

ECONOMIC IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITIES FROM OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PUBLIC LANDS OF THE CENTRAL CATSKILLS

A study commissioned by the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development (CCCD), Catskill Mountainkeeper (CMK), and Catskill Heritage Alliance (CHA) estimated visitor totals and the economic impact for surrounding communities generated by outdoor recreational activities in the Central Catskills. Prior to this study, there has never been a comprehensive analysis conducted to determine the number of annual outdoor recreational visitors to the Catskills, so this study represents the first of its kind effort to quantify the significance of outdoor recreation to the region. The findings of the study included the following:

- Outdoor recreational activities that rely on public and protected lands attracted a total of **1,717,927 visitors**. These visitors had an estimated economic impact on the region's economy of **\$46,207,000** and supported **980 jobs**.
- All outdoor recreational activities, including both those that rely on public and protected lands and those that rely on private lands, attracted a total of **2,496,753 visitors**. These visitors had an estimated economic impact of **\$114,768,000** on the region's economy and supported **2413 jobs**.
- NYS DEC and NYC DEP operations generated an estimated economic impact of **\$62,403,156** and supported **1571 jobs**. Because of concerns about the accuracy of the operations spending and employment numbers provided, these estimates were judged to be highly speculative and actual impacts may be significantly greater.

The study also included a review conducted to identify potential unrealized or undeveloped recreational opportunities in the Catskills. Based on this review, a number of previously identified initiatives were recommended for further consideration, including:

- **The Route 28 Central Catskills Scenic Byway**
- **Expansion of Trail Networks**
- **Continued Expansion of the DEP Reservoir Boating Program**
- **The Catskill Interpretive Center**

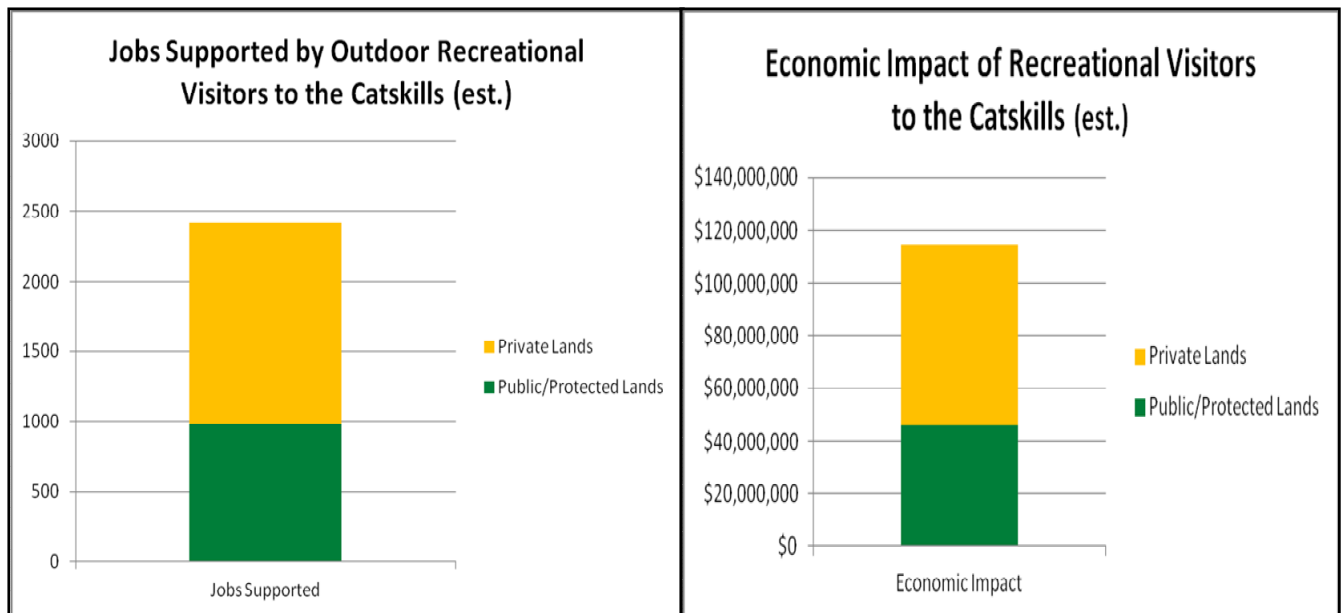
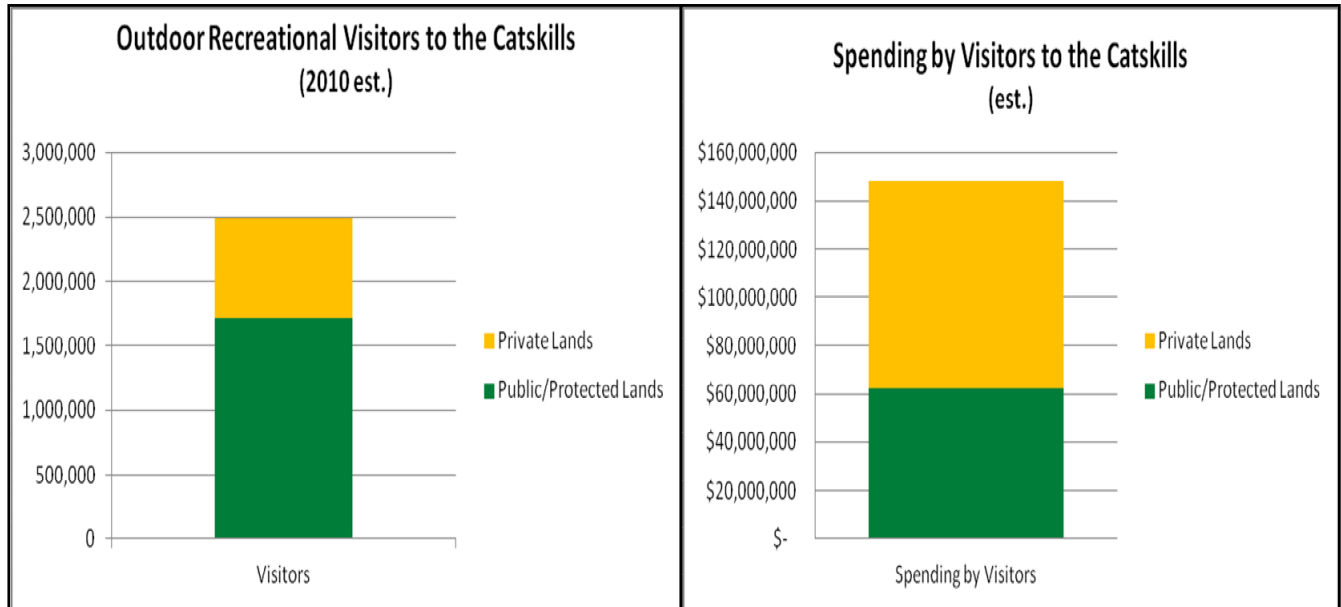
In addition, opportunities for enhancing marketing efforts were noted, including:

- **Centralizing Marketing Activities**
- **Increasing Marketing to International Visitors**
- **Increasing Marketing to Downhill Skiers**
- **Development of a "Gateway" Visitor Information Center**

Opportunities to leverage tourism trends were also noted, including:

- **Art and Art History Tourism**
- **Agri-tourism**
- **Ecotourism**
- **Wildlife Viewing and Bird Watching**

IMPACT OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL VISITORS ON THE CATSKILLS



Economic impacts generated by recreational activities and of the operations of organizations that protect and manage the natural areas of the Catskills were estimated using the Money Generation (MGM) economic impact models. These models were developed for the National Park Service and have been used for similar evaluations of many parks around the country. The information required to estimate the economic impact of recreational visitors using these models includes the number of visitors to the region and the lodging used by these visitors. Estimating the economic impact of operations required information pertaining to operations spending and employment, including the percent of spending that was local. For the purpose of this study, the Central Catskills Region is defined to include the lands inside the Catskill Park and the Catskill-Delaware Watershed. Economic impacts pertained to Delaware, Greene, Sullivan and Ulster Counties.