



West Virginia University's Brad & Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative

Bridging Outdoor Economic Development &
Access to Physical Activity



BRAD AND ALYS SMITH OUTDOOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

TWO FOCUS AREAS OF THE SMITH OEDC

OUTDOOR ECONOMY

Igniting West Virginia's economy and quality of life through outdoor recreation.

YOUTH INITIATIVES

Providing the stepping stones for West Virginia's future.

Addressing Population Loss Through Quality of Life

Purpose:

To Address Population Loss

Vision:

We envision a West Virginia where all our communities are vibrant and thriving

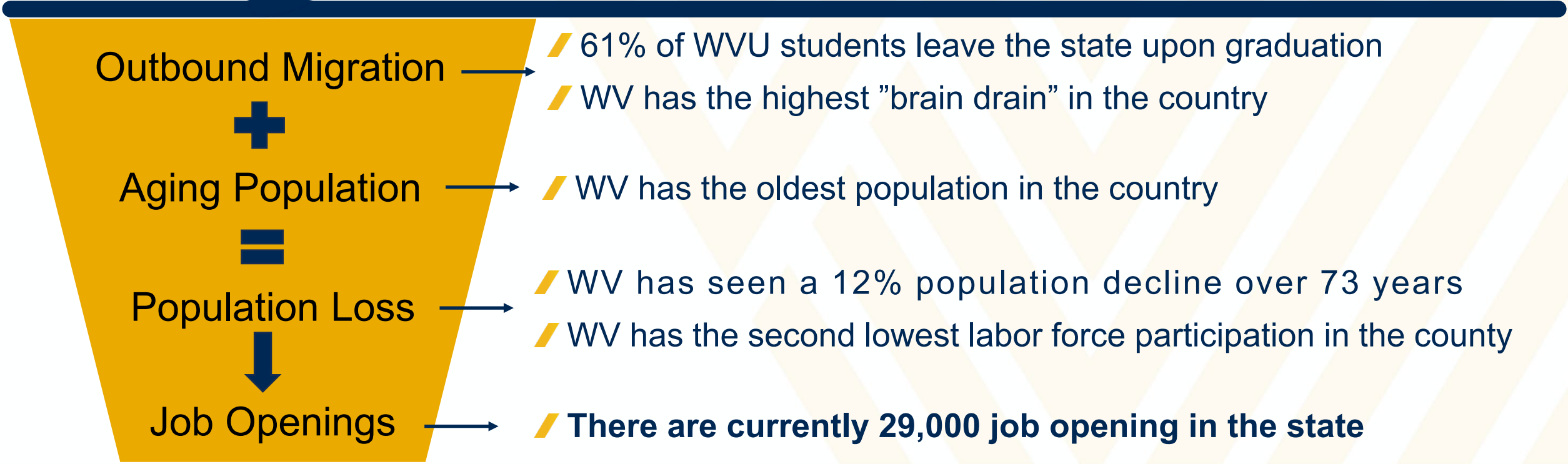
Mission:

Empower West Virginia's communities and partners to advance the state's economy and enhance quality of life through outdoor recreation

FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE FOR WEST VIRGINIA'S FUTURE

“Talent is replacing the tax incentives as the most important factor in economic development decisions”

President & CEO of the Florida Chamber of Commerce- to Congress



Why Is This a Viable Strategy?



BRAD AND ALYS SMITH OUTDOOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

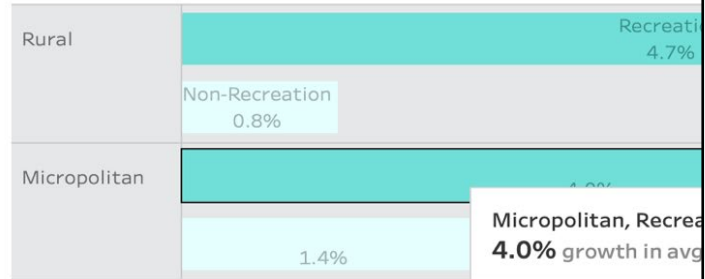
TALENT ATTRACTION & RETENTION

Recreation Counties Attract New Residents and Higher Incomes

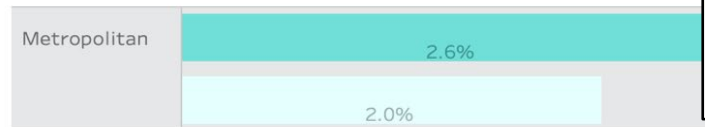
Recreation Counties, as classified by the USDA
Research Service

Recreation Counties Have Faster Growth in Since 2010

In non-metro areas, recreation counties are experiencing
job on average.

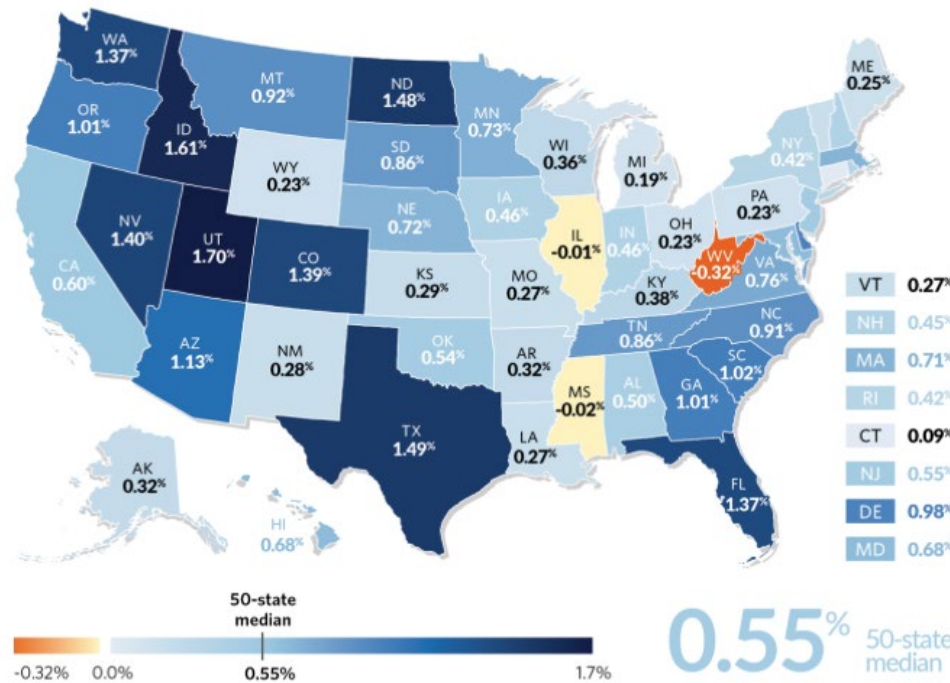


In metro areas, there is not a meaningful difference
between recreation and non-recreation counties.



State Population Growth Varied Widely Over Past Decade

Population growth rate, 2010-20



Source: Pew analysis of U.S. Census Bureau decennial data

© 2022 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Recreation Counties Have Higher Net Migration Rates

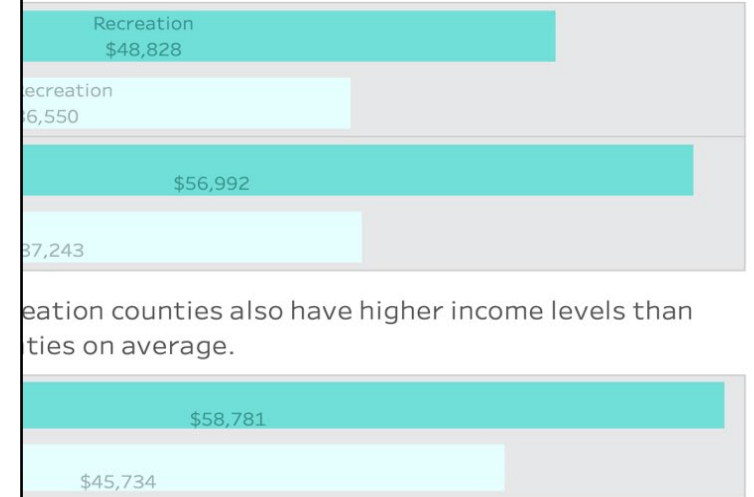


Recreation counties are growing while non-recreation counties are

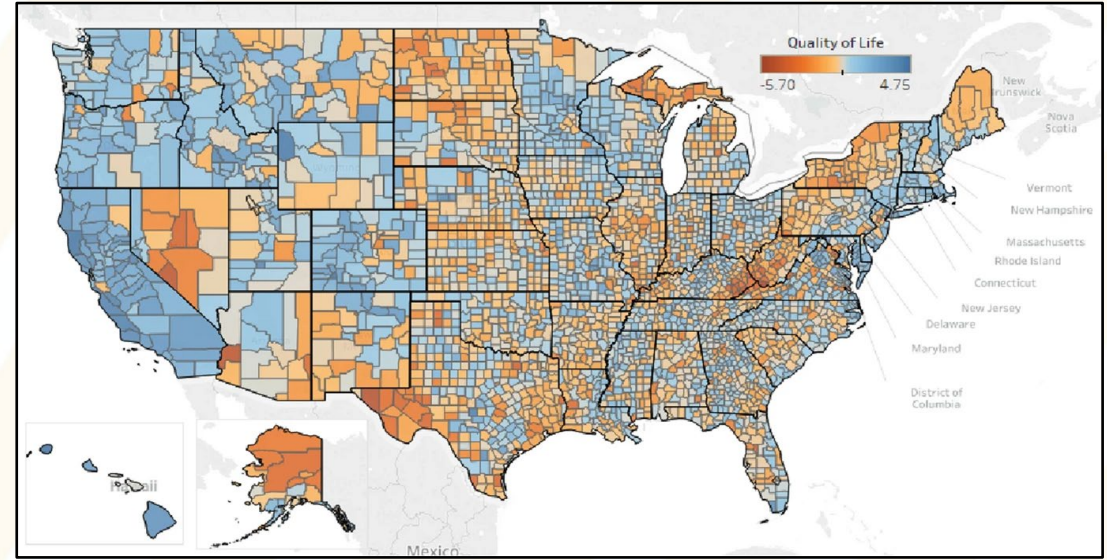
Recreation Counties Have Higher Household Income Among



Recreation counties have higher income levels among newcomers on



TALENT ATTRACTION & RETENTION



Bentonville, Arkansas Is Disneyland for Mountain Bikers

Our New York City-based bike columnist visited America's most up-and-coming cycling destination and found it well deserving of the hype



Bentonville ranked 5th fastest-growing U.S. city; Northwest Arkansas cities lead growth in state

by Jeff Della Rosa (@DellaRosa@mwbj.com) · May 21, 2020 8:49 am · 4,852 views

Tags: Census data

Share Tweet LinkedIn



NWA ranks fourth on 'Best Places to Live' report

Region climbs, passes Austin and Denver

by Doug Thompson | July 13, 2021 at 10:30 am

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U.S. News & WORLD REPORT



TALENT ATTRACTION & RETENTION

INFORMED DECISIONS™

Marin Christensen
Research Associate

Utah Outdoor Partners Survey of Tech Sector Employees

The most important factor for Utah's tech sector employees deciding to move to or stay in Utah is access to outdoor recreation and wilderness.

The tech sector is Utah's fastest growing industry and **79% of Utah tech-sector worker transplants** rated outdoor recreation and access to public lands as the most important factor in their decision to move to Utah. While **82% of Utah natives** that have left and moved back said outdoor recreation was the most important factor in the decision to move back.

The New York Times

Social Climbing Has a Whole New Meaning

The nubby fitness obsession that forces you to unplug and concentrate or — AAAAH!



According to Climbing Business Journal, which tracks gym openings nationally, the commercial climbing gym industry grew at a rate of 6.9 percent in 2016, 10 percent in 2017 and 11.8 percent in 2018.

Engineers in particular seem to be attracted to the sport, because each “boulder problem” of holds is a three-dimensional puzzle, and gyms reset them monthly to keep things spicy. (As part of its corporate wellness program, Google installed a rock wall in its New York offices in Chelsea, in 2013. Its Bay Area and Los Angeles offices have rock walls, too.)

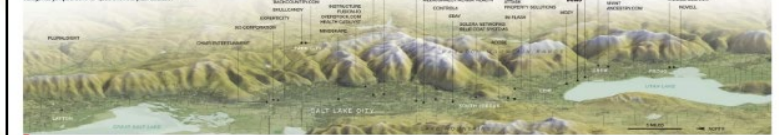
"They surveyed fast growing businesses in Utah and found that the the **second most important reason for locating or expanding the businesses in Utah was access to outdoor recreation**. And these were not companies in the recreation business at all. The first and third factors were also related to recreation"

Utah Outdoor Partners Survey of Businesses

Authored by: Marin Christensen and Samantha Ball

UTAH'S SILICON SLOPES

With a low cost of living and a boom of tech talent streaming to our state's mountains, the 20-year number of tech startups in Utah has doubled in the last five years. The number of tech companies in the state, most of which are clustered in that valley, has jumped 80% to 1,200 over the past decade.



 Kem C. Gardner
POLICY INSTITUTE
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

THE OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITY

IN 2022

RECREATION ACCOUNTED FOR

5 Million Jobs

**3.2% of
Employment**

\$1.1 Trillion
IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT

ORR

IN 2022

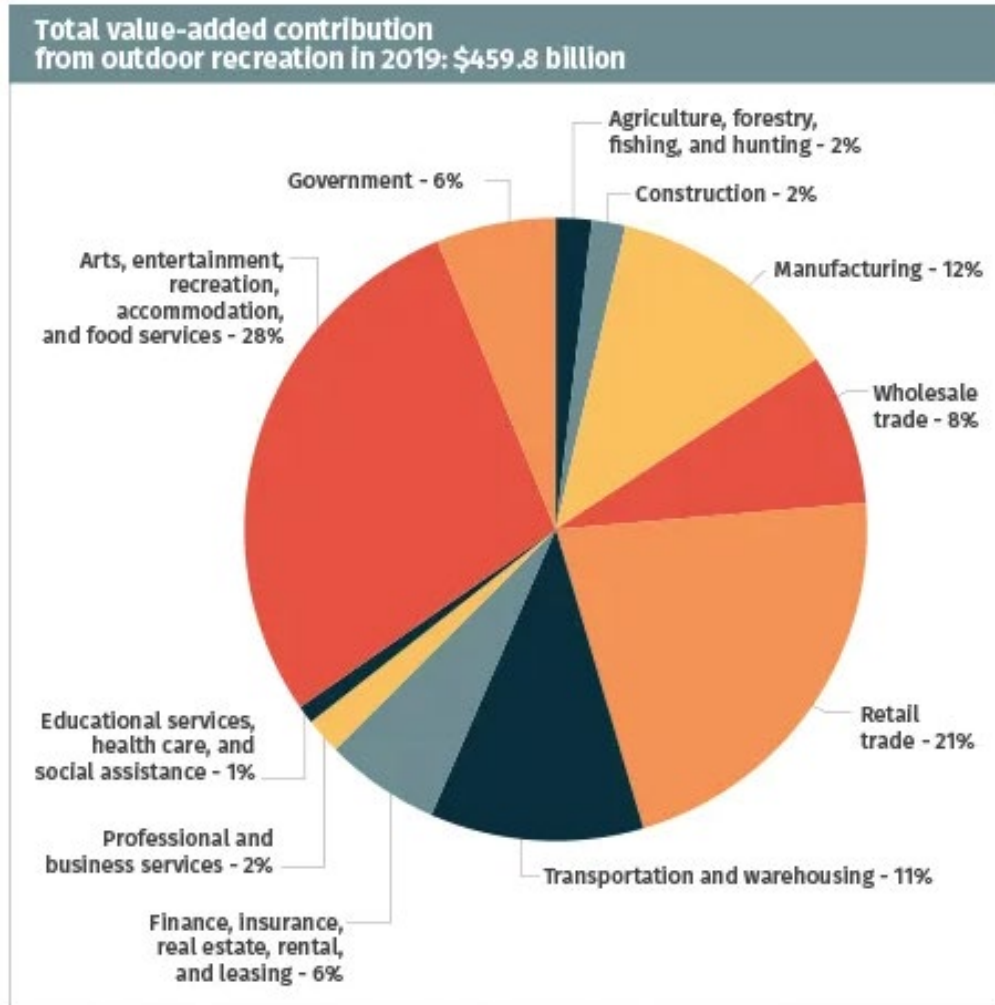
RECREATION ACCOUNTED FOR

**3.2% of
Employment**

IN THE U.S.

ORR

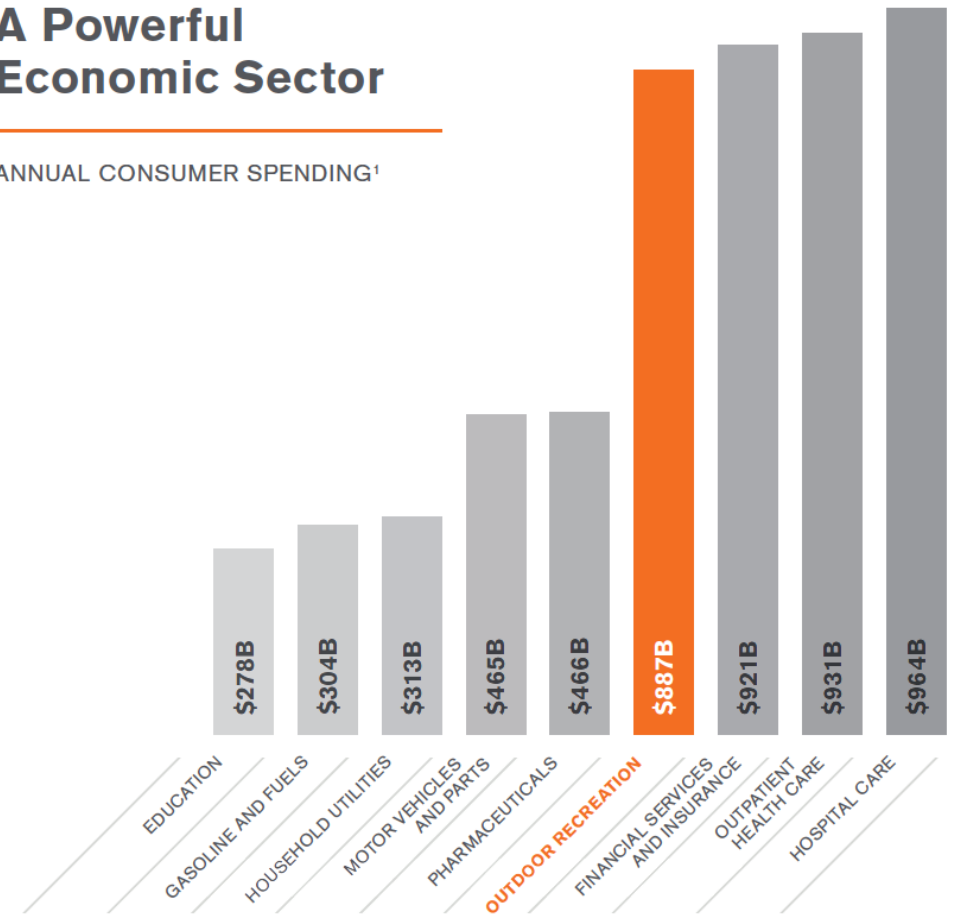
OUTDOOR RECREATION IS BIG BUSINESS



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account.

A Powerful Economic Sector

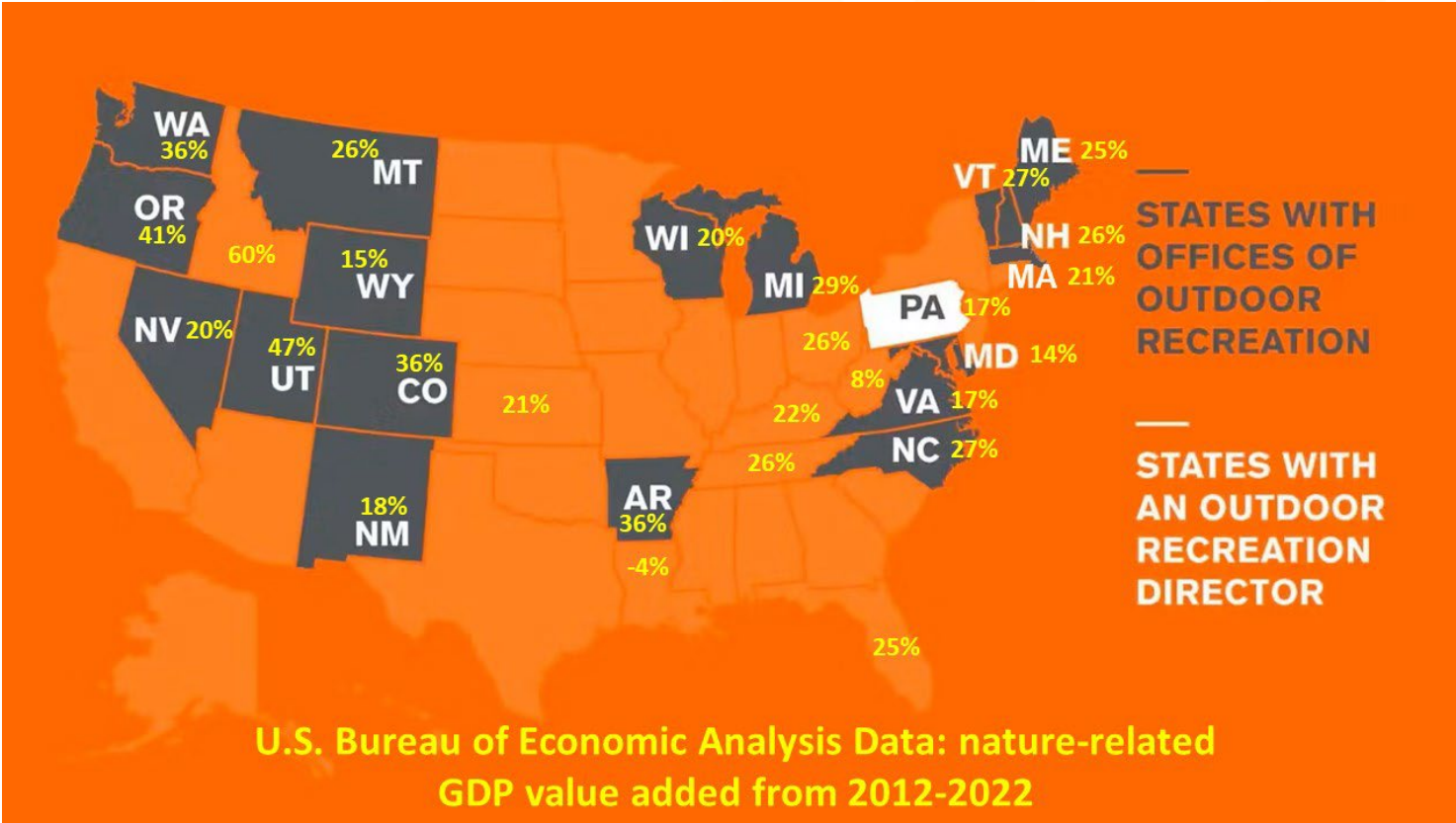
ANNUAL CONSUMER SPENDING¹



¹ Bureau of Economic Analysis, Personal Consumption Expenditures by Type of Product

<https://outdoorindustry.org/advocacy>

2022 WV OUTDOOR ECONOMY



WV Outdoor Economy Generates

- /// \$1.7 Billion in WV
- /// 20,000 WV Jobs
- /// 2.8% of all employees in the state

*Still have a long way to go: 2012-2022 WV Ranks **49th** in the Country for OE's Contribution to the GDP

These Activities Make Up The Outdoor Recreation Economy



CAMPING

RV campsite
Tent campsite
Rustic lodge



FISHING

Recreational fly
Recreational non-fly



HUNTING

Shotgun
Rifle
Bow



MOTORCYCLING

On-road
Off-road



OFF-ROADING

ATV
ROV
Dune buggy
4x4 and Jeep



SNOW SPORTS

Cross-country skiing
Downhill skiing
Nordic skiing
Snowboarding
Snowmobiling
Snowshoeing
Telemark skiing



TRAIL SPORTS

Day hiking on trail
Backpacking
Rock or ice climbing
Running 3+ miles
Horseback riding
Mountaineering



WATER SPORTS

Kayaking
Rafting
Canoeing
Surfing
Scuba diving
Sailing
Stand-up paddling
Boating:
cruising, sightseeing,
wakeboarding, tubing,
kneeboarding,
waterskiing



WHEEL SPORTS

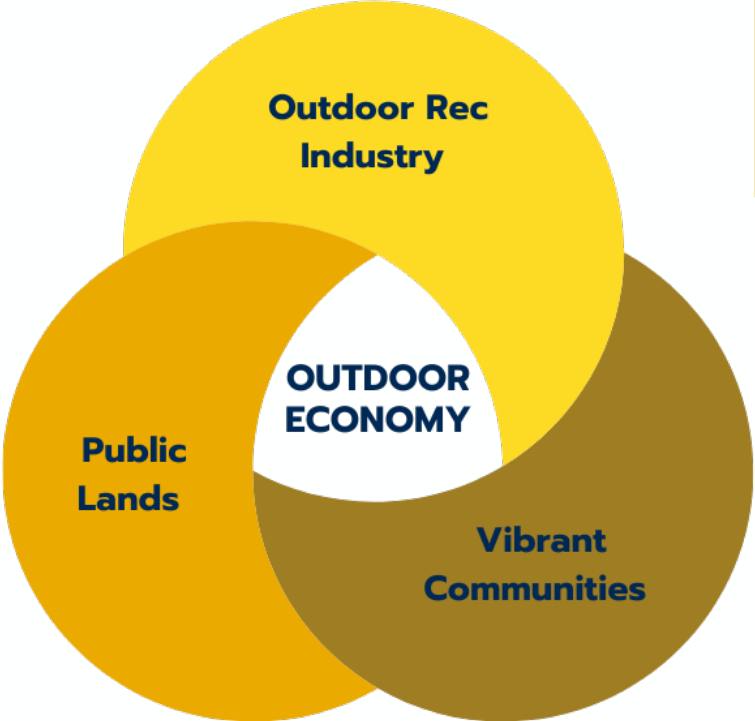
Bicycling, paved road
Bicycling, off-road
Skateboarding



WILDLIFE VIEWING

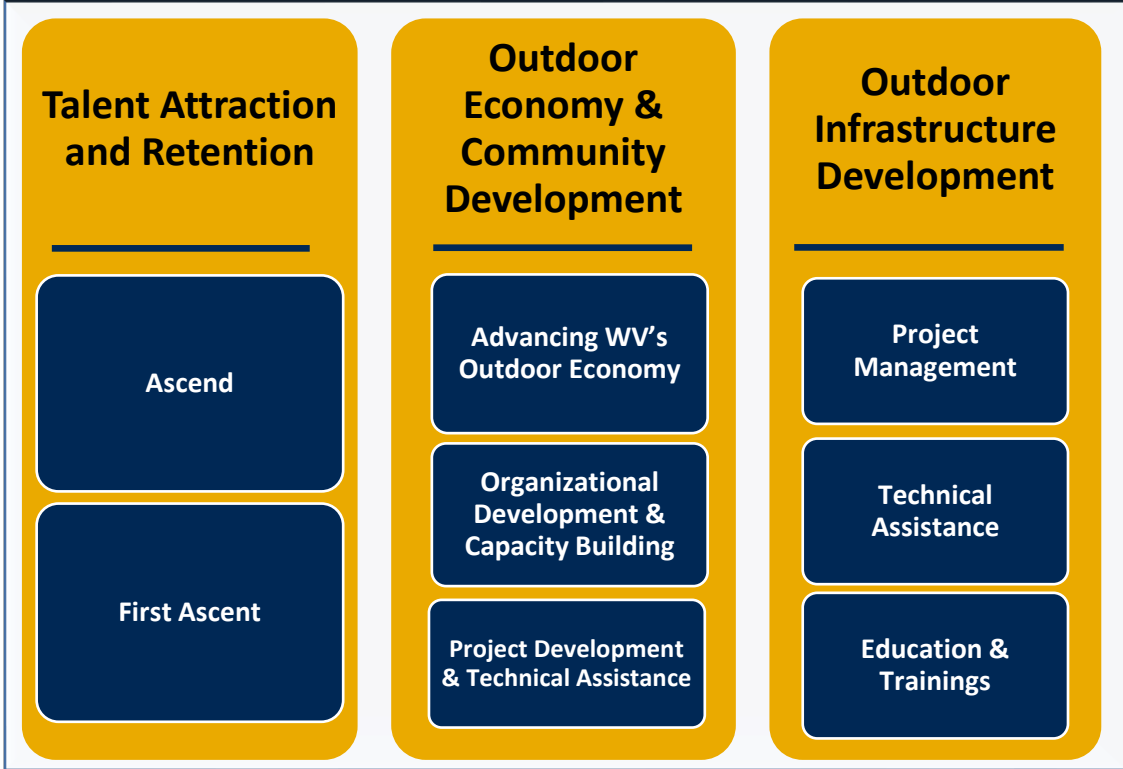
Without
Trails You
Have No
Outdoor
Economy

OUR APPROACH



The Smith OEDC's Work in the Outdoor Economy

Core Initiatives



Supporting Programs









Outdoors Recreation's Role in Health and Wellness



BRAD AND ALYS SMITH OUTDOOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

Core Participation in Select Sports

Percentage of children ages 6-12 who participated on a regular basis in 2021
(number of days varies by sport)

Sport	2008	2019	2020	2021	2020-2021 Change	# Kids in 2021
 Baseball	16.5%	14.4%	12.2%	12.6%	3.0%	3,670,506
 Basketball	16.6%	14.0%	14.8%	14.5%	-2.3%	4,208,369
 Bicycling	27.7%	17.0%	18.2%	18.0%	-0.9%	5,243,326
 Cheerleading	2.4%	2.9%	2.3%	2.2%	-2.6%	649,347
 Flag Football	4.5%	3.5%	3.4%	3.4%	1.5%	1,000,296
 Tackle Football	3.7%	2.9%	2.8%	2.3%	-17.9%	677,872
 Golf	5.0%	4.6%	5.3%	5.2%	-1.9%	1,500,000
 Gymnastics	2.3%	3.6%	2.9%	3.0%	4.2%	881,905
 Ice Hockey	0.5%	1.2%	1.0%	0.9%	-10.5%	272,662
 Lacrosse	0.4%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	-23.7%	200,509
 Soccer (Outdoor)	10.4%	7.7%	6.2%	7.4%	19.5%	2,160,186
 Softball (Fast-Pitch)	1.0%	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%	-0.1%	348,575
 Swimming (Team)	N/A	1.3%	1.0%	1.1%	11.9%	334,394
 Tennis	4.3%	4.3%	5.9%	5.8%	-2.9%	1,681,717
 Track and Field	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	-7.3%	322,862
 Volleyball (Court)	2.9%	2.9%	2.5%	2.6%	4.8%	751,197
 Wrestling	1.1%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	-11.5%	162,157

SPORTS PARTICIPATION 6-12 YEAR OLDS

- Most youth sports rates are generally declining.
- In 2021 golf, tennis, gymnastics, softball, had slight increases.
- Three of the most popular sports basketball, baseball, and soccer declined again in 2021

*Core participation, meaning kids who played certain sports on a regular basis
Sports Participation of Youth, (2022). Aspen Institute's Sports & Society Program

Core Participation in Select Sports

Percentage of children ages 13-17 who participated on a regular basis in 2021
(number of days varies by sport)

Sport	2008	2019	2020	2021	2020-21 Change	# Kids in 2021
Baseball	8.2%	10.4%	8.7%	9.5%	9.5%	1,980,057
Basketball	18.3%	16.5%	16.9%	17.5%	4.0%	3,657,654
Bicycling	16.8%	20.6%	21.8%	21.0%	-3.5%	4,379,888
Cheerleading	3.2%	3.0%	2.2%	2.4%	9.5%	496,189
Flag Football	8.6%	2.7%	2.4%	2.8%	15.8%	573,354
Tackle Football	3.3%	7.0%	6.8%	6.9%	1.7%	1,432,020
Golf	6.4%	5.3%	7.2%	6.8%	-5.6%	1,600,000
Gymnastics	1.8%	1.5%	1.2%	1.2%	7.0%	259,291
Ice Hockey	0.8%	1.3%	1.1%	1.2%	1.5%	241,660
Lacrosse	1.2%	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%	-4.1%	395,604
Soccer (Outdoor)	7.9%	7.1%	5.7%	6.7%	18.6%	1,403,949
Softball (Fast-Pitch)	2.1%	2.0%	1.7%	1.8%	6.8%	369,298
Swimming (Team)	N/A	2.8%	2.3%	2.2%	-3.6%	461,918
Tennis	6.0%	6.8%	7.9%	8.0%	0.9%	1,659,298
Track and Field	6.3%	5.5%	5.2%	4.9%	-6.0%	1,026,422
Volleyball (Court)	7.3%	5.6%	5.0%	5.2%	5.0%	1,086,800
Wrestling	2.6%	1.2%	1.9%	1.0%	-6.4%	200,828

SPORTS PARTICIPATION 13-17 YEAR OLDS

✓ In 2021 several sports saw slight increases from 2008.

✓ However, overall participation from 13-17 years old's is down.

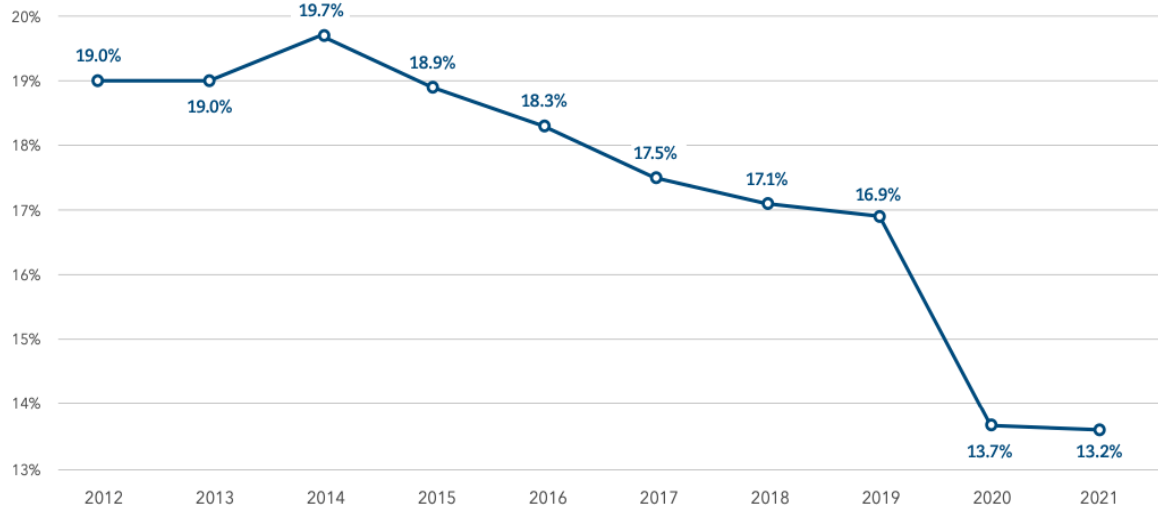
✓ Income is the key indicator of participation in this age group

*Core participation, meaning kids who played certain sports on a regular basis
Sports Participation of Youth, (2022). Aspen Institute's Sports & Society Program

TRADITIONAL SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Physically Inactive Children

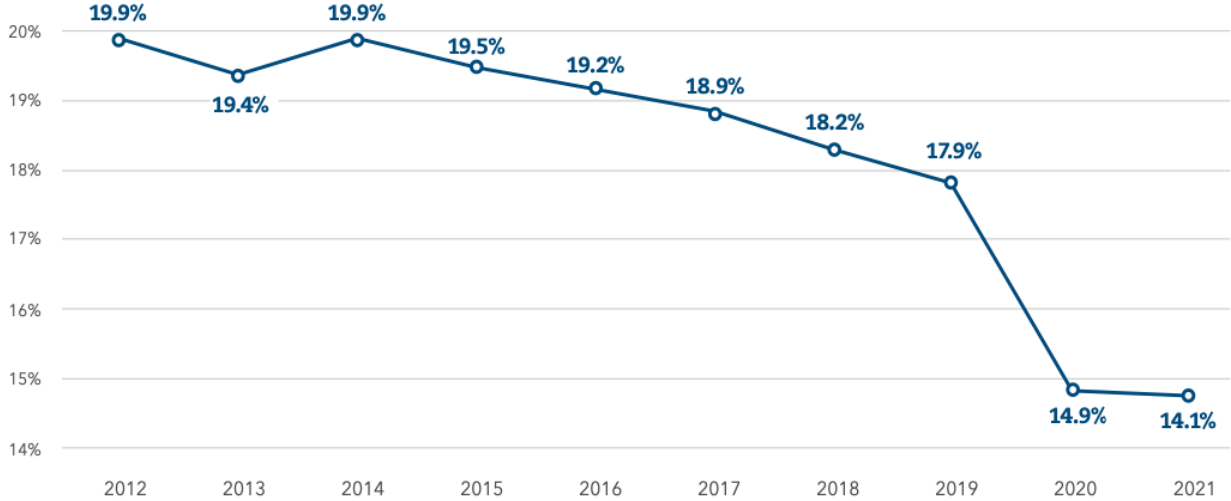
Percentage of kids ages 6-12 who engaged in no sport activity during the year



Source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association, 2021

Physically Inactive Teenagers

Percentage of youth ages 13-17 who engaged in no sport activity during the year



Source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association, 2021



OUTDOOR PARTICIPANT TRENDS

MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES, 2022



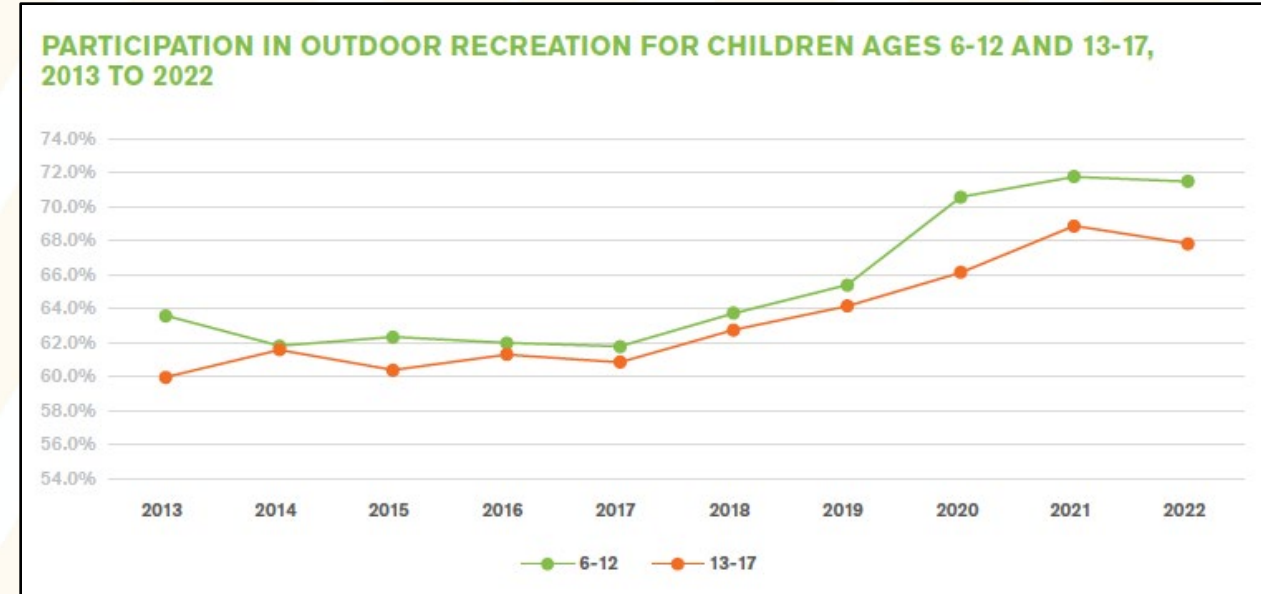
YOUTH (6 TO 17) MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES*

The popularity of outdoor activities has been determined by those with the highest participation rates.



OUTDOOR PARTICIPANT TRENDS

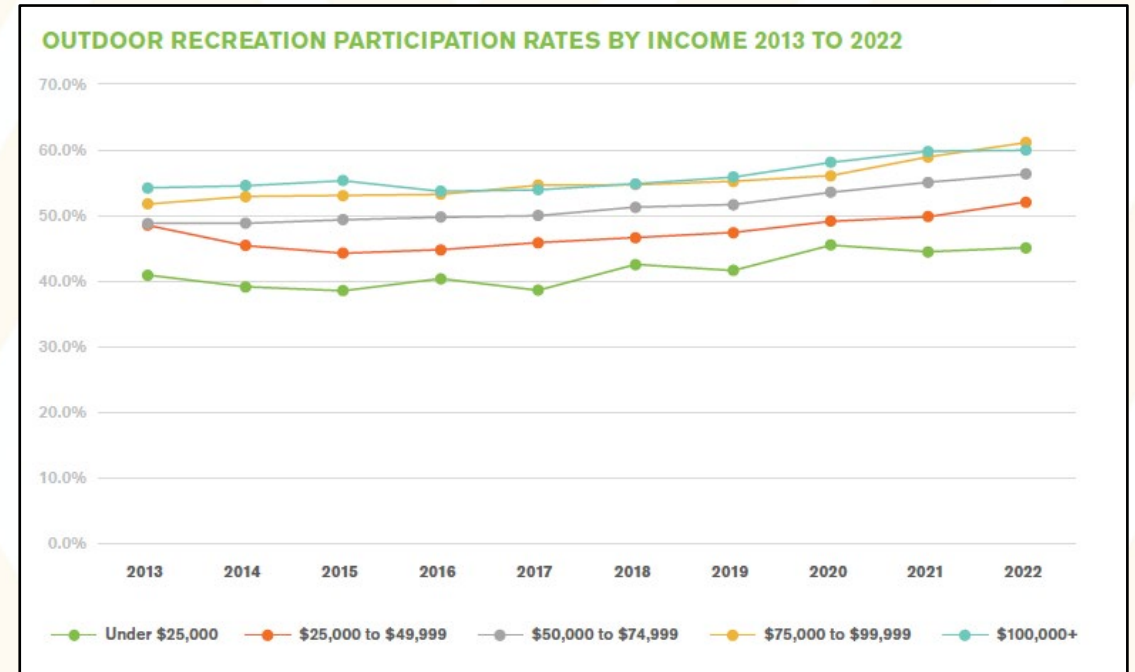
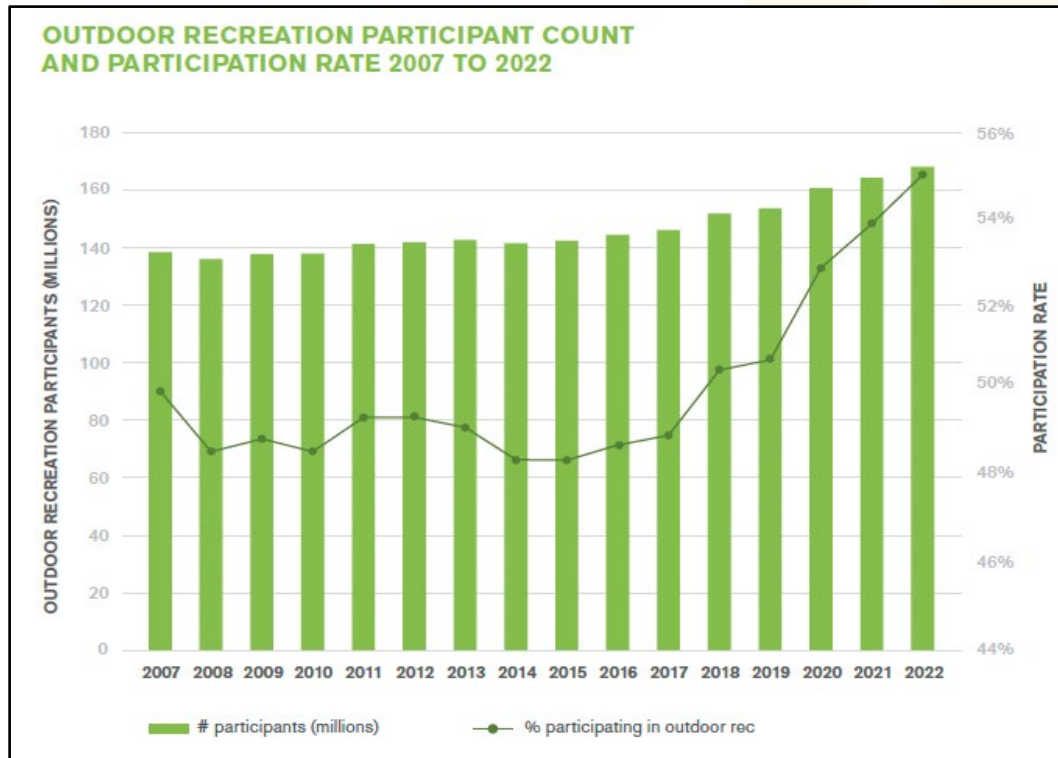
Changes in participant trends



<https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2023>

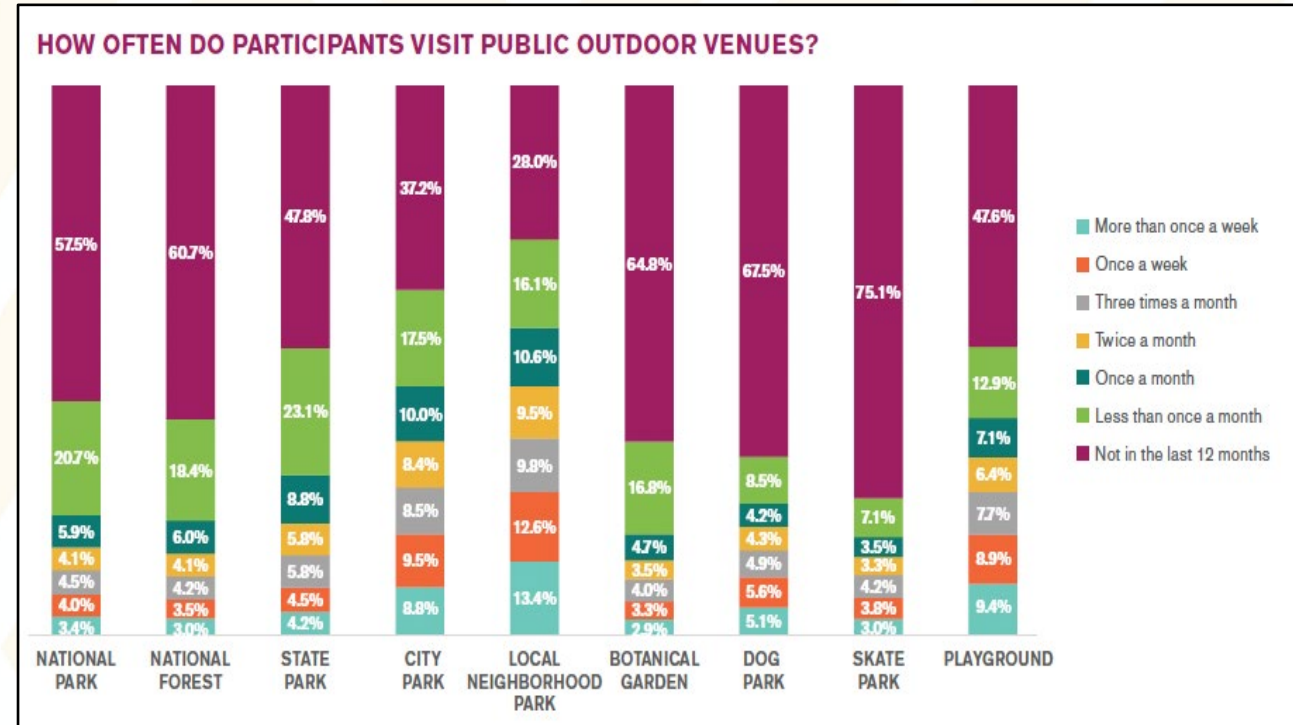
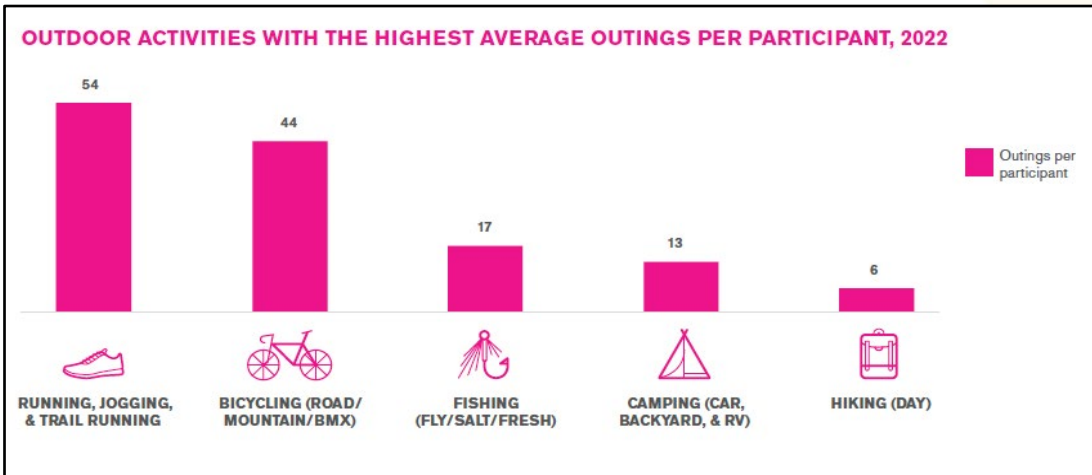
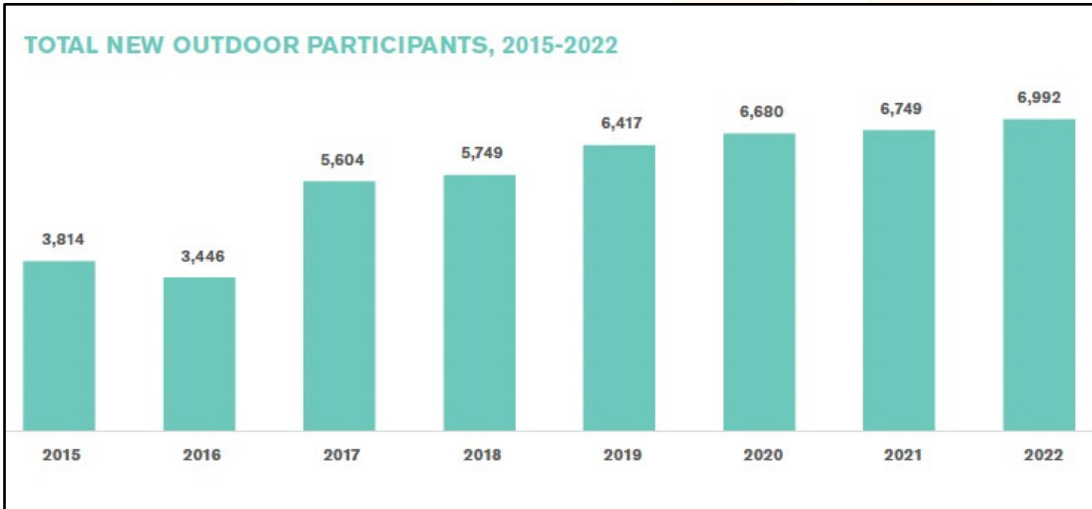
OUTDOOR PARTICIPANT TRENDS

Changes in participant trends



<https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2023>

OUTDOOR PARTICIPANT TRENDS



COMMUNITY HEALTH BENEFITS

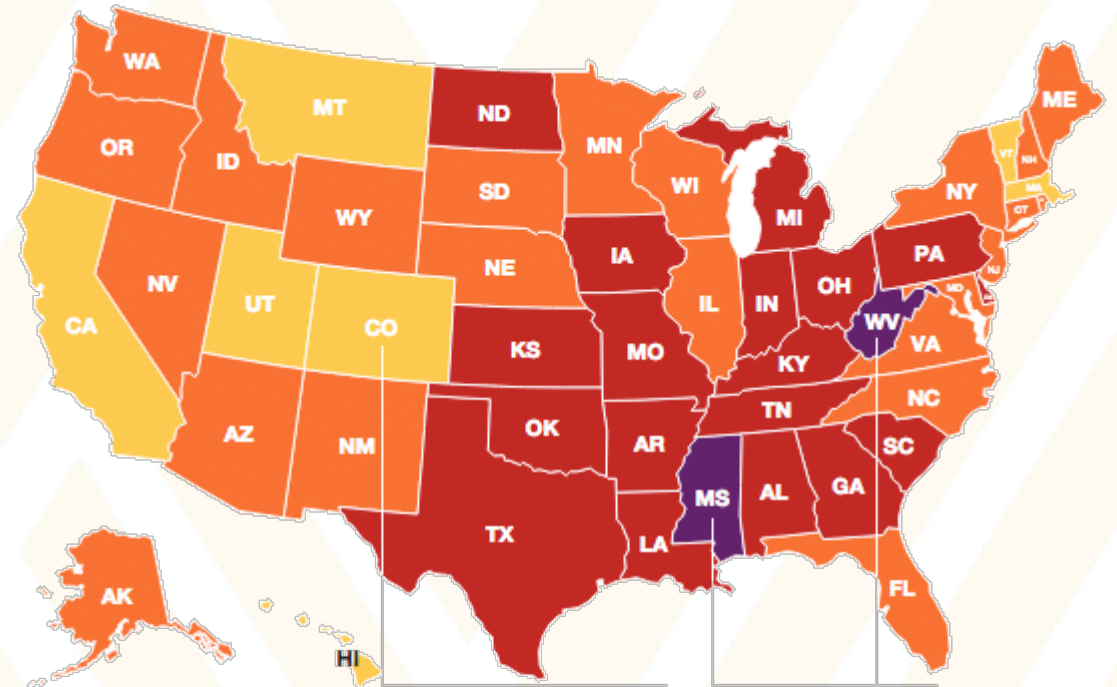
For every dollar invested in building trails, nearly three dollars in medical cost savings may be achieved.

Wang G, et al. A cost-benefit analysis of physical activity using bike/pedestrian trails. Health Promotion Practice: 2005; 6(2): 174-9

Being in nature can:

- Reduce stress
- Calms anxiety
- Lead to a lower risk of depression

<https://news.stanford.edu/2015/06/30/hiking-mental-health-063015/>



20

States with adult obesity rates of at least 30 percent

43

States with adult obesity rates of at least 25 percent

21.3%

Colorado has the lowest rate of adult obesity

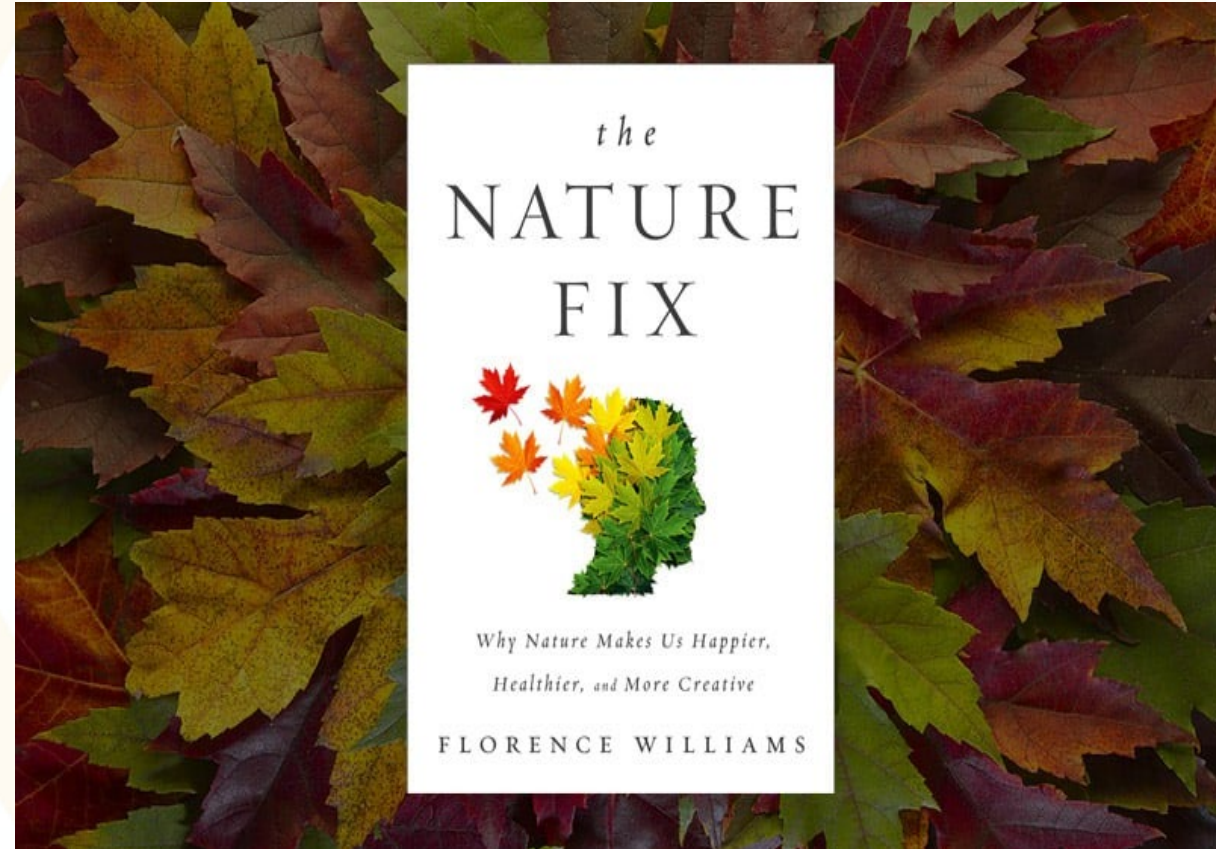
35.1%

Mississippi and West Virginia have the highest rates of adult obesity

STUDIES SHOW THE BENEFITS OF BEING OUTSIDE IN NATURE

- There is no replacement for the peaceful elements of nature
- Smell, sight, and sound of nature changes our brains and improves health
- The more time spent in nature the more benefits
- Nature can reduce stress and improve mental health

Just think if we can combine the mental health benefits of being outside with the benefits of exercise



COMMUNITY HEALTH BENEFITS

according to a [study](#) released in 2014 by the American Journal of Public Health, there is a direct and significant measurable correlation between how close people live to biking and walking infrastructure and the amount of weekly exercise they get. The study was conducted on three communities who were upgrading their walking and biking infrastructure, measuring the exercise habits of the residents both before the trails went in, and after. The results showed that those living within less than a mile of the new trails were getting on average 45 minutes more exercise a week after the trails were built than they were before the trails were built. The study also found that the amount of exercise a week went down the further away people live from trails. As the lead author of the study, the study shows the importance of a supportive environment to promote physical activity by

Previous research has identified and quantified significant physical health benefits from trails. A study on the health benefits from bike/pedestrian trails found that every \$1 invested in trails resulted in \$2.94 of savings on health care costs,¹⁷ showing that trails can serve as a cost-effective health

Mental health benefits are more difficult to quantify, but nonetheless represent important benefits for trail-based recreation participants. An analysis of health benefits conducted by the University of Washington (2019) will provide more insight into the relationship between trail-based recreation and health.



Journal of Education and Recreation Patterns
2757-9344
jerpatterns.com

HOME ABOUT LOGIN REGISTER SEARCH CURRENT ARCHIVES ANNOUNCEMENTS TEMPLATE

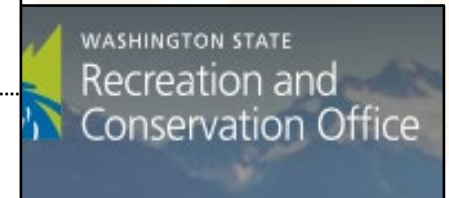
Home > Vol 3, No 2 (2022) > **TWILLEY**

Investigating Recreation Activity Type on College Students' Subjective Well-being and Leisure Satisfaction

Danny TWILLEY, Holland HUNTER, Laura MORRIS

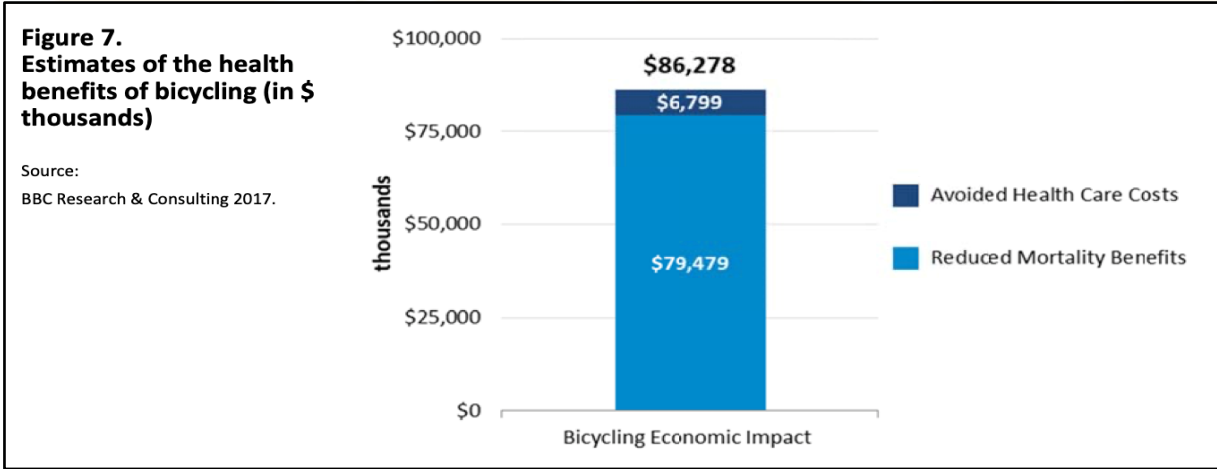
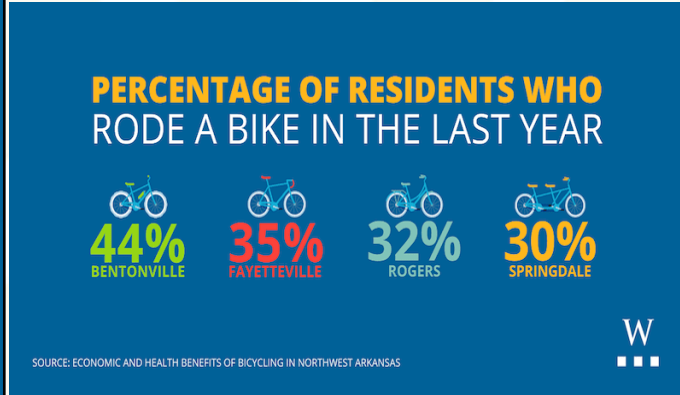
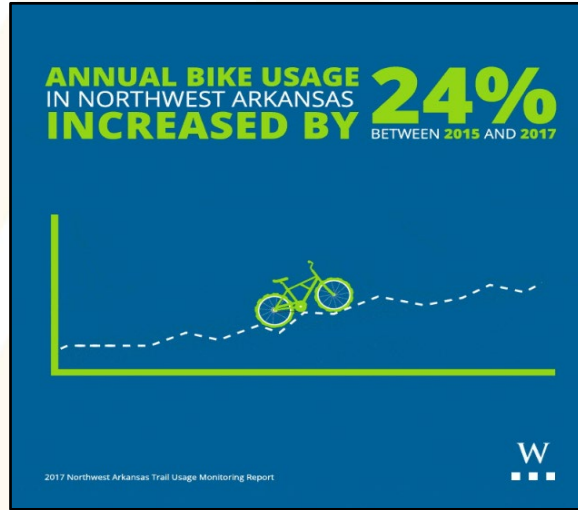
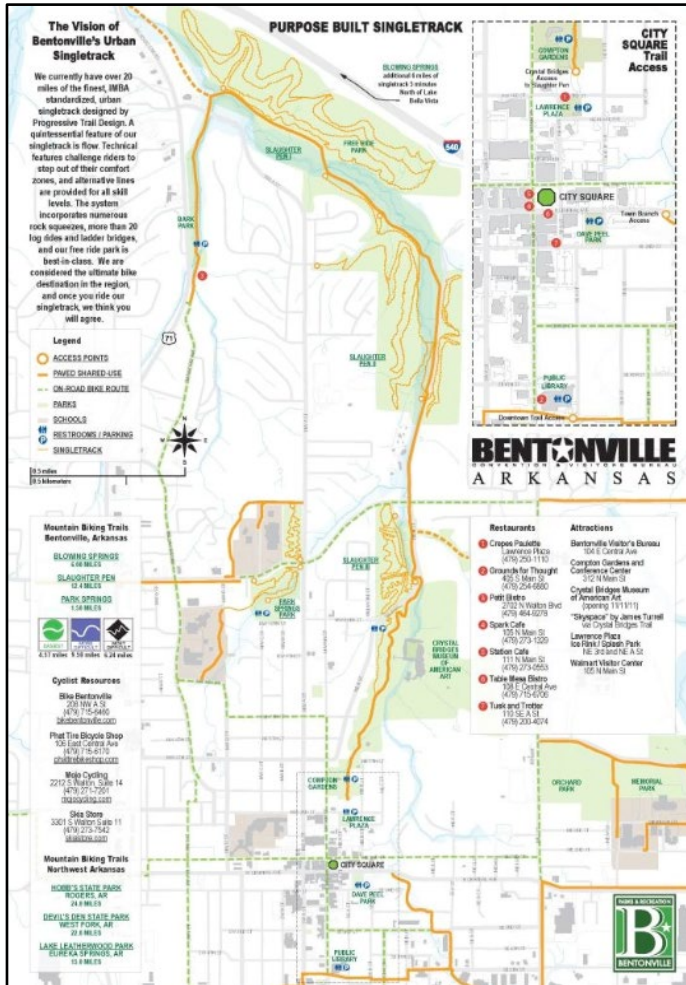


actually measure that impact. For example, a study found that 120 minutes, in the outdoors is the threshold for health benefits. Over 20,000 people studied in this research, the majority of those who participated took part in outdoor activities within two miles of their home, showing again why it's important to have trails readily available to the public. The study also concluded that it didn't make a difference whether the time spent outdoors was in a single day, or over the entirety of the week, meaning that daily commuters who use trails and pathways, if their weekly commute totals 120 minutes or more, are reaping real psychological benefits.



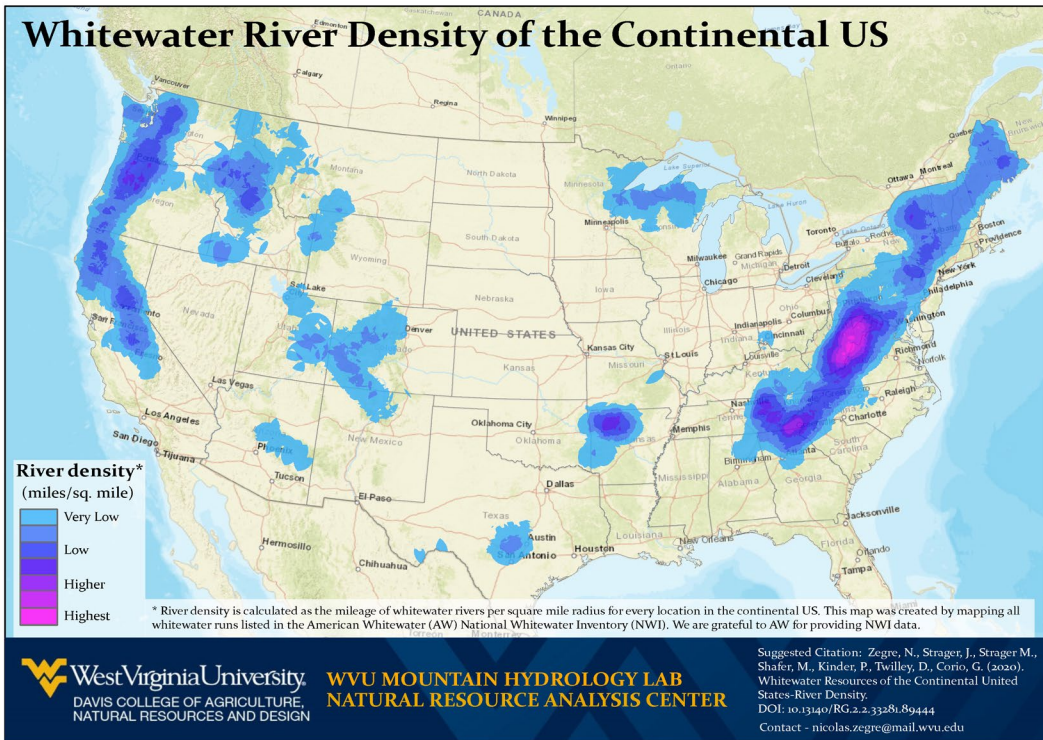
HEALTH
Physical activity associated with trail use results in more than \$390 million of health savings annually.

COMMUNITY HEALTH BENEFITS

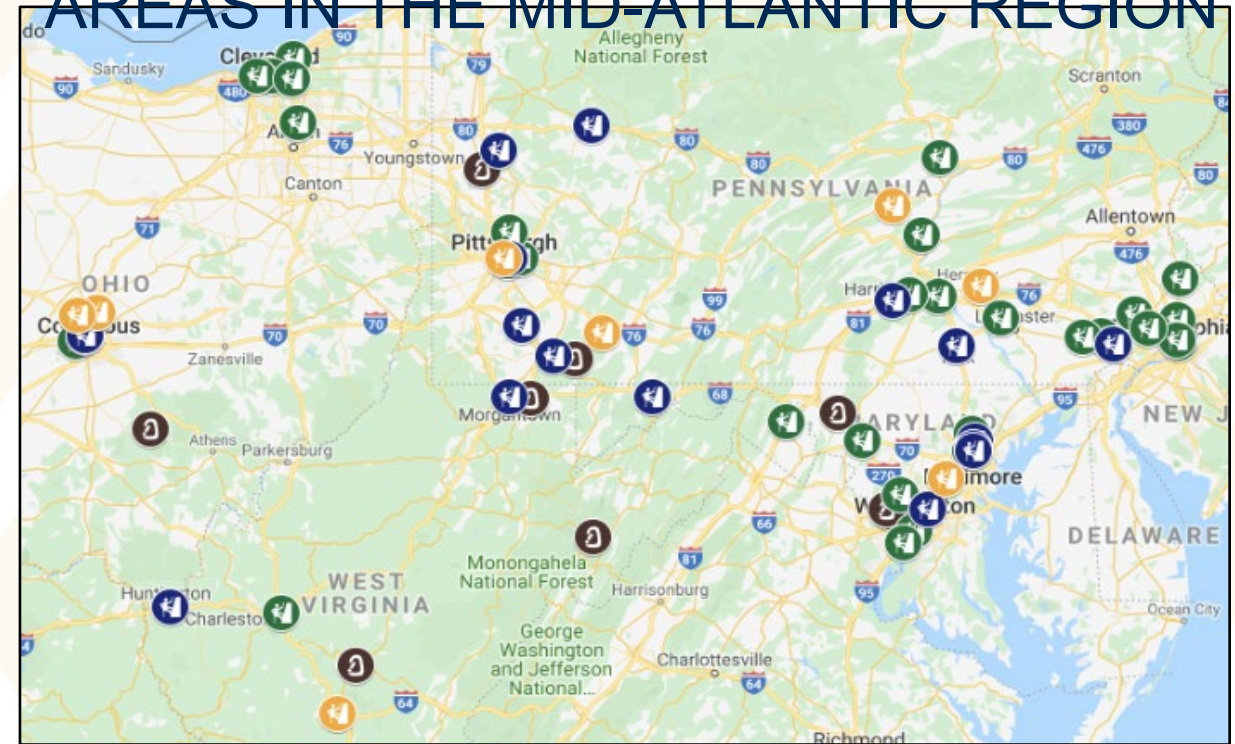


WHY WV?: VALUABLE, RARE, & HARD TO IMITATE

✓ GREATEST DENSITY OF RIVERS/WHITEWATER IN THE U.S



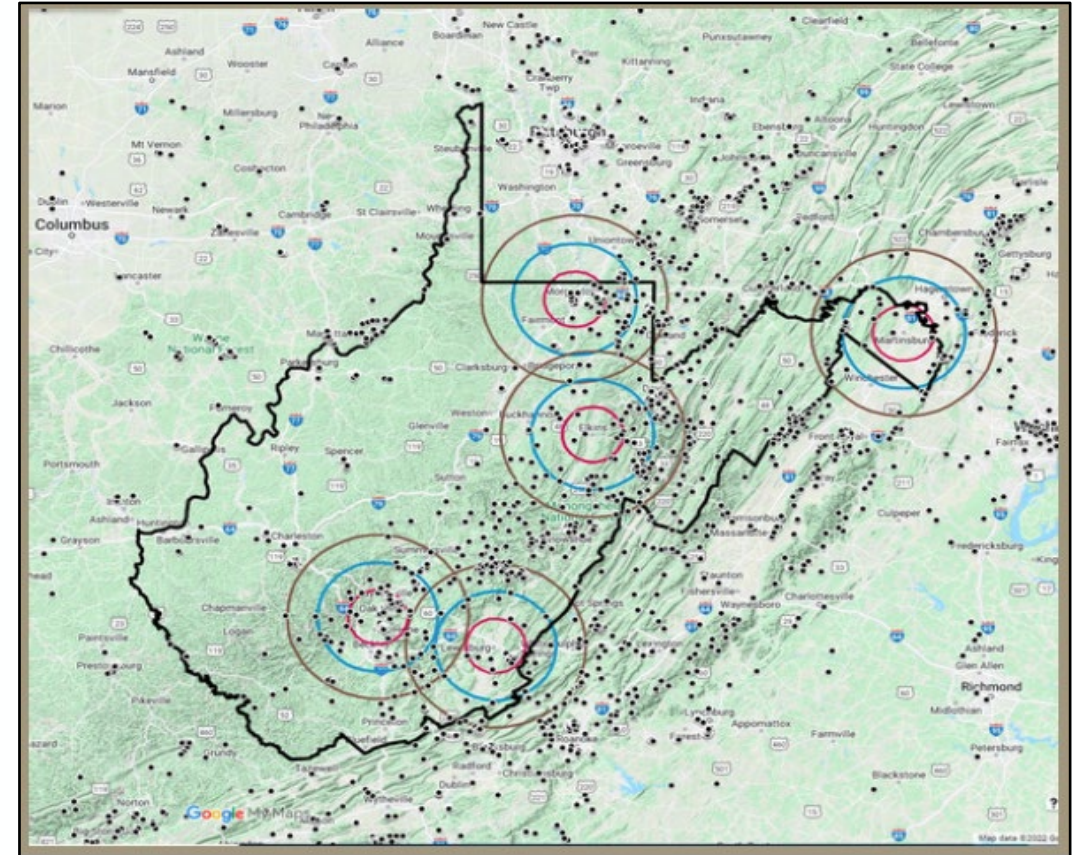
✓ 3 OF THE MOST POPULAR CLIMBING AREAS IN THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION



ANCHORED IN THE OUTDOORS

Asset Mapping: Valuable, Rare, Hard to Imitate

Drive Time	Morgantown	Lewisburg	Martinsburg	Elkins	NRG Area
Whitewater 30 mins	13	12	8	15	23
Whitewater 60 mins	51	60	27	53	62
Whitewater 90 mins	94	138	90	123	111
Climbing 30 mins	650	0	43	10	1590
Climbing 60 mins	1198	45	770	394	1601
Climbing 90 mins	1400	2325	1684	626	1693
Mountain Biking 30 mins	38	13	2	0	32
Mountain Biking 60 mins	117	70	38	51	60
Mountain Biking 90 mins	192	203	197	176	142
Ski Areas 30 mins	0	0	0	0	0
Ski Areas 60 mins	2	1	1	6	1
Ski Areas 90 mins	7	3	3	10	1



Building Buy-In & Partnerships Through Proof In Concept



BRAD AND ALYS SMITH OUTDOOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

Morgantown Trail Opportunities



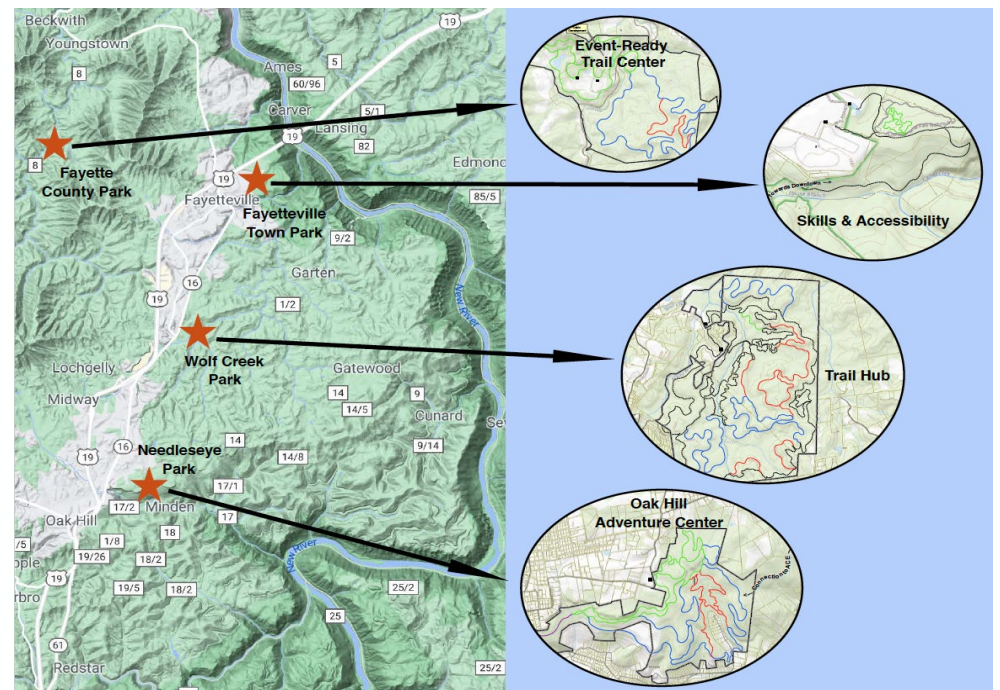
Mountaineer Bike Yard @ Mylan Park

- ✓ No other facility like it in the eastern U.S.
 - ✓ All Weather/Hard Surfaced
 - ✓ BMX Track
 - ✓ UCI Competition Pump Track
 - ✓ Jump & Flow Track
 - ✓ Skills Trail
- ✓ EDA Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation- \$5.7m
- ✓ **Partners:** Mylan Park Foundation, WVU OEDC, Action Sports Design, Visit Mountaineer Country, EDA



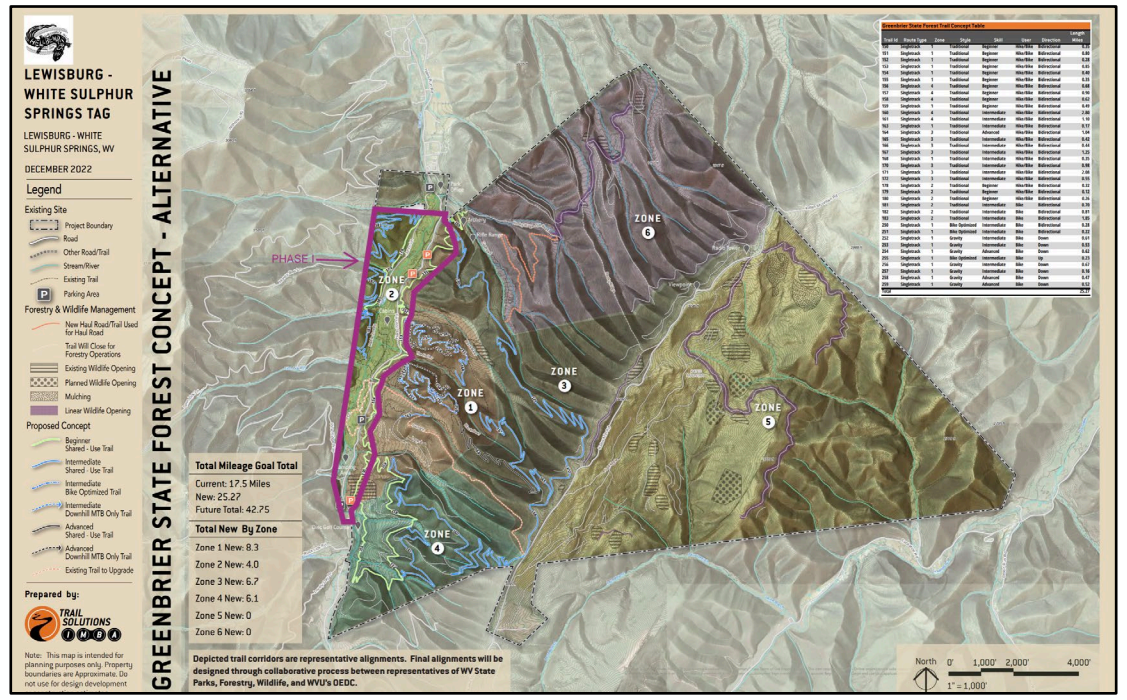
New River Gorge Area

- Build on the recent National Park Designation
- Diversify opportunities
- 4 Locations- All near town
- CDS Funding for Phases I & II- \$1.5m
- Town, County, City/Land Trust Property Owners
- Partners:** NRGRDA, FTC, City of Oak Hill, Town of Fayetteville, Region IV Planning and Development Council, Fayette County, NPS, WV Land Trust



Greenbrier Valley

- They had an idea of what they wanted
 - // Hubcap- bike park in WSS
 - // 5,000 acers of State Forest
 - // Fish Hatchery and Lewisburg
 - // Would the location allow for & create accessibility?
- Organizational Capacity
 - // GVORBA
 - // Create non-profit status
- Got to work
 - // Realistic - Moving dirt in 3 years or less
 - // Grants- Planning & \$2.6m HUD earmark
- // **Partners:** WV DNR, WV Forestry, US Fish & Wildlife, City of Lewisburg, City of White Sulphur Springs, Local Businesses



Elkins Area- EAST

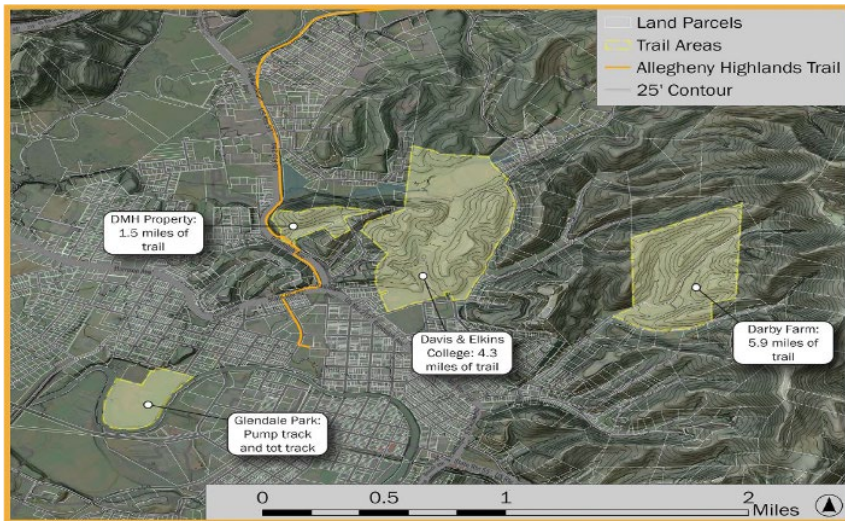
- ✓ Brought Community Together
- ✓ Property Identification
 - ✓ Was it enough property?
 - ✓ Do we/could we get landowner permission?
 - ✓ Would the location allow for & create accessibility?
- ✓ Organizational Capacity
 - ✓ Consistency in meetings
 - ✓ Working Group
 - ✓ Informing
 - ✓ Now moving to formalization
- ✓ Got to work
 - ✓ Realistic - Moving dirt in 3 years or less
 - ✓ Grants- Planning



Two Phase Project: In Town & Mon National Forest

// In-Town

- // ARC POWER Planning Grant
- // 4 Locations
- // Move dirt quickly
- // 2 phases funded



// Mon National Forest

- // IMBA- TAG
- // 12,000+ acers of MNF
- // Elkins and Parsons
- // Longer process



Activation

The People Part of the Equation



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ACTIVATION

Community Lifestyle: Live, Work, & Play

- // Think of an iconic destination, or trail community
- // Can you describe the feeling or vibe of that place?
- // That vibe that you feel is their culture
- // Translates to a brand and image

*None of these impacts happen if your community is not involved

ACTIVATION

Community Lifestyle: Live, Work, & Play

- /// Actively build that culture by creating awareness, excitement, and opportunities.
 - /// Programming
 - /// Events
 - /// Branding & Promotion
- /// This results in momentum for the community
- /// Activation adds people to the equation
- /// An active vibrant community is the ROI



ACTIVATION

Program Strategy

Create opportunities for engagement:

- // Develop full progression of programming
 - // Skills clinics
 - // Group rides – Especially Beginner!
 - // Events & races
- // Diversify opportunities:
 - // Youth & family programming
 - // Partner with other organizations

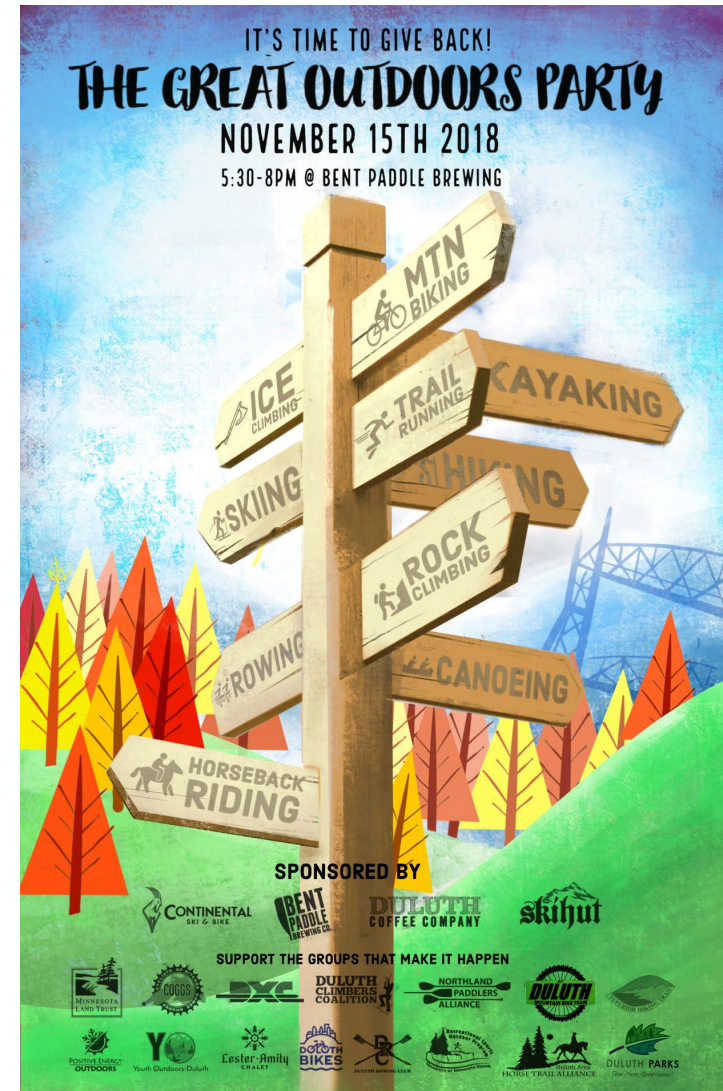


ACTIVATION

Connect the Experience

Think of surrounding amenities & assets that turn a community into a destination:

- /// Spectrum of accommodations
- /// Mainstreet/Downtown Experience
- /// Amenities:
 - /// Restaurants
 - /// Shops
 - /// Outdoor Retail & Bike Shops
- /// Music, Arts & Culture, Tech
- /// Connectivity
- /// Other outdoor activities

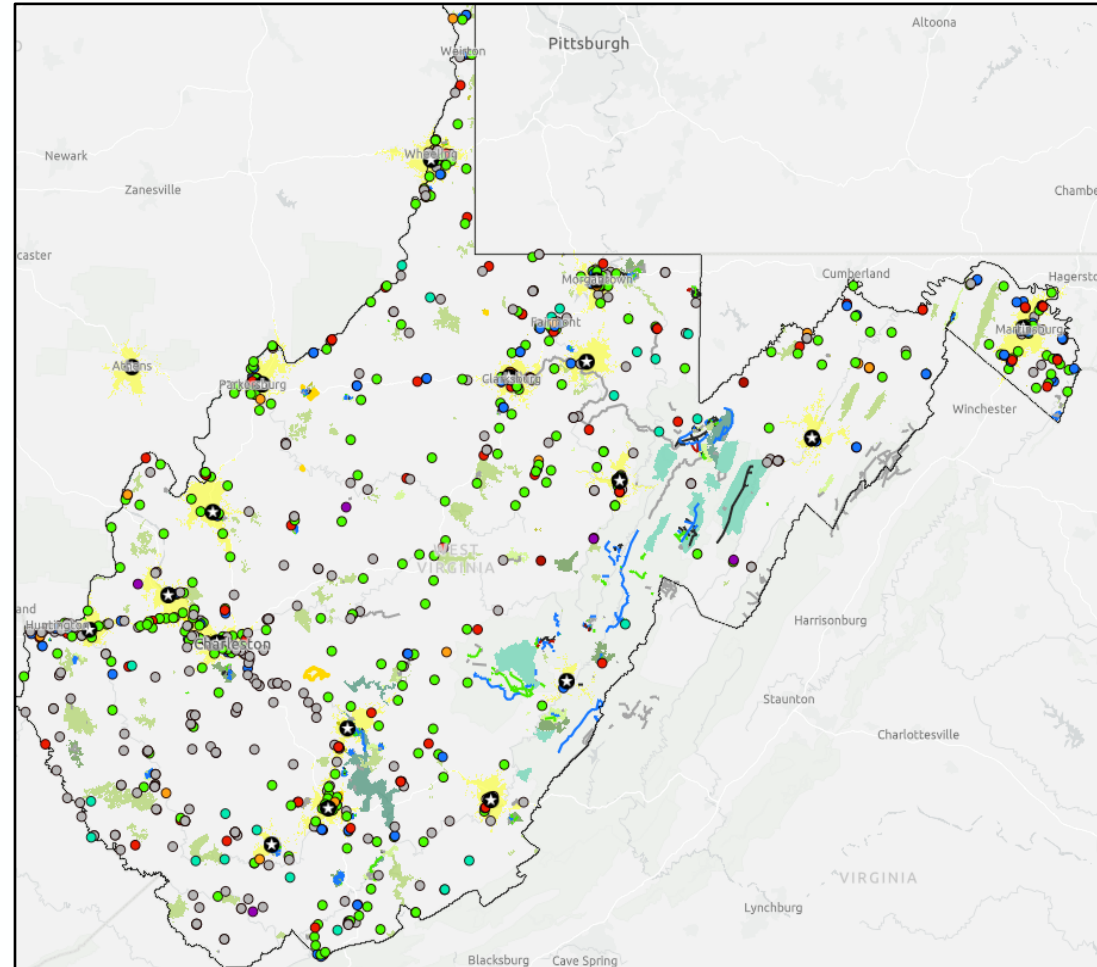


Programming For the Future

- Active Southern WV
- Girls on the Run
- Little Bellas
- NICA
 - National
 - West Virginia

ACTIVE
SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA

**REMOVING
BARRIERS**



Thank You!

Questions?



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