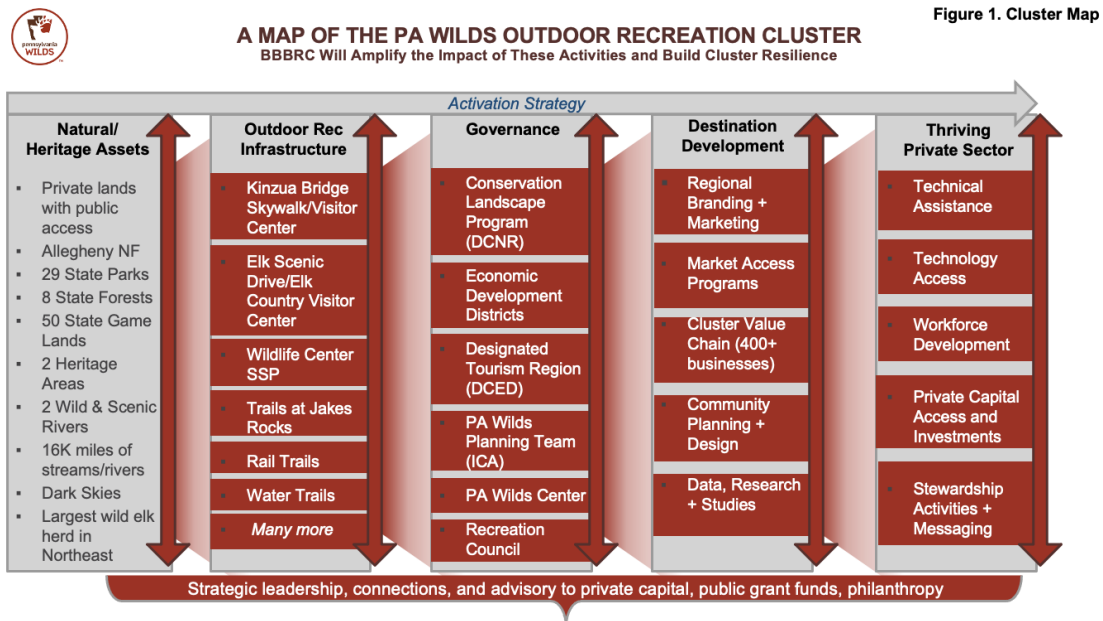


SECTION I: SYNOPSIS

Project Summary: *PA Wilds Outdoor Recreation Industry Cluster Development* (Outdoor Rec Cluster) applies proven economic development strategies to further diversify the region's coal-impacted economy by leveraging its tremendous public lands, entrepreneurial culture, and existing cluster to grow sustainable tourism. The project is grounded in two decades of regional collaboration in rural PA. As seasoned collaborators, we will take a systems-level approach to activate the PA Wilds region's natural assets through catalytic infrastructure and technology investments and springboard enterprise development to create a best-in-class model for rural regions. These catalytic investments will result in 436,000 new visitors (see Scale attachment: "Outdoor-Recreation-A High-Growth-Industry") yielding \$54M in value-added impact annually through \$128M in new spending, supporting 1,333 jobs.

Vision: In five years, the Outdoor Rec Cluster will be the national standard for rural regions to leverage the growing outdoor recreation economy. Expanding the existing industry cluster will provide a road map for economic development agencies to activate communities and build a bridge over which public investment in recreation infrastructure will translate to private-sector growth rooted in local wealth creation and sustainable living wage jobs.

Regional Growth Cluster: Recreation is increasingly recognized as a powerful economic driver in rural America. However, the development and management of outdoor recreation infrastructure has not adopted the best practices of economic development. Integrating outdoor recreation construction into a holistic economic development strategy to maximize economic impact requires defining governance, investment strategies, and sustainable operations that are aligned with community development strategies. This BBBRC investment will establish the national model for rural regions to unlock the true potential of catalytic recreation investments using a cluster model. Strategist Michael Porter writes that clusters are "geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field." The PA Wilds Outdoor Rec Cluster is built on five pillars, as demonstrated in Figure 1. Each pillar helps to activate the region's natural/heritage assets to support a thriving private sector. Dozens of nonprofit and government partners and hundreds of private-sector partners already participate in this cluster. This BBBRC investment will evolve, expand and accelerate the activities of each of the red pillars, supercharging the cluster's participation and impact on this highly rural, economically-distressed, and historically-underserved landscape.



The PA Wilds Outdoor Recreation Cluster is shaped by these factors:

- ***An abundance of natural and heritage assets with proven economic impact and potential for growth.*** Nationally, outdoor recreation is a giant -- a growing \$689B annual industry, according to the Outdoor Industry Association, and accounting for nearly 2% of US GDP according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The PA Wilds is home to more public land than Yellowstone National Park. With 2.4M acres of public land, 16,000 miles of streams and rivers, and many scenic vistas and wildlife, the region is unrivaled in Pennsylvania for its outdoor recreation potential. Early cluster success has resulted in double-digit growth in visitor spending in every county of the PA Wilds over the last decade (State Tourism Office -Tourism Economics Reports), resulting in many small business startups and expansions. The region saw record-setting growth in visitor spending in the three years prior to the global pandemic. Tourism is now a \$1.85B industry that makes up 11% of the region's economy. The region attracts more than 7M visitors a year, about 15 times the resident population. The pandemic has positioned the PA Wilds for even greater growth as Americans turn to the outdoors in record numbers ([Retail Tracking Service Data, 2020](#)). The time is now to align an innovative economic development approach into a booming outdoor recreation economy to drive more local wealth creation in this distressed rural region.

- ***The need for a more resilient and sustainable economy*** to combat rural challenges, such as outmigration, loss of manufacturing base, and systemic underinvestment, all of which have been amplified by the decline of coal. The PA Wilds region is strategically building a post-coal economy based on its natural and heritage assets that equitably benefits residents. Every county of the PA Wilds contains census tracts defined as experiencing "Severe Distress," and nearly 40% of the region's residents live in these census tracts. By shifting to sustainable use of natural resources through recreation, the region is revitalizing and building a robust community of entrepreneurs, successful businesses, and intentional investment to ensure long-term vitality and rooted local wealth.

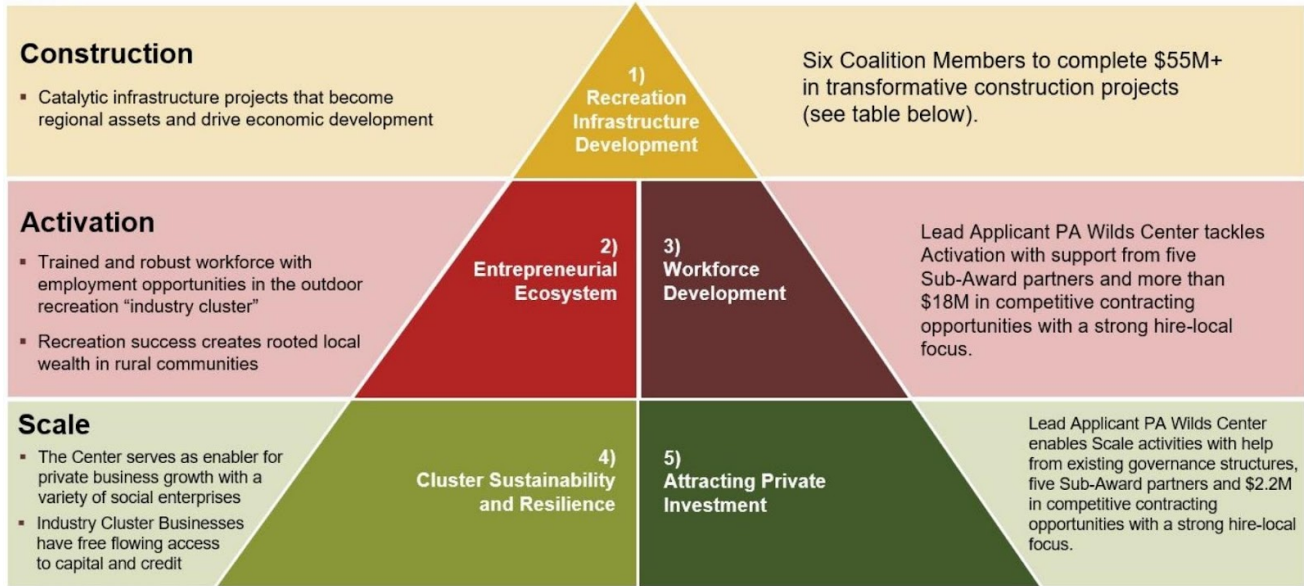
- ***A need for regionalization as a path forward*** for economic development in rural communities. The PA Wilds has roughly 500,000 residents (4% of PA's population) spread across a landscape the size of Massachusetts (U.S. Census 5 Year Estimate, 2015-2019). The region's small cities, towns, and villages face common challenges and are stronger and more resilient when working together as a region to overcome them. Traditionally, outdoor recreation funding is disbursed solely through resource-constrained land management agencies while rural development funding is fragmented across various government programs. This means smaller community groups must compete for funding, missing opportunities for collaboration. This BBBRC investment will address this and other public funding barriers facing rural regions. Those barriers include limited pre-development funding; eligibility criteria that constrain projects spread across multiple jurisdictions; and limitations on the use of funds, match, and reimbursement that create undue burdens for communities with limited means.

Project Design, Budget, and Partners: This proposal stands on three complementary and unified efforts: Construction, Activation, and Scaling (Fig. 2). The Outdoor Rec Cluster involves strategic investments in construction of outdoor recreation infrastructure, activating these investments through workforce and entrepreneurial support, and scaling impact by enabling private-sector dollars to flow to the region. The BBBRC presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest in next-level, transformative cluster development by funding eight component projects that align with this activation model. The Construction projects broaden the impact of the cluster, while the Activation and Scale projects enable deeper integration, activation, and sustainability of these new assets to support a thriving private sector, while laying the critical framework for advancing other strategic recreation infrastructure in the future.



Outdoor Recreation Cluster Activation Model + Partners

Figure 2. Project Design



PA WILDS OUTDOOR RECREATION CLUSTER & COMPONENT PROJECTS	COALITION MEMBER APPLICANT	EDA REQUEST	MATCH	TOTAL	% Non Federal Match
CONSTRUCTION					
Pine Creek Rail Trail Extension + Welcome Center	Tioga County	\$7,846,552	\$3,051,437	\$10,897,989	28%
Warren Riverfront Development and Rec Hub	City of Warren	\$7,250,000	\$2,000,000	\$9,250,000	22%
Marienville Trail Hub	Jenks Township	\$1,175,572	\$293,893	\$1,469,465	20%
Elk Country Visitor Center Expansion	Keystone Elk Country Alliance	\$2,334,086	\$583,522	\$2,917,608	20%
Brady Tunnel - Closing Top 10 Trail Gap	Armstrong Trails	\$5,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$6,000,000	17%
Synergistic Upgrades to DCNR Assets	PA DCNR	\$19,686,301	\$4,921,575	\$24,607,876	20%
ACTIVATION: Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Expansion and Workforce Development	PA Wilds Center	\$26,039,244	\$7,688,602	\$33,727,846	23%
SCALE: Cluster Sustainability and Attracting Private Investment	PA Wilds Center	\$4,420,101	\$1,171,810	\$5,591,911	21%
TOTAL		\$73,751,856	\$20,710,839	\$94,462,695	22%

Project Partners: As noted in Figure 2, Construction projects will be undertaken by municipal, state, and nonprofit partner organizations participating in the cluster. BBBRC Lead Applicant PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship (PA Wilds Center) will spearhead the Activation and Scale component applications with Sub-Award support by 10 nonprofits, including two nonprofit Industrial Resource Centers serving the PA Wilds region (to knit manufacturers closer to the cluster) and designated Heritage Areas and nonprofit recreation organizations. Capital stack and strategy support for the cluster will be provided by the Progress Fund CDFI, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund, Ben Franklin Technology Partners, and the four Economic Development Districts (EDDs) that serve the region (see: “Letters of Support and Commitment”). The PA Wilds Planning Team, a stakeholder group of 50-plus partners formed under a groundbreaking 2006 Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, will provide governance and project capacity support. Entrepreneurial wrap-around services will be provided by PA’s robust business service provider network. Additional project support will be provided through competitive contracting with

local chambers, visitor bureaus, Main Street organizations, industrial development corporations, institutions of higher education, and private-sector companies. The Outdoor Rec Cluster will also engage national experts that focus on the intersection of outdoor recreation and rural development (Aspen Institute, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, The Conservation Fund).

Alignment with Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS): The PA Wilds region is served by four CEDS plans. This project has strong alignment with each plan, advancing stated CEDS goals such as “Encourage the protection, modernization, and expansion of existing businesses and job opportunities;” “Encourage entrepreneurship and the recruitment of new business and industry consistent with the character of the Region;” “Encourage the prudent utilization of the Region’s natural resources in an environmentally sustainable manner;” “Promote Tourism as a Regional Economic Priority;” and “Assess and recommend improvements for the region’s infrastructure including parks, forest, open space, green space, game lands, fishing, and boating areas, which will attract residents and visitors.” The four EDDs serving the region are active in the cluster and helped to build capacity for this application. The Coalition will engage the EDDs during BBBRC, particularly on evolving the cluster’s governance frameworks to ensure future alignments with regional greenways and CEDS plans. All four EDDs have submitted support letters.

Complementary Initiatives: This investment will be leveraged by these complementary initiatives:

1. A group of cluster partners (PA Wilds Center, Ben Franklin Technology Partners, PA Technical Assistance Program (PennTAP), EDDs, and Small Business Development Centers) are implementing an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER project, “Igniting Innovation in the PA Wilds Region,” which leverages the region’s outdoor rec cluster to support technology-based entrepreneurship. This project includes three “Big Idea Contests” with prizes up to \$50,000 between 2022-2024 to help demystify the innovation roadmap for rural entrepreneurs and unlock latent innovation, including outdoor recreation-related products.
2. The “Central PA Graduate Retention Initiative,” funded via an ARC Area Development Grant, leverages the cluster’s place-making and branding efforts to attract remote workers.
3. With support from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, one of the top 50 philanthropies in the world, PA Wilds Center is developing a mini-grant program for rural makers and outfitters to help them scale up alongside this BBBRC investment to meet new market demand (the goal is to submit the program to the Foundation for funding consideration in 2023).
4. West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund is finishing a \$5M next-level energy efficient retrofit of a commercial Main Street building in the PA Wilds, the first of its kind in America. This “Passive House” retro-fit will expand space and accessibility at the adjoining PA Wilds Media Lab, an anchor facility for cluster-related marketing, workforce, and administrative activities.
5. Cluster investor DCNR will continue to invest millions in locally-driven recreation projects in the PA Wilds through its annual grant programs.
6. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will leverage millions more on the Allegheny National Forest via outdoor recreation funding it is receiving via the Great American Outdoors Act and other sources.
7. Additional complementary initiatives are highlighted in the Activation attachment titled “Leveraged Projects.”



Outdoor Recreation Cluster Projects - Implementation Timeline

Figure 3. Timeline

		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Recreation Infrastructure Development	Pine Creek Rail Trail Extension + Welcome Center						
	Warren Riverfront Development and Rec Hub						
	Marienville Trail Hub						
	Elk Country Visitor Center Expansion						
	Brady Tunnel – Closing Top 10 Trail Gap						
	Synergistic Upgrades to DCNR Assets						
Activation	Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Expansion + Workforce Development						
Scale	Cluster Sustainability + Attracting Private Investment						

Metrics for Success: The Coalition will use success and performance metrics that are simple enough to internally track without incurring large evaluation costs, are commonly used in impact investment, and can transparently communicate impact across multiple projects. Our metrics to success are embedded in our grant outcomes outlined in Section VII.

SECTION II: PROJECT LOCATION

This project serves 13 rural counties in northcentral Pennsylvania known collectively as the “Pennsylvania Wilds” (PA Wilds). The PA Wilds is one of the state’s 11 official tourism regions and one of its eight designated Conservation Landscapes because of its unique natural assets. The counties that make up the region (and their FIPS codes) are: Cameron (42023), Clarion (42031), Clearfield (42033), Clinton (42035), Elk (42047), Forest (42053), Jefferson (42065), Lycoming (42081); McKean (42083); Potter (42105); Tioga (42117); Warren (42123); and the northern, rural part of Centre County (42027).

The PA Wilds is part of Appalachia, a 13-state, economically-distressed region. The greatest concentration of public lands in the Commonwealth are located in the PA Wilds, including 29 state parks, 8 state forests, 50 state game lands, and Pennsylvania’s only National Forest, the 500,000-acre Allegheny National Forest. The region is home to two National Wild & Scenic Rivers, the largest wild elk herd in the northeast and some of the darkest night skies in America. The region’s public lands are surrounded by thousands more acres of privately-held forest land, making the PA Wilds one of the largest blocks of forest between New York City and Chicago.

The region’s defining geologic feature is a high plateau carved over centuries by water, forming channels, valleys, and canyons. Major river systems, and some of Pennsylvania’s finest headwaters, start in the PA Wilds. These rugged physical features have historically been obstacles to economic development and broadband and transportation infrastructure. The region has faced further economic challenges in recent decades due to globalization, major shifts in technology, urban migration, systemic underinvestment, and other macro forces. Population decline is a defining issue facing the region, with ramifications across economic, community, and workforce development. The region has one city with a population of over 15,000 (Williamsport, pop. 27,754) and many smaller towns and villages. The region has 53 census tracts defined as having “Severe Distress” (see Scale attachment: “Economic Context Data”). The PA Wilds has a history of resource extraction. The entire region is coal-impacted and listed as at risk for future economic hardship should contraction of the coal industry continue, with four counties in the “worst 20%” and seven others labeled as “high,” according to the Economic Analysis of the Appalachian Coal Industry Ecosystem (CIE) studies released by the ARC (see Scale attachment: “Nexus to Coal”).

Almost 20 years ago, state and local partners began working together to leverage two of the region's greatest assets – its public lands and its people – to help diversify rural economies and revitalize communities through development of the region's outdoor recreation industry. This BBBRC investment would further leverage these two assets, as well as the more than \$300M partners have invested into this cluster and its infrastructure to date.

SECTION III: PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

Hundreds of rural small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs) currently participate in the Outdoor Rec Cluster via an established value chain program, the Wilds Cooperative of PA (see Activation attachment: “Industry Appendix”). Currently, the cluster comprises a cottage industry of makers, producers, and similar craft businesses; place-based service sector businesses such as outfitters, restaurants, breweries, and lodges; public lands and conservation organizations; creative services companies; and manufacturers of outdoor or tourism-related products.

Private sector participation in the cluster would grow considerably under BBBRC as new recreation and commerce infrastructure are brought online and new outreach and workforce activities are undertaken so that the private sector can appropriately leverage them. Through Sub-Awards, two Industrial Resource Centers serving the region will bring more manufacturers into the cluster and help high-growth makers successfully transition to a manufacturing NAICS.

The six Construction component projects will enable new catalytic recreation assets to be developed, creating an estimated 430 jobs during construction and 108,060 square feet of retail space and attracting thousands of new visitors that support small businesses. These new visitors will support 1,333 jobs through \$128M in new spending annually (see Scale attachment: “Construction Components and Impacts”). The Activation and Scale components bridge these investments to private-sector growth through sustainable, interconnected strategies that include:

- Investing in best-in-class technology to overcome barriers-to-market that typically impede rural businesses by developing a community marketplace at pawilds.com that allows rural businesses to easily plug in and sell products and services direct to consumers or business-to-business with the added marketing power of the region's brand. From this progressive web app, consumers will be able to explore the PA Wilds from mobile devices, book local lodging and outfitting trips, and buy locally-made or value-added products.
- Expanding the PA Wilds Conservation Shop, a proven brick-and-mortar gift shop model that focuses on improving market access for rural entrepreneurs while filling gaps in visitor services, building local capacity, and stewarding natural assets, from 2 to 10 units.
- Systematically investing in rooted local wealth by expanding the value chain of rural SMEs that are the supply chain for this regional commerce infrastructure.
- Expanding the cluster's governance capacity, capital stack, professional development, wrap-around services, and workforce development to help companies grow to meet market demand.
- Expanding marketing, branding, and interpretive efforts to tie new and existing recreation assets together as a curated experience and drive digital and physical foot traffic to businesses.
- Enabling strategic product development through innovative strategies with rural companies.

As detailed in Section VIII, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, Progress Fund, DCNR, DCED, West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund, PA Council on the Arts, PA Wilds Center, and other partners have committed more than \$8.8M to support continued growth of this cluster via the Activation and Scale component applications.

SECTION IV: SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE REGIONAL GROWTH CLUSTER

The PA Wilds Center serves as the hub of the Outdoor Rec Cluster, facilitating the connective tissue between the five pillars, engaging partners in planning, and providing organizational capacity for core cluster platforms and programs such as pawilds.com and the regional value chain. A sustainable cluster must be considered at two levels: at the cluster level where a higher degree of investment will further enable a thriving rural private sector, and at the PA Wilds Center, where sustainable operations ensure the nonprofit's ability to provide critical cluster support for long-term economic impact. BBBRC will enable the Outdoor Rec Cluster to achieve long-term operational sustainability, with the ability to:

- **Operate Self Sufficiently:** Each of the Center-led activation strategies and associated business lines produce more revenue than operating costs on an annual basis; or when that is not the case, there is a business line identified that can cover that revenue gap.
- **Ability to Utilize Philanthropic, Public, and Private Capital:** Both the Center and the cluster have access to public funds from local, state, and federal governments; charitable dollars from philanthropic organizations; and private investment via impact investors (return seeking capital).
- **Provide Financial Strategic Support to Cluster Partners:** The Center adds capacity via RECO position and others to become a strategic partner to public, private, and non-profit organizations making regional, catalytic investments in the PA Wilds.
- **Increase Private Investment:** The Center will continue to build the cluster's capital stack by working with partners to explore and implement one or more of the following: developing an Investment Prospectus, establishment of a Rural Opportunity Zone Fund, establishment of a Revolving Loan Fund or similar vehicles to enable cluster growth.

Particular to outdoor recreation infrastructure development, our cluster will integrate three core economic development principles:

- **Blended Financing:** The Center will leverage public, private, and philanthropic capital to advance projects. Having the tools and authorities to manage all forms of capital is essential to our strategy.
- **Regional Management:** Bringing more stakeholders together to jointly fund and manage a project increases the likelihood of funding, by unifying messaging and drawing on the different resources available to different stakeholders.
- **Sustainability and Replicability:** Funding the BBBRC suite of construction projects will allow the cluster to integrate the projects into replicable operations and governance model that sustainably addresses future needs for hard tourism infrastructure in the PA Wilds, including on state- and federally-managed lands and on private lands.

The Scale component application discusses these goals and principles in more detail.

SECTION V: PLAN FOR COALITION'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Outdoor Rec Cluster development has been informed by two decades of stakeholder participation, numerous studies that engaged the public, and robust communications platforms and programs that enable ongoing outreach to a broad base of residents and visitors.

This proposal contains \$55M in outdoor recreation construction projects. Four of the Construction projects are being undertaken by state or municipal partners where public engagement was critical to the project being supported at the local level. The two Construction projects being led by nonprofits are multi-phase efforts with strong public support and regular media coverage. As part of their component applications, all Coalition Members have made assurances to follow federal procurement and wage guidelines for these projects. As the component applications demonstrate, these

projects will result in robust direct and indirect economic activity on the region's highly rural landscape, benefiting local communities.

Local contracting and purchasing will also play a major role in the non-construction Activation and Scale component projects. The Lead Applicant for these two component projects under BBBRC would scale a rural value chain and community marketplace that was founded (with financial support from EDA) to systematically reinvest in the region's hardest-to-reach businesses – rural small businesses – via inventory purchases, online sales, and contracting opportunities. Market-driven, sustainable reinvestment infrastructure like this is needed to counter forces that have systematically pulled wealth out of rural communities for decades, such as the franchising and outside ownership of rural hospitals, newspapers, grocery and hardware stores, restaurants, and other anchoring institutions. Under BBBRC, the Center would issue more than \$20M in competitive contracts, benefiting dozens of small rural businesses and organizations. This application also includes \$3.3M in Sub-Awards to nonprofit partner organizations with mission alignment to the cluster. Data shows spending locally has a multiplier effect. “On average, 48 percent of each purchase at local independent businesses was recirculated locally, compared to less than 14 percent of purchases at chain stores,” according to a study by Civic Economics that was reported on by the American Independent Business Alliance in 2021.

The Outdoor Rec Cluster will serve as a national model for capturing the economic opportunity related with outdoor recreation asset development. The opportunities, lessons learned, and outcomes created through BBBRC will be shared widely via the cluster's established communications platform, which includes websites, social media channels, newsletters, outreach events, and stakeholder networks.

SECTION VI: ENSURING EQUITABLE BENEFITS ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Development of the PA Wilds Outdoor Rec Cluster began 20 years ago as a way to revitalize a large rural area that was getting left behind. By investing in this BBBRC proposal, EDA will scale a proven strategy and drive greater impact to an area of demonstrated historical underservice. Engaging a broad base of residents and communities in the cluster's opportunities is baked into its framework. Through BBBRC, the Cluster will unlock benefits equitably across affected communities by:

- Investing in strategic recreation infrastructure in underserved rural communities.
- Placing strategic activation investments (Conservation Shops) in two of PA's least-populated, economically-distressed counties, and completing pre-development for one in one of its most coal-impacted counties. These shops create family-sustaining jobs, improve market access for rural entrepreneurs, create economic activity via visitation and serve as critical capacity-building spokes for the cluster in these hardest-to-reach counties.
- Creating/expanding programs that can be accessed from multiple remote locations.
- Creating/expanding low-cost or free programs that create jobs, improve market access, build capacity and resilience, and grow rooted local wealth in a rural historically underserved area.
- Creating/expanding market opportunities for women-owned businesses, a historically underserved population. (Studies show that Maker businesses are predominantly women-owned; for example, 87% of the 2.1M makers on Etsy are women)
- Creating/expanding programs that help a coal-impacted region transition its economy.
- Pursuing relationships with investors and creating tools to enable more equitable access to financing and funding sources by lowering the barriers to access.

The Lead Applicant has also budgeted \$1M to engage diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) professionals to audit its programs, platforms, and assets, as well as conduct

interviews and site visits to the region. The goal is to help the cluster identify ways to improve DEIA starting where it is at – and then to immediately begin implementing recommendations from the professionals’ findings. This builds on work the cluster has done with DCNR over the last two years to make the region’s public lands more welcoming for all and advances a major priority area identified in Pennsylvania’s Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (2020-2024).

SECTION VII: OVERVIEW OF THE OUTCOMES

Delta Development Group assessed the economic data provided by individual component Construction projects and determined the projected impact to \$54.1M in *annual* value added for the region. The \$53M in construction will result in 430 construction and construction support jobs, \$25 million in labor income, and 8 million in new taxes (see Scale attachment: “Construction Components and Impacts” for methodology and details). Once complete, our catalytic investments will result in an annual impact of:

- 1,333 jobs
- \$18,093,181 new tax revenue
- \$54,142,811 value added (GDP)
- 108,060 sq. ft in new retail space supported
- \$128,370,349 new direct tourism spending
- 436,000 new annual visitors

By investing in this project, EDA will enable the cluster coalition to drive the following outcomes, around which all component application goals and outputs are oriented:

Goals	Outcomes	Metrics
Increased Economic Output	Increased economic activity via new spending and expanded services to the cluster. Gaps in services filled by local businesses.	Visitor spending, size of local government tax base, sales tax revenue, hotel occupancy tax revenue, jobs created, businesses created/expanded; new hires from the local community; IMPLAN data (direct, indirect, induced spending).
Increased Regional Equity	Lower barriers to entry for new businesses, easier access to capital + business services.	Businesses in the cluster that are owned/led by underserved populations and/or businesses located in underserved geographies.
Increased Financial Investment Into Region	Increased: financial investment, cluster relationships to enable capital, resources to attract talent + businesses, bridge financing to connect public/private capital.	Investments made by CDFI and other partners, follow-on investments in the cluster, new/expanded cluster partnerships with private investors (banks, CDFIs, private foundations, etc).

SECTION VIII: WORK COMPLETED SINCE PHASE 1

Between Phase 1 and Phase 2, the Coalition conducted the following activities:

- Weekly group meetings to help prepare our Phase 2 application. The Lead Applicant also met 1:1 with Coalition Members weekly, completed site tours, and attended and shared EDA technical assistance learnings.
- Lead Applicant hired Quantified Ventures (QV), an outcomes-based financing firm that specializes in governance, funding, and capacity-building for outdoor recreation projects

nationally – to do business planning for the Center and visioning for cluster resiliency. QV’s work includes developing a pro forma for each of the Center’s high-mission-impact revenue lines that would be scaled under BBBRC to help support and enable the cluster (Conservation Shops, online marketplace, licensing, licensed products, etc.), as well as cluster mapping and identifying steps to evolve the cluster’s systems and governance structures to allow for private-sector follow-on investment (see Scale attachment: “Interim Business Plan”).

- Lead Applicant contracted with MakerPlace Inc., a PA-based tech firm, to do early-stage development, cost estimates, user adoption analysis, and evaluations on the economic impact of creating a best-in-class online marketplace to support cluster development.
- Lead Applicant hired Delta Development Group to conduct IMPLAN across proposed cluster construction projects to better understand short- and long-term economic impacts.
- Coalition conducted outreach to public- and private-sector stakeholders to update and engage them in the Phase 2 application. Ten regional nonprofit organizations with core competencies that align with cluster development submitted sub-award proposals to help accomplish the Activation and Scale component projects.
- Coalition shared news about being a BBBRC finalist and its opportunities via press releases and social media posts, garnering more than 46,000 estimated online views.

PA Wilds Center, state partners, Richard King Mellon Foundation, EDDs, and Coalition Members helped to mobilize partners around the application. Major new commitments include:

- \$11,617,061 in non-federal match for construction projects (see: Fig 2)
- \$5,175,000 from the Progress Fund CDFI to establish an office and staff presence in the PA Wilds (\$175,000) and to do more lending to cluster businesses (\$5M).
- \$1,200,000 by DCNR to support Lead Applicant’s role enabling cluster development and \$145,000 to support a Sub-Award with the Student Conservation Association to operate PA Outdoor Corp youth crews in the PA Wilds.
- Lead Applicant PA Wilds Center is committing \$500,000 cash, \$480,000 in-kind via a Google Ad Grant, and \$127,000 other in-kind services to support cluster development.
- West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund is committing \$100,000 in energy grants to projects that support cluster growth, and \$114,500 to help build capacity at the Media Lab, an anchor location for cluster-related workforce, marketing, and administration.
- PA Council on the Arts is committing \$156,000 to support maker-related entrepreneurship and workforce efforts advanced by BBBRC.
- DCED is committing \$75,000 to support small business development activities. It is also strategizing with the Coalition about other programs it might leverage in the future.
- Industrial Resource Centers that serve the region have committed \$165,152 to help knit the region’s manufacturing sector, and youth entrepreneurs, closer to the cluster.
- Zippo Manufacturing is committing \$250,000 to the cluster’s development.
- Lumber Heritage Region, Route 6 Alliance, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Keystone Trails Association, PA Parks and Forests Foundation, and Ridgway Industrial Development Corp., have committed \$329,760.
- PA Wilds Planning Team, an early cluster governance structure, is committing \$114,000.
- National Actors Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group and the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable each committed to being a resource to the Coalition as it develops and promotes its replicable models (see Scale attachment, “Replicable Models.”)

There were no changes to the vision of the project between Phase 1 and Phase 2.