

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Where Natural and Cultural Heritage Create Economic Vitality



\$2.39 billion
contributed to
the economy

\$176.5 million generated
in state and local taxes

30,000
jobs
supported



BLUERIDGE
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



About Us

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area was designated by Congress and the President in November 2003, in recognition of the unique character, culture, and natural beauty of the mountains and foothills of North Carolina. The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership (BRNHA), a 501(c)3 nonprofit, serves as the management entity for the federal designation and supports responsible tourism and economic development, placing special emphasis on the preservation and promotion of the

region's natural heritage and its living traditions of Cherokee, craft, music, and agricultural heritage.

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area spans a large geographic area (10,515 square miles, population over 1.2 million) with a high concentration of rural communities. The BRNHA Partnership promotes heritage tourism and economic development through grant-making, marketing, and sharing best practice information with its many partner organizations.

► PARTNERS

The BRNHA Partnership fulfills its mission through hundreds of collaborative partnerships with other nonprofits, governments, educational institutions, and private businesses. This partnership model makes it possible for BRNHA to leverage and match the federal dollars it receives. It also yields a greater economic return to the region, better coordination in the preservation of heritage resources, and an improved visitor experience.



Friendship dance at the Cherokee Homestead Exhibit in Hayesville, NC

The Study

► AREAS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT

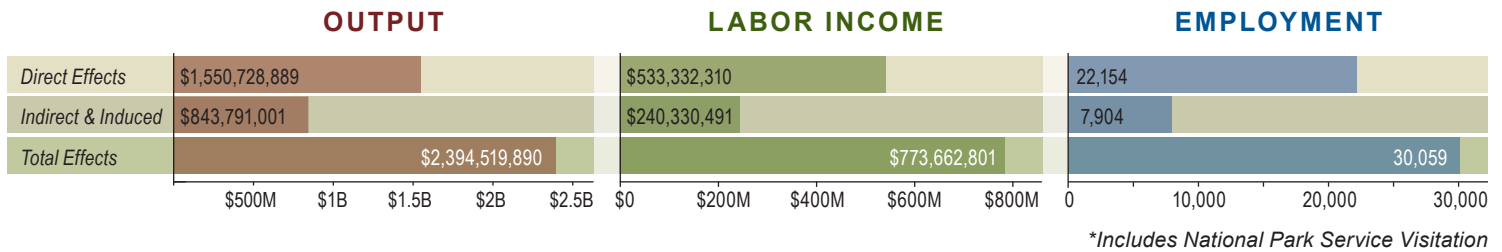
The analysis of the economic benefit of the BRNHA Partnership and selected partners (*see list on back*) consisted of two specific spending areas where the organization provides the greatest economic contribution to Western North Carolina:

- ★ Visitor expenditures at partner sites and
- ★ BRNHA operations and grant-making.

★ VISITOR EXPENDITURES

Visitor spending accounts for the greatest benefit for BRNHA-related economic contribution within the 25 counties comprising the Heritage Area. The average number of visitors to this region over the past three years, including visitors to National Park Service sites, totals 15,332,700. The positive ripple effect of this spending on the economy of the region resulted in a total economic output of \$2,394,519,890, supporting 30,059 jobs.

ANNUAL ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF VISITATION* TO THE BRNHA AREA

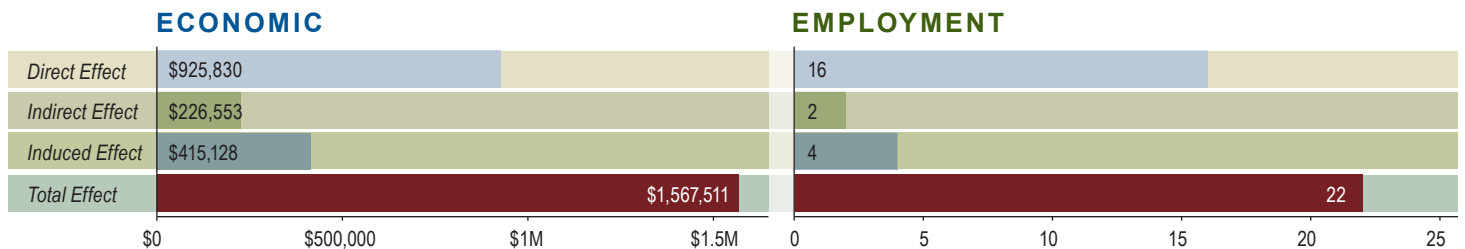


★ BRNHA OPERATIONS AND GRANT-MAKING

The economic impact of the BRNHA Partnership through its operating activities is represented by the spending of the organization and the employees it supports. A secondary benefit is the technical resources provided by the BRNHA Partnership which serve as economic catalysts for the region.

Over its 10-year history, the BRNHA Partnership has awarded 111 grants totaling \$1.8 million to partner projects that have strengthened heritage tourism products, helped market the region, and raised public awareness of the value of culture and heritage to the economy. The grants program requires at least a one-to-one match—to date, \$3.5 million in additional resources have been leveraged in the region through the BRNHA grants program.

ANNUAL IMPACTS OF BRNHA PARTNERSHIP OPERATIONS & GRANT-MAKING



★ REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Illustrated are the industry sectors with the largest number of jobs supported by visitation to the region and BRNHA Partnership operations.

INDUSTRY SECTORS BY EMPLOYMENT

INDUSTRY SECTOR	JOBS	OUTPUT
Food services and drinking places	10,728	\$609,860,872
Hotels and motels, including casino hotels	6,131	\$645,774,163
Other amusement and recreation industries	3,006	\$186,468,602
Retail Stores - General merchandise	1,579	\$92,186,224
Retail Stores - Food and beverage	1,105	\$53,832,398
Real estate establishments	691	\$91,760,883
Retail Stores - Gasoline stations	492	\$54,232,641
Transit and ground passenger transportation	491	\$29,356,726
Services to buildings and dwellings	488	\$24,577,843
Employment services	405	\$12,888,781

ABOUT THE STUDY

► RESEARCH PROTOCOL

Economic impact analyses and reporting were conducted by David Primm, President of Primm Research in Pittsburgh, PA. David has produced economic impact studies for the past eight years. Data collection

was coordinated and managed by Chris Cavanaugh, President of Magellan Strategy Group, Asheville, NC.

Conducted in 2013, the study and analysis utilized recommendations from previous research. The research protocol followed methodologies used in economic impact studies for National Park Service entities and National Heritage Areas, utilizing visitation data from BRNHA partner

sites and visitor spending estimates from National Park sites. Because it helps to operate the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center in Asheville, BRNHA has a closer working relationship with the National Park Service than most National Heritage Areas.

The combined data was modeled with IMPLAN economic impact software using North Carolina data sets.



The final study report is available at BlueRidgeHeritage.com

► PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY

The study quantifies the economic impact of the heritage tourism sector in Western North Carolina. The twenty sites and events that were selected to be part of this study:



**REFLECT THE
GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY
OF THE REGION**



**REPRESENT THE
FIVE HERITAGE LEGACIES
OF THE BRNHA**



**HAVE RELIABLE
ANNUAL VISITOR COUNTS**

► PARTICIPATING PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Our thanks to the following partners and attractions for providing visitation data:

ATTRACTION	LOCATION
Asheville Art Museum	Asheville
Biltmore Estate	Asheville
Blue Ridge Parkway	Regional
Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site	Flat Rock
Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park	Chimney Rock
Cradle of Forestry	Brevard
Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands	Asheville
Grandfather Mountain	Linville
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	Western counties
John C. Campbell Folk School	Brasstown
MerleFest	Wilkesboro
Mount Airy Museum of Regional History	Mount Airy
Nantahala Outdoor Center	Multiple
North Carolina Arboretum	Asheville
Oconaluftee Indian Village	Cherokee
Penland School of Crafts	Penland
Stecoah Valley Cultural Arts Center	Stecoah
Tweetsie Railroad	Blowing Rock
Unto These Hills Outdoor Drama	Cherokee
Wilkes Heritage Museum	Wilkesboro



► MISSION

The mission of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership is to protect, preserve, interpret, and develop the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources of Western North Carolina for the benefit of present and future generations, and in so doing, sustain our heritage and stimulate improved economic opportunity in our region.

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