



# EDD

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

## OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes  
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Director, Axie Navas

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## **The Outdoor Recreation Division Celebrates a Full Year of Accomplishments**

*ORD announces many “firsts” in support of outdoor recreation in New Mexico*

**SANTA FE, N.M.** – The Economic Development Department (EDD) is celebrating the one-year anniversary of the Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) and all of its accomplishments to date.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham identified outdoor industry growth as an important element in diversifying the state economy. Toward that end, Gov. Lujan Grisham signed a law in April 2019 that made New Mexico the 15th U.S. state to create an Outdoor Recreation Division.

In doing so, N.M. showed its commitment to growing and championing the outdoor recreation economy, which we recognize as an immensely powerful engine to grow wealth and job opportunities. Written into the New Mexico law was also the first-ever Outdoor Equity Fund, a grant intended to help underserved youth enjoy access to the outdoors.

"Thanks to the great vision of Gov. Lujan Grisham and the Legislature, New Mexico is now a leader in outdoor recreation," EDD Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said. "From day one this Outdoor Rec team has been working closely with communities to carefully develop recreation resources and create jobs, and also to teach a younger generation of outdoor enthusiasts about responsible stewardship."

After an extensive search, EDD hired Axie Navas to act as director of the new division in September 2019. Navas came to the position with a decade of professional storytelling experience in the outdoor industry, most recently working for *Outside* magazine, with a passion for making the outdoors more accessible to both visitors and locals alike. In July 2020, Alyssa Renwick joined the ORD team as project coordinator. A valuable addition,

Renwick holds a bachelor's degree in biological and evolutionary psychology and a master's degree in public health with a focus in physical activity and public health.

The ORD works to ensure that New Mexicans gain from the public health, environmental, and economic benefits of sustainable outdoor recreation. The division measures its success based on five core values: sustainable economic development, conservation and access, equity, education, and health and wellness. Over the past year, the ORD has been very hard at work in all of these efforts, and in addition it has also been proactive in responding to the COVID-19 health emergency.

In a recent report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, New Mexico's Outdoor Recreation Economy growth rate, as a percentage of GDP for 2019, is reported to be outpacing that of the national average. [Read more here.](#)

The following is a list of the division's major accomplishment over the past year:

### **Economic Development Efforts:**

- Created a 15-person advisory board made up of industry, education, and conservation leaders. [Learn about our advisory board and staff...](#)
- Won an REI grant to commission a report illustrating the breadth and size of New Mexico's outdoor recreation economy. [Read the press release...](#)
- Drove over 3,000 miles on a three-month listening tour (pre-pandemic) to learn about the outdoor economy in each of New Mexico's counties; [View the itinerary map...](#)
- Invested \$100,000 in two outdoor business incubators;
  - San Juan College: 4 new outdoor recreation businesses, 12 new employees, \$260,000 in wages.
  - [Creative Startups](#): 25 entrepreneurs participated in online business training curriculum. Online enrollment begins again in fall 2020.
- Created jobs through [JTIP](#) (Job Training Incentive Program);
  - Best Deal Retailer: 14 jobs in January
  - Tactical Application Vehicles: 2 jobs in January
- Supported launch of state's first-ever outdoor recreation trade alliance. [Read the press release...](#)
- Put New Mexico on the radar of other outdoor businesses, including The Radavist which moved to Santa Fe in the spring.

### **Conservation and Access:**

- Awarded the Special Projects and Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Fund to six organizations. [Read the press release...](#)
- Petitioning to protect over 100 miles of waterways in the state through an Outstanding National Resource Waters designation.

- Championed bedrock conservation policy, like the Great American Outdoors Act, through op-eds and virtual appearances with Senator Heinrich.

### **Education and Outreach:**

- Awarded the groundbreaking Outdoor Equity Fund to 25 applicants. Included in that group are three Native organizations / tribal governments (NACA, Zuni Pueblo, and Karuna Colectiva) that will get 449 Indigenous youth outside within the next year. [Read the press release...](#)
- Raised over \$35,000 in the summer of 2020 for the Outdoor Equity Fund from the North Face, REI, and individual donors.
- Steered a cradle-to-career statewide Outdoor Education Strategy, made possible through a National Park Service grant. An advisory committee, made up of 17 education and workforce development leaders, was formed, with a goal to publish a strategy in spring 2021 to increase the number of New Mexicans in outdoor workforce development programs.

### **Promotion:**

- Co-Hosted the virtual October 2020 Outdoor Economics Fall Forum, which had 372 participants and over 30 speakers from across the state and country.
- Earned media for ORD and New Mexico's outdoor recreation opportunities; 70+ earned articles since fall 2019.
- Built digital portfolio for ORD, including over 1,778 social and newsletter followers and 713% growth in unique visitors to the ORD website.
- Secured featured articles about New Mexico in dozens of national publications, including Associated Press, SNEWS, Outside Online, Men's Journal, REI Co-Op Journal, and more.

### **COVID-19 Response:**

- Launched new page on the ORD website to communicate public land closures related to COVID emergency orders, coordinating weekly with federal and state land management agencies. [Visit the webpage...](#)
- Surveyed NM outdoor businesses on health crisis impacts to their business and ideas for recovery. [View the data...](#)
- Helped craft safe outdoor recreation practices for state. [Read the press release...](#)
- Awarded \$10,000 to the Silver Stallion nonprofit, for a Gallup-based Mobile Ride Center, a mobile bike shop to travel the Navajo Nation and repair kids' bikes. Worked with, Myron Billy, a professional Diné bike mechanic on this initiative. [Read the press release...](#)

*Click on the image below to watch a short video about the Mobile Ride Center*



*Journey Montessori School students enjoying a hike  
on the Chili Line Trail.  
Courtesy of Santa Fe Conservation Trust.*



*Mobile Ride Center - mobile bike repair for Navajo  
Nation.*

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*The New Mexico Economic Development Department's mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by  
increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive.*

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