

[New Mexico Independent](#)

By Matthew Reichbach

June 4, 2009

Congressman Ben Ray Luján announced today that he introduced legislation designed to encourage environmental research at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

The bill would authorize \$5 million in funding for [LANL's National Environmental Research Park](#) (NERP) as well as \$5 million for each of six other [NERPs](#) throughout the country.

“These parks are unique outdoor laboratories that offer secure settings for long-term research on a broad range of subjects, including wildlife biology, ecology, climate change effects, and maintenance of freshwater ecosystems,” said Luján.

More from a press release from Luján's office:

The Los Alamos NERP was designated at in 1973. Its 40 square miles include the entire site of Los Alamos National Laboratory and a landscape of canyons, mesas, mountains, and the Rio Grande, providing a diverse range of ecosystems to explore. The Los Alamos Research Park's ongoing environmental studies include: interaction between its local ecosystems and the hydrologic cycle; contaminant transport; landfill cap performance; woodland productivity; and long-term data sets developed to monitor climate change effects, soil moisture, and fire ecology providing valuable baseline reference information.

Luján said the NERPs “are one of our nation’s most valuable environmental research assets, and it is time for them to be recognized in law and explicitly provided the resources they need to continue their valuable work. This legislation offers guidance for the parks’ research and monitoring programs as well as their education and outreach activities, and it authorizes core funding needed to support their important work.”