



Laguna Fire 2025 - USFS Santa Fe Facebook Photo

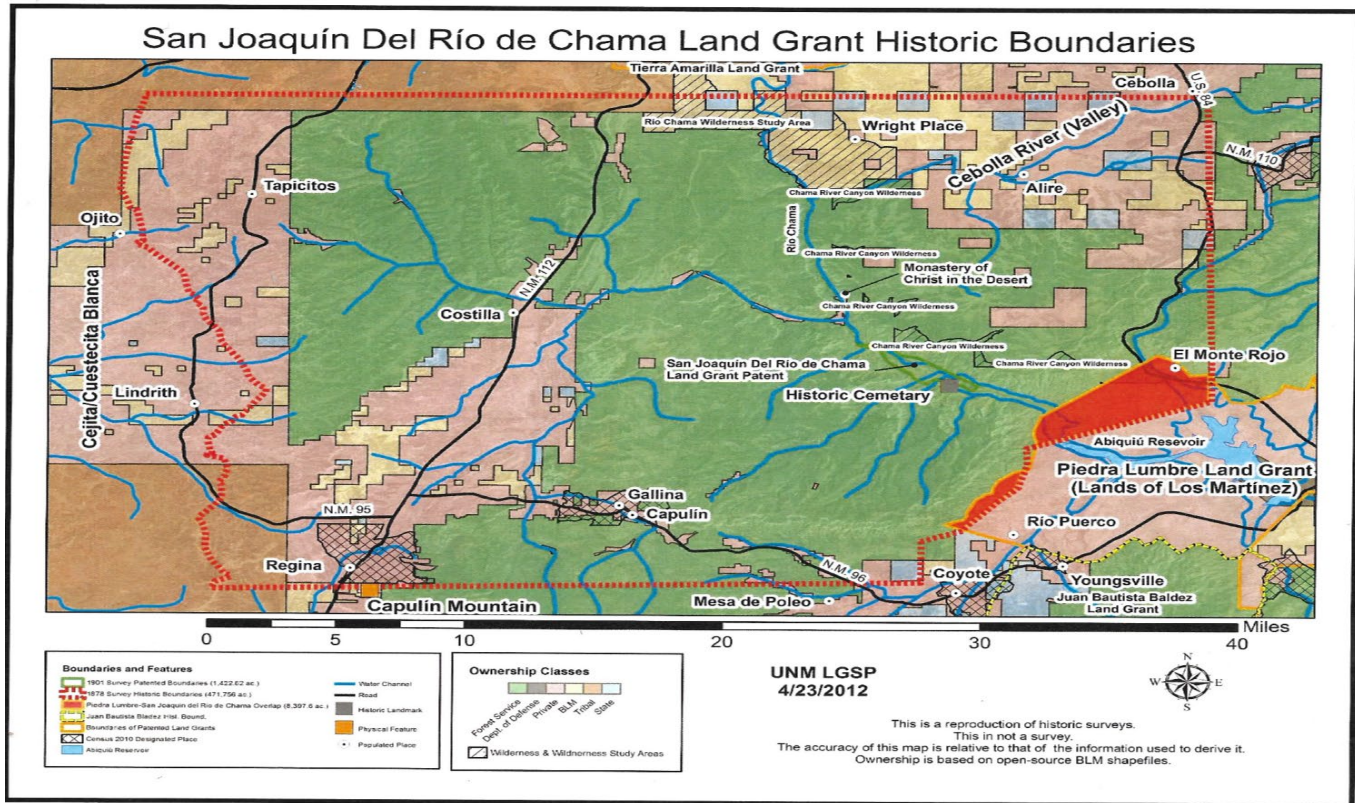
Presentation to the  
NM Land Grant Interim Committee  
August 14, 2025

**San Joaquin del Rio de Chama Land Grant/Merced**

Leonard T Martinez President  
Gerald Chacon Secretary of Land and Water  
Monica Rodriguez Secretary

# Our History

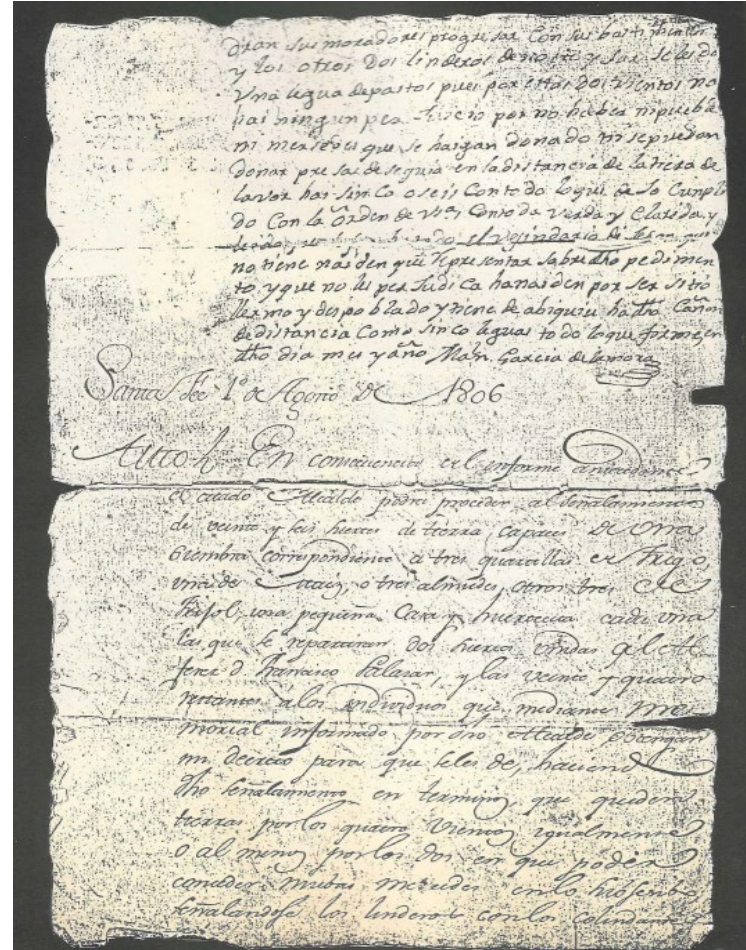
## 1872 Survey and 1905 Patent Map





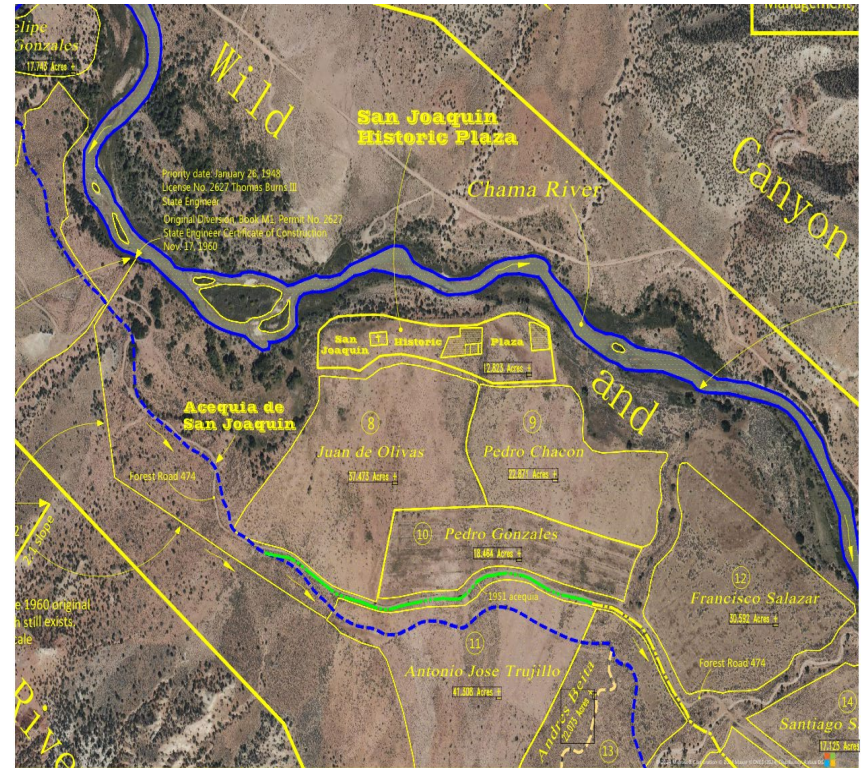
# Projects List and Status Update

1. Canon de Chama Irrigation Project
1. San Joaquin Community and Economic Development Center
1. Youth Conservation Corp
1. Las Mercedes Unidos Event Center
1. Development of our South Annex
1. Renovations of our Historic Escuelita and Morada
1. Preservation and Maintenance of Cemeteries
1. Acquisition of Former Common Lands



# Canon de Chama Irrigation Project Objectives and Goals

- Economic Development for the local community the land grant and our heirs
- Protect the historical, cultural and natural resources
  - Including the historic plaza, cemetery, orchards, acequia infrastructure and all other archaeological sites and resources
- Prevent the loss of the water rights
- Provide forage resources for livestock
- Provide farm land to grow produce, fruits and vegetables



# Canon de Chama Irrigation Project Objectives and Goals

- Research other crop opportunities
- Provide winter grazing of crop residue for permittees
- Protect seed and varietal resources
- Mitigate flood damage to farm and acequia infrastructure
- Improve soil health
- Protect the Ojitos





# Youth Conservation Corp



Acequias and Land Grants

Traditional Agriculture

Community Governance

Culture, Food, Vocabulary,  
History

Adobe construction

Fence Construction and Repair

Community Garden

Erosion Control

Assets Inventory

Land Stewardship

# Growing our resources and...

Friendship

Collaboration

Leadership

Job Skills

Responsibility

Discipline

Respeto, Humildad y Orgullo



# San Joaquin Community and Economic Development Center

Completed Renovations: New HVAC, Stucco, Roof, and Windows, New Fencing

**Funding: Capital Outlay**



Future Proposed Uses:

Local Government Office Hours, Business Incubation Programs, Small Business Support, Farmers Markets, Agro Businesses, Recreation Businesses, Commercial Kitchen, High Speed WiFi, Student Drop In Center, Senior Center, Cultural Events, Genealogy Center, Early Childhood Education Center

**Future Funding: Congressionally Directed Spending and Capital Outlay**



# Las Mercedes Unidos Event Center

San Joaquin del Rio de Chama, Tierra Amarilla, Juan Bautista Land Grants

Acquired in 2020 through Capital Outlay

Completed Electric Remediation and Rewiring

Parking Lot Maintenance

Weed and Pest Control

Tested Existing Wells - NOT Adequate

Working to Drill a New Well

Partnership with Medical Evacuation Helicopters

# Laguna and Indios Fire 28,0000 acres and Counting

Laguna Fire, 2025 - 17,450+ acres

Indios Fire, 2024 - 11,000 acres

USFS Continues to Demonstrate an inability to manage 'prescribed or controlled burns'

We went to the community meetings

We advised the USFS NOT to burn. WHY?

- We are in a 20 year extreme drought
- Monsoons are not reliable
- Winds remain strong through the summer months
- Grass regrowth impossible midsummer
- Damage to acequia infrastructure and watershed
- Water is scarce and should NOT be used for planned fire
- Personnel shortage due to other fires in the US
- How much water from the reservoirs and Rio Chama was used?
- Reduction in Tourism, smoke and air quality
- Impacts to cattle growers - allotments - Complete loss of cattle
- Long term impacts to traditional communities



What has been lost: Trees, Grassland, Plants, Cattle Allotments, Animals including Deer, Elk, Cattle, Insects, Threats to the watershed and the Community Trust in USFS

# Fire Impacts - Cascading Events Laguna and Los Indios

Cascading Events, Flooding, Soil Loss, Detriment to Wildlife Damage to the Watershed. Higher Rates or No Insurance for communities

- Land Grant is unable to acquire insurance for facilities we are now designated as in a fire of flood zone.

**Remedies:** Re-seeding projects, YCC Projects for Erosion, Planting Tree Seedlings, Technical Support for Community including Emergency Alerts and management, removal of green one seeded juniper. Requires FUNDING!

**Solutions:** More manual thinning, reducing hurdles for leneros, more fuel wood programs, community led thinning and timber projects. ALSO Direct communication by USFS to Land Grant and include in the decision making. Review the NEPA Process to reduce “ANALYSIS PARALYSIS” Increase the capacity of local infrastructure for forest thinning. (Timber Harvesting Industry was completely decimated in the 1980’s) Review the process for timber harvesting to reduce the number of small diameter timber.



**Fire in its current use is destroying the ecosystem.**



# How the NM Land Grant Interim Committee can Support our Work

\$200,000 to increase Land Grant capacity and to provide technical assistance to community

Bridging Better Relationships with Federal Partners including BLM and USFS

Bridging Better Relationships with State Partners like Game and Fish - Include Land Grants in the rulemaking process. Only available process are depredation hunts. Increase E-PLUS and Public Licenses during the season

Support and Pass the Land Grant and Acequias Infrastructure Fund (2025 HB 330)



Ranchers on a midnight search for cattle using USFS drone during the Laguna Fire

# Contact Info

Leonard T. Martinez  
lenmtznm@gmail.com

Gerald Chacon  
gfchacon53@gmail.com

Monica T. Rodriguez  
secretary.sanjoaquin.landgrant@gmail.com

