



# Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking

OH Outdoor Recreation Economy Conference | July 22, 2025



Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

We believe in  
**OUTSIDE FOR ALL**



We are  
**CONNECTING  
EVERYONE TO  
THE OUTDOORS**



# OUR COMMITMENTS

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## HEALTH

Everyone needs access to the benefits of nature. Working hand in hand with communities, we are closing the park equity gap by creating parks and protecting land where it's needed most.



## EQUITY

We create opportunities for everyone to experience the physical and mental health benefits nature provides, from close-to-home parks to awe inspiring outdoor experiences.



## CLIMATE

The parks we create and the lands we protect safeguard people from extreme heat, poor air and water quality, flooding, and sea level rise, making communities more resilient and prepared for change.



## COMMUNITY

We work alongside community members and leaders to create, protect and advance the outdoor places and spaces that are essential to everyone's well-being.



INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION

**WE CREATE,  
ENHANCE AND  
PROTECT GREAT  
PLACES TO RIDE  
MOUNTAIN BIKES**



Since 1988, IMBA has been partnering with communities worldwide on advocacy, education, stewardship, and sustainable trail solutions.





# Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking



[www.tpl.org/econmountainbiking](http://www.tpl.org/econmountainbiking)



# Outdoor Recreation's Economic Impact

2023 Data from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

- Outdoor recreation accounts for 2.3%, or \$639.5 billion, of the U.S. GDP
- Across all industries and activities, OR creates nearly 5 million jobs earning \$293.9 in compensation
- Nationally, cycling contributes \$3.7 billion to the national GDP (includes BMX, E-bikes, mountain, and road)



# Outdoor Recreation Economy in Ohio

2023 Data from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

- Outdoor recreation accounts for 2.2%, or \$19.3 billion, of Ohio's GDP
- Across all industries and activities, Ohio has 147,986,000 jobs earning \$8 billion in compensation

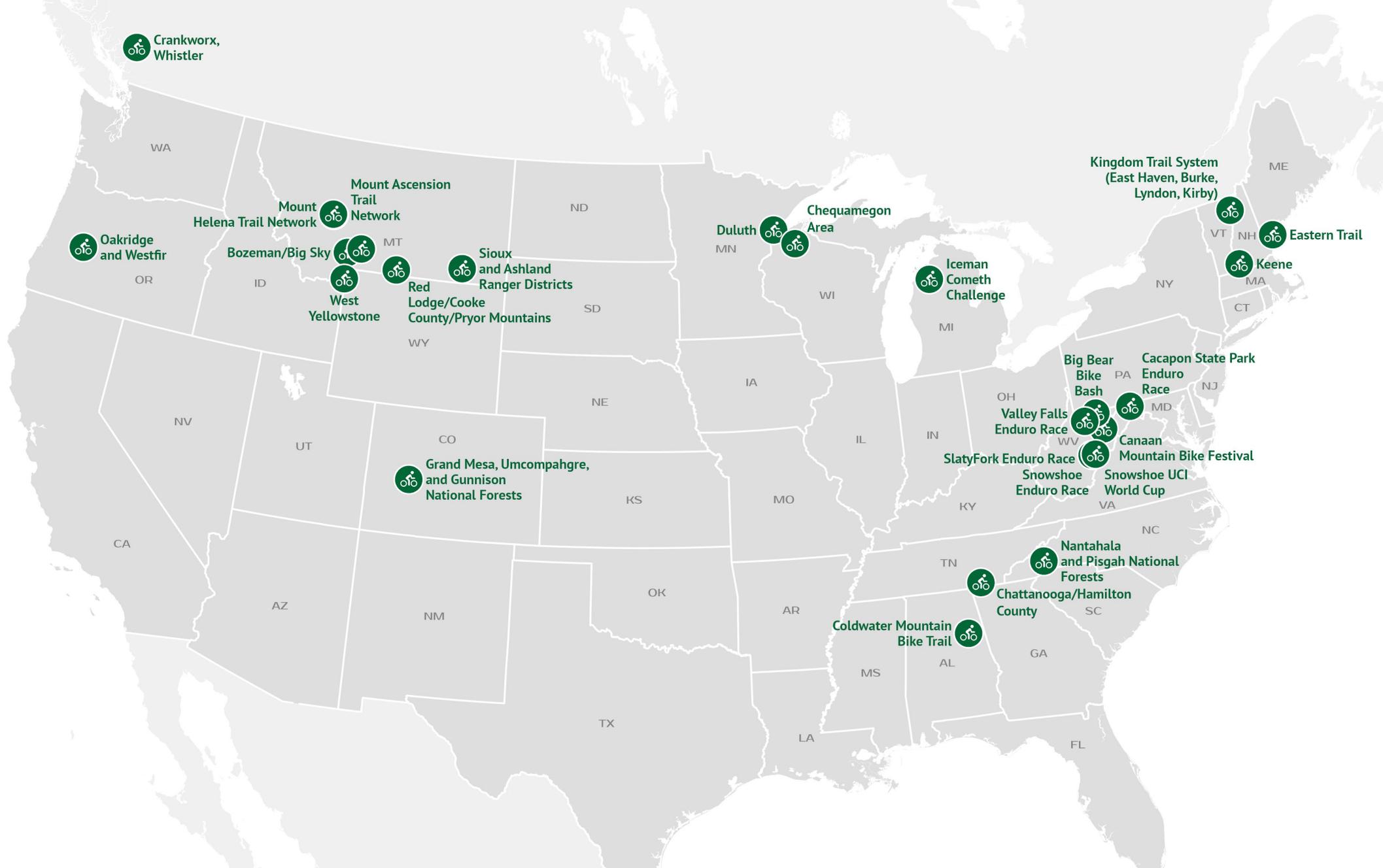




# Key Findings

## Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking

- The average expenditure per visit for mountain biking tourists was \$416 per visit
- These values ranged from \$104 per visit in Duluth, MN to \$1,011 in Chequamegon, WI
- Mountain biking tourism also produces jobs: across the 13 sites in the report, up to 1,626 jobs were directly or indirectly created due to mountain bike-related tourism
- These employees earned up to \$54.1 million in wages and salaries





# Indirect Economic Benefits

## Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking

- Positive health outcomes (physical and mental)
  - Increased social connectedness
  - Improved quality of life (attract and retain residents)
  - Increased recreational value and access to outdoor recreation (attract and retain employers)
  - Increased property value
- ...Who benefits?



# Best Practices for Rural Outdoor Recreation Planning

## Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking

- Invest in workforce and multifamily housing
- Leverage professional trail builders
- Plan for inclusive programming; include BIPOC and adaptive mountain biking advocates as early stakeholders
- Regional destination marketing
- Communicate early, often
- Coordinate emergency access

# Special Events

## Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking

TPL summarize economic data for special events in the US and Canada; for example:

*In **West Virginia**, the average spending per rider ranged \$146 to \$360 for different events. They attracted nearly 7,300 riders plus guests and spectators, and the total estimated rider spending across all events was \$4 million*



# Mountain Biking Case Studies



# Kingdom Trails — VT

## Visitation

- economic impact of \$10.5 million annually
- estimated 94,000 visitors annually
- avg visitor daily spending \$151

## Membership Sales 2009 – 2019

### Kingdom Trail Association

- average increase of 15% per year
- reached 150,000 members in 2019
- memberships help sustain, maintain the trail network

## Out-of-town visitors

- 84% of riders come from out of state
- stay for 2.7 days on avg
- spend in lodging, restaurants, retail establishments



# Chattanooga, TN



## Overview

- 85.5 miles of trails in Hamilton County
- 44,089 annual visits
- 16,910 visits from nonlocal visitors
- \$369 per person avg. per-trip spending (incl. lodging, food, transportation)

## Mountain bikers in Chattanooga annually contribute:

- \$7.4 million to the local economy
- \$521,000 in county and state taxes
- over \$537,000 in federal taxes

# Guidance for Rural Communities Investing in Outdoor Recreation

Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking





# Planning for Natural Surface Trails

## Key Challenges for Rural Communities

- Access to suitable lands
- Secure funding for the trail network
- Distance from major population centers
- Emergency service access
- Equitable and inclusive access to outdoor recreation (key consideration in designing, building, programming, and marketing the trail system)



# Planning for Natural Surface Trails

## Key Challenges for Rural Communities

- Changes in community dynamics (short-term rental market, seasonal homeowners)
- Ability of local infrastructure to meet demand
- Potential negative impacts on the environment
- Trail-user conflict

# Maximizing Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking Trails

## Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking

- 1) Create a robust, cross-sector collaborative stakeholder process
- 2) Focus on connecting trails to existing assets
- 3) Identify trail champions
- 4) Collect baseline economic data
- 5) Reduce costs by leveraging partnerships
- 6) Be inclusive in trail planning and programming
- 7) Be mindful about the potential for conflicts





## I'm working on a mountain biking trail; where can I find support for my project?

### Resources for Trail Planners and Builders

- **Potential Community Partners:** TPL, IMBA, Trails are Common Ground™, local mountain bike clubs, Professional Trail Builders Association, American Trails
  - Virtual support: webinars and presentations
- **Rural Outdoor Recreation Economy Support:** Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, US EPA Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program, USDA Recreation Economy research
  - ORR Rural Development Trail Map: <https://recreationroundtable.org/programs/rural-development/>



Since 1972, TPL has protected 4 million acres of public land; created 5,504 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places; raised \$110 billion in public funding for parks and public lands; and connected nearly 9.7 million people to the outdoors.

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

**Contact Information:**

**Jennifer Clinton**  
Senior Parks & Conservation  
Economist

[jennifer.clinton@tpl.org](mailto:jennifer.clinton@tpl.org)

# Thank You



# Q&A

