

Outdoor Recreation's Economic Benefits

Nationwide, the outdoor recreation economy accounts for **\$1.1 trillion in annual economic impact (2.2% of GDP) and 5 million jobs**. The outdoor recreation economy grew **2.5x faster than the U.S. economy as a whole in 2022** as millions more Americans than ever before flocked to the outdoors to sustain their physical and mental health and to [live and work in places](#) with high quality recreation access.

\$1.1 trillion	4.8%	5 million
Nominal Gross Output from Outdoor Recreation, 2022	Outdoor Industry Growth 2021-22 (versus 1.9% for U.S. economy)	Outdoor Jobs in U.S. (3.2% of all U.S. employment)

To take advantage of this momentum, hundreds of rural and urban communities across the United States are investing in outdoor recreation infrastructure and access to help build a more diverse and resilient local economy.



- **Montgomery, Alabama** [built an Olympic-standard whitewater park](#) to spur economic development, add to the lifestyle of residents, fuel continued tourism growth, enhance their military missions, and make Montgomery a more attractive destination for a workforce that prioritizes quality of life when selecting a place to live and work.
- **Farmington, New Mexico** [developed the Outdoor Recreation Industry Initiative](#) to utilize a highly skilled labor force and considerable manufacturing capacity to bring new outdoor offerings and experiences to the City while attracting more outdoor businesses.
- **Old Fort, North Carolina** is [building a network of multi-use trails](#) on the Pisgah National Forest to develop outdoor recreation resources alongside commercial and residential spaces and build a healthier and more resilient community.
- **Beckley, West Virginia** [aims to leverage outdoor assets](#), such as New River Gorge National Park and Preserve and Piney Creek Preserve, to enhance quality of life, revitalize downtown, and create a vibrant outdoor economy.

According to [Headwaters Economics](#), these investments:

Attract and retain new businesses and skilled workers to communities.	Increase tax revenue through new spending at local businesses and increased property tax revenue.	Benefit Main Street businesses like restaurants, grocery stores, gear stores, and other retailers.
Help generate higher rates of immigration, helping fuel jobs for teachers, doctors, construction workers, and more.	Draw wealth from retirees and investors to help boost the local economy.	Invite visitors from out-of-town to spend money on lodging, restaurants, and other services, creating jobs and putting money into the community.

Learn more at recreationroundtable.org/programs/rural-development