



NEW MEXICO

OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
Acting Cabinet Secretary Mark Roper
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Outdoor Recreation Division awards nearly \$2 million in a fourth round of funding through the Trails+ Grant

The Trails+ Grant supports outdoor infrastructure projects to expand access to the outdoors in New Mexico

SANTA FE, N.M. – The Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) of the Economic Development Department (EDD) has announced the fourth round of fiscal year 2024 Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant recipients. ORD is awarding \$1,944,944 in funding to 13 projects throughout the state to expand outdoor access and grow the New Mexico outdoor recreation economy.

“Since Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham created the Outdoor Recreation Division in 2019 and identified outdoor businesses as a key path to diversify New Mexico’s economy, the Economic Development Department through ORD has provided 147 grants in 29 counties with this innovative Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant program,” Acting EDD Cabinet Secretary Mark Roper said. “These are infrastructure and improvement dollars flowing to all corners of New Mexico to help communities support recreational amenities and create jobs.”

ORD has invested over \$20 million to increase outdoor access through the Outdoor Recreation Trails+ and Outdoor Equity Fund programs. The Trails+ Grant was created in 2020 by the governor and lawmakers to support projects that connect communities to outdoor recreation opportunities, including trails, outdoor classrooms, community shelters, wildlife viewing areas, and more.

“We are thrilled to continue fostering the growth and accessibility of New Mexico's beautiful landscapes through the Trails+ Grant,” ORD Director Karina Armijo said. “This funding is not just an investment in infrastructure; it’s an investment in community well-being, economic development, and the preservation of our natural heritage for future generations. By enhancing our outdoor spaces, we ensure that every New Mexican has the opportunity to connect with nature and experience the countless benefits of outdoor recreation.”

The 13 new projects are expected to bring almost \$1.5 million in matching funds and create 132 jobs. These new positions include full-time, part-time, and seasonal roles across the state.

The Trails+ Grant opened this fiscal year with \$10 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funding. Through multiple rounds of awards during, ORD supported a total of 57 projects with \$7,627,513. Since the program was created in 2020, ORD has provided over 147 grants worth \$15,152,649 to projects in 29 New Mexico counties.

“The City of Lovington is thrilled that we have been awarded the Trails+ Grant from the State of New Mexico’s Outdoor Recreation Division,” Lovington City Manager David Miranda said. “This significant grant will enhance access to and enjoyment of the 70 plus acres of Chaparral Park in Lovington. The grant will allow us to fund necessary changes and upgrades to the large outdoor structure, amphitheater and park amenities and assist with economic development by enhancing the region’s features. Without this funding, performing the necessary upgrades for the aging and dilapidated amphitheater and group

shelter would have been challenging, if not impossible.”

A new grantee in FY24, the Santa Fe Rail Trail, is a collaborative endeavor between Santa Fe County and the City of Santa Fe. The Trails+ Grant assists in the continued development of a valuable community trail connecting Santa Fe Railyard to Lamy, 16 miles to the Southeast. ORD is also thrilled to work with a new trail group grantee from Carlsbad, the Cavern City Trail Keepers, who will install 11 cattleguards along the La Cueva Ridge Trail. This will enable community access to recreation areas without allowing livestock to stray from pastures onto the trail between the City of Carlsbad and Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The grant will support a wide variety of outdoor infrastructure projects.

“The Adaptive Sports Program of New Mexico (ASPNM) is proud to collaborate with the ORD to enhance inclusion and accessibility to outdoor recreation,” ASPNM Director of Development Camille Romero said. “ASPNM is a steadfast provider of adaptive sports for individuals with disabilities across New Mexico. Despite significant growth in our community of individuals served, our infrastructure has remained minimal. Thanks to the funding from the ORD Trails+ program, we will construct a much-needed and eagerly anticipated accessible facility at Ski Santa Fe. This initiative will help to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the joy and exhilaration that accompanies a day on the slopes!”

There is currently \$2.3 million in funding available for Outdoor Recreation Trails+ FY24 and the Outdoor Recreation Division will be accepting Trails+ Grant submissions until June 30, 2024. Read the [program guide](#) for details on how to apply.

Meet the FY 2024 Round 4 Trails+ awardees:

Adaptive Sports Program New Mexico, \$99,000, Santa Fe Ski Basin: The Adaptive Sports Program New Mexico facility will serve as a fully accessible welcome center for individuals with disabilities participating in adaptive skiing and snowboarding at Ski Santa Fe. It will provide a staging area for the numerous athletes and volunteers involved in ASPNM's winter sports programs, accommodating hundreds of participants throughout the season. Additionally, the facility will house ASPNM's extensive inventory of adaptive equipment, ranging from sit skis and ski bikes to outriggers and various other tools, ensuring accessibility for all individuals, regardless of ability, on the slopes.

Albuquerque Mountain Bike Association, \$99,000, Sandia Crest: Albuquerque Mountain Bike Association (AMBA) in collaboration with the Sandia Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest, will build upon and improve the existing downhill designated mountain biking trails on the east side of the Sandia Crest. This scalable project was scoped and approved in the USFS's April 2021 Sandia Trails Improvement Project but requires supporting labor and funding from the biking community and collaborating organizations. The project will use a hybrid trail development approach, pairing machine and hand-built trail construction strategies to create unrivaled progressive features, while maintaining the character and experience of the existing trails

Cavern City Trail Keepers, \$61,000, Carlsbad: Cavern City Trail Keepers will assist the local BLM office with the provision and installation of 11 cattleguards and equestrian gates along the developing La Cueva Ridge Tail (LCRT). The LCRT will run from the City of Carlsbad to Whites City, at Carlsbad Caverns National Park, connecting the La Cueva Non-Motorized Trail System to the Guadalupe Ridge National Recreation Trail to create, maintain, and preserve a diversity of trail experiences for mountain bikers and other outdoor enthusiasts in the Carlsbad, NM area.

City of Lovington, \$500,000, Lovington: Lovington's Chaparral Park and Lake provides outdoor recreation to numerous individuals and groups in the community. The funded project will replace the aging shelter with a larger structure, ensuring safer and more pleasing outdoor amphitheater and park amenities. The city seeks to enhance the communal experience and foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents.

City of Moriarty, \$99,999, Moriarty: Moriarty will construct a walking trail around the perimeter of its City Park. With access to sporting facilities, proximity to the community center and library, and central location within the city, a walking trail incorporated into the park will provide many benefits to the city and its residents.

Collins Lake Autism Center, \$60,000, Mora County: Collins Lake Autism Center is diversifying its programming through a partnership with Mora Public Schools to provide outdoor environmental education. This grant supports the installation of a classroom yurt and related facilities to meet the growing need for environmental education programs.

Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions, \$99,999, Thoreau: This project will increase year-round access to Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions' outdoor education programs for young people of all backgrounds by adding a heated bunkhouse space to an existing building on CGE's property in McKinley County.

Las Placitas Association, \$99,950, Sandoval County: Las Placitas Association will provide the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rio Puerco Field Office an Environmental Assessment and Recreation Area Management Plan in support of trail systems, associated facilities, defining habitat connectivity, and the designation of a Developed Recreation Area on BLM land, nicknamed "Buffalo Tract," that lies north of the Village of Placitas. The multi-use trail system will serve local residents and the broader regional recreational community.

Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project, \$25,000, Rio Arriba County: The grant will provide funding for needed maintenance of severely eroded trails at the Wells Preserve. The maintenance and upkeep of trails will improve safety and establish better access for visitors, K-12 schools, and local Tribes primarily from Rio Arriba County. The project will better showcase the diversity of archaeological features and highlight the histories of the region.

Santa Fe Botanical Garden, \$99,000, Santa Fe: Santa Fe Botanical Gardens (SFBG) pathways need renovation for continued safe and accessible passage for people of all abilities. The original stabilized crusher fines paths are aesthetically suited to the naturalistic gardens and more ecologically sound than pavement. However, this surface is subject to degradation over time and needs renewal. SFBG will also develop a new Children's Discovery Garden in need of additional paths.

Santa Fe County, \$500,000, Lamy: The awarded project will construct Segment 6 of the Santa Fe Rail Trail, an 18-mile multimodal trail system that will connect the Santa Fe Railyard to the historic Lamy Train Station. Segment 6 extends 1.6 miles from Spur Ranch Road to a new trailhead at U.S. Highway 285. The trail will be ADA-compliant, 8 feet wide, and soft-surfaced. Segment 6 is the penultimate section needed to complete the 18-mile regional trail.

Taos Mainstreet, \$99,999, Town of Taos: Taos MainStreet (TMS) will replace existing vehicular and pedestrian signage to make downtown Taos more navigable, friendly, and prosperous. The wayfinding project is a component of TMS's Walkability Initiative stemming from downtown Taos business community members voicing their concern that visitors have difficulty navigating downtown. The project team consists of TMS, Groundwork Studio, Leighton Moon Design Services, and the Town of Taos. The goal is to create signs that direct visitors and Taoseños to historic destinations and businesses, encourage walking and biking, and develop a wayfinding system that is simple, predictable, inclusive, and contributes to economic development.

Trout Unlimited, \$99,000, Taos: The La Junta Trail in the Wild Rivers Recreation Area of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument has been closed since 2018. The BLM has identified the trail's reopening as their top priority for improvements in the monument in the coming years. This project will finalize the design of the trail's reconstruction. By facilitating the process of implementing repairs, post BLM feasibility study, and with a completed design, the reopening of an iconic northern New Mexico trail will be the final step.

The review committee for the fourth round of awards was comprised of:

- Michael Chacon, New Mexico Indian Affairs Department Tribal Environmental Justice Specialist
- Samuel Jensen, NM Dept of Transportation Active Transportation Program Supervisor, Bicycle/Pedestrian/Equestrian Coordinator
- Desi Ortiz, New Mexico Game and Fish Off-highway Vehicle Program Manager
- Kerry Wood, Forest Service Southwest Region Trails Dispersed Rec and Travel Management Program Manager

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Albuquerque Mountain Bike Association, trail work on the Sandia Crest

The mission of the Outdoor Recreation Division, a division of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, 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](#) at [@NMOOutdoorRec](#).



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