



Recommendations for Implementation & Collaborative Action (RICA)

Statewide Recreation and Tourism Cohort of Practice
California Jobs First

Thank you for your feedback!

This document was prepared as a companion guide to the ["State Cohort RICA Draft Review"](#) feedback form. Feedback closed on July 29th, 2026.

The revised recommendations are compiled from your valued feedback, specific feedback from Visit CA, and the collaborative work from the "Recreation and Tourism Symposium of Practice," convened by MLTPA and the Redwood Region RISE with support from California Jobs First. The full-day facilitated session was held at the California Natural Resources building on April 23rd, 2026, and focused on drawing lessons from the Catalyst phase of California Jobs First in our respective regions and on the barriers to implementing projects developed through California Jobs First.

The recommendations reflect the input and feedback that consistently rose to the top at the Symposium of Practice as critical pathways for advancing the implementation of sustainable outdoor recreation, tourism, and arts and culture projects across the state.

The recommendations are presented under the following topics: "Assets," "Policy & Regulations," "Funding," "Data," "Climate," "Workforce," "Collaboratives," and "Branding & Marketing." Recommendations were rated on a scale from "Strongly Support" to "Strongly Do Not Support", with the opportunity to leave specific comments on any of the recommendations.

Source materials are available on the MLTPA website [here](#), including:

- Meeting materials and outputs from the Symposium of Practice and Project Interview Summaries by Region.
- Meeting recordings and materials from the monthly Recreation and Tourism Cohort meetings dating back to June 6, 2025.

Please be sure to join us on August 14th, 2026, at 1:30 pm to review the results of your feedback and the final version of the State Cohort RICA!

ASSETS

1. Recreation Integration with State Infrastructure

The State of California ~~and~~ its agencies, ~~and Visit California~~ will collaborate with regional practitioners on state-funded infrastructure planning to integrate opportunities for sustainable outdoor recreation, ~~and~~ tourism, **and cultural infrastructure.**

- **Visit CA Comment:** *Infrastructure planning falls outside Visit California's statutory mandate under the California Tourism Marketing Act. As an industry-funded marketing organization, Visit California cannot participate in state infrastructure planning, though we commend state and local efforts to enhance visitor experiences.*

2. Liability Protection for Private Landowners

The State of California, **in coordination with the National Agricultural Law Center and UC Agriculture and Natural Resources,** will extend protections for private landowners who provide public recreation access beyond the recreational use immunity already provided in California Civil Code §846, to address liability exposure that discourages private landowners' participation in regional recreation networks.

3. Existing Assets and Infrastructure

The State of California, through its funding agencies and their grant guidelines, will strengthen opportunities to restore and maintain historic rural recreation, **cultural, and tourism infrastructure.** ~~and tourism-infrastructure.~~

4. Place-Based Education and Stewardship

The State of California, through its funding agencies and their grant guidelines, and in collaboration with ~~Visit California~~ and local Destination Marketing Organizations, **Chambers of Commerce, and Main Street Programs,** will fund place-based education and stewardship tools to connect visitors to the cultural, Indigenous, and ecological contexts of California's outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities and promote responsible use.

- **Visit CA Comment:** *Visit California maintains a robust suite of destination stewardship resources and a dedicated Native American cultural heritage platform, developed in partnership with Tribal leaders and indigenous tourism organizations. While Visit California can provide feedback on similar efforts, the organization cannot allocate resources to fund or directly develop parallel assets that duplicate existing programs.*

5. Health Agency Partnerships

The State of California, California Health and Human Services, and rural healthcare providers will integrate outdoor recreation and arts and culture activities into rural community health strategies to position outdoor recreation and cultural engagement as a health intervention **opportunity for residents of rural recreation communities.** ~~rather than solely a tourism activity.~~

POLICY & REGULATIONS

1. Tribal Liaisons

The State of California, through its funding agencies and their grant guidelines that require tribal engagement, will provide funding and technical assistance to tribal liaisons, **tribal nations, and the organizations they serve** to support state-funded outdoor recreation and tourism projects.

2. State Parks Partnerships with Federal Agencies

California State Parks will prioritize establishing Good Neighbor Authority agreements with federal partners to ensure continuity of resource management and support for recreational activities.

3. Office of Outdoor Recreation

The State of California, through legislative or other means, will establish an office of outdoor recreation, or its equivalent, to provide statewide support and coordination for California's outdoor recreation sector.

- **Visit CA Comment:** *The recommendation lacks a clear definition of 'statewide support and coordination.' Visit California is not opposed to state-level economic development for the outdoor recreation sector, provided these efforts do not duplicate Visit California's existing role in statewide tourism and outdoor recreation marketing.*

4. Investments on Federally Managed Public Lands

The State of California, through its issuance of state bonds, will ensure unambiguous language on the use of state funds to invest in outdoor recreation infrastructure and programs on federally managed public lands.

5. Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Alignment

The State of California **and** its state agencies, ~~and Visit California~~ will work with tourism, ~~and~~ recreation, **and cultural** practitioners to develop practical geographies for regional outdoor recreation and tourism to align **with** and integrate California's outdoor recreation, **cultural**, and tourism sectors.

- **Visit CA Comment:** *To effectively market California's geographic diversity to travelers, Visit California structures consumer messaging around 12 official tourism regions based on shared geography, culture, climate and travel appeal. While regional entities sometimes create sub-regional alignments for local purposes, Visit California will maintain focus on these 12 established regions to preserve clarity, efficiency and alignment in statewide marketing.*

6. Cultural Stewardship Workforce

The California Workforce Development Board, the California Arts Council, and local government entities will, through formal regulatory guidance, ~~and in alignment with SB 628,~~

the California Creative Workforce Act of 2021, explicitly designate cultural heritage stewardship roles as eligible workforce development investments to integrate arts and cultural workforce development into the broader regional workforce pipeline.

FUNDING

1. RCRC Support

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) will provide technical and financial assistance to align identified recreation and tourism opportunities with counties' needs, including projects that cross county lines in California, while identifying common interests with federal partners in the outdoor recreation and tourism sector.

2. Local Jurisdictions Funding Authorities

Local jurisdictions will consider opportunities to fund projects in the sustainable outdoor recreation, tourism, and art and culture sectors using funding authorities available to them, including sales and parcel taxes, **tourism** business improvement districts (TBIDs), and special districts, such as recreation districts.

3. Reconstitute Recreation RACs

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) will engage with federal partners to reconstitute Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (Recreation RACs) to review and establish fee proposals.

4. Prioritize Ongoing Needs

The State of California, through its funding agencies, will encourage grant guidelines **to ensure that ongoing operation and maintenance needs of recreation and tourism assets are eligible for and supported by state grant funding, alongside continued investment in that prioritize project funding for ongoing needs over** new or innovative needs, which often produce one-off projects without identified maintenance funding.

5. Strengthen the Jobs First Sector

The State of California, through its funding agencies, will encourage grant guidelines to support outdoor recreation, ~~and~~ tourism, **and creative economy** projects that will clarify and enhance the "Strengthen" sector of the state's Economic Blueprint, as published by California Jobs First.

6. Block Grants for Multi-Benefit Projects

Relevant State of California grant funding will replicate and model the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) Block Grant Model to specifically include and support **flexible, multi-year planning horizons in** the outdoor recreation and tourism sector as part of multi-benefit project development and funding.

7. CALFIRE Designation of Assets

CALFIRE will designate outdoor recreation, **cultural**, and tourism assets through its grant guidelines as critical community infrastructure to inform fuels mitigation work and the awarding of state grants.

8. CEQA/NEPA Decisions

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) will coordinate with partners to identify recreation and tourism projects delayed by lapses in federal capacity and facilitate opportunities for these projects to achieve "shovel-ready" status through final joint environmental planning decisions.

9. End-to-End Planning

The State of California, through its funding agencies and their grant guidelines, will establish opportunities to fund projects from concept through shovel-ready status that will eliminate funding gaps at the scoping, design, environmental review, or pre-construction stages.

10. Training and Technical Assistance for Grantees

The State of California, through its funding agencies and their grant guidelines, will provide technical assistance to rural and small-organization grantees to ensure compliance and timely reporting while building capacity.

11. Integrated Placemaking

The State of California will make funding available through its grant programs to integrate trail and recreation infrastructure projects with cultural programming, public art, and community storytelling.

DATA

1. Visit California Data Development

~~Visit California will convene and host regional roundtables focused on its data development programs to align its data collection and analysis with the needs of the outdoor recreation and tourism sector and rural regions.~~

- **Visit CA Comment:** Visit California operates under the statutory framework of the California Tourism Marketing Act and is directly funded by assessed tourism businesses. Data programs are strategically tailored to serve these assessed stakeholders, a model validated by a 98.3% approval rate in our recent industry referendum renewing the program through 2031. Diverting assessment dollars away from these proven, board-approved research priorities to host specialized regional data roundtables is inconsistent with our statutory mission and fiduciary responsibility to assessed businesses.

2. Joint State-Federal Socioeconomic Data Sharing

The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) will establish a socio-economic data-sharing program for the outdoor recreation and tourism sectors between the state of California and federal partners, including the new U.S. Forest Service office in Placerville, to manage mutual data-sharing needs.

- **Visit CA Comment:** Visit California maintains robust travel-related economic impact research for the entirety of the state, by county and tourism region, which should be considered before pursuing or investing in new research that could be duplicative of reporting already being conducted.

3. Alignment of Priorities

The State of California and federal partners will convene biennially to share "North Star" priorities for their shared recreation and tourism sector and to establish a shared focus for efficient collaborative efforts.

4. UCANR CE Technical Support

UC Agriculture and Natural Resources and its Cooperative Extension (UCCE) will support communities working in the outdoor recreation, ~~and~~ tourism, and creative economy sectors by providing technical support and data to enhance outdoor recreation and tourism programming and infrastructure supporting economic development and job creation.

5. Economic Transitions and CALED

The California Association for Local Economic Development (CALED) will include examples of rural communities transitioning towards recreation, ~~and~~ tourism, and cultural economy-based systems as economies as a feature of their Rural Exchange events to provide information and resources to candidate communities.

CLIMATE

1. Multiple Benefit Climate Projects

The State of California, through its funding agencies and their grant guidelines, including California Natural Resources Agency's 30x30 program, will establish opportunities to award funding for multiple-benefit projects addressing climate change that include sustainable outdoor recreation, tourism, and cultural infrastructure. ~~the arts.~~

2. Fire-Hardened Trails and Climate Resilience

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and CALFIRE will, through the state's of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, draft and publish an administrative directive that advances fire-hardened trail prescriptions for wildfire mitigation in alignment with related Goals and Key Actions from "California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience" to harden vulnerable California communities.

3. Wildfire Ignition Risk Education

CAL FIRE will, through its grant guidelines, incentivize funding for the implementation of Goals and Key Actions from "California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience" to support educational opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism users about the risks of wildfire ignition from outdoor recreation activities.

4. Block Grants and Outdoor Recreation

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the Department of Conservation (DOC) will integrate outdoor recreation and tourism as multi-benefit criteria into their block grant programs for water, forestry, and restoration projects to ensure that outdoor recreation is recognized as essential to the health of the environment, communities, and regions in state grants.

5. Biomass and Outdoor Recreation

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and CALFIRE will, through their grant guidelines, incentivize funding for Goals and Key Actions from "California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience" to include support for sustainable outdoor recreation infrastructure and programs when funding biomass removal, utilization, and energy projects.

6. Outdoor Education

The California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Natural Resources Agency will reinstate field trips and outdoor education programs, including the Green Schoolyards Initiative, through their funding opportunities and grant programs to create inspired stewards and advocates for California's future.

WORKFORCE

1. Trail Standards and Worker Certifications

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), including State Parks, and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), and the California Council of Land Trusts (CCLT), will establish planning, design, and maintenance standards for trail programs to create career pathways and certifications for trail professionals and entrepreneurs.

2. Industry Sector Skills Codes

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) and the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency will refine and consolidate industry sector skills codes for outdoor recreation, tourism, and the arts to generate reliable, sector-specific data and tracking information for these sectors.

3. Skills-Based Wildfire, Outdoor Recreation, and Tourism Jobs

The State of California, through its relevant agencies, will implement recommendations from “California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience” to prioritize projects that will create skills-based, prevailing-wage jobs in the wildfire mitigation, outdoor recreation, and tourism sectors.

4. Career Technical Education for the Outdoor Recreation Economy

The California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) will collaborate with the California Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to integrate business skills targeted towards professionals in the outdoor recreation economy into the SBDC's Career Technical Education program.

5. California Conservation Corps Contract Exemptions

The State of California, through its regulatory authority, will pursue AB 339 exemptions for contracting with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and other workforce training programs to ensure that state policy recognizes outdoor recreation infrastructure and programming as integral to fire mitigation, workforce development, and climate resilience.

COLLABORATIVES

1. Regional Collaboratives

Local jurisdictions, with support from local, state, federal, and philanthropic funding, will create and maintain regional outdoor recreation and tourism collaboratives to provide networking and collaboration opportunities, connect with other regional collaboratives statewide through a community of practice, connect rural and urban collaboratives to bridge regional divides, and conduct regional asset mapping.

2. Regional Collaboratives and Agency Engagement

Local, State, and federal agencies will engage with regional collaboratives to align agency priorities with regional capacity and needs, braid agency funding and create matches where possible, to provide technical assistance and ecosystem support for the outdoor recreation and tourism sector.

3. Interagency Working Group on Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

The State of California, through its relevant state agencies and ~~Visit California~~, and regional collaboratives, will establish a working group to document activities in the outdoor recreation, ~~and~~ tourism, and cultural economy sectors that overlap with the program areas of Visit California and state agencies to make recommendations for efficient program delivery.

- **Visit CA Comment:** Visit California is governed by an industry-led, public-private Board of Commissioners comprising state-appointed leaders, elected industry representatives and regional stakeholders. This statutory board oversees organization performance, program delivery and operational efficiency. While open to informal cross-agency communication, formal interagency working groups tasked with evaluating or dictating Visit California's program delivery fall outside our established governance structure.

BRANDING & MARKETING

1. Regional Branding and Marketing

Local jurisdictions, with support from local, state, federal, and private funding, will invest in recreation and tourism collaboratives to facilitate regional branding and marketing among regional DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Main Street Programs, and between urban and rural regions.

- **Visit CA Comment:** Regional marketing collaboratives already exist across California's DMO network, including several that connect urban and rural destinations within shared marketing regions. Rather than standing up new recreation and tourism collaboratives to perform branding and marketing functions, Visit California encourages outdoor recreation advocates to work within these existing DMO structures. Creating parallel entities to do overlapping marketing work risks diluting brand consistency, competing for the same local and private funding, and duplicating capacity that regional DMOs are already resourced and positioned to provide.

2. State Tourism and the Arts

~~Visit California and the California Arts Council will collaborate on new program initiatives to support greater inclusion of regional artistic and cultural voices in statewide tourism branding and marketing.~~

- **Visit CA Comment:** Visit California actively integrates regional artistic, cultural and diverse creative voices across its global marketing campaigns and storytelling channels. Statewide branding strategy and marketing investments must remain data-driven and directed by our relevant committees and board to ensure maximum ROI for California's tourism economy.

3. Economic Transition GO-Biz

The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) will engage state agency partners and compile industrial-sector transition case studies and stories and analysis (e.g., from timber or cannabis) to support regions and communities undergoing similar transitions who may be considering investment in outdoor recreation and tourism economies.
