

# The Economic Influence of Human Powered Recreation in Colorado's Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, & Gunnison National Forests

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# We don't just play in the forest. Recreation dollars power this region.

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests in western Colorado stretch from the high Sawatch Range peaks of the Continental Divide to the plateaus and canyons of Colorado's Western Slope, encompassing some of the most remote and beautiful landscapes in Colorado.

Outdoor adventures in western Colorado – including rock climbing, mountain biking, hiking, paddling, and snowsports – are more than just fun.

Human-powered outdoor recreation supports \$392 million in annual visitor spending on the GMUG National Forests, which receive 2.6 million visits a year.

Right now, the U.S. Forest Service is in the process of updating the land management plans for the GMUG National Forests in Colorado. Outdoor recreation is a valued part of these National Forests.

## Outdoor recreation needs to be prioritized in this process.



Numbers derived from studies by James N. Maples, PhD, and Michael J. Bradley, PhD (Eastern Kentucky University)

1. Economic Impact of Mountain Biking in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, 2018
2. Economic Impact of Rock Climbing in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, 2018
3. Economic Impact of Paddling in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, 2018
4. Economic Impact of Snowsports in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, 2018
5. Economic Impact of Hiking in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, 2018

In the GMUG National Forests, rock climbing, mountain biking, hiking, paddling, and snowsports annually support:

ANNUAL VISITOR SPENDING

\$392 million



ANNUAL VISITS TO THE FOREST

2.6 million

FOR COLORADANS

4,148 full time jobs



\$112.2 million in wages

*Any way you slice it, outdoor recreation brings substantial dollars to Colorado's economy.*



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5. Economic Impact of Hiking in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, 2018
6. Visitation numbers: National Forest Service 2014 Recreation, Access and Scenery Assessment

# More than 92% of residents surveyed chose to live in western Colorado because of its unparalleled access to outdoor recreation.

Colorado's GMUG National Forests attract a broad array of people to the region. Nearly 75% of the individuals surveyed earn more than \$50,000 a year. One in four are business owners.

The allure to this region is deeply rooted in the GMUG National Forests' recreational opportunities. These forests help shape Colorado's identity as a healthy, adventure-loving place to work, play, and live. Let's keep it that way.

**Please reach out with ideas or questions.**

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The insights and data within this document are the result of five studies commissioned by Outdoor Alliance, all completed in 2018 by James N. Maples, PhD, and Michael J. Bradley, PhD (Eastern Kentucky University). Additional insights are the result of supplemental studies produced by James N. Maples, PhD; Michael Bradley, PhD, and Holly Ningard, PhD. Please contact the email above for the complete study reports.

