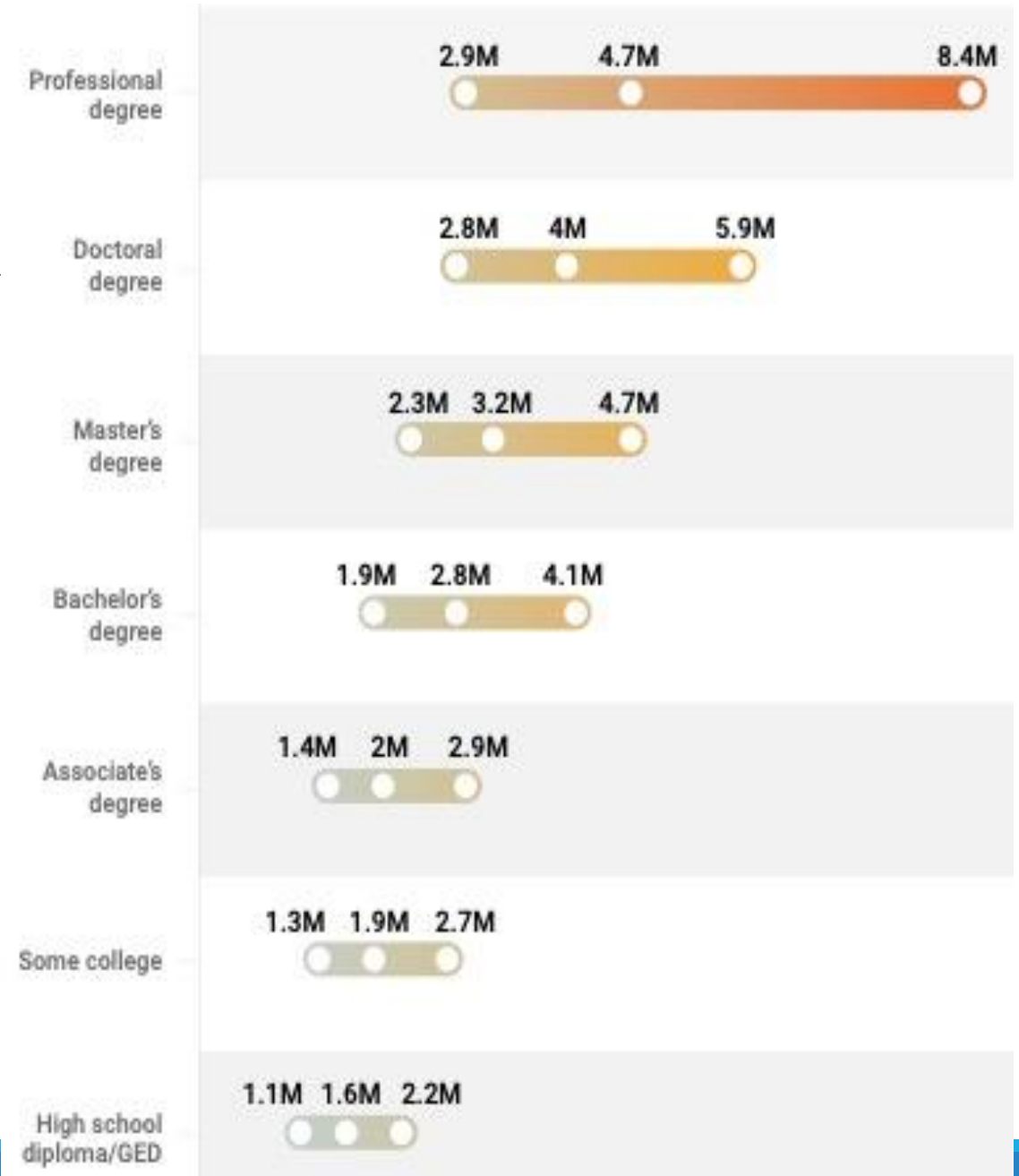
- CT: 45,776 (2.6%, +5.9% over 2021) = \$2.1B in compensation
- **ME: 32,274 (5%, +7.3% over 2021) = \$1.5B in compensation**
- MA: 102,687 (2.7%, +10.2% over 2021) = \$6B in compensation
- NH: 30,852 (4.8%, +10.3% over 2021) = \$1.5B in compensation
- RI: 18,000 (3.6%, +6.6% over 2021) = \$836M in compensation
- VT: 15,340 (4.8%, +12.4% over 2021) = \$700M in compensation

Recreation jobs - credentials

Lifetime earning range by educational level

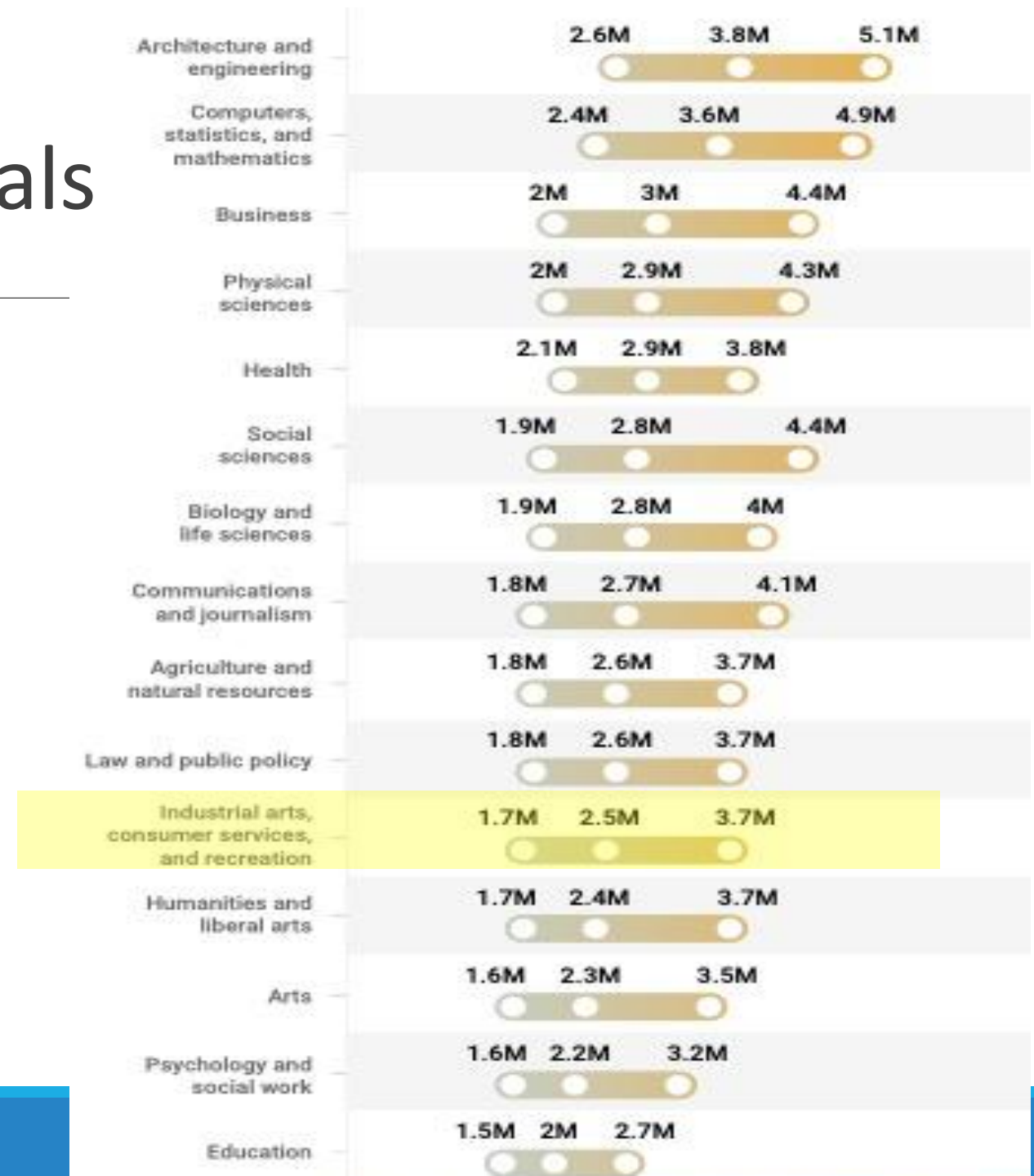
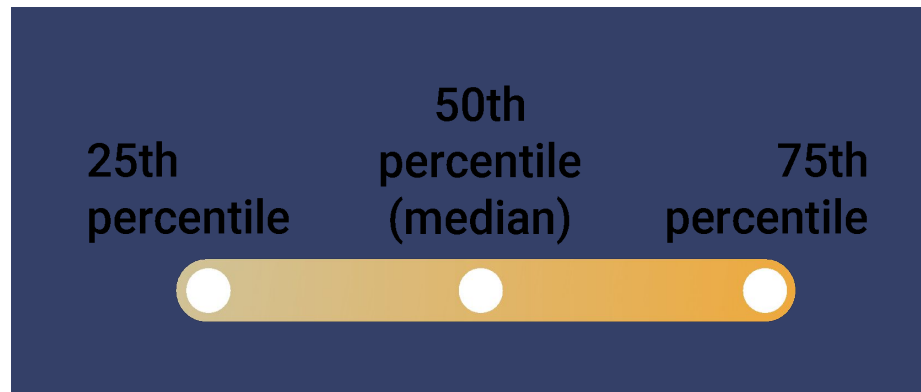


(Carnevale et al, 2021)



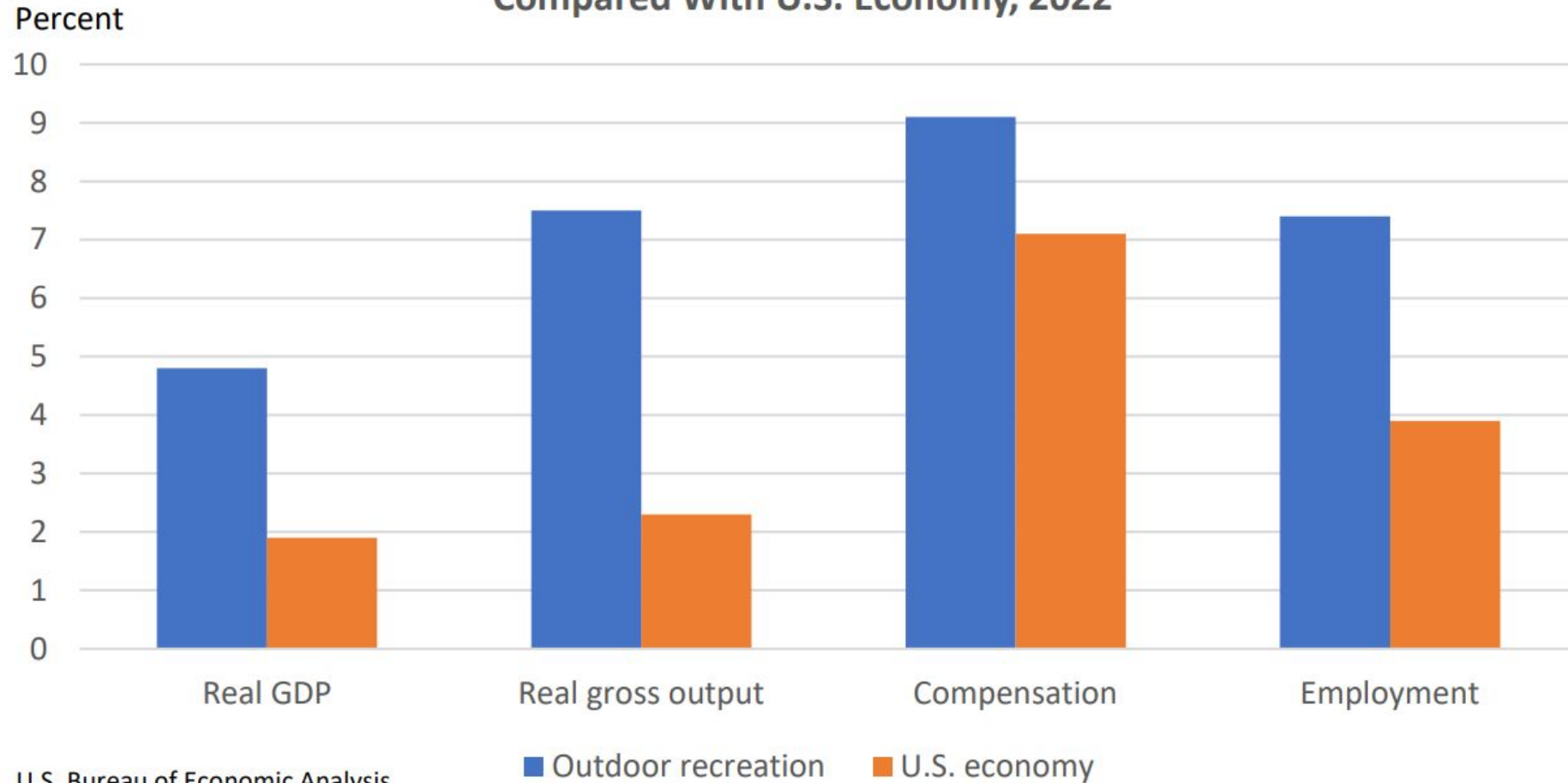
Recreation jobs - credentials

Lifetime earnings among bachelors degree holders by college major



Recreation's economic impact

Chart 1. Change in Outdoor Recreation,
Compared With U.S. Economy, 2022



<https://www.bea.gov/news/2023/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2022>

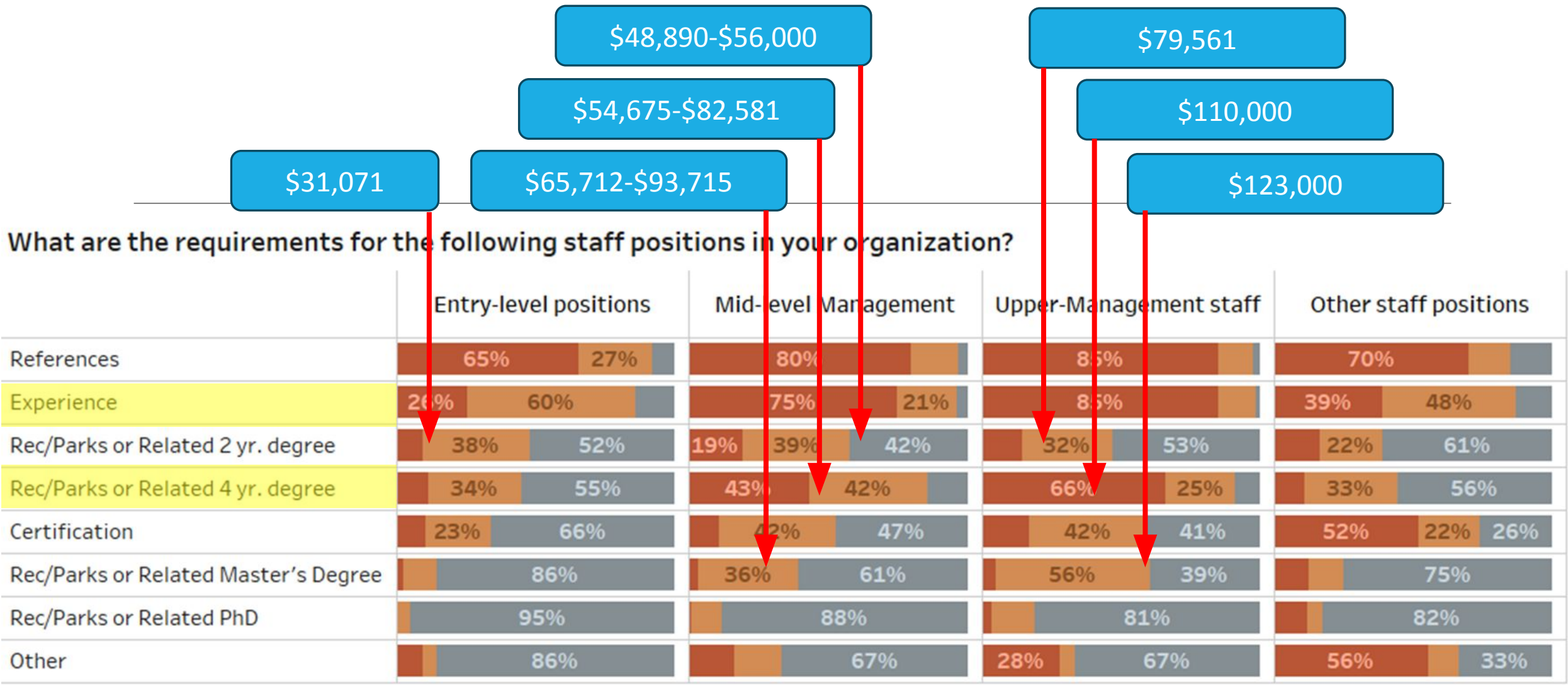
Recreation jobs - earnings

What are the requirements for the following staff positions in your organization?

	Entry-level positions	Mid-level Management	Upper-Management staff	Other staff positions
References	65% 27%	80%	85%	70%
Experience	26% 60%	75% 21%	85%	39% 48%
Rec/Parks or Related 2 yr. degree	38% 52%	19% 39% 42%	32% 53%	22% 61%
Rec/Parks or Related 4 yr. degree	34% 55%	43% 42%	66% 25%	33% 56%
Certification	23% 66%	42% 47%	42% 41%	52% 22% 26%
Rec/Parks or Related Master's Degree	86%	36% 61%	56% 39%	75%
Rec/Parks or Related PhD	95%	88%	81%	82%
Other	86%	67%	28% 67%	56% 33%

Categories are sorted in descending order by percent repoding required and preferred for entry-level positions. Source: RRC Associates and GP RED

(GP RED, 2021)



Categories are sorted in descending order by percent repoding required and preferred for entry-level positions. Source: RRC Associates and GP RED

(Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023; NRPA, 2023)

Recreation jobs - earnings

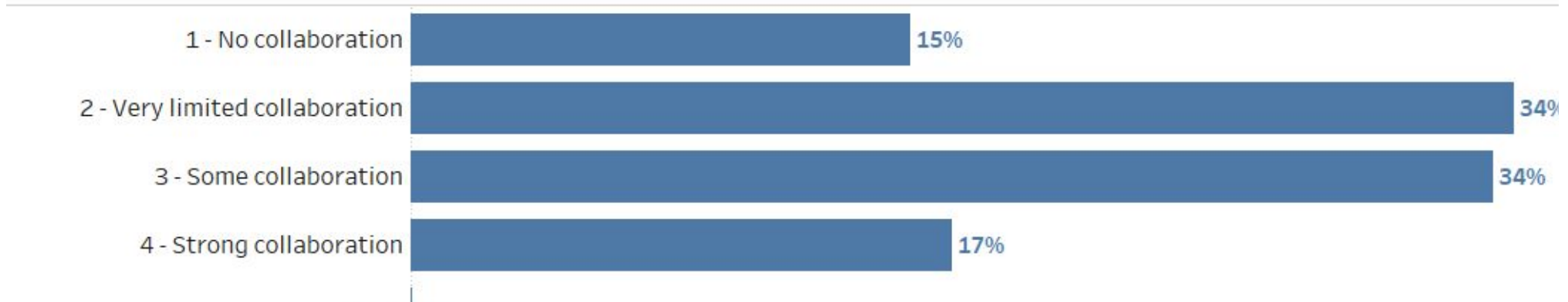
MEDIAN BASE SALARIES AND TYPICAL ANNUAL SALARY INCREASES

	January 1, 2023: Base Salary	Median Year-to-Year Percentage Change
Park and Recreation Agency Director	\$114,000	+4.8%
Planning Director	\$97,104	+4.1%
Director of Finance	\$101,234	+5.5%
Recreation Director	\$82,081	+4.5%
Park Operations Director	\$83,000	+4.7%
Park Operations	\$60,000	+4.8%
Facilities Manager	\$68,385	+5.2%
Athletics Supervisor	\$58,892	+5.0%
Aquatics Supervisor	\$58,183	+5.0%
Recreation Programs Coordinator	\$54,566	+5.0%
Marketing and Communications Director	\$70,000	+5.7%
Fitness Center Manager	\$66,428	+5.0%
Administrative Assistant	\$47,672	+5.0%

(NRPA, 2023, p. 14)

Collaboration with University Programs

Q 20: How would you describe the level of collaboration/contact your organization has with college or university recreation, parks, or related programs?



51% collaborate with college or university programs

- 17% call the collaboration level "strong."
- 39% have a relationship with one primary university.

Building a Workforce: Internship Programs

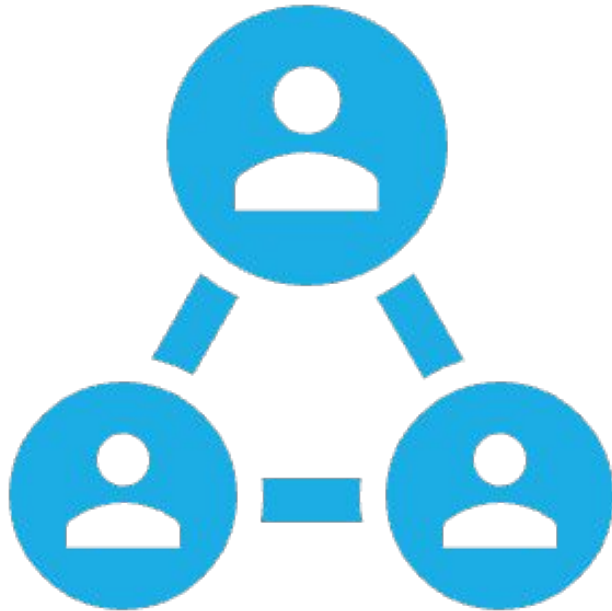
Q 19: Does your organization have an active college internship program?



Source: RRC Associates and GP RED

Summary of Empirical Data

- Policymakers and advocates are taking a “big tent” approach to defining recreation
- Recreation is increasing in economic importance especially in “amenity rich” areas
- Recreation shows growth nationally and at the state levels
- There are decent jobs in that provide a living wage over the lifecourse
- Experience and 2/4 year credentials contribute to career earnings
- There is room for growth in developing degree and work experience relationships

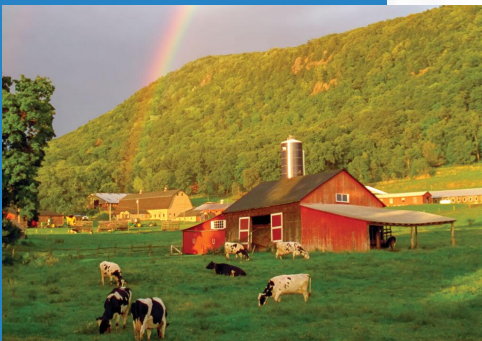


Narrative Reality

Narratives are culturally shared messages that frame conceptions of recreation and influence support and behavior.

- Provide information for decision making
- Widely shared within cultures and social groups
- Unconsciously engrained into communities and individuals
- Violating the narrative content is risky
- Benefits are provided to those who align with the narrative content

Narratives We've Encountered



About Youth Development

- "College For All"--Must go to four-year college to be successful (Seaman et al, 2023) vs. "What's the Alternative?"
- In NH: It's A Safe Place to Grow Up vs. Spread Your Wings

About Workforce Development

- "Not enough bodies!" vs. "Build a farm system" mindset
- "Boomerang"--come back when you are ready to contribute
- "The American Dream" of achieving retirement (Smith & Dougherty, 2012)

About Economic Development

- "Oldest States in the Country"
- In NH: "Live Free or Die" vs. Maine (Lobsters, Vacationland); Vermont (Bucolic Green Pastures)
- "We all work together, but we don't 'work together'"



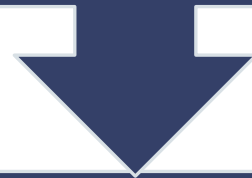
Narratives about Recreation

What are stories (metaphors, tropes, quips) you hear about recreation as...

- A public good?
- Contributor to workforce and viable career path?
- Impact on local community and state economy?

Alternative Narratives and Stories

Story structures that are created in resistance to the cultural narratives about recreation, often bolstered by concrete examples.



Examples:

Tourism, Hospitality and Outdoor Recreation
Institute (THOR; University of Maine)

Shaheen Chairs Hearing on America's Outdoor
Recreation Economy

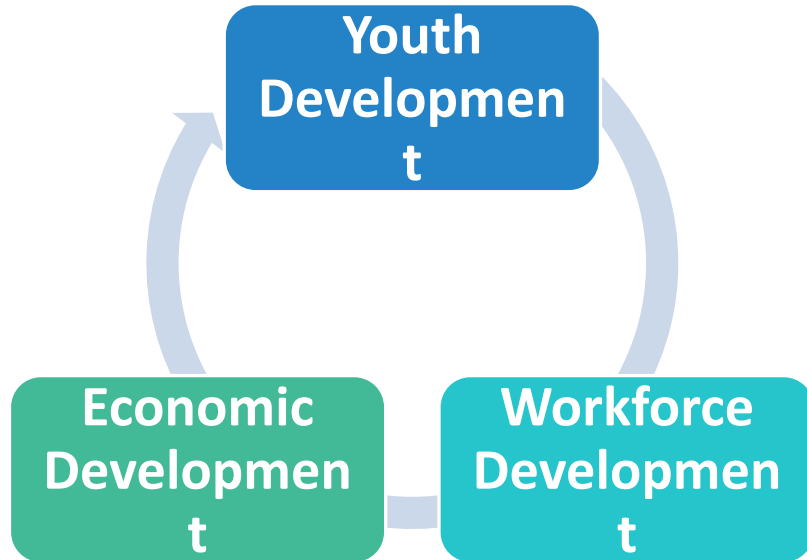
Developing
Alternative
Stories
(Panel)

Jessica Brodie (Executive Director of the VT Recreation and Parks Association)

Jackie Dagger (Director of the VT Outdoor Recreation Economic Development Collaborative)

Andy Bohannon (Parks, Recreation, & Facilities Director for the city of Keene, NH)

Marty Parichand (Founder/Owner of Outdoor New England in Franklin, NH)



These are all interconnected, and it's a long-term play!

Call to Action in Re-Telling Our Story: Using Empirical *and* Narrative Data

Narratives can help (or hurt) with communicating the value of recreation to stakeholders and employees.

Empirical/Data Driven- Collect data to communicate a story that is favorable (research/evaluation can help!)

Narrative: Stories that highlight and create diverse stakeholder—businesses, community groups, diverse ages and backgrounds

Narrative: Leverage (or combat) existing negative narratives by developing platforms and marketing campaigns to share recreation's value

Resources

Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) economic data:

<https://recreationroundtable.org/resources/national-recreation-data/>

State data: <https://recreationroundtable.org/resources/state-recreation-data/>

ORR workforce hub: <https://recreationroundtable.org/resources/workforce-hub/>

US BEA outdoor recreation satellite account:

<https://www.bea.gov/news/2023/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2022>

NRPA salary survey/data:

<https://connect.nrpa.org/communities/community-home?CommunityKey=6d652a28-c664-4864-aefa-b5af171a920e>

GP Red report: <https://www.gpred.org/about/outcomes-report/>