

TOP TEN REASONS WHY SPECIAL PLACES ACROSS NEW MEXICO DESERVE PROTECTION

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped to protect over 25 special places across New Mexico in the past 50 years. Two such places, Miranda Canyon and Price's Dairy, need additional funding in order to be full protected from threats:

- 1) The low levels of water in New Mexico's rivers are considered a major concern to New Mexicans, with 94% of New Mexicans calling it a serious problem. LWCF has helped to protect water across the state from the Santa Fe Watershed Preservation, to the Rio Chama and Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River.
- 2) LWCF funded projects are key contributors to this economic benefit. For example, in 2009 alone Bandelier National Monument received over \$9 million in spending from visits supporting 181 jobs.
- 3) New Mexico has received \$97,000,000 benefit from National Park tourism, and there were over 1.5 million visitors in 2011, which paid \$1.7 billion in salaries across the state and created 68,000 jobs.
- 4) The total Federal and State funding from the LWCF is approximately \$229,000,000 in New Mexico, making New Mexico the second highest funded in the Mountain Time Zone. This money has protected some of New Mexico's most beautiful places including Chaco Culture National Historic Park, Bandelier National Monument, and the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River.
- 5) Boasting almost 5,000 acres, Miranda Canyon contains watershed lands which not only supply water to Ranchos de Taos and Llano Quemado, but also feed into Taos Valley streams, and ultimately help to maintain the Rio Grande.
- 6) Miranda Canyon is home to cultural and historical sites, such as the Old Spanish National Historic Trail parts of the Camino Real Trail, and artifacts from Pueblo Indians and Spanish settlers, making it such an important part of New Mexico's heritage. LWCF has helped protect numerous cultural and historic sights, most notably those in Chaco Culture National Historic Park and Bandelier National Monument.
- 7) Miranda Canyon boasts rock formations dating 1.7 billion years old, rivaling that found at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.
- 8) Proposals to develop Miranda Canyon into 150 lots created a public outcry in Taos, leading to the sale of parts of the property to the National Forest Service, keeping this scenic, historical, and ecological landmark safe from development. However more than 3,000 acres of this land are still unprotected and face a constant risk of development.
- 9) The purchase of Price's Dairy and its 154 acre-feet of pre-1907 senior water rights is key to maintaining New Mexico's environmental health, as the watershed can be used to restore habitats of ecological value. This will contribute to and protect a part of the Rio Grande which is a critical water resource, providing drinking and irrigation water to 70% of New Mexicans, or 1.3 million people.
- 10) Using LWCF funding, Price's Dairy has also been established as Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge, the first urban refuge of its kind in the Southwest. This protects the area's natural resources and provides recreational and educational opportunities to the local community. However 180 acres still remain unprotected, so to preserve the whole area and the risks it faces, \$1.5 million are needed from the LWCF.

Environment New Mexico thanks Senators Udall and Heinrich for being champions of our state's natural heritage – and for supporting a permanently and fully funded Land and Water Conservation Fund.

