



Economic Effects of National Forest Recreation in Alaska

Key Message

Recreation visitors to the national forests in Alaska are estimated to spend over \$353 million each year in the local economy. Local jobs related to recreation in Alaska’s national forests are estimated at almost 3600 direct jobs and over 4600 total jobs.

Background

The U.S. Forest Service surveys recreation visitors through the National Visitor Use Monitoring survey (NVUM). The Alaska Region has supplemented the national NVUM survey to collect better and more detailed information about backcountry recreation, access to remote places in Alaska, and trip details such as length of stay. The supplemental survey also was implemented because of the unique ways that people access the Tongass and Chugach National Forests.

Current Situation

Dr. Eric White and Dr. Dan Stynes wrote a 2010 report entitled “Characterization of Resident and Non-resident Visitors to Alaska National Forests”. This report was based on a study of expenditure profiles in the region as well as supplemental survey results for 2008 and 2009, matched to the basic NVUM survey information. White and Stynes have calculated a revised visitation estimate of 2,019,000 annual visits to the Tongass National Forest due to previously undocumented travel to the forest via boat and plane (the visitation estimate based on the national survey was 1,628,000). White and Stynes developed coefficients for spending, income, and jobs per 10,000 visits to the forests. When multiplied by estimated visits, the following numbers are derived for visitor spending, income, and jobs related to visits to the national forests in Alaska.

	# of Annual NF Recreation Visits	Total Annual Spending Related to NF Visits	Direct Personal Income Related to NF Visits	Direct Jobs Related to NF Visits	Total jobs Related to NF Visits
Tongass NF	2,019,000	\$ 268,452,297	\$ 76,984,874	2,772	3,551
Chugach NF	498,000	\$ 84,871,351	\$ 21,812,101	827	1,093
Regional Total	2,517,000	\$ 353,323,648	\$ 98,796,975	3,599	4,644
source: NVUM and 2010 Report by Dr. Eric White and Dr. Dan Stynes					

Half of Alaska residents surveyed who live in Southeast Alaska and 21% of residents living in Southcentral Alaska reported using a boat or plane to access the national forest. This is quite different from how national forests are accessed in other states and is one reason recreation sampling in Alaska can be so difficult. The Alaska supplemental NVUM survey attempts to accurately count these visitors.

Nationwide, recreation visitor spending amounted to nearly \$11 billion in 2012, and as visitor spending ripples through the U.S. economy, the monetary value of all the goods and services adds a little more than \$13 billion to the gross domestic product, and sustains about 190,000 full- and part-time jobs.

More Information

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