Researchers Say National Park Fee Hike Could Cost Montana

Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research say the fee increase would decrease annual spending by $3.4 million in the surrounding communities

By ASSOCIATED PRESS // Dec 1, 2017

MISSOULA — University of Montana researchers say the U.S. Department of Interior’s proposal to more than double the cost of the seven-day pass for national parks could cause economic harm to neighboring communities.

The Missoulian reports that economists at the university’s Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research say the fee increase would decrease annual spending by $3.4 million in the surrounding communities within 60 miles (100 kilometers) of Yellowstone National Park.

Institute director Jeremy Sage says the effects found from their research on Yellowstone would likely carry over to other parks and communities. He says other proposed fee increases should be expected to “reduce visits and thus have a negative impact on local communities.”

The institute has not yet calculated the potential loss amount for the communities around Glacier National Park.