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Protecting Forests Increases Jobs and Income in Rural Economies

- **Employment and annual wages have increased where logging has declined.** The U.S. Pacific Northwest is the most studied region in the nation in terms of the relationship between logging and jobs and income. The U.S. Forest Service's own 2024 analysis¹ shows that, as logging levels declined after the 1980s in the region, employment and average annual wages (adjusted for inflation) increased substantially.
- **Recreation and tourism are the real economic contributors, not logging.** A comprehensive analysis by the U.S. Forest Service itself revealed that, nationally, recreation and tourism on national forests create 31.4 times more jobs and contribute 38.1 times more income to the nation's economy than logging on national forests.²
- **Employment and income in rural counties increases with more protected federal public lands.** A 2017 analysis by Headwaters Economics found that, in rural counties with higher percentages of the county's total area comprised of protected federal public lands, employment and per capita income were higher than in rural counties with lower percentages of protected federal public lands.³ In fact, counties in the top 25th percentile (counties with the highest proportion of their area comprised of protected federal public lands) had employment and personal income levels that were more than twice as high as the counties in the lowest 25th percentile (counties with the lowest proportion of their area comprised of protected federal public lands).

¹ U.S. Forest Service. 2024. Northwest Forest Plan Amendment, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Figures 3-8 and 3-9. Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, OR.

² U.S. Forest Service, The Forest Service Program for Forest and Rangeland Resources: A Long-Term Strategic Plan, Draft 1995 RPA Program, Oct. 1995, pp. IV-2 & IV-3.

³ Lawson, M. 2017. Federal lands in the West: liability or asset? Headwaters Economics, Bozeman, MT.