



The Economic Impact of the Organ Mountain Desert Peaks National Monument Designation

Economic Development Department

City of Las Cruces

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Executive Summary

The Organ Mountains Desert Peaks (OMDP) was proclaimed a national monument on May 21, 2014. The 496,330 acres that make up the OMDP national monument surrounds the City of Las Cruces. This report estimates the potential economic impacts of the national monument designation and its effects in Doña Ana County, NM. The intention of economic impact studies is to measure the net change in economic activity associated with new spending in a local economy. In this report 4 different economic impacts are reported: direct, indirect, induced, and dynamic economic effects. Assumptions were undertaken to approximate the net economic effect that the national monument designation has had on the economy of Doña Ana County.

The findings indicate that most of the economic benefits are related to the tourism industry in Doña Ana County. In 2017, the designation of the OMDP as a national monument brought 24,246 visitors from out-of-county. The economic impact of these visitors observed in the table below (Table 6 of the report) totaled \$1,703,585. These individuals generated 20 jobs. The average salary of each job generated was \$28,558 in annual wages, along with a total compensation of \$571,156.

2017 Economic Impacts of OMDP National Monument Designation				
	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Employment	18	1	1	20
Sales/Output	\$1,255,216	\$180,434	\$267,934	\$1,703,585
Compensation	\$431,591	\$54,841	\$84,721	\$571,156
Source: Author's Calculations and Chmura's JobsEQ				

Additionally, there are other sustained economic benefits potentially existing for Doña Ana County due to the OMDP national monument designation. These are called dynamic effects, which are the continuous economic benefits that are expected to occur over time, but cannot be anticipated in scale. These are benefits in terms of flood prevention, health benefits associated with increased access to recreational opportunities, ground-water recharge, and other economic effects over-time.

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Introduction

The intention of this report is to assess the economic impact that the the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks (OMDP) may have had in Doña Ana County, NM, since its designation as a national monument. The economic impact specified in this study should not be generalized to other public land designations not identified herein.

In May 21, 2014 OMDP was proclaimed a national monument¹. The OMDP national monument is comprised of 496,330 acres and surrounds the City of Las Cruces, it includes the Organ and Robledo Mountains, Sierra de las Uvas, Doña Ana Mountains and Potrillo Mountains which encompass the Desert Peaks. Although most of the OMDP is located within Doña Ana County, there are portions of the monument that fall under Luna County, particularly those situated in the Potrillo Mountains. The proclamation protects the monument from sale, location, and lease of land, minerals and geothermal leasing¹.

The Economic Profile System (EPS)² of Headwaters Economics references the 2016 U.S. Geological Service as its source indicating that 46% of the land in Doña Ana County is owned by the Bureau of

Land Management (BLM). Table 1 details land ownership in the County. The OMDP National Monument represents 44% of the 1,119,644 acres owned by the BLM in the County. The OMDP national monument is about 20% of Doña Ana County's land.

Table 1. Doña Ana County Land Ownership 2016		
Doña Ana County, NM	Acres	Percent Total
Total Area	2,440,470	100%
Private Lands	323,162	13%
Conservation Easement	0	0%
Federal Lands	1,828,154	75%
Forest Service	0	0%
BLM	1,119,644	46%
OMDP	496,330	20%
National Park Service	50,780	2%
Military	490,485	20%
Other Federal	167,245	7%
State Lands	288,379	12%
State Trust Lands	288,101	12%
Other State	278	0%
Tribal Lands	0	0%
City, County, Other	774	0%
Source: Headwaters Economics using data from U.S. Geological Service		

¹ Proclamation 9131—Establishment of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, May 21, 2014. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=104897>.

² <https://headwaterseconomics.org>

The Economics of National Monuments/Parks Designations

The research on this topic is varied. There are articles with different perspectives that add to the economic, academic, and policy discussion of public land designations. From an economic perspective, the uses of public land are associated with the potential uses that can be given to the land for different purposes (opportunity cost). Presumably, public land designations limit land availability for uses in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (NAICS 11) and extractive industries like mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (NAICS 21), while promoting industries associated with arts, entertainment, and recreation (NAICS 71) and accommodation and food services (NAICS 72)³.

Pugliese, McCann, and Artz³ note that public land management, particularly from the U.S. Forest Service, drives the discussion of economic impacts from extractive (timber, mining, etc.) vs non-extractive industries (tourism, wildlife protection, etc.). In essence, designations of public lands into national parks (and to some degree in national monuments)⁴ are expected to have a positive effect on

non-extractive industries, while expecting a negative effect for extractive industries. The analysis carried by Pugliese, McCann, and Artz focuses on the reduction of timber sales and the effect that it has on county employment.

Gibson and Evans⁵ indicate that common arguments against the national parks designations include the assumption that the area will become off-limits to local users. In other words, the region will be “locked up” and removed from the productive use. As a result, local economies will suffer. At the same time, Gibson and Evans also indicate that national monument designation can have a positive impact in a community since they consider it an export-industry with minimal start-up costs.

There are studies that associate protected lands with increases in population or employment to the local area. Chen and Weber⁶ find a positive relationship between proximity to protected forestland and amenity migration. Rasker, Gude, and Delorey⁷ indicate that at least for Western non-metropolitan counties protected public lands, have attracted fast-growing economic sectors like tourism. Weiler and

³ Pugliese, A., McCann, L., & Artz, G. (2015). Impacts of national forests in the West on county population and employment. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 50, 62-69.

⁴ Certain National Monuments allow some operations of extractive industries.

⁵ Gibson, L. J., & Evans, B. (2003). Economic Development and Preservation: The Case of National Parks. *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers*, 77-94.

⁶ Chen, Y., & Weber, B. (2011). Federal policy, rural community growth, and wealth creation: The impact of the federal forest policy and rural development spending in the Pacific Northwest. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 94(2), 542-548.

⁷ Rasker, R., Gude, P. H., & Delorey, M. (2013). The effect of protected federal lands on economic prosperity in the non-metropolitan West. *Journal of Regional Analysis & Policy*, 43(2), 110.

Seidl⁸ utilize econometric and input-output methods to indicate that conversion from national monuments into national parks have sustained long term visitor effects in communities in which they are located.

With respect to instances involving conflicting arguments, such as in this debate, it is important to review studies on a case by case basis. The conclusions and assumptions contained within this report should only be interpreted in light of the OMDP national monument designation specifically and its economic impact on Doña Ana County.

⁸ Weiler, S., & Seidl, A. (2004). What's in a name? Extracting econometric drivers to assess the impact of national park designation. *Journal of Regional Science*, 44(2), 245-262.

Organ Mountain Desert Peak National Monument and Doña Ana County Employment

The literature indicates that public land designations typically affect 4 major industries: timber, agriculture, tourism, and mining⁹. Total private employment in Doña Ana County has almost no dependence on mining and timber sectors (in 2017 both timber and mining represented 0% of the total employment in Doña Ana County)¹⁰. Agriculture represents 4% of total private employment in 2017 for the County. However, in this report, agriculture employment is not expected to be negatively affected by the national monument designation for two reasons. The first reason is that livestock grazing is still permitted to occur within grazing districts under the national monument proclamation 9131¹. The Congressional Research Service provided a memorandum indicating that up until July 2017 “[T]here have been no changes to livestock grazing on the ground as a result of the establishment of the monument”¹¹. The second reason is that the proclamation does not specify the use of monument land for agriculture, this means that potentially the occurrence of crop agriculture is not discounted as an option, but considered on a case by case basis.

⁹The 4 industries were constructed from the suggestions of Headwaters Economics: Economic Profile System definition by NAICS code: Timber (NAICS 113, 1153, 3211, 3212, 3219, 3221, 3222); Agriculture (NAICS 111, 112, 114, 1151, 1152); Tourism (NAICS 447, 448, 453, 481, 487, 711, 712, 713, 721, 722); Mining (NAICS 211, 212, 213, 237120, 486).

¹⁰ Chmura’s JobsEQ

This study then will focus on tourism as the main sector. Tourism is considered a basic sector, since outside spending flows into the local economy. This study will examine the expenditures that out-of-county visitors generate due to the national monument designation. Table 2 indicates the NAICS codes considered for building the tourism sector in Doña Ana County as suggested by Headwaters Economics⁹. Tourism employs roughly 12% of the total private employment of the County. This suggests that about 1 out of every 10 individuals in the County is employed in an industry associated with tourism. Gibson and Evans⁵ indicate that a national monument designation is a relatively inexpensive vehicle for a county to attract tourists, since it involves a presidential proclamation, without the need of the County to engage in high start-up costs.

Tourism	
Gasoline Stations (447)	Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries (711)
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores (448)	Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions (712)
Miscellaneous Store Retailers (453)	Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries (713)
Air Transportation (481)	Accommodation (721)
Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation (487)	Food Services and Drinking Places (722)

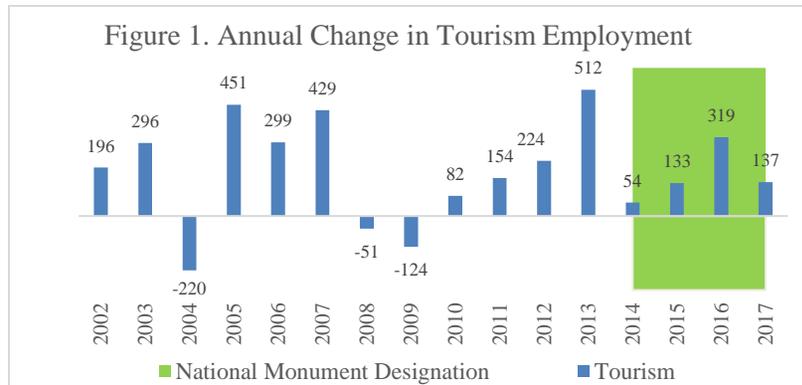
Source: Jobs EQ

¹¹ Vincent, C.H. (July 14, 2017). *Livestock Grazing in Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument* [Memorandum]. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. Retrieved 5/17/2018 from https://www.organmountains.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/OMDPNM-Grazing-Final-Memo_CRS_2017.pdf

Figure 1 indicates year over year the change in tourism employment in Doña Ana County. Prior to the designation, employment in tourism from 2002 to 2013 increased on average 187 employees annually. However, after the designation, it increased on average 161 jobs per year from 2014 to 2017. Relationship does not imply causality. The input-output model will aid in providing a more definitive answer on the economic impact of the designation. Table 3 indicates the private establishments, employment and average annual wages that tourism promoted in the County. In 2017 there were 542 establishments associated with tourism, and the annual average wage per worker was \$20,806.

	Employment	Establishments	Av. Annual Wage
2010	7,763	524	\$19,026
2011	7,917	534	\$19,126
2012	8,141	536	\$19,240
2013	8,653	551	\$19,336
2014	8,707	540	\$19,159
2015	8,840	519	\$19,318
2016	9,159	527	\$19,745
2017	9,295	542	\$20,806

Source: Jobs EQ



Source: Author's Calculations Using Data from Jobs EQ

The Economic Impact of OMDP Designation

Economic impact studies are conducted to measure the net change in new economic activity; primarily spending, income, and jobs, associated with an economic event (new spending) inside a geographical area. The argument is that an economic injection (new dollars) would presumably generate more than simply proportional effects of economic activity in a region. The three types of impacts are: direct, indirect, and induced.

The direct expenditures cause spin-off effects that result in additional expenditures at the Doña Ana County level. For example, direct expenditures from out-of-county visitors generate purchases of groceries, commodities, and other goods. The indirect effects come from ancillary industries that are part of the supply chain of the direct effect industries. Induced effects involve people and businesses (local) without an obvious connection to the direct effects. An example of induced effects would be the expenditure of a waiter's tips on the payment of his electric bill, where the tips were paid by an out-of-county visitor driven by the national monument designation.

Besides the direct, indirect, and induced effects there are continuing economic effects that are difficult to measure called dynamic effects¹². Dynamic effects are lasting economic effects that are caused by an economic event, but are not evidenced in the direct, indirect and induced effects. These dynamic effects will be explored in the latter portion of this study.

This analysis focuses on calculating a net economic impact of out-of-county visitors due to the designation of OMPD as a national monument to Doña Ana County. The expenditures of local visitors are not counted, since presumably these expenditures would have occurred somewhere else in the County. Therefore, they are not considered an injection to the County economy. The expenditures of out-of-county visitors not driven by the monument designation could be counted toward the economic impact. At the same time, this study focuses on the effect that the monument designation has, and these visitors would have visited the monument regardless of the designation. Therefore, expenditures of out-of-county visitors not motivated by the monument designation are not counted in this study.

¹² Adkisson, R. V., McFerrin, R., & Center, A. (2006). Potential Economic Impacts of a PGA Champions Golf Tour Event in New Mexico. *Office of Policy Analysis, Arrowhead Center, New Mexico State University*.

This economic impact study is an *ex post* type of study, meaning that it is conducted after the proclamation occurred. It is based on evidence of visitors. However complete information about the visitors is unavailable. There is no information on how much a visitor spends, where he/she is coming from, how much is he/she spending on different categories, etc. In instances of insufficient data elements concerning an economic event, assumptions must be made in order to generate impact estimates. The models utilized for the calculation of the economic impacts of the OMDP national monument are produced by Chmura's JobsEQ¹³. Input-output models have been used in the estimation of the economic effects that result from direct expenditures related to the out-of-county visitors to the national monument.

¹³ www.chmuraecon.com/jobseq

Study Assumptions

The BLM reports annual visitors from 2009 until 2017 of two developed recreational sites: Aguirre Spring Recreation Area and Dripping Springs Natural Area at OMDP national monument.

However, apart from total annual visitors data, no further information is provided. Given that, this study will make 4 main assumptions of the analysis. Changes in these basic assumptions will result in changes to the overall economic impact effects.

Initially this study assumes that only the visitors reported by the BLM in the areas of Aguirre and Dripping Springs visited the OMDP national monument. This assumption underestimates the actual level of visitation, since there are more entrances/access points that visitors may use to enter the monument. The reason for using this assumption is because, even though the recorded numbers underestimate the actuals, it is uncertain as to how many more visitors accessed the area.

The second assumption states that the proportion of increased annual visitation from 2014 to 2017 is caused by the national monument designation. The average annual visitation from 2009 to 2013 was

52,715 and otherwise, following the proclamation from 2014 to 2017 it was 80,962. The assumption states that on average 53% of the annual visits from 2014 to 2017 are caused by the OMDP national monument designation.

The third assumption is that numbers on types of expenditures and per visitor spending, are baselined from the White Sands National Monument (WSNM) in Otero County, NM. WSNM is about 50 miles away from Doña Ana County and both counties share similar visitor demographics. Table 4 indicates the categories of expenditure and the percentage dedicated to that consumption as well as the average consumption per visitor in WSNM¹⁴.

¹⁴ National Park Service. (2018, May 09). *Tourism to White Sands National Monument creates over \$35,000,000 in economic benefits report shows visitor spending supports 450 jobs in local*

economy [News release]. Retrieved from <https://www.nps.gov/whsa/learn/news/2018econbenefit.htm>

Category	%
Camping	0.6%
Gas	17.7%
Groceries	6.0%
Hotels	30.5%
Recreation Industries	5.2%
Restaurants	19.8%
Retail	16.1%
Transportation	4.1%
Average expenditure per visitor 2017	\$51.77
Average expenditure per visitor 2016	\$52.71
Source: National Park Service	

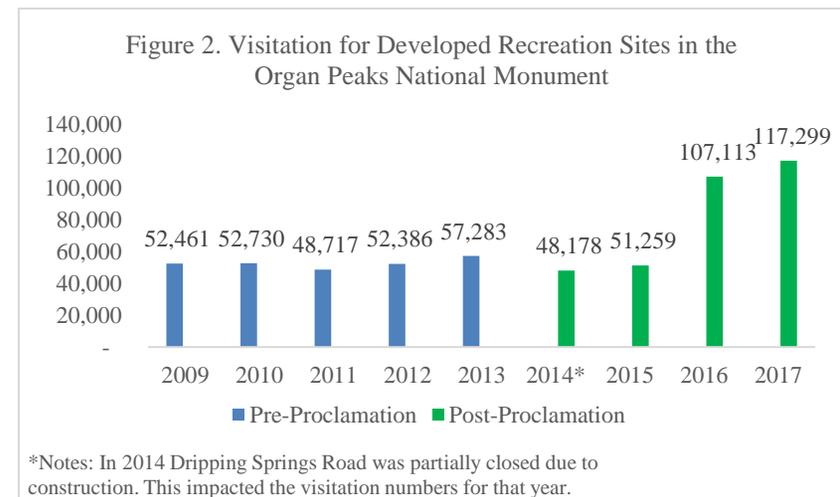
The fourth assumption indicates that out-of-county visitors will be represented from the survey carried by Fix et al.¹⁵ In this survey, they indicate that approximately 61% of the on-site-respondents were from Doña Ana County. This indicates that 39% of the respondents were out-of-county visitors. The survey was performed during the Spring of 2017 and the current study will assume that 39% of out-of-county visitors remain constant for the entire 2017.

The BLM reports annual visitor data collected from the Aguirre Springs recreation and Dripping Springs natural areas, which

¹⁵ Fix, P.J., Brown C.P., Virden, R.J., Casey, T. (2018). *Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument Outcomes Focused Management Study, Spring 2017*. Colorado Mesa

indicate that the OMDP attracted at least 117,299 visitors in 2017.

An overview of the data indicates that the year with the lowest visitation was 2014, which was the year of the designation. However, the BLM indicated that during 2014 there was ongoing construction on the road towards the Dripping Springs natural area. The BLM indicates that presumably there were 30-minute-long wait times to get into the park due to the construction, which could have affected visitation numbers. Figure 2 indicates annual visitation to OMDP national monument.



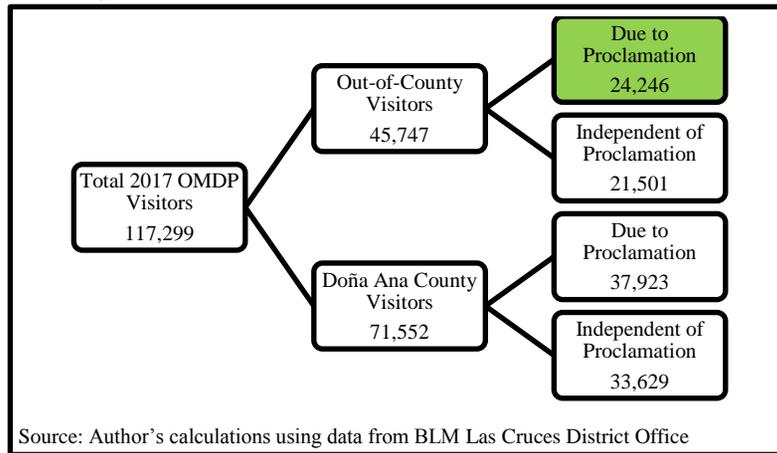
Source: Bureau of Land Management-Las Cruces District Office

University: Retrieved from: <https://www.coloradomesa.edu/natural-resource-center/documents/OMDPNM%20Outdoor%20Recreation%20Survey%20Report.pdf>

OMDP Visitation and Spending

Based on the assumptions of the model and the information provided by the BLM we can estimate the visiting expenditures. Figure 3 describes out-of-county visitation to the OMDP due to the proclamation in 2017. The diagram indicates that in 2017 there were 117,299 visitors to the OMDP. Of these visitors to the monument, 39% were out-of-county, which means that 45,747 visitors originated outside of Doña Ana County in 2017. Out of these, 53% of individuals were driven to visit the OMDP due to the national monument designation. This indicates that in 2017 close to 24,246 individuals from outside the county visited the OMDP due to its designation as a national monument.

Figure 3. 2017 Estimated Visitation Structure to OMDP



The spending structure is based on the assumptions considered. The 2017 estimate is that on average an out-of-county visitor spent \$51.77 on the visit to the OMDP national monument. The largest proportion of goods and services consumed fall under local hotels, restaurants, and retail stores. Table 5 indicates the expenditure structure by these visitors. For 2017 the total expenditure that out-of-county visitors driven by the OMDP national monument designation had inside Doña Ana County came to \$1,255,215. These expenditure figures reflect those visitors from outside the county that decided to visit the county because of the national monument of OMDP

Category	Percentage	1 Visitor	24,246 Visitors
Camping	0.6%	\$0.31	\$7,531
Gas	17.7%	\$9.16	\$222,173
Groceries	6.0%	\$3.11	\$75,313
Hotels	30.5%	\$15.79	\$382,841
Recreation Industries	5.2%	\$2.69	\$65,271
Restaurants	19.8%	\$10.25	\$248,533
Retail	16.1%	\$8.33	\$202,090
Transportation	4.1%	\$2.12	\$51,464
Totals	100%	\$51.77	\$1,255,215

Source: Author's calculations and data from the National Park Service

The different impacts noted in Table 6 were calculated using JobsEQ data and software. Table 6 provides data on the local economic impact of the OMDP national monument designation. The 2017 total sales/output generated by the designation was \$1,703,585. A total of 20 jobs were generated in 2017 due to the designation. On average, the national monument designation of OMDP generated about \$571,156 in salaries in 2017. This represents an average annual salary of \$28,558 per job generated.

Table 6. Economic Impacts of OMDP National Monument Designation				
	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Employment	18	1	1	20
Sales/Output	\$1,255,216	\$180,434	\$267,934	\$1,703,585
Compensation	\$431,591	\$54,841	\$84,721	\$571,156
Source: Author's Calculations and Chmura's JobsEQ				

The largest impact is derived from direct expenditures in 2017 generating a total of 18 direct jobs. This suggests that the purchases of out-of-town visitors driven by the designation employed 18 individuals in retail businesses, grocery stores, hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and transportation. The second greatest effect comes from the induced effects. This indicates that the expenditures of the people employed in retail businesses, grocery stores, hotels,

restaurants, etc. who received the expenditures of the visitors, generated an additional job in 2017 with output of \$267,934. Finally, the third largest economic impact comes from the indirect effects. The supply chain that makes up the ancillary industries associated with the expenditures of the out-of-town visitors driven by the designation generated 1 job in 2017 with output of \$180,434.

It is important to point out that the results described in Table 6 are based on the assumptions considered in this study. If the assumptions hold, then the estimates should be close to what is reported in Table 6. Any change in the assumptions, could result in increases or decreases of the results provided.

In Summary:

- In 2017, sales/output generated by the national monument designation were \$1,703,585.
- In 2017, a total of 20 jobs were created due to the national monument designation.
- In 2017, a total of \$571, 156 were paid in compensation to the 20 employees, which translate to an average wage per employee of \$28,558 per job generated.

Dynamic Effects of OMDP National Monument Designation

As previously stated, the different impacts outside of direct, indirect, and induced are considered dynamic economic effects. This implies that there are economic benefits beyond the expenditures of visitors. Dynamic effects may be evident if the national monument designation of the OMDP leads to potentially positive economic impacts that would have not occurred without the national monument designation. The dynamic effects occur across time. It is difficult to measure these types of effects due to unpredictable future implications. However, the following are a list of potential dynamic economic effects associated with the proclamation:

- Flood prevention/control: the preservation of the OMDP as a national monument helps mitigate the deterioration of the monument land. This assists in preventing flooding from rains by slowing down the water, which can result in savings to damaged infrastructure due to flooding. This approach is known as Ecosystem based approach to Adaptation (EbA), which indicates that by conserving the

natural environment, there is a tendency to reduce sudden climate afflictions¹⁶.

- Ground-water recharge: similarly, to the previous point, slowing down rain water can help recharge the ground-water aquifers. This can help in the water availability for the population in Doña Ana County. This is known as Mountain-Front Recharge (MFR). By having partitioning of rainfall in the mountain, there is deep infiltration through bedrock to ground water¹⁷.
- Wildlife preservation: the monument serves to preserve natural habitats for wildlife, even though hunting is still permitted in certain areas. Natural predators found in these protected habitats prevent the spread of rodents and insects helping to reduce the spread of diseases of these animals. Gubler et al.¹⁸ indicate that land use can be a principal factor for controlling diseases. This suggests that by preserving a balanced habitat due to the monument designation, there are potential health benefits.
- Scenic view: the scenic qualities of this national monument designation provide a unique background for residents and visitors alike. A scenery like this one can help increase the

¹⁶ Jones, H. P., Hole, D. G., & Zavaleta, E. S. (2012). Harnessing nature to help people adapt to climate change. *Nature Climate Change*, 2(7), 504.

¹⁷ Wilson, J. L., & Guan, H. (2004). Mountain-Block Hydrology and Mountain-Front Recharge. *Groundwater recharge in a desert environment: The Southwestern United States*, 113-137.

¹⁸ Gubler, D. J., Reiter, P., Ebi, K. L., Yap, W., Nasci, R., & Patz, J. A. (2001). Climate variability and change in the United States: potential impacts on vector-and rodent-borne diseases. *Environmental health perspectives*, 109(Suppl 2), 223.

value of properties with visual access to the OMDP. Kong et al.¹⁹ notes that there is a positive relationship between property values and landscape.

- Recreational benefits: the designation of the monument and its protection can lead to potential health benefits by promoting recreational activities²⁰. The survey conducted by Fix et al.¹⁶ indicated that 70% of the respondents used the OMDP for hiking and almost 94% of the visitors reported they were somewhat or very satisfied with their visit to the OMDP.

This list indicates the potential dynamic effects that could be realized due to the national monument designation, but it is not limited to these, since there could be further benefits not listed herein. As stated previously, the value of these dynamic effects is difficult to measure since the time component is unknown. However, these effects could potentially be the most significant economic effects attributable to the designation. The dynamic effects are often ignored or underestimated in economic impact studies, and any comprehensive analysis should include some discussion regarding these potential effects.

¹⁹ Kong, F., Yin, H., & Nakagoshi, N. (2007). Using GIS and landscape metrics in the hedonic price modeling of the amenity value of urban green space: A case study in Jinan City, China. *Landscape and urban planning*, 79(3-4), 240-252.

²⁰ Belloc, N. B., & Breslow, L. (1972). Relationship of physical health status and health practices. *Preventive medicine*, 1(3), 409-421.

Conclusions of OMDP National Monument Designation

The designation of the OMDP as a national monument has had positive effects in the economy of Doña Ana County. The potential negative effects cited in the literature applied to specific industries including timber and mining, and agriculture. The County is certainly not dependent on timber or mining and with respect to agriculture, as an industry, there is no expectation that it would be affected given that grazing and crop agriculture are still permitted as a practicable industry under the national monument designation. As such, most of the effects are captured under the tourism industry in Doña Ana County.

The designation of the monument brought 24,246 visitors from out-of-county in 2017. The economic impact of these visitors totaled \$1,703,585 in 2017. In terms of employment 20 jobs were generated in 2017. The average salary of each job generated came to \$28,558 in annual wages. Most of these jobs are concentrated in the tourism industry.

There are other economic effects that are sustained over time that may be described as dynamic economic effects. Potentially the most significant economic benefit of the designation resides in these dynamic effects since they can help in flood prevention, health benefits associated with increased access to recreational

opportunities, ground-water recharge, and other economic effects that prevail over time.