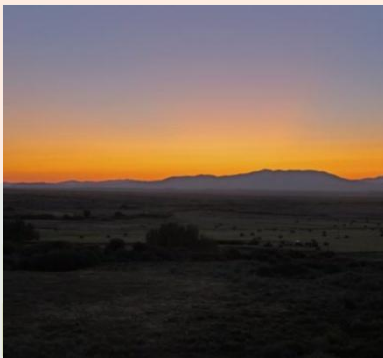




University of Nevada, Reno
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College of Agriculture,
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2026 The Economic Impacts of the Ruby Mountains on Elko County

Examining the natural and recreational resources that make the Ruby Mountains an important part of Elko County's economy.

● ● ● ● ● *WILD, OUTDOOR, ECONOMY*

The Ruby Mountains are an important part of Elko County, from beautiful nature and outdoor recreation, the location of habitats for countless species, incredible snow packs, and creation of watersheds supporting recreation and agriculture throughout the County, the physical and fiscal impacts of the Ruby Mountain range run wide.



A YEAR-ROUND DESTINATION
FOR ADVENTURERS



MILLIONS OF ACRES OF
PUBLIC LANDS TO EXPLORE



OUTDOOR RECREATION
SUPPORTS SMALL BUSINESS,
JOBS AND THE LOCAL ELKO
COMMUNITY

THE RUBY MOUNTAINS

ELKO COUNTY, NEVADA

● ● ● ● ●

OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY



TOP RECREATION JOBS IN ELKO (2025)

Sector	Jobs	% of Total Recreation Jobs	Average Earning Per Job
Traveler Accommodation	3,334	13.6%	\$47,475
Gambling Industries	259	1.1%	\$50,040
Other Amusement & Recreation Industries	192	0.8%	\$33,198
Department Stores	135	0.6%	\$22,963

Local Visitor Spending



\$85.9 Million

Nonlocal Visitor Spending



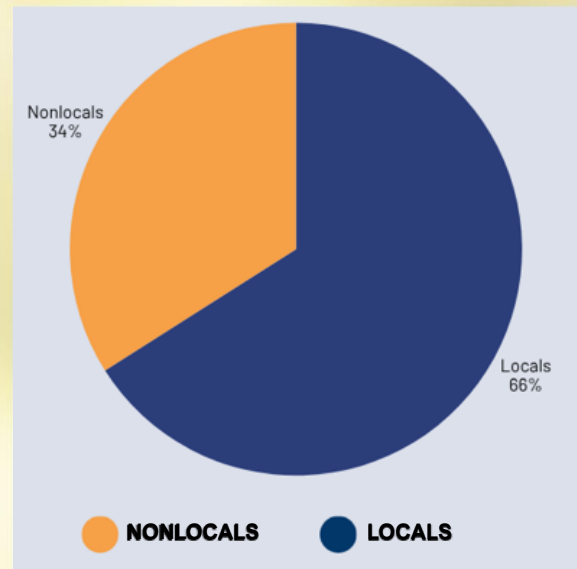
\$93.1 Million

All Visitor Spending



\$178.9 Million

OUTDOOR RECREATION BY VISITOR TYPE (2025)



ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION IN ELKO COUNTY (2025)

Total Economic Output:	\$230.3 Million
Total Job Years:	1,684
Labor Income:	\$69.7 Million
GDP:	\$128.9 Million

Source: The Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation in Nevada,
Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation



\$9.3 Million

**Total Economic
Contribution**
(Largest in Nevada)



118

Jobs Supported
(Highest in state)



\$15.4 Million

**Total Tag-Related
Expenditures**
(Second largest in
Nevada)



142,000

**Big Game Hunting
Days**

+45,000 Scouting Days



32,227

**Upland Game
Hunting Days**



\$6.2 Million

**Big Game New-
Dollar Expenditures
and
\$360k Upland Game**



64%

**Percentage of Big
Game Hunters from
Out of County**



54%

**Percentage of
Upland Game
Hunters from Out of
County**

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HUNTING



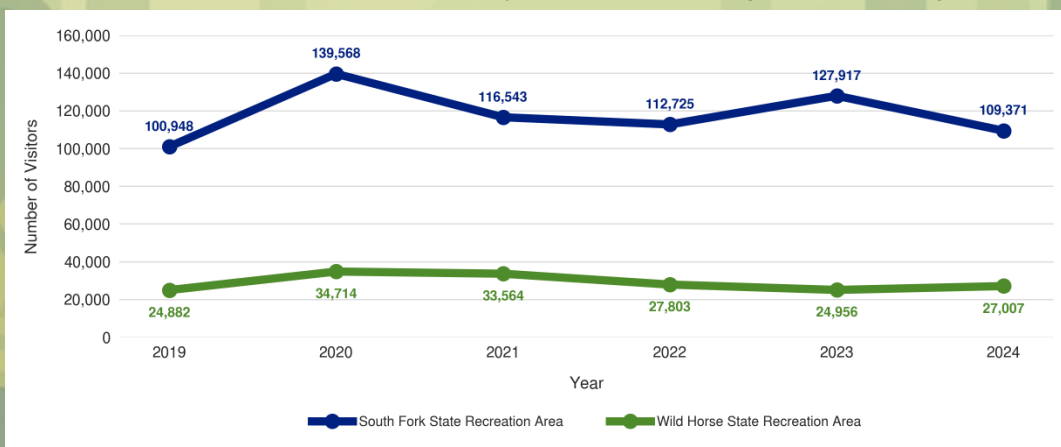
Source: Hunting-Related Economic Activity in Nevada: A County-level Analysis of Economic Activity Associated with Big Game and Upland Game Hunting in 2020; Bowman, Taylor, Harris, Borden.

STATE PARKS IN ELKO COUNTY



	South Fork State Recreation Area (2022)	Wild Horse State Recreation Area (2022)
		
Visitor Days	105,000	25,000
Distinct Trips	20,900	4,000
Economic Output	\$1.4M	\$135k
Jobs Supported	13.3	1.2
Tax Revenue	\$274,000	\$24,000

Visitation at Elko County State Parks (2019-2024)



Source: The Economic Impact of Nevada State Parks: An Analysis of Visitor Expenditures and Associated Economic Activity for Nevada State Parks System in 2022; Bowman, Brides-Lyman, Taylor, Borden

THE RUBY MOUNTAIN WATERSHED

Snowfall gathered in high-alpine lakes becomes the water that serves the communities, habitats, recreation and agriculture across Northeastern Nevada.

2,800+

**Square Miles
of Watershed**

236,000

**Average Acre-Feet of
Water Each Year**

HOW WATER MOVES THROUGH THE RUBIES

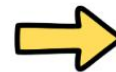
SNOWPACK



ALPINE LAKES



KEY CREEKS



VALLEY USES



Winter snowfall is stored in the high country, gathers in Alpine Lakes, and concentrates into tributaries such as Lamoille and Soldier Creeks before reaching surrounding Valleys.

SIX WATERSHED AREAS IN ELKO COUNTY

LAMOILLE
VALLEY

CLOVER
VALLEY

HUNTINGTON
VALLEY

RUBY MOUNTAINS

STAR VALLEY
AREA

RUBY
VALLEY

SOUTH
FORK AREA

WHAT THE WATER SUPPORTS



Fishing, Kayaking, Boating, Hunting, Snowmobiling, Backcountry Travel, Skiing



Cold-water streams, alpine lakes and valley corridors provide habitat for diverse plant and animal species.



Water is diverted or stored for agriculture, industry, further recreation and municipal supply.

A Shared Resource Across the Ruby Mountain Landscape

Source: Nevada Division of Water Resources, 2026 Nevada Hydrology Mapping Application

Agriculture Rooted in Land, Livestock and Legacy

A vast agricultural landscape makes Elko County the leading cattle-producing county and a major contributor to the state's farm economy.

437

Farms

2,081,839

Acres in Farms

\$89M

Products Sold

A LEADER IN NEVADA AGRICULTURE

LARGEST CATTLE PRODUCTION IN NEVADA



Elko County's ranching scale reflects generations of land stewardship and livestock production across Northeastern Nevada.

9%

OF NEVADA'S
TOTAL
AGRICULTURE
SALES

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture-related industries extend well beyond the farm gate, supporting business activity, employment, wages, and exports throughout the county.

\$89M

Economic
Output

210+

Jobs Supported
Annually

\$10M+

Employee
Compensation

\$200M+

Agriculture
Exports
Annually

A PRODUCTIVE LAND BASE CREATES VALUE ACROSS ELKO COUNTY

This publication was created by the Nevada Economic Assessment Project (NEAP)

NEAP is a statewide program to develop and maintain an extensive baseline data archive with timely, meaningful, and consistent characteristics and a set of analytical tools used to provide Nevada's communities with research and analysis of emerging issues through outreach and engagement.



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Sportsmen for the Rubies

Sportsmen for the Rubies endeavors to preserve the sporting heritage, wildlife habitat, and public access to the wild spaces of the Ruby Mountains—the foundations of resilient communities, healthy ecosystems, and thriving economies in Elko County and northeastern Nevada.

Visit <https://coalitionfornevadaswildlife.org/>

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