Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument

A Summary of Economic Performance in the Surrounding Communities

BACKGROUND
The 496,000 acre Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument was created in 2014 to protect the historic and biological resources of five mountain chains in southern New Mexico. Located almost entirely in Dona Ana County, New Mexico the monument is managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

PUBLIC ACCESS AND USE OF THE MONUMENT
The Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the monument is under development. In the meantime, visitors can enjoy outdoor recreation such as hiking, hunting, ATV riding, or horseback riding. Traditional and existing rights such as grazing and plant gathering also will continue.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM
Travel and tourism are important to communities in Dona Ana County, representing about 19% of total private wage and salary employment, or 9,571 jobs, in 2015. In New Mexico, the Outdoor Industry Association reports that recreation contributes more than $6 billion annually to the state’s economy.

SUMMARY FINDINGS
Research shows that conserving public lands like the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument helps to safeguard and highlight amenities that draw new residents, tourists, and businesses to surrounding communities.

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. In addition, protected natural amenities—such as the pristine scenery found at Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks—also help sustain property values and attract new investment.

ECONOMY GROWING
The communities in Dona Ana County, New Mexico neighboring the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument continue to grow, echoing previous growth trends.

From 2001 to 2015, in Dona Ana County:
- Population grew by 21%
- Real personal income grew by 42%
- Jobs grew by 27%
- Real per capita income grew by 17%

SERVICES JOBS INCREASING ACROSS THE BOARD
Services jobs—such as doctors, engineers, and teachers—account for the majority of employment growth in Dona Ana County 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 2015, in Dona Ana County:
- Services grew from 46,336 to 65,200 jobs, a 41% increase
- Non-Services grew from 12,630 to 14,039, an 11% increase
THE COMMUNITIES IN DONA ANA COUNTY NEIGHBORING THE MONUMENT HAVE GROWN STEADILY SINCE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY.

THE INCREASES IN POPULATION, JOBS, PERSONAL INCOME, AND PER CAPITA INCOME 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.

TRADITIONAL JOBS HOLD STEADY
Long before the monument’s creation, commodity industries (agriculture, mining, timber) in Dona Ana County were small relative to the overall economy. These industries remain part of the county’s economy today.

In 2015, in Dona Ana County:
- Agriculture accounted for 3% of total employment
- Mining accounted for 0.1% of total private employment
- Timber accounted for 0.3% of total private employment

PROSPERITY ON THE RISE
As the economy has grown, per capita income has risen as well. This indicates growing prosperity in the region.

From 2001 to 2015, in Dona Ana County:
- Real per capita income grew from $27,870 to $32,653, a 17% increase

Non-Labor Income Growing Fastest
One of the largest and fastest growing sources of new personal income in Dona Ana County 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 Boom generation retires.7

From 2001 to 2015, in Dona Ana County:
- Non-Labor income grew from $1.8 billion to $3.1 billion, a 71% increase
- As a result, in 2015 non-labor income made up 45% of total personal income

5 The U.S. Department of Commerce changed the 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.