

Economic Impact of Local Parks, Recreation and Open Space in Pennsylvania

National Economic Engine



The economic impact of local parks, recreation and open space is substantial. Spending by recreation enthusiasts provide direct earnings, jobs and tax revenues. Nationally, the total economic impact is estimated to be \$821 billion generating state taxes of nearly \$100 billion and supporting 311 million jobs.

Local parks and open space play a critical role in our national and state economies, support our quality of life and help us to maintain attractive and sustainable communities where people want to live and work.

State Economic Engine

Local parks, open space and trails provide opportunities for close-to-home recreation. This conservation and recreation infrastructure accommodates 43% of the recreation that occurs in the Commonwealth and contributes substantially to the Commonwealth's economy.

Editors Note:

Please note that the source economic impact studies for all the facts contained in this document are all available on DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation website at:

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/economicimpact/index.htm>

Value of Recreation in PA

A study of the direct and indirect impacts of outdoor recreation travel in Pennsylvania documents the substantial contribution of recreation activities to Pennsylvania's economy.

The study documented recreation related spending in excess of \$4 billion which supported 84,120 jobs and generated \$770 million in taxes.

The dollars spent by outdoor recreation enthusiasts accounted for a third (33%) of the total spending in Pennsylvania for leisure travel.

Municipal financial data reported to the Governor's Center for Local Government Services for 2009 shows that \$351.2 million in municipal funding was spent to support recreation and cultural activities.

Regional Tourism

Pennsylvania has focused recreational tourism efforts regionally through DCNR's Conservation Landscape Initiative and partnership building efforts. These focused efforts have driven travel and tourism and have resulted in substantial regional economic impacts. These impacts were studied in detail in the Pennsylvania Wilds region and include:

- Annual Gross Domestic Product growth of 3.7% percent from 2004 to 2007.
- A sharp increase in overnight leisure travel by +5.3% per year, versus +1.9% per year for all of PA.
- A 3.3% per year increase in parks visitation while national park attendance was flat.
- From 2002 to 2006, visitor spending within the Pennsylvania Wilds region grew by +6.3% per year, versus +4.9% per year for visitor spending within PA as a whole.
- From 2002 to 2007, tourism employment within the PA Wilds region grew by +0.5% per year, versus -2.2% per year for tourism in PA as a whole.

- Tourism earnings within the Pennsylvania Wilds region grew by +5.4% per year, versus -2.8% per year for tourism earnings for PA as a whole.
- From 2005 to 2008, state sales tax revenue from tourism categories within the Pennsylvania Wilds grew by +2.7% per year, versus +0.6% per year for state sales tax revenue from tourism categories for PA overall.
- From 2004 to 2007, hotel tax revenues within the Pennsylvania Wilds grew by +13.1% per year, versus the +8.0% per year growth in hotel tax revenues throughout PA as a whole.
- From 2003 to 2008, the Pennsylvania Wilds region experienced a net growth in chain hotel establishments of +12, or an almost 40% increase.



Southeast Pennsylvania Open Space Value

A study of the value of open space, parks and trails in a five county area in southeastern Pennsylvania was commissioned by the Greenspace Alliance and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission in 2010.

The study documented that open space, parks and trail use creates jobs and attracts people who spend in Pennsylvania communities.

- Economic activity associated with protected open space in southeastern Pennsylvania resulted in more than 6,900 jobs and \$299 million in annual earnings.

- Total annual expenditures in the five-county region associated with protected open space equaled \$566 million. Specifically:
 - \$174 million, or 31%, was attributable to spending associated with the management and maintenance of publicly protected open space;
 - \$206 million, or 36%, accounted for agricultural sales associated with preserved farmland; and
 - \$187 million, or 33%, was generated through tourism activity associated with protected open space.
- Agricultural jobs associated with protected farmland made up 45% of employment related to protected open space in southeastern Pennsylvania, totaling 3,100 jobs.
- Economic activity associated with protected open space generated \$30 million per year in state and local tax revenue.

Economic Impact of Philadelphia Parks



A Report by The Trust for Public Land's Center for City Park Excellence for the Philadelphia Parks Alliance - June 2008 - documents the economic impact of local parks in Philadelphia. The report documents that:

- Philadelphia's parks provide the City and its residents with: \$23 million in city revenue; \$16 million in municipal cost savings; \$729 million generated in wealth for residents; and \$1.1 billion in cost savings for citizens—about 100 times the amount the city spends on parks each year.
- About 41% of tourists visited a park while in Philadelphia, and an estimated 20% of park visitors (tourists) came because of the parks!

- Overnight tourists spent \$75.4 million while visiting Philadelphia parks and day tourists spent \$39.6 million.
- City's tax revenue from strictly park visitors in 2006, equaled \$5,177,000.

Value of Trails in PA

There have been a number of trail specific economic impact studies in Pennsylvania. These studies have demonstrated that the annual economic impact of trails is substantial, that they support jobs and spur business development. Many of these studies are available on DCNR's webpage at:

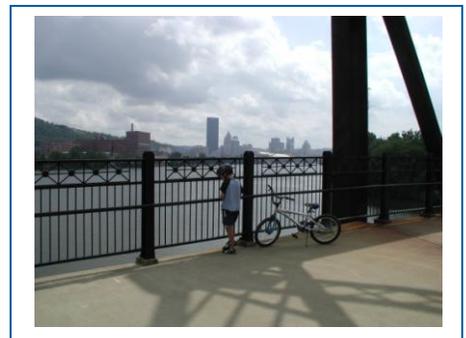
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/economicimpact/index.htm>

The economic impact study for the Great Allegheny Passage was completed in 2008. This destination trail runs from Pittsburgh to Washington D.C. The study documents how trails have become economic engines and have spurred the rebirth of communities along their path.

The study confirms that trails are an important economic infrastructure for PA that are spinning off economic impacts on an annual basis in addition to significantly contributing to our quality of life. The 2008 Study found and documented:

- Over \$40 million in annual direct spending and another \$7.5 million in wages is attributable to the trail market.
- Business owners indicated 25% of gross revenue was directly attributed to trail users.
- 2/3 owners reported experiencing some increase in revenue due to proximity to trail.

The Great Allegheny Passage Trail is a case study on how communities can be reborn and revitalized with strategic green/recreation infrastructure investments. Communities like West Newton and Connellsville, to name just two, have reinvented themselves as trail towns.



More Information

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<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/economicimpact/index.htm>



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AND NATURAL RESOURCES