



Protect America's Climbing

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NEW STUDY SHOWS OUTDOOR RECREATION KEY TO 87,000 ARIZONA JOBS

*Arizona Businesses, Outdoor Recreation Groups Say New Figures Show Why
Lawmakers Should Protect Wilderness and Tourism Initiatives*

PHOENIX (April 26, 2011) More than 87,000 Arizona jobs and \$371 million in state tax revenues are supported by "human-powered recreation" such as hiking, mountain biking and camping, according to a new study commissioned by the Access Fund, a national climbing advocacy organization.

The report from two Arizona economists, both Arizona State University alumni, shows that legislative efforts to cut funding for state and national parks and land preservation, which support human-powered recreation, could put greater pressure on Arizona's hospitality industry and rural areas, which both depend on outdoor adventurers.

"Outdoor recreation is critical to Arizona's hospitality and tourism economy," said Diane Brossart, president of Valley Forward Association, a 42-year old environmental public interest organization that counts many of Arizona's largest corporations, small businesses and government agencies as members. "Our elected leaders must understand that Arizona's recreation areas do more than fuel healthy lifestyles – they fuel our economy. Cutting our investment in state and national lands puts the brakes on any economic recovery here in Arizona."

Specifically, the study shows:

- 38 percent of human-powered recreation outings result in an overnight stay.
- Human-powered recreation produces \$5.3 billion in annual retail sales in Arizona and generates nearly \$371 million in state tax revenue.
- Spending on human-powered recreation activities is responsible for 12 percent of Arizona's total retail economy.
- Human-powered recreation directly supports nearly 87,000 Arizona jobs, and indirectly supports another 100,000 jobs.

"We know that climbers, hikers, bikers and boaters leave an important economic impact on the local economy, but we wanted to be able to quantify that impact as much as possible," said Brady Robinson, executive director of the Access Fund.

Will Cobb, who heads the Northern Arizona Climbers Coalition, regularly sees the impact of outdoor recreation on local economies. "When someone takes their family or friends to a national park or recreation area in Arizona, they stay at local hotels, eat at local restaurants, and spend money with local gas stations and retailers—to say nothing of the money they spend with tourism and outfitting businesses," he said.

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Several efforts at the state and federal level threaten Arizona's tourism industry, but none more directly than potential cuts to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Some in Congress aim to drastically cut the 40-year-old Land and Water Conservation Fund, which provides for local communities to use federal resources to preserve outdoor recreation areas for hiking, fishing, biking and other outdoor activities. LWCF uses no federal discretionary dollars and is deficit-neutral; the LWCF has been funded entirely by oil and gas royalties since its implementation. Cuts to LWCF would not reduce the federal deficit, but would be damaging to Arizona's tourism industry.

The LWCF helps fund state projects submitted and suggested by the State of Arizona, relying on "local control" for development and implementation plans. Specifically, the LWCF includes several current and upcoming projects:

- The 2011 federal budget includes more than \$13 million for six Arizona recreation projects, including the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and the Petrified Forest National Park.
- The 2012 federal budget includes nearly \$8 million for Arizona projects including Shield Ranch and the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.
- Past LWCF projects include the Phoenix Metro Area Bikeway Development, bicycle trail developments in Flagstaff, the Scottsdale City Bikeways, the Tempe Sports Complex, the Municipal Golf Course in Casa Grande and Prescott City Park.

On the heels of the release of this new economic study, Arizona's small business owners—many of whom rely on human-powered recreation—are asking Arizona's elected officials to protect tourism-related jobs. To obtain a copy of the full report, [click here](#).

ABOUT VALLEY FORWARD

Valley Forward has been bringing business and civic leaders together for more than four decades to convene thoughtful public dialogue on regional issues and to improve the environment and sustainability of Valley communities. The organization is now taking its mission statewide through an Arizona Forward initiative.

ABOUT THE ACCESS FUND

The Access Fund is a national advocacy organization that keeps U.S. climbing areas open and conserves the climbing environment. Now celebrating its 20th year, the Access Fund supports and represents over 2.3 million climbers nationwide.

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