

Summary

# ECONOMIC IMPACT IN OHIO

## of World Heritage Tourism



In 2013 BaxStarr Consulting Group provided to the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks UNESCO Nomination Steering Committee an aggregate assessment of the potential impact of the sites' World Heritage inscription on the economy of Ohio. Their study begins with the important point that ***cultural heritage tourists are different*** – they spend more, they stay longer. The latest data show that cultural heritage tourists spend \$994 per trip compared to \$611, stay an average of 3 days, and engage in leisure travel more frequently annually. World Heritage destination tourism is an international growth market. 70% of international travelers to the US visit cultural heritage destinations; approximately 3.5 million foreign visitors come to Ohio.

The economic impacts of tourism are well known. In Ohio, as of 2011, tourism spending was over \$23 billion; as a result of the direct and indirect impacts, one of every 11.5 jobs is sustained by tourism, or 8.7% of total employment. A very conservative estimate of the increase in tourists to the nominated sites projects an uptick from current levels of around 100,000 annually to 300,000. (For comparison, Cahokia has experienced ***a sustained 10-fold increase in visitors*** since receiving their World Heritage designation). Using the data on the cultural heritage sector and the state of Ohio recent statistics, the BaxStarr study found:

- an additional \$51 million in spending annually by foreign and overnight visitors
- a \$6 million increase in spending by business travelers and day-trippers
- A total increase (direct, indirect, and induced) of \$80 million annually
- Wages would increase by \$21 million
- \$5.4 million additional state and local taxes generated

Based upon the current trajectory of the tourism industry in Ohio, after 5 years the total impacts would be over \$100 million annually, with yearly tax revenue of nearly \$7 million.