Economic impacts

Motorized use trails are important to tourism in rural communities. Communities throughout Wisconsin host non-local trail riders, and in return, these trail riders spend money in our communities. So, how much do motorized recreationists spend? Where is this money spent? And how does this spending translate in economic stimulus for residents?

Answering these and other questions about local economic impact served as the primary impetus behind the Cheese Country Trail study.

Trail-related user spending

- Individual trip expenditure patterns differed between local trail users and non-local trail users (figure 1).
- On average, individual non-local trail users spent between $175 and $220 per trip, depending on the time of year.
- Trail users’ total spending exceeded $15 million during the 12-month study (see table on back).
- Non-local trail users infused the local economy with more than $13 million during the 12-month study.
- Non-local trail user spending supported almost 190 local jobs and contributed almost $3 million in employee compensation for residents of Green, Lafayette, and Iowa Counties.
- Jobs created compensated each employee with an average of over $28,000 per year.

Figure 1. Trail user expenditures by category
Trip characteristics

- The majority of users entered the trail at either Monroe or Darlington.
- Twenty-six percent of trail users spent at least one overnight. Camping and hotel/motel were the most common types of lodging, and most overnight visitors stayed in Darlington, Gratiot, or Monroe (figure 2).
- During the study, campgrounds were available along the trail only in Darlington and Gratiot. As the study was completed, Monroe opened a route from the trailhead to the Green County Fairgrounds, where camping is also available. Those who camp or rent cabins tend to spend at least two nights away from home.
- On average, hotel and motel guests stay 1.7 nights per trip.
- Many trail users also dine, shop, and visit area attractions (figure 3).

For more information

To learn more about the Cheese Country Trail, visit the Tri-County Trails website: www.tricountytrails.com.

For more “Results at a Glance,” see Characteristics of Trail Users and Future Directions.

The full report is available on the Green County UW-Extension website: http://green.uwex.edu.