

## Examples of Economic Benefits of Wild and Scenic River Designation

### General:

- Economic studies show that Wild and Scenic rivers generate \$45-70 per visitor per day in local economic activity.
- These visitor expenses include but are not limited to: lodging, guides, food and gas, equipment and luxury items purchased while in the area.

### Upper Truckee:

- The Upper Truckee (Meiss Meadows) receives on average 20,000 visitor days annually. A visitor day is equated as one single day for one person, so a group of five people that use the area for three days equals 15 visitor days.
- Given the formula that people on average spend \$45-70 dollars per visitor day in local economic activity visiting Wild and Scenic River corridors, we can assume this for the Upper Truckee in El Dorado County:
  - **Spending \$45 per visitor day, a Wild and Scenic Upper Truckee River will generate \$900,000 dollars in local revenue to El Dorado County annually.**
  - **Spending \$70 per visitor day, a Wild and Scenic Upper Truckee River will generate \$1.4 million dollars in local revenue to El Dorado County annually.**

### West Branch of The Farmington River Wild and Scenic Designation:

- The West Branch Farmington Wild & Scenic River is 14 miles long. The river generates \$259,285 per mile in direct benefits to the local economy and provides recreational opportunities worth \$675,000 per mile. Each recreational visit generates an average of \$46.89 in direct economic benefits. The West Branch is estimated to receive 77,400 recreation visitors annually.
- Sixty percent of the visits are for fishing, 30% for tubing, and 8% for boating.
- Recreational river use generates an estimated annual economic impact of \$3.63 million for the five river towns. This is an estimate of direct as well as the indirect and induced effects from user expenditures on the local economies.
- This economic impact is quite large considering the small area under consideration, its relatively rural character, and the fact that only 10% of visits involved overnight stays.
- The total economic benefits (consumer surplus) to recreational users was estimated to be \$9.45 million, that is, the total social value of the river segment to users over and above what it costs them to visit.

- The Farmington River and its proximity to residential lands explain approximately 8% of their values. Property owners demanding properties nearer the river placed a higher economic value on the river than those at distant locations.
- The river's effect on residential land values at a one-mile distance is \$3.76 per foot and at a six-mile distance is \$0.63 per foot.

#### **Chattooga Wild and Scenic Designation:**

- The segment of the Chattooga Wild & Scenic River most used for whitewater boating is 7 miles long. The river generates \$372,571 per mile in local economic benefits and provides whitewater recreation opportunities worth \$827,754 per mile.
- Each whitewater recreation visit generates \$60.65 in direct local economic benefits.
- Forest Service river use records indicated that approximately 43,000 boating visits were made to the Chattooga in 2001.
- Using these figures (the most recent available) and spending data provided by the users, it was estimated that visitors from outside the area spent over \$1.8 million in the 6-county area where the river segment is located.
- After applying the appropriate multipliers, the total economic impact was estimated to be over \$2.608 million for this local area in 2002.
- Most of this impact was in the form of admissions and fees, retail purchases, and expenditures in restaurants.
- The total economic benefit to recreation boaters was estimated to be \$5,794,282. This represents the total value of the river segment to boaters and is distinct from the economic impact of river use.

#### **American River Wild and Scenic Designation:**

- The American Wild & Scenic River, which includes the American River Parkway, is 23 miles long. The river generates \$15.8 million in direct economic benefits per mile and \$48.56 in direct economic benefits per visitor.
- In the mid 1980s, Sacramento County hired Seymour W. Gold to write a Recreation Planning Report for the American River Parkway. One of the goals of Mr. Gold's report was to estimate the recreation visitation to the Parkway in 1985 as well as to forecast future demand through the year 2020. His work determined that there were approximately 5.5 million visitors in 1985 and that it would grow to 7.5 million in 2000 and 9.5 million in 2020. These conclusions were primarily based on projected population growth and assumed additional facilities would be developed when required. Combining Gold's population based methodology with updated population projections, we estimate the 2025 visitation should be over 12.4 million people annually.

- If there is a build up of latent demand on the Parkway, then there is also an unrealized economic value in the Parkway. Using Gold's projected visitation for 2006 and the National Park Service Money Generation Model, the estimated annual direct and indirect spending for all Parkway related goods and services in the greater Sacramento Area was **\$364,218,973**, with the estimated annual Parkway visitor direct spending portion being **\$163,007,792**. Indirect spending reflects the impact that park visitors have on the local economy in terms of their contributions to sales, income and jobs in the area.

Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management  
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Use and Economic Importance of the Chattooga River  
Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management,  
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC  
Moore, Roger L., Christos Siderelis  
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American River Parkway 2006 Financial Needs Study Update  
County of Sacramento Department of Regional Parks  
June 2006