



The Economic Impact of Mountain Bicycle Events in Oregon

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Introduction

Trails are a community asset and provide indirect and direct benefits to the region in which they are located. Various studies have evaluated the benefits of trails noting improvements in health, environmental preservation, community development, property values and various other forms of economic impact.

Purpose

There are very few empirical studies that have documented the economic impact of mountain biking events in the US. For the purpose of this project, mountain biking events were used as a proxy to assess the economic impact of trails because the events were held on community trails. Therefore, we aimed to quantify the economic impact of several mountain biking events and one tour operator in Oregon during 2012.

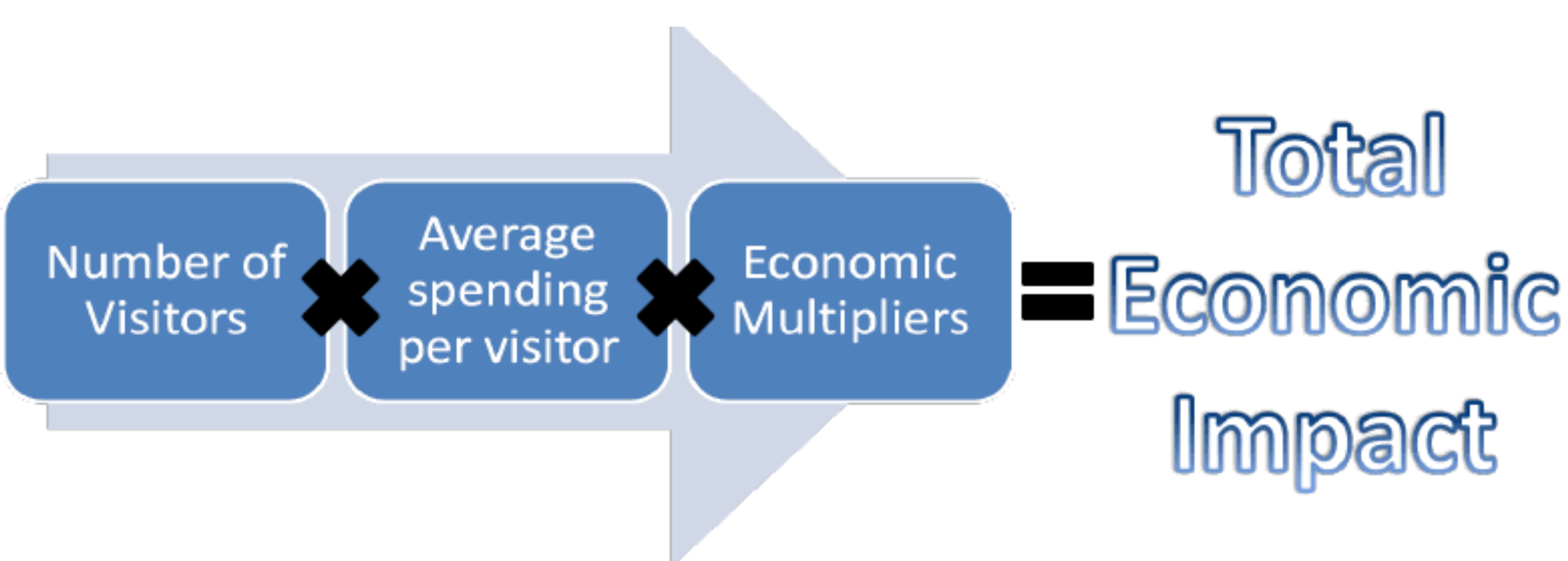
Methods

Instrumentation

Participants from three mountain bike events: High Cascades 100 (HC 100), Mountain Bike Marathon Championships (Marathon), Mountain Bike Oregon (MBO) and one Oregon-based tour operator (Cog Wild) were surveyed online. HC 100 and Marathon were one day events. MBO was a three-day event held in July and again in August. Only 2012 Cog Wild clients were surveyed. The online survey was developed using previously validated economic impact surveys (Lindberg, 2010, 2009a, 2009b; White & Stynes, 2008). Two external experts reviewed the survey to increase the current survey's content validity. The survey was pilot-tested for wording and consistency during the Echo Red 2 Red event held in Echo, Ore., in March 2012.

IMPLAN Model

IMPLAN, an economic modeling program that uses an input-output method, was used to measure how expenditures from the targeted events flowed through the local (i.e., County) economy.



Results

Participant Demographics

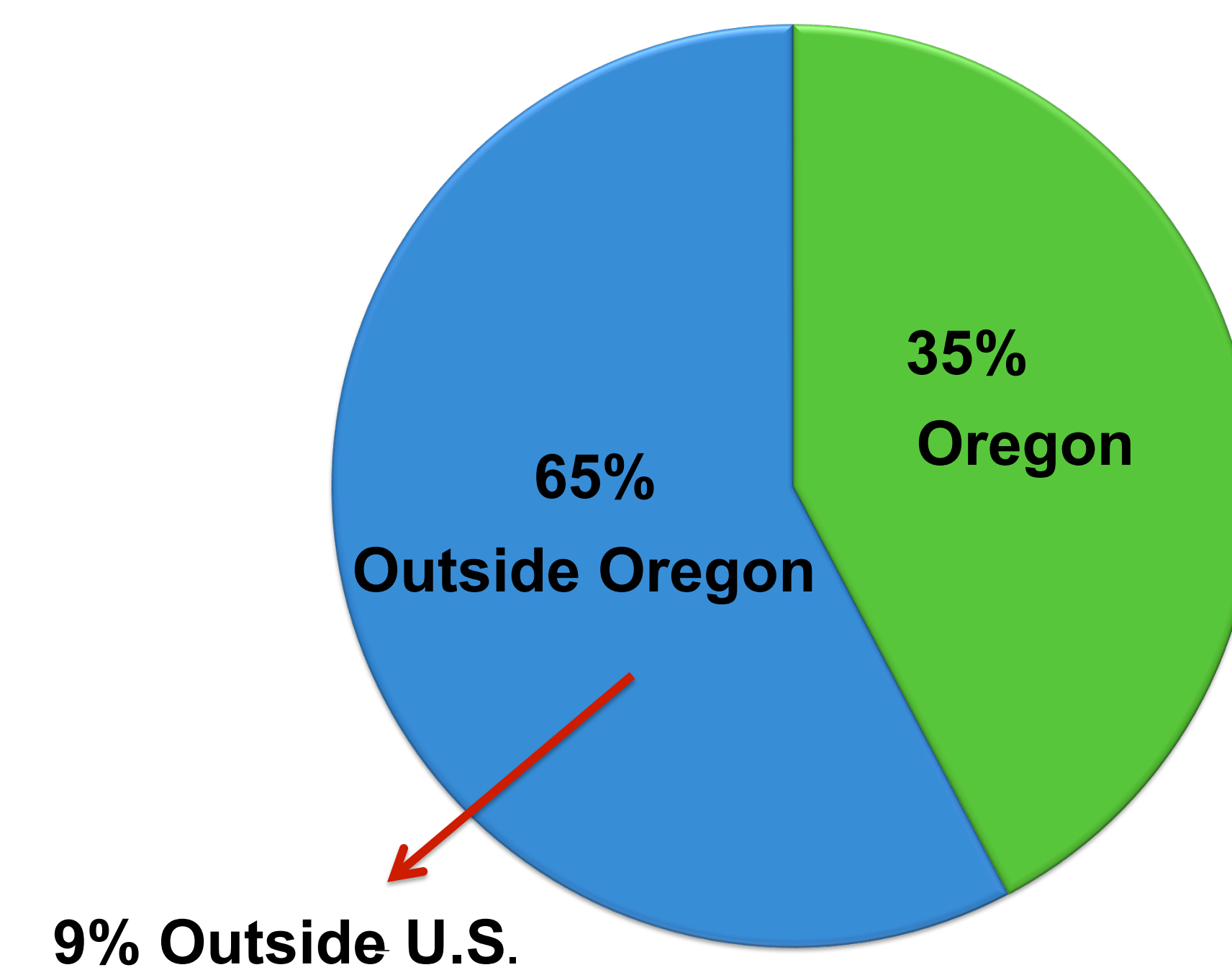
- The events attracted a total of 1,727 participants (HC 100=282; MBO=1,015; Marathon=240; Cog Wild=480) to Oregon from 28 US States, including Hawaii, and from four different countries (Canada, Austria, Australia, and New Zealand).
- The overall response rate was 35%. Sample sizes and 95% confidence intervals (CI) for the expenditure per person per day survey question estimates are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample size and CI, by event

	Sample	CI%
Marathon	63	11%
MBO	237	4%
HC 100	178	9%
Cog Wild	106	13%

- 65% of survey respondents listed their home Zip Code from outside of Oregon.

Location of Residence



- 82% of participants were male. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 74 years of age. 44% of respondents were between the ages of 35 to 44, a large percentage. Less than 1% were between the ages of 18-24; 17% were 25-34; 29% were 45-54; 8% were 55-64; and 1% was 65-74.
- 43% of the participants reported an annual household income between \$100,000-\$199,999, and 29% reported an annual household income of \$200,000 or more.

Travel Party Behavior

- The average length of stay in the event county was 3.9 nights (+/- .93 nights).
- Average travel party size was 2.98 individuals (+/- 2.36).
- Average expenditure per day for an individual was \$99, weighted equally across all four events. Specific spending categories and estimates are displayed in Table 2 and 3.

Table 2. Expenditure per person per day, by event

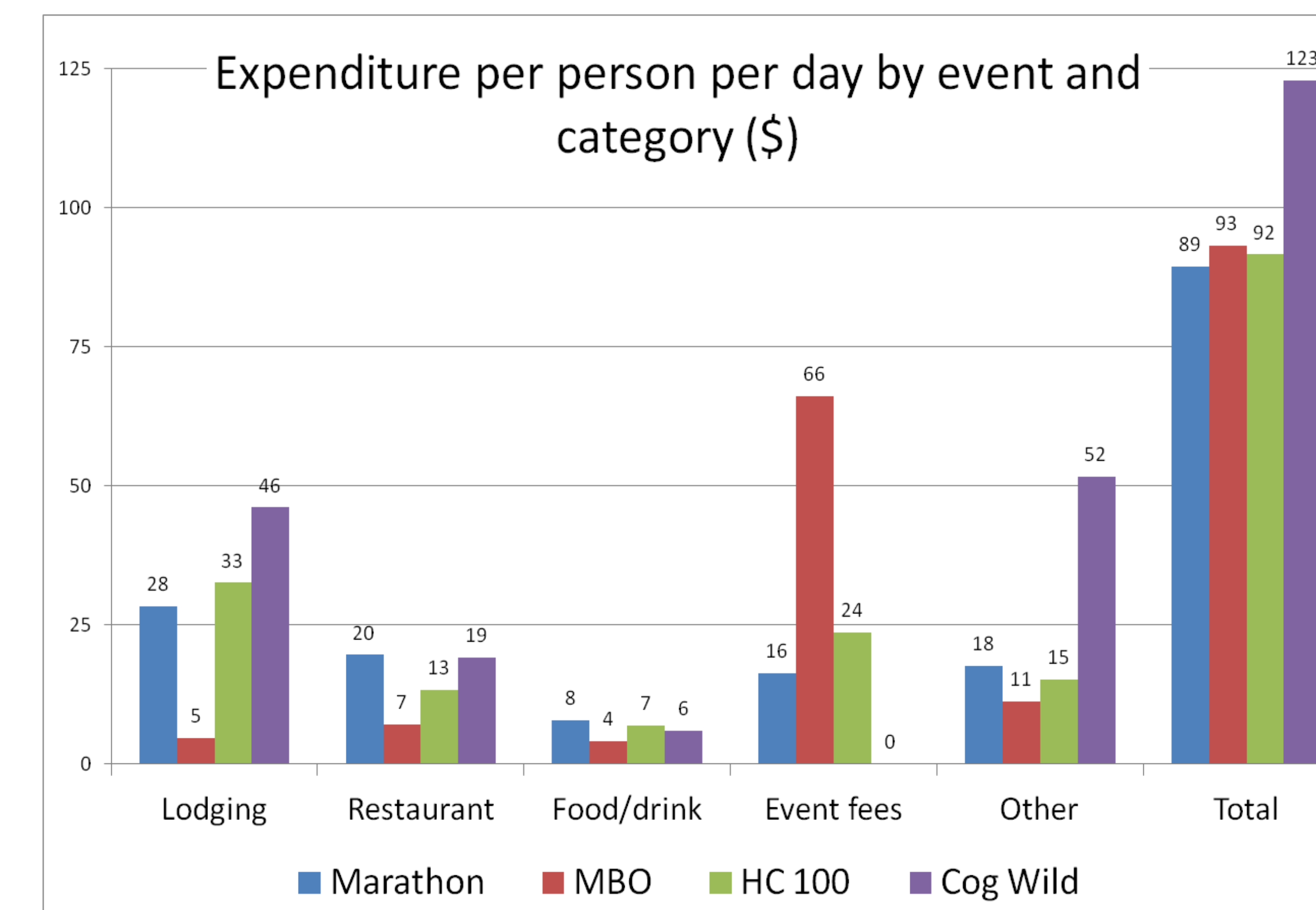


Table 3. Expenditure, by event

	Per person per day	Expenditure per party
Marathon	\$89	\$900
MBO	\$93	\$1,210
HC 100	\$92	\$1,230
Cog Wild	\$123	\$1,680

Economic Impact

Three measures of economic impact (direct expenditures, sales, and employment) were estimated for each event. Table 3 displays the sales, by event, after the multiplier effect was applied.

Table 4. Direct and indirect estimates, by event

	Expenditure	Sales	Employment
Marathon	\$213,200	\$309,700	4
MBO	\$1,231,200	\$1,686,300	26
HC 100	\$389,600	\$608,500	9
Cog Wild	\$765,400	\$1,084,00	13

Discussion

Lodging and restaurant/food expenditures accounted for a significant amount of the total spending at all the events. Our results suggest that event organizers should continue to collaborate with local business owners during the event to encourage longer overnight stay periods. This study provides evidence that the demand for trails is present in some Oregon communities. Further, it's important to recognize that these relatively small mountain biking events played an important role in the economic health of the targeted communities.

Limitations

- Moderate-low response rate
- Self-report
- Online survey

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References

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