

Del. Water Gap National Recreation Area: Driving Local Economies Through Outdoor Recreation

By Kyle Groetzinger

DEL. WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA - Since 1965, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area has invited visitors to enjoy 40 miles of free-flowing river and some 70,000 acres of forests and floodplains, waterfalls and marshes, beaches and mountain terrain.

Scenic fall vista at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area © B. Katz

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area lends economic vitality to a region that covers five counties—Sussex and Warren counties in New Jersey, and Monroe, Northampton, and Pike counties in Pennsylvania. Just as important to the region's economy are the park's values as a community partner and as an anchor in a larger landscape of conserved and natural areas.

In 2015, the National Parks Conservation Association conducted an economic and fiscal impact analysis of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and in 2022, partnered with Jon Stover & Associates, an economic development consulting firm, to provide updated economic and fiscal impact figures. The findings presented in this report mirror the methodology used in 2015 to provide updated figures consistent with the prior report. Figures included in this study reflect the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of visitor spending within Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the economic impacts of the employment at the park.

It also provides recommendations to enhance Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area's economic potential. These include:

Advancing efforts to conserve ecologically important landscapes between and adjacent to Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

Creating a welcoming and safe experience for all park visitors, particularly those who speak Spanish and other languages.

Advising policymakers in surrounding counties and townships to promote zoning regulations that embrace the outdoor recreational economy while protecting Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

Filling gaps in park resources by leveraging federal funding to improve and preserve Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

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