

## White Gold

### New report quantifies economic impact of climate change on winter sports industry

Friday, February 23, 2018



ELIZABETH BURAKOWSKI, A RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN THE EARTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH CENTER, IS A CO-AUTHOR ON A RECENT STUDY THAT LOOKED AT THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE WINTER SPORTS INDUSTRY. (PHOTO: CAMERON WAKE)

UNH research assistant professor [Elizabeth Burakowski '07](#) co-authored a study from the organization Protect Our Winters that found climate change is affecting both the duration of winter and the accumulation and quality of snow, posing a significant risk to winter sports and to American jobs and the economy.

The report, [The Economic Contributions of Winter Sports in a](#)

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[Changing Climate](#), shows the impact of climate change on the \$20.3 billion snow sports industry, what the industry is doing to adapt and why urgent action is needed.

The report finds that low-snow seasons result in 5.5 million fewer visitors to ski towns than average, while higher than average snow years encouraged Americans to spend time outside in the winter — with significant economic benefits.

“Low snow hurts much more than big snow helps the economy,” says Burakowski, a researcher in the [Earth Systems Research Center](#) at UNH’s [Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space](#). “In high-snow years, our mountain communities can operate at full capacity. Our report reveals that low-snow years can result in close to \$1 billion in reduced economic activity and 17,400 fewer jobs.”

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The report puts an economic value to the significant shifts in winter temperatures, precipitation and snow and ice cover driven by a changing climate. It found that snowboarders, skiers and snowmobilers added an estimated \$20.3 billion in economic value to the U.S. economy, through spending at ski resorts, hotels, restaurants, bars, grocery stores and gas stations.

This report updates a [2012 report](#) from Natural Resources Defense Council and Protect Our Winters co-authored by Burakowski and UNH lecturer Matthew Magnusson.

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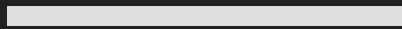
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