



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Two Local Groups Aim to Increase Outdoor Learning in Rural Northern New Mexico by Building and Strengthening Community Connections**

**[Northern New Mexico]** (March 11, 2022) There is widespread support in New Mexico for getting kids outside to learn as evidenced by the recent bipartisan passage in the 2022 Legislative Session of legislation that will create an outdoor learning program at the NM Public Education Department (Senate Bill 32, incorporated into House Bill 2). Outdoor and environmental education programs, curricula, camps, and opportunities are more dispersed for teachers and students in rural areas, and the providers available face unique challenges in reaching and serving rural youth and schools. In response, Environmental Education of New Mexico and the Conservation Science Center at New Mexico Highlands University will be hosting the free Fostering Connections to Grow Outdoor Learning Symposium focused on northern New Mexico and rural communities by Zoom on Monday, April 18th, from 9:00 am-1:00 pm. Just in time for Earth Day, these organizations will help make connections among diverse individuals interested in increasing opportunities for outdoor learning. This includes teachers, youth, families, outdoor and environmental educators, youth camp coordinators, public lands staff, and agriculture program providers. Everyone is welcome and can register at no cost online at [eenm.org/symposium](http://eenm.org/symposium).

Join for inspiring speakers, interactive workshops, and opportunities to build relationships to help increase outdoor and environmental learning in rural northern New Mexico. The half-day symposium includes a panel discussion about knowledge equity in outdoor learning, emphasizing attention to local knowledge and perspectives that participants bring and offer as learners, educators, and community members.

Following the panel, participants will take part in a series of networking activities and opportunities to build relationships to help maximize limited resources and expand capacity to serve rural youth, families, teachers, and program providers with relevant and meaningful outdoor and environmental learning opportunities in and out of school.

This symposium is grounded in northern New Mexico, but rural communities across the state face similar challenges. Thus, all are welcome to work towards a model for expanding and resourcing our student communities. Registration is free and currently open at [eenm.org/symposium](http://eenm.org/symposium). This program was made possible by the generous support of the Los Alamos National Labs (LANL) Foundation Education Enrichment Grant.

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