



POCONOS
VRO

POCONOS ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT



Contact

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building bridges within our community is at the heart of our initiatives, as we strive to connect the divide between vacation rentals and our neighbors, fostering a harmonious coexistence.



STR REVENUE GREATLY BENEFITS LOCAL ECONOMY

- STRs drive nearly **4x more revenue back to the community** than hotels on a per-reservation basis.
- STRs **save Poconos taxpayers \$1,500** annually.
- Tourism supports nearly **1/3 of ALL jobs** in the Poconos.



COLLABORATION DRIVES PROGRESS ON SHARED GOALS

- Support **Rental Committees** fosters productive conversations with Townships, HOAs, and boards.
- Inaugural Poconos STR Conference **championed best practices & brokered dialogue** with officials.
- Educational seminars create and celebrate **Good Neighbors**.



POCONOS VRO SUPPORTS FAIR REGULATION & ENFORCEMENT

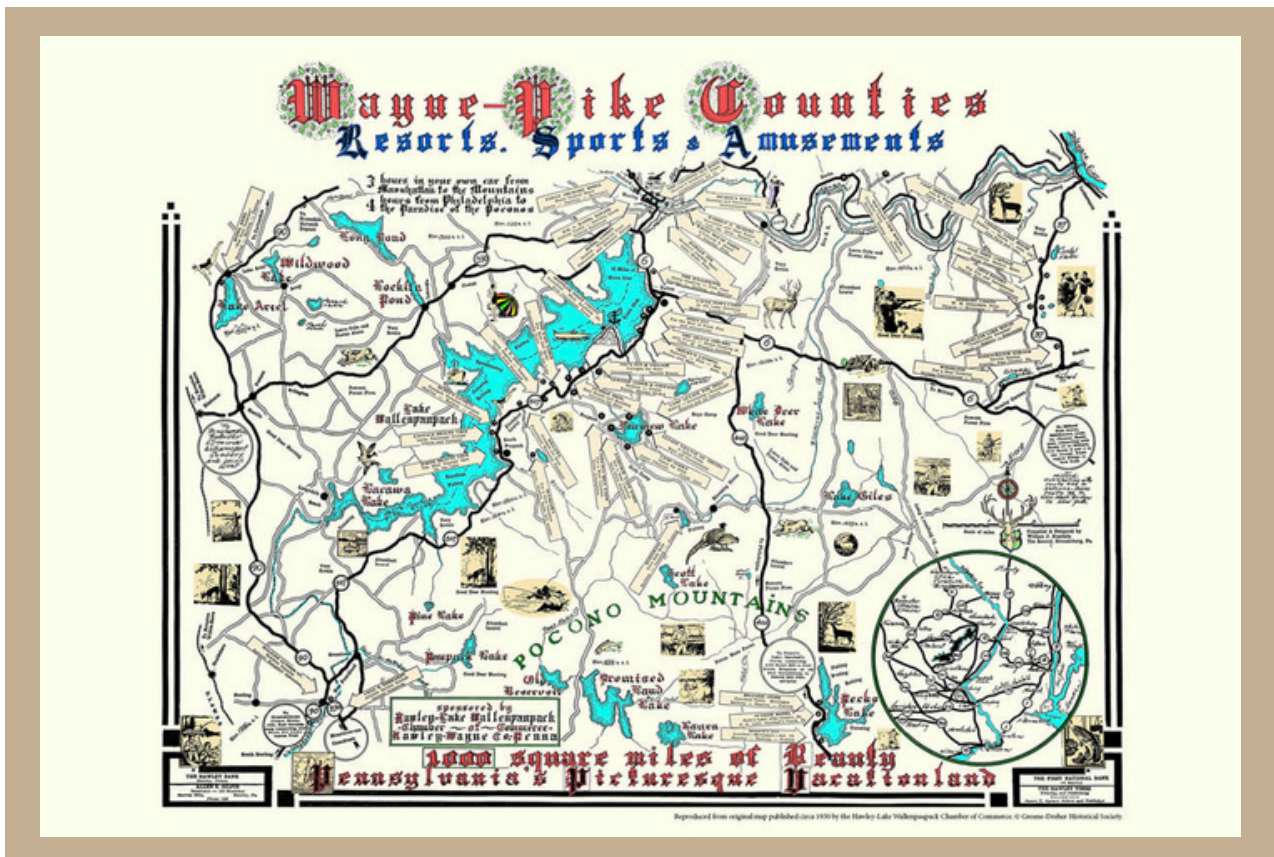
- Poconos VRO believes **fair regulation & enforcement** is good for both residents **AND** STR owners.
- By having a seat at the table, we can collectively (and more effectively) **address challenges while preserving this cornerstone of the Poconos economy**.

“Changing how we see people changes people.” - Robyn Gobbel

HISTORY OF STRS IN THE POCONOS

The Pocono region encompasses over 2,400 square miles, over 80 municipalities, with 150 lakes, hiking, biking, skiing, fishing, waterparks, 9 state parks, golf courses, with festivals and events all year long. Tourism is at the heart of keeping our work force and businesses surviving and thriving. For decades vacation rentals have been the backbone of what drives people to come and experience the Pocono mountains.

The Pocono region was once known as the honeymoon capital of the world and a popular escape for tristate metropolitan families seeking a break from city life. One of the main paths to ownership for residents and vacation home owners is to stay in a rental home when visiting the Poconos. This attraction has led to the development of our ski resorts, waterparks, shopping, restaurants, and a place that draws over 30 million visitors creating over 35,000 jobs. Tourism provides \$875.1 million annually in total taxes which translates to \$1,500 per person in direct tax support for residents of the Pocono Mountains.



WORKING TOGETHER



Poconos VRO was founded to advance the interests of the vacation rental industry in the Poconos and support everyone who relies on its success. As outlined in this report, vacation rental homes are a key driver of tourism, bringing countless visitors to the Poconos each year. Our members are dedicated to operating quality STRs that are well-managed, well-maintained, and contribute positively to the vitality of the region, enhancing the standard of living for all.

This report aims to highlight the positive economic impact our industry has on the region. We strive to be not just good owners and operators, but good neighbors. We acknowledge that our presence can affect neighborhoods, and we urge our civic leaders to adopt fair regulations and reasonable taxes and fees to ensure the continued viability of our industry. Poconos VRO is a community of owners and managers committed to creating positive ripple effects for everyone who lives in, works in, or enjoys the Poconos.

CHALLENGE	SOULTIONS	RESULTS
STR Host Compliance (the “bad apples”)	Fair, reasonable, and enforceable regulations combined with self-monitoring tech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-compliance • Decreased violations
Understanding of STR Positive Impact on Local Economy	Greater education on how STRs drive job creation and support livelihoods for local residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fosters unity among residents and owners • Displays benefits to community
Partnering to Achieve Shared Goals	Creation of Rental Committees to work with Townships, HOAs, and boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of adoption and onboarding • Less stress on township and owners

STR IMPACT ON THE POCONO ECONOMY

Spending grew across all categories that had been hardest hit during the pandemic. Spending by visitors increased \$7.5 billion, 82% of the overall spending gain in 2021. Visitor Spending rose 35% in the Pocono Mountains Region in 2022. (only region to surpass 2019 pre-pandemic level).



01 — Employment

Employment directly supported by visitor spending rose 13%, or by nearly 2,850 jobs in 2021. Most recent reports tourism supports a total of 35,818 jobs in the Poconos, nearly 1/3 of all jobs in the Pocono Mountains. Job growth in the tourism sector creates demand for goods and services, leading to additional job opportunities and economic activity throughout the region.



02 — Local Impact

In 2021, Lodging and food & beverage spending both grew by more than \$1.4 billion. Recreational spending increased by \$1.6 billion to reach \$6.5 billion. This saves each resident at least \$1,500 per tax payer. STR taxes contribute to the PMVB Community Impact Grant which has awarded \$1,186,833 among 129 regional projects funded through 2024.



03 — Education & Healthcare

The locally produced portion of visitor-supported sales in the finance & real estate industry added \$5.4 billion to state GDP in 2021. Spending by travel demand supported workers supported \$1.9 billion in GDP contribution in the education and health care industries, showing how tourism activity supports businesses across the economic spectrum. STRs fund school taxes without increasing enrollment.

VISITOR COUNTS FOR THE POCONOS

- > **Visitor Spending rose 35% in the Pocono Mountains Region in 2022.** (only region to surpass 2019 pre-pandemic level)
- > **Over 30 million guests per year in 2023.**
- > Tourism provides **38%** of the employment and **41%** of the labor income in the Poconos.
- > Tourism provides **\$875.1 million** annually in total taxes.
- > State and local taxes account for **\$426.8 million, representing 48.8%** of the total.
- > Tourism provides over **\$1,500 per person** in direct tax support for residents of the Pocono Mountains.



STR FACTS & FIGURES

Vacation Rentals = Short Term Rentals (STR)

ECONOMIC IMPACT



\$1,500/YEAR

The amount STR taxes save every Poconos tax payer annually



35,818 JOBS

Tourism supports nearly 1/3 of all jobs in the Pocono Mountains *and* 41% of Poconos labor income



\$4.3 BILLION

Visitor spending in the Pocono Mountains annually.

STR OWNERS & MANAGERS

From the State of the STR Industry Study



MOM & POP

The industry is largely individual homeowners and small businesses. Of owners, 70% own one STR, and of property managers, 54% manage 10 or fewer.



40%

Percentage of STR owners who also rent for mid-term stays to host non-leisure guests like traveling nurses, hospital patients, and remote workers



38.1%

On average, STR owners rely on their STR activity for 38.1% of their income, often to supplement retirement or help pay for major life expenses, like tuition.

PoconosVRO.wildapricot.org/Economic-Impact

TOOLS &

DOWNLOADS

www.PoconosVRO.org

[Pocono Mountains](#)

[Marketing Dashboard](#)

[2023 Economic](#)

[Scorecard](#)

[Impact of Tourism](#)

[2023 Tourism Facts](#)

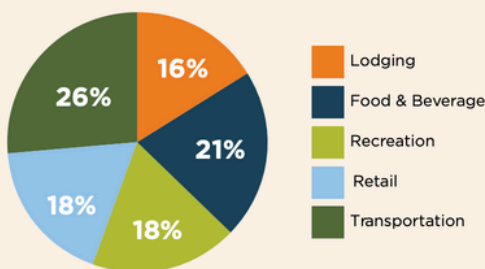
[PMVB Research &](#)

[Travel Impacts](#)

An estimated 30 million visitors come to the Pocono Mountains each year for both day and overnight trips.



Travel spending in the Pocono Mountains exceeds **\$4.3 billion** annually



Total Tourism and Economic Impact

- 35,818 jobs
- \$1.8 billion in labor income
- \$448 million in federal taxes
- \$427 million in state and local taxes alone

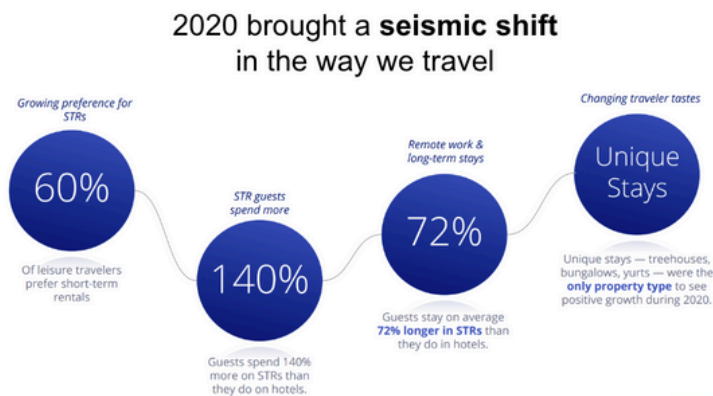


“Travelers have made a shift to prefer STRs over traditional lodging since 2020. Visitors are spending more for the vacation home experience and staying longer than in traditional hotel stays. Home resale value thrive in communities that allow STRs. Visiting Friends & Relatives represent 3 in every 4 overnight guests to the Pocono Mountains.” - Arrivalist 2024

HOW AND WHY WE TRAVEL?

How has Covid and travel changed since 2020?

WHY TRACK STRs?



How much money goes to the community?

\$224

Hotel revenue per reservation

\$841

STR revenue per reservation

Impact of STR Regulations in regards to Real Estate can be found in our backyard

Upper Mt Bethel Township, PA
No Short-Rentals Allowed



4 beds
2 baths
2,320 sqft

\$419,000

Kidder Township, PA
Short-Rentals Allowed



4 beds
3 baths
2,250 sqft

\$674,900

Caps have effects: **Home values in 'free-fall'** Read More:

<https://ktla.com/news/california/palm-springs-home-values-in-free-fall-after-city-cracks-down-on-airbnb/>

140%

more is being spent by travelers per arrivals for the vacation home experience

72%

longer stays come from vacation rentals

NEXT STEPS

Vacation rentals offer lodging options to a changing world, while providing a glimpse of what it is like to live or retire to our beautiful community.

And we want to be part of that restorative change. Poconos VRO has the insight and experience that can help...



01 — Connect with Community

We aim to strengthen our communication with neighbors and the community while welcoming families to experience the Poconos. To ensure positive relationships, we provide an open and direct line of contact for any concerns or feedback.



02 — Support our Local Economy

STRs have a commitment to supporting our local restaurants, stores, amenities, and also our contractors, landscapers, maintenance, cleaners, waste, and snow removal personnel to name a few. We look to grow these interrelationships.



03 — Improve Quality of Life

We continue to work with our local governments and governing bodies in our various associations to help come up with balanced guidelines for our hosts and visitors while providing educational and technological resources to help maintain the peaceful symbiotic relationship between our residents and travelers.



04 — Assure Exceptional Guest Experiences

Rules and regulations that are designed to assure the health, safety and enjoyment of our guests is why we call for reasonable regulation. Tourism depends on hospitality and making our guests feel safe and welcome which go a long way to raising the region's reputation as a friendly and fun place to visit.

TOP 10 REASONS HOSTS START HOSTING

1. They started renting short-term out of necessity to supplement income or cover costs.

- *“I’m a single parent of five. The kids and I rented a back unit at a duplex. The owner decided to sell and through the grace of God I was able to purchase the home. The house has been a rental for 40 years and was neglected. The money I make from [my] STR makes improvements on the property. I also manage and clean STRs on my street. This industry provides for my family and will provide retirement and college funds.”*
- *“I needed a source of income after a divorce. Considering my age and being disabled, there were not many options.”*

2. They purchased or inherited a future retirement home and/or began hosting to supplement retirement income.

- *“Our residence had a 1,500 [square foot] in-law suite which was unused and totally private. Property tax increases made retirement living in our home difficult. We now cover taxes and mortgage with [vacation rental] income.”*

3. They inherited a family home or purchased a home for future family generations.

- *“We needed a larger home to start our family, and we have kept the rental home for a possible home for our children in the future.”*
- *“Built as a second home for family in 2005. The market crashed, lost job and income, so had to convert this property into a full-time STR to prevent it from being taken by the bank. Now I love having it as a necessary and relatively easy investment to manage. Plan to retire in the STR in eight years.”*

4. They were asked by someone else for help managing their STR.

5. They had problems with long-term renters.

- *“Long-term rentals were not working out at the property we owned due to tenants not addressing maintenance items and being a long-term issue to the neighbors.”*

6. They needed temporary or seasonal space to house or care for others, such as aging family members, and short-term rented the space when it was vacant.

- *“To pay for a ministry to veterans with PTSD/TBI who stay in our property free of charge while undergoing treatment.”*
- *“I built an ADU for my parents to move into, but they don’t need it full time yet so we STR when they are not here.”*

7. They had to relocate but wanted to keep the property.

- *“Moved but wanted to keep our house—we put a lot of work/detail into our property, and short-term rental guests take such good care of it. Honestly, wouldn’t feel comfortable with traditional renters. Also love that it allows us to go back and visit whenever we would like to (or whenever we have extra house projects, etc., we want to take care of).”*

8. They invested in real estate for wealth generation or financial stability.

9. They wanted or needed to cover the costs of renovations, repairs, or restorations.

- *“I bought a single-family home on a teacher’s salary. There was an existing studio which I renovated to pay for constant necessary repairs.”*

10. They had extra space, such as an ADU or guest cottage, that they wanted to optimize.

From the [State of the STR Industry Study](#).

10 TIPS FOR HOSTS

Hosting a short-term rental?

Here are **10** essential tips to ensure a smooth experience:

-  **Know the Local Regulations:** Understand the laws and regulations governing short-term rentals in your area, including zoning laws, occupancy limits, and tax requirements.
-  **Screen Guests:** Implement a thorough guest screening process to minimize the risk of problematic guests. Utilize platforms that offer guest reviews and verification systems.
-  **Set Clear House Rules:** Clearly communicate your house rules to guests before their arrival, covering noise, parking, smoking, and any other relevant policies.
-  **Manage Noise Levels:** Enforce quiet hours and take proactive measures to minimize noise disturbances, such as installing soundproofing and implement noise meter device protection.
-  **Address Neighbor Concerns:** Build positive relationships with neighbors by addressing concerns proactively.
-  **Adhere to Safety Standards:** Ensure that your property meets all safety standards, including having working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and proper emergency exit routes.
-  **Maintain Open Communication:** Encourage guests to communicate any concerns or issues promptly and provide them with a reliable point of contact for assistance during their stay.
-  **Invest in Quality Amenities:** Provide guests with comfortable and well-maintained amenities to enhance their experience and minimize potential complaints.
-  **Regular Property Inspections:** Conduct regular inspections to ensure your property is being well-maintained and to identify any potential issues early on.
-  **Keep Records:** Maintain thorough records of guest communications, bookings, and any incidents that occur during their stay to protect yourself in case of disputes or legal issues.

10 TIPS FOR GUESTS

☀️ Attention Guests! ☀️

Here are **10** essential tips for a fantastic short-term rental experience:

- 📖 **Respect House Rules:** Take the time to understand and follow the host's house rules, including those on noise and smoking.
- 📞 **Communicate with the Host:** Keep the host informed of your arrival time and any changes to your plans. Communicate any concerns or issues promptly during your stay.
- 🏠 **Respect the Property:** Guests should treat the rental property with care and respect, while also being considerate of the community and neighborhood.
- 👤 **Be Considerate of Neighbors:** Respect the privacy and comfort of neighbors by keeping noise levels to a minimum, especially during late hours.
- 🏠 **Adhere to Capacity, Parking, Trash and Noise Levels:** Respect the number of people and cars permitted, garbage procedures, and noise levels during the day and at night to avoid violations.
- 📖 **Be Mindful of Local Laws:** Familiarize yourself with local laws and regulations to ensure a smooth and compliant stay.
- 🚰 **Follow Safety Guidelines:** Take precautions to ensure your safety and the safety of others, such as adhering to any safety instructions provided by the host and familiarizing yourself with emergency procedures.
- 🚨 **Report Damage or Issues:** Alert the host immediately if you notice any damage or issues during your stay to prevent further damage and ensure a timely resolution.
- 🧹 **Leave the Property Clean and Tidy:** Clean up after yourself and leave the property in the same condition as you found it to ensure a positive experience for future guests.
- 🔑 **Follow Check-Out Procedures:** Adhere to the host's check-out procedures, including returning keys and following any instructions for locking up the property.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Poconos VRO board, PMVB, PMAR, Rent Responsibly, Arrivalist, and Tourism Economics for providing the guidance and data in this report. Included are links to the sources contained in this document.

<https://poconosvro.wildapricot.org/Economic-Impact>

- [Pocono Mountains Marketing Dashboard](#)
- [2023 Economic Scorecard](#)
- [Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism in Pennsylvania](#)
- [2023 General Tourism Information & Facts](#)
- [All PMVB Research & Travel Impacts](#)
- [Pocono Mountains History](#)
- [Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau Grant Program](#)



**We thank you for your continued support in
our efforts to contribute to the Poconos.**

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