

The Economic Influence of Human Powered Recreation in Western North Carolina

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We don't just play in the forest. Recreation dollars power this region.

Right now, the U.S. Forest Service is in the process of reworking the land management plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests – land that sees 4.6M visitors a year and covers one million acres of Western North Carolina.

That's one million acres that climbers, mountain bikers, and paddlers travel from far and wide to experience. That's one million acres of outdoor recreation that attract residents and successful businesses and create jobs. That's one million acres that generate \$83.3 million in spending by outdoor recreation visitors and \$31.7 million in spending by residents.

Outdoor recreation needs to be prioritized in this process.

Numbers derived from studies by James N. Maples, PhD, and Michael J. Bradley, PhD (Eastern Kentucky University)

1. Economic Impact of Mountain Biking in the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, 2017
2. Economic Impact of Rock Climbing in the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, 2017
3. Economic Impact of Non-Commercial Paddling and Preliminary Estimates of Economic Impact of Commercial Paddling in the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, 2017

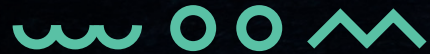
OUTDOOR RECREATION IN WNC

Economic impact of rock climbing, mountain biking, and paddling

ANNUAL VISITOR IMPACT

\$83.3 million

(paddle, mountain bike, climb)



ANNUAL RESIDENT SPENDING

\$31.7 million

(paddle, mountain bike, climb)

CLIMB, MTN BIKE, & PADDLE SUPPORT

1,018 full time jobs
\$13.8M in income

This doesn't consider all seasonal employment that outdoor recreation supports.

Western North Carolina's rivers, trails, rocks, and talent pool draw lucrative outdoor gear manufacturing to the region.

27 GEAR MANUFACTURERS

\$4M ANNUAL LOCAL SOURCING

Other successful non-outdoor businesses, like Oskar Blues Brewery, express that outdoor access is a primary reason they chose Western North Carolina as home.

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Outdoor Gear Manufacturing data courtesy of Outdoor Gear Builders of WNC 2015 analysis.

NPNF-visitation number: National Forest Service 2014 Recreation, Access and Scenery Assessment

More than 95% of residents surveyed chose to live in Western North Carolina for its unparalleled access to outdoor recreation.

Access to outdoor recreation attracts a vibrant cross section of people, working in manufacturing, healthcare, and technology. More than 65% of individuals surveyed earn greater than \$50K a year. One in five are business owners. These residents greatly contribute to a thriving economy in Western North Carolina.

Please reach out with ideas or questions.

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The insights and data within this document (not including the outdoor gear manufacturing information) are the result of three studies commissioned by Outdoor Alliance, all completed in 2017 by James N. Maples, PhD, and Michael J. Bradley, PhD (Eastern Kentucky University). Please contact the email above for the complete study reports.

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