

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument

A summary of economic performance in surrounding counties



Photo courtesy USDA USFS

BACKGROUND

The 452,000-acre San Gabriel Mountains National Monument was designated in 2014 to protect rich cultural history, striking geological features, and vibrant ecological diversity. San Gabriel Mountains is home to more than 600 archeological sites and 19th- and 20th-century ruins including mountaintop resorts, a scenic railway, and homesteads. Located in Los Angeles County, California, the monument is managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

PUBLIC ACCESS AND USES

The monument allows hiking, cycling, horseback riding, backpacking, scenic driving, wildlife viewing, and archeological, astronomical and geological interpretation. San Gabriel Mountains National Monument is the most visited location in the Angeles National Forest, which attracts nearly 4.6 million visits a year, more than the Grand Canyon or Yosemite National Park.¹

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Travel and tourism are important to communities in the San Gabriel Mountains region, representing about 17% of total private wage and salary employment, or 649,985 jobs, in 2024.² Recreation contributed more than \$83.9 billion to California's economy in 2023.³

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Research shows that conserving public lands like the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument helps to safeguard and highlight amenities that draw new visitors, businesses, and residents to surrounding communities.⁴

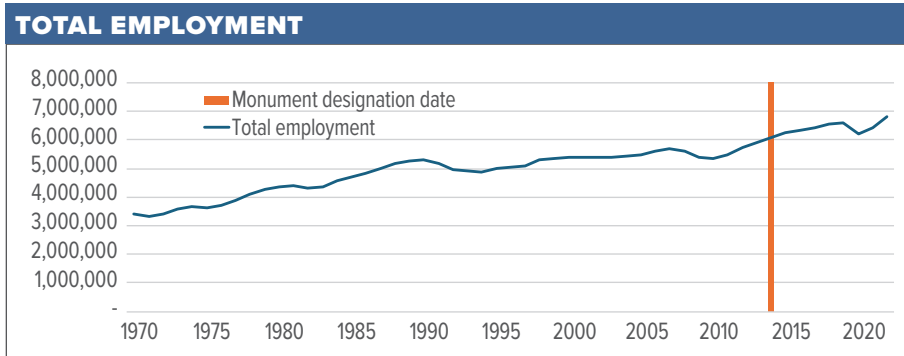
Western counties with protected public lands, like national monuments, have been more successful at attracting fast-growing economic sectors and as a result grow more quickly, on average, than counties without protected public lands. In addition, protected natural amenities—such as the towering peaks, dramatic geological formations, and stunning waterfalls found at San Gabriel Mountains National Monument—also help sustain property values and attract new investment.

ECONOMY GROWS AFTER DESIGNATION

The economy of Los Angeles County neighboring the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument has grown after the designation of the monument, continuing previous growth trends.

From 2001 to 2022 in the San Gabriel Mountains:⁵

- Population grew by 1%.
- Jobs grew by 26%.



SERVICE JOBS INCREASING/STEADY

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 San Gabriel Mountains:⁵

- Service jobs grew from 3.9 million to 5.6 million, a 42% increase.
- Non-service jobs declined from 832,788 to 608,352 jobs, a 27% decrease due to a loss of manufacturing-related jobs.

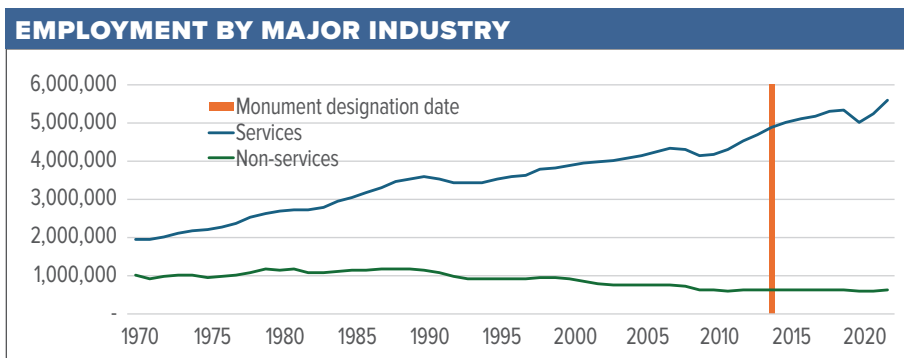




Photo courtesy USDA USFS

The communities in Los Angeles County neighboring the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument experienced strong growth since its designation in 2014. 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. Wigglesworth, A. (2024, May 2). Biden expands San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2024-05-02/biden-expands-san-gabriel-mountains-national-monument>
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/>

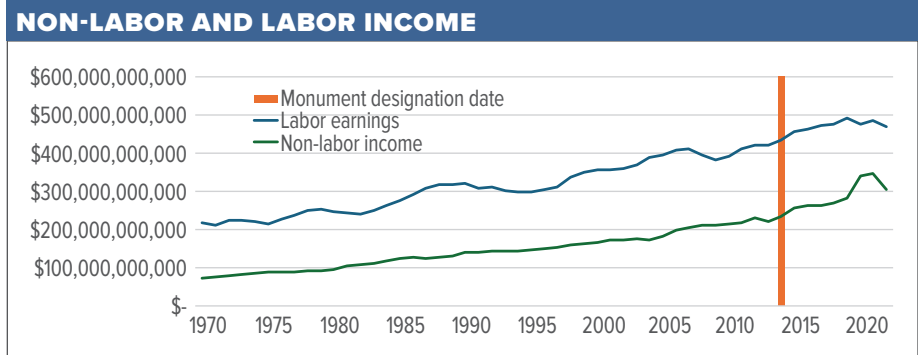
NON-LABOR INCOME GROWS FASTEST

One of the largest and fastest growing sources of new personal income in the San Gabriel Mountains 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.⁶

From 2001 to 2022 in the San Gabriel Mountains:⁵

- Non-labor income grew from \$170 billion to \$302 billion, a 78% increase.
- As a result, in 2022 non-labor income made up 39% of total personal income.



TRADITIONAL JOBS HOLD STEADY

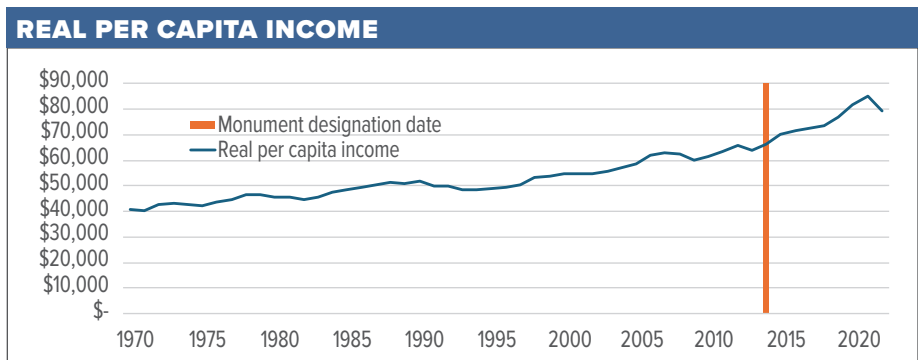
Long before the monument's creation, commodity industries (agriculture, mining, timber) were becoming a smaller share of the overall economy in the San Gabriel Mountains region. These industries remain a small part of the region's economy today.

PROSPERITY ON THE RISE

As the economy has grown since the designation of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, per capita income and earnings per job have risen as well. This indicates growing prosperity in the region.

From 2001 to 2022 in the San Gabriel Mountains:⁵

- Real per capita income grew from \$54,548 to \$79,480, a 46% increase.
- Real earnings per job grew from \$52,472 to \$57,292, a 9% increase.



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