

# Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

*A Summary of Economic Performance in the Surrounding Communities*



*Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, Photo: BLM*

## BACKGROUND

The 370,000 acre Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument was designated in 2001 to protect lands that hold a spectacular array of plant life, unique geological features, endless recreation opportunities, and significant historical artifacts. The area is defined in part by the history of use by Native Americans, Lewis and Clark, and subsequent generations of trappers, traders, and homesteaders. Located in Blaine, Choteau, Fergus, and Phillips counties, Montana the monument is managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

## PUBLIC ACCESS AND USE OF THE MONUMENT

The monument allows a wide variety of uses including grazing, rights-of-way, hunting, fishing, and other activities. A 149-mile stretch of the Wild and Scenic Missouri River flows through the monument.

## TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Travel and tourism is important to the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region, representing about 19% of total private wage and salary employment, or 1,165 jobs, in 2008. In Montana, the Outdoor Industry Foundation reports that recreation contributes \$2.5 billion annually to the state's economy.<sup>6</sup>

## SUMMARY FINDINGS

Research shows that conserving public lands like the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument helps to safeguard and highlight amenities that draw new residents, tourists, and businesses to surrounding communities.<sup>1</sup>

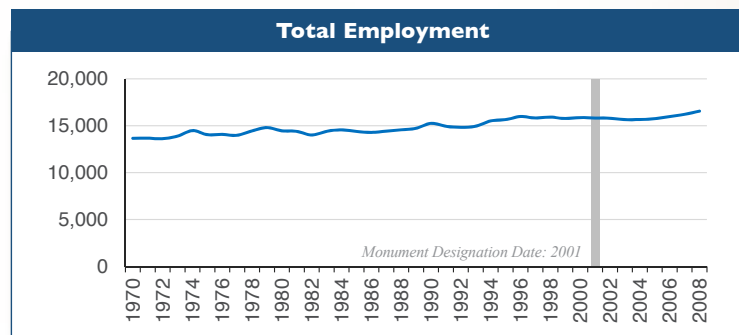
Western counties with protected public lands, like national monuments, have been more successful at attracting fast-growing economic sectors and as a result grow more quickly, on average, than counties without protected public lands.<sup>2</sup> In addition, protected natural amenities—such as the pristine scenery found at Upper Missouri River Breaks—also help sustain property values and attract new investment.<sup>3</sup>

## ECONOMY GROWS AFTER DESIGNATION

The economies of Blaine, Choteau, Fergus, and Phillips counties, Montana around the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region) grew after the 2001 designation of the monument, continuing modest job growth and accelerating personal and per capita income gains.

**From 2001 to 2008, in the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region:<sup>4</sup>**

- Employment grew by 5%
- Real personal income grew by 18%
- Real per capita income grew by 27%

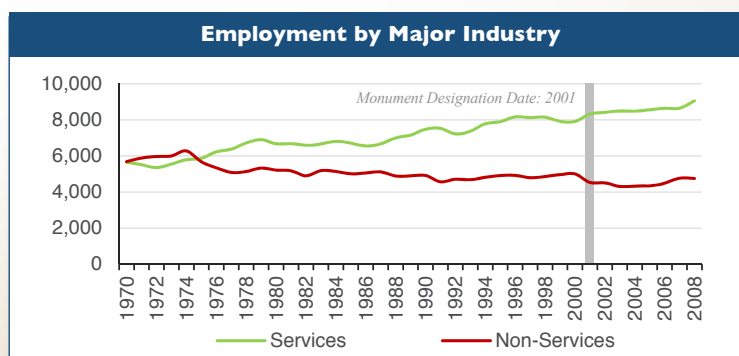


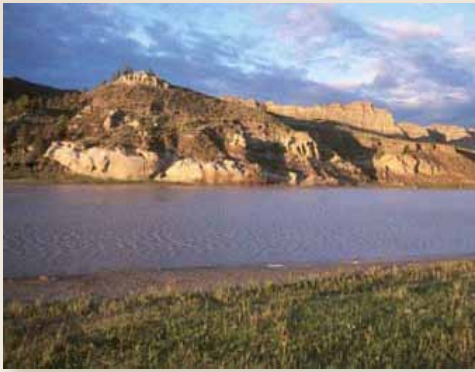
## SERVICES JOBS INCREASING ACROSS THE BOARD

Services jobs—such as doctors, engineers, and teachers—account for the majority of employment growth in the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region in recent decades. These jobs are increasingly mobile, and many entrepreneurs locate their businesses in areas with a high quality of life.

**From 2001 to 2008, in the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region:<sup>5</sup>**

- Services grew from 8,322 to 9,053 jobs, a 9% increase
- Non-Services grew from 4,531 to 4,753 jobs, a 5% increase





Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument,  
Photo: BLM

THE ECONOMIES NEIGHBORING THE UPPER MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT GREW SINCE ITS DESIGNATION IN 2001.

THE INCREASES IN JOBS, PERSONAL INCOME, AND PER CAPITA INCOME ALSO MIRROR OTHER WESTERN COUNTIES WITH NATIONAL MONUMENTS OR OTHER PROTECTED LANDS.

#### METHODOLOGY

This fact sheet is part of a series that assesses the economic performance of local communities that are adjacent to national monuments. The series examines national monuments in the eleven western continental states that are larger than 10,000 acres and were created in 1982 or later.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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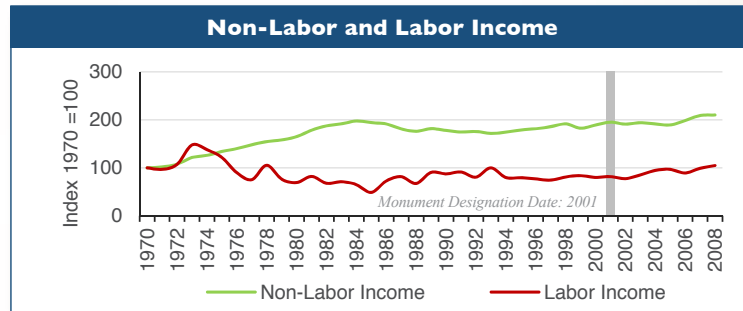
## NON-LABOR INCOME GROWS FASTEST

One of the largest and fastest growing sources of new personal income in the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region is non-labor income, which is made up of investment income such as dividends, interest and rent, and government transfer payments such as Social Security and Medicare.

For people with investment income and many retirees, protected public lands and recreation provide important aspects of a high quality of life. Non-labor income already represents more than a third of all personal income in the West—and will grow as the Baby Boomer generation retires.<sup>7</sup>

### From 2001 to 2008, in the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region:

- Non-Labor income grew from \$372 million to \$400 million, an 8% increase
- As a result, in 2008 non-labor income made up 44% of total personal income



## TRADITIONAL JOBS HOLD STEADY

Long before the monument's creation, commodity industries (agriculture, mining, timber) were becoming a smaller share of the overall economy in the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region. These industries remain part of the region's economy today.

### In 2008, in the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region:

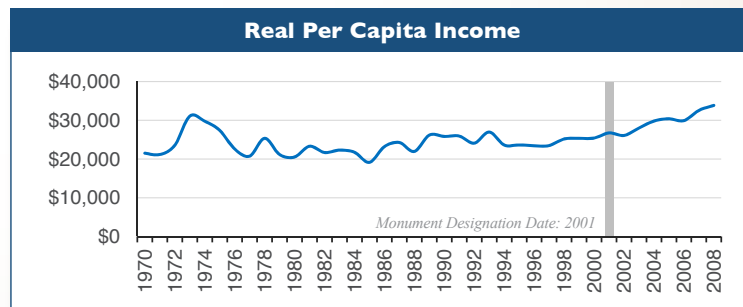
- Agriculture accounted for 17% of total employment
- Mining accounted for 4% of total private employment
- Timber accounted for 0.3% of total private employment

## PROSPERITY ON THE RISE

As the economy has grown since designation of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, per capita income has risen as well. This indicates growing prosperity in the region.

### From 2001 to 2008, in the Upper Missouri River Breaks Region:

- Real per capita income grew from \$26,744 to \$33,864, a 27% increase



<sup>1</sup> Lorah, P., R. Southwick, et al. 2003. Environmental Protection, Population Change, and Economic Development in the Rural Western United States. *Population and Environment* 24(3): 255-272. McGranahan, D. A. 1999. Natural Amenities Drive Rural Population Change. E. R. S. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Washington, D.C. Haas, W. H., W. J. Serow, et al. 2002. The Baby Boom, Amenity Retirement Migration, and Retirement Communities: Will the Golden Age of Retirement Continue? *Research on Aging* 24(1): 150-164.

<sup>2</sup> Rasker, R. 2006. An Exploration into the Economic Impact of Industrial Development Versus Conservation on Western Public Lands. *Society & Natural Resources*, 19(3): 191-207.

<sup>3</sup> Deller, S. C., T. H. Tsai, et al. 2001. The Role of Amenities and Quality of Life in Rural Economic Growth. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 83(2): 352-365.

<sup>4</sup> All economic data comes from U.S. Department of Commerce. 2010. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Department of Commerce. 2010. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, Washington, D.C.

<sup>5</sup> The U.S. Department of Commerce changed with way it classifies industries between 2000 and 2001. To show a continuous timeline for services and non-services employment we subtracted non-services jobs from total private employment to derive services jobs. The national recession from March-November 2001 also may account for short-term employment volatility around 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Outdoor Industry Foundation. 2006. *The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy: A \$730 Billion Annual Contribution to the U.S. Economy.*

<sup>7</sup> Frey, W.H. 2006. *America's Regional Demographics in the '00 Decade: The Role of Seniors, Boomers and New Minorities.* The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.