



# NEW MEXICO

## OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Acting Cabinet Secretary Jon Clark  
Director Karina Armijo

### **New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division Awards \$1 million in Outdoor Equity Funding to Organizations in 12 Counties, 5 Tribal communities**

*Outdoor Equity Fund has supported 84 organizations with outdoor youth programming in second round of grants*

**SANTA FE, N.M.** –The New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) is awarding \$1 million in new Outdoor Equity Fund grants to 30 organizations, school districts, and local governments in 12 counties and five Tribal communities, ORD Director Karina Armijo announced today.

The first-of-its-kind Outdoor Equity Fund (OEF) was created in 2019 to enable all New Mexican youth equitable access to the outdoors. Since Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed the Outdoor Equity Fund into legislation, the program has granted nearly \$5 million to 211 organizations throughout the state. The grant supports programming that provides outdoor experiences that foster stewardship and respect for New Mexico’s land, water, and cultural heritage.

“The organizations and communities receiving funding for their youth programs are not only fostering the next generation of outdoor leaders by introducing new experiences but also planting the seed of the possibility of a career in outdoor recreation. These 30 programs actively introduce 6,498 young New Mexicans to the outdoors through day hikes, hunting and tanning, bike rides, ecosystem monitoring, adaptive equine camps, fly fishing, acequia cultural preservation, and more,” Acting New Mexico Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Jon Clark said.

For this second round of Outdoor Equity Fund awards, the combined organizations received \$1,052,347. Recipients are bringing an additional total match of \$722,301.50. Awardee programs serve 12 counties across New Mexico and five Tribal communities, with grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000 each.

“We are grateful and excited to be able to have the opportunity to get Indigenous and Hispanic youth out onto their traditional lands to learn about their culture, history, language, landscape, and traditional forms of conservation through fly fishing,” Vidal Gonzales, owner of The Uncivilized Outdoorsman and partner with Trout Unlimited, said. “With the mentorship from their elders, our youth will have the opportunity to engage in outdoor recreation that centers on their traditional ways of life.”

“Trout Unlimited is humbled by this incredible opportunity to work with The Uncivilized Outdoorsman to lead fly fishing education with youth and elders in the Hispanic and Indigenous Youth Fly Fishing Camp in 2024,” Claire Catlett, Trout Unlimited Upper Rio Grande engagement manager, said.

To date, the state has invested \$2,793,846 in the Outdoor Equity Fund awards in 2023 through a combination of state and federal funding, including over a million in American Rescue Plan Act money. Funding for the Outdoor Equity Fund for fiscal year 2025 will be provided by the state's Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, a bipartisan land and water conservation initiative.

“At ORD, we are committed to championing a vision where all New Mexicans have equal access to the transformative power of nature,” ORD Director Karina Armijo said. “With the announcement of 30 more awardees to the Outdoor Equity Fund and 84 total in this fiscal year alone, we collectively ensure that outdoor experiences become an inclusive and empowering force for all, fostering a diverse community that thrives in the great outdoors.”

"Funds like these are invaluable to us as an organization! With support from the Outdoor Equity Fund, students throughout the Middle Rio Grande Valley will be able to gain hands-on experience with scientific data collection, research, and community initiatives to conserve our environment and ecosystems," Zoe Daniels, Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program education manager, said. "Moreover, many students, often for the first time, will become immersed in the beauty of the bosque in their own backyards. Thank you, OEF, for helping us in supporting our local youth!"

### **2023 Round Two (FY24) Outdoor Equity Fund Award Recipients:**

**Adaptive Sports Program New Mexico** (\$35,550, Sandoval County): Offering an inclusive ski and snowboarding program for public school students with disabilities. Utilizing a wide variety of adaptive equipment and techniques to support the needs of participating students, ASPNM ensures that all youth can experience the thrill of the slopes of Ski Santa Fe. Removing barriers to outdoor recreation and making adaptive skiing and snowboarding accessible to low-income disabled youth in a positive, empowering way is the primary goal of this ASPNM program.

**Adelante Development Center** (\$40,000, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County): Destination Accessibility is an inclusive program from nonprofit Adelante that will provide affordable mobility equipment rentals such as scooters and wheelchairs for outdoor activities to youth, bridging barriers to exploration and ensuring the outdoors of New Mexico is exciting and accessible for young adventurers with disabilities.

**Animas Public Schools** (\$40,000, Animas, Hidalgo County): Animas Public Schools will provide students with environmental and climate education related to current events via school trips that venture outside—encouraging students to be globally-minded and active citizens, understanding the impact of our actions on the environment, and emphasizing the conservation and preservation of our unique ecosystems.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region** (\$22,500, McKinley County): The Big Brothers Big Sisters will support an outdoor mentoring program that encourages mentors and mentees to spend 4 to 6 hours a month outdoors and in their communities. The program supports participating in monthly events, including hiking, fishing, conservation, outdoor education, and many other outdoor activities.

**Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program** (\$20,000, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County): The Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program will support monthly outdoor education for 200 students from low-income schools to collect field data from one of the 33 data collection sites along the Middle Rio Grande. Students gather information about the bosque ecosystem health indicators, like water quality, at established monitoring sites to inform local and federal agencies on resource use and stewardship practices.

**Center for Social Sustainable Systems (CESOSS)** (\$40,000, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County): CESOSS aims to expand the Acequia Education program that has been vital in connecting people, water, and land in the South Valley. The program includes the Pajarito Landmarks Project and the Ciclos de la Tierra Curriculum, two culturally relevant projects that aim to show younger audiences that the land holds family history and dynamic ecological diversity, which in turn will reinvigorate a passion for preserving acequia culture and history among youth.

**CYCLE Kids, Inc.** (\$39,990, Bernalillo County): The CYCLE Kids program helps children get a healthy start in life by partnering with schools to promote physical and emotional well-being through cycling. By harnessing the excitement of riding a bike, CYCLE Kids aims to ensure that children have access to fundamental rights that will set them on the path to success.

**Farmington Area Single Track** (\$40,000, Farmington, San Juan County): Farmington Area Single Track will expand its 8-week inclusive youth cycling program for ages 2 to 18. Teaching youth the basics of cycling, trail etiquette, and outdoor appreciation while fostering team camaraderie.

**Gila Resources Information Project** (\$20,000, Silver City, Grant County): The Silver City Watershed Keepers Nature Discovery Summer Camp is a week-long program for 4th, 5th, and 6th-graders aimed at teaching children about their environment, cultural heritage, and public lands. Providing children with outdoor experiences and education on water resource protection and the preservation of cultural sites.

**Girls Inc. of Santa Fe** (\$40,000, Santa Fe, Santa Fe County): Throughout the year, Girls Inc. of Santa Fe immerses over 250 girls in outdoor programs, accumulating over 100 hours of engagement. Through these immersive outdoor activities and interactive learning, participants gain knowledge and confidence to explore and engage with the natural world, encouraging them to become responsible and adventurous stewards of our environment.

**Hero's Path Palliative Care** (\$39,050, Bernalillo County): The program provides personalized environmental education and promotes outdoor equity for children with complex medical needs and their families. The program eliminates significant barriers to participation for people facing high medical and mobility challenges by providing skilled nursing and highly trained educators on every field day.

**Inspiring Childrens Foundation / 4KINSHIP** (\$29,000, Navajo Nation, San Juan County): The goal of this program is to use skateboarding to provide Navajo youth with safe spaces for outdoor recreation, health, and personal growth. The funds from this grant will be used to continue and expand the existing free, weekly skateboard classes at the Two Grey Hills Skatepark in Newcomb, NM. By supporting the physical and mental health of Native young people through skateboarding, this program will build a culture of well-being that transcends economic and cultural barriers.

**Keshet Dance Company** (\$39,932, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County): Keshet will partner with 21st Century Public Academy and National Water Dance to support middle school Outdoor Environmental Education specific to water issues. Programming for youth throughout Albuquerque will connect students with creative learning, landscape engagement, water resource conversations, and the opportunity to engage in outdoor performances as part of the national collective.

**Mandy's Farm** (\$27,900, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County): Mandy's Farm provides enriching outdoor horse experiences to children who are often underrepresented due to intellectual or developmental disabilities. This youth program will be an Adaptive Horsemanship Camp, free-of-charge for these children, with a goal to empower children to flourish and grow in this program. They will experience the joy of riding and bonding with a horse in the outdoor environment.

**Mark Armijo Academy** (\$40,000, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County): Mark Armijo Academy's (MAA) Outdoor Equity Project Get Teens Outside is a dynamic and innovation project which exposes youth who have limited or no experience in the outdoors as an entry point to demonstrating the fun, hands-on, and interactive activities which can transition to careers, and individuals who access the outdoors who normally would not be able to.

**New Mexico Interscholastic Cycling League** (\$38,950, Sandoval County): In support of the vision to enable every New Mexico student to experience mountain biking, New Mexico Interscholastic Cycling League will offer a "Try it Out" program. Partnering with interested communities to introduce mountain biking to youth for the first time, this

program brings high quality mountain bikes, helmets, gear, and mountain bike instructors to communities. It also offers scholarships for full-season participation.

**New Mexico Wildlife Center** (\$40,000, Española, Santa Fe County): The New Mexico Wildlife Center will provide interactive programming about wildlife and habitat conservation to sparks excitement in students. Ambassador Animal Encounter programs challenge learners with activities utilizing animal artifacts and creative inquiry to learn about nature, ecosystems, and adaptation.

**New Mexico Youth Conservation Foundation** (\$33,680, Gila, Grant County): The New Mexico Youth Conservation Foundation (NMYCF) is a nonprofit organization focused on supporting outdoor opportunities for New Mexican youth by providing and supporting outdoor programming for schools, nonprofits, and others through free instruction, education, and equipment. The NMYCF also serves as an outdoor lending library for outdoor gear, equipment, tools, and educational supplies.

**NMCAN** (\$40,000, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County): NMCAN provides transformative community building programming designed to provide foster and juvenile justice youth with meaningful relationship-building opportunities. NMCAN recognizes the limited access these young people have to the outdoors and the need for opportunities to connect to the outdoors through this programming.

**Public Lands Interpretive Association** (\$40,000, Doña Ana County): The Whiptail Trails Club empowers 7th and 8th grade students to learn about New Mexico public lands. In its third year, this program aims to provide in-class visits and field trips to more than 200 students attending Title 1 schools in Las Cruces and surrounding rural areas. The program will help students learn more about New Mexico public lands and how to be responsible stewards.

**Raton Intermediate School** (\$5,000, Raton, Colfax County): Teachers will add real world connection to science curriculum by taking students outdoors to explore the fascinating world of biomimicry in fishing and native root systems. Students will design and test 3D printed fishing bait and utilize 3D printing technology to create systems that mitigate post-forest fire damage. This program empowers students with innovative thinking and environmental stewardship, fostering a deeper connection to the natural world.

**Rivers & Birds** (\$40,000, Arroyo Seco, Taos County): Rivers & Birds' Earth Stewardship Through Outdoor Recreation Program takes Taos County public school students into nature to teach environmental stewardship and leadership through joyful, multi-day adventures involving hiking and rafting integrated with ecology on public lands.

**Santa Fe Children's Museum** (\$40,000, Santa Fe, Santa Fe County): Santa Fe Children's Museum (SFCM) and Earth Care Santa Fe will partner from May through September 2024 to give local underrepresented youth an opportunity to experience the outdoors. Youth will tend and harvest the 12-bed community garden, and learn about pollination, conservation, responsible farming practices, and child development. Youth mentors will co-facilitate the weekly garden program, Seeds and Sprouts, encouraging visitors to learn from the natural world. Youth will then distribute their harvest to local shelters.

**Story Packer Productions** (\$40,000, Jemez Pueblo, Sandoval County): Story Packer Productions promotes health by connecting Indigenous and low-income youth to the outdoors through storytelling, habitat relationship-building, traditional food sovereignty skill building, and animal skin tanning. Youth are provided opportunities for mentorship in storytelling to document experiences and program activities by filming events when culturally appropriate. Participants gain more than experience by taking home the food they farm, meat from their hunts, hides they tan, and videos they produce.

**Tamaya Wellness Center Youth Program** (\$40,000, Santa Ana Pueblo, Sandoval County): The Tamaya Outdoor Adventure Club will provide the youth of Santa Ana Pueblo with opportunities to experience and discover outdoors adventures that may be economically challenging for their family to provide otherwise. The Outdoor Adventure

Club will also collaborate with the Santa Ana Department of Natural Resources to provide environmental and climate education.

**Teaching Outdoors to ALL Learners (TOTAL NM)** (\$40,000, Bosque Farms, Valencia County): Using the power of nature, outdoor education for all students, and hands-on experiential learning encompassing multiple subjects at once, TOTAL NM will mentor youth to help design the Outdoor Educator Leadership Institute Program at public schools throughout Valencia County. The end goal will be a framework for outdoor classrooms adaptable for schools, districts, and communities throughout New Mexico.

**Trout Unlimited / The Uncivilized Outdoorsman** (\$39875.10, Rio Arriba County): Trout Unlimited will co-partner with The Uncivilized Outdoorsman, a Pueblo Indigenous-owned company, to provide the Indigenous and Hispanic Youth Fly Fishing Camp during the summer of 2024. The program will be offered to 10 underserved students (ages of 9-18) and their families who self-identify as Indigenous and Hispanic from Sandoval, Rio Arriba, and Santa Fe Counties.

**Trout Unlimited New Mexico State Council** (\$40,000, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County): The Trout Unlimited (TU) New Mexico Council proposes to expand the Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program statewide. Students raise trout in their classrooms, participate in outdoor ecology and recreation events, and release the young fish at designated locations with the guidance of TU volunteers, teachers, and agency support. TIC is a STEM-based collaborative educational program to inspire the next generation of conservation stewards.

**Youth Agricultural Cooperative / Southwest Organizing Project** (\$30,000, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County): The Youth Agricultural Cooperative consists of two main programs: an 8-week summer agricultural internship with 20-30 middle and high school youth and a youth leadership program that with 8-10 young leaders. Youth utilize a community garden for service learning and take produce to market. Youth leaders are supported through scholarships.

**Youth Heartline** (\$25,000, Taos, Taos County): Youth Heartline's Branches Hiking Program will provide outdoor hiking and camping experiences for youth aged 9-13. Youth will participate in four hiking trips to different locations in the Carson National Forest and the program will culminate in an overnight camping trip. Each activity will incorporate both environmental and socio-emotional education, focused on stewardship, native plant identification, and environmental awareness, while the socio-emotional education will focus on developing coping skills, friendship development, and building confidence.

A review committee spent hours reviewing, giving feedback on, and scoring the applications, with a minimum of two reviewers for each application. ORD is grateful to the evaluation committee:

- Karina Armijo – Director, ORD
- AJ Jones – Deputy Director, ORD
- Shani Harvie – Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator, EDD
- Kayla Lucero-Matteucci – Just Transition Advisor, EDD
- Alyssa Renwick – Former OEF Coordinator and Deputy Director of ORD
- Kathy Whiteman – Director, Center for a Sustainable Future and Outdoor Programs

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*Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program*





*Trout Unlimited / The Uncivilized Outdoorsman*

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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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