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New Mexico State Parks boost economy by $266 million

Thousands of jobs supported as visitors flock to New Mexico's parks

SANTA FE — New Mexico State Parks contributed $266 million to the state's economy in 2024, a new study shows, supporting thousands of jobs and enriching the quality of life for residents and out-of-state visitors.

"The numbers show that every visit to a state park contributes directly to New Mexico's economy," said **EMNRD Sec. Melanie Kenderdine.**

The Arrowhead Center at New Mexico State University, in partnership with the State Parks Division of Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), analyzed the state park system's influence from 2019 to 2024, capturing a detailed picture of its financial and community contributions.

"This study shows the economic impact and contribution of state parks throughout New Mexico," said **Dr. Kramer Winingham**, director of economic analysis at Arrowhead Center. "It is notable that New Mexico State Parks' economic contribution is significantly higher than their expenditures due to the follow-on effects from visitor spending—which are very large."

Key 2024 economic contributions from New Mexico State Parks:

- 5,120 jobs supported statewide
- $266 million contributed to the state GDP
- $511 million in revenue generated for New Mexico businesses
- $162 million in labor income
- $40 million in state and local taxes.

"These impressive numbers demonstrate that New Mexico State Parks are essential to our state's economic vitality and quality of life," said **State Parks Division Director Toby Velasquez.**

The State Parks Division achieves these results while receiving just 25% of its operating budget from the state general fund. The division relies primarily on federal grants, user fees, dedicated taxes, and revenue from concessionaires to fund its work.

Strategic investments yield tangible returns

Using $20 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds, the division invested in park facilities, infrastructure, and operations at 32 parks statewide. Over four years, State Parks dedicated $14.5 million to upgrade visitor amenities and $5.5 million to modernize outdated equipment and strengthen law enforcement and park operations.

Looking ahead, the division plans to invest an additional $56 million in capital improvements during FY25 and FY26, ensuring New Mexico's parks continue to serve as world-class outdoor destinations and local economic drivers.

A legacy of stewardship

Now in its 92nd year, the New Mexico State Parks system manages over 190,000 acres across 35 parks in 23 counties, connecting people to nature, culture, and community. As more New Mexicans and tourists seek accessible, high quality outdoor pursuits, the demand for accessible and well-maintained state parks continues to grow.

See the complete study and learn more state parks' economic impact here.

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