

Your Lands, Your Wildlife

Outdoor Recreation



OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY GROWING IN THE WEST

There's a new kind of gold out West. It's the American West's stunning landscapes, jagged peaks, red rock canyons, swirling rivers and vast forests. Retirees, outdoor enthusiasts and people with flexible jobs are heading West with their families and businesses to enjoy the higher quality of life that comes with having mountains, rivers, forests and lakes in your backyard.

The highest population growth in the country is occurring in counties with natural amenities such as warm climate, mountains to climb and rivers, streams and lakes to raft, boat and swim. Many of these places occur on or near public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), where local communities serve as gateways to enjoying near limitless recreational opportunities.

From hiking to hang gliding, outdoor recreation and the American West's stunning public lands are luring folks out west, playing a vital role supporting these growing communities and local economies – from the service industry to the outdoor recreation related businesses.

Fishing – Sportfishing outranks football, basketball, baseball and tennis as one of America's favorite pastimes.

- One out of every six Americans goes fishing every year.
- 30 million U.S. residents went fishing in 2006, and spent nearly \$42.2 billion on equipment, licenses and travel-related costs.
- Anglers spent an average of \$1.1 billion per year on bait alone. That's twice as much as Americans spend annually on ski equipment.
- The economic impacts of fishing ripple throughout communities, because anglers also give their dollars to local motels, restaurants and grocery stores in rural areas.



Photo courtesy of DOI BLM

Montana's Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument provides unparalleled canoeing and outdoor opportunities.

Outdoor Recreation – The retail sales of the active outdoor recreation industry are higher than other U.S. economic sectors like pharmaceutical manufacturing legal services and the motion picture industry.

- Outdoor recreation contributes a whopping \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy.
- The industry supports 6.5 million jobs across the U.S., meaning nearly 1 in 20 workers earn their livelihood from outdoor recreation.
- Backcountry recreation is one of the fastest-growing segments of all outdoor activities.
- Forest Service and BLM lands offer the most, and best, opportunities in outdoor recreation.

Activity	Total 2004 Participants
Backpacking	25.8 million
Primitive Camping	33.1 million
Developed Camping	66.5 million
Visited wilderness area	71.9 million
Day Hiking	81.3 million
Canoeing	26.9 million
Horseback riding	19.1 million
Rafting	33.1 million
Mountain biking	42.5 million

Source: U.S. Forest Service. Recreation Statistics Update Report: Participation Rates for Outdoor Activities in 2004

Hunting – *If the \$76 billion that sportsmen spend annually on hunting and fishing were the Gross Domestic Product of a country, sportsmen as a nation would rank 57th out of 181 countries.*

- In 2006, 12.5 million people went hunting. That's more than the population of New York and Los Angeles combined.
- Hunters spend \$11.8 billion a year alone on big game like deer, antelope and elk.
- In terms of employment, hunting generates more than \$1.3 billion annually in personal wages and salaries in 11 of our western states.
- Nearly 20 percent of national forest visitors specifically visit national forests to hunt or fish.
- The majority of hunters in western states prefer to hunt on publicly owned lands.

State	Hunters who hunt on public lands
New Mexico	94%
Arizona	82%
Wyoming	74%
Idaho	88%
Montana	86%
Utah	81%

Source: Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. Backcountry Bounty: Hunters, Anglers, and Prosperity in the West

National forests and Bureau of Land Management lands sustain thousands of miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers. These rivers exemplify the wild spirit of the West and provide unparalleled fishing and recreational opportunities.

The Bureau of Land Management

- Manages 38 Wild and Scenic rivers totaling more than 2,050 river miles
- This includes 150 miles of the Missouri River in Montana, the United States' longest river

The Forest Service

- Manages 104 Wild and Scenic rivers in 20 states, more than any other federal agency
- Total river length reaches nearly 4,500 miles – 41% of the total Wild and Scenic River system



Courtesy of U.S. Forest Service

Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep like these living in Colorado's national forests are popular among wildlife watchers.

Wildlife Viewing – *Annual revenue generated from wildlife viewing exceeds annual sales of both Motorola and K-Mart.*

- Wildlife watching is the most popular form of outdoor recreation, beating out bicycling, hiking and camping.
- Almost a third of the U.S. population, nearly 71 million people, actively set out to watch wildlife in 2006.
- In 2006, wildlife watching's contribution to the U.S. economy was an astounding \$45.7 billion.
- 23 million people specifically took trips away from their home to watch wildlife.

Defenders of Wildlife supports balanced, science-based wildlife conservation measures on public lands. Healthy fish and wildlife on public lands indicate overall land health, leading to unparalleled recreation opportunities, outstanding water quality, clean air, and countless other natural, social and economic benefits for all Americans.

Sources

1. Outdoor Industry Foundation. "The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy." Fall 2006
2. Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. 2007 "Hunting and Fishing Bright Stars of the American Economy: A force as big as all outdoors."
3. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2006 National Survey of Fishing Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.
4. Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. 2006 "Backcountry Bounty: Hunters, Anglers, and Prosperity in the West."
5. U.S. Forest Service. National Forest Visitor Use Monitoring Program National Project Results, January 2000 – September 2003