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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 23, 2026

State invests \$13.5M in trails, programs, recreation economy

SANTA FE— New Mexico will invest \$13.5 million in trails, watersheds and outdoor access as part of the FY 27 state budget signed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, boosting the state’s \$3.6 billion outdoor recreation economy.

The Outdoor Recreation Division of the Economic Development Department (EDD) will receive \$3.5 million toward its Outdoor Equity Fund, the nation’s first-of-its-kind grant program dedicated to connecting underserved youth with outdoor experiences. The division also received \$10 million for its Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant to fund community-led trail development and improvements, forest and watershed restoration, and infrastructure projects that expand recreational access and strengthen local economies.

“The outdoor recreation industry enhances the quality of life as well as the economies of communities throughout New Mexico,” said **EDD Secretary Rob Black**. “This funding fuels economic growth, creates jobs and career pathways, bringing new opportunities for everyone, especially our youth.”

“We deeply appreciate the governor and legislators for continuing to prioritize equitable access to New Mexico’s outdoors,” said **Outdoor Recreation Division Director Karina Armijo**. “This investment helps ensure that communities across the state — especially rural and Tribal communities — can access the economic, health and quality-of-life benefits that outdoor recreation provides.”

Established by the legislature in 2019, the Outdoor Recreation Division has invested \$8.7 million to connect more than 106,000 youth to the outdoors through the Outdoor Equity Fund and \$33.9 million in outdoor infrastructure projects through the Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant program, supporting an estimated 2,367 jobs.

For more information about Outdoor Recreation Division programs and grant opportunities, visit www.NMOutside.com.



Climbing, hiking and tent camping are among the fastest growing activities in New Mexico

EDD's mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive. EDD's programs contribute directly to this mission by funding workforce training and infrastructure that supports business growth, helping every community create a thriving economy.

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