

IMBA's Focus of

More trails close to home

- COMMUNITY BUILDING
- HEALTH + WELLNESS BENEFITS
- ECONOMIC + BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
- YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
- EQUITABLE ACCESS
- TRAIL DIVERSITY
- TOURISM



60 million adult Americans ride a bike each year, and bicycling creates major economic growth in the United States:

- Contributes \$133 billion annually to the US economy.
- Supports nearly 1.1 million jobs across the US
- Produces \$53.1 billion annually in retail sales and services.

A 2018 economic impact study released by the Walton Family Foundation describes in detail the \$137 million benefit from trails in Northwest Arkansas to the Arkansas economy in 2017, of which \$27 million came from tourism dollars.

A case study in Cable, Wisconsin, clearly illustrates how a community can benefit from offering a world-class bicycling experience. Construction of new bicycle trails in Cable resulted in:

- Increased property values.
- Increased spending on bicycle related goods.
- 35 jobs created annually, adding \$523,000 to total employee compensation.
- Nearly \$1.3 million impact related to spending from mountain bicyclists.

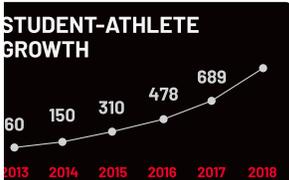
Minnesota Department of Transportation 2016 Study

Assessing the Economic Impact and Health Effects of Bicycling in Minnesota

The study shows that in 2014, the bicycling industry generated \$778 million of economic activity, which includes \$209 million of labor income and 5,519 jobs. Nearly 80 percent of that economic activity came from manufacturing and wholesale business. Minnesota community's host more than 100 bicycle events annually and bring an estimated 50,212 visitors to the state. Trail rides, races, mountain bicycling events and bicycle tours generated \$14.3 million of economic activity, which included \$4.6 million in labor income and 150 jobs, the study found.

In Georgia, consumer spending on outdoor recreation contributes \$27.3 billion annually to the state economy. The Georgia outdoor recreation economy also:

- Supports more than 238,000 direct jobs across the state.
- Generates more than \$8.1 billion in wages and salaries.
- Generates \$1.8 billion in state and local taxes.



5 RACES
1500 SPECTATORS AT EACH

95% OF STUDENT-ATHLETES REPORT AN INCREASE IN HEALTH AND FITNESS

367 AVERAGE HOURS PARTICIPATED PER SEASON PER RIDER

89% OF RIDERS HAVE A GPA OF 3.1 OR HIGHER

4 WILDERNESS FIRST AID COURSES

16 HIGH LEVEL LICENSING COURSES

2 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES

CERTIFYING 240 LEVEL 2 & 3 COACHES

15 IN SEASON CORE STAFF MEMBERS

558 COACHES

140 RACE DAY VOLUNTEERS

37 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED EACH YEAR



The Wisconsin League is 1 of 25 NICA leagues building strong minds, bodies, character, and communities through cycling for over 17,000 middle and high school students nationwide. We are rapidly growing as more students discover this fun,



Why Trails...

Promoting Active and Healthy Lifestyles

The benefits of mountain biking may start on the trails, but they don't end there. Learning to ride a bike is a rite of passage. Bikes and the sport of mountain biking provide a multitude of opportunities to teach children valuable lessons that will carry into adulthood. Obesity is at a high, while activity levels among Americans are plummeting. With its progressive nature and way of stimulating the senses, mountain biking is appealing, especially to youth, and provides an excellent form of recreation for reversing the trend toward poor health. Since riding a bike provides excellent cardio conditioning, improves strength and coordination, and burns several hundred calories an hour, it is an activity as appealing to parents as it is to kids. The unstructured play that mountain biking provides inspires people to explore and appreciate the natural world, leading to positive associations with outdoor activities and exercise.

Mountain biking allows individuals to advance at their own pace, so kids looking for a challenge can have just as much fun as children who are more interested in exploring the scenery. Riding in nature provides an environment where children can work on their skills, have fun, and pedal their bikes without parents having to worry. Mountain biking is a cross-generational endeavor, accessible to all ages and levels of physical fitness. Going for a trail ride is an excellent way for parents to do more than support their children's activities, it's a way to share the experience. Every ride is an opportunity to create a healthy lifestyle and pass on lessons that are best learned through experience.

Several studies on physical activity have indicated that proximity to recreational facilities, such as trails, is a predictor for physical activity. Simply put, if there are walking and biking trails nearby then residents are more likely to use them and therefore be healthier. Physical health and exposure to nature also benefit mental health, reducing stress and increasing happiness. In addition, individual and community health translate to economic benefits by decreasing health care costs.

Contributing to Economic Growth

A well-designed trail system can stimulate economic growth by increasing activity within the local population as well as attracting visitors from outside. Trails can generate business in retail sales and services, support jobs, provide sustainable growth in rural communities, and produce tax revenue. Access to trails also correlates to a higher quality of life, thus making the community more desirable and capable of attracting new businesses and workers to an area.

Communities throughout North America are looking at increasing mountain bicycling tourism as a sustainable, renewable source of economic development. A mountain biking destination is one that attracts tourists to an area for the benefits of the mountain biking experience; provides visitors with all of the amenities needed to compliment, ease, and enhance their visit; and in turn creates word of mouth about the community that will draw new and repeat visits.

According to the Outdoor Industry Alliance, mountain bicyclists represent approximately 3.4 percent of the US population, or nearly 10.6 million participants. Enthusiasts, who represent a portion of this overall number, travel extensively within a four-hour range and will typically devote one week per year specifically to travel to reach mountain bicycling destinations. Same-day visitors spend approximately \$35 per day in local communities while destination visitors spend closer to \$193 per day (due in part to lodging and increased meal purchases).

While mountain bicyclists are certainly willing to travel to ride, they will only do so if their destination contains a key ingredient: high-quality trails. These trails must be a sufficient length and contain a variety of experiences, such as traditional singletrack, bike-optimized singletrack, bike parks, and shuttle options. The competition for these destination-quality locations is slowly increasing over time.

Fostering Community Identity and Involvement

Involving community members in the planning, building, and maintaining of trails fosters community pride. In order to maintain sustainable trails, care of the trail system should be managed by local enthusiasts and rely on an organized membership base. Volunteering to help with trails provides an opportunity for area residents to connect with each other and with the terrain and land that surround them. IMBA members donate nearly one million volunteer hours to trails throughout North America every year, making volunteerism a large part of mountain bike culture.

Trails and parks also provide informal opportunities for people to meet and interact with others in a natural setting. Connection to nature is paramount to maintaining the health of the environment and making the outdoors relevant and accessible to all. Trails serve a diverse population and cultivate unity and stewardship in the community. Trails can even revitalize blighted areas, for example, turning landfills into bike parks or gravel pits into trailheads.

Preserving Open Space

Trails make communities better places to live by preserving and creating open spaces for recreation. Greenways function as hands-on environmental classrooms for people of all ages, providing opportunities to enjoy nature up close. With its abundant plant life, open spaces can decrease pollution, protect water quality, and reduce soil erosion. Economic growth and property values are also tied to open space as buyers are generally willing to pay more for property located close to parks and open space. The recreation, health, economic, and environmental benefits of trails can contribute to an overall enhanced quality of life in nearby communities.