



Conservation Wins!

The governor just signed some of the most important conservation bills in recent history. *(Yet, there is still more to do.)*

FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We want to give you a brief update on the just completed historic state legislative session and how protecting wildlands and water fared. We and a broad coalition of stakeholders had some important wins that will pay dividends toward the health, prosperity, and quality of



life for all of us today and for future generations.

Mark Allison
Executive Director
New Mexico Wild

These successes were years in the making as we worked with partners to make the case that our environment must be an investment priority. While we did not get everything we wanted, speaking with a united voice for our shared values made a real impact. Your support of New Mexico Wild was part of that united voice and I want to thank you for your continued commitment to our public lands.

Investing more in the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund

Passed last year, the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund is New Mexico’s first-ever dedicated source of recurring funding for conservation, land and water stewardship, forest and watershed health, outdoor recreation and infrastructure, agriculture and working lands, historic preservation, and wildlife species protection. The Fund provides important matching funds to bring in federal dollars to the state. This year, the legislature provided an additional \$300 million appropriation. This

permanent fund produces dividends that will pay 12% annually to a wide range of state agencies that manage conservation stewardship programs. The agencies will begin to receive these additional funds in 2025.

In a separate bill, the legislature approved the New Mexico Match Fund Act which provides \$75 million to help fill gaps that state, tribal, and local entities need to meet federal grant match requirements. The bill passed three committees in the House and Senate with unanimous bipartisan support from committee members.

Community-based conservation. State lawmakers listen to their constituents and local conservation advocates. Our supporters create momentum for the conservation investments made in the recent legislative session.

Caja del Rio Community Event
Santa Fe Brewing / August 2022
Photo by Irene Owsley



Big win for clean water

In this legislative session, \$7.6 million was appropriated to the New Mexico Environment Department to set up a surface water quality permitting program. Changes to federal protections under the Clean Water Act due to U.S. Supreme Court decisions in recent years has left New Mexico's waters arguably the most vulnerable in the country. The new permitting program will protect our rivers, streams, and wetlands for future generations.



Photo by Jim O'Donnell

Questions remain on the Strategic Water Supply

One of the most challenging issues this legislative session was how to engage with the Strategic Water Supply initiative announced by Governor Lujan Grisham last December. Funding would purchase treated brackish and produced water to then be sold for industrial purposes. While New Mexico Wild appreciates our leaders thinking boldly about how to address our water crisis, we continue to have many questions about how the initiative would work, unintended consequences, and the utility of such a large investment when other solutions with broad consensus remain unfunded. We are grateful for more time to continue to work with the Governor's office, legislative leaders, and the New Mexico Environment Department to think through these questions.



Other conservation bills from this year's legislative session

Wildlife Corridor Funding

The fund aims to reduce animal-related vehicle collisions through highway infrastructure projects that include signage, fencing, and overpass/underpass projects. This also helps to promote habitat connectivity. Unfortunately, despite support from the governor, recommended funding was dramatically reduced. Our team and partners will continue to advocate for much-needed funding.

Other Water Investments

The capital outlay bill included \$2 million for the River Stewardship Program with an additional \$1.25 million allocated to this program from the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund. The bill also included \$5 million for acequia improvements statewide. The interest-generating Water Trust Fund received \$50 million for water-related projects vetted by the Water Trust Board. An important appropriation of \$7.5 million to the Strategic Water Reserve will provide funding for the state to purchase or lease water to benefit endangered species and for compact compliance.

State Land and Water Conservation Fund

This Fund helps the state better access federal LWCF dollars. The LWCF has been an important conservation tool to safeguard natural areas, water resources, cultural heritage, and recreational opportunities. The updated fund prioritizes funding requests from Pueblos, Tribes, and rural communities.

Reform bills

Both the Game Commission reform bill and the oil & gas reform bill stalled in this session, but advocacy work on these important initiatives continues.

You can find more information on these legislative bills on our website: nmwild.org



State conservation advocacy to protect our Wilderness, Wildlife, and Water is made possible by your support. Please use the enclosed donation form and envelope or donate online at:

NMWILD.ORG