

Tourism to Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Creates \$166.6 Million In Economic Benefits

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Date: April 20, 2017

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Sandy Springs, GA— A new National Park Service (NPS) report shows that 2,736,385 visitors to Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in 2016 spent over \$119,071,900 in communities near the park. That spending supported 1,841 jobs in the local area and had a cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$166,687,300.

“Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area welcomed 2.7 million visitors from across the country and around the world to hike, bike, and paddle our river and trails,” said Superintendent Bill Cox. “We are delighted to share the story of this river, resources, and the experiences it provides with our communities and partners. We also feature the park as a way to introduce our visitors to this part of the country and all that it offers. National park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service, and it’s a big factor in our local economy as well. We appreciate the partnership and support of our neighbors and are glad to be able to give back by helping to sustain local communities.”

The Atlanta Metro area enjoys three National Park Service (NPS) units that tell the story of our shared heritage from Civil War to Civil Rights and protects more than half of the area’s public green space. Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, and Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area offer recreation, natural scenic beauty, and a chance to be inspired and humbled by our collective legacy of Civil Rights. All three national park units generated over \$415.7 million in economic benefit in 2016.

The peer-reviewed visitor spending analysis was conducted by economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas of the U.S. Geological Survey and Lynne Koontz of the National Park Service. The report shows \$18.4 billion of direct spending by 331 million park visitors in communities within 60 miles of a national park. This spending supported 318,000 jobs nationally; 271,544 of those jobs are found in these gateway communities. The cumulative benefit to the U.S. economy was \$34.9 billion.

According to the 2016 report, most park visitor spending was for lodging (31.2 percent) followed by food and beverages (27.2 percent), gas and oil (11.7 percent), admissions and fees (10.2 percent) and souvenirs and other expenses (2.5 percent).

Report authors this year produced an interactive tool. Users can explore current year visitor spending, jobs, labor income, value added, and output effects by sector for national, state, and local economies. Users can also view year-by-year trend data. The interactive tool and report are available at the NPS Social Science Program webpage: go.nps.gov/vse.

The report includes information for visitor spending at individual parks and by state.

To learn more about national parks in Georgia and how the National Park Service works with Georgia communities to help preserve local history, conserve the environment, and provide outdoor recreation, go to www.nps.gov/georgia. Want to visit and #FindYourPark? Check

out www.nps.gov/chat, www.nps.gov/malu, and www.nps.gov/kemo to learn more and plan your visit.

Last updated: April 20, 2017