



Economic Contributions of Outdoor Recreation on Federal Lands (2016)





## Background

Outdoor recreation on Federal lands and waters provides benefits to individuals who participate in these activities in a variety of ways including supporting physical, mental, and spiritual health, and providing opportunities to spend time with family and friends. Outdoor recreation is also a multi-billion dollar industry in the United States, and local communities and businesses derive significant benefits from the economic activity and spending associated with trips to these locations. Broadly speaking, benefits of outdoor recreation include:

- (1) improved wellbeing experienced by recreationists themselves; and
  - (2) economic activity in communities that is supported by visitor spending.
- These categories are referred to as:
- (1) economic value and
  - (2) regional economic contributions.

## Economic Contributions of Outdoor Recreation

Visitors to Federal lands and waters participate in a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities at areas managed by the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), the Forest Service (USFS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This paper uses data from these seven agencies to provide a snapshot of the economic contributions outdoor recreation supported in regional economies in 2016.

When recreationists visit Federal lands and waters, the money they spend helps to support jobs and economic activity in nearby communities.

Outdoor recreationists made more than 889 million visits to Federal lands and waterways in 2016, spending \$49 billion and supporting 826,000 jobs.

This paper summarizes economic contributions from 2016 for each agency, as shown in the table below. In addition to visits, spending, and jobs, the table also provides estimates of economic contributions in terms of value added, labor income and output. Value added is often referred to as the contribution to gross domestic product (GDP). It represents the value of final goods and services produced in the economy, and includes wages and salaries, self-employment income, property income, and indirect business taxes. The economic contribution measures are separate from spending; the two are not additive. Value added, labor income, and output are distinct ways of measuring economic contributions and should also not be added together.

	Recreation Visits (millions)	Visitor Spending 2016-\$ (billions)	Jobs 2016 (thousands)	Value added 2016-\$ (billions)	Labor income 2016-\$ (billions)	Output 2016-\$ (billions)
National Park Service	331	\$ 18	318	\$ 20	\$ 12	\$ 35
Bureau of Land Management	65	3	48	4	2	7
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	50	2	37	3	2	5
Bureau of Reclamation	30	1	23	2	1	3
Forest Service	146	9	148	11	6	20
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	N/A	5	63	N/A	2	7
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	267	11	189	13	8	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>\$ 49</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>\$ 53</b>	<b>\$ 33</b>	<b>\$ 103</b>



## Methods and Data Sources

### National Park Service

NPS data is from *2016 National Park Visitor Spending Effects, Economic Contributions to Local Communities, States, and the Nation*, (Cullinane Thomas and Koontz, 2016). Economic contributions are calculated using 2013 IMPLAN data (released in 2014). NPS visitation data are for CY 2016.

### Bureau of Land Management

BLM visitation data is from the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS), and spending profiles are from the US Forest Service NVUM Four-year Report (spending profiles of National Forest Visitors). Economic contributions are calculated using 2015 IMPLAN data (released in 2016). BLM visitation data are for FY 2016.

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

USFWS visitation data was obtained from the Refuge Annual Performance Plan (RAPP) database, and spending profiles were calculated based on data from the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Commerce 2011). Economic contributions are calculated using 2015 IMPLAN data (released in 2016). FWS visitation data are for FY 2016.

### Bureau of Reclamation

Bureau of Reclamation visitation data are from the Recreation Use Data Report (RUDR), and spending profiles are calculated from the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-As-

sociated Recreation. Economic contributions are calculated using 2015 IMPLAN data (released in 2016). BOR visitation data are for FY 2016. Most BOR project recreation sites are managed by Reclamation partners, including both Federal and non-Federal entities.

### U.S. Forest Service

Forest Service visitation data is from estimates obtained through the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) program, over the FY2012 – FY2016 period: ([www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/pdf/5082016NationalSummaryReport062217.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/pdf/5082016NationalSummaryReport062217.pdf)). Spending profiles also were developed using NVUM data from the same period (White 2017). Economic effects are calculated using IMPLAN 2015 data, and inflated to 2016 dollars.

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries does not have a program of estimating annual visitation. Visitation is done on each sanctuary as needed for management purposes and visitation has not been estimated at any one point in time for all sites. Economic studies are done as needed and the numbers are a compilation of studies done at different years at different sites and brought up to 2016 dollars using the consumer price index.

### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Visitation data for the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) are from the Visitation Estimation & Reporting System (VERS). Spending profiles are estimated from a national visitor spending survey conducted in 2012/2013 and indexed using 2016 CPI figures. Spending av-

erages were computed and multiplied by visitation statistics to estimate total annual visitor spending. Economic contributions are calculated using the Army Corps' Regional Economic System (RECONS) with 2015 multipliers from IMPLAN data released in 2017. USACE visitation data are for FY 2016.

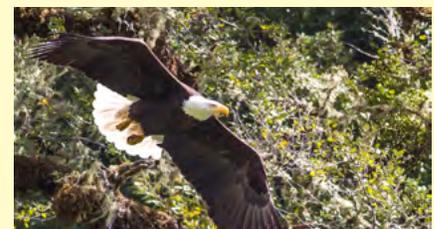
### References

Cullinane Thomas, C., and L. Koontz. 2017. 2016 national park visitor spending effects: Economic contributions to local communities, states, and the nation. Natural Resource Report. NPS/NRSS/EQD/NRR—2017/1421. National Park Service, Fort Collins, Colorado.

U.S. Department of the Interior Economic Report FY 2016. [www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/fy\\_2016\\_doi\\_economic\\_report\\_2017-09-25.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/fy_2016_doi_economic_report_2017-09-25.pdf)

U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. [www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/fhw11-nat.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/fhw11-nat.pdf)

White, Eric M. 2017. Spending patterns of outdoor recreation visitors to national forests. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW-GTR-961. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station.





## For more information about your U.S. public lands please visit:

Recreation.gov [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: [www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation](http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation)

Bureau of Land Management: [www.blm.gov/programs/recreation](http://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation)

Fish and Wildlife Service: [www.fws.gov/refuges/visitors](http://www.fws.gov/refuges/visitors)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: [oceanservice.noaa.gov/recreation](http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/recreation)

National Park Service: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

Bureau of Reclamation: [www.usbr.gov/recreation/overview.html](http://www.usbr.gov/recreation/overview.html)

U.S. Forest Service: [www.fs.fed.us/recreation](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation)

S. Cline and C. Crowley. 2018. Economic Contributions of Outdoor Recreation on Federal Lands (2016), The U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Policy Analysis, Washington, DC

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**US Army Corps  
of Engineers.**