



# NEW MEXICO

## OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

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### **Outdoor Recreation Division Awards \$2.3 Million for Outdoor Infrastructure**

*Projects to build or maintain more than 600 miles of trails and  
generate over 250 new jobs in 12 counties*

**SANTA FE, N.M.** – The Economic Development Department (EDD) Outdoor Recreation Division Director Karina Armijo announced today the first round of Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant awardees for 2023. Awards total \$2,360,289 for 20 projects by organizations bringing in an additional \$1,953,453 in matching funding.

The Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant invests in conservation-minded shovel-ready projects that are open to the public, increase access to outdoor opportunities, and demonstrate a clear economic benefit to the community through improved quality of life, better public health outcomes, and/or increased eco-tourism. Eligible projects include trail design or construction, signage, river access, whitewater amenities, outdoor classroom infrastructure, trailhead improvements, picnic shelters, wildlife viewing areas, and more.

“We are proud to support these organizations,” ORD Director Karina Armijo said. “These projects are adding and updating trail infrastructure that promotes stewardship, increases equitable access to the outdoors for all New Mexicans, and enriches our community connection to the stunning landscapes that define our state while creating jobs and expanding economic opportunities.”

The grant recipients of this round are located throughout the state in 12 counties with 80% of the projects based in rural areas and two in Tribal communities. Awards range from \$26,000 for Surf New Mexico planning a river park in Velarde to \$499,927 for the City of Carlsbad for the Carlsbad Lower Tansill Dam renovation initiative. Projects receiving funding are estimated to create more than 250 jobs and will either build or maintain over 600 miles of New Mexico trails.

“The Lower Tansill Dam area is an extremely popular spot for Carlsbad residents, especially those who enjoy more peaceful recreational activities such as fishing or kayaking, as well as bird watching and walking,” Mayor of Carlsbad Dale W. Janway said. “We’re extremely excited about seeing some greatly needed improvements made to this area. Thanks to Angie Barrios-Testa and the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division for all of their hard work putting this together.”

Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant applications are broken into two tier types of local projects with funding up to \$99,999 or regional projects with awards up to \$500,000. Tier two funding was awarded to the cities of Anthony, Carlsbad, and Sunland Park and to Socorro County. Sixteen local projects were awarded in the tier one category,

including a variety of proposals for planning phases, a rail trail revamp in Raton, designing an outdoor economic development zone in Questa, an ADA accessible trail segment for the Pueblo of Jemez, fire and flood impacted trail work, and many more.

“The Pueblo of Jemez NM-4 multi-use pedestrian trail project will greatly improve the health and safety of our community, by providing a safe pathway to walk, run, and roll along the NM-4,” Pueblo of Jemez Planning Development & Transportation Department Director Sheri Bozic said. “We are grateful to have the support of the EDD Outdoor Recreation Division and fortunate to receive Trails+ grant funding for our project!”

ORD is grateful to the members of the review committee for their many hours spent evaluating applications and attending presentations by applicants. Each application was reviewed by multiple committee members and Tier 2 applicants presented their projects to a review team. The review committee consisted of Gabrielle McGuinness from the New Mexico Tourism Department, Desi Ortiz of New Mexico Game and Fish, Hannah Schlechter of the Bureau of Reclamation, and Maria Trevino from the National Park Service’s Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program.

There is an additional \$7.6 million in funding available for Outdoor Recreation Trails+ projects, with the application open on a rolling basis until FY24 funding is expended. Organizations are encouraged to apply early for this competitive grant. Read the [2023 program guide](#) for details.

### **2023-2024 (FY24) Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant Recipients:**

**City of Anthony** (\$375,000, Anthony, Doña Ana County, Tier II): Dos Lagos, a city-led master planned 107-acre development, provides a unique outdoor recreational environment, supported by health and sciences medical campus, health education, and outdoor recreational trail network. The City of Anthony has planned and designed a unique placemaking colored concrete multi-use trail for non-motorized use. The trail will connect walkers, joggers, strollers, bicycles, and other non-motorized transportation to the development, while promoting outdoor activities.

**City of Carlsbad** (\$499,927.45, Carlsbad, Eddy County, Tier II): The City of Carlsbad will renovate the Carlsbad Lower Tansill Dam, part of the Lake Carlsbad Recreation Area, situated along the southernmost region of the Lower Tansill Reservoir. This entails improvements of the southwestern shore and enhancements to recreational opportunities, encompassing the addition of new trees, picnic tables, a launch dock, crosswalks, shade and picnic pavilions, expanded concrete trails and a parking lot, enhancement of existing designated trails, and a widened road with a bike lane.

**City of Raton** (\$65,748, Raton, Colfax County, Tier I): The City of Raton is addressing the challenge of connecting the east and west sides of the city separated by railroad tracks, focusing on linking the historic district to Roundhouse Memorial Park, recreational trails, and the aquatic center. A 1948 tunnel once provided a vital link between the two halves of the city but is closed and in disrepair. The City of Raton will renovate this tunnel, linking the city's sections to benefit residents and visitors.

**City of Sunland Park** (\$224,000, Sunland Park, Doña Ana County, Tier II): Sunland Park is presently developing the first phase of the region’s Rio Grande Trail, which extends from Racetrack Drive north past Sunland Park Drive. This initial phase, aligning with the Rio Grande Trail (RGT), will include the preliminary and final design of five miles along the RGT through the city with new trail bridges, wayfinding, trailhead connections, points of interest, facility vehicular access, and parking.

**Collins Lake Autism Center** (\$30,000, Cleveland, Mora County, Tier I): Collins Lake Autism Center is part of a 300-acre ranch with a mission to support individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities with campground facilities for educational and recreational programs. This project will complete a fire suppression system to protect Collins Lake Ranch educational and recreational assets.

**Enchanted Circle Trails Association** (\$59,262, Taos, Taos County, Tier I): The Enchanted Circle Trails Association's Adopt-a-Trail (AAT) program engages community partners to take on maintaining public trails. With six groups adopting over 50 miles of

trails, contributing 895 volunteer service hours, the goal is to expand significantly during the next two years. This project will engage directly with the community through AAT and related programs to provide training, support, and resources that arm community volunteers with the skills and tools needed to keep trails open for all.

**Friends of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge** (\$48,020, San Antonio, Socorro County, Tier I): This project aims to increase and diversify native pollinator plant species present on a 12-acre site at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (BdA NWR) and provide experience and information to visitors. BdA NWR will install accessible trails and interpretive signage to pollinator enhancement areas and create an outdoor classroom with an interpretive display built in.

**Gila Chapter Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico** (\$87,000, Silver City, Grant County, Tier I): This project prepares for a rise in recreation visitation during and after the 2024 Gila Wilderness Centennial. The two-part plan will reopen a network of over 100 trail miles, by completing loop trails, increasing out-and-back excursions, and maintaining the recently improved trails throughout the Gila Wilderness and surrounding areas. It will provide updated and detailed trail information in person and online to ensure a high-quality experience, public safety, and enhanced enjoyment for locals and visitors.

**Global Opportunities Unlimited** (\$49,495, Taos, Taos County, Tier I): This project will expand state adaptive cycling opportunities to include the Enchanted Circle Trail (ECT) system in Northern New Mexico. Global Opportunities will partner with the ECT Association to audit handicap access on the public trail system to increase access for mobility-challenged trail riders. A team of GO Unlimited adaptive cycle riders will work with non-disabled ECT riders to conduct onsite audits of multiple trails to identify inclusive cycling opportunities and future trail projects that would allow for further expansion.

**National Forest Foundation** (\$99,636, Mora, Colfax, Taos, and Grant Counties, Tier I): The National Forest Foundation's (NFF) Burned Landscape Trail Improvement Initiative will restore and enhance recreational opportunities in significant areas of the Santa Fe and Gila National Forests affected by the Hermit's Peak Calf Canyon Fire and Black Fire of 2022. The NFF, with the U.S. Forest Service and community partners, will focus efforts on trail rehabilitation, maintenance, reroutes, closures, new signage, and public engagement in trail stewardship. Projects under this initiative aim to create a sustainable and thriving trail network throughout New Mexico for current and future generations.

**National Ghost Ranch Foundation, Inc.** (\$50,000, Abiquiu, Rio Arriba County, Tier I): The National Ghost Ranch Foundation (NGRF) is a nonprofit education and retreat center and Registered Natural Landmark, near the community of Abiquiu. NGRF will build 1.75 miles of trails that will be accessible to people who use wheelchairs and other assistive mobility devices to enjoy the landscape and backcountry of the ranch currently inaccessible to people with mobility issues.

**Pueblo of Jemez Planning, Development, & Transportation Department** (\$99,000, Jemez Pueblo, Sandoval County, Tier I): The project entails construction of the NM-4 multi-use "Hemish Path to Wellness" pedestrian trail, including the addition of a wide asphalt 1.8-mile trail along NM-4. Trail improvements include two mid-block pedestrian crossings and two premanufactured pedestrian bridges spanning existing drainage washes along with drainage improvements, lighting, and trail signage. This project provides the Pueblo of Jemez with needed ADA compliant pedestrian facility improvements.





*Pueblo of Jemez Planning, Development, & Transportation Department trail improvements*

**Questa Economic Development Fund** (\$28,050, Questa, Taos County, Tier I): Conceptional plans, maps, and designs will be developed for new outdoor recreation opportunities in Questa to inspire open-air activity for residents, attract visitors to the region, and generate community outdoor recreation business opportunities. Designed to appeal to a broad range of users and make access inclusive, the system of unmotorized, stacked loop trails in Questa's Largo Canyon will be close to town with hiking, biking, and horse trails for all ability levels. Connected recreation areas will have rock-climbing opportunities developed near popular fishing and camping sites.

**Rocky Mountain Youth Corps** (\$99,998, Ranchos de Taos, Taos County, Tier I): Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC) and Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF) will collaborate on trail maintenance projects to prioritize safer trails for outdoor enthusiasts and improve watershed health in post-fire areas. Restoration will focus on Borrego, Pajarito, and Nablina trails in Española, and Creek National Recreation Trail in Coyote. Urgent work includes addressing Black Feather Fire areas in San Pedro Peaks Wilderness.

**San Juan County** (\$66,666, Aztec, San Juan County, Tier I): An enduring outdoor recreation and trails master plan will play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of life and overall well-being of San Juan County. This project will establish a comprehensive outdoor recreation and trails master plan tailored to the needs of the San Juan community to serve as a compass for the next two decades, steering the evolution of recreational amenities, park spaces, and trail networks.

**Socorro County** (\$161,632, Socorro, Socorro County, Tier II): The Escondida Lake Park project is a comprehensive facility enhancement project designed to improve the outdoor recreation pursuits of visitors. The project involves the planning of upgraded utilities and improved lighting, revamped amenities like restrooms, playground, and picnic areas, enhanced landscaping, and upgraded campsite facilities, including group and RV sites with all essential hookups.

**Surf New Mexico** (\$26,000, Embudo, Santa Fe County, Tier I): Surf New Mexico, with fiscal agent Rio Grande Restoration, will begin phase one to plan preliminary evaluation of a river park on the Rio Grande near Velarde. The project includes re-engineering diversion dams on the Rio Grande near Velarde to increase efficiency in providing water

for acequias and create enhanced river access through parking areas, boat ramps, surf waves, a non-motorized bridge, and trail along the historic Chile Line railroad bed. The full project will include take-out boat ramps, a bathroom, surf wave, and pedestrian bridge over the Rio Grande to access a path constructed on the historic Chile Line railroad grade.

**Taos County** (\$99,000, Taos, Taos County, Tier I): This project will entail planning and designing a vibrant, accessible multi-use 9-acre development Phase one will identify the desired community pathways and outdoor recreational amenities through a community-led, emergent design process, including a walking path and other recreational amenities. The project site will become an area of the town for with enhanced access to outdoor recreation for residents, visitors, and businesses by way of creating a more vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, and safe public realm.

**Town of Red River** (\$82,180, Red River, Taos County, Tier I): The Town of Red River will utilize funding for the Mallette Nature Trail and Park Improvement Project that also serves as the trailhead for the 30-mile Greenie Peak/Cabresto Trail system. The popular scenic trails are utilized to hike, bike, cross-country ski and snowshoe. Improvements will address wayfinding and ADA accessibility for an economy that is 85% supported by recreation tourism.

**Zuni Youth Enrichment Project** (\$99,000, Zuni, McKinley County, Tier I): This project will mobilize eight Zuni youth, ages 15-24, to take an active role in planning and stewarding Zuni's trail system in a built environment apprenticeship. The project expands on the maintenance of over 50 miles of trail, across nine distinct routes, with goals to engage our community in the development of a master trail plan that will inform future trail development and maintenance efforts. During the apprenticeship, youth will explore education and career opportunities in outdoor recreational careers while increasing the community's access to safe trails.

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*The Outdoor Recreation Division, a division of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, aims to increase the overall mental and physical well-being of New Mexicans through the power of outdoor recreation, enabling residents throughout the state to hold jobs that afford them dignity, joy, and stability. We strive to commit to all residents to protect their state's natural heritage - its lands and waters, flora and fauna - and find a future on that path. We aim to parlay this commitment into long-term, sustainable investment, both in infrastructure and education.*

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