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## Water-Related Outdoor Recreation in Colorado Generates Over \$18 Billion Annually

*New study finds Colorado's waterways support over 100,000 jobs and billions in tax revenue across the state*

DENVER, Colorado -- A new [study](#) released by [Business for Water Stewardship](#) today found that water-related outdoor recreation in Colorado **produces \$18.8 billion in economic output, and contributes \$10.3 billion to the state gross domestic product (GDP) overall**. According to the study:

- **6.7 million people participate in water-related outdoor recreation** in Colorado annually, whether in the form of hiking, jogging, camping, fishing or other water-related activities on or around Colorado's waterways.
- Water-related recreation supports over **131,000 jobs** around the state that provide **\$6.3 billion in household income** and generate an estimated **\$2.7 billion in tax revenue**.

"The access to unparalleled outdoor recreation is part of what makes living in Colorado so special. But it's not only about quality of life -- outdoor recreation is a cornerstone of the state economy, and Colorado's waterways are an essential economic engine," said **Molly Mugglestone, Director of Communications and Colorado Policy, Business for Water Stewardship**. "Investing in clean and plentiful waterways isn't just good for the environment, it's good for business. Continued stewardship of Colorado's waterways is essential to the long-term health of Colorado's economy, ecosystems, and communities."

The study, conducted by [Southwick Associates](#), presents economic contributions based on estimated retail spending in Colorado attributable to time on or along the water spent engaging in one of nine target activities (trail sports, camping, picnicking or relaxing, water sports, wildlife-watching, fishing, snow sports, bicycling or skateboarding and hunting or shooting) across nine river basins (Arkansas, Colorado, Gunnison, Metro, North Platte, Rio Grande, San Juan / Dolores San Miguel, South Platte, Yampa / White Green). Of the nine basins surveyed, the Colorado River mainstem alone generates \$3.8 billion in economic output annually and supports 26,768 jobs.

"We believe it's critically important to promote the outdoor industry's importance to Colorado's economy and our way of life. These figures are staggering, but not surprising," said **David Dragoo, founder of Mayfly Outdoors**. "At Mayfly, we see the impact that recreation and engagement has on our community in Montrose as well as across the state. We think it's part of our job to help ensure our communities can access and enjoy our rivers and waterways. Protecting river resources is even more important than ever as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic."

In releasing this study BWS has partnered with the Outdoor Industry Association to promote the critical need to protect Colorado's rivers and waterways. "Outdoor recreation is a huge economic driver in the state and Colorado is home to many outdoor businesses and to our industry's largest gathering, Outdoor Retailer, said **Lise Aaangeenbrug, executive director, Outdoor Industry Association**. "While we can't gather as an industry this summer in Denver, watching the growth of people going outdoors during the pandemic and the release of this important data gives the industry great hope for the future. Protecting our state's public lands and waterways are more important than ever to provide places to go outside and support the health and wellbeing of our communities"

"We know that our great outdoors, including Colorado's beautiful rivers, are a huge part of what makes our state such a great place to call home, drawing millions of people from around the globe every year and bringing industry and business here. But we can't stop at enjoying nature – we must also protect it for the future. This study shows how much our state's economy depends on preserving our rivers. We must continue to protect our quality of life and keep our environment as a top priority," said **Kelly Brough, President and CEO, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce**.

More information and the full text of the study is available [here](#).

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**Business for Water Stewardship**, a program of the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, helps businesses across the US advance solutions to ensure our communities, economies and ecosystems have enough clean water to flourish. Business for Water Stewardship promotes water-smart policies and programs with consumer campaigns, on-the-ground projects and business leadership to prove that investing in water can help bolster a company's bottom line. Learn more at [www.businessforwater.org](http://www.businessforwater.org)

**Southwick Associates** is a market research, statistics, and economics firm, specializing in the hunting, shooting, sportfishing, and outdoor recreation markets. Learn more at [www.southwickassociates.com](http://www.southwickassociates.com)

**Mayfly Outdoors** is a Colorado-based outdoor products company founded in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Mayfly subsidiaries operate under various brand names including Abel, Ross Reels, and Airflo. Combined, these businesses are the recipients of more industry "Awards in Excellence" for innovation, dependability and performance than any other fly-fishing tackle manufacturers in the world. Learn more at [www.mayflyoutdoors.com](http://www.mayflyoutdoors.com)

Based in Boulder, Colo., with offices in Washington, D.C., **Outdoor Industry Association (OIA)** is the leading trade association for the outdoor industry. OIA unites and serves 1300 manufacturer, supplier, sales representative and retailer members through its focus on trade and recreation policy, sustainable business innovation and outdoor participation. For more information, visit [www.outdoorindustry.org](http://www.outdoorindustry.org)

For more than 150 years, the **Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce** has been a leading voice for Colorado's business community. With a membership that spans the state and includes thousands of businesses and their 400,000 employees, the Chamber is an effective advocate for small and large businesses. For more information, go to [www.denverchamber.org](http://www.denverchamber.org)