

LFC Requester: _____

**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS
2025 Regular Session**

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Check all that apply:
Original X **Amendment** _____
Correction _____ **Substitute** _____

Date 1/30/25
Bill No: HB219

Sponsor: Rep. Nathan Small
Short Title: Slot Canyon Riverlands State Park
Agency Name and Code: EMNRD 521
Number: _____
Person Writing: Toby Velasquez
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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26		
N/A	\$9,000.0	Nonrecurring	GF

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26	FY27		
N/A	N/A	TBD	Recurring	OSF

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	\$398,452	\$398,452	\$398,452	\$1,195,356	Recurring	OSF

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:
 Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act:

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

HB21 relates to state parks and provides for the development and designation of Slot Canyon Riverlands State Park as a new state park. HB219 restricts the sale, trade, barter or exchange of holdings in certain parcels of the park and makes an appropriation of \$9M from the General Fund to the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department for expenditure in fiscal year 2026 and subsequent fiscal years.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SM 38 was introduced by Senator Jeff Steinborn and Representative Nathan P. Small and passed in the 2023 session of the New Mexico State Legislature. SM 38 requested that the State Parks Division (SPD) of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department complete a feasibility study (Study) to consider the establishment of a state park at Broad Canyon Ranch (BCR). BCR was acquired by SPD in 2008 with fundraising support from the Trust for Public Lands and the World Wildlife Fund.

The BCR Study Area (Study Area) is in Doña Ana County along a stretch of the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico. The Study Area is approximately 20 miles north of Las Cruces and straddles NM 185. The Study Area is comprised of three (3) separate tracts owned by the SPD, referred to in this report as the “Northern Parcel,” “Riverside Parcel,” and “Upland Parcel.”

The three Study Area parcels were evaluated based on the statutory criteria for establishing a state park (NMSA 1972 Chapter 16 Article 2). This involved an assessment of natural and cultural resources, potential recreational opportunities, and the suitability of lands available for recreational development within each parcel. Additionally, the Study analyzes whether state park development would conform with the New Mexico State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

The Study provided a range of approximate development cost estimates, including planning, design, construction, and equipment for the various management and development alternatives. HB219 supports Alternative 3, a state park with a campground on the Riverside Parcel plus the cost estimate for developing the Upland Parcel. The Northern Parcel does not meet the criteria for designation or development as a state park. Alternative 3 has an option for a potential visitor center by renovating the existing ranch house or demolition of the existing ranch house and construction of a new purpose-designed visitor center. Alternative 3, including both Riverside and Upland Parcels, is anticipated to cost approximately \$6.75M depending on the extent of development. The development of a visitor center is expected to cost between \$1.4M and \$2.5M. With visitor center, the grand total for Alternative 3 is between \$8.1M and \$9.3M.

State park staffing will be dependent on the level of recreational development as well as the types of amenities and activities offered if the site is to be developed as a state park. HB219 supports Alternative 3, and notes that many state parks are currently understaffed. For Alternative 3, the study outlines that 4 full time equivalent positions, and 2 seasonal positions will adequately support this alternative at a projected recurring annual operating cost of \$338,452.

The Study also evaluated and projected the annual operating costs for recurring costs for equipment, utilities, maintenance and other related operational expenses at \$60,000.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The BCR was purchased with Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) and thus both the Riverside and Upland Parcels are LWCF obligated properties. The LWCF was designed to provide funds and matching grants to federal, state and local governments for the acquisition of land and water, and easements on land and water, to safeguard natural areas, water resources and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. LWCF documentation indicates that the original land use intent included: 1) permanent public access to the property with parking and comfort station; 2) non-intrusive trail alignment with the proposed Rio Grande Trail; and 3) future development of additional trails to support wildlife viewing.

Since the time of acquisition, SPD has supported ecological restoration activities on site through various partnerships, including with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, and Southwest Audubon. The property is fenced and gated and is managed through periodic visits by state park staff assigned at nearby state parks.

The Northern Parcel was purchased in the 1980s, and since that time the property has remained fenced and has not been managed actively as part of the state parks system.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

HB219 supports Alternative 3, which supports SPD operating the Riverside and Upland Parcels as a state park with a campground and visitor center. The Northern Parcel could be retained by SPD for future connections to Organ Mountains Desert Peaks (OMDP) National Monument for recreational development or simply place this parcel under conservation status. Approximately 20 developed campsites could be developed, and the SPD could pursue adaptive reuse of the existing ranch house and adjacent structures, and develop a visitor center, outdoor classroom, and facilities for a concessionaire. Recreational development would take into consideration and manage/limit access to most sensitive habitat areas on site. A concessionaire could support daily operations during the non-motorized boating season, and a camp host could support basic campground operations year-round. Agreements with organizations such as the Friends of OMDP could be developed to support education and interpretation.

HB219 supports the desired recreation activities indicated by stakeholders – hiking, birdwatching, picnicking, non-motorized boating, education/interpretive programs, and camping. It also supports top management priorities identified by stakeholders – wildlife habitat protection, ecosystem restoration, creating connections with regional trails and parks, and recreational development. HB219 also supports public access, multiple sustained use, and economic development on the lower Rio Grande. HB219 also supports year-round visitation and expands opportunities for public access, outdoor education, and interpretive programming.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There are many plans and reports by local, state, and federal agencies that guide recreational development and resource management in the Study Area and surrounding region. These include plans for trail development, ecological restoration, wetlands management, and resource management for adjacent federal lands. The Study Area is located within a large public lands complex with adjacent properties owned by Bureau of Land Management (BLM), State Land Office (SLO), International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), and New Mexico State University (NMSU). The Riverside and Upland Parcels are important for providing and managing access to various recreational areas as well as supporting trail alignment with the Rio Grande Trail. It will be incumbent on the various public land agencies to partner to ensure the most efficient and

effective administrative agreements are explored and implemented to achieve the objectives as provided by Alternative 3.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

None.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None.

ALTERNATIVES

None.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

There will be no development or designation of Slot Canyon Riverlands State Park as a new state park, and \$9M from the General Fund to the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department for expenditure in fiscal year 2026 and subsequent fiscal years will not be appropriated.

AMENDMENTS

None.