

7 Reasons to Support the Santa Fe to Taos Thru-Hike

1) Outdoor recreation is good for New Mexico's economy.

- Outdoor recreation created \$3.2 billion in value added for New Mexico, accounting for 2.4% of New Mexico GDP and 29,182 jobs in 2023 according to the BEA Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account.

2) Hiking (Climbing / hiking / tent camping) is the biggest growth category for New Mexico's outdoor recreation economy since the pandemic.

- The outdoor economic category of "Climbing / hiking / tent camping" has increased more since 2019 than any other recreation category measured by the BEA for their Regional Economic Accounts in the "SAORSA" table (Outdoor Recreation Value Added, Compensation, and Employment by State). "Climbing / hiking / tent camping" has increased by 213% from 2019 to 2023.

Which categories of outdoor recreation have grown the most since the pandemic? (From 2019 to 2023)

Description	2019 (in 1000s of \$)	2023 (in 1000s of \$)	% increase from 2019
Climbing / hiking / tent camping	16083	34266	213%
Air and land guided tours / outfitted travel	45938	95169	207%
Guided tours / outfitted travel	65839	135887	206%
Water guided tours / outfitted travel (includes boating and fishing charters)	19901	40719	205%
Shooting (includes archery)	12811	21218	166%
Hunting / shooting / trapping	21153	33979	161%
Other snow activities (includes snowmobiling) 2/	13193	20489	155%
Hunting / trapping	8342	12761	153%
Festivals / sporting events / concerts	31278	47275	151%
Other outdoor recreation	366633	528469	144%
Field sports	11183	15492	139%
State and local government	170251	231966	136%
Other outdoor recreation activities 6/	35098	47471	135%
Game areas (includes golfing and tennis)	59450	79856	134%
Government expenditures	307154	408581	133%
Other conventional water activities 4/	17332	22492	130%
Federal government	136903	176615	129%
Total core outdoor recreation activities	1080782	1371426	127%
Other conventional outdoor recreation activities	49121	62313	127%
Other conventional air and land activities 3/	31789	39822	125%
Productive activities (includes gardening)	40648	50680	125%
Amusement parks / water parks	107932	134197	124%
Sailing	3264	3968	122%
RVing	152330	182274	120%
Equestrian	54381	64283	118%
Snow activities	75055	88653	118%
Conventional outdoor recreation activities	714149	842957	118%
Total outdoor recreation activities	2700883	3185964	118%
Recreational flying	11910	13884	117%
Multi-use apparel and accessories (other) 5/	15205	17611	116%
Local trips 7/	264676	306019	116%
Food and beverages	261909	301164	115%
Multi-use apparel and accessories (conventional) 5/	209813	235048	112%
Supporting outdoor recreation	1620101	1814537	112%
Fishing (excludes boating)	16463	18327	111%
Boating / fishing	83746	92956	111%
Other boating	62512	69027	110%
Skiing / Snowboarding	61862	68165	110%
Lodging	340520	373688	110%
Canoeing / kayaking	1507	1634	108%
Travel and tourism 8/	996348	1049233	105%
Bicycling	10189	10558	104%
Transportation	270417	268766	99%
Construction	51923	50705	98%
Shopping and souvenirs	123502	105615	86%
Motorcycling / ATVing	30368	24742	81%

From:
 SAOACTVA: Outdoor recreation satellite account activities - value added 1.
 Last updated: November 20, 2024-- new statistics for 2023; revised statistics for 2012-2022.
 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis
<https://apps.bea.gov/regional/downloadzip.htm>

3) The thru-hike is not just for elite athletes, and it doesn't have to be done all at once.

- The thru-hike is broken up into six sections, each roughly 20 miles long. So it can be done in a series of weekends, or over a summer.
- Most of the people on long-distance trails (thru-hikes) don't do the entire route. For example, only about 150 people a year complete the Continental Divide Trail. Most of the activity on the trail is "section hikers"—people who hike for a few days a time.

4) The thru-hike connects two of New Mexico's major tourist destinations.

- It amplifies the draw for Santa Fe, Taos, and the towns and villages in between.

5) The thru-hike complements the High Road to Taos and its existing services, history, and attractions.

- There is a natural loop of traffic to the thru-hike: Up over the mountains from Santa Fe, then down from Taos via a trip on the Rio Grande or via the High Road to Taos.

6) The thru-hike supports pride in New Mexico's exceptional natural beauty and its deep, rich history.

- It is also an ideal experience to share with out-of-staters who have misconceptions of New Mexico being just vacant, flat, and hot.

7) The thru-hike gives New Mexico youth (and its adults) an opportunity to experience the confidence boost of completing a major physical achievement.

- The health benefits of this are important, but the pride of accomplishment might arguably be even greater. If you can get yourself over the mountains from Santa Fe to Taos (or Taos to Santa Fe), what else can you do?
- This accomplishment can be done over time, either over a summer or even a series of summers.
- The route of the thru-hike was expressly designed to be done in pieces. There are enough access points, enough water, and enough camping sites to do the thru-hike in 5-7 miles a day.