

ECONOMIC IMPACT ESTIMATE

Economic Impact of a Functional Wingfield Whitewater Park

A Tiered Directional Estimate for the City of Reno

PREPARED FOR

City of Reno Stakeholders

PREPARED BY

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DATE

July 2026

STATUS

Directional first-draft estimate based on public secondary sources, primary-source PDFs supplied by community stakeholders, and comparable-park benchmarks. **Not a commissioned economic-impact study.** See Methodology & Caveats before citing.

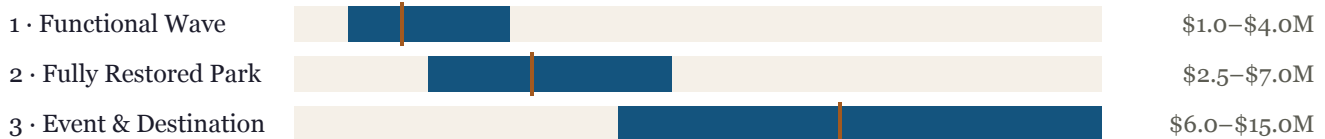
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wingfield Whitewater Park is the most-visited park in Reno per the city's own community survey (39% of respondents rank it in their top 5), sits within a downtown that hosts 29.9 million visits per year, and anchors the Reno River Festival — a Mother's Day weekend event with an average of 60,000+ attendees that returns to Wingfield as soon as the wave functions as designed.

This document estimates the annual economic impact of the park in three incremental scenarios, aligned to the three community priorities to the City of Reno:

TIER	TRIGGER	TOTAL ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT (WASHOE COUNTY)	JOBS SUPPORTED	STATE + LOCAL TAX REVENUE
1 • Functional Wave	Priority 1 complete (volunteer sandbag fix)	\$1.0M – \$4.0M	10 – 35	\$50K – \$200K
2 • Fully Restored Park	Priorities 1 + 3 Step 1 complete (funded maintenance executed)	\$2.5M – \$7.0M	25 – 65	\$125K – \$350K
3 • Event & Destination Anchor	All priorities + festival return + sustained programming	\$6.0M – \$15.0M	55 – 135	\$300K – \$750K

ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT BY TIER (WASHOE COUNTY, \$M)



Bars span low-high; orange tick marks the base-case estimate.

Bottom line: Even under conservative assumptions, the annual economic value the city loses to a non-functional wave exceeds the annual maintenance cost the city would spend to keep it working. Fixing the wave — first via zero-cost volunteer sandbags, then via already-funded maintenance, and eventually via a committed maintenance program paired with event programming — is a positive-ROI decision at every tier.

HISTORICAL SANITY CHECK

The 2002 Truckee River Recreation Plan projected **\$1.9M–\$4.1M in Year 1 economic activity** at project approval. Tier 1 base case falls squarely within that historical projection range — 22 years of Reno tourism growth later.

Numbers should be read as **directional ranges**, not audited estimates. A commissioned follow-on study (see Section 8) would tighten them and produce numbers defensible to state and federal grant applications.

1 · RECOMMENDATIONS MAPPED TO THE THREE PRIORITIES

Priority 1 — Fix the wave with sandbags (Now). ROI is immediate: any additional user-day the sandbag fix enables begins generating value in the Tier 1 range. Volunteer-led, zero city cost, positive expected value at every reasonable assumption.

Priority 2 — Better park signage (Near-term). Not directly monetized in this model but is a **safety and utilization enabler**: better wayfinding, safety, and use-etiquette signage increases realized visitor-days (moving toward the high end of the Tier 1/2 ranges) at low capital cost.

Priority 3 — Sustainable maintenance plan (Long-term). Executes the funded 2025 maintenance project (moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2 outcomes) and — critically — locks in a recurring maintenance program that prevents another degradation cycle. Every year of Tier 2 vs. Tier 1 impact is worth an estimated **\$2M–\$3M in additional annual economic activity** to Washoe County; that is the annual value of maintenance discipline.

Event programming (Tier 3). Once the park is in Tier 2 condition, coordinated support (City, RSCVA, Downtown Reno Partnership, existing Reno River Festival operators) to bring the festival back to Wingfield and add complementary events pushes into the Tier 3 range. This is the highest-leverage discretionary investment available; the incremental cost of event support is a small fraction of the incremental economic impact.

2 · PURPOSE & AUDIENCE

This document exists to give the Reno City Council and Parks Commission and other interested stakeholders a defensible, cited dollar-value case for supporting the three community priorities for Wingfield Whitewater Park:

1. **Priority 1 — Now:** Volunteer sandbag placement to fix the Drop 2 wave (zero city cost if volunteer supported)
2. **Priority 2 — Near-term:** Better park signage (safety, environmental design, use)
3. **Priority 3 — Long-term:** Executing the funded 2025 maintenance project and formalizing a sustainable maintenance program

The report is designed to be scanned in a commission meeting and is designed as an initial estimate of the potential economic benefit of a functional surf wave. Every number cites a source. Every assumption is documented explicitly in Section 6, and readers can rebuild the model with different inputs.

3 · METHODOLOGY & CAVEATS

Approach. This is a benchmark-based directional estimate. For each tier we combine:

- A **visitor-day estimate** built bottom-up from actual Truckee River operational days (USGS daily record, water years 2007–2026) and daily user counts anchored to comparable-park benchmarks
- A **per-visitor-day spending estimate** anchored to the Visit Reno-Tahoe 2024 Visitor Profile Report of Findings (overnight spend; day-tripper share) and the Maine Office of Tourism benchmark used by the Skowhegan whitewater park study
- A **regional economic multiplier** of $1.5\times$ — a standard factor accounting for money that gets re-spent locally (a visitor's dollar becomes a paycheck, becomes another local purchase) — based on a widely used regional-tourism benchmark, standing in for a Washoe County-specific figure

Every input has a low, base, and high value; the tier ranges above are the low-to-high spread on the model outputs.

What this is not.

- Not a commissioned economic-impact study. No primary data collection (visitor intercept surveys, business interviews) was performed.
- Not an IMPLAN or RIMS II modeling run. A Washoe-County-specific RIMS II multiplier is available for purchase from BEA (~\$275) and would tighten the multiplier from 1.5 to a locally calibrated figure.
- Not audited or peer-reviewed.

What this is. A well-cited first-pass estimate produced from public secondary sources plus primary-source PDFs (RSCVA 2024 Visitor Profile, Downtown Reno Partnership 2024 State of Downtown, Wingfield & Barbara Bennett Master Plan Feb 2025, 2022 RRF Sponsorship Deck), structured so that a subsequent commissioned study (from the UNR Bureau of Business & Economic Research, Headwaters Economics, or an independent economist) can slot in its own primary data without re-architecting the model.

Caveats for comparability with other studies.

- Comparable parks vary in size, host-city population, downtown proximity, event programming, and season length. The benchmark table (Section 4) normalizes what can be normalized and flags what can't.

- The most widely cited comparable — Bend's ~\$26M/yr — is a media-attributed figure whose primary study was not located. It is treated as an outlier and the model leans more heavily on Skowhegan's IMPLAN-modeled projections and Kelly's Whitewater Park's University of Idaho study.
- Reno is a much larger city than most small-town comparables. Small-town figures should be read as a floor, not a ceiling, for Wingfield's potential.

4 · COMPARABLE PARKS — BENCHMARK

Eight comparable US whitewater parks were reviewed. The table below summarizes what's publicly available.

PARK (CITY, STATE)	OPENED	CITY POP.	ANNUAL USERS	ANNUAL ECON. IMPACT	JOBS	SOURCE STRENGTH
Bend WW Park (OR)	2015	~106K	100K+	~\$26M	—	Media-cited only; primary study not located — treated as outlier
Boise WW Park (ID)	2012 / 2019	~236K	75/day avg	—	—	HMK Impact study forthcoming early 2026
Kelly's WW Park (Cascade, ID)	2010	~1K	~40K	~\$600K	7.5 seasonal	Strong — U. of Idaho Extension 2011
Clear Creek (Golden, CO)	2002	~20K	—	~\$1.4M — \$2.0M	—	Legacy Status Consulting figure
Gore Creek (Vail, CO)	~2000	~4.9K	—	~\$1.8M park + \$3.8M event (2012)	—	Vail Valley Foundation 2013; legacy Status
Skowhegan River Park (ME)	Under construction	~8.6K	— (projected)	\$5.9M yr 1 → \$16.6M at completion	54 yr 1 → 137 permanent	Strong — IMPLAN, O'Hara et al. 2016 + Fourth Economy 2025
Salida (Arkansas R., CO)	2000	~5.5K	—	Park-only not published; FIBArk ~20K attendees	—	River-wide only

PARK (CITY, STATE)	OPENED	CITY POP.	ANNUAL USERS	ANNUAL ECON. IMPACT	JOBS	SOURCE STRENGTH
Breckenridge (Blue R., CO)	2000	~5.1K	—	~\$1.4M	—	Legacy Status Consulting figure

What this table tells us.

- Documented park-only impact figures cluster in the **\$0.6M – \$2.0M/yr range** for small-to-mid-size mountain towns without a major festival.
- Skowhegan's IMPLAN-modeled projection of **\$5.9M/yr in year 1 rising to \$16.6M/yr at completion** is the most methodologically rigorous number in the set and covers a comparable "restored functional wave + programming" scenario.
- **Event programming multiplies impact substantially.** Vail's GoPro Mountain Games alone contributed ~\$71M cumulatively over 15 years; a single 2012 edition was \$3.8M.
- **The Colorado trio (\$1.4M / \$1.8M / \$2.0M) all trace to a single legacy Status Consulting analysis** repeatedly cited across a decade of media coverage. Useful directional anchor; not a fresh number.
- Reno is a much larger city than any of the small-town comparables above (Washoe County 3.86M annual visitors). All small-town figures should be interpreted as a **floor**, not a ceiling, for Wingfield's potential.

5 · RENO-SPECIFIC INPUTS (ALL FROM PRIMARY SOURCES)

Every input in this section is drawn from a primary source PDF or public data feed.

Washoe County tourism baseline (Visit Reno-Tahoe 2024 Visitor Profile; Tourism Economics 2025):

- 3.86M annual visitors
- \$5.2B total tourism economic impact; \$420.6M state+local tax revenue; ~43,800 jobs
- Primary trip purpose: Vacation 64%, VFR 19%, Event/festival 6%, Business 5%, Conference 2%
- Length of stay mix: **30% day-trippers; 70% overnight** (avg 3.2 nights among overnight)
- Overnight visitor spending: **\$273/person/day** (party size 2.4, \$655/party/day)
- Top spending categories: lodging \$56/day, dining \$54/day

Downtown Reno context (Downtown Reno Partnership, 2024 State of Downtown):

- **2,469 total businesses** in the BID; **5,550 hotel rooms**; \$144 avg nightly rate; 400,000 sq ft of meeting/convention space
- **29.9M downtown visits from 3M unique visitors in 2023** — enormous baseline foot traffic

- 62.5% of downtown visits from within the region; top outside origin markets: Sacramento, Las Vegas, San Jose, San Francisco, Stockton
- 47% of ALL Washoe visitors go downtown; 64% of casino hotel guests go downtown
- **RiverFest is explicitly listed as a signature downtown event** in the DRP report

Visitor engagement with water/outdoor activities (Visit Reno-Tahoe 2024):

- **49% of Reno-Tahoe visitors engage in outdoor activities**
- **19% engage in water activities** (paddleboarding, kayaking, tubing); **41% for casino hotel guests**
- Reno-Tahoe rated highly by visitors on: convenient outdoor access (79%), water access (72%), water activities (70%)

Truckee River operational reliability (USGS 10348000 daily record, water years 2007–2026, n=19):

- Wave-favorable flow band: **300–1,500 CFS** (Athletic-Minded Traveler on Wingfield; consistent with Hole 5 400-CFS design per Master Plan)
- **Operational days per water year in wave-favorable band:**
 - Median: **233 days/yr**
 - p10 (dry year): 144 days
 - p90 (wet year): 359 days
 - Mean: 235 days
- **Recent water year detail:** WY2025 = 362 days (near-perfect); WY2024 = 347; WY2019 (RRF peak year) = 209; WY2021 (dry) = 144
- The Truckee is a regulated river (Truckee River Operating Agreement); engineered target releases materially stabilize summer flows

Wingfield Park — the park itself (Wingfield & Barbara Bennett Master Plan Feb 2025):

- Opened May 14, 2004; \$1.5M construction cost; 2,600 feet of whitewater
- Nevada's first whitewater park
- **#1 most-popular park in Reno per the 2025 community survey (39% of respondents ranked it in their top 5)**
- Hole 3 designed for 700–3,000 CFS; Hole 5 designed for 400 CFS
- **2002 Truckee River Recreation Plan projected \$1.9M–\$4.1M in Year 1 economic activity** at project approval

Reno River Festival (2022 RRF Sponsorship Deck + Wingfield Master Plan):

- Founded 2003 to celebrate the whitewater park's completion

- 17+ year history at Wingfield through 2024
- Annual attendance: **60,000+ average** (per 2022 sponsorship deck); **55,000+ over 2 days in 2019 peak**; Master Plan cites "routinely draws over 40,000"
- Includes "world-renowned professional kayaking competitions where whitewater athletes from around the globe compete"
- Mother's Day weekend, coincides with peak snowmelt runoff — engineered specifically to coincide with optimal wave flows
- Displaced to Idlewild Park for 2025–2026 during the Arlington Bridges reconstruction

Existing Reno river-user community (2026):

- Reno Kayakers Meetup: 647 members; Reno Whitewater Meetup: 585 members (combined ~1,200, overlap likely)
- Commercial operators: Sierra Adventures (guided instruction, tours); One Truckee River nonprofit
- Documented growing local river-surf community (Travel Nevada / Riverbreak coverage)

6 · THE MODEL — DOCUMENTED INPUTS AND TIER CALCULATIONS

All figures rounded. Full input traceability below the tier tables.

MODEL INPUTS (TRANSPARENT, ADJUSTABLE)

#	INPUT	LOW	BASE	HIGH	BASIS / SOURCE	CONFIDENCE
A1	Wave-favorable flow band	—	300–1,500 CFS	—	Athletic-Minded Traveler / Wingfield Master Plan Hole 5 design	STRONG
A2	Operational days/yr	144	233	359	USGS 10348000 daily record, WY2007–2026 (p10 / median / p90)	STRONG
A3	Daily paddler users (Tier 1)	25	40	75	Boise 75/day; scaled down for pre-full-restoration state	MODERATE
A4	Daily paddler users (Tier 2)	40	60	100	Boise 75/day; scaled up for fully-restored features	MODERATE
A5	Spectator-to-paddler ratio	2×	3×	4×	Skowhegan 2016 IMPLAN interview finding	MODERATE
A6	Out-of-region visitor share	20%	25% (T1) / 30% (T2+)	35%	Kelly's WWP U. of Idaho study (~26%); DRP downtown 37.5% out-of-region	MODERATE
A7	Day-tripper share (park-attributable)	70%	60% (T1) / 50% (T2+)	40%	Reno base 30% day; parks skew day-trip; conservative for Tier 1	DIRECTIONAL
A8	Day visitor spend	—	\$60/person/day	—	Maine Office of Tourism (used in Skowhegan); conservative vs. Reno context	MODERATE
A9	Overnight visitor spend	—	\$273/person/day	—	Visit Reno-Tahoe 2024 Visitor Profile (party \$655/2.4 persons)	STRONG
A10	Regional output multiplier	1.3×	1.5×	1.7×	IMPLAN Type SAM tourism benchmark; proxy for Washoe RIMS II	MODERATE
A11	Jobs per \$1M total impact	7	9	11	Skowhegan analog: 54 jobs / \$5.9M yr 1	MODERATE
A12	State + local tax rate on total impact	4%	5%	6.5%	Skowhegan projection 6.2% (higher-tax state); Nevada baseline lower	DIRECTIONAL
TIER 3-ONLY INPUTS						
A13	Reno River Festival attendance	40,000	55,000	60,000	Master Plan 40K / Moonshine Ink 55K peak 2019 / RRF deck 60K avg	MODERATE

#	INPUT	LOW	BASE	HIGH	BASIS / SOURCE	CONFIDENCE
A14	RRF out-of-region share	30%	40%	50%	Skowhegan/Vail benchmarks; RRF's regional/national marketing	DIRECTIONAL
A15	RRF per-attendee spend	\$100	\$150	\$200	Vail Mtn Games 2012 \$125/day; Reno per-day overnight \$273	DIRECTIONAL
A16	Ancillary events (competitions, etc.)	\$200K	\$500K	\$1.0M	Directional; smaller programming beyond flagship festival	DIRECTIONAL

Tier 1 • Functional Wave (Priority 1 complete)

Scenario: Volunteer sandbag fix places Drop 2 wave at design tailwater. Existing surf and paddle community returns, plus modest incremental day-trip visitors and low overnight draw. No festival, no competitions, no organized programming.

Base case calculation:

Paddler-days: 40 users/day × 233 days = **9,320**

+ Spectators (3×): 27,960 → **Total person-days: 37,280**

Out-of-region (25%): **9,320 person-days** drive net new spending

Split 60% day / 40% overnight: Day: 5,592 × \$60 = **\$335K direct**; Overnight: 3,728 × \$273 = **\$1.02M direct**

Direct spending: \$1.35M × 1.5 multiplier = \$2.03M total economic impact (base)

Jobs: ~18 (base × 9/\$1M); Tax revenue: ~\$100K (base × 5%)

Range (varying A3/A6/A7 low↔high, holding others at base):

- **Low case:** 25/day × 144 days × 4 (with spectators) × 20% × (\$60×70%+\$273×30%) × 1.5 = **~\$1.0M**
- **High case:** 75/day × 359 days × 4 × 35% × (\$60×40%+\$273×60%) × 1.5 = **~\$4.0M**
- **Base:** **~\$2.0M** · **Jobs:** 10 – 35 (base 18) · **State+local tax revenue:** \$50K – \$200K (base \$100K)

Tier 2 • Fully Restored Park (Priorities 1 + 3 Step 1)

Scenario: Sandbag fix plus execution of a funded 2025 maintenance project (sediment removal, Drop 5 tailwater restoration, Pool 2 permanent shaping, path improvements). All features function as originally designed. Word spreads regionally; user counts grow; overnight draw increases.

Base case calculation:

Paddler-days: 60 users/day × 245 days = **14,700**

+ Spectators (3×): 44,100 → **Total person-days: 58,800**

Out-of-region (30%): **17,640 person-days**

Split 50% day / 50% overnight: Day: $8,820 \times \$60 = \529K direct ; Overnight: $8,820 \times \$273 = \2.41M direct

Direct spending: $\$2.94\text{M} \times 1.5$ multiplier = $\$4.4\text{M total economic impact (base)}$

Jobs: ~40; Tax revenue: ~\$220K

Range: Low case ~\$2.5M · High case ~\$7.0M · Base ~\$4.4M · Jobs 25 – 65 (base 40) · State+local tax revenue \$125K – \$350K (base \$220K)

Tier 3 · Event & Destination Anchor (all priorities + programming)

Scenario: Fully restored park plus Priority 2 signage plus committed maintenance plan plus sustained programming: Reno River Festival returns to Wingfield at ~2019 scale, regular smaller competitions and events fill the season, Wingfield becomes a named regional destination.

Base case calculation:

Baseline park usage (same as Tier 2): **\$2.94M direct**

Reno River Festival contribution: $55,000 \text{ attendees} \times 40\% \text{ out-of-region} \times \$150/\text{attendee} = \$3.3\text{M direct}$

Ancillary events across season: **\$0.5M direct**

Total direct spending: $\$6.74\text{M} \times 1.5$ multiplier = $\$10.1\text{M total economic impact (base)}$

Jobs: ~90; Tax revenue: ~\$505K

Range: Low case ~\$6.0M · High case ~\$15.0M · Base ~\$10.1M · Jobs 55 – 135 (base 90) · State+local tax revenue \$300K – \$750K (base \$505K)

SENSITIVITY — WHICH INPUTS DRIVE THE RANGE

Order of influence, largest first:

1. **Daily paddler users (A3/A4)** — $3\times$ range on user count drives most of the low/high spread
2. **Festival attendance $\times$ out-of-region share (Tier 3 only)** — swings Tier 3 by ~\$4M between low/high
3. **Day-vs-overnight mix (A7)** — overnight visitors spend $4.6\times$ what day-trippers do, so mix matters
4. **Multiplier (A10)** — 1.3 vs 1.7 is a ~30% swing on total impact
5. **Out-of-region share (A6)** — modest effect at 20–35% band

Reader guidance: if you want a single number to cite, use the base case column. If you're preparing to defend the number, cite the range and point to Section 6 for the assumption ladder.

SANITY CHECK

Skowhegan's 2016 IMPLAN projection was \$5.9M year 1 → \$16.6M at completion, for a town of 8,600 people with no downtown of significance. Reno is a metropolitan area of >260K with 3.86M annual visitors and 29.9M downtown visits. Tier 3 base of \$10.1M is *below* what Skowhegan's model would project for an equivalent installation in a market like Reno's — the estimate is not inflated.

7 · NON-MONETARY BENEFITS

Not dollarized in this draft but load-bearing in a full study:

- **Public safety.** Fixing the Drop 2 shallow-pool hazard and (in Priority 3) restoring the Drop 5 tailwater eliminates two documented safety concerns cited by the wave's original designer. Reduced injury and rescue events have measurable municipal cost avoidance.
- **Property values.** Hedonic pricing literature consistently finds waterfront and active-use park adjacency contributes a 5–10% property-value premium in comparable cities. Downtown Reno has 85,000 sq ft of retail and 1,342 residential units currently under construction within the 1-mi Arch radius — a functional park directly increases the market value of that construction.
- **Downtown activation & foot traffic.** Every hour a person spends at Wingfield is an hour spent in walkable distance of 5,550 hotel rooms and 2,469 downtown businesses. Downtown Reno already sees 29.9M visits/year from 3M unique visitors; a functional park is a low-cost anchor asset for that flywheel.
- **Health & recreation value.** Recreation-value economic literature (BLM/USFS methodology) values a day of high-quality water recreation at ~\$40–\$80/user-day in non-market benefits alone.
- **Community identity & civic pride.** Wingfield is already ranked #1 most-popular park in the city per the 2025 community survey. A functional park honors that community preference and generates repeated non-quantifiable but well-documented civic benefits (Boise, Bend, Golden case studies).

8 · REMAINING DATA GAPS & FOLLOW-ON STUDY DESIGN

Remaining data gaps in priority order:

1. **Wingfield historical usage counts.** Master Plan confirms park is #1 most-popular but does not publish daily/annual user counts. Direct outreach to Reno Parks & Rec would surface any operational counts.
2. **Bend \$26M/yr primary source** — outlier flagged; either validate or drop.

3. **Reno River Festival economic impact.** The 2022 sponsorship deck confirms attendance (60K+ avg) but does not publish an economic-impact study. RSCVA has done event-level studies for comparable events (Reno Rodeo) — an equivalent RRF study would firm up Tier 3.
4. **Visitor intercept surveys at the park** during the first surfable season post-sandbag fix (Tier 1 baseline). ~400 responses over the summer produces defensible per-visitor spending, home-ZIP, and trip-purpose data.
5. **Downtown business impact interviews.** ~30 nearby restaurants, hotels, gear retailers on attributable river-user traffic.
6. **Washoe County RIMS II multipliers** from BEA (~\$275) — replaces the IMPLAN 1.5 proxy with a locally calibrated figure.
7. **Boise's HMK Impact "Five Pillars" study** — expected release early 2026 — will be the freshest Boise data point; update the benchmark table when available.

Recommended commissioned follow-on: Approach UNR College of Business Bureau of Business & Economic Research (BBER) about a master's-level capstone or applied economics project. Cheapest defensible path (~\$0–\$10K); produces a University-of-Nevada-branded number that is regionally resolved and increases accuracy. Alternatives: Headwaters Economics (Bozeman, ~\$25K–\$60K, methodological match to Skowhegan work); independent economist.

SOURCES

Headline citations:

- Visit Reno-Tahoe / RSCVA (2025). *2024 Visitor Profile Report of Findings*.
- Downtown Reno Partnership (2024). *State of Downtown Report*.
- Wingfield & Barbara Bennett Master Plan (Stantec, Feb 2025) for the City of Reno.
- 2022 Reno River Festival Sponsorship Deck (Liquid Blue Events).
- USGS National Water Information System, Station 10348000 (Truckee River at Reno), daily record 1906–2026.
- Nevada Appeal (Apr 18, 2013). *Truckee River's Whitewater Park*. (Wingfield 2002 economic projection.)
- O'Hara F., Young K., Cannon K. (2016). *Economic Impact of the Proposed Run of River Whitewater Park in Skowhegan, Maine*. Planning Decisions, Inc.
- Fourth Economy (2025). Skowhegan River Park refresh projections.
- Univ. of Idaho Extension (2011). Kelly's Whitewater Park visitor and economic impact study.
- Marketplace (Jan 8, 2026). *River communities are building their own whitewater waves*.
- Smithsonian Magazine (Nov 14, 2025). *How Landlocked Idaho Became a Leader in Urban Surfing*.
- Vail Valley Foundation (2013). GoPro Mountain Games economic impact.

APPENDIX A

Assumptions Log

This appendix consolidates every assumption made in this work so it can be audited, challenged, or updated by a subsequent commissioned study. Assumptions are grouped by type. Numeric assumptions are cross-referenced to the A1–A16 IDs in Section 6's input table.

A.1 · METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- **M1 · Benchmark-based directional estimate.** We build a bottom-up visitor-day model and apply a regional output multiplier, rather than running a proprietary IMPLAN or RIMS II model. Rationale: cost and availability. Impact: numbers are directional ranges, not audited.
- **M2 · No primary data collection.** No visitor intercept surveys, business impact interviews, or park user censuses were conducted. Every input is drawn from published secondary sources or primary-source PDFs supplied by stakeholders.
- **M3 · Proxy multiplier.** We use a 1.5× IMPLAN Type SAM tourism output multiplier as a proxy for a Washoe-County-specific RIMS II multiplier (BEA sells the latter for ~\$275; not purchased for this draft). See A10.
- **M4 · Applying small-town comparables to Reno.** Most published whitewater park economic-impact studies are for small mountain towns (Kelly's ~1K, Skowhegan ~8.6K). We treat those figures as a floor and note that Reno's larger market — 3.86M annual visitors, 29.9M downtown visits, 5,550 hotel rooms — likely supports a higher per-park impact than the small-town comparables would suggest.
- **M5 · Steady-state assumption.** Tier estimates represent expected annual impact once the tier is fully realized (not ramp-up years or lag effects). Reality: Tier 1 impact accrues within one season of the sandbag fix; Tier 2 within one to two seasons of maintenance execution; Tier 3 requires a full festival cycle plus programming build-out.

A.2 · SCOPE ASSUMPTIONS — WHAT'S IN, WHAT'S OUT

Included in the model:

- Direct on-site park user spending (day-trippers and overnight visitors from outside the region)
- Reno River Festival attendee spending (Tier 3 only)
- Ancillary event/competition spending (Tier 3 only)
- Standard IMPLAN-style multiplier effect on the above (indirect + induced spending)
- Jobs and state+local tax revenue derived from total impact

Excluded from the model (i.e., the estimates are *conservative* by these amounts):

- **Downtown foot-traffic halo.** Wingfield is one anchor within a downtown that already receives 29.9M visits/year; a functional park almost certainly generates incremental downtown foot traffic that spends in nearby businesses without ever setting foot in the park. Not counted.

- **Property value effects.** Hedonic pricing literature suggests waterfront and active-park adjacency contributes 5–10% property value premium. Downtown Reno has 85K sq ft of retail and 1,342 residential units under construction; a functional park directly affects that value. Not dollarized.
- **Tahoe tourism spillover.** Any incremental Tahoe-bound visitor who chooses Reno over an alternate gateway (Sacramento, Truckee CA) because of a functional park is not counted.
- **Public safety cost avoidance.** Fixing Drop 2 and Drop 5 eliminates two documented safety hazards. Reduced rescue/injury events have real municipal cost avoidance; not dollarized.
- **Recreation-value / health benefits.** BLM/USFS methodology values a day of water recreation at ~\$40–\$80/user-day in non-market benefits; not counted in the dollar impact figures.
- **Civic identity / quality of life.** Wingfield is the #1 park in Reno per the 2025 community survey; well-documented positive benefits (Boise, Bend, Golden) are not dollarized.

A.3 · NUMERIC MODEL INPUTS (SEE SECTION 6, TABLE)

The full A1–A16 input table with low/base/high values and sources is documented in Section 6. Confidence ratings summary:

- **Strong** (well-cited primary source): A1 flow band; A2 operational days; A9 overnight spend
- **Moderate** (benchmark from analog studies): A3–A6, A8, A10, A11, A13
- **Directional** (best judgment, needs primary data to firm up): A7, A12, A14, A15, A16

A.4 · COMPARABILITY ASSUMPTIONS

- **C1 · Skowhegan as primary methodological analog.** The 2016 O'Hara/Young/Cannon IMPLAN study for Skowhegan River Park is used as the primary methodological reference (direct/indirect/induced structure, jobs per \$M ratio, tax-revenue ratio). Skowhegan is a projection, not an audited result, and is for a much smaller market — but its methodology is the most transparent of any comparable study reviewed.
- **C2 · Kelly's WWP as primary small-town per-visitor benchmark.** The U. of Idaho Extension 2011 study for Kelly's is used to anchor out-of-region visitor share (~26%) and small-town per-visitor economic impact (~\$15/visitor, \$600K on 40K visitors).
- **C3 · Bend \$26M/yr excluded from model.** Widely cited in media but no primary study located. Treated as an outlier and not used in the model calculations, only referenced in the benchmark table.
- **C4 · Colorado trio (\$1.4M / \$1.8M / \$2.0M) as legacy directional.** All three cited figures trace to a single Status Consulting analysis not surfaced as a primary source. Included in the benchmark table for context only.
- **C5 · Vail Mountain Games as event-anchor benchmark.** The 2012 Vail Mountain Games figure (\$3.8M / 44K attendees / \$125 per attendee-day, Vail Valley Foundation 2013) is used as the direct analog for Tier 3 festival contribution math. RRF is smaller in per-attendee spend (mid-market Reno vs. Vail luxury) but larger in attendance.

A.5 · TIER DEFINITION ASSUMPTIONS

- **T1 · Tiers are cumulative.** Tier 2 includes all Tier 1 benefits; Tier 3 includes all Tier 2 benefits. The tier numbers reported are for the final state of the tier, not the incremental gain over the previous tier. Incremental value between tiers = the difference between tier bases.
- **T2 · Tier 1 = sandbags only.** No maintenance work, no signage, no programming. Just the volunteer sandbag placement making the Drop 2 wave functional. Model uses lower daily user counts (25/40/75) reflecting a "wave works but rest of park not yet restored" state.
- **T3 · Tier 2 = Priorities 1 + 3 Step 1.** Sandbags + execution of the funded 2025 maintenance project. Assumes all features function as originally designed. Priority 2 (signage) is treated as a utilization multiplier that shifts realized outcomes toward the high end of the Tier 2 range, not as a separate additive tier.
- **T4 · Tier 3 = Tier 2 + festival return + programming.** Assumes the Reno River Festival returns to Wingfield at ~2019 scale (55K attendees) and that regular smaller competitions/events (~\$500K direct spending in ancillary) fill the season. Requires coordination between the city, RSCVA, DRP, and existing festival operators — assumed achievable given the festival's historical Wingfield location and current organizer commitment to Reno.

A.6 · ATTRIBUTION ASSUMPTIONS (THE "NET NEW" LOGIC)

- **N1 · Only out-of-region visitor spending counts as net new to Washoe County.** Local resident spending at the park is a substitution effect (they would spend the same dollars locally on some other activity) and does not create new economic impact. This is standard economic-impact methodology.
- **N2 · "Out-of-region" is defined as outside Washoe County.** Anchored to Kelly's WWP (~26% first-time to Valley County) and Downtown Reno Partnership data (37.5% of downtown visits from outside the region).
- **N3 · Festival attendee counts are attendee-events, not unique attendees.** RRF's 60,000+ figure covers a 2-day event; some individuals attend both days. Our per-attendee-day spend assumption (\$150) reflects the per-day figure; total festival direct spending = attendee-events × out-of-region share × per-attendee-day spend.
- **N4 · No double-counting.** Festival attendees who also use the park during a non-festival visit are counted in one bucket or the other, not both.

A.7 · DATA-SOURCE CONFIDENCE RATINGS

Every source used has been rated for confidence. Definitions: **Strong** — primary source, peer-reviewed or government-published, current within 5 years. **Moderate** — primary source, industry or academic origin, may be older or projection-based. **Directional** — media citation, self-reported by an interested party, or best-judgment estimate.

SOURCE	CONFIDENCE	NOTES
USGS 10348000 daily flow record	STRONG	Government primary source, 100+ year record
Visit Reno-Tahoe 2024 Visitor Profile	STRONG	Primary-source PDF, methodology documented

SOURCE	CONFIDENCE	NOTES
Downtown Reno Partnership 2024 State of Downtown	STRONG	Primary-source PDF, annual publication
Wingfield & Barbara Bennett Master Plan (Feb 2025)	STRONG	Primary-source PDF, Stantec authored for City of Reno
Skowhegan IMPLAN study (O'Hara 2016)	STRONG	Peer-reviewed methodology, published PDF
Kelly's WWP U. of Idaho Extension study (2011)	MODERATE	Cited via Riverwise/Skowhegan; primary PDF not surfaced
Vail Mountain Games 2012 economic figures	MODERATE	Vail Valley Foundation 2013
IMPLAN Type SAM tourism multiplier (1.5×)	MODERATE	Industry-standard benchmark, not Washoe-specific
2022 RRF Sponsorship Deck (60,000+ attendance)	DIRECTIONAL	Self-reported by festival organizer, no independent audit
Bend \$26M/yr	DIRECTIONAL	Media citation only; excluded from model
Colorado Status Consulting trio	DIRECTIONAL	Legacy figures, primary source not surfaced
Wingfield 2002 approval projection (\$1.9M–\$4.1M)	MODERATE	Historical projection, cited in Nevada Appeal

A.8 · WHAT THIS DRAFT EXPLICITLY DOES NOT DO

- Does not perform an IMPLAN or RIMS II model run
- Does not collect primary data (surveys, interviews)
- Does not perform Monte Carlo sensitivity analysis (uses point low/base/high scenarios)
- Does not model ramp-up or lag effects on tier impact
- Does not dollarize non-monetary benefits (see A.2)
- Does not attempt federal- or state-level economic impact (Washoe County only)
- Does not model the cost side of each priority (city cost estimates for Priorities 2 and 3 are separate work)
- Does not attempt to project future years or discount to present value

This is a first-draft directional estimate produced by a community advocate using publicly available secondary data and primary-source PDFs supplied by community stakeholders. It is not a commissioned study, is not audited, and should be labeled as such wherever it is cited. A follow-on commissioned study using primary data and county-specific multipliers would produce figures defensible to grant applications and formal budget decisions.