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Interior Department Supported \$358 Billion in Economic Activity, 2 Million Jobs in 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today released a report showing that the various activities of the Department of the Interior contributed \$358 billion to the U.S. economy in 2014, supporting more than two million jobs across the country.

“This report demonstrates once again that the Department of the Interior is a powerful economic engine,” Jewell said. “Our parks and public lands support outdoor recreation, promote renewable energy and allow us to harness other domestic energy resources, create jobs and promote economic development in communities across all 50 states.”

The *U.S. Department of the Interior’s [Economic Report for Fiscal Year 2014](#)* found that national parks, national wildlife refuges, national monuments and other public lands managed by Interior hosted an estimated 423 million recreational visits in 2014 – up from 407 million in 2013 – and that these visits alone supported \$42 billion in economic output and about 375,000 jobs nationwide. This year’s report is paired with [a web-based data visualization tool](#) that lets the user customize the contribution analysis by bureau, activity or state.

Jewell has stressed the importance of continuing the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which is set to expire on September 30, 2015, unless Congress acts to reauthorize the fund. The LWCF provides money for federal, state and local government purchases of land, water and wetlands, from federal oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf. President Obama has called for fully funding the LWCF at \$900 million beginning in 2016.

Some highlights from the report include:

Recreation: National parks, national wildlife refuges and other lands managed by the Department hosted an estimated 423 million visits, supporting \$42 billion in economic output and about 375,000 jobs.

Renewable Energy: Interior lands and facilities produced 38 million megawatt hours (MWh) of hydropower, enough to power about 3.5 million homes. In 2014 the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Indian Affairs approved the installation of 768 MW in new solar

energy projects on public and tribal lands. Renewable energy activities supported an estimated \$3 billion in economic output, resulting in about 13,000 jobs.

Fossil Fuel Energy: Fossil fuel energy produced from Interior lands in 2014 included 706 million barrels of crude oil, 3.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 421 million tons of coal, supporting \$230 billion in economic output and over one million jobs.

Non-fuel (Hardrock) Minerals: Hardrock mining on Interior lands produced a wide variety of minerals, including an estimated 2.5 million troy ounces of gold, and supported about \$12 billion in economic output and over 42,000 jobs.

Forage and Grazing: Interior lands produced more than 10 million animal unit months of forage in 2014. Forage and grazing activities supported \$1.4 billion in economic output and about 17,000 jobs.

Timber: Over half a billion board feet of timber harvested on BLM and tribal lands supported \$0.8 billion in economic output and about 3,800 jobs.

Water: The Bureau of Reclamation and the BIA store and deliver water for agricultural, municipal and industrial users, supporting \$51 billion in economic output and 379,000 jobs in 2014.

Grants and Payments: Grant and payment programs administered by Interior support activities such as reclamation of abandoned mine lands, historic preservation, habitat conservation, and tribal governance. These activities supported \$10 billion in economic output and 99,000 jobs in 2014.

Prepared by the Department's Office of Policy Analysis, the report is the sixth in a series of annual economic reports published since 2009. The estimated \$358 billion in economic output is related to a variety of Interior's activities including: tourism and outdoor recreation at parks, monuments and refuges, water management, energy and mineral development on public lands, wildlife conservation, hunting and fishing, support for American Indian tribal communities and U.S. island territories, as well as scientific research and innovation endeavors.

Jewell noted that many of Interior's activities—such as scientific research and conservation of parks, wetlands and wildlife habitat—have economic values that are not easily calculated, and are not included in the report's totals.

“While this report quantifies some of the economic benefits of public lands, the full value of our lands and historic sites cannot be expressed in dollars,” said Jewell. “Many of these are simply priceless treasures that belong to all Americans and define our cultural, historic and natural heritage for present and future generations. They provide us with clean water, clean air and habitat for a rich diversity of plant and animal species that depend on healthy public lands and waters, in addition to breathing space for our growing population.”