On May 25th 2018 the Piedmont Triad Regional Council along with the NC Department of Commerce’s Outdoor Recreation Office hosted local government officials, travel and tourism staff, and private business owners to discuss how to expand and further utilize the outdoor recreation assets in the Piedmont Triad. A full summary of the discussion is outlined below.

North Carolina

260,000 Direct Jobs

$8.3 BILLION Wages and Salaries

$28.0 BILLION In Consumer Spending

$1.3 BILLION In State and Local Tax Revenue
WHAT WE LEARNED

Opportunities

What opportunities for the outdoor recreation economy exists in the Piedmont Triad?

- Incentives for businesses to locate in agricultural communities or small towns
- Partnering small and large companies for competitive advantage
- Cities in close proximity to rural areas
- MOU’s with private and non-private partners
- Utilizing core rivers
- Family programming, easy paddles, kid friendly events
- Increase in river access locations and camping
- Leverage heritage for outdoor recreation business
- Keep textile and manufacturing products and machinery in NC

Barriers

What barriers for the outdoor recreation economy exists in the Piedmont Triad?

- Cannot separate rural destinations from communities and larger downtown’s
- Climate change
- Lack of broadband and cell coverage in rural areas (EMS issues)
- Getting youth and minorities outdoors (future leaders and customers)
- Need assistance in land acquisition/private property is an issue
- County and municipal parks making up the difference
- Funds going mostly to coastal and mountain region’s for economic development
- LWCF to expire in October 2018
- USGS river gauges are going away
- Security on rivers and trails (policing, self-policing, maintenance)
- Need resources for trail building and upkeep
- Need large tracts of land with public access (Uwharrie Trail and Forest)
- Resources for innovative outdoor recreation
- Maintenance of shared spaces
- Reduction of wildlife funds in NC
- Interest gap for signing up for hospitality programs
- Lack of sufficient lodging opportunities in rural areas
- Getting the community colleges to work together on curriculums
- Quality of the outdoor experience is important when bringing visitors back
- Ordinances that prevent camping or outdoor recreation from flourishing near trails
- Gaps in locations of outfitters reducing blueway/river use
- Trailhead parking and support facilities are key but not always affordable

NORTH CAROLINA

$28.0 BILLION

IN CONSUMER SPENDING ANNUALLY

PIEDMONT TRIAD REGIONAL COUNCIL

OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY STATES WITH OFFICES OF OUTDOOR RECREATION
Assets and What's Working

What's currently working in the outdoor recreation economy for the Piedmont Triad?

- Strong network of municipal staff within outdoor recreation and state
- Mountains to Sea Trail in the Piedmont
- Wayfinding and signage (Yadkin Heritage Program Example)
- Regional trails (partnerships, municipalities, marketing and branding)
- Engagement with outdoor recreation businesses
- Experience based learning (RCC Trails Program)
- State office dedicated to outdoor recreation
- Businesses that are trail and bike friendly
- "Hip camp" or "Air BnB" opportunities for lodging

New Ideas

What new ideas or opportunities exists as part of this effort?

- A "Foothills to Bay" Trail
- Additional maintenance of public lands
- Change the community mindset about priority of trails and outdoor recreation
- Identify ways to measure visitation along the region’s rivers
- Asset Inventory of outdoor recreation in the Piedmont Triad
- Develop conversations with elected officials at all levels on economic impacts
- Further develop curriculum for outdoor recreation
- Identify a liaison between community colleges and businesses
- NC SCORP (needed for LWCF funding) should be coordinated with Commerce position
- Illustrate different advantages to trail and recreation dedication (e.g. tax benefits, economic benefits, health benefits)
- Need additional product to maximize overnight stays (e.g. food, lodging, longer trails)
- Sharing facilities between private hotels, community colleges, parks and rec. etc.
- Partner rural TDA's with larger city CVBs to fully utilize all opportunities for programming and events
- Explore alternative model/algorithm to attract hotel and lodging businesses to rural areas
- Explore building re-use grants to support redevelopment of old industrial/mill areas
- Business recruitment tactics beyond low taxes
NEXT STEPS

SURVEY

We've developed a post-event survey that should take less than 8 minutes to complete. We want your feedback on the information above, what you envision as next steps, and what level of involvement you would like as we move forward in this process!

CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY

NEXT MEETING

Save the Date - our next meeting will be July 24th at the Piedmont Triad Regional Council

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER