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Proposed national monument could create jobs, cash

By Glynis Board

August 13, 2013 • A new economic report issued by environmental consulting firm Downstream Strategies estimates a proposed national monument designation in east-central West Virginia could boost revenue and jobs in the region.

According to **the report**, the proposed Birthplace of Rivers National Monument could support 143 jobs and bring a total of \$5.2 million in economic activity to the region annually.

Researchers estimate that there would be a 42% increase in visitation-related spending as a result of designation as well as an increase of more than \$800,000 in local, state, and federal tax revenue, annually. The additional tourism dollars would support county libraries, hospitals, local parks, arts, and emergency services.

National monument designation is a special status bestowed upon federal lands—in this case, US Forest Service land—possessing unique natural, cultural, or historic features, established by either an act of Congress or by presidential proclamation. The Birthplace of Rivers monument would span the Cranberry Wilderness, the Highland Scenic Highway, Falls of Hills Creek and the headwaters of six rivers. The monument would be the only large wildlands national monument in the East, and the first national monument in West Virginia.

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