



Economic Benefits of Outdoor Recreation in Washington

\$25.2 Billion

Spent on recreation trips and equipment annually in Washington.

237,000 Jobs

Direct and indirect jobs supported in Washington.

\$5 Billion

Local and state taxes collected.

\$1.6 Billion

Generated by out-of-state visitors.

\$53 Billion

Natural and recreation benefits generated by outdoor recreation lands, such as flood protection.

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Washington's Outdoors Are Economic Force

Outdoor recreation is a driving force in Washington's economy, creating jobs and building rural businesses. It also contributes many other benefits to all Washingtonians, according to [a 2025 report](#).

Washingtonians Love to Be Outside

Washingtonians and visitors participated in outdoor recreation about 437 million days in 2024. Of all the places to visit, state and federal public lands are the most visited, hosting 36 percent of all recreation days while local parks host 30 percent, and private lands host 34 percent.

What Are the Most Popular Activities?

The five recreational activities with the greatest participation are (1) walking and hiking, (2) wildlife and nature viewing, (3) scenic driving, (4) hanging out, and (5) picnicking and barbecuing.

What Businesses Does Outdoor Recreation Support?

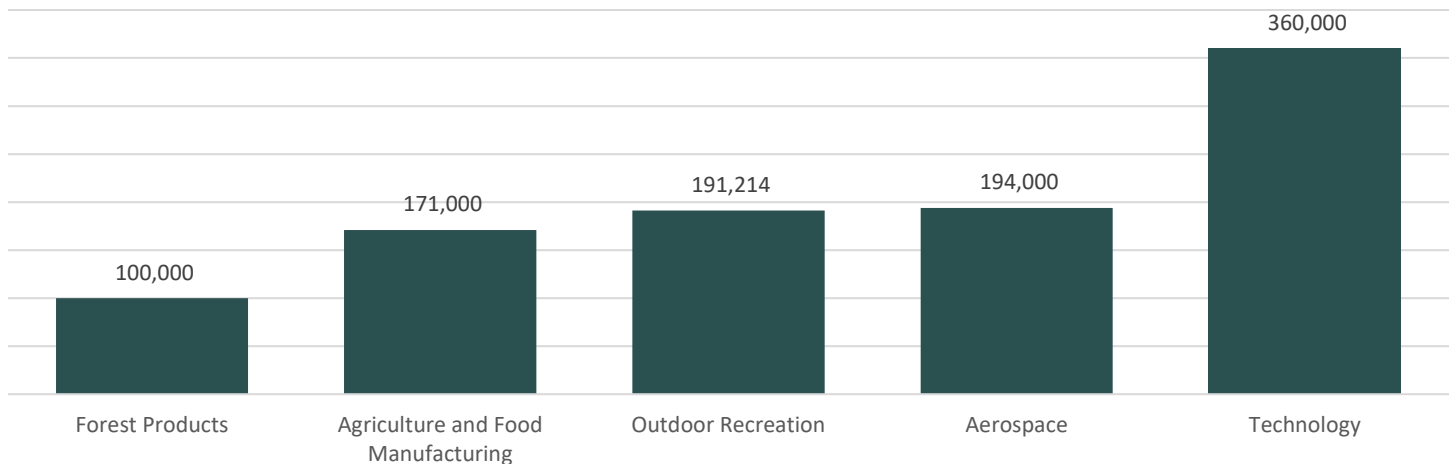
Each year, Washingtonians and visitors spend \$25.2 billion on outdoor recreation, supporting many different businesses, such as sporting goods retailers (17 percent); gas (13 percent); restaurants (12 percent); hotels, motels, and cabins (11 percent); and grocery stores (10 percent).



Outdoor Recreation is a Major Employer in Washington

Spending on outdoor recreation in Washington supports 237,000 jobs across the state, with 191,000 of those being direct jobs. On average, every \$1 million for recreation spending sustains nine jobs. Outdoor recreation is a major employer, representing 5.4 percent of Washington's total employment.

Jobs in Washington¹



Other Benefits of the Outdoors

Outdoor spaces provide a variety of natural and recreational services and benefits. For example, forests support hiking but also provide services such as habitat for wildlife, trees that store climate-warming carbon, and storing freshwater, and flood protection, and aesthetic beauty. The value of these benefits is more than \$53 billion annually.

Trends

National data and this report show that while more people are recreating outside, they are doing so less often. The number of outings has decreased from 468 million days in 2019 to 437 million days in 2024—a more than 6 percent decrease.

About this Report

The Legislature, as part of 2013-2015 Operating Budget, requested a report to quantify the economic contribution from statewide outdoor recreation to the state's economy. The Legislature authorized this report as an update to the initial report, both of which were written by Earth Economics of Tacoma. The numbers in this year's report differ from previous numbers because of new methods in counting visitor participation. View the original and subsequent reports on the Recreation and Conservation Office website at <https://rco.wa.gov/reports-and-studies/recreation/>.

¹"Key Industries," Washington Department of Commerce, accessed October 20, 2026, <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/key-sectors/>.

The following table presents county-level spending and resulting total economic effects for outdoor recreation participation. These estimates do not include equipment expenditures or activity-based expenditures, due to a lack of data on where purchases occur.

County Level Results

County	Total Expenditures	Economic Contribution	Multiplier	Jobs ²	State and Local Tax
Adams	\$11,262,000	\$16,608,000	1.47	102	\$2,208,000
Asotin	\$39,093,000	\$49,865,000	1.28	336	\$5,567,000
Benton	\$120,172,000	\$199,155,000	1.66	1,691	\$25,942,000
Chelan	\$258,622,000	\$405,161,000	1.57	2,809	\$41,195,000
Clallam	\$214,222,000	\$316,478,000	1.48	2,366	\$40,807,000
Clark	\$671,253,000	\$921,939,000	1.37	7,620	\$115,973,000
Columbia	\$9,060,000	\$13,016,000	1.44	73	\$1,592,000
Cowlitz	\$164,165,000	\$244,095,000	1.49	1,697	\$31,991,000
Douglas	\$69,913,000	\$101,975,000	1.46	561	\$12,500,000
Ferry	\$27,650,000	\$38,957,000	1.41	304	\$4,965,000
Franklin	\$45,214,000	\$70,519,000	1.56	461	\$8,492,000
Garfield	\$4,725,000	\$5,650,000	1.20	42	\$879,000
Grant	\$129,649,000	\$196,841,000	1.52	1,304	\$23,605,000
Grays Harbor	\$555,360,000	\$842,472,000	1.52	6,054	\$99,506,000
Island	\$123,553,000	\$186,965,000	1.51	1,543	\$21,451,000
Jefferson	\$97,477,000	\$139,242,000	1.43	1,000	\$16,793,000
King	\$1,995,231,000	\$3,080,985,000	1.54	20,268	\$337,504,000
Kitsap	\$261,376,000	\$407,518,000	1.56	3,159	\$49,009,000
Kittitas	\$165,325,000	\$244,327,000	1.48	1,427	\$28,197,000
Klickitat	\$86,426,000	\$123,284,000	1.43	899	\$16,080,000
Lewis	\$221,210,000	\$323,897,000	1.46	1,816	\$41,854,000
Lincoln	\$7,776,000	\$10,843,000	1.39	76	\$1,436,000
Mason	\$130,709,000	\$189,699,000	1.45	1,172	\$24,010,000
Okanogan	\$198,136,000	\$295,617,000	1.49	2,095	\$35,074,000
Pacific	\$232,636,000	\$336,700,000	1.45	2,466	\$47,891,000
Pend Oreille	\$24,983,000	\$34,337,000	1.37	210	\$3,705,000
Pierce	\$851,148,000	\$1,388,681,000	1.63	10,473	\$161,641,000
San Juan	\$32,629,000	\$46,349,000	1.42	299	\$5,682,000
Skagit	\$369,694,000	\$564,742,000	1.53	3,803	\$68,602,000
Skamania	\$35,864,000	\$48,294,000	1.35	349	\$5,412,000
Snohomish	\$696,750,000	\$1,055,855,000	1.52	6,558	\$111,184,000

²Jobs supported does not necessarily reflect on-the-ground realities because IMPLAN uses a linear mode that does not constrain jobs supported by the actual employment data for a county.

Investing in Washington's Great Outdoors

County	Total Expenditures	Economic Contribution	Multiplier	Jobs ²	State and Local Tax
Spokane	\$486,911,000	\$796,345,000	1.64	5,664	\$89,971,000
Stevens	\$104,932,000	\$159,996,000	1.52	1,155	\$20,734,000
Thurston	\$349,600,000	\$576,217,000	1.65	4,196	\$71,593,000
Wahkiakum	\$86,162,000	\$118,948,000	1.38	1,745	\$13,373,000
Walla Walla	\$34,353,000	\$52,468,000	1.53	372	\$6,839,000
Whatcom	\$331,709,000	\$507,024,000	1.53	3,185	\$59,227,000
Whitman	\$48,247,000	\$72,856,000	1.51	579	\$9,884,000
Yakima	\$281,120,000	\$441,215,000	1.57	3,006	\$52,183,000

Spending by Activity

Activity	Participants	Total Participant Days		Total Spending	
		Low	High	Low	High
Trails- and Road-Based Activities	20,741,597	308,052,390	517,325,213	\$3,031,235,000	\$5,090,480,000
Leisure Activities in Parks	20,119,293	107,353,032	261,614,546	\$2,129,347,000	\$5,839,725,000
Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	15,954,567	169,746,888	264,656,672	\$14,014,296,000	\$19,414,141,000
Water-Based Activities	12,342,372	55,603,994	167,695,597	\$3,668,566,000	\$12,759,274,000
Athletics	8,763,179	15,101,146	158,195,176	\$486,435,000	\$4,487,396,000
Camping Activities	8,031,499	24,668,280	85,756,199	\$1,456,415,000	\$5,063,045,000
Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting Sports	7,300,763	17,708,125	110,123,757	\$994,047,000	\$6,360,216,000
Snow and Ice Activities	7,101,814	17,226,247	92,169,330	\$2,293,747,000	\$12,049,733,000
Land-Based Motorized Vehicle Activities	3,726,284	8,877,134	74,500,219	\$524,105,000	\$4,398,492,000
Outdoor Adventures	3,664,053	4,931,508	56,120,173	\$379,769,000	\$4,714,161,000
Total³	107,745,423	729,268,694	1,788,156,882	\$28,974,966,000	\$80,176,667,000

³Totals may vary due to rounding.