Eight Ways Nature Supports New Hampshire’s Economy

Nature Economy Information Brief July 2022

Financial, built, and human capital support our economies. But what about natural capital? Nature and its services provide important benefits and utilities that, if stewarded carefully, annually renew and support sustainable economic development in communities.

In the following information brief we share eight ways that nature supports New Hampshire's economy. These ideas are shared below in cartoon format to maximize accessibility and interest. We hope they will spark discussion and future planning and decision-making to incorporate nature in sustainable ways into economic development discussions.

1. Youth Retention
Access to nature and the opportunity to get outdoors can help high school students and others consider their post graduate decisions and support New Hampshire’s workforce needs.

2. Adaptation to a Changing Climate
Extreme heat is one of the deadliest consequences of climate change. Trees and other plants provide many benefits in a town or city setting, including shade and the reduction of what is called the “heat island effect,” when more urban areas experience higher temperatures than rural locations.
3. Food, Fuel, and Fiber

Nature provides us with the building blocks of life, including crops and seafood as well as energy resources and materials for products we use every day. More economies are focusing on access to these resources in a sustainable and renewable manner.

4. Nature is an Asset for Entrepreneurs and Workforce Recruitment and Retention

Entrepreneurs and employees alike are looking for quality of life amenities when they decide where to start a business or to move for a new job. New Hampshire offers many of those amenities in close proximity to where people work, live and play.

5. Accessible Transportation

Trails, paths, riverwalks, and community right of ways can provide connectivity and the chance to safely travel from one area to another without a car. This opens up more opportunities for those with lower incomes as well as those with preferences for lower or non-polluting and more active options for travel.
6. Outdoor Recreation Increases Spending in Communities

In New Hampshire and across the country, the outdoor recreation economy is becoming a significant sector of economic activity. Properly stewarded natural assets can bring new visitors, spending, and opportunities for sustainable investment around year-round outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, fishing, swimming, boating and paddle sports, hunting, off-road vehicles, horseback riding, bird watching, skiing and nature viewing, to a name a few our State offers.

7. Pollution and Flood Reduction

Nature can have the amazing property of cleaning pollution and reducing flood risk. Trees and wetlands can filter water and air as well as store carbon dioxide. Buffers and landscapes allowed to provide “green infrastructure” can also store excess water during heavy precipitation events.

8. Exercise and Connection in Nature

Local access to nature, where people live and work, allows more opportunity to exercise and connect for both physical and mental health benefits.

There are many other ways that nature supports community well-being and economic vibrancy, including the connection to indigenous knowledge and history as well as many other cultural, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits. We would love to know what you are doing in your community.
References

Downtowns and Trails Info Brief
Rivers and Economic Development Research Brief
The Nature Economy Collaborative
Craft Breweries and Community
Nature’s Fortune: How Business and Society Thrive by Investing in Nature by Mark Tercek and Jonathan Adams
NH’s Workforce: The Youth Retention Initiative

Learn More

Nature Economy - Downtowns and Trails
10 Minute Walk
Natural Capital Project
Collaborative Research Excellence - CoRE Initiative

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