



## BAYFIELD AREA TRAILS ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY 2024-2025

**Trails!** Hiking, XC skiing, snowshoeing, biking .... presumably trails in the Bayfield Peninsula are valuable and attract people to the area to visit and live.

1. But how valuable and how many people?
2. What is the economic impact of trail visitors on local businesses?
3. Should local governments and potential grantors be investing more or less toward trail development?
4. Are the trails of the right types, locations, and lengths?
5. When land use decisions are being considered, can the value of trails be calculated and factored into decisions?

**Project Partners:** To help answer these important questions, the Bayfield Area Trails Committee is partnering with the Bayfield Chamber and Visitor Bureau and University of WI - River Falls Survey Research Center to conduct this year-round study. The project is being funded by grants from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, Wisconsin Department of Tourism Joint Effort Marketing Program, the Town of Bayfield, and Bayfield Area Trails volunteers.

### **Calling All Volunteers!**

The success of this project will hinge on volunteers conducting trail user surveys at trailheads throughout the year. Come one, come all!

**Meet the Coordinator:** Hilary Jewell, an avid outdoorsperson, farmer, and mother of two small children brings skill and enthusiasm to the project. Hilary will coordinate and support volunteers conducting surveys at trailheads across the peninsula.



### **Study Components:**

1. Use of Automated Trail Counters stationed at key trailheads to gain a general idea of trail use numbers.
2. A Trail User Survey focused on economic impacts. The survey utilizes volunteers to interview trail users regarding their trail use, where they live and their local spending. This portion of the study is the most volunteer intensive, as the interviews are being conducted on multiple trails, at different times of day, on varied days of the week and over all four seasons! Volunteers are stationed at trail heads to greet trail users and enter their survey responses into handheld devices.
3. An online "Targeted Survey of Trail Users" will be launched after the completion of the 12-month Intercept Survey and will remain "live" for four weeks. This survey will be sent to known Bayfield Peninsula trail users and will gauge their satisfaction with current trails and explore what attracts them to the area and how trails might be improved.
4. An online "Community Survey" will be launched and run concurrently with the Targeted Survey. Its purpose is to gauge the opinions of residents of Bayfield peninsula regarding the impact of trails and trails-related tourism on their quality of life and their decision to live in the area.

**Products & Results:** The Survey Research Center will receive and analyze the data and generate a final report which will:

1. Provide quantification of the economic contribution from trail users toward the local economy, thereby informing elected officials, business owners, and land managers about how trails add benefits (or costs) in their areas of responsibility.
2. Identify opportunities for expanding marketing and public information related to trails.
3. Place the economic impacts of trails and outdoor recreation on a more quantifiable and thus competitive economic footing when land use decisions are being considered.
4. Guide short term and long-term goal setting and planning.

**User Survey Locations**  
Big Ravine – Gil Larsen  
Big Ravine – North  
Ravine  
Big Ravine – Hilltop  
Brownstone Trail  
Les Voigt Fish Hatchery  
Jerry Jolly Trails  
Salmo Trail  
Mt. Ashwabay  
Lost Creek Falls  
Siskiwit River Preserve  
Frog Bay Tribal Park

An example of this type of study, CAMBA's (Chequamegon Area Mountain Biking Association) 2020 study is available here: <https://cambatrails.org/about/economic-impact-studies/>.

**This study is an investment in the future of trails in the Bayfield area.  
Please be part of this important endeavor!**

Contact [bayfieldareatrails@gmail.com](mailto:bayfieldareatrails@gmail.com) if you want to help  
To learn more about Bayfield Area Trails go to [bayfieldareatrails.com](http://bayfieldareatrails.com)