

# **The Economic Contributions of Recreational Visitation at Sullys Hill National Game Preserve National Wildlife Refuge**

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Division of Economics  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

This paper establishes the economic contribution baseline for recreational visitation at Sullys Hill National Game Preserve (Preserve). The paper addresses the levels of Preserve recreational activities and the economic effects of Preserve 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, Sullys Hill National Game Preserve 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 Preserve 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 Preserve would address all applicable economic effects associated with the use of Preserve-produced goods and services. However, some of the major contributions of the Preserve 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 Preserve’s total social impacts.

## **Preserve Description**

Sullys Hill National Game Preserve is a 1,675-acre national wildlife refuge located on the south shore of Devils Lake about 10 miles south of the city of Devils Lake, North Dakota. According to the refuge's legislative purposes, hunting is not permitted on this Preserve.

The Preserve offers unique opportunities to view bison, elk, and many varieties of birds and other wildlife. Scenic overlooks provide panoramic views of Devils Lake, and a network of nature trails and an auto tour route offer ways to explore the Preserve by foot and vehicle. A 6,000 square foot visitor/education center provides opportunities for area schools and visitors to learn about the National Wildlife Refuge System as well as the refuge and the surrounding prairie wetlands, woodlands, and grasslands of North Dakota.

## Activity Levels

Table 1 shows the recreation visits for the Preserve. The Preserve had about 69,000 recreational visits in 2017 which contributed to the economic effect of the Preserve. Non-consumptive recreation accounted for all visits with residents comprising 41 percent of Preserve visitation.

**Table 1. Sullys Hill NGP NWR: 2017 Recreation Visits**

Activity	Residents	Non-Residents	Total
<b>Non-Consumptive:</b>			
Pedestrian	8,916	8,916	17,832
Auto Tour	13,110	19,664	32,774
Boat Trail/Launch	-	-	-
Bicycle	-	-	-
Photography	2,768	8,303	11,070
Interpretation	1,266	543	1,809
Other Recreation	-	-	-
Visitor Center	2,042	3,062	5,104
<b>Hunting:</b>			
Big Game	-	-	-
Small Game	-	-	-
Migratory Birds	-	-	-
<b>Fishing:</b>	-	-	-
<b>Total Visitation</b>	<b>28,101</b>	<b>40,488</b>	<b>68,589</b>

Source: Refuge Annual Performance Plan 2017 and Refuge Staff

## Regional Economic Analysis

The economic area for the Preserve is the two-county area of Benson and Ramsey Counties in North Dakota. It is assumed that visitor expenditures occur primarily within these counties. Visitor recreation expenditures for 2017 are shown in Table 2. Total expenditures were \$853,000 with non-residents accounting for \$725,000 or 85 percent of total expenditures. Expenditures on non-consumptive activities accounted nearly all expenditures.

Spending in the local area generates and supports economic activity within the two county area (Table 3). The contribution of recreational spending in local communities was associated with about 9 jobs, \$278,000 in employment income, \$102,000 in total tax revenue, and \$1.1 million in economic output.

**Table 2. Sullys Hill NGP NWR: Visitor Recreation Expenditures (2017 \$,000)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Non-Residents</b>	<b>Total</b>
Non-Consumptive	\$127.9	\$724.7	\$852.6
Hunting	-	-	-
Fishing	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$127.9</b>	<b>\$724.7</b>	<b>\$852.6</b>

**Table 3. Sullys Hill NGP NWR: Local Economic Contributions Associated with Recreation Visits (2017 \$,000)**

	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Non-Residents</b>	<b>Total</b>
Economic Output	\$168.3	\$909.3	\$1,077.5
Jobs	2	8	9
Job Income	\$45.6	\$232.1	\$277.7
State and Local Tax Revenue	\$15.6	\$86.0	\$101.6

## 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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