

Recovering Lost Ground: The State of Energy, Environment & Public Lands Budgets in New Mexico



Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources (EMNRD)

The New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies. It is responsible for oversight of the oil and gas industry, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, and the management of state forests and 35 state parks. The agency operates through a combination of general fund appropriations, federal grants, fees and other revenues.

During the Richardson administration, the department averaged \$22,504,100 in general fund appropriations, or \$28,193,879 when adjusted for inflation. Under the Martinez administration, EMNRD's general fund budget saw an average of \$19,958,413, or \$21,517,724 when adjusted for inflation. This represents a -23.68% cut under the Martinez administration when adjusted for inflation. In FY2020, the first year of the Lujan Grisham administration, EMNRD's general fund budget was increased by 9.31% from the previous year to \$22,084,200.¹

For the upcoming budget year, FY2021, EMNRD has requested a 12% increase in general fund appropriations from the previous year, to \$24,756,900. If the Lujan Grisham administration request is fully funded, and accounting for inflation, this would represent an +8.84% increase from the Martinez administration, but represent -16.93% less than the average under the Richardson administration.²

Currently, the agency's program support division, which is responsible for the general day-to-day operations of the agency, has a vacancy rate of 21%. According to the department, the proposed general fund budget increase would help the department meet its goal to lower the vacancy rate to 5%.³



A butterfly lands on a wildflower in northern New Mexico.
Photo: Garrett VeneKlasen

¹ Table 1. EMNRD - Top-Line General Fund Appropriations (FY2004-FY2020) and FY2021 Executive Budget Request

² Ibid.

³ [Slide 3, EMNRD - FY2021 Budget Request Presentation, N.M. Legislative Finance Committee](#)

Table 1. EMNRD - Top-Line General Fund Appropriations (FY2004-FY2020) and FY2021 Executive Budget Request

Fiscal Year	Final Appropriation in Millions	Percent change from previous yr.	Document	Table/Pg. Found	Amount in \$2019 [^]	Administration	Average Appropriation	Percent Change Admin to Admin
FY2004	\$18,683,000	N/A	LCF May 2003	Table 3/pg. 39	\$26,065,880	Richardson	\$22,504,100 Average Amount in \$2019 - \$28,193,879	N/A
FY2005	\$19,646,900	+5.16%	LCF April 2004	Table 4/pg. 43	\$26,614,700			
FY2006	\$20,727,000	+5.50%	LCF May 2005	Appendix E	\$27,215,700			
FY2007	\$21,772,900	+5.05%	LCF March 2006	Appendix E	\$27,451,080			
FY2008	\$24,950,000	+14.59%	LCF April 2007	Appendix G/ pg. 72	\$30,732,010			
FY2009	\$26,446,500	+6.00%	LCF March 2008	Appendix G/ pg. 63	\$30,847,800			
FY2010	\$24,884,900	-5.90%	LCF April 2009	Appendix E/pg. 55	\$29,648,080			
FY2011	\$22,921,600	-7.89%	LCF April 2010	Appendix E/pg. 50	\$26,975,780			
FY2012	\$19,826,100	-13.50%	LCF April 2011	Appendix D/pg. 48	\$22,515,750	Martinez	\$19,958,413 Average Amount in \$2019 - \$21,517,724	% Change Using \$2019 -23.68%
FY2013	\$20,159,700	+1.68%	LCF April 2012	Appendix C/pg. 45	\$22,576,620			
FY2014	\$20,938,100	+3.86%	LCF April 2013	Appendix C/pg. 45	\$22,997,440			
FY2015	\$22,166,600	+5.87%	LCF January 2014	Appendix B/pg. 41	\$23,871,170			
FY2016	\$20,141,200	-9.14%	LCF May 2015	Appendix C/pg. 39	\$21,653,300			
FY2017	\$19,188,700	-4.73%	LCF March 2016	Appendix B/pg. 40	\$20,460,060			
FY2018	\$17,043,600	-11.18%	LCF May 2017	Appendix B/pg. 27	\$17,864,150			
FY2019	\$20,203,300	+18.54%	LCF May 2018	Appendix C/pg. 35	\$20,203,300			
FY2020	\$22,084,200	+9.31%	LCF May 2019	Appendix C/pg. 43	\$22,084,200	Lujan Grisham	\$23,420,550	% Change From Martinez Admin Using \$2019 Average +8.84% % Change from Richardson Admin Using \$2019 Average -16.93%
FY2021	\$24,756,900	+12.10%	FY2021 Executive Budget Recommendation	pg. 19	\$24,756,900			

Sources: Data acquired from New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee Post-session Fiscal Reviews.

[^]Calculated using [BLS inflation calculator](#) from July of year of session to July of 2019.

EMNRD - Oil and Gas Conservation Division (OCD)

The Oil Conservation Division (OCD) has the important role of regulating oil and gas activity in New Mexico by gathering data; permitting new wells; enforcing the division's rules and the state's oil and gas statutes; making certain abandoned wells are properly plugged; and ensuring the land is responsibly restored.⁴

During the Richardson administration, the OCD's general fund appropriations averaged \$3,799,125, or \$4,757,380 when adjusted for inflation. Under the Martinez administration, the division's general fund budget was cut by 25% to an average of

\$3,271,538, or \$3,531,584 when adjusted for inflation. In FY2020, the first year of the Lujan Grisham administration, OCD's general fund appropriation was increased by 17.34%.⁵

For the upcoming budget year, FY2021, the Lujan Grisham administration has requested a 15.35% increase in general fund appropriations from the previous year. If the request is fully funded, and accounting for inflation, this would represent an +77.23% increase from the average general fund appropriation under the Martinez administration, and a +31.56% increase from the Richardson administration.

The increase would go in part to hiring more inspector/compliance officer positions. According to

⁴ EMNRD/OCD Website: <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/oecd/>

⁵ Table 2, General Fund Appropriations to the Oil and Conservation Division of EMNRD (FY2004-2020) and FY2021 Executive Budget Request

the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee's most recent agency report card, half of all inspector/compliance officer positions are vacant at the division.⁶ This vacancy has continued despite historic levels of oil and gas development in New Mexico during the past several years. As a result, the agency attributes fewer inspections and a lack of compliance with permits and regulations to compliance

officer vacancies.⁷ For example, in FY2019, 31,043 inspections were conducted at oil and gas wells and associated facilities, dropping from 42,800 in FY2018.⁸

Additional data by the agency shows a strong need for more compliance officers:⁹

Year	Applications for Permit to Drill (APD)	Saltwater Disposal Well Permits (SWD)	Hearing Orders
2017	1433	74	665
2018	2296	145	1502
2019	1929 (As of Oct. 30, 2019)	233 (as of 6/30/2019)	2100 (estimated)

Table 2. General Fund Appropriations to the Oil Conservation Division of EMNRD - (FY2004-2020) and FY2021 Executive Budget Request

Fiscal Year	General Fund Final Appropriation Oil & Gas Conservation Division	Percent Change from previous yr.	Document	Table/Pg. Found	Amount in \$2019	Administration	Average Appropriation	Percent Change Admin to Admin
FY2004	\$4,445,300	N/A	GAA of 2003~	p. 104	\$6,201,931	Richardson	\$3,799,125 Average Amount in \$2019 – \$4,757,380	N/A
FY2005	\$1,052,800	-76.32%	GAA of 2004	p. 104	\$1,426,177			
FY2006	\$3,995,100	+279.47%	GAA of 2005	p. 106	\$5,245,787			
FY2007	\$3,994,100	-0.03%	GAA of 2006	p. 107	\$5,035,726			
FY2008	\$4,268,200	+6.86%	GAA of 2007	p. 105	\$5,257,329			
FY2009	\$4,231,100	-0.87%	GAA of 2008	p. 109	\$4,935,251			
FY2010	\$4,374,200	+3.38	GAA of 2009	p. 109	\$5,211,459			
FY2011	\$4,032,200	-7.82%	GAA of 2010	p. 106	\$4,745,382	Martinez	\$3,271,538 Average Amount in \$2019 – \$3,531,584	Percentage Change Using \$2019 – -25.77%
FY2012	\$3,583,100	-11.14%	GAA of 2011	p. 106	\$4,069,190			
FY2013	\$3,587,300	+0.12%	GAA of 2012	p. 99	\$4,017,377			
FY2014	\$3,589,400	+0.06%	GAA of 2013	p. 98	\$3,942,430			
FY2015	\$3,618,800	+0.82%	GAA of 2014	p. 90	\$3,897,079			
FY2016	\$2,670,000	-26.22%	GAA of 2015	p. 79	\$2,870,451			
FY2017	\$2,316,100	-13.25%	GAA of 2016	p. 79	\$2,469,555			
FY2018	\$1,853,800	-19.96%	GAA of 2017	p. 74	\$1,943,050			
FY2019	\$4,953,800	+167.22%	GAA of 2018	p. 73	\$5,043,536			
FY2020	\$5,812,800	+17.34%	GAA of 2019	p. 70	\$5,812,800			
FY2021	\$6,705,000	+15.35%	FY2021 Executive Budget Recommendation	p. 19	\$6,705,000	Lujan Grisham	\$6,258,900	% Change From Martinez Admin Using \$2019 Average – +77.23% % Change from Richardson Admin Using \$2019 Average +31.56%

Sources: Data acquired from New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee Post-session Fiscal Reviews.

^Calculated using [BLS inflation calculator](#) from July of year of session to July of 2019.

6 [Page 41, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, Performance Report Card, First Quarter, Fiscal Year 2020](#)

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 [Slide 4, EMNRD - FY2021 Budget Request Presentation, N.M. Legislative Finance Committee](#)

EMNRD - State Parks Division

The State Parks Division of EMNRD is responsible for protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources, providing first-class recreational and education facilities and opportunities, and promoting public safety to benefit and enrich the lives of visitors.¹⁰ The division operates through a combination of parks fees, general fund appropriations and leveraged federal grant funds.

During the Richardson administration, the general fund for the State Parks Division averaged \$9,286,363, or \$11,702,599 when adjusted for inflation. Under the Martinez administration, the division's general fund budget was cut by -13.84% to an average of \$9,320,625, or \$10,082,543 when adjusted for inflation.¹¹

In FY2020, the first year of the Lujan Grisham administration, the division's general fund budget was increased by +7.35%. For the upcoming budget year, FY2021, the Lujan Grisham administration has requested a 13.19% increase in general fund appropriations from the previous year, to \$9,005,300.¹²

If the Lujan Grisham administration request is fully funded, and accounting for inflation, the budget would still be -15.89% less than the average under the Martinez administration, and -27.53% less than the average under the Richardson administration.

During the Martinez administration, 72 full-time employee positions were eliminated¹³, and the State Parks Program currently has a vacancy rate of 24 percent.¹⁴ For the FY2021 budget year, EMNRD has requested 8 new full-time employees for the State Parks Division.¹⁵ One of the new positions would be a dedicated grant manager for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program (LWCF).

Through 2008, the division had a dedicated full-time employee managing LWCF grants, but since that time, management has been roughly 10% of one full-time staff.¹⁶

This has meant the division has not been able to manage a competitive pass-through grant program for LWCF, including: calling for and reviewing proposals; ensuring that local and tribal government entities (sub-grantees) meet federal compliance standards; and reviewing completed projects every five years to ensure that land has not been converted to other uses. Despite the lack of human resources, the division has requested and received federal funding for projects within the New Mexico State Parks system. If the legislature meets EMNRD's request for the new full-time staff positions, the State Parks Division expects to expand the LWCF grant program to its full potential, which could result in a significant increase in federal funding for the New Mexico State Parks system.¹⁷



Boy Scout volunteers with the new information sign they helped install. Photo: New Mexico Wild

10 New Mexico State Parks Division Website, <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SPD/missionandvision.html>

11 Table 3. General Fund Appropriations to State Parks Division of EMNRD - General Fund Appropriations - (FY2004-2020) and FY2021 Executive Budget Request

12 Ibid.

13 Data provided by the State Parks Division.

14 [Page 186, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, Appropriation Recommendations, Report to the Fifty-Fourth Legislature, Second Session, Volume 2.](#)

15 [Slide 7, EMNRD - FY2021 Budget Request Presentation, N.M. Legislative Finance Committee](#)

16 Data provided by the State Parks Division.

17 Ibid.

Table 3. General Fund Appropriations to the State Parks Division of EMNRD – General Fund Appropriations - (FY2004-2020) and FY2021 Executive Budget Request

Fiscal Year	General Fund Final Appropriation -State Parks Division	Percent Change from previous yr.	Document	Table/Pg. Found	Amount in \$2019	Administration	Average Appropriation	Percent change Admin to Admin
FY2004	\$7,730,500	N/A	GAA of 2003~	pg. 104	\$10,785,330	Richardson	\$9,286,363 Average Amount in \$2019 – \$11,702,599	N/A
FY2005	\$8,740,800	13.07%	GAA of 2004	pg. 104	\$11,840,740			
FY2006	\$9,441,500	8.02%	GAA of 2005	pg.106	\$12,397,211			
FY2007	\$10,198,700	8.02%	GAA of 2006	pg.105	\$12,858,430			
FY2008	\$12,405,800	21.64%	GAA of 2007	pg. 103	\$15,280,770			
FY2009	\$3,781,200	-69.52%	GAA of 2008	pg. 107	\$4,410,478			
FY2010	\$11,391,400	201.26%	GAA of 2009	pg. 108	\$13,571,810			
FY2011	\$10,601,000	-6.94%	GAA of 2010	pg. 105	\$12,476,020	Martinez	\$9,320,625 Average Amount in \$2019 – \$10,082,543	Percentage Change Using \$2019 – -13.84%
FY2012	\$8,334,000	-21.38%	GAA of 2011	pg. 104	\$9,464,606			
FY2013	\$9,854,600	18.25%	GAA of 2012	pg. 97	\$11,036,056			
FY2014	\$10,730,100	8.88%	GAA of 2013	pg. 96	\$11,785,440			
FY2015	\$10,923,400	1.80%	GAA of 2014	pg. 89	\$11,763,390			
FY2016	\$8,917,400	-18.36%	GAA of 2015	pg. 77	\$9,586,876			
FY2017	\$10,967,600	22.99%	GAA of 2016	pg. 77	\$11,694,270			
FY2018	\$7,426,600	-32.29%	GAA of 2017	pg. 73	\$7,784,150	Lujan Grisham	\$8,480,550	% Change From Martinez Admin Using \$2019 Average – -15.89% % Change from Richardson Admin Using \$2019 Average -27.53%
FY2019	\$7,411,300	-0.21%	GAA of 2018	pg.71	\$7,545,553			
FY2020	\$7,955,800	7.35%	GAA of 2019	pg. 68	\$7,955,800			
FY2021	\$9,005,300	+13.19%	FY2021 Executive Budget Recommendation	pg. 19	\$9,005,300			

Sources: Data acquired from the General Appropriations Acts (GAA) as noted.

^Calculated using [BLS inflation calculator](#) from July of year of session to July of 2019.

Overall, budget and staffing levels for the State Parks Division affect awareness, visitation and enjoyment of the parks system by New Mexicans. The division is further challenged by environmental-related issues like fire severity and drought conditions, park closures, and low stream, river and lake levels.¹⁸

According to the Legislative Finance Committee, both the State Forestry Division and State Parks Division have fallen short of their performance measurement goals due to weather trends and emergencies, funding limitations, and infrastructure deficiencies.¹⁹

Together, these factors have contributed to a massive decline of nearly one million visitors to New Mexico State Parks since 2016:

Year	Visitation (in millions)
FY2016 ²⁰	5.46
FY2017 ²¹	4.93
FY2018 ²²	4.71
FY2019 ²³	4.5

18 [Page 146, Report of the Legislative Finance Committee to the 54th Legislature, First Session, Volume 1, January 2019, Fiscal Year 2020.](#)

19 [Page 1, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, Performance Report Card, Fourth Quarter, Fiscal Year 20219](#)

20 [Page 34, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, Performance Report Card, First Quarter, Fiscal Year 2018](#)

21 [Page 43, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, Performance Report Card, Fourth Quarter, Fiscal Year 2019](#)

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

Additionally, interpretive programs, which educate visitors about the natural and cultural resources of the state parks, have declined for the past four years, including more than half since FY2016:

Year	Number of Interpretive Programs
FY2016 ²⁴	1,312
FY2017 ²⁵	1,053
FY2018 ²⁶	860
FY2019 ²⁷	687

- 24 [Page 34, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, Performance Report Card, First Quarter, Fiscal Year 2018](#)
 25 [Page 43, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, Performance Report Card, Fourth Quarter, Fiscal Year 2019](#)
 26 Ibid.
 27 Ibid.

New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is the state's regulatory agency charged with protection of the environment, resources, and public health and safety. It has a wide-ranging mandate responsible for monitoring air quality, drinking water and groundwater/surface water, food manufacturing and hemp manufacturing, radiation control, hazardous waste, and the enforcement of various state regulations and federal laws.

Much like the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Division (EMNRD), due to staffing and budget cuts, the NMED is struggling to carry out its mission to protect the public from environmental and health risks – even when New Mexico has seen historic increases in oil and gas activity and is facing new challenges related to climate change. While traditionally most of the department's budget comes from federal funding or special budget requests, the Lujan Grisham administration is requesting a significant increase in general fund appropriations in FY2021 to meet these challenges.

During the Richardson administration, general fund appropriations for NMED averaged \$14,984,288, or \$18,843,896 when adjusted for inflation. Under the Martinez administration, the agency's general fund budget was cut by -31.69%, to an average of \$11,922,438, or \$12,871,379 when adjusted for inflation.²⁸ During this time, while the state's energy

production grew to historic levels, the cuts left the agency with an 18.8% vacancy rate, significantly decreasing the ability to protect New Mexicans from clean air and water.²⁹

As described in Table 5, the vacancy has left the department with a lopsided number of inspectors vs. potential contamination sources. For example, there are currently only seven air quality inspectors keeping track of emissions from 7,700 sources.³⁰

In FY2020, the first year of the Lujan Grisham administration, NMED's general fund appropriation was increased by 6% from the previous year to almost \$12 million. For the upcoming FY2021 budget year, NMED has requested a significant increase to more than \$18 million, or 57.26%.³¹ According to the NMED, this increase would give the agency greater ability to protect public health and the environment and:³²

- Recruit/retain new and existing staff with pay parity;
- Develop and implement science-based approaches related to climate change, food and hemp manufacturing, oil and natural gas produced water, PFSA and remediation of legacy contamination, etc.;
- Employ greater innovation, like the use of cutting-edge technology for permitting, monitoring, etc.;
- Increase and improve collaboration with constituents and customers;
- Conduct greater compliance assurance activities.

- 28 Table 4. NMED - General Fund Appropriations (FY2004-2020) and FY2021 Budget Request
 29 [Slide 3, NMED Budget Presentation to Legislative Finance Committee, FY2021](#)
 30 [Slide 9, NMED Budget Presentation to Legislative Finance Committee, FY2021](#)
 31 Table 4. NMED - General Fund Appropriations (FY2004-2020) and FY2021 Budget Request
 32 [Slides 4-5, NMED Budget Presentation to Legislative Finance Committee, FY2021](#)

Table 4. NMED - General Fund Appropriations (FY2004-2020) and FY2021 Executive Budget Request

Fiscal Year	General Fund Final Appropriation	Percent change from previous yr.	Document	Table*/Pg. Found	Amount in \$2019 [^]	Administration	Average Appropriation	% Change Admin to Admin
FY2004	\$14,174,100	N/A	LCF May 2003	Table 3/pg. 40	\$19,775,220	Richardson	\$14,984,288 Average Amount in \$2019 – \$18,843,896	N/A
FY2005	\$14,829,300	4.62%	LCF April 2004	Table 4/pg. 44	\$20,088,530			
FY2006	\$13,527,400	-8.78%	LCF May 2005	Appendix E	\$17,762,220			
FY2007	\$14,077,400	4.07%	LCF March 2006	Appendix E	\$17,748,660			
FY2008	\$15,715,400	11.64%	LCF April 2007	Appendix G/pg. 72	\$19,357,350			
FY2009	\$16,708,300	6.32%	LCF March 2008	Appendix G/pg. 63	\$19,488,940			
FY2010	\$16,008,200	-4.19%	LCF April 2009	Appendix E/pg. 55	\$19,072,300			
FY2011	\$14,834,200	-7.33%	LCF April 2010	Appendix E/pg. 51	\$17,457,950			
FY2012	\$11,503,700	-22.45%	LCF April 2011	Appendix D/pg. 49	\$13,064,310	Martinez	\$11,922,438 Average Amount in \$2019 – \$12,871,379	Percentage Change Using \$2019 – -31.69%
FY2013	\$11,256,200	-2.15%	LCF April 2012	Appendix C/pg.46	\$12,605,690			
FY2014	\$11,468,400	1.89%	LCF April 2013	Appendix C/pg. 46	\$12,596,360			
FY2015	\$12,550,600	9.44%	LCF January 2014	Appendix B/pg. 42	\$13,515,720			
FY2016	\$13,257,800	5.63%	LCF May 2015	Appendix C/pg.40	\$14,253,130			
FY2017	\$12,697,800	-4.22%	LCF March 2016	Appendix B/pg. 41	\$13,539,100			
FY2018	\$11,372,500	-10.44%	LCF May 2017	Appendix B/pg. 27	\$11,920,020			
FY2019	\$11,272,500	-0.88%	LCF May 2018	Appendix C/pg. 36	\$11,476,700			
FY2020	\$11,970,200	6.19%	LCF May 2019	Appendix C/pg. 43	\$11,970,200	Lujan Grisham	\$15,397,500	% Change From Martinez Admin Using \$2019 Average – +19.63 % Change from Richardson Admin Using \$2019 Average -18.29%
FY2021	\$18,824,800	57.26%	FY2021 Executive Budget Recommendation	pg. 21				

Sources: Data acquired from New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee Post-session Fiscal Reviews.

[^]Calculated using [BLS inflation calculator](#) from July of year of session to July of 2019.

If the Lujan Grisham administration's request for NMED's general fund appropriations is fully funded, and accounting for inflation, this would represent an +19.63% increase from the Martinez administration, but represent -18.29% less than the average under the Richardson administration.

In its FY2021 request, NMED is attempting to address the 18.8% vacancy rate by supporting a total

of 702 full-time employees, up from the 635 it has now.³³ The agency has 26 offices throughout the state, and the increase would include the hiring of inspectors to protect against environmental and public health risks. The following table shows the current lop-sided number of sources requiring inspection vs. the significantly low number of compliance inspection staff:

Table 5: Regulated Source vs. Compliance Inspector Staff, New Mexico Environment Department³⁴

Regulated Sources	Known Universe	Compliance Inspection Staff	Sources Per Compliance Inspector
Air emitting sources	7,700	7	1,100 sources/inspector
Drinking water sources	1,076	4.5	239 source/inspector
Food prep/manufacturing	9,200	22	418 sources/inspector
Groundwater sources	700	2	350 sources/inspector
Hazardous waste sources	2,631	7	376 sources/inspector
OSHA	50,000+ employers	10	5,000+ sources/inspector
Petroleum storage tanks	4,419	12	369 sources/inspector

33 Slide 6 – [NMED Budget Presentation to Legislative Finance Committee, FY2021](#)

34 Slide 9 – [NMED Budget Presentation to Legislative Finance Committee, FY2021](#)

New Mexico Department of Game & Fish

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is a state agency with a mission to conserve, regulate, propagate and protect the wildlife and fish within the state of New Mexico using a flexible management system that ensures sustainable use for public food supply, recreation and safety; and to provide for off-highway motor vehicle recreation that recognizes cultural, historic, and resource values while ensuring public safety.³⁵

It is considered an “enterprise agency” in that it operates solely on the revenue it generates - primarily through state hunting and fishing licenses and leveraged federal funding. As shown in Table 6, it has not received general fund appropriations from the legislature since FY2009. In its FY2021 budget, the Lujan Grisham administration is requesting a

special appropriation of \$500,00 for management of threatened and endangered species.³⁶ If enacted, this would be the first legislative appropriation from the general fund in more than 10 years.



Kids playing in the Gila River. Photo: Mason Cummings

Table 6. Department of Game & Fish State Funding (FY2004-2020)

	General Fund Appropriation [^]	Appropriation	Document	Table/Pg. Found
FY2004	174.6	\$174,600	LCF May 2003	Table 3/pg. 39
FY2005	176.1	\$176,100	LCF April 2004	Table 4/pg. 43
FY2006	181.9	\$181,900	LCF May 2005	Appendix E
FY2007	181.9	\$181,900	LCF March 2006	Appendix E
FY2008	304.2	\$304,200	LCF April 2007	Appendix G/ pg. 72
FY2009	333.1	\$333,100	LCF March 2008	Appendix G/ pg. 63
FY2010	0	\$0	LCF April 2009	Appendix E/pg. 55
FY2011	0	\$0	LCF April 2010	Appendix E/pg. 50
FY2012	0	\$0	LCF April 2011	Appendix D/pg. 48
FY2013	0	\$0	LCF April 2012	Appendix C/pg. 45
FY2014	0	\$0	LCF April 2013	Appendix C/pg. 45
FY2015	0	\$0	LCF January 2014	Appendix B/pg. 41
FY2016	0	\$0	LCF May 2015	Appendix C/pg. 39
FY2017	0	\$0	LCF March 2016	Appendix B/pg. 40
FY2018	0	\$0	LCF May 2017	Appendix B/pg. 27
FY2019	0	\$0	LCF May 2018	Appendix C/pg. 35
FY2020	0	\$0	LCF May 2019	Appendix C/pg. 43
FY2021	0	\$500,000 (Special appropriations request)	FY2021 Executive Budget Recommendation	pg.45

Source: Data from Legislative Finance Committee, Post-Session Summaries (2003-2019)

As shown in Table 7, the agency was operating with a vacancy rate of 16% in 2019 – and has averaged a vacancy rate of 14-22% since 2012. For 2019, the vacancy rate includes a 13% rate for specific zoolo-

gists/wildlife biologists and a 17% rate for wardens. Under the Martinez administration, the vacancy rate for wildlife biologists/zoologists ranges was as high as 25% in 2014:

Table 7. Department of Game & Fish Employee Breakdown 2012-2019

	Status	All Employees	Zoologists/ Wildlife Biologists	Wardens
2012	Filled	280	52	73
	Vacant	53	8	15
	Total	333	60	88
2013	Filled	257	47	62
	Vacant	67	13	20
	Total	324	60	82
2014	Filled	257	49	66
	Vacant	71	10	22
	Total	328	59	88
2015	Filled	264	49	66
	Vacant	52	9	17
	Total	316	58	83
2016	Filled	291	51	77
	Vacant	46	7	16
	Total	337	58	93
2017	Filled	281	53	72
	Vacant	45	5	10
	Total	326	58	82
2018	Filled	282	52	74
	Vacant	52	7	15
	Total	334	59	89
2019	Filled	280	52	73
	Vacant	53	8	15
	Total	333	60	88

Source: [New Mexico Sunshine Portal](#)

New Mexico State Land Office

The New Mexico State Land Office manages 9 million acres of surface acres and 13 million mineral acres across 32 counties, collectively known as state trust land. Revenue is raised by leasing land for oil, gas, and mineral exploration, business and commercial operations such as renewable energy projects, agriculture and livestock grazing, outdoor recreation opportunities, and more. Like the Game & Fish Department, its expenditures, including capital outlay, are paid through the funds it generates rather than the general fund.³⁷

Despite the sharp increase in oil and gas development, renewable energy projects and recreational activities on state trust lands, the office has just 20 field staff to oversee 13 million acres statewide, an average of 650,000 per staff member.³⁸ According to data provided by the State Land Office, at the end of the Martinez administration, the Office had a vacancy rate of 22%. Under the leadership of Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard, the office cut the vacancy rate to 10%, and increased the number of field staff dedicated to covering

37 New Mexico State Land Office Website: <https://www.nmstatelands.org/about/>
38 Data Provided by the State Land Office

southeast New Mexico by over 50%³⁹. In its FY2021 request to the Legislative Finance Committee, the Office is requesting additional staff to “better manage the high volume of project clearance requests that must be completed before leases and other

business activities can be approved.” According to its data, the division “handles approximately 2,000 requests annually, and managing them efficiently is directly tied to the ability to generate revenue.”⁴⁰

39 [Slide 14, State Land Office FY 2021 Budget Request to the Legislative Finance Committee, November 20, 2019](#)
40 [Slide 22, State Land Office FY 2021 Budget Request to the Legislative Finance Committee, November 20, 2019](#)



New Mexico forest sunset Photo: Garrett VeneKlasen



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