

# THE OUTDOOR ECONOMY



The outdoor economy can be defined as “the stream of economic output that results from the protection and sustainable use of America’s lands and waters when they are preserved in a largely undeveloped state.”

Many different types of industries depend on the outdoor economy, including companies that make recreation gear, local shops that serve tourists visiting national parks, and even non-recreation businesses that locate near mountains and spectacular places to provide a “competitive advantage” for hiring and retaining workers.

America’s millions of acres of national public lands are key drivers of our country’s thriving outdoor economy. From national parks to national forests to rivers and lakes, protected public lands are crucial to ensuring that the outdoor economy remains healthy and strong for generations to come.

## The growing recreation economy

The outdoor recreation economy stands as an economic powerhouse in the West. The outdoor recreation industry provides \$646 billion in economic output to the U.S. every year, accounting for more direct jobs than the construction and real estate industries.

And the industry is only growing. Between 2005 and 2011—a period of time when many businesses across the country where cutting back and downsizing—the outdoor recreation economy grew 5% annually.

A recent poll conducted by Outdoor Industry Association (OIA)—the leading trade association and voice of the outdoor recreation industry—confirmed the widespread support for the growing outdoor economy among Westerners. When asked what types of businesses they hope to see more of, Western voters ranked outdoor recreation businesses above healthcare, oil and gas drilling, and mining.

The growth of the outdoor economy depends on a thoughtful balance between land conservation and development. In fact, 83 percent of Coloradans and 74 percent of Nevadans believe that protected public lands improve opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities.



## COLORADANS & NEVADANS

believe public lands have a positive impact on opportunities for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation





## Protected lands are a competitive advantage

Economic **research** shows that in the West, protected public lands support faster rates of job growth and higher levels of per capita income. This is particularly true of the service industry and high-tech sectors, which both must compete in a global market to attract high quality, knowledgeable workers.

Over the last 40 years, rural Western counties with more protected public lands have seen **SIGNIFICANT JOB GROWTH:**

Counties with **over 30% protected lands**..... **345%** job increase

Counties with **no protected lands**..... **83%** job increase

## Other benefits of protected public lands

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## Here are some of the impacts oil and gas drilling has on Western communities and lands.

- Protected public lands can add **value to local real estate markets**.
- Cities and towns near protected public lands in the American West attract more retirees. In fact, retirees are **three times more likely** to move to counties with protected lands.
- On average, the per capita income in rural Western counties is **\$436 higher** for every 10,000 acres of protected public lands, while job growth in counties with more public lands is **four times higher** than in counties with no protected lands.
- Public lands absorb **significant amounts** of carbon, helping in the fight against climate change.
- More than **900 cities** nationwide rely on national forest watersheds.