



Make this summer New Mexico True

June 2, 2016

Summer in Northern New Mexico: the days are longer, the temperatures warmer, and the temptation to get outside is greater each time you look out the window.

Although the entire local workforce—including new-to-town summer students—is essential to the growth, productivity, and efficiency of our region, don't be afraid to step back from your electronic devices and plug in to nature.

We are fortunate to live in a beautiful area. True, we don't have an abundance of five-star restaurants or fancy nightlife—but our air is clean, our vistas grand, and I'd choose one of our mountain sunsets over a big cityscape, any day. The opportunities for learning, exploring, and getting sunburned (please wear sunblock!) are endless.

Our local hiking and cycling trails crisscross the region with greater frequency than our paved roads. Whether you're looking for an organized event (such as the [5K Butterfly Run](#) in Pojoaque on June 19) or simply hoping to take a stroll during your lunch hour, don't take our open spaces for granted—they are a precious resource, and we are lucky to enjoy them.

Northern New Mexico is home to not one but *several* national parks. In the Los Alamos area, climb into ancestral Puebloan cave dwellings at [Bandelier National Monument](#), spend an afternoon hiking and fishing at [Valles Caldera National Preserve](#), or soak up local history at [Manhattan Project National Historical Park](#).

Tyuonyi (Qu-weh-nee) was once two stories tall with over 400 rooms, most of which were used for storing food. Photo: NPS

Closer to Taos, the [Rio Grande del Norte National Monument](#) covers nearly 250,000 acres, including the impressive Rio Grande Gorge Bridge—the seventh highest bridge in the United States.

Another way to enjoy the outdoors during the coming months is to attend a [feast day](#)—a celebration of language, culture, and religion—at one of New Mexico's 19 Pueblos. These Native dances draw from centuries of tradition and are a valuable way to develop an appreciation for the customs and culture of the region.

Punctuate your big high-altitude adventures with smaller ones—grab breakfast at a farmers market or dance the evening away at a summer concert under the stars. You'll come back to work or school recharged and ready to take on another day—at least until the view out your window draws you outside once again.

—Kathy Keith

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