

## **NEW FINDINGS: Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument Spurred Steady Economic Growth in Southern New Mexico over the Past Decade**

*Communities around the national monument have seen growth in new jobs and millions in tax revenue due to a three-fold increase in visitation since 2014*

### **CONTACTS:**

Carrie Hamblen, Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce, [carrie@locallascruces.com](mailto:carrie@locallascruces.com)

Jen Dickson, Mission Driven Advocacy, [jensdickson@gmail.com](mailto:jensdickson@gmail.com)

**LAS CRUCES, NM** (September 13, 2023) – Job growth, increased tax revenue, and visitation to restaurants, motels, and small businesses have all been boosted by the protection of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM), according to an [economic study released today](#). ***A Decade of Opportunity: How the Designation of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument is Boosting Southern New Mexico's Economy***, shows the positive economic impact on Doña Ana and Luna counties since the monument's establishment in 2014 - far exceeding estimates made before protections were put in place.

The [study](#), released by the Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce and compiled by BBC Research and Consulting, quantifies how the change in designation of lands near Las Cruces and Deming, New Mexico, to a national monument raised the profile of the region, leading to an increase in visitation and spending that created significant economic growth. Since its designation, the monument has drawn-in more than \$234 million in cumulative economic impact, including \$35 million in 2022 alone.

“The data exemplifies what we have been witnessing - the designation of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument is fueling our local businesses and has provided our community an opportunity to diversify our economy and bring in new revenue we would not have seen otherwise,” **said Carrie Hamblen, CEO/President of the Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce.**

“Organ-Mountains-Desert Peaks is a success story that will likely help us sustain a strong and vibrant local economy for decades to come.”

### **Key findings from the study include:**

- **Visitation to the monument has nearly tripled over the past decade.** These visitors spend money supporting jobs and local businesses, including retail shops, gas stations, restaurants, motels, and other service businesses.
- **Spending by out-of-town visitors resulted in \$35 million** of positive economic impacts to 2022.
- In 2022, visitation to the monument supported **305 jobs**.
- Increased business revenue also meant significant growth for county coffers. **Visitation to the monument in 2022 generated \$1.9 million in tax revenue**, and nearly \$13 million in taxes over the past decade, including \$1.2 in revenue to the county, and \$2 million for local governments.
- The Bureau of Land Management, which oversees the monument, **increased their operations and staffing budget** by a factor of six since designation, increasing protection, research, and recreation activities.

“Having a national monument so accessible has been a welcomed addition when marketing Las Cruces and our businesses,” said **Rochelle Miller-Hernandez**, Executive Director of Visit Las Cruces. “Since the designation of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, we have seen a 150% increase in interest for the monument on our website. Recognizing the incredible draw the monument has for visitors, we work hard to ensure they are spending the night in Las Cruces and shopping locally. The heightened visibility of the monument has people excited to come visit, and spend money.”

An analysis of the past decade also found that economic impacts from visitation to the monument have exceeded initial predictions made prior to protection by 51 percent.

“While Hatch is known for our delicious green chile, we are excited to also become an outdoor recreation destination. The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument has become a crucial part of this opportunity,” said **Slim Whitlock, Mayor of Hatch**. “These lands taught me everything I know about the outdoors, and because we've protected them, I love knowing that they will be there for my grandchildren to enjoy and learn the same life lessons.”

**Susana Chaparro, Chair of the Doña Ana County Board of County Commissioners**, said, “we are thrilled to see the economic success that has come with the creation of our new national monument. The tripling of visitors to OMDP has helped create hundreds of jobs in Doña Ana county, and raise millions in revenue for vital community services.”

The study released today notes that the monument designation raised the profile of southern New Mexico by adding to the existing protected public lands in the region. Along with White Sands and Prehistoric Trackways National Monuments, the addition of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks provides visitors with an opportunity to explore multiple monuments in one visit. The proximity to Las Cruces, Deming, and Hatch allows these towns to benefit with visitors patronizing local businesses for supplies, services, lodging, and entertainment.

“The people I meet at my business always have a story to share about their adventures within the Monument,” said **Pablo Lopez, Manager of Outdoor Adventures**. “They are creating lasting memories with their families and friends while they are financially supporting local businesses at the same time. It is something special that we get to be part of, while in-return, providing economic stability and job growth to aid our own families.”

According to the study, the designation of the monument has encouraged more local residents to visit, improving quality of life and public health. Locals are 61 percent of total visitors. Of non-local visitors, 73 percent said the monument was the reason for their visit to the area.

“This exciting new report confirms what we have seen time again,” said **Jeff Steinborn, Executive Director of Outdoor New Mexico**. “Protected public lands create sustainable new jobs, and a high quality of life. The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument provides a great model for other communities on how to protect their treasured natural areas, while creating economic prosperity.”

Read the [full study here](#).

###