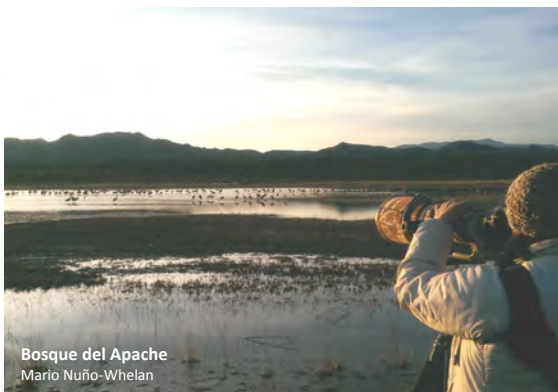


# The Economic Benefits of Protected Public Lands in New Mexico

New Mexico’s protected public lands, such as wilderness areas, monuments, and wildlife refuges, have a substantial impact on our local economy. From recreation and tourism—like camping, hiking, rafting, and birdwatching—to traditional uses—including hunting, fishing, ranching and acequia farming—our public lands support a wide variety of activities and attract both visitors and businesses to the Land of Enchantment. Moreover, they serve vital functions and provide harder-to-measure ecosystem benefits such as clean air, clean water, and wildlife habitat. These functions are essential to the environmental and human health of our state.

## Public Lands Support a Thriving Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Industry

- Outdoor recreation is an American heritage. Annually, **Americans spend \$646 billion on outdoor recreation** – including gear, vehicles, trips, travel expenses and more.<sup>1</sup>
- In New Mexico, outdoor recreation generates **\$6.1 billion** in consumer spending; **68,000** direct jobs; and **\$458 million** in state and local tax revenue.<sup>2</sup>
- Tourism is New Mexico’s second largest industry, bringing more than **\$5.9 billion** annually.<sup>3</sup>
- According to a report by the New Mexico Tourism Department, **over half (51.9%) of all overnight visitors to the state engage in outdoor activities.**<sup>4</sup>



Bosque del Apache  
Mario Nuño-Whelan

### *Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge—Socorro County, NM*

- The Bosque del Apache brings in **\$13.7 million annually** from non-residents to the counties of Socorro, Bernalillo, and Sierra, including \$4.3 million in regional tax revenue and 203 jobs generated.<sup>5</sup>
- Bird watching alone is significant for New Mexico and **the state ranks fifth nationally** with 46 percent of its birders coming from outside its borders. The Festival of the Cranes at the Bosque del Apache Refuge contributes more than **\$2.2 million to the region** over its six days.<sup>6</sup>

## Hunter and Angler Spending is Significant for the Local Economy

- According to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, New Mexico’s hunters and anglers spend more than **\$613 million** in the state—supporting more than 7,900 jobs, \$267 million in labor income, and another \$51.4 million in state and local tax revenues.<sup>7</sup>
- In the West, **69% of hunters hunt on public lands.**<sup>8</sup>
- Hunters and anglers support nearly as many jobs in New Mexico as Los Alamos National Laboratories, one of the largest employers in the state (7,695 vs 7,949).<sup>9</sup>

### *2013 Spending in Several Northern New Mexico Counties<sup>9</sup>*

	Mora County	Rio Arriba County	San Miguel County	Santa Fe County	Taos County
Angler Spending	\$3,498,128	\$12,628,806	\$28,912,139	\$18,488,442	\$14,314,724
Hunter Spending	\$3,551,844	\$22,212,895	\$18,379,145	\$22,499,635	\$9,263,884
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,049,972</b>	<b>\$34,841,701</b>	<b>\$47,291,284</b>	<b>\$40,988,077</b>	<b>\$23,578,608</b>

1 Outdoor Industry Association (2012) - *The Outdoor Recreation Economy* (<http://outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/recreation/economy.html>)

2 Ibid.

3 New Mexico Tourism Department – *2014 Governor’s Conference Presentation* (<http://nmtourism.org>)

4 New Mexico Tourism Department – *2014 Annual Report* (<http://nmtourism.org>)

5 US Fish and Wildlife Service (2004) – *Banking on Nature: The Economic Benefits to Local Communities of National Wildlife Refuge Visitation*

6 Ibid.

7 New Mexico Department of Game and Fish - *The Economic Contributions of Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping in New Mexico in 2013: A statewide and county-level analysis* (<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/publications/press-release/NMDGF-Economics-of-Fishing-Hunting-and-Trapping-Final.pdf>)

8 Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (2014) - *Our Public Lands Not for Sale* ([https://www.backcountryhunters.org/images/Public\\_Lands\\_Report.pdf](https://www.backcountryhunters.org/images/Public_Lands_Report.pdf))

9 Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation - *2013 Sportsmen’s Economic Impact Report* ([http://www.sportsmenslink.org/uploads/page/Economic\\_Impact\\_Report\\_E-version.pdf](http://www.sportsmenslink.org/uploads/page/Economic_Impact_Report_E-version.pdf))

10 New Mexico Department of Game and Fish 2013 (*see footnote 7*)

## High Quality of Life Attracts Businesses and Investment

- Research shows that communities and counties near protected public lands outperform those without public lands in economic performance measures, including employment, income growth, and property values.<sup>10</sup>
- Across New Mexico and the West, protected federal lands such as national parks, monuments, and wilderness areas are associated with higher rates of job growth. From 1970 to 2010, western non-metropolitan counties with more than 30% federal protected land **increased jobs by 345%**. By comparison, non-metro counties with no protected federal lands increased employment by 83%.<sup>11</sup>
- Public lands and the amenities they provide – such as pristine scenery and wildlife – help increase property values. Home owners near parks and other protected areas can have **property values more than 20 percent higher** than similar properties elsewhere.<sup>12</sup>
- In today's economy, the bulk of the economic value of natural amenities and recreation opportunities lies in their ability to **attract and retain people, businesses, and retirees who locate in areas with a high quality of life**, such as natural amenities. The same qualities that attract businesses also draw retirees and people with investment income.



- Federal protected lands have helped places like Cibola County diversify their economies which had been stagnant due to overreliance on declining resource extraction industries.
- The communities in Cibola County that neighbor the **El Malpais National Monument** experienced strong growth after the 1987 designation of the monument, reversing declines in the earlier 1980s.<sup>13</sup> In 2013, El Malpais National Monument in Cibola County received **137,904 visitors** that spent **\$8,373,400** in communities near the park, supporting **120 jobs** in the area.<sup>14</sup>

*“New Mexico’s prosperity depends on being able to attract people with the talents and creativity required to remain competitive in the 21st century. Such people are drawn by natural beauty and amenities, making New Mexico’s environmental quality a key asset for continued growth.”*

**Dr. Christopher Erickson**—Department of Economics, New Mexico State University



- The **Río Grande del Norte National Monument** designation has been good for business in Taos County, bringing a 40% increase in visitors in less than one year since the National Monument designation; and a 21% increase in Town of Taos lodgers’ tax revenue.<sup>15</sup>

*“Our proximity to the national monument is an asset and we mention it in our marketing. It’s very exciting because the monument is one more asset to attract visitors and create jobs in our community.”*

**Dan Irion**—Co-Founder, Taos Mesa Brewing Co.

10 National Wildlife Federation (2013) – *Valuing Our Western Public Lands*

11 Headwaters Economics (2012) - *New Mexico’s Economy and the Role of Federal Protected Lands*

12 The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - *The Economics Associated with Outdoor Recreation, Natural Resources Conservation and Historic Preservation in the United States 2011*

([https://www.fws.gov/refuges/news/pdfs/TheEconomicValueofOutdoorRecreation\[1\].pdf](https://www.fws.gov/refuges/news/pdfs/TheEconomicValueofOutdoorRecreation[1].pdf))

13 Headwaters Economics (2011) – *El Malpais National Monument - A Summary of Economic Performance in the Surrounding Communities*

(<http://headwaterseconomics.org/wphw/wp-content/uploads/malpais.pdf>)

14 National Park Service - *2013 National Park Visitor Spending Effects*

([http://nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/NPSVSE2013\\_final\\_nrss.pdf](http://nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/NPSVSE2013_final_nrss.pdf))

15 New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce - *Rio Grande del Norte National Monument 1 Year Later (2014)*

(<http://nmgreenchamber.com/rgdn-factsheet/>)