

The Impact of the Wind River Lodge on the Wind River Indian Reservation

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Executive Summary

This research project was a case study on the impacts of the Wind River Lodge on the Wind River Indian Reservation. The Wind River Lodge was proposed to the Shoshone and Arapaho Tribes Fish and Game by the Indifly Foundation and has plans to help alleviate problems that the Wind River Indian Reservation faces by providing the youth of the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho an alternative outlet from typical life on the Wind River Indian Reservation, funding for the understaffed Shoshone and Arapaho Tribes Fish and Game, help in alleviating the high unemployment rate among tribal members, and the preservation of cultural values through its cultural center.

Data and Methodology

Using data from the National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and Wyoming Office of Tourism, the amount of visitor spending in the counties and regions surrounding the Wind River Indian Reservation were used to estimate the amount of potential revenue that could be captured with the implementation of projects such as the Wind River Lodge. Next, two surveys were conducted on the lodging industry and guided fishing industry to create rates for the different variations of the economic impact model used for the economic impact of the lodging accommodations and guided fishing services at the Wind River Lodge. Survey data, along with data from the Bureau of Land Management and Wyoming Game and Fish, was used to show the demand for the different services the Wind River Lodge could provide.

Results

The results of this research showed that there is a large amount of visitor spending in the regions surrounding the Wind River Indian Reservation that could potentially be captured by the implementation of the Wind River Lodge and projects similar in nature. The demand for the

services that the Wind River Lodge could provide was also shown to be present. When applying the rates derived from the surveys to the different variations of the economic impact model for the Wind River Lodge, the low model yielded \$1,411,228, the median model yielded \$1,823,276, and the premium model yielded \$2,359,448. The different yields all made for considerable revenues that the Wind River Lodge could make, providing a substantial economic impact on the Wind River Indian Reservation. The above results make a strong argument for the implementation for projects on the Wind River Indian Reservation such as the Wind River Lodge. The Wind River Lodge provides sustainable and viable solutions to the many problems plaguing the Wind River Indian Reservation. Moving forward, it should be taken seriously when future plans for the Wind River Lodge are put in place.

Takeaways and Acknowledgments

The opportunity to participate in the Summer Undergraduate Research in Economics Program has been a unique experience that has taught me so much. Conducting interviews, designing and distributing surveys, analyzing data using R and Microsoft Excel, and immersing myself into a field of research that I am truly passionate about are just the tip of the iceberg when talking about the takeaways from this research project. The relationships I have built have created a web of individuals that have provided me perspective on the many different industries within the state of Wyoming. Specifically, I would like to thank Dr. Shogren from the Economics Department at the University of Wyoming, Matt Shilling and David Yoskowitz from The Indifly Foundation, Art Lawson and Wilma Wagon from the Shoshone and Arapaho Tribes Fish and Game, Darin Westby and his team at the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, and the numerous other entities and individuals who played a role in this research project.