

NATIONAL FOREST HOMEOWNERS

2006 Economic Impact Survey¹

The National Forest Homeowners believes it is important to be able to demonstrate the value of the Recreation Residence Program to those who might wonder about the role of the cabin program in the 21st century. We know that cabin owners make many valuable contributions to the health and vitality of the forests and nearby communities.

Expenditures, Volunteerism and Forest Stewardship by cabin owners and guests benefit not only the Federal Government, but also local and state governments *and* businesses. Since the Forest Service does not keep statistics on the economic benefit to communities from the use of cabins on the National Forest, NFH prepared and conducted this survey to establish what a 'typical' cabin use year might contribute in overall real dollars. We believe these survey data provide powerful support for and illustrate the values of the Recreation Residence Program.

Summarized Survey Results

	Typical Cabin	National Total ²
Government Fees & Taxes	\$1792	\$25.0 M
Improvements & Repairs	\$2246	\$31.3 M
Insurance (ho, pp)	\$ 848	\$11.8 M
Utilities	\$ 484	\$ 6.8 M
SUBTOTAL	<u>\$5370</u>	<u>\$74.9 M</u>
Food, Drink & Staples	\$4045	\$56.4 M
Recreational Activities	\$1341	\$18.7 M
Dining Out	\$1171	\$16.3 M
Travel (to, from & there)	\$3895	\$54.3 M
Donations	\$ 549	\$ 7.7 M
TOTAL	<u>\$16,371</u>	<u>\$228.3 M</u>

Conclusions

Governmental Impact

In 2006, the US Treasury received over \$12 million dollars in fees from special use permits from the Recreation Residence Program. County governments received property taxes of \$10.7 million dollars. The 'typical' cabin paid about \$1800 in governmental fees and taxes. The Recreation Residence Program nationally paid about \$25 million to all governmental bodies.

Local Economic Impact (within 50 miles of the cabin)

It is clear from our survey that the impact of the cabin program on local economies is very significant. Expenditures in local communities on food, staples, improvements and repairs, and recreational activities for the 'typical' cabin are \$6555 annually. Plus, an additional \$549 per year is given in donations and volunteer hours (56 hours annually) contribute another \$1051 of value to local communities. ***This totals \$8155 injected into local economies by each cabin every year.*** Also, note that we were not able to factor in several other potentially large, local cabin generated expenditures, i.e., property tax dollars, insurance premiums and utility costs that also return economic benefits to local communities.

At the national level, the impact of the Recreation Residence program on local economies is at least \$113.7 M annually and *does not* include some portion of the \$18.6 insurance and utility costs. ***Surely, the small rural communities, that provide products and services to cabin owners, directly benefit from expenditures resulting from the Recreation Residence Program. They care about the long term impact and viability of the cabin program.***

Volunteer and Charitable Impact on Local Forests

The average number of volunteer hours on the National Forest by each cabin owner is more than 56 hours annually. Consider what this is worth to the local forests. If we value each volunteer labor hour at \$18.77³, each cabin contributes \$1051 to their local forest and neighbors. Plus, nationally this volunteer time is worth about \$14.7 million dollars.

Charitable contributions on the local forest take many forms. Much is contributed to local religious groups, search and rescue teams, road maintenance and emergency medical response agencies. The 'typical' cabin makes charitable contributions to these entities of about \$549 annually. On the national level, this amounts to over \$7.6 million every year.

The total volunteer and charitable value of each cabin on National Forests is \$1600 every year. On a national level the value of volunteer and charitable giving from cabin owners is about \$22.3 million annually.

S u m m a r y

The economic impact of the Recreation Residence Program is both broad and significant. As a direct result of the cabin program, local economies receive at least \$114 million additional consumer dollars every year, governmental agencies receive about \$25 million in tax, permit and fee revenues, plus, volunteer and charitable efforts by cabin owners provide at least an additional \$22.3 million economic boost locally. Note that the dollar value of this volunteer time does not reflect the benefit to the health and welfare of local communities and forests. As part time residents, but reliable stewards of their local forests, cabin owners on the National Forest are valuable assets to local communities and their local forests. Support for this program going forward benefits all.

¹ Survey conducted in 2006 and reported in April 2007.

² Based on 13,940 nationally, data from USDA Forest Service.

³ Provided by Independent Sector, see @ independentsector.org.