

# Gold Butte National Monument

A summary of economic performance in surrounding counties



Photo courtesy BLM

## BACKGROUND

The 297,000-acre Gold Butte National Monument was designated in 2016 to protect lands that reveal stories of human habitation over thousands of years through geological and biological treasures. The monument protects artifacts from Western mining and ranching heritage and carved rock stories created by ancient Indigenous people. Located in Clark County, Nevada, the monument is managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

## PUBLIC ACCESS AND USES

The monument allows hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, and riding off-highway vehicles on more than 300 miles of primitive routes. In Fiscal Year 2022, the monument attracted 72,545 visitors.<sup>1</sup>

## TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Travel and tourism are important to communities in the Gold Butte region, representing about 34% of total private wage and salary employment, or 320,459 jobs, in 2024.<sup>2</sup> Recreation contributed more than \$8.4 billion to Nevada's economy in 2023.<sup>3</sup>

## SUMMARY FINDINGS

Research shows that conserving public lands like the Gold Butte National Monument helps to safeguard and highlight amenities that draw new visitors, businesses, and residents to surrounding communities.<sup>4</sup>

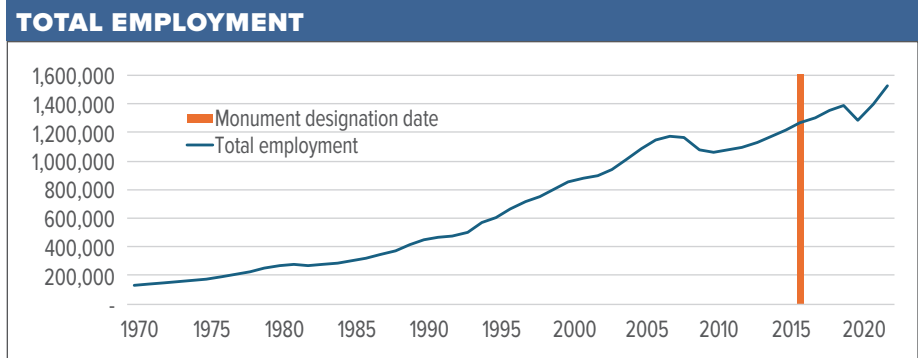
Western counties with protected public lands, like national monuments, have been more successful at attracting fast-growing economic sectors and as a result grow more quickly, on average, than counties without protected public lands. In addition, protected natural amenities—such as the intricate rock formations found at Gold Butte National Monument—also help sustain property values and attract new investment.

## ECONOMY IS STEADY AFTER DESIGNATION

The economy of Clark County neighboring the Gold Butte National Monument has grown after the designation of the monument, continuing previous growth trends.

### From 2001 to 2022 in the Gold Butte region:<sup>5</sup>

- Population grew by 59%.
- Jobs grew by 73%.



## SERVICE JOBS INCREASING

Service jobs—such as doctors, hospitality workers, and teachers—reflect economic diversification for many communities. These jobs are increasingly mobile, and many entrepreneurs locate their businesses in areas with a high quality of life.

### From 2001 to 2022 in the Gold Butte region:<sup>5</sup>

- Service jobs grew from 697,199 to 1,270,542, an 82% increase.
- Non-service jobs grew from 102,332 to 129,141, a 26% increase.

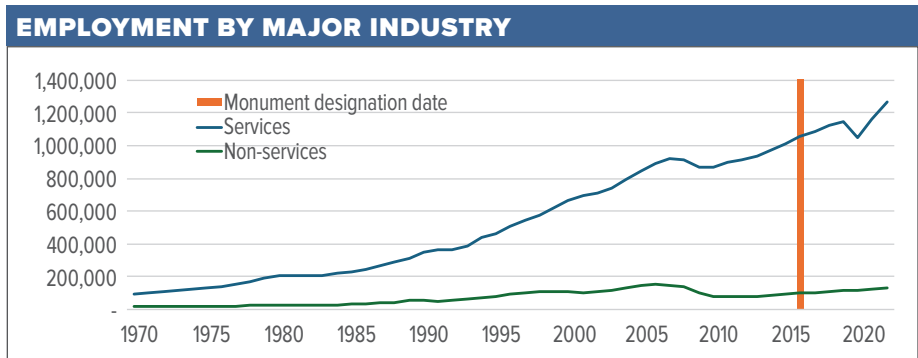




Photo courtesy Bob Wick, BLM

The communities in Clark County neighboring the Gold Butte National Monument experienced overall growth since its designation in 2016. The increases in population, jobs, personal income, and per capita income mirror other Western counties with national monuments or other protected lands.

## ABOUT

This fact sheet is part of a series created by Headwaters Economics that assesses the economic performance of local communities adjacent to national monuments. For more information, see <https://headwaterseconomics.org/public-lands/economic-performance-national-monuments>.

1. Bureau of Land Management. (2023). *Gold Butte National Monument Annual Manager's Report, Fiscal Year 2022*. Las Vegas, NV: Bureau of Land Management, Southern Nevada District Office. Retrieved from <https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2023-08/GBNM2022final.pdf>
2. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023). *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/cew/>
3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2024). *Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>
4. Headwaters Economics. (2021). *National Monuments Can Boost Local Economies*. Bozeman, MT: Headwaters Economics. Retrieved from <https://headwaterseconomics.org/public-lands/national-monuments-studies/>
5. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2023). *Regional Economic Accounts*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from <https://www.bea.gov/data/economic-accounts/regional>
6. Lawson, M. (2019). *Non-Labor Income in the Rural West*. Bozeman, MT: Headwaters Economics. Retrieved from <https://headwaterseconomics.org/public-lands/papl-lawson/>

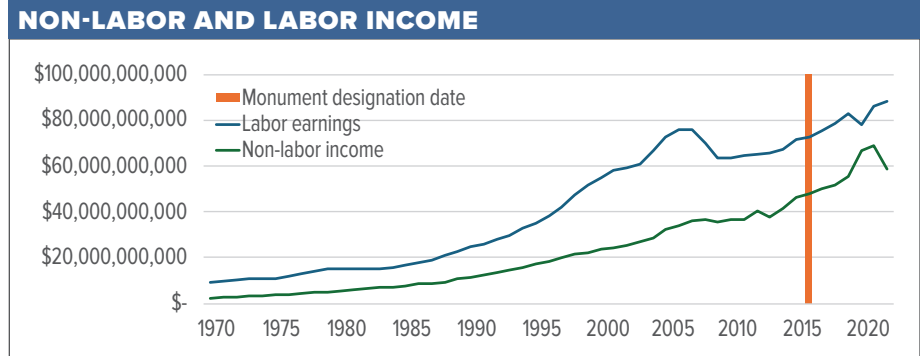
## NON-LABOR INCOME GROWS FASTEST

One of the largest and fastest growing sources of new personal income in the Gold Butte 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>6</sup>

### From 2001 to 2022 in the Gold Butte region:<sup>5</sup>

- Non-labor income grew from \$42.2 billion to \$58.8 billion, a 143% increase.
- As a result, in 2022 non-labor income made up 40% of total personal income.



## TRADITIONAL JOBS HOLD STEADY

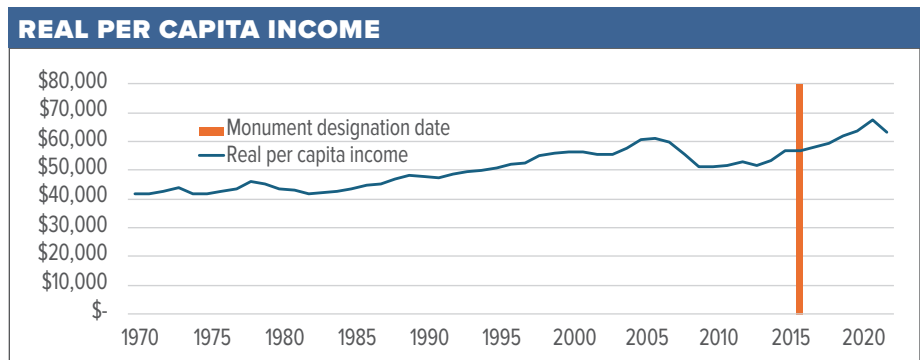
Long before the monument's creation, commodity industries (agriculture, mining, timber) were becoming a smaller share of the overall economy in the Gold Butte region. These industries remain part of the region's economy today.

## PROSPERITY ON THE RISE

As the economy has grown since the designation of the Gold Butte National Monument, per capita income has also risen. This indicates growing prosperity in the region. Earnings per job were falling prior to monument designation and continued to fall after monument designation.

### From 2001 to 2022 in the Gold Butte region:<sup>5</sup>

- Real per capita income grew from \$56,317 to \$63,408, a 13% increase.
- Real earnings per job declined from \$74,150 to \$66,422, a 10% decrease.



Headwaters Economics is an independent, nonprofit research group that works to improve community development and land management decisions.