

North Carolina Ski Areas Association Economic Value Analysis Final Results

2009-10



Prepared for:

North Carolina Ski Areas Association

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North Carolina Ski Areas Association Economic Value Analysis



Final Report

September 2010

Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of an Economic Value Analysis Study of the sport of alpine skiing and snowboarding in North Carolina. The North Carolina Ski Areas Association (NCSAA), the trade group for alpine ski areas in the state, commissioned the study, which was conducted by RRC Associates (RRC) of Boulder, Colorado. RRC is the leading consulting and market research firm in the alpine snowsports industry and tracks many statistics and figures for the industry throughout North America. RRC publishes annually on behalf of the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) the Kottke End of Season Report, the National Demographic Study, and the Economic Analysis of US Ski Areas, three industry reports that track patterns of significance related to operational, demographic, and financial information, respectively.

North Carolina has six operating ski areas within the state's borders, drawing visitors from all across the Southeast. The ski resort industry is very important to the state, particularly during the time of year when such businesses operate (mid-November through March), and quantifying the economic value of the industry is necessary to understanding its significance.

Executive Summary

The Economic Value is defined as the total value to the economy due to the existence of ski areas. The total value is the amount that such ski areas contribute to the North Carolina economy, and the amount by which the economy would suffer without those ski area facilities.

The total economic value documented in this report is the sum of winter value, employment value, and capital improvements, along with economic multipliers that take into account the ripple effects (indirect and induced effects) of the industry's impact. The focus of this analysis is the winter season during which the ski areas operate, generally mid-November to March.

Primary sources of information for this analysis included surveys of skiers and snowboarders at North Carolina ski areas and a survey of the ski area operator. The guest surveys profiled visitors in terms of demographics, geographic origin, satisfaction, and expenditure patterns, among others. The survey of ski area operators documented total volume of business (skier visits), revenue, expenses, employment, days of operation, and capital expenditures.

Using these data sources, a model was created to estimate the total economic value of the ski resort industry to North Carolina. The ***overall economic value of the ski resort industry to the State of North Carolina was \$146 million*** for the period covering the 2009-10 season.

This economic value figure quantifies only the most direct impacts, and does not include summer value, social, environmental, or cultural impacts, which can be significant but are more difficult to quantify and have thus been excluded from this analysis. See the section titled "Other Benefits" for a discussion of some of these qualitative effects.

Methodology

Several sources of information were utilized to construct this Economic Value Study. Ski areas in the state submitted questionnaires to RRC Associates about operations, including revenues, expenses, number of employees, days of operation, number of skier visits, capital expenditures, and other information.

A second survey was administered during the 2009-10 winter season of visitors to North Carolina ski areas. The guest surveys profiled visitors in terms of demographics, geographic origin, satisfaction, and expenditure patterns, among others. The survey of ski area operators documented total volume of business (skier visits), revenue, expenses, employment, days of operation, and capital expenditures. Surveys were conducted at four different ski areas in North Carolina (Sugar Mountain, Beech Mountain, Cataloochee, and Appalachian). The surveys returned were statistically weighted to be proportionate to the skier visits at the respective ski areas, making the overall results more representative. A total of 1,510 surveys were collected during the season, which represents a very good quantity of surveys for this study.¹

As opposed to other types of visitor or tourism impact studies, this report focuses on the *economic value* of the alpine ski resort industry to North Carolina. While many economic impact studies focus on new or incremental spending from out-of-region visitors, this analysis instead highlights the value that the industry produces given its current configuration, inclusive of residents and visitors alike. Importantly, skiing is an activity that participants would likely do elsewhere if no facilities existed in North Carolina. In other words, resident skiers and snowboarders most likely would not give up their sport, but would instead travel elsewhere to participate. As such, this study is not limited to visitors to North Carolina, but is inclusive of all skiers and snowboarders who participate at facilities within the state's boundaries.

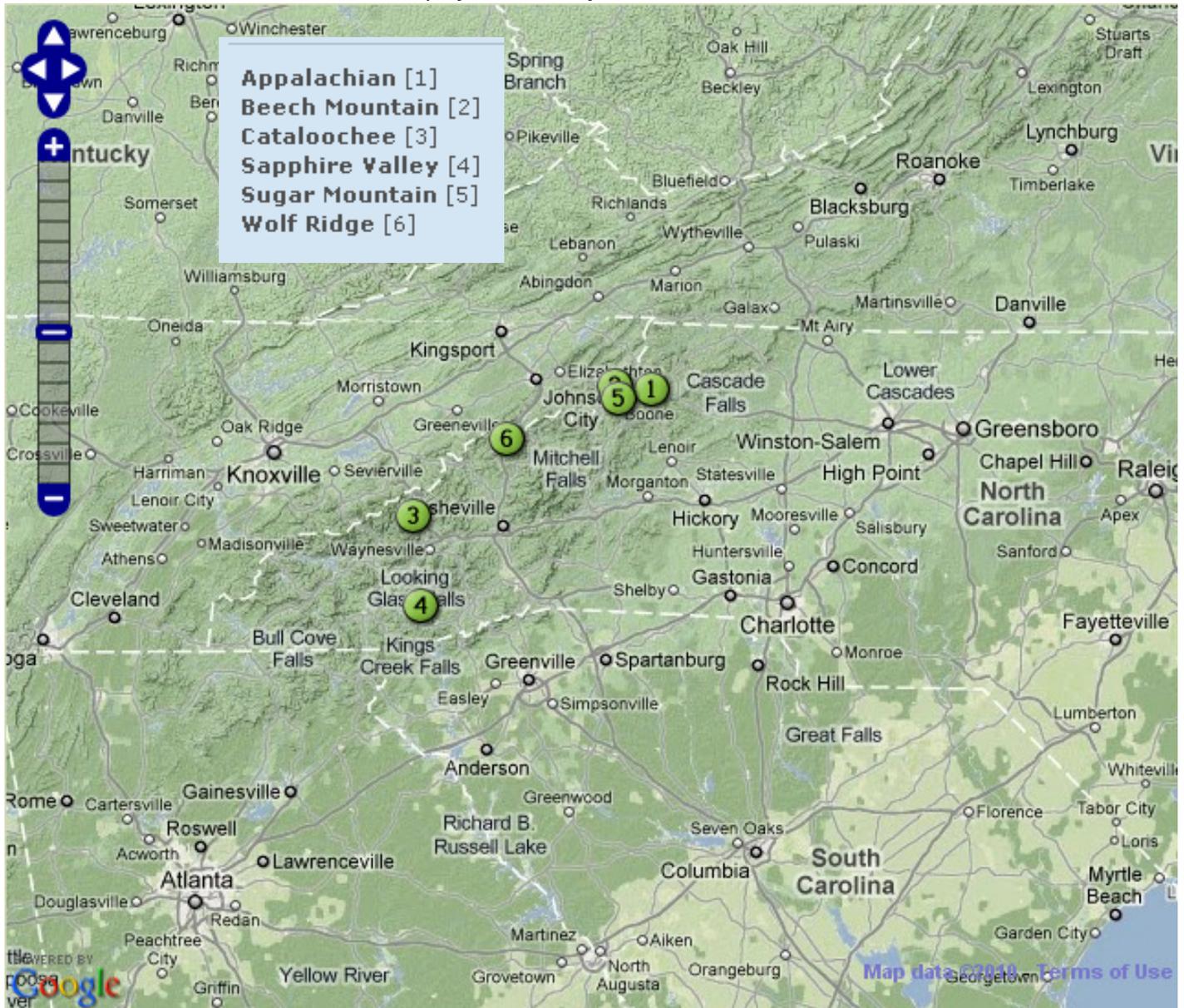
¹ For the total sample size of 1,510 interviews conducted, the margin of error is +/- 2.52 percent (for the 95 percent confidence interval). Note that the margin of error is different for each question response on the survey depending on the resultant sample sizes, proportion of responses, and number of answer categories for each question. Comparison of differences in the data between various market segments and from year to year, therefore, should take into consideration these factors. As a general comment, it is sometimes more appropriate to focus attention on the general trends and patterns in the data rather than on the individual percentages.

Final Report Findings

North Carolina Ski Resort Industry

The state has a small number of operating ski areas (6), but provides a wide variety of opportunities for snowsports enthusiasts. The ski areas are in the western part of the state, as illustrated in the map below.

Figure 1
Map of Ski Areas of North Carolina



Of the six ski areas in the North Carolina ski resort industry, four returned surveys about their operations. Assumptions were made to project the results from the other two ski areas, allowing for total state figures to be estimated.

The table below outlines some of the key operational and financial statistics regarding the North Carolina ski resort industry.

Table 1
Key Statistics for North Carolina ski areas, 2009-10 Season

2009-10 Season Statistics	
Total Visits	671,554
Total Revenue	\$32,526,608
Year-Round Employees	96
Seasonal Employees	1,557
Capital Expenditures	\$3,341,237

As seen in the table above, the ski area industry in North Carolina provides 96 year-round jobs and 1,557 seasonal jobs. The industry generated over \$32 million in gross revenue from ski area operations, including lift tickets, lessons, equipment rental, retail stores, food & beverage (which is a concession at some North Carolina ski resorts), and other operating departments.

While most North Carolina ski areas do not own or operate lodging accommodations, the industry is responsible for many overnight stays in local commercial lodging and private accommodations managed by property management firms. The benefit to the local economy is apparent from the gross lodging revenues generated in local municipalities like Boone, Blowing Rock, Maggie Valley, Beech Mountain, Banner Elk, and Sugar Mountain, as well as counties such as Madison County (Wolf Ridge ski area), Haywood County (Cataloochee ski area), and Watauga County. These revenue figures are calculated from Tourism Development Authority occupancy tax collections, and they corroborate the lodging expenditures from visitor spending (detailed in the Visitor expenditures section below).

Some selected gross revenue figures for the November to March period, derived from Tourism Development Authority occupancy tax collections, are presented in the table to follow. While some hotel visitors during that time might be visiting for some other reason, most hotel stays during the winter are related to skiing and snowboarding in the geographic areas represented by these TDAs. These gross occupancy revenues demonstrate the extent to which the ski resort industry has a real impact on the local economy beyond the ski area's direct revenue.

Table 2A
Gross Revenue from Lodging Operations, November to March
(Calculated from Occupancy Tax Collections)

	<u>2005-06</u>	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>	<u>2009-10</u>
Village of Sugar Mountain	\$3,030,475	\$2,871,223	\$2,904,818	\$2,554,996	\$2,956,045
Haywood County	\$5,004,567	\$5,360,333	\$5,656,200	\$5,426,300	\$4,775,133
Town of Banner Elk	\$1,127,490	\$1,123,655	\$1,174,831	\$960,389	\$1,140,019
Town of Beech Mountain	\$3,241,433	\$3,080,950	\$2,507,233	\$2,244,667	\$2,292,519
Madison County	\$907,744	\$1,176,150	\$1,358,700	\$1,444,730	\$1,432,605
Blowing Rock	\$3,305,873	\$3,410,036	\$3,529,249	\$2,850,849	\$2,633,227
Boone	\$5,776,276	\$5,911,779	\$6,448,792	\$5,815,844	\$6,026,325
Watauga County	n/a	\$4,266,610	\$5,005,544	\$4,516,138	\$4,447,408

*Note: Watauga County did not begin TDA collections until 2006-07

Of note, the share of the annual gross occupancy revenue that the five-month winter period (November to March) represents for the Village of Sugar Mountain is approximately 80 to 82 percent, while at the Town of Beech Mountain, winter represents about 69 to 73 percent of the annual gross lodging revenue. These figures clearly show the importance of the winter season to the overall tourism impact. Even in communities where summer tourism dominates, like Blowing Rock, winter lodging revenues are vital to maintaining a year-round tourism economy and economic stability.

Table 2B
November to March Gross Lodging Revenues (calculated from Occupancy Tax Collections) as
Percent of Annual Total

	<u>2005-06</u>	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>	<u>2009-10</u>
Village of Sugar Mountain	81.2%	81.5%	79.4%	78.4%	82.8%
Haywood County	23.0%	22.8%	21.7%	22.7%	21.4%
Town of Banner Elk	48.5%	42.4%	45.4%	48.3%	53.0%
Town of Beech Mountain	74.8%	71.9%	68.4%	69.4%	73.0%
Madison County	48.5%	41.4%	42.5%	45.6%	46.7%
Blowing Rock	26.9%	25.7%	27.1%	25.2%	25.2%
Boone	35.0%	33.3%	34.9%	33.2%	40.4%
Watauga County	n/a*	35.2%	36.8%	34.8%	36.5%

*Note: Watauga County did not begin TDA collections until 2006-07

Visitor Expenditures

One of the primary functions of the survey research was to document spending patterns among skiers and snowboarders in North Carolina. Survey respondents were asked to detail the dollar amounts their group spent on the trip for a variety of categories, including lift tickets/tubing/ice skating (33.5 percent of the total), ski/snowboard lessons, ski/snowboard equipment rental, lodging, food & beverage (both at the ski area and at off-mountain locations), shopping/gifts/souvenirs, entertainment/activities, local transportation/rental car, and other spending. This section details the results from this section of the survey.

Results for group expenditures were divided by the number of people in the group to arrive at a per person spending figure for each of the categories, as presented in the table below. The sum of all the categories results in a total per person expenditure figure for the visit. The **average expenditure per person for the ski trip within the state of North Carolina is \$131.70**. Additionally (and not documented in this report), an incremental \$13.58 per person is spent associated with the ski trip, but outside North Carolina.

Table 3
Average Spending per Person
2009-10 Ski Season

Type of Expenditure	Per Person Spending	Percent of Total
Lift tickets/tubing/ice skating	\$44.78	33.5%
Ski/snowboard lessons	\$5.75	4.8%
Equipment rental/demo at ski area	\$13.81	10.7%
Equipment rental/demo at other North Carolina locations	\$1.97	1.4%
Food/beverage/restaurants on-mountain/base area	\$16.88	13.2%
Food/beverage/restaurants in other North Carolina cities	\$14.22	9.8%
Lodging accommodations (nightly rate)	\$18.88	14.4%
Shopping/gifts/souvenirs/retail stores	\$9.04	6.6%
Entertainment/activities	\$3.85	3.0%
Local transportation/rental car	\$1.54	1.6%
Other spending	\$0.98	0.9%
TOTAL PER PERSON SPENDING	\$131.70	

These expenditure figures are corroborated by responses to a question on the survey that asked skiers and snowboarders to indicate other activities they planned to participate in as part of the ski trip. The numerous answers to this question show how the ski resort industry drives secondary spending on other activities. Common responses were eating out/dining, hiking, ice skating, tubing, shopping, and visiting friends/relatives. As well, diverse answers included

visiting local attractions (such as Blowing Rock, Biltmore, Chimney Rock, Daniel Boone Inn, Mast General Store, Grandfather Mountain, and others), movies, relaxing, and driving the Blue Ridge Parkway. These comments illustrate the varied activities which skiers and snowboarders are involved in as part of their visit.

It is particularly important to note the importance and economic value of the ski resort industry during the four-month winter season in which these businesses primarily operate. Tourism is an important industry in North Carolina throughout the year, but the summer months tend to dominate this industry. The winter months represent the low season in most tourism areas in the state, with the exception of those regions where skiing and snowboarding is offered. In other words, the ski resort industry provides economic value at a particularly important time of the year. As well, its presence allows for year-round employment opportunities for residents of these areas of the state and provides for a diversified and year-round economy.

The per person expenditures were then multiplied by the total skier visit figure for the state in 2009/10 (671,554) to derive a total direct expenditure figure. As presented in the table below, skiers and snowboarders visiting North Carolina ski areas were directly responsible for \$88.5 million in direct expenditures during the 2009-10 winter season.

Table 4
Total Direct Expenditures
2009-10 Ski Season

Type of Expenditure	Total Expenditures
Lift tickets/tubing/ice skating	\$30,071,064
Ski/snowboard lessons	\$3,861,794
Equipment rental/demo at ski area	\$9,273,689
Equipment rental/demo at other North Carolina locations	\$1,324,614
Food/beverage/restaurants on-mountain/base area	\$11,335,530
Food/beverage/restaurants in other North Carolina cities	\$9,549,136
Lodging accommodations (nightly rate)	\$12,677,618
Shopping/gifts/souvenirs/retail stores	\$6,071,026
Entertainment/activities	\$2,588,826
Local transportation/rental car	\$1,035,350
Other spending	\$658,002
TOTAL SPENDING	\$88,446,648

Multiplier

Economic value has several effects, including direct and secondary (indirect and induced effects). Thus far, this report has focused on the direct value that ski areas generate. To estimate the indirect and induced effects, a multiplier is generally utilized. A multiplier is a figure used to estimate the secondary effects on the statewide economy of a particular industry.

Several factors impact the size of a multiplier. Industries in large urban areas generally have higher multipliers because more of the spending by the industry stays within the local area. Smaller industries in more rural areas would generally have smaller multipliers because more of their spending leaks out to other regions where the goods are produced. For tourism and other service industries, multipliers might be somewhat higher because the spending is actually for a service, not a product, and thus more value is retained. A multiplier for a state-level analysis would tend to be higher than one for a regional or local analysis. All these factors must be taken into consideration when estimating the multiplier. The reliability of the level of tourism activity (in this case, skier visits) and spending should also be taken into account.

Given some of the above factors and the conservative nature of this analysis, a relatively low multiplier has been utilized for this report. While the confidence in the direct spending is high (very reliable skier visit, tubing visit, day/overnight visitor percentages, and visitor expenditure numbers), the calculation of a multiplier through an Input-Output model or other academic modeling is beyond the scope of this analysis. Rather, comparisons to similar industries and expert judgment were used to derive the multiplier figure. For this analysis, ***a multiplier of 1.65 has been utilized.***

Direct spending was estimated to be \$88.5 million. Taking the multiplier (1.65) into account, ***the total economic value of the ski area industry to North Carolina is \$145.9 million.***

The study done in 2002/03 estimated a total value of \$120 million, with a higher multiplier used (1.77). In an apples to apples comparison (using the same multiplier for both studies), the 2009/10 study shows an increase in value of 30.5 percent over the 2002/03 estimate. This result is equivalent to an average increase in value of 4.4 percent per year.

The table below presents some of the salient information from this report in comparison to prior reports, with the caveat that different methodologies were used to collect the information in prior seasons. The 2009-10 season was a record-setting season for skier visits and resort gross revenues in the state. Total payroll was \$8.7 million, with a similar number of employees to the 2000-01 season.

*Table 5
Summary Statistics, North Carolina Ski Resorts*

Season	Total Skier/ Snowboarder Visits	Total Resort Revenues (\$Millions)	Total Resort Payroll (\$Millions)	Total Resort Employment
1976-77	338,000	\$5.7	\$1.4	760
1985-86	580,000	n/a	\$3.0	1,100
1995-96	641,000	\$22.0	n/a	1,404
2000-01	544,000	\$21.5	\$6.6	1,788
2001-02	476,000	\$18.9	\$6.5	1,644
2002-03	544,000	\$23.1	\$6.9	1,759
2008-09	614,675	\$28.7	\$8.5	1,665
2009-10	671,554	\$32.5	\$8.7	1,653

Source: Surveys of Ski Area Owners/General Managers

Other Benefits

The presence of the ski resort industry in North Carolina has many other benefits not included in the direct economic value analysis presented above. This section describes some of these non-monetary benefits, which exist but are difficult to accurately quantify.

Quality of Life Impacts

Overall, alpine ski resorts have a positive impact on the quality of life in the parts of the state in which they operate. They provide a sense of community, civic pride, something that local residents identify with and are a part of, and other intangible benefits. Ski areas also encourage quality family experiences; create opportunities for competitive & non-competitive clubs; provide social benefits through social clubs; and allow for winter season healthy, athletic after-school programs. An appreciation for natural beauty and learning about habitat is also enhanced through the essential outdoor component of the skiing experience.

Events and Exposure

Media coverage of events at ski areas provides terrific promotional and branding exposure that is worth much more than the events themselves cost. Some of the larger events which garner significant regional and national media coverage include ski races,

snowboarding freestyle competitions, and numerous other events and festivals. As well, summer and fall activities and festivals include weddings, fall festivals, hiking, mountain biking, scenic chairlift rides, and other popular activities. These events bring new visitors to the region and provide media exposure to potential customers to visit in the future.

Health and Wellness Benefits

Skiing provides one of the few opportunities for outdoor recreation during the winter, a season in which many people stay inside and exercise less. All participants, from kids to Baby Boomers and beyond, reap positive health benefits from skiing and snowboarding. The importance of providing opportunities for exercise cannot be overstated, especially as more Americans become overweight and obese. For example, Wachusett Mountain Ski Area in Massachusetts recently partnered with Fallon Community Health Plans to allow members to use their fitness reimbursement towards ski lift tickets and lessons. The health benefits of skiing and snowboarding are clearly of vital importance.

Economic Value Conclusion

This Economic Value Analysis provides a conservative estimate of the value of the ski resort industry in the State of North Carolina. Through direct and indirect value, the ski resort industry plays a critical role in the North Carolina economy, particularly during the mid-November through March period of the year when other segments of the tourism economy are at a seasonal lull.

The major conclusions of this Economic Value Analysis are as follows:

- Direct Value for the 2009-10 winter season was ***\$88.5 million***
- Indirect Value for the 2009-10 winter season was ***\$57.5 million***.
- Total Economic Value, including the above direct winter value, with a multiplier of 1.65, is ***\$146 million***.

Skiing and snowboarding facilities draw residents and visitors to areas with such services and amenities, and they are frequently the anchor economic impetus to the communities in which they operate (which tend to be more rural), as well as to nearby commercial and residential development, including enhanced property values and higher property tax collections. The ***overall economic value of the ski resort industry to the State of North Carolina was \$146 million*** for the 4-month period covering the 2009-10 season. Other important benefits not included in this Economic Value Analysis include Quality of Life impacts, Health and Wellness impacts, Events and Exposure, and additional special programs.

Additional Research Findings

The visitor survey covered additional topics beyond visitor spending. Some of the highlights from these additional questions, including visitor demographics and geographic origin, visitor satisfaction, and other visitor characteristics, are summarized here.

Ski Area Visitor Demographics

The results of the on-site visitor surveys provide a comprehensive view of skiers and snowboarders in North Carolina. This section portrays some of the highlights of the visitor demographics and other visitor information.

In general, the customer at North Carolina ski areas tends to be **singles or families, most aged 55 or younger** (average age is 32.6 years, with a median of 32 years). The gender split is 54 percent male/46 percent female. Household incomes are moderately high, with about half the customer base in the \$50,000 to \$150,000 range.

Most visitors were in a group of two to five people, though some larger groups were recorded in the survey research. **The average group size was 5.0 people**, with a median of 4 people. Many ski areas in North Carolina reach out to groups to increase business.

Skier/Snowboarder Characteristics

In terms of ability levels, a **high proportion of visitors are first time skiers/snowboarders** (13 percent) or beginners (25 percent). The largest group is of intermediate ability (40 percent), followed by advanced/expert (22 percent). Importantly, 43 percent said that the trip was a first time skiing/snowboarding experience for someone in their party. These results show that the ski areas in North Carolina play an important role in the industry in introducing people to skiing and snowboarding for the first time.

The **majority of survey respondents were skiing** (62 percent), while most of the remainder (one-third) were snowboarding. Two percent were tubing, one percent were ice skating, and the final two percent was doing another activity. This report includes information from all survey participants, regardless of the type of equipment/activity they were doing that day.

Half the ski area visitors were in the area as part of an overnight trip away from their home (50 percent). Thirty-eight percent were day visitors, while 11 percent were residents of the local area. This result shows a healthy mix of customers, and illustrates the extent to which the ski industry attracts visitors who spend money in the region and the state.

Looking only at overnight visitors, most drove from home to reach the ski area (92 percent), though 5 percent rode a chartered bus. The majority was staying in rented accommodations

(hotel/motel – 44 percent, rental condo – 29 percent, inn/bed & breakfast – 5 percent), with an additional 15 percent staying in a private residence. The average number of nights stayed on the trip was 2.8, with an average of 2.1 days skiing/snowboarding.

The ski resorts in North Carolina generate many visitors to the area and to the state as a result of skiing and snowboarding. Ninety percent said that skiing/snowboarding was the primary reason for the trip to the North Carolina mountains, an impressive statistic that indicates these visitors would not have come without the ski resorts. Twenty-six percent of survey participants said they had not visited any other North Carolina ski area in the past five years, suggesting that the presence of ski resorts causes substantial new visitors to the region.

Geographic Residence

The geographic origin of all skiers and snowboarders in North Carolina shows that **52 percent reside in-state and 48 percent visit from out-of-state**. The most important states are neighboring Georgia (14 percent), Florida, South Carolina (each 10 percent), and Tennessee (8 percent).

Table 6
Top States, 2009-10 Season

North Carolina	52%
Georgia	14%
Florida	10%
South Carolina	10%
Tennessee	8%
Alabama	3%
Virginia	1%
All Other States	2%

Looking at market areas, about **one-quarter of all skiers and snowboarders live in the Charlotte area** (26 percent), followed by **Atlanta** (12 percent), **Raleigh-Durham** (10 percent), **Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville** (9 percent), and **Greensboro-Winston Salem-High Point** (8 percent). Smaller contributors include Bristol-Kingsport-Johnson City (3 percent), Tampa-St. Petersburg (3 percent), Wilmington, Knoxville, Columbia, Orlando-Daytona-Melbourne, and Jacksonville (each 2 percent). These results show a geographically diverse customer base and illustrate the broad appeal of skiing and snowboarding in North Carolina.

Table 7
Top Markets, 2009-10 Season

Charlotte, NC	26%
Atlanta, GA	12%
Raleigh-Durham, NC	10%
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville, SC-NC	9%
Greensboro-Winston Salem-High Point, NC	8%
Bristol/Kingsport/Johnson City, TN-VA	3%
Tampa-St Pete, FL	3%
Wilmington, NC	2%
Knoxville, TN	2%
Columbia, SC	2%
Orlando-Daytona-Melbourne, FL	2%
Jacksonville, FL	2%
All Others	19%

Other Survey Information

The survey results contain various other important information topics, including the timing of trip planning, media sources used, ticket type used, and other information.

Overnight visitors were asked when they began planning their visit. The trip planning time horizon is broadly spread, generally between one week and three months ahead of time. Overall, 19 percent of overnight visitors planned their visit less than a week ahead of time, with an additional 15 percent planning one to two weeks in advance, 15 percent two weeks to one month, 21 percent one to two months, and 12 percent two to three months ago. The remaining 19 percent planned more than 3 months ahead of time.

All visitors were asked about the information sources they used to plan their visit. Many indicated that they called the ski area directly for information prior to their trip (34 percent). Fifteen percent used the www.goskinc.com website, an impressive number indicative of the need for such a site to disseminate information; as well, 23 percent used another website in planning their visit. Other information sources were used only modestly, including a NC Ski brochure/guide (4 percent), a travel agent (3 percent), a Ski North Carolina TV ad (2 percent), or a ski club publication (1 percent).

About half of survey respondents said they were using a full-day lift ticket (53 percent), followed by a half-day ticket (16 percent) and a twilight ticket (14 percent). Nine percent were skiing/boarding during a night session, and just 6 percent had a season pass. Four percent were part of a group package, while another 4 percent had a multi-day ticket.

The frequency of skiing and snowboarding is relatively low, consistent with the high proportion of first timers/beginners and low proportion of season pass holders. The average number of days skied/snowboarded this season was 7.1 days (median of 3), with an average of 6.3 days at ski areas in North Carolina (median of 3), and 5.3 days at the ski area where the survey was taken (median of 2). These results suggest a high level of very infrequent customers, which has two implications for the state's ski areas. One is the observation that these ski areas have experienced success in drawing new customers to the slopes, an impressive achievement. The other is a challenge that this dynamic presents, meaning that the state's ski areas need to spend resources to market and prospect to new customers.

About RRC Associates

RRC Associates is a multi-disciplinary consulting firm providing market research, strategic analysis, and community/land planning services. RRC specializes in collecting and analyzing customer feedback for a variety of public and private clients nationwide and internationally. Research techniques we utilize are customized to clients' needs, but often incorporate web-based surveys; national and regional panels; intercept, telephone, and mail back surveys; and/or focus groups. Our office also operates a full service focus group facility specializing in qualitative research, the Boulder Focus Center.

RRC is the foremost consulting and market research firm in the alpine snowsports industry and tracks many statistics and figures for the industry throughout North America. RRC publishes annually on behalf of the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) the Kottke End of Season Report, the National Demographic Study, and the Economic Analysis of US Ski Areas, three industry reports that track patterns of significance related to operational, demographic, and financial information, respectively. Our firm also collects national figures for the ski resort industry in Canada, giving us an unprecedented depth of understanding of the North American snowsports industry.

Principal areas of focus by RRC include the ski and snowboard industry in particular, and the travel, tourism, and recreation industries generally. In these subject areas the firm is considered national experts and are frequently quoted and contacted for information concerning trends and opportunities. RRC also provides consulting services in real estate feasibility and market demand analysis, financial consulting and modeling, data base management, competitive analysis, customer demographic profiling, and customer satisfaction/loyalty assessments. Additionally, RRC provides a wide range of community planning, land planning, public processing, and affordable housing studies for a variety of public agencies and communities as well as private entities.