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Outdoor recreation remains a powerful economic driver across North Carolina, according to U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Sixth year of economic data shows outdoor industry provides job growth, builds healthy communities, and supports the economy at the state and national levels.

NORTH CAROLINA. — November 21, 2023 — The United States Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) has released its most current [economic data](#), measuring outdoor recreation’s powerful and positive economic impact on the U.S. economy in 2022. Despite continuing inflation, workforce, and global supply chains and climate challenges, North Carolina’s outdoor recreation economy remains a powerful state driver, ranking 11th in the nation. This year’s report shows that, by BEA measured metrics, outdoor recreation generates **\$14.6 billion** in value added for North Carolina, accounts for **2%** of the state’s economy, and **2.9%** of employment, or over **146,000 jobs**.

"The latest data highlights that outdoor recreation and its supporting industries have an unwavering impact as an economic powerhouse in North Carolina," said Amy Allison, director of the MADE X MTNS (Made By Mountains) Partnership. "By championing strategic investments in public lands and infrastructure, fostering outdoor-driven communities, and providing support for the innovative endeavors of outdoor recreation businesses and entrepreneurs we continue to bolster our region's economy, while also laying the foundation for a thriving and resilient future."

At a national level, these new numbers show outdoor recreation generates **\$1.08 trillion** in gross economic output, accounts for **3.2%** of U.S. wage and salary employment, and accounts for **4.98 million** jobs. This means the outdoor recreation economy contributes more to the U.S. economy than mining, utilities, farming and ranching, and chemical products manufacturing. ([ORR Website](#))

North Carolina has maintained its year-over-year strength in core outdoor recreation sectors, supported by an interconnected network of land management, economic development, entrepreneurial support, business alliances, conservation, tourism, user group advocacy and more. As access, opportunities, investment in greater equity and statewide outdoor investment have expanded, so have many outdoor recreational activities in their economic impact and participation.

"The MADE X MTNS Partnership remains dedicated to fostering the sustainable growth of the outdoor recreation economy, ensuring it stands as a cornerstone of Western North Carolina’s economic prosperity," said Amy Allison. "We will also continue to recognize the pivotal role of equity in ensuring widespread access to outdoor opportunities, a key factor in advancing

entrepreneurship, driving workforce development, and cultivating dynamic and inclusive outdoor recreation communities."

The coordinated efforts of the MADE X MTNS Partnership, Outdoor Business Alliance of WNC, NC Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, NC Outdoor Recreation Coalition, Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Dogwood Health Trust further fortify North Carolina's strong national standing in the outdoor economy.

The recent data shows that, in 2022:

- North Carolina remains ranked 11th among all states in regards to outdoor recreation's *value-added economic impact*.
- North Carolina remains ranked 9th among all states in *employment* (2.9%).
- North Carolina is ranked 11th in outdoor recreation employee *compensation*.

The consistency of these annual reports signals a clear return on investing in our natural spaces, public health, and fostering an environment conducive to entrepreneurship, small business growth, and workforce quality of life. Communities across North Carolina are leaning on their outdoor assets as means to attract new businesses and workforce talent, increase quality of life for residents and be sustainable tourism drivers.

This is the sixth consecutive year of data on this critical industry sector and our first look at the sustainability of the outdoor industry in a post-pandemic economy. It clearly remains a national economic pillar and a consistent job creator worthy of continued investment.

See the full [national](#) and [state](#) report, and visit madexmtns.com for more information about MADE X MTNS's mission to grow the outdoor economy and catalyze rural development across Western North Carolina.

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About MADE X MTNS Partnership

The MADE X MTNS (Made By Mountains) Partnership is working to expand the outdoor industry and economy across North Carolina's Appalachian region and catalyze rural development by building vibrant outdoor communities, driving outdoor industry growth, and empowering regional storytelling. For more information, visit madexmtns.com or [@madexmtns](#)