

Preparing the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account

The Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) measures the size of the outdoor recreation economy and the link between outdoor recreation and the broader U.S. economy. Like other satellite accounts, the ORSA was built on BEA's comprehensive supply-use framework. The supply-use tables provide a detailed look at the relationships among industries and how each industry contributes to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In practice, the ORSA is a rearrangement of the published supply-use tables that isolates outdoor recreation spending and production. For example, the supply-use tables show the production of all apparel, whereas the ORSA shows the production of apparel used specifically for outdoor recreation activities, such as wet suits and hiking boots. A variety of private and public data sources were used to identify outdoor recreation spending and production in order to develop the ORSA estimates.

The term "outdoor recreation" can be defined in many different ways. BEA staff worked closely with outdoor recreation experts from academia, government, and industry to develop the definition of outdoor recreation used in the ORSA. To meet the needs of diverse data users, the definition and presentation of statistics used in the account are designed to capture both the conventional and broad views of outdoor recreation reflected in existing literature. The conventional definition reflects more traditional outdoor recreation activities such as hunting, hiking, camping, and fishing. More formally, the conventional definition includes *all recreational activities undertaken for pleasure that generally involve some level of intentional physical exertion and occur in nature-based environments outdoors*. The broad definition includes all conventional outdoor recreation activities and a range of additional activities. More formally, the broad definition includes *all recreational activities undertaken for pleasure that occur outdoors*.

The ORSA follows other BEA satellite accounts by dividing outdoor recreation activity into two general categories: core and supporting. Core activities include the production and purchase of goods and services used directly for outdoor recreation, while supporting activities are defined as goods and services that support access to outdoor recreation activities. Core activities for the ORSA include the production and purchase of gear, equipment, fuel, concessions, maintenance, repair, and fees. Supporting activities include travel and tourism expenses, construction, and government expenditures related to outdoor recreation activities.

An important feature of the ORSA is the presentation of gross output estimates by type of outdoor recreation activity, in addition to the standard presentation of estimates by industry. Due to overlap among many outdoor activities (for example, hiking while camping or fishing while boating), activities were either split into mutually exclusive categories when source data allowed or combined into a single category containing multiple related activities. For example, tent camping and hiking were combined into a single category to avoid double counting the many items that can be used for both activities.

The ORSA statistics fulfill requirements of the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016, which directed the Secretary of Commerce to "enter into a joint memorandum with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, an assessment and analysis of the outdoor recreation economy of the United States and the effects attributable to such economy on the overall economy of the United States."

Additional information on the outdoor recreation statistics and the data sources and methodology that underlie their preparation are available in the September 2018 issue of the *Survey of Current Business*.