

# *Western North Carolina* OUTDOOR ECONOMY

## 18-County Outdoor Industry and Labor Market Highlights

10,000+  
Jobs

### Jobs and Businesses

32 select industries pinpointed 1,100 businesses that sustained over 10,000 jobs in 2020.

### Employment Growth

WNC Outdoor Industry employment growth exceeded the Nation's -1% and State's 5% from 2015-2020.

9%  
Employment  
Growth  
2015-2020

1.7x  
National  
Average

### Job Concentration

There were 70 percent more jobs in this industry group in WNC compared to the national average, suggesting specialization in WNC.

### Gross Regional Product

GRP estimates the final market value of all goods and services produced by the industry group and was robust in 2020.

\$773M  
GRP

\$1.4B  
Sales

### Sales

Sales or gross receipts of the industry group, both to other industries and consumers, were just over \$1.4 billion.

Broad  
Regional  
Relevance

Competitive  
Advantage





Funded by a U.S. EDA grant, this study included the 18 counties of the Mountain Area, Southwestern, and High Country workforce development regions:

Southwestern Mountain Area High Country

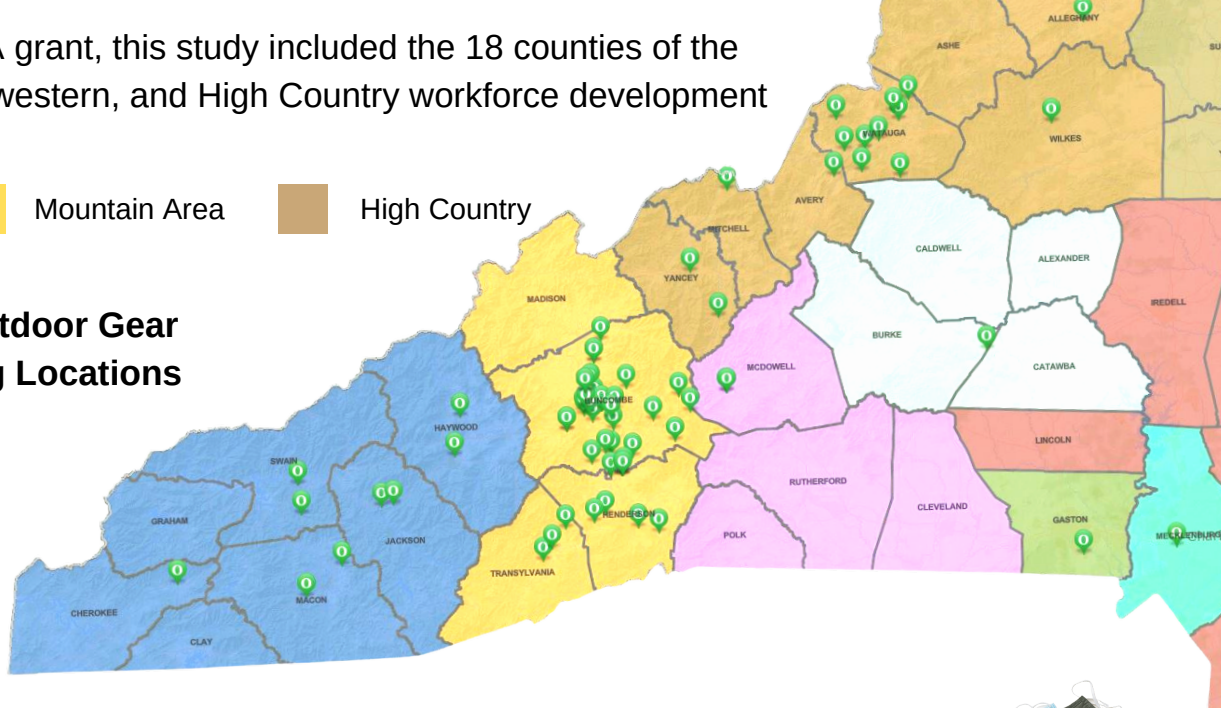
 At least 73 Outdoor Gear Manufacturing Locations



[rebrand.ly/wncoutdoor](https://rebrand.ly/wncoutdoor)

**Scan QR Code or  
Click the link**

to learn more about  
Outdoor Industry and  
Gear Production.



The Outdoor Industry is enmeshed with many sectors of the economy. The study highlighted how numerous outdoor manufacturing organizations pivoted to support the healthcare system in response to COVID-19. For example, WNC gear manufacturers were recognized for producing tens of thousands of PPE products using advanced technologies.



**Economic Impact of Removing  
Outdoor Economy Jobs from WNC**

**-14,667  
Jobs**

*Direct & Indirect  
Supported Jobs*

**-\$586M  
Earnings**

One scenario suggests that if the 10,000 pinpointed jobs related to outdoor industries were removed from WNC, an additional 4,700 indirect or supported jobs could also be impacted, as well as associated \$586 million earnings for households.

**WNC has established a growing outdoor industry cluster with supply chain, educational programs, and a talented workforce that has distinguished the region.**

**Partners:**



Please note that the results of the analysis represent this discrete study and the analysis is not directly comparable to other studies due to differences in methodologies. Estimates are dependent on the industries selected, as well as the data sources. All data reflects quantities at a specific point in time and may be periodically updated. Data for 2020 was collected in 2021. Margins of error may apply.

For more information, please contact Riverbird Research, a division of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, at [riverbirdresearch.com](https://riverbirdresearch.com).