



## **Economic Impact of the Hatfield-McCoy Trails**

The Hatfield-McCoy Trails project, governed by the Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority—a joint development agency, is a network of outdoor recreational trails and amenities serving fourteen historically economically distressed counties in southern West Virginia. Originally established to promote statewide and regional economic development opportunities related to tourism, the trail network opened in 2000. Today, the Hatfield-McCoy Trails have expanded to include a total of ten trail systems totaling more than 1,000 miles of trails usable by All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs), Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) and off-road motorcycles.

### **Background and Development**

The concept of an economic development project for distressed Southern West Virginia has its origins in the early 1990s, influenced by the desire to promote tourism development potential in the region. Entities including the Hatfield-McCoy Recreation Development Coalition and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted surveys of community leaders as well as feasibility and economic impact studies of proposed projects to examine the viability of development options.

In 1996, seeking an opportunity to support trail-oriented recreation facilities utilizing private property in the mountainous terrain of southern West Virginia to provide significant economic and recreational benefits to the state by increased tourism, the Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority (HMRRRA) was established by the West Virginia Legislature to oversee the continual development of the Hatfield-McCoy Trails economic development project. The initial plan included seven counties—Boone, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Wayne and Wyoming—and was later revised to include Kanawha and Mercer counties. In 2018, this was expanded further to include Braxton, Clay, Fayette, Nicholas and Webster counties. Development of the first three trails concluded in 2000 and the Hatfield-McCoy Trails officially opened in October of that year with roughly 300 miles of trails.

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