

Quiet Recreation on BLM-Managed Lands in Eastern Colorado: Economic Contribution 2015

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CONTACT

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DISCLAIMER

ECONorthwest was commissioned by The Pew Charitable Trusts to complete this report.

Throughout the report we have identified our sources of information and assumptions used in the analysis. Within practical limits, ECONW has made every effort to check the reasonableness of the data and assumptions and to test the sensitivity of the results of our analysis to changes in key assumptions.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the many individuals who provided us with information and insight. But we emphasize that we, alone, are responsible for the report's contents. We have prepared this report based on our own knowledge and training and on information derived from government agencies, private statistical services, the reports of others, interviews of individuals, or other sources believed to be reliable. ECONorthwest has not verified the accuracy of such information, however, and makes no representation regarding its accuracy or completeness. Any statements nonfactual in nature constitute the authors' current opinions, which may change as more information becomes available.

The analytical method used in this report was peer reviewed by other professional economists for accuracy and appropriateness. Responsibility for the research and findings lies solely with ECONorthwest.

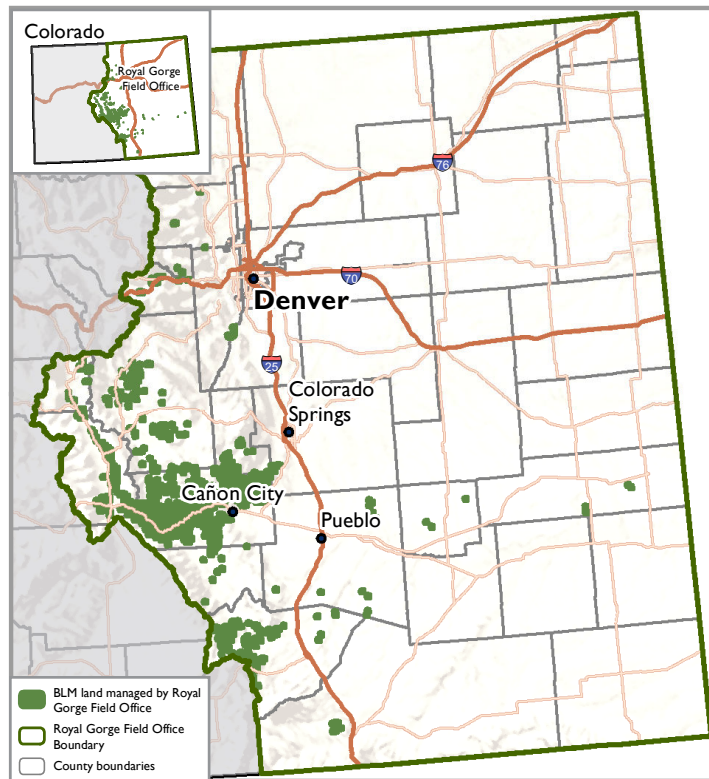
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INTRODUCTION

Public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Colorado provide a wealth of recreational opportunities. This report focuses on “quiet” recreational uses on eastern Colorado lands managed by BLM’s Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO). These uses range from camping, hunting, and rafting to rock climbing and mountain biking.

The BLM’s RGFO manages approximately 658,000 acres of land located primarily in the Arkansas River Valley east of the Continental Divide. This region contains diverse landscapes offering a variety of recreational opportunities at both developed sites and remote areas.

Figure 1. Lands Managed by the Royal Gorge Field Office (Colorado)



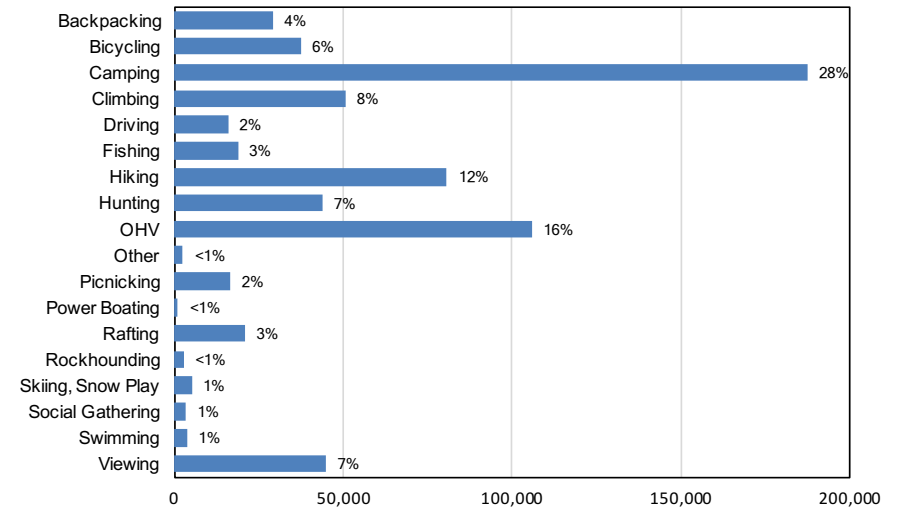
Source: ECONorthwest

RECREATION IN EASTERN COLORADO

According to visitation data from BLM, there were nearly 1.6 million visits to BLM lands managed by the RGFO in eastern Colorado in 2015. A “visit” is a trip of any length—an hour, a day, a week—by an individual to BLM land for recreational purposes. These visits accounted for approximately 20 percent of the nearly 7.7 million visits to all BLM lands throughout the state of Colorado in 2015.¹

As Figure 2 shows, recreational visitors engaged in a wide range of activities during their time in the region managed by the RGFO. The BLM reports activity participation in units of “visitor days”—defined as aggregated 12-hour periods of time. There were 672,000 visitor days on lands managed by the RGFO in 2015, with Camping (28%), Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use (16%), Hiking (12%), and Climbing (8%) at the top of the list.

Figure 2. Recreation on Lands Managed by BLM’s RGFO, Visitor Days (2015)



Source: ECONorthwest based on data from the Recreation Management Information System (BLM, 2015).
 Note: Almost 50 recreation categories were condensed into the categories displayed in this figure.
 Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

1. The source for all visitation data in this report is data provided by the BLM from the BLM Recreation Management Information System.

QUIET RECREATION VISITS

“Quiet recreation” is recreation that does not involve significant motorized activity (such as motor-boating, snowmobiling, motorcycling, other off-highway-vehicle use, etc.)—aside from any transportation to and from the recreation sites. In this analysis, we estimate the number of “quiet recreation visits,” which are trips (of any length) to BLM lands managed by the RGFO in eastern Colorado for the primary purpose of engaging in quiet recreation activities.

Our analysis utilizes data on visits and activities from the BLM and data on characteristics of visits to other public lands from the National Visitor Use Monitoring Program, which is an extensive survey effort of the U.S. Forest Service.² We outlined the analytical approach in a 2016 report of quiet recreation on BLM lands across the western U.S.³ The more localized focus in this analysis afforded us the opportunity to undertake a more detailed review of data from the field office, communicate with BLM personnel about the area, and review other studies of the region.⁴ As a result, we incorporated region-specific or site-specific assumptions instead of more general data when available.⁵

Figure 3 shows the results. We estimate that there were 1,230,000 quiet recreation visits on BLM land in the RGFO region in 2015, which represents 77 percent of all recreational visits to BLM-managed lands in the region.

Figure 3. Recreation Visits to BLM Land Managed by the RGFO in E. Colorado (2015)

Type of Recreation Visit	Number of Visits
All Recreation	1,592,000
Quiet Recreation	1,230,000

Values rounded to the nearest thousand.

Source: ECONorthwest based on data from BLM

QUIET RECREATION SPENDING

When people visit BLM lands to engage in recreation, they also contribute to local economies through their local purchases. Visitors make expenditures on food, fuel, and other goods and services. A share of those expenditures occurs in communities within 50 miles of the recreation site. These expenditures support local incomes, jobs, and other economic activity.

We apply data on the spending amounts associated with individual recreation visits to calculate the total expenditures from quiet recreation visits on lands managed by the BLM.⁶ As Figure 4 shows, we estimate that quiet recreation visitors on BLM land managed by the RGFO spent \$54.3 million locally in conjunction with their visits in 2015, with nearly \$39 million spent by visitors from outside the area.

Figure 4. Visit-Related Expenditures, Quiet Recreation in the RGFO Region (2015)

Category of Visitor	Expenditures
Local	\$13,157,000
Non-Local	\$38,879,000
Non-Primary	\$2,309,000
Total	\$54,345,000

Values rounded to the nearest thousand.

Source: ECONorthwest, based on BLM and NVUM data

Note: “Non-Primary” Visitors are visitors for whom recreation was not the primary purpose of their visit.

2. Bureau of Land Management. 2015. Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) Data; and USDA Forest Service. 2015. National Visitor Use Monitoring Version 2.1 - Round 2 (2005 – 2009) Data.

3. For a description of the analytical approach used for calculating quiet recreation visitation, spending, and economic contribution, See ECONorthwest. 2016. *Quiet Recreation on BLM-Managed Lands: Economic Contribution 2014*. March.

4. See, for example, T. Casey, J. Gollob, and B. Parry. 2016. *Bureau of Land Management Royal Gorge Field Office Recreation Planning Report 2015*. Natural Resource Center, Colorado Mesa University. March.

5. For example, we reviewed site-level data to identify concentrated locations of non-quiet activities. Based on site data and communication with BLM personnel we utilized site-specific estimates of cross-participation between quiet and non-quiet activities rather than national averages in such locations.

6. See ECONorthwest (2016) for a description of the analytical method. For spending data, See E.M. White and D.J. Stynes. 2010. *Updated Spending Profiles for National Forest Recreation Visitors by Activity*. Joint Venture Agreement between the USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station and Oregon State University. #10-JV-11261955-018. November.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

We use statewide and regional economic models to estimate the ripple effects of the dollars spent in local communities in conjunction with quiet recreation visits to BLM lands.⁷ Figure 5 shows the economic contribution of spending associated with quiet recreation visits on BLM lands managed by the RGFO in eastern Colorado in 2015.

Direct effects are the activities of visitors making purchases within 50 miles of BLM recreation areas. Indirect effects are the result of activity by suppliers to the directly- and indirectly-affected businesses. Induced effects are the result of purchases of goods and services by employees and proprietors in directly- and indirectly-affected businesses. Total economic effects are reported as the sum of direct, indirect, and induced effects.

Our analysis focuses on the economic activity associated with quiet recreation on BLM lands, so we include the spending from all categories of visitors. To understand the relative contribution among the different groups of visitors, we break out the results separately for three different groups of visitors: local, non-local, and non-primary-purpose (those for whom recreation was not the primary purpose of their visit).

Visitors' expenditures of \$54.3 million in the region supported approximately \$40.1 million in personal income (employee compensation), \$27.9 million in value-added (contribution to GDP), nearly 700 jobs (both full-time and part-time, full-year equivalents), and economic output (value of goods and services produced) of over \$67.5 million.



Hindman Gulch. Photo Credit: Curt Nimz

Figure 5. Economic Contribution by Visitor Category (2015)

Type of Effect	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Local				
Output	\$6,323,000	\$2,603,000	\$3,611,000	\$12,538,000
Compensation	\$3,632,000	\$1,505,000	\$2,133,000	\$7,270,000
Value-Added	\$3,198,000	\$910,000	\$1,219,000	\$5,328,000
Jobs	92	14	24	130
Non-Local				
Output	\$27,110,000	\$11,095,000	\$14,607,000	\$52,812,000
Compensation	\$16,570,000	\$6,389,000	\$8,628,000	\$31,587,000
Value-Added	\$12,634,000	\$3,960,000	\$4,932,000	\$21,526,000
Jobs	376	61	98	537
Non-Primary				
Output	\$1,076,000	\$452,000	\$697,000	\$2,225,000
Compensation	\$607,000	\$262,000	\$412,000	\$1,281,000
Value-Added	\$638,000	\$156,000	\$235,000	\$1,028,000
Jobs	18	2	5	26
Total				
Output	\$34,510,000	\$14,150,000	\$18,915,000	\$67,575,000
Compensation	\$20,809,000	\$8,156,000	\$11,173,000	\$40,138,000
Value-Added	\$16,470,000	\$5,026,000	\$6,387,000	\$27,882,000
Jobs	486	78	127	693

Dollar values rounded to the nearest thousand.

Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source: ECONorthwest

7. This analysis utilized input-output modeling with IMPLAN software and 2015 IMPLAN data. See ECONorthwest (2016) for a description of the analytical method.