

The Power of Outdoor Recreation in the Upper American and Cosumnes River Watersheds

A Driver of Rural Economies and Highly Valuable to Tourists

Expansive outdoor recreation in the headwaters region of the American and Cosumnes Rivers watersheds provides significant benefits to local residents and visitors from around the state, nation, and beyond due to its wealth of natural capital. These diverse lands, from forests to open water, attract millions of visitors each year who enjoy numerous outdoor activities such as:

- Skiing
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Agritourism
- Camping
- Backpacking
- Kayaking
- Boating
- Swimming
- Whitewater Rafting
- Off-Highway Vehicle Excursions



OUTDOOR RECREATION INJECTS REVENUE INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Outdoor recreation in these watersheds is an incredibly valuable resource with a significant economic footprint. Understanding outdoor recreation patterns and the associated economic values helps inform decision-making, resource allocation, and long-term strategic planning. According to a study completed by El Dorado Water Agency, outdoor recreation in these watersheds in 2022 generated the following benefits:

\$607 million in economic output from visitor spending, including:



\$382 million
direct spending on lodging, restaurants, and retail



Nearly \$27 million
generated in local and state taxes



2,520 jobs
supported from direct consumer spending resulting in **over \$118 million in wages**



plus \$660 million in consumer surplus benefits beyond direct spending

APPROXIMATELY 7 MILLION OUTDOOR RECREATION VISITS TO THE WATERSHEDS IN 2022



Federally-owned lands provide the most recreation opportunities in the watersheds and **attracted 3.7 million visits**, over half of the outdoor recreation visits, in 2022. Visitation trends had pronounced seasonality, with peaks during the summer and winter and dips in shoulder seasons (spring and fall).

Agritourism is a significant force for rural economic development

There were over 1 million visits to Apple Hill in 2022, highlighting the importance of agritourism in the area. Although agritourism comprises less than 1% of outdoor recreation lands in the watersheds, it represents 25% of total visitor spending.

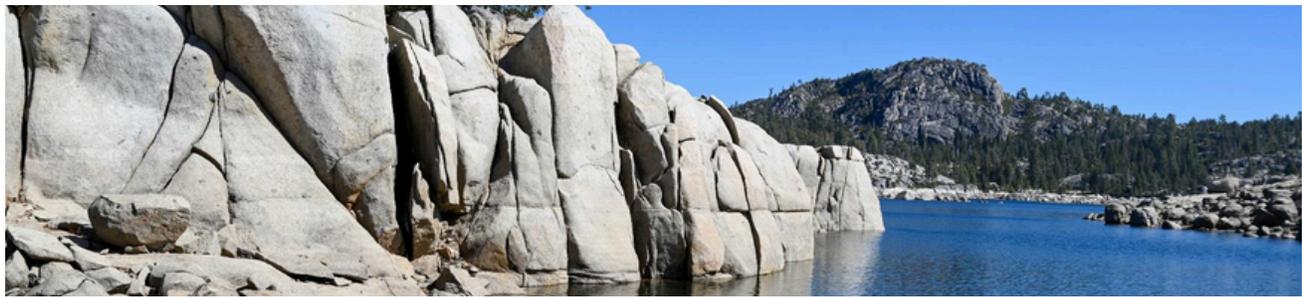
TOURISTS ARE KEY TO SUPPORTING LOCAL ECONOMY

Outdoor recreation in these watersheds is not only valued by those who live in the watershed but also by those who reside throughout the state, country, and globally. **Attracting tourists from outside the watershed allows them to experience the benefits of nature as well as support the local economy.** Being away from home, tourists tend to incur additional costs in lodging and transportation, contributing to elevated spending profiles which boosts the local economy.

Tourists from around the globe recreate in these watersheds



Origin of tourists to the watersheds based on 2022 recreation-associated mobile location pings.



INVESTING IN RECREATIONAL LANDS IS VITAL

Investment in the headwaters region of the American and Cosumnes Rivers watersheds yields far-reaching benefits. Every dollar invested in recreational lands not only contributes to the quality of outdoor recreation experiences, but it also stimulates and strengthens the regional economy. It also generates a return-on-investment by strengthening health and wellness, raising awareness about conservation of natural resources, and improving the quality of life for local residents and visitors.

Outdoor recreation in our distinctive and highly sought after watershed is integral to sustaining rural economies and strengthening quality of life for local residents and tourists. As demand for outdoor recreation continues to grow, more pressure is put on the watersheds' natural capital, making it imperative to protect and invest in them.

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For more information visit: edwateragency.org/Pages/UARWatershed.aspx

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