



NEW MEXICO

OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

Contact: Michelle Simon
Michelle.Simon@edd.nm.gov
(505) 439-2320

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
Cabinet Secretary-Designate Rob Black
Deputy Cabinet Secretary Isaac Romero
ORD Director Karina Armijo

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From Trails to Jobs: Outdoor Recreation drives \$3.2 billion economic impact in New Mexico

Bureau of Economic Analysis data reveals outdoor recreation supports over 29,000 jobs and sustains record growth

SANTA FE, N.M. — The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) has released new data exhibiting outdoor recreation’s powerful and positive economic impact on New Mexico’s economy. According to the latest data from the BEA Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, outdoor recreation created **\$3.2 billion in value added for New Mexico, accounting for 2.4% of New Mexico GDP and 29,182 jobs in 2023.**

The BEA report indicates that 2023 has seen the largest recorded increase in New Mexico’s outdoor recreation gross domestic product (GDP) at 6.6% compared to the previous year. Additionally, the industry has experienced steady growth in employment, with over 1,000 new jobs created. The report also highlights increased participation in activities such as hunting and trapping, kayaking and canoeing, and snow sports. The highest economic contributors to the state’s outdoor recreation sector are RVing, boating and fishing, and snow activities.

After assuming office in 2019, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham identified outdoor recreation as one of nine target industries to grow and diversify New Mexico’s economy. In April 2019, the governor signed a bill creating the state’s first Office of Outdoor Recreation. Since then, the Outdoor Recreation Division has invested \$22.4 million in trails and infrastructure projects and awarded \$6.4 million in Outdoor Equity Fund grants, getting more than 83,000 youth outside for transformative, educational experiences.

New Mexico Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary-Designate Rob Black said the governor’s commitment to outdoor recreation is paying dividends for the state. “The new data shows that outdoor recreation is vital to New Mexico’s economy and the well-being of our communities. This is especially true in our rural areas where it creates jobs, boosts local economies, and enhances health and wellness,” Black said.

Key Highlights from the 2023 data on the outdoor recreation economy in New Mexico:

- *New Mexico saw a 6.6% increase in 2023 YOY in total outdoor recreation activities.*
- *Top core outdoor recreation activities include RVing, boating/fishing, snow activities, equestrian, and climbing/hiking/tent camping.*
- *The average annual growth rate since 2013 is 5.5% overall, 6.5% in core OR activities (listed above).*
- *YOY since 2022 snow activities increased 10%, canoeing/kayaking increased 13%, and hunting/trapping increased 17%.*

“The latest BEA data reinforces what we’ve always known here in New Mexico — outdoor recreation is deeply intertwined with our quality of life and a thriving, sustainable economy,” Karina Armijo, director of the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division, said. “Investing in outdoor access and stewardship through programs like the Outdoor Equity Fund and Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant fosters a healthier, more connected, and resilient future for all New Mexicans.”

At a national level, these new figures show that outdoor recreation generated \$1.2 trillion in economic output, \$639.5 billion in GDP (2.3% of total GDP), comprised 3.1% of U.S. employees, and accounted for 5 million jobs in 2023. This means the outdoor recreation economy contributes more to the U.S. economy than farming, oil and gas extraction, mining, and utilities.

Jessica Turner, president of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, elevated the new data as a testament to the strength and importance of the outdoor recreation economy. “This marks another year of growth for the outdoor recreation economy, underscoring its resilience and importance across the nation. We urge this Congress to take swift action to pass the EXPLORE Act, a widely supported package of bills that will help to ensure that all Americans have access to the outdoors and support the communities and businesses that rely on recreation economies.”

BEA press release: https://www.bea.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/orsa1124_o.pdf

Outdoor Recreation Roundtable news release: <https://recreationroundtable.org/news/new-data-shows-outdoor-recreation-is-a-1-2-trillion-economic-engine-supporting-5-million-american-jobs/>

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Fishing is among the top outdoor recreation activities in New Mexico.



Canoeing and kayaking in the state has grown in popularity by 13% since 2022.



Participation in snow activities increased by 10%.

The Outdoor Recreation Division is a division of the New Mexico Economic Development Department. Its mission is to increase equitable access to the outdoors for all New Mexicans, ensuring healthy outcomes, environmental stewardship, and economic prosperity. For more information, visit nmoutside.com or follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) @NMOOutdoorRec.



New Mexico Economic Development Department
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New Mexico Economic Development Department | 1100 South St. Francis Dr Joseph M.
Montoya Building | Santa Fe, NM 87505-4147 US

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