



OPEN GATE PROGRAM INFORMATION

INCENTIVES FOR PRIVATE LANDOWNERS TO PROVIDE PUBLIC ACCESS

What is the Open Gate Program?

- A statewide program operated by New Mexico Department of Game and Fish that leases private land for public hunting, angling, trapping, and right-of-way access opportunities.
- **Through the program, participating landowners provide legal access to hunters, while the state provides monetary incentives, liability protection, and increased patrolling efforts by law enforcement.**
- Program interests include properties that improve access to landlocked public land and/or properties with sustainable populations of: oryx, deer, pronghorn, cougar, bighorn sheep, turkey, grouse, dove, quail, sandhill crane, waterfowl, javelina, furbearer species, and/or sport fishes.
- The program is funded through the Habitat Management & Access Validation (HMAV) stamp.
 - \$1 of every \$4 from a HMAV purchase is allocated to the Open Gate Program fund.
- Annual, multi-year or long-term agreement contracts are available.
- Properties that provide greater public opportunities and maintain sustainable fish and wildlife resources, or provide exceptional access are most desirable, but enrollment in the program is not guaranteed.



What are the landowner benefits?

- Enrolled landowners are compensated for access provided throughout a license year based on a Commission approved pay scale, habitat or access quality, and hunting or fishing quality.
- The program may be used as a tool for private lands that are subject to trespassing due to their proximity to heavily utilized public lands.
- Liability protection under the terms of 17-4-7 NMSA 1978.
- Program rules designed to protect private property and the landowner.
- Signage installed and maintained on site to manage public access.

What is involved in the application review process?

- Applications and the current rate sheet are available on NM Department of Game & Fish's Open Gate Program website.
- Applications are processed by the Open Gate Program Coordinator, who will:
 1. Conduct an initial assessment of the property using maps and deeds,
 2. Schedule and conduct a site visit and property assessment,
 3. Gather information about the property and surrounding areas from local area experts (game wardens and regional biologists), and
 4. Determine if the property fits the current needs of the program and whether it works within the budget of the Open Gate Program.

What are the benefits to sportsmen and sportswomen?

- Provides quality private-land hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities.
- Improves access to landlocked public lands.
- Increases land access opportunities at no additional cost.
- Private land access without written permission.
- 44% of the land area in New Mexico is privately owned.
 - Private land access through the Open Gate Program can increase access to landlocked public land and provide high quality hunting and fishing opportunities to the public.



**Scan the QR code to
Learn more about the
Open Gate program!**

