

Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee (August 22, 2024)
NEW MEXICO'S OUTDOOR RECREATION HUNTING & FISHING ECONOMY

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- New Mexico Council of Outfitters and Guides is a 501(c)6 non-profit trade organization that advocates the interests of the guided hunting and fishing industry in NM.
- All hunting and fishing outfitter operations in NM are considered small businesses and all pay NM gross receipts taxes. All are considered tourism revenue
- “Outfitter” is a term used to indicate the business owner and a “guide” is an employee of the outfitter.
- NMCOG has contracted with Southwick Associates and is in the process of conducting a comprehensive economic impact study of the outfitted hunting and fishing industry. The final report will be delivered to Legislators in January 2025.
- NM has more diversity of huntable big game species than any other US state other than Alaska
- New Mexico ranks top 3 for best elk hunting locations in the world.
- New Mexico is home to world-class trout fishing
- Guided hunting & fishing is essential to New Mexico’s rural economies

SAN JUAN COUNTY SPECIFIC

Fishing

- 17 miles of the San Juan River below Navajo Dam are world-renowned trout waters
- Only county in the state where fishing and hunting outfitters are equally important to local economy
- 70% of all anglers on the San Juan River are guided and 90% of any guide’s clientele is non-resident
- The average outfitting operation along the San Juan hires between 9 and 11 river guides per season
- Hunters that come to hunt the Jicarilla often also book fishing trips on the San Juan
- River outfitters typically also provide lodging, food, and fly shop resources to the local community

Hunting

- Migratory unit for deer and elk. Animals come down from CO during the winter and go back in spring. Some animals also come from the Jicarilla.
- Hunting takes place on Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Private, and Tribal lands
- Lots of resident hunter opportunity on Rio Chama, Humphries, and Sergeants Wildlife Management Areas
- All deer hunting opportunities in area are allocated through the draw (even private land)
- Hunting outfitters help support local meat processors and taxidermy businesses

LOCAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- NM’s guided fishing industry is unregulated. Too many people operating as guides on the San Juan
- Farmington’s airport does not accommodate commercial flights. Hunting & Fishing clients fly into Durango
- Better management of fish stocking practices and water flow would improve an already good fishery
- Need better road maintenance and more staffing in the State Park
- A program to manage flow and vegetation in the third channel ponds would increase waterfowl opportunities