



# **Vermont Climate Resilience and State Wildlands Act (H.276)**



**Michael Kellett • January 21, 2026**

Camels Hump Summit Southward / Niranjana Arminius, [Wikipedia Commons](#)



# Massachusetts Forest Protection Bills ([H.952](#), [H.953](#), [H.1048](#))

- Designate **462,0000 acres (~80%) of state-owned lands as permanent reserves:**  
*“to allow natural processes to prevail with minimal human interference”*
- Protect an **additional 9% of the state land base**
- Allows **active management to continue on 20%** of state-owned lands



View to the southwest from Mount Greylock State Reservation / Michael Kellett





# Vermont Climate Resilience and State Wildlands Act ([H.276](#))

- Designates **268,000 acres (~66%) of state-owned lands as wildlands:**  
*“permanently protected... and managed to allow natural processes to prevail”*
- Protects an **additional 3% of the state land base**
- Allows **active management to continue on ~33%** of state-owned lands



Groton State Forest / Zack Porter





## State Lands Not Major Sources of Timber

- **Less than 1% of Vermont timber production** is from state-owned lands
- **About 3% of Massachusetts timber production** is from state-owned lands



Wendell State Forest, Massachusetts





## Protected Wildlands — Many Non-timber Benefits

- **Biodiversity:** habitats for full range of native plant and wildlife species
- **Climate:** stabilize climate, mitigate floods, accumulate carbon
- **People:** clean air and water, health and well-being, economic diversity



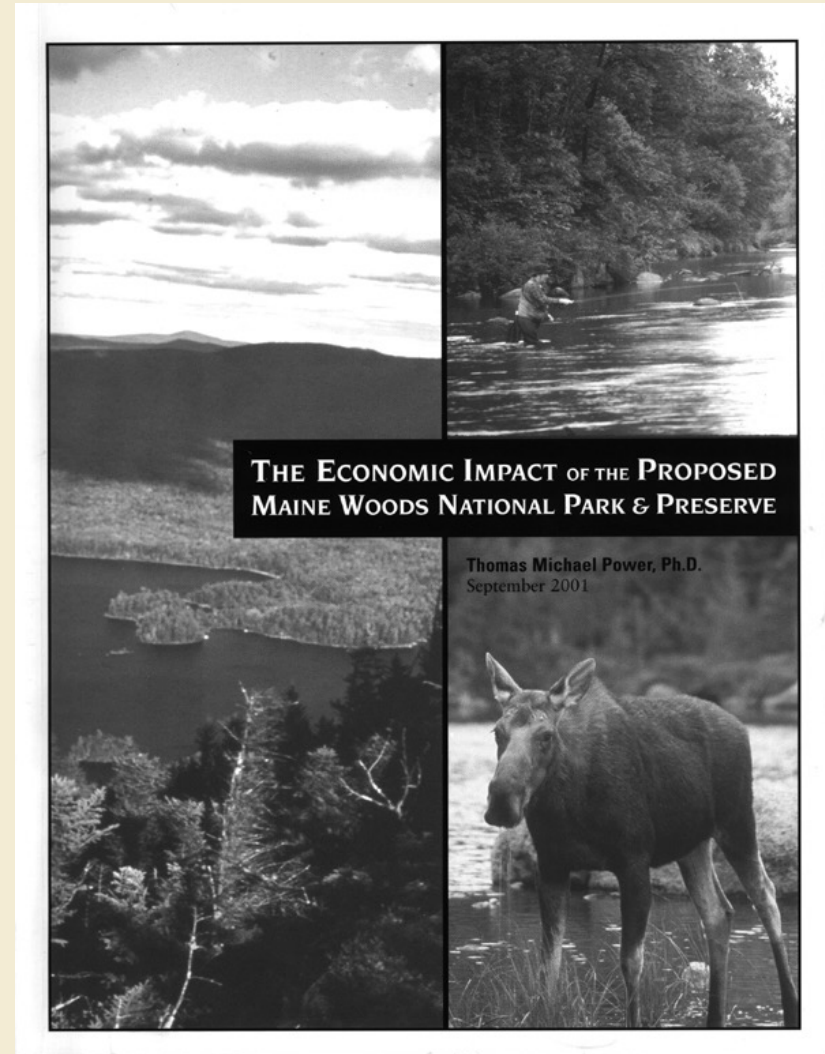
Camel's Hump State Park, Vermont / Zack Porter



## Economic Benefits of Protected Wildlands

*“[A] quantitative analysis was conducted of all of the large National Parks in the lower 48 United States.... [J]ob, aggregate income, and population growth rates were almost universally much higher in the counties and communities surrounding National Parks than in areas not adjacent to National Parks over the last 30 years.”*

Power (2001) The Economic Impact of the Proposed Maine Woods National Park and Preserve. <http://tinyurl.com/46hpxnwh>







# Key Economic Benefits of Protected Wildlands



Yellowstone Falls, Yellowstone National Park / Michael Kellett

- **Visitor Spending:** Directly supports local businesses like hotels, restaurants, and shops in local communities.
- **Job Creation:** Private-sector jobs in hospitality, food service, and recreation, generating significant labor income.
- **Economic Diversification:** Help communities move away from reliance on single industries (like mining or timber) by fostering a stable outdoor recreation economy.





# Key Economic Benefits of Protected Wildlands



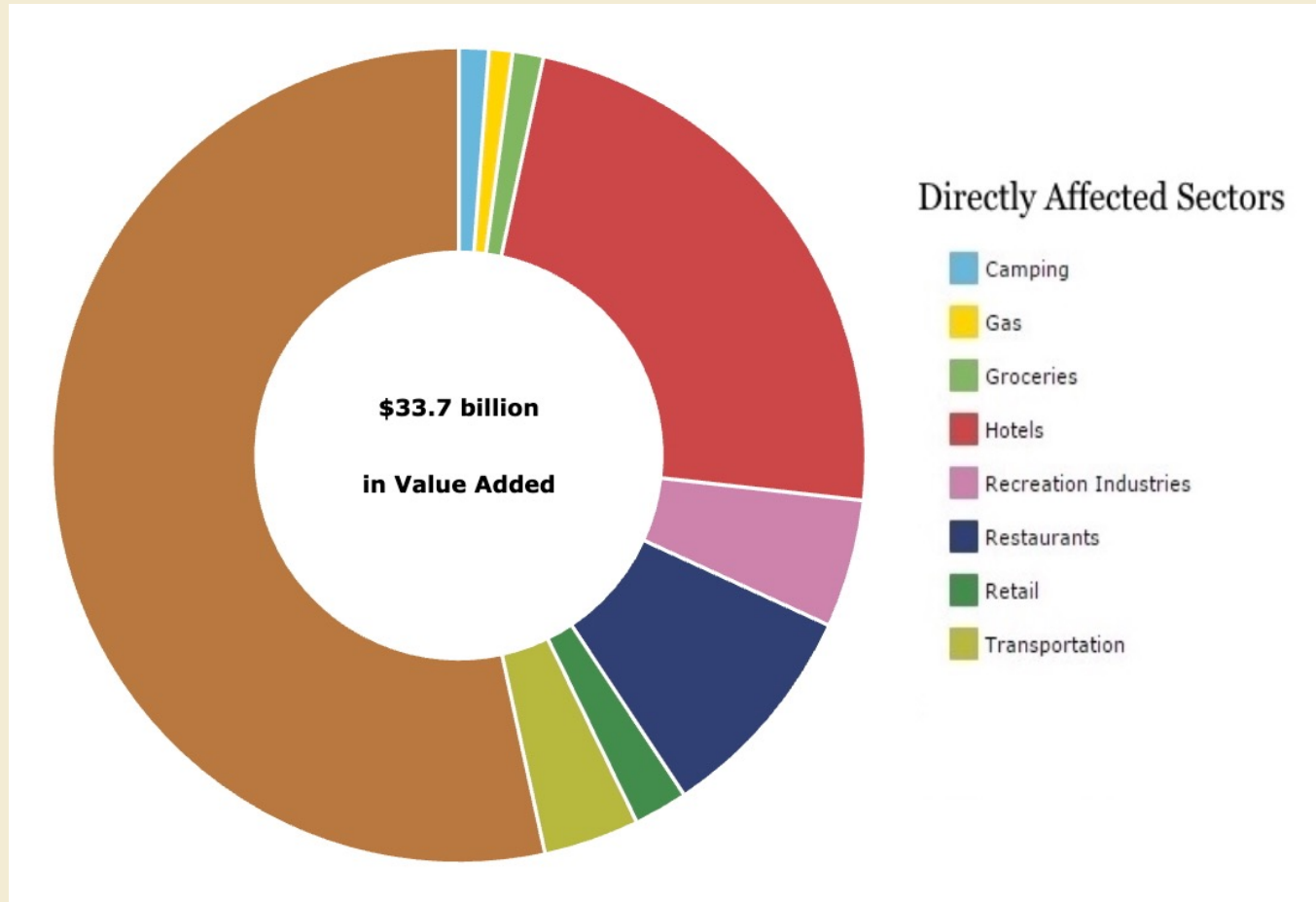
New River Gorge National Park and Preserve / Roller Coaster Philosophy, [Wikipedia Commons](#)

- **Increased Property Values:** Proximity to parks and wildlands increases property values, boosting local tax revenues for municipalities.
- **Business Attraction:** Companies often locate near parks and wildlands to attract and retain talent, drawn by the quality-of-life amenities parks offer.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Public funding and visitor spending often lead to investments in local infrastructure, benefiting residents and businesses.





# National Parks Total Economic Impacts — 2024



- **Total Visitors:**  
331.9 million recreation visits
- **Visitor Spending:**  
\$29 billion in gateway communities
- **Jobs Supported:**  
340,000 jobs
- **Labor Income:**  
\$18.8 billion
- **Economic Output:**  
\$56.3 billion to U.S. economy





# Acadia National Park Economic Impacts — 2024



- **Total Visitors:**  
4 million recreation visits
- **Visitor Spending:**  
\$539 million in gateway communities
- **Jobs Supported:**  
5,300 jobs
- **Labor Income:**  
\$243 million
- **Economic Output:**  
\$745 million to gateway communities





# Katahdin Woods & Waters NM Economic Impacts — 2024



- **Total Visitors:**  
35.2 thousand recreation visits
- **Visitor Spending:**  
\$2.7 million in gateway communities
- **Jobs Supported:**  
26 jobs
- **Labor Income:**  
\$1.1 million
- **Economic Output:**  
\$3.4 million to gateway communities





## **H.276 — An Opportunity to Strengthen Vermont's Economy**



CC Putnam State Forest, Worcester Range / Zack Porter



## **H.276 — An Opportunity to Strengthen Vermont's Economy**



Camel's Hump State Park / Zack Porter





## **H.276 — An Opportunity to Strengthen Vermont's Economy**



Lake Willoughby looking north / King of Hearts, [Wikimedia Commons](#)





# Thank you!

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