



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

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## **Governor Bill Richardson Announces Comprehensive Package to Protect Hunting and Fishing Access to Public Lands**

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today announced a series of proposals designed to protect access to New Mexico's abundant and magnificent public lands for hunting, fishing, and recreation. The Governor outlined a comprehensive package of initiatives including several legislative proposals he plans to introduce in the 2007 legislative session.

"Not only is it, in my opinion, the natural born right of our citizens to enjoy the magnificent public lands in our state, it's also very good business. Hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation contribute over a billion dollars to the state's economy each year," said Governor Richardson. "I support both the "Right to Hunt and Fish" policy on New Mexico's public lands *and* the sound wildlife management and conservation principles administered by our Department of Game and Fish. You can have both."

The Governor announced a six-point plan:

- **One: Ensure access to our public lands.** The Governor's package includes legislation that will require public access easements to be included in any deal to sell or trade public lands that could become landlocked. In addition, it would create a review board for all sales or trades of public lands to ensure that access is maintained in the resulting deal. This concept was introduced in a bill sponsored by Senator Carlos Cisneros last session but unfortunately it did not pass.
- **Two: Double the funding for state purchases of easements to provide access to public lands.** The state currently purchases public access easements on a modest level through a program that we are going to rename the "**Open Gate- Hunting and Fishing Access Program**". There are some land owners who currently grant access through their property at no charge, and the hope is that other private land owners will follow their lead. The Governor's plan also includes hiring an "Access Specialist" within the Department of Game and Fish to run the Open Gate program and to support programs to get youth outdoors.
- **Three: Require the State Land Office to report annually on any public lands where access for hunting, fishing, or recreation has been lost.** The report should also include what land has been added to offset that loss of access.
- **Four: Issuing a number of new hunting and fishing authorizations.** The two new "Grand Slam" Hunt Authorizations for Habitat Enhancement and Conservation provide opportunities to hunt elk, deer, oryx, ibex, and pronghorn antelope. In addition, with the new Governor's Wildlife Conservation Hunting and Fishing Authorizations, up to 12 big game and 12 game bird and trophy fish opportunities

will be available annually. The funds generated will go to the Game Protection Fund and be used only for fish and wildlife conservation activities in New Mexico.

- **Five: The Department of Game & Fish will develop guidelines for oil & gas development on all state lands, including those owned by the State Land Office and the Game Commission.** The department of Game and Fish will work with the Environment Department and Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources to implement the guidelines.
- **SIX: Expand existing programs that teach our young people how to hunt and fish responsibly.** Hunting and fishing, as well as other outdoor recreation activities can are activities to be enjoyed for a lifetime. We should encourage our children to experience our wildlands from an early age both to teach them outdoor skills and to instill in them a working appreciation of the incredible natural land resources we have in this state.

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