

The Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund

1st Fiscal Year Report

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025
(FY2025)



— Land of —
ENCHANTMENT
**LEGACY
FUND**

For Our Land, Water, Economy & Culture



FY25 Highlights



64,905 acres

of public and private land are being improved by Legacy Fund programs

23,128 acres

are being surveyed and treated through NMDA's Noxious Weeds Program

\$1 million

was distributed to restore historical properties in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Silver City, Deming and the Dinetah region by the N.M. Dept. of Cultural Affairs.

120

estimated jobs are being created by the Trails+ Grant Program



46

Soil & Water Conservation Districts projects are being funded by NMDA

10,751 acres

of agricultural land are being improved thanks to NMDA's Healthy Soil Program

460

acres of wetlands & riparian habitat + **33** miles of creeks/streams are being protected by NMED's River Stewardship Program

40,348

forest & watershed acres are targeted for treatment through EMNRD's Forestry Division

7,735

N.M. youth are being served by the Outdoor Equity Fund



34 wildlife species

are the focus of habitat improvement by the N.M. Dept. of Game & Fish

Executive Summary

The Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund (Legacy Fund) is New Mexico's first state funding source for conservation - prioritizing land and water stewardship, forest and watershed health, outdoor recreation and infrastructure, agriculture and working lands, historic preservation and wildlife species protection. It provides funding for existing state programs that were never funded or funded sporadically in the past, using distributions from the \$350 million Conservation Legacy Permanent Fund (Legacy Permanent Fund).

Approximately \$12.5 million is being delivered to New Mexico communities each year through ten existing programs across six state agencies. The Legacy Fund's first fiscal year (FY25) began on July 1, 2024 and ended on June 30, 2025. This report highlights the first year successes, challenges and opportunities.

Key Figures for FY25

100%

of the **\$12.5 million** has been allocated for **FY25**

185

individual projects

93%

of **N.M. counties** are receiving funding for **on-the-ground projects**

80%

of projects in rural areas vs. **20% in urban areas**

\$5+ Million

in matching dollars is from **local, federal and private sources**

All 33 Counties

have **wildlife survey projects** happening locally

\$50+ Million

was requested from local communities for the **\$12.5 million** available

100%

of Legacy Fund programs are leveraging **federal matching dollars**

10

Tribal communities are benefiting from Legacy Fund programs, including **4 high schools** who serve Tribal students specifically

Legacy Fund:
\$50 Million over 4 years

FY 25

\$12.5 Million

EMNRD

Energy, Minerals, & Natural Resources Dept.

22.5% **\$2.81 Million**

50% **\$1.41 Million**

Forest & Watershed Restoration Act

50% **\$1.41 Million**

Natural Heritage Conservation Act

NMDA

New Mexico Dept. of Agriculture

22.5% **\$2.81 Million**

Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Healthy Soil Program

Noxious Weed Management

NMED

New Mexico Environment Dept.

10% **\$1.25 Million**

100% **\$1.25 Million**

River Stewardship Program

EDD

New Mexico Economic Development Dept.

15% **\$1.88 Million**

25% **\$468,000**

Outdoor Equity Fund

75% **\$1.41 Million**

Trails + Grants Program

DCA

New Mexico Dept. of Cultural Affairs

8% **\$1 Million**

100% **\$1 Million**

Cultural Properties Restoration Fund

NMDGF

New Mexico Dept. of Game & Fish

22% **\$2.75 Million**

100% **\$2.75 Million**

Game Protection Fund

Strong Demand from New Mexico Communities

Legacy Fund Program	Legacy Fund Allocation: FY25	Amount Requested	Projects Funded*	Applications Received
NMDA Healthy Soil Program	\$670,000	\$1,913,000	39	88
NMDA SWCDs	\$1,040,000	\$3,500,000	31	57
NMED River Stewardship	\$1,250,000	\$10,500,000	7	18
DCA Cultural Properties Restoration Fund	\$1,000,000	\$6,000,000	5	32
EDD Outdoor Equity Fund	\$468,000	\$4,200,000		
EDD Trails+ Program	\$1,410,000	\$10,000,000		

*Includes projects funded specifically by Legacy Fund dollars in FY25. Additional projects were funded by these programs in FY25 using different funding sources.



Sample of FY25 Matching Funds

NMDA Noxious Weeds	\$66,000
NMDA Healthy Soil	\$490,000
EMNRD NHCA	\$230,000
NMED River Stewardship	\$731,913
DCA Cultural Properties	\$1,302,591.10
EDD Outdoor Equity Fund	\$1,479,498.07
EDD Trails+ Grant Program	\$1,500,00.0

Key Takeaways

The Legacy Fund is meeting & exceeding its goals.

- There is strong demand for funding from all **33 counties** and from Tribal communities.
- Over **\$50+ million** was requested from local communities for the **\$12.5 million** available in FY25.

The Legacy Fund is encouraging cross-agency collaboration.

- Agencies like **NMDA** are using funds to match other federally-funded programs under different agencies like **EMNRD** for noxious weeds management and forestry/invasive plant programs.
- **NMED** and the **N.M. Dept. of Game & Fish** are also working together on watershed restoration projects that support fish and wildlife.
- Other agencies, such as the **State Land Office** and the **N.M. Office of Natural Resource Trustee**, are also collaborating on Legacy Fund projects.

The Legacy Fund is bringing conservation-minded people together.

- **NMED's River Stewardship Program** is developing successful partnerships with cattle ranchers and grazing permittees to protect critical watersheds.
- Other programs involve schools, faith communities, small businesses, private foundations, etc.

The Legacy Fund is serving its purpose as a matching fund.

- More than **\$5 million** in local, federal and private funding is being leveraged by the **\$12.5 million** available in FY25.
- **100%** of Legacy Fund programs are leveraging some form of federal matching dollars.



The Legacy Fund is supporting rural communities

- **80%** of projects funded in FY25 are in rural areas vs. **20%** in urban areas.

The Legacy Permanent Fund is working as an investment tool.

- **The Permanent Fund** is seeing higher than expected interest returns.
- All programs will receive increased disbursements in FY26.

The Legacy Fund is a job creator.

- 20 NGOs, subcontractors and engineers support **NMED's River Stewardship Program**; **90%** of them are from N.M.
- **120 jobs** are being created by the **Trails+ Grant Program** in FY25.



Challenges

Federal funding freezes are causing uncertainty, confusion and frustration at state agencies.

- Many Legacy Fund grants were disrupted by federal agency changes in FY25.
- Because **100%** of Legacy Fund Programs leveraged some sort of federal match, every single state agency faced challenges in FY25. While most grants are secure, some still face uncertainty.

Time restraints are impacting some grant applications and distributions.

- Some programs, like **NMED's River Stewardship Program**, have a deadline of two years to complete a grant. Projects for river and wetland restoration often need additional time beyond this limit to contract and execute the grant.

Demand from N.M. communities is outpacing available Legacy Fund dollars.

- Every single program received more applications than funding available - some even **5x** and **10x** more. This represents pent-up demand from decades of little-to-no funding.

Programs needed lead time and staff to establish themselves in the first year.

- For programs that received little-to-no funding historically, dedicated staff did not exist to manage the grants. As a result, agencies needed time to organize or hire staff to manage the funds, which delayed the **RFP** process for some programs in the first fiscal year.
- Examples include **NMDA's Noxious Weeds Program, EMNRD's Natural Heritage Conservation Act Program and DCA's Cultural Properties Restoration Fund.**
- Today, all agencies have at least one person dedicated to managing Legacy Fund programs and staff are applying their lessons learned in FY26.

Programs continue to need additional funding streams higher than what the Legacy Fund can provide.

- The Legacy Fund was intended to provide a baseline of recurring seed money to all programs, but was not intended to meet each program's annual needs.

Tribes, Pueblos and Nations are eligible for most, but not all, Legacy Fund programs

- Because of the underlying statute, Tribes are not directly eligible for the **Cultural Properties Restoration Fund (CPRF)**, but the **N.M. Dept. of Cultural Affairs** has worked hard to support projects in Tribal communities in partnership with political subdivisions of the state.

Opportunities

- Continued growth and interest from the Legacy Permanent Fund is expected, which could **increase the annual distributions to each program.**

→ The Legacy Fund could meet **\$50 million in annual demand from N.M. communities each year.**

→ Additional, targeted outreach could result in more funding being delivered to **Tribes, Pueblos and Nations.**



Summary & Highlights: FY25

Forest & Watershed Health

NMED - River Stewardship Program

7 river restoration projects:

- Wetland restoration in **Catron County**
- Watershed quality improvements in the **Upper Gila Watershed in Sierra County**
- Restoration of the **Cimarron Watershed**
- Trout habitat improvements in the **Rio Embudo and Rio Chama in Rio Arriba County**
- Beaver habitat restoration on the **Rio Puerco in Sandoval County**
- Wetland improvements in **Albuquerque's South Valley** at the **Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge**
- 20 NGOs, subcontractors and engineers support **NMED's River Stewardship Program**; 90% of them are from N.M.

EMNRD - FAWRA

9 projects on state lands in and around the:

- Santa Fe Fireshed
- Middle Rio Grande Bosque
- Cimarron Watershed
- L Bar/Marquez Wildlife Management Area
- Sangre de Cristo Mountains
- Carson & Gila National Forests

Farming, Ranching & Agricultural Heritage

EMNRD - Natural Heritage Conservation Act Program

4 projects supporting conservation easements in:

- Mora County
- Santa Fe County
- Socorro County
- An 100-acre conservation easement located between **Nambe and Pojoaque pueblos** will support a fourth-generation farm with acequia water rights, protect wildlife habitat and allow public viewing of that habitat from a bike path

NMDA - Healthy Soil Program

39 grants to improve agricultural lands, benefiting more than 30 private landowners and acequia associations, including

- The **Chimayó Cultural Preservation Association** to improve soil health on four parcels of **Plaza del Cerro**

NMDA - District Opportunities Grant

31 projects are supporting 23 Soil & Water Conservation & Watershed Districts, including:

- Improvements to a 120-acre nature area in **Socorro** for public and recreational use



NMDA - Noxious Weeds

15 projects across 14 counties, including:

- Treatment of a 45-acre area in **Taos** that includes a public park, open space and acequia lands, with support from seasonal youth crews

The total project numbers include projects funded specifically by Legacy Fund dollars in FY25. Additional projects were funded by these programs in FY25 using different funding sources.

Outdoor Recreation & Infrastructure

- 7,735 N.M. youth are being served by the Outdoor Equity Fund
- 120 estimated jobs are being created by the Trails+ Grant Program
- Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) employing N.M. youth are active in many Legacy Fund programs, teaching valuable job-training skills and inspiring careers in conservation

EDD - Outdoor Equity Fund

- 22 grants supporting outdoor recreation for youth activities including:
 - Boating and water skiing
 - Bird watching and wildlife photography
 - Horseback riding
 - Recording petroglyphs
 - Hunting and Fishing
 - Tipi camping
- 4 grants serve Tribal students specifically

EDD - Trails+ Grant Program

- 4 grants supporting infrastructure improvements, including:
 - Restoring 326 miles of wildfire-damaged trails in the **Carson, Santa Fe, and Gila National Forests**
 - Improving a popular recreation trail along the **Pecos River in Carlsbad**
 - Improving pedestrian and cycling crossings in **Albuquerque**
 - Building infrastructure at the 370-acre **Ned Houk Park in Clovis**



Wildlife Habitat Restoration

N.M. Dept of Game & Fish

- 43 projects supporting 34 wildlife species, including N.M.'s Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)
- All 33 N.M. counties have wildlife survey projects happening locally
- One educational project with high school students at **Dora High School** and **Tatum High School** focuses on habitat for the lesser prairie-chicken

Historic Preservation

DCA - Cultural Properties Restoration Fund (CPRF)

For the first time in decades, this program funded 5 projects to restore historic and cultural properties, including:

- **Silver City's** only surviving 19th century stone building
- The oldest fire station in **Albuquerque**
- The original city hall in **Santa Fe**
- A 1916 national guard armory in **Deming**
- Four Bee Holdzil (**Navajo** defensive structures) in the **Dinetah** region



Background

The Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund was established by the passage of Senate Bill 9, which was sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Peter Wirth, retired Senator Steven Neville and House Appropriations Chairman Nathan Small. It was created and championed by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham who signed the bill into law on March 23, 2023. The effort was the result of more than five years of negotiations among a broad, bipartisan coalition of New Mexicans.

In the 2023 session, legislators appropriated \$50 million to establish the Legacy Fund and \$50 million to establish the Legacy Permanent Fund. In the 2024 session, legislators appropriated an additional \$300 million to the Legacy Permanent Fund to ensure the funds can produce enough annual returns to be self-sustaining, weather economic downturns, access federal matching dollars and meet the high demand from New Mexico communities.

In the first fiscal year that began on July 1, 2024 and ended June 30, 2025, the Legacy Fund distributed approximately \$12.5 million to ten existing programs across six state agencies. Interest gained from the Legacy Permanent Fund is expected to increase annual distributions to all programs in FY26 and beyond. At the end of May 2025, the balance of the Legacy Permanent Fund was \$382.9 million.

