



# EDD

ECONOMIC  
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DEPARTMENT

## OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

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## **Nearly 500 New Jobs Created Through the Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant in 2022**

*Round three of Trails+ awards benefit 10 counties*

**SANTA FE, N.M.** - Nearly \$2 million in outdoor infrastructure funding for 19 projects statewide was publicly declared today by the Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) of the New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD). This is the third round of Outdoor Recreation Trails+ grant awards announced by EDD Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes for 2022.

The Outdoor Recreation Trails+ grant seeks to enhance economic development, prosperity, and wellness for New Mexicans through projects including outdoor classrooms, river walks, and trail accessibility. Round one of awards was announced in [June](#), round two in [September](#). The third round of 19 awards totaling \$1,809,946 million brings the 2022 total in Trails+ funding to \$6,559,352 million for 54 projects.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham created both ORD and the Trails+ grant in 2019 in order to increase outdoor jobs and access throughout New Mexico. The outdoor recreation industry is a priority for EDD as a key target sector to diversify the state's economy. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, New Mexico now ranks fifth nationwide in outdoor recreation employment growth. In 2021, outdoor recreation contributed \$2.3 billion to the state's GDP and employed 28,475 New Mexicans.

"The thriving outdoor recreation economy supports communities, especially in rural areas statewide, with job creation, increased access and a higher quality of life," Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said. "Outdoor recreation businesses rely on the projects supported by this grant. I want to thank lawmakers for their continued support of outdoor recreation funding."

The projects awarded this round will create over 200 jobs in 10 counties: Bernalillo, Lincoln, Mora, Otero, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, San Juan, San Miguel, Sierra, and Taos. Nearly 70% of the Trails+ funding will benefit Tribal or rural communities. New jobs supported through the grant will include at least 82 full time, 21 part time, 14 seasonal, 40 contractual, and 46 youth positions. Overall, 2022 Trails+ funding will generate over 500 new employment opportunities.

Taos Pueblo is the only Tier II (\$100-500k funded) project awarded in round three. Taos Pueblo will receive funds to clear access to Tribal trails blocked by downed trees from a wind event in December 2021 and design and engineer a 4.5 mile non-motorized trail along NM 150 to Arroyo Seco. This trail segment was identified as a high priority in the

Enchanted Circle Trails Plan and will be a safe connecting connector for residents of Arroyo Seco, Valdez, Des Montes, El Salto, and Taos Pueblo to the Town of Taos, while also establishing access for cyclists and hikers to the public lands along the Rio Hondo and Taos Ski Valley in the Carson National Forest.

“Taos Pueblo is very appreciative and thankful for receiving the Trails+ grant award,” Taos Pueblo Tribal Secretary Dwayne Lefthand said. “This funding will assist the community and surrounding areas by providing a safe alternative for biking and walking along Hwy 150 with the new proposed trail. It will also provide the Pueblo with funding to reopen trails that are inaccessible on Tribal lands, hit heavily by the “big wind event” we had last year in December. These trails are not only used for cultural access but are crucial for emergency access. This will provide an opportunity, at a minimum, to address some of the lower areas that need clearing of trees and debris.”

A review committee of six people spent three weeks reviewing the funding applicants. The committee included NM Tourism Development Director Lancing Adams, National Park Service Outdoor Recreation Planner Atila Balitty, ORD Outdoor Recreation Planner Carl Colonius, State Land Office Outdoor Recreation Director Craig Johnson, North Central New Mexico Economic Community Development Planner Felicity Fonseca, Philmont Scout Ranch Vice President and General Manager Roger Hoyt, ORD Marketing Coordinator AJ Jones, and ORD Deputy Director Alyssa Renwick.

“We’re very excited to see another round of Trails+ grant funding go to communities throughout New Mexico,” ORD Outdoor Recreation Planner Carl Colonius said. “We plan to continue creating equitable access to public lands and recreational infrastructure in New Mexico, as well as support job creation in the state with this strategy. We appreciate the team that helped evaluate the proposals. Their assistance is invaluable.”

Meet the third round 2022 Trails+ awardees:

**CAPPED, Inc. (Cancer Awareness, Prevalence, Prevention and Early Detection) (\$99,999.00, Tier I):**

The CAPPED project will complete the Trinity Turtle Healing Labyrinth Park (TTHLP), creating the largest permanent labyrinth park of its kind in the United States. The path of the 40,000 sq. ft. labyrinth meets ADA accessibility guidelines and doubles as an open-air amphitheater/learning center. Visual and audible signage will educate the public about the health benefits of labyrinths, as well as the unique cultural, historical, and recreational opportunities within the Tularosa Basin and mountain communities. Sunrise and sunset views invite picnics and RVs stays.

**City of Farmington (\$99,999.00, Tier I):**

The Juniper Basin Recreation Area consists of 93 acres in the northern part of Farmington for nonmotorized recreation, professionally designed single-track bike trails and terrain park for all skill levels, and open space connectivity with Lake Farmington and bike trails on BLM land. With the help of Trails Solutions, a trail system design arm of IMBA (Intl. Mountain Biking Association) the City of Farmington has developed design documents that outline trails of varying skill levels and abilities, a tot track, pump track, and concurrent walking trails. This project will be a part of the first phase of the park, which will include the parking area, a bike recreation area, and nearly a half mile of single-track trail.

**City of Las Vegas (\$99,999.00, Tier I):**

While developing the city's comprehensive master plan in 2020, this project was identified by the community as a high priority with potential to significantly impact access to outdoor recreation and healthy outdoor activities for the community as a whole. The City of Las Vegas' Rodriguez Park Baseball & Softball Field is open to the public, locally, regionally, and nationally. The city will be adding a trail encompassing the park, a project unique to this area of the state.

**Collins Lake Autism Center (\$82,000.00, Tier I):**

Collins Lake Outdoor Learning Center is adding another classroom, upgrading existing facilities, including water and septic systems, and building additional facilities to enhance outdoor recreational opportunities. Since opening, the demands on the center have grown and are now greater than current infrastructure can meet. This project will help meet the

needs of the community.

**Continental Divide Trail Coalition (\$32,456.20, Tier I):**

To support various aspects of maintenance and stewardship work on the Continental Divide Trail (CDT), Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) projects include a volunteer maintenance project in the Carson National Forest, an Adopt-a-Trail training in Silver City, and four single-day Community Stewardship events, one in each designated CDT Gateway Community in New Mexico. Collectively, these projects will address deferred maintenance and infrastructure needs on the CDT and support the long-term protection of the trail.

**EcoServants (\$38,695.00, Tier I):**

Design and construction of the Sawmill Trail will open access to the Grindstone Lake Trail system by creating a new trail to Grindstone Mesa from Carrizo Canyon Road at a trailhead next to Mescalero Apache Reservation and close to Ruidoso Downs. This 5-mile trail will be cut first by a mini-dozer and a mini-excavator, then followed by EcoServants' summer New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps (NMYCC) crews. Seasonal youth crews will finish the trail by grooming the tread, cleaning back slopes and down slopes, and completing turns.

**El Rancho de las Golondrinas (\$50,000.00, Tier I):**

El Rancho de las Golondrinas is expanding and adding ADA accessible routes throughout the historic museum property. A re-envisioned and expanded wayfinding system will be implemented throughout the trail networks utilizing universal symbols and Spanish translation. This will provide equitable access, a greater educational experience, and ensure the health and safety of guests through improvements and clearer navigation of the property for all trail visitors.

**Friends of the Questa Public Library (\$56,000.00, Tier I):**

This project with Friends of the Questa Public Library will improve upon the grounds surrounding the Questa Public Library and explore connectivity to Questa High School. It is an important development of this traditional Hispanic community to provide an outdoor community multipurpose space. It will serve Questa and surrounding areas in northern Taos County. The project will provide opportunities for outdoor activities, family gatherings, educational and storytelling programs for children, and enjoying the beautiful mountain views. Friends of the Questa Public Library stated the space will also meet needs as a tourist destination, improve the village infrastructure, and attract new residents to the community.

**Glorieta Adventure Camps (\$99,999.00, Tier I):**

Glorieta Adventure Camps plans to restore the Historic Route 66 path and Old Santa Fe Trail that run through their property. The trails will be transformed into a multiuse trail for mountain bikes, adaptive bikes, electric bikes, and small ATVs. This will be among the first adaptive trails in Santa Fe county, allowing visitors of varying abilities to partake in outdoor adventure. The project will include trail construction, trailhead signage, and educational interpretive signage.

**Great Southwest Council (GSWC) Boy Scouts of America's (BSA) (\$64,750.00, Tier I):**

This project will increase outdoor use and access by improving the usability of the GSWC BSA Campbell Ranch through creating new trailhead infrastructure and a trail system. The project includes building trails, improving ranch usage with the installation of a latrine and picnic area at the trailhead, and improve the existing parking area. Currently, use of the ranch is limited by a lack of facilities. The ranch is near a large population base and is open to all youth development groups that would like to promote the enjoyment of the outdoors in their programs.

**Natural Curiosity (\$91,400.00, Tier I):**

Natural Curiosity endeavors to address deferred and routine maintenance on over 60 miles of trail within the Black Range Ranger District of the Gila National Forest. These trails provide access to hikers, backpackers, hunters, horseback riders, fire crews, and day or multiday users of the GNF. By restoring and maintaining these trails, this project will increase opportunities for tourism, education, recreation, and conservation in Sierra County. Phase I of this project will focus on reopening 35 miles of trail within the 2022

Black Fire burn scar, while Phase II will reopen adjoining trails and address necessary reroutes in consultation with the USFS.

**New Mexico Off-Highway-Vehicle Alliance (NMOHVA) (\$60,000.00, Tier I):**

There are several goals of this NMOHVA project, each designed to de-escalate existing and potential conflicts between grazing permittees on the forest and OHV recreational trail use. The education and gate management project can be repeated in other districts and jurisdictions if shown to be effective. Public lands in New Mexico are very popular for OHV recreation where designated routes are open to motorized travel, but misguided, off-road travel and lack of knowledge on use of throughways can cause conflicts between land users NMOHVA stated. This project will de-escalate contested use between ranchers and OHVs on public land through better gate management methods and targeted educational campaigns.

**Public Lands Interpretive Association (\$97,000.00, Tier I):**

The Valley of Fires Trail Project will increase trail access at the Valley of Fires Recreation Area in Carrizozo by building an additional trail to a natural site with a unique, kipuka lava rock formation. The trail will connect with an existing interpretive trail and offer a 1.5-mile, round-trip hiking experience for visitors. Included in the project will be trail building, interpretive signage, and two shade structures with benches for visitors. Interpretive signage will explain how kipuka are formed and how flora and fauna depend on these formations. This project will help further connect visitors to the area.

**Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, Albuquerque Public Schools (\$40,000.00, Tier I):**

The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, an environmental education center owned by Albuquerque Public Schools and managed by the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, will improve upon their trail network, which needs maintenance and repair to allow for better grades, drainage, accessibility, stabilization, reroutes, and replacement of structures to provide safer and sustainable usage. Thousands of 5th graders, community organizations, professional, and public visitors hike the trails each year. Trail work will be performed by members of the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC) and Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps (ALCC).

**Santa Fe Conservation Trust (\$92,723.00, Tier I):**

This project focuses on the need for recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. The Santa Fe Conservation Trust's Conservation Homestead Accessible Trail goal is to create a half-mile accessible trail loop and parking area, along with interpretive signage at the entrance to a 4-mile loop that connects to the larger Galisteo Basin Preserve trail system. The trail will serve thousands, including the 18,933 individuals with a disability in Santa Fe County. It will also help elders and others who need an accessible trail loop to experience the dynamic, rural landscape. The trail project will provide free access to the 12.9% of residents in Santa Fe County with a disability who otherwise would not be able to experience and learn about the landscape of the Galisteo Basin.

**Taos Center for the Arts (\$64,893.50, Tier I):**

Taos Center for the Arts (TCA) generated a 5-plus-year phased plan to revitalize their campus to create aesthetically appealing outdoor green spaces for public art, performance, recreation, and relaxation with a goal towards uniting and educating the community and visitors to the unique and special qualities of rural Taos. TCA envisions a community campus that maintains the history and intent of its spaces; that creates a welcoming, inclusive, accessible, and attractive environment; and that enhances TCA's identity as an historic, cultural art center of Taos. This phase of the project will generate construction documents for our outdoor campus revitalization project.

**Taos Pueblo (\$490,034.00, Tier II):**

The funds for this project will support two projects on Taos Pueblo land that will increase connectivity both within Taos Pueblo for Tribal members and between the communities that border Taos Pueblo. One project is surveying and engineering for a 4.5-mile nonmotorized trail paralleling NM Hwy 150 between US 64 at El Prado and the community of Arroyo Seco, clearing and restoration of Taos Pueblo wilderness trails for emergency and fire response, as well as for cultural, educational, spiritual, and subsistence access is the second project.

**University of New Mexico-Taos (\$99,999.00, Tier I):**

UNM-Taos is a walking destination that allows many people living in the region to benefit from the outdoors. In order to improve the experience of people who access the trails for exercise and enjoyment, UNM-Taos will restore an existing trail developed by the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps and enhance it with the addition of fitness stations. The college will also develop an accessible Art Walk that will curate existing outdoor sculpture and provide a pathway that can be accessed by pedestrian and wheelchair traffic. This project will develop trails to ensure adequate width, grade, and surface to provide full accessibility to the art and the experience of the Art Walk. The trail will be used for exercise, including walking, jogging, and running. Adding outdoor fitness equipment will enhance the use of the trail for exercise. Trailhead signage and other informational signage will complete the upgrades to the UNM-Taos southern trail.

**Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque (\$50,000.00, Tier I):**

The Village of Los Ranchos will build an edible trail, from a pollinator garden to an acequia at the Larry P. Abraham Agri-Nature Center. Public access to the trail will also include formal educational programming from an outdoor classroom to self-guided learning through interpretive signs along the route. The trail will begin at the pollinator garden, meander through a community garden and plaza with raised beds and edible landscaping, cross a field of ancient grains, and connect with the Griegos Lateral Acequia that bisects the Los Poblanos Open Space.



*Taos Pueblo Trail Projects, courtesy of Taos Pueblo*



*Conceptual rendering of non-motorized path along NM 150 near Taos Pueblo.*

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*The Outdoor Recreation Division 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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