



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN SC GREAT OUTDOORS

Growing outdoor-based tourism

South Carolina recognizes that tourism, film production, commercial fishing, insurance, real estate, agriculture, and other key industries depend on a healthy environment in order to continue serving as major economic drivers that benefit the current and future residents.

Protecting more wetlands & forests in South Carolina comes not only with environmental and climate benefits that are critical for our survival, but also boosts our state's economy. A healthy economy and a healthy environment can and must co-exist. The following case studies in economic development provide us with insight into the economic benefits of conservation.

Keeping forests & wetlands standing comes with significant economic benefits

There are a variety of options perfect for forest landowners to use their land in a way that keeps their forests looking beautiful. These options include camp-leasing and other outdoor recreation opportunities.

According to a 2019 report, camping is rising in popularity across the U.S., with 77 million households involved in camping¹



Two case studies: HipCamp & Tentrr

Hipcamp: by connecting landowners with responsible campers, Hipcamp fosters the conservation of private lands. Nearly 90% of forests in the South are privately owned, and, even more, finding the perfect spot when camping can be a challenge. Hipcamp provides a web platform for listing and discovering private campgrounds. How much income can hosts make?

An estimated monthly income according to Hipcamp for the area near Francis Marion National Forest located north of Charleston can be between \$96 to \$164 if renting a classic campsite area or RV and between \$160 to \$362 if the host provides lodging.[2]

Tentrr: another online platform, Tentrr provides landowners with the opportunity to rent their land to earn extra income. This increases the options for locals to earn money on their private land while incentivizing the preservation of their communities and natural attractions. How much income can hosts make on the Tentrr platform?

An estimated monthly income according to Tentrr for campsites on private Georgia land are around \$280 for simple backcountry access and between \$700-\$1,197 for signature campsites.[3]

References

1. North America Camping Report (2019), Kampgrounds of America
2. <https://www.hipcamp.com/host>
3. <https://bit.ly/2N3z4PS>



Expanding trail system options

Communities that prioritize trails have benefited greatly from economic, quality of life, health, accessibility, and mobility improvements. In South Carolina, the Swamp Rabbit Trail is an excellent example of a community trail done right.

An old abandoned rail line was transformed by Greenville county into what it is now the Swamp Rabbit Trail - imitating the “rails to trails” model. The trail is a 19.9-mile multi-use greenway system that runs along the Reedy River connecting with schools, parks, and local businesses. The Swamp Rabbit Trail is a local attraction, bringing residents as well as tourists: improving local businesses and the economy.

Trails lead to economic gains [1]

- Businesses interviewed reported increases in sales and revenue (10% to as high as 85%)
- Greenville County Recreation estimates the trail's economic impact is \$6.7 million/year
- Seven new businesses opened because of the trail
- Around half of the total customers are tourists and the other half are local people

Invest in forest & wetland protection, support permanent expansion of protected lands, and ban subsidies for false clean energy solutions like biomass in order to take full economic advantage of forests



Outdoor Recreation

Nearly 331 million people visit US national parks each year, and over 760 million visitors to state parks each year. The outdoor industry nourishes a vast economic engine that creates billions of revenues and jobs all over the US. According to the 2016 final report by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the outdoor industry accounts for 2.2% of the US gross domestic product (GDP), **this represents \$373.7 billion. The outdoor industry reached a higher value than extractive industries like mining, oil, and gas extraction that account for 1.4% of the total GDP.**

South Carolina depends on the protection of forests & wetlands for rural economic development. WHY?

Because one of the **key elements** that attract outdoor recreation and tourism to the state is standing forest & wetlands. Over half of South Carolina residents participate and engage in outdoor activities every year (58%). The outdoor industry in S.C. generates [2]:

- 151,000 direct jobs
- \$16.3 billion in annual consumer spending
- \$4.6 billion in wages and salaries
- \$1.8 billion in state and local tax revenue

Beyond economic opportunities, forested wetlands also provide ecosystem services benefits to South Carolina[3]:

- \$11.2 billion in aesthetics, tourism, & recreation
- \$11.9 billion in protection from extreme events
- \$9 billion in water supply and waste treatment

Preserving wetland forests and open spaces is one of the most effective ways that communities can avoid damages from flooding. Preserving these ecosystems in SC is essential for the state to become safer, wealthier, and healthier.

References

1. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B4QPvctUt6DcRmoweFN TYXg3aFU>
2. <https://outdoorindustry.org/state/south-carolina/>
3. <https://dogwoodalliance.org/treasures-of-the-south>