Economic Impact Study
of Organized Youth Camps in Western North Carolina
(Buncombe, Henderson, Jackson and Transylvania Counties)
January 2011 - NC State University

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS
Total # Families represented in survey results: 53,238
Families visiting region specifically for camp 49,665
Total # Camps represented in survey results 50
Staff represented in survey results 5,477

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
Avg expenditure per non-resident family while in area $2,096
Avg expenditure per seasonal staff while in area $2,402
Full-time equivalent jobs created beyond camp staff 10,335
New tax revenues $33 million
Total economic impact on the four counties in WNC from residential summer camps and their operations $365 million

FINDINGS by COUNTY
Total Economic Impact
BUNCOMBE $103 million 7 camps
HENDERSON $120 million 17 camps
JACKSON $11.5 million 2 camps
TRANSYLVANIA $126 million 14 camps
CAMP STAFF

- 69% are female; 27% male; 4% no answer
- 72% of camp staff are between the ages of 16 and 29
- 90% are hired seasonally; 3% parttime; 7% fulltime

ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC FINDINGS

- Annual direct spending of camps surveyed (combined) $61 million
- Acres (avg) owned by camps surveyed 399
- Acres (total) of all camps surveyed 19,376
- Acres (total) of camps surveyed in conservation 3,000+
- Miles (avg) camp families live from camp 500
  (max distance recorded was 8,500 miles)
- Overnight lodging: # nights avg in hotel/motel 4.14
- Top activities during travel Dining; shopping; visiting scenic area; hiking
- Camps using local food product 74%

BENEFITS of ORGANIZED CAMPS on Youth Development

- Youth become more independent
- Youth become more self-confident
- Youth develop new skills

- Camp makes a difference in my child’s life 93% of camp families surveyed
- I would recommend camp to others 95% of camp families surveyed
- I will send my child back to camp 95% of camp families surveyed

COMPARISON TO 1999 STUDY

The current economic impact study provides a critical evaluation of the impact of residential summer camps within WNC by using IMPLAN modeling to estimate the exact multipliers within the four county region. Within this study, a total of 40 usable camp surveys were included, whereas 22 camp surveys were included in the 1999 study. The 1999 economic impact study showed that camps in WNC generated approximately $96.2 million for the local communities in 1999.

In comparison, the estimated economic impact for 2010 was $365 million and shows a 279% increase from the original study in 1999. This increase can be attributed to the actual increase in economic impact, inflation, and the accuracy of the statistical methodology.
CAMP DEMOGRAPHICS

The following section (pages 12-17) includes data from a total of 40 camps in WNC that submitted usable data by the camp directors.

County location of camp

- Transylvania, 14, 35%
- Henderson, 17, 42.5%
- Buncombe, 7, 17.5%
- Jackson, 2, 5%

Type of camp

- Independent For Profit, 22, 55%
- Independent Nonprofit, 18, 45%

Slightly over half of the 40 camp directors indicated that their camp was independent and for profit.