

The Economic Contributions of Recreational Visitation at Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge

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This paper establishes the economic contribution baseline for recreational visitation at Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The paper addresses the levels of Refuge recreational activities and the economic effects of Refuge recreational activities. The analysis is followed by a glossary of terms. For more information regarding the methodology, please refer to “Banking on Nature – The Economic Contributions to Local Communities of National Wildlife Refuge Visitation” at <https://www.fws.gov/economics/divisionpublications/divisionpublications.asp>.

From an economic perspective, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge provides a variety of environmental and natural resource goods and services used by people either directly or indirectly. The use of these goods and services may result in economic effects to both local and state economies. The various services the Refuge provides can be grouped into five broad categories: (1) maintenance and conservation of environmental resources, services and ecological processes; (2) protection of natural resources such as fish, wildlife, and plants; (3) protection of cultural and historical sites and objects; (4) provision of educational and research opportunities; and (5) outdoor and wildlife-related recreation. A comprehensive economic profile of the Refuge would address all applicable economic effects associated with the use of refuge-produced goods and services. However, some of the major contributions of the Refuge to the natural environment, such as watershed protection, maintenance and stabilization of ecological processes, and the enhancement of biodiversity are beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, this paper focuses on economic effects associated with recreational visitation. As a result, benefits represent conservative estimates and do not represent the Refuge’s total social impacts.

Refuge Description

A variety of educational programs and resources are available for teachers and students. Refuge staff provide guided activities that focus on the natural history of the Cache River Wetlands. Education trunks are also available for teachers to check out and include step-by-step activities and related tools and materials for educators to lead activities at their teaching site (outdoors or in the classroom). Education trunks are a fun, easy and interactive way to teach students about wetland ecology and the importance of biological diversity. Each trunk includes step-by-step lesson plans and hands-on activities, plus tools and materials for educators to teach the program on their own. Upon request and subject to availability, a staff member from Cypress Creek or the Wetlands Center may also lead the class, either in the field or at your school. Trunks can be reserved in advance and checked out for up to two weeks.

Guided canoe tours are available to interested schools and organized groups. Tours include a 3 to 6 mile voyage through an ancient cypress swamp, to learn first-hand about local wildlife and the importance of wetlands to plants, animals and humans. Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge offers free canoe tours to educational groups by appointment, February through October. Tours are scheduled Tuesday through Thursday, and include a 1.5-hour (3 miles) or 3-hour (6 miles) guided trip.

Activity Levels

Table 1 shows the recreation visits for the Refuge. The Refuge had about 18,000 recreational visits in 2017 which contributed to the economic effect of the Refuge. Non-consumptive recreation accounted for about 114,000 visits with residents comprising 92 percent of Refuge visitation.

Table 1. Cypress Creek NWR: 2017 Recreation Visits

Activity	Residents	Non-Residents	Total
Non-Consumptive:			
Pedestrian	420	1,680	2,100
Auto Tour	-	-	-
Boat Trail/Launch	240	560	800
Bicycle	-	-	-
Photography	43	383	425
Interpretation	71	285	356
Other Recreation	100	400	500
Visitor Center	-	-	-
Hunting:			
Big Game	1,640	2,460	4,100
Small Game	2,520	1,080	3,600
Migratory Birds	800	3,066	3,865
Fishing:	1,980	220	2,200
Total Visitation	7,813	10,133	17,946

Source: Refuge Annual Performance Plan 2017 and Refuge Staff

Regional Economic Analysis

The economic area for the Refuge is the four-county area of Alexander, Johnson, Pulaski, and Union Counties in Illinois. It is assumed that visitor expenditures occur primarily within these counties. Visitor recreation expenditures for 2017 are shown in Table 2. Total expenditures were \$492,000 with non-residents accounting for \$382,000 or 78 percent of total expenditures. Expenditures on non-consumptive activities accounted for 10 percent of all expenditures.

Spending in the local area generates and supports economic activity within the four county area (Table 3). The contribution of recreational spending in local communities was associated with about 7 jobs, \$142,000 in employment income, \$53,000 in total tax revenue, and \$558,000 in economic output.

Table 2. Cypress Creek NWR: Visitor Recreation Expenditures (2017 \$,000)

Activity	Residents	Non-Residents	Total
Non-Consumptive	\$5.0	\$43.1	\$48.1
Hunting	\$71.5	\$329.3	\$400.8
Fishing	\$33.8	\$9.4	\$43.2
Total Expenditures	\$110.2	\$381.8	\$492.0

Table 3. Cypress Creek NWR: Local Economic Contributions Associated with Recreation Visits (2017 \$,000)

	Residents	Non-Residents	Total
Economic Output	\$123.3	\$434.8	\$558.1
Jobs	2	5	7
Job Income	\$31.5	\$110.4	\$141.8
State and Local Tax Revenue	\$10.8	\$42.3	\$53.2

Glossary

Economic Contribution: The economic activity generated in a region by residents and non-resident recreation spending.

Expenditures: The spending by recreational visitors when visiting refuges. Expenditure categories include food, lodging, transportation, and other. Expenditure information is based on the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation (NSFHWR).

Economic Output: The total spending by final consumers on all goods. The amount reported in this study is the change in spending by final consumers in the region attributable to refuge visitation. Economic output includes spending by people who earn income from refuge visitors' activities as well as spending by refuge visitors themselves.

Impact: The new economic activity generated in a region as a refuge attracts non-residents to the area. This figure represents economic activity that would be lost if the refuge were not there.

IMPLAN: An economic modeling software package that applies input-output analysis techniques to regional economies.

Jobs: Full and part time jobs.

Job Income: Income to households from labor including wages and salaries.

Resident/Non-Resident: People living more than 50 miles from the refuges are considered non-residents for this study.

Tax Revenue: Local, county and state taxes: sales tax, property tax, and income tax

Visitors: A visitor is someone who comes to the refuge and participates in one or more of the activities available at the refuge.

Visits (visitation): A visit is not the same as a visitor. One visitor could be responsible for several visits on a refuge. For example, if a family of four went fishing in the morning and hiked a short nature trail in the afternoon, they would have contributed eight activity visits to the refuge; yet, they are only four visitors.

References

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