

New Mexico takes leadership role in outdoor recreation economy

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SANTA FE — Outdoor Recreation Director Axie Navas has been elected to chair an organization of 13 states where developing and protecting recreation opportunities are now policy priorities, Economic Development Department Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced Jan. 19.

The Confluence of States is a bipartisan agreement between states to promote and grow the outdoor economy in the U. S. The Confluence signatories commit to practices that protect and sustain our water, air, land, and wildlife for current and future generations and the betterment of the economy. The agreement is based on four pillars: 1. conservation & stewardship; 2. education & workforce training; 3. economic development; and 4. public health & wellness.

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Currently 13 states have signed on to the accords. Colorado, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming were the initial signatories. On Oct. 24, 2019, New Mexico, along with Maine, Michigan, Nevada, and Virginia signed onto the agreement. The goal is to eventually have all 50 states participate.

State peers in the accord elected New Mexico State, under the leadership of Axie Navas, to chair the confluence with co-chair Nathan Fey, director of the Colorado Office of Outdoor Recreation. The co-chairs will be responsible for convening all the states, creating strategies for the various members, and serving as the national point people for the offices of outdoor recreation.

“Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham’s efforts to grow the outdoor recreation economy in New Mexico has gained national attention, and the leadership role that Axie Navas plays will help as we increase partnerships with the federal government to build these businesses and create jobs,” Keyes said.

“This honor is a great opportunity for New Mexico to continue growing its national leadership role in the outdoor industry, a reputation it established with the creation of the first-ever Outdoor Equity Fund,” Navas said.

“New Mexico has outpaced the national average in growth in the outdoor recreation economy, and is committed to the industry as a way to further diversify our economy and foster better, faster statewide recovery efforts, especially in our most rural areas.

“In addition to our economic goals, the foundational beliefs of the accords will also help improve access to outdoor recreation and serve to better protect our lands and waters,” she concluded.

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