

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### The Trout Economy

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

The North Mills River, in North Carolina's Henderson County, is one of Western North Carolina's most popular trout rivers. I took some time one Friday to enjoy the river and as I was getting ready to head home, I struck up a conversation with another man in the parking area who was arriving. The man was from Texas. His wife had come to the area on business, and when he saw you could trout fish here, he decided to tag along with her.

A recent study, funded by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, quantifies the economic impact of trout fishing in North Carolina's mountains. In 2008, the report finds, 93,000 anglers spend \$146 million on mountain trout fishing trips. This supported 1997 jobs and provided an estimated \$56 million in income.

There is much hay made about the perceived trade off between economic development and environmental protection. However, studies like this bring home the point that there is actually plenty of economic opportunity in protecting our streams and wild lands.

Would any government in the Southern Appalachians want to jeopardize a \$146 million industry? Well, that's what happens when a wastewater treatment plant malfunctions, or dirt erodes off a construction site and into a stream.

In addition to highlighting the need to protect our high, cold trout streams, the study hints at the economic opportunity to be had in protecting and developing recreational fishing on our bigger rivers, like the French Broad.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.