

Report on House Joint Memorial 1 (2018)

Addressing Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant- Merced Lineas

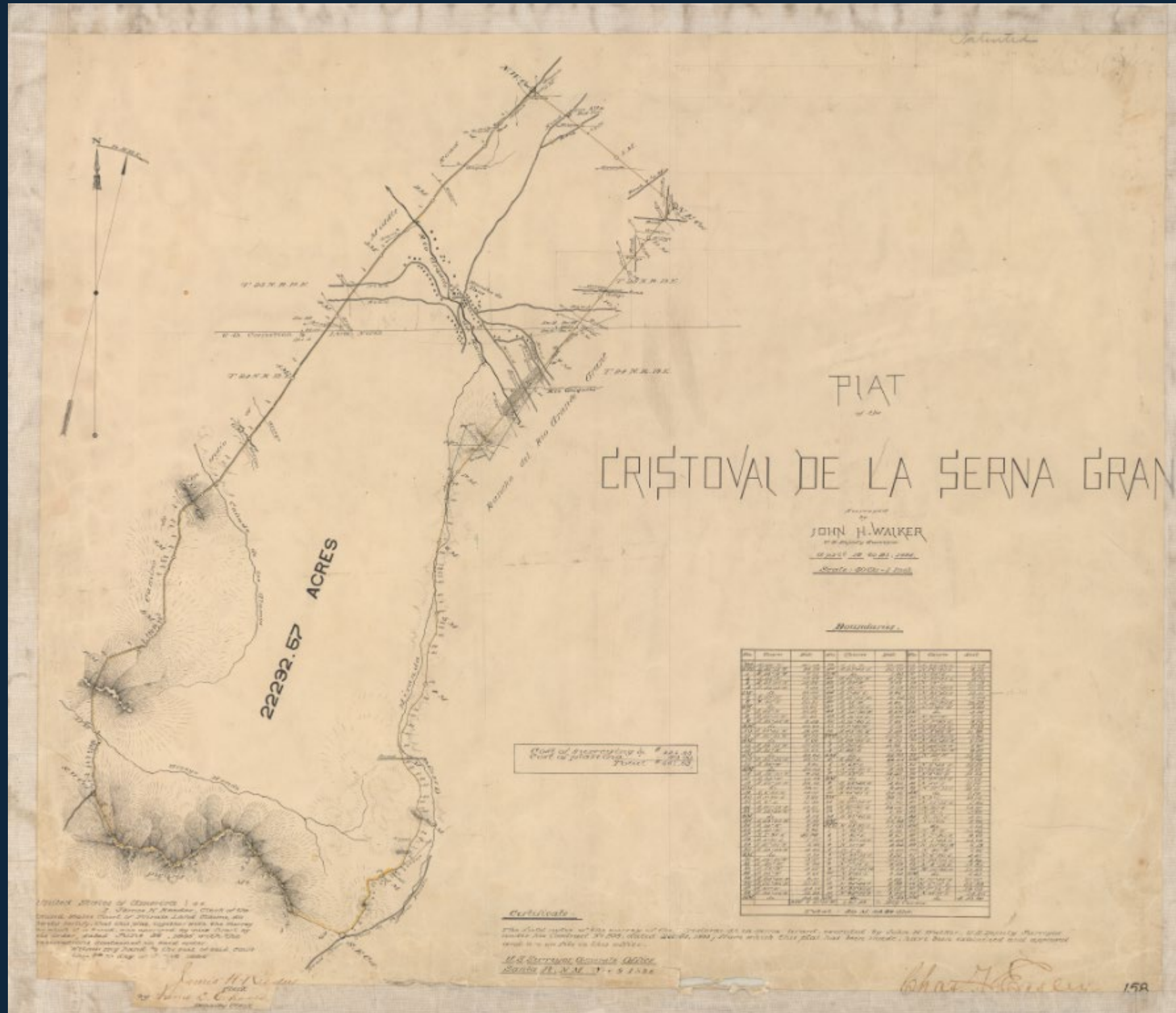
Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty Division
Presentation to Interim Land Grant Committee of the
New Mexico Legislature

Enrique Romero, Division Director & Assistant Attorney
General

August 26, 2026

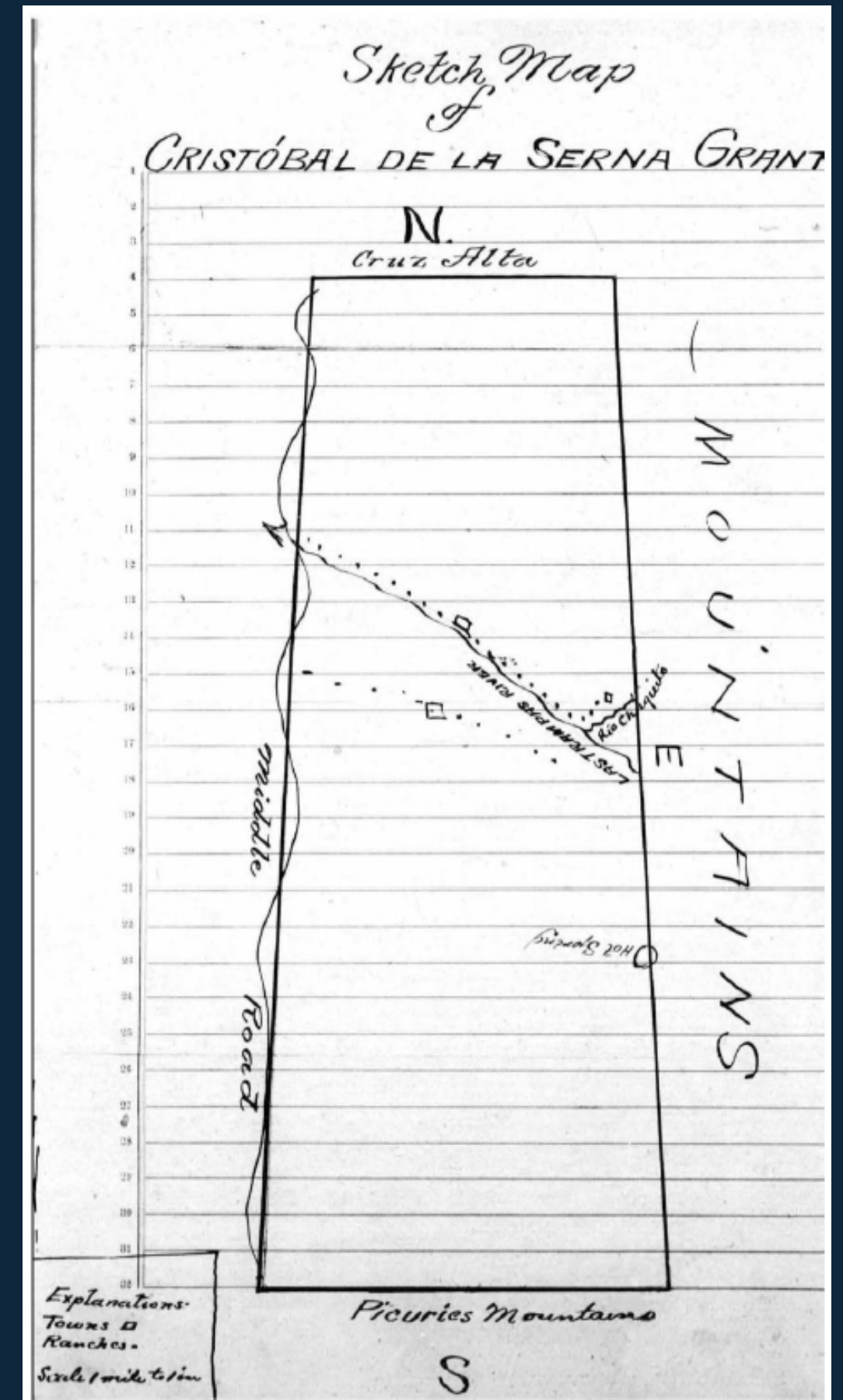


Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant-Merced



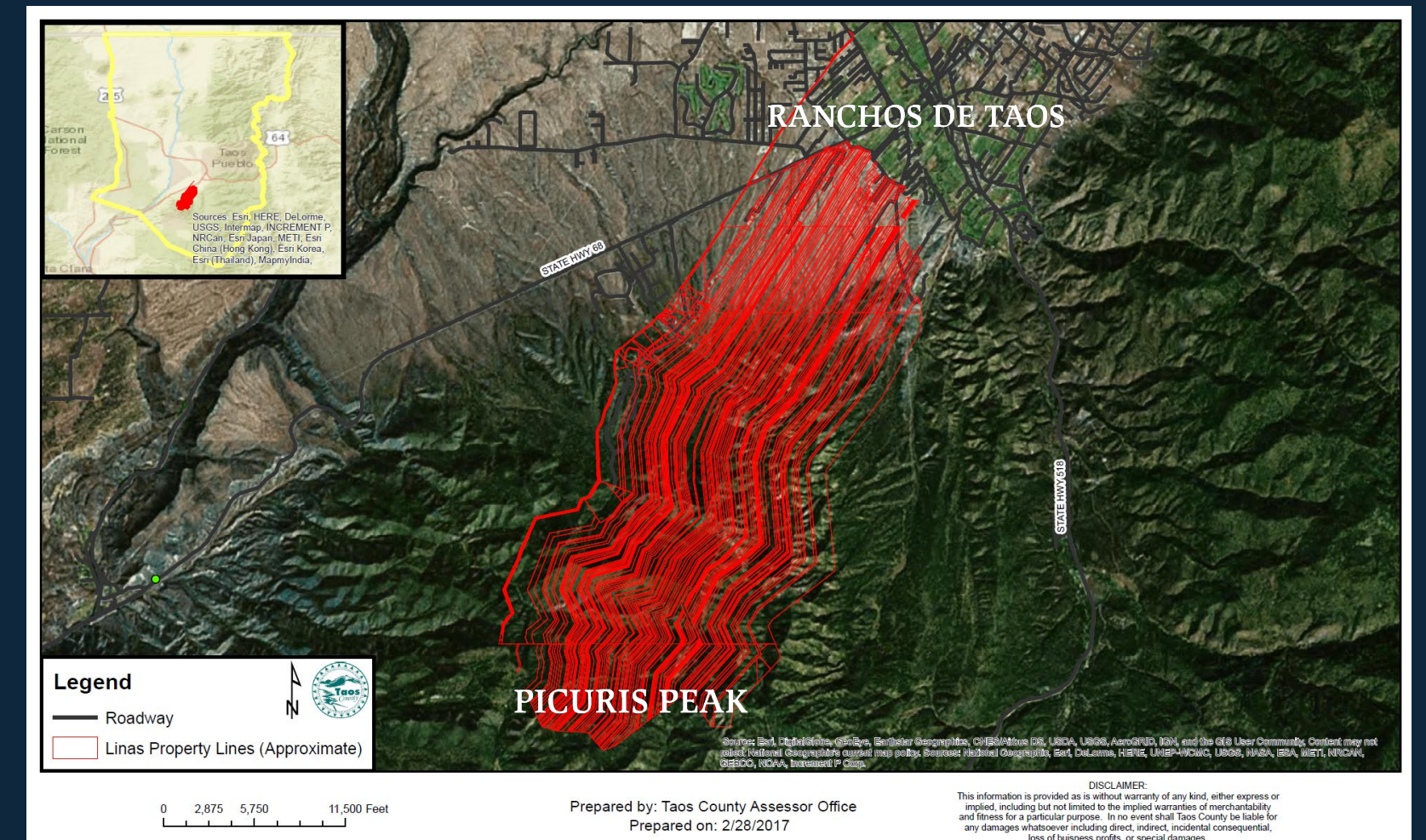
Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant-Merced

- Originally issued in 1710 to Cristobal de la Serna
- Grant purchased by Diego Romero in 1724
- “Partitioned” twice after Diego Romero’s death in 1745 and in 1764
- Jose Romero (Diego Romero’s grandson) petitioned alcalde to confirm land after documents were lost in the Comanche raids
- Confirmed by Governor Don Juan Bautista de Anza in 1787
- Confirmed by the Court of Private Land Claims in 1892
- Surveyed in 1894
- Patented in 1903 for 22,232.57 acres



HJM 1 (2018) – *The Problem*

- In 1941, the Taos County Assessor undertook a “reassessment survey”
- Resulted in a map in which the parcels were drawn as “three-foot-wide strips, called “*lineas*”, some of which extended up to five miles from the valley floor to the top of Picuris Peak
- “[R]esemble[e] spaghetti, flat tree rings or a ball of string after a cat has played with it”
- *Lineas* create land management issues for most land uses
- Proper valuation *lineas* is infeasible



HJM 1 (2018) – *The Request*

- “[R]esearch the history and legal basis for the creation of the 1941 plat map for the Cristobal de la Serna land grant-merced; and...
- [D]evelop a proposal for how the property titles and boundaries for the land may be rationalized”
- Include the following stakeholders:
 - Tax and Revenue Department
 - Board of County Commissioners of Taos County
 - Taos County Assessor’s Office
 - Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant-Merced

HJM 1 Report to the Interim Committee

The Report discusses the Stakeholders' work in response to the requests of HJM 1 and highlights the problems, needs, and next steps, including requests for this Committee

Land Grant History

Provides brief history of CDLS Land Grant-Merced.

State Actions Pre-HJM 1

Identifies governmental actions prior to the issuance of HJM 1, including statutory changes supporting increasing land grant's authority.

Problems and Solutions

Summarizes what the Stakeholders have identified as the core problems and solutions.

Next Steps, Needs and Requests

Concludes with identifying the funding and policy needs to continue with project.



New Mexico
Department
of Justice

Stakeholder Participation

- 4 meetings between September 11, 2025, and July 23, 2026, of the full Stakeholder group
- Stakeholders named in HJM 1 plus Taos Planning and Zoning Department and Taos County Clerk's Office
- Numerous meetings with individual stakeholders
- Research at County Assessor's Office and State Records and Archives



(Extra special Thank You to the Taos Soil and Water Conservation District for the use of their conference room!)

Lineas Problems

- *Lineas* are unidentifiable
- *Lineas* were intended for taxation purposes
- *Lineas* are inconsistent with the protections under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
- Capital outlay funds limit CDLS's purchasing power
- *Lineas* limit improvements and restrict land use
- History of bad faith and land loss
- Possibility that not all heirs were included in the 1941 survey

QUITCLAIM DEED

MAXIMINO TRUJILLO, Widower of JOSSIE TRUJILLO, whose address is 2613 Oakland, Pueblo, Colorado 81004, MAX E. TRUJILLO, JR. whose address is 2909 Aster, Pueblo, Colorado 81005, FLOYD E. TRUJILLO, whose address is 2840 Aster, Pueblo, Colorado 81005, ALEX I. TRUJILLO, whose address is 3509 White Pine Court, Pueblo, Colorado 81004, VIRGINIA D. SANCHEZ, whose address is 2724 East Orman, Pueblo, Colorado 81004, JOE B. TRUJILLO, whose address is 2501 Columbine, Pueblo, Colorado 81004 and DENNIS F. TRUJILLO, whose address is 2613 Oakland, Pueblo, Colorado 81004, for consideration paid, quitclaim their equal undivided interests to MANUEL P. TRUJILLO, whose address is Post Office Box 207, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico 87557, in and to the following described real estate in Taos County, New Mexico:

A Tract of land (linias) 19 yards in width with the following boundaries:

North with the Public Road,
South with the top of the Picuris,
East with the property of Mrs. Alex Gusdorf,
West with Ranchos de Taos.

Norte: Con el Camino Publico,
Sur: Con la Sierra de Picuris,
Oriente: Con propiedad de Mrs. Alex Gusdorf,
Poniente: Ranchos de Taos.

CERTIFICATION

All microphotographic images of documents on this film strip are of authorized documents in the possession of this agency as noted in the Statement of Document Certification on file at this agency. These documents are routinely microfilmed as a necessary operation in the generation of an inviolate document file.

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DATE OF FILMING

Lineas Solutions

- Conduct a survey to identify current boundaries
- Conduct a title history of the approximately 1,200 parcels within the *lineas* area
- Prioritize parcels for re-establishing the common lands
- State and/or county level moratorium to pause development
- Challenge surveys
- Statutory language clarifying survey requirements
- Eminent domain condemnation
- Incentives for selling *lineas* to CDLS
- Zoning overlays

Needs, Next Steps and Requests

Funding Requests:

Surveyor Services

Will likely be required for any proposed solution; could be contracted through the NMLGC or directly through CDLS.

Estimated cost:

Signage, Fencing, and Boundary Markers

Once a survey is completed, the boundaries need to be identified to prevent ongoing encroachment.

Estimated cost:

Support Staff

To relieve the burdens on Taos County and assist in processing property cards and historical data.

Estimated cost:

Incentives

For CDLS to purchase the *lineas* at more competitive rates and encourage heirs to voluntarily consolidate *lineas* properties.

Estimated cost:

Needs, Next Steps, and Requests

Policy Requests:

Renewed Memorial

Issue another memorial documenting progress, importance of issue, and need for funding; alternatively, set up a Task Force.

Waiver of DFA's Requirements

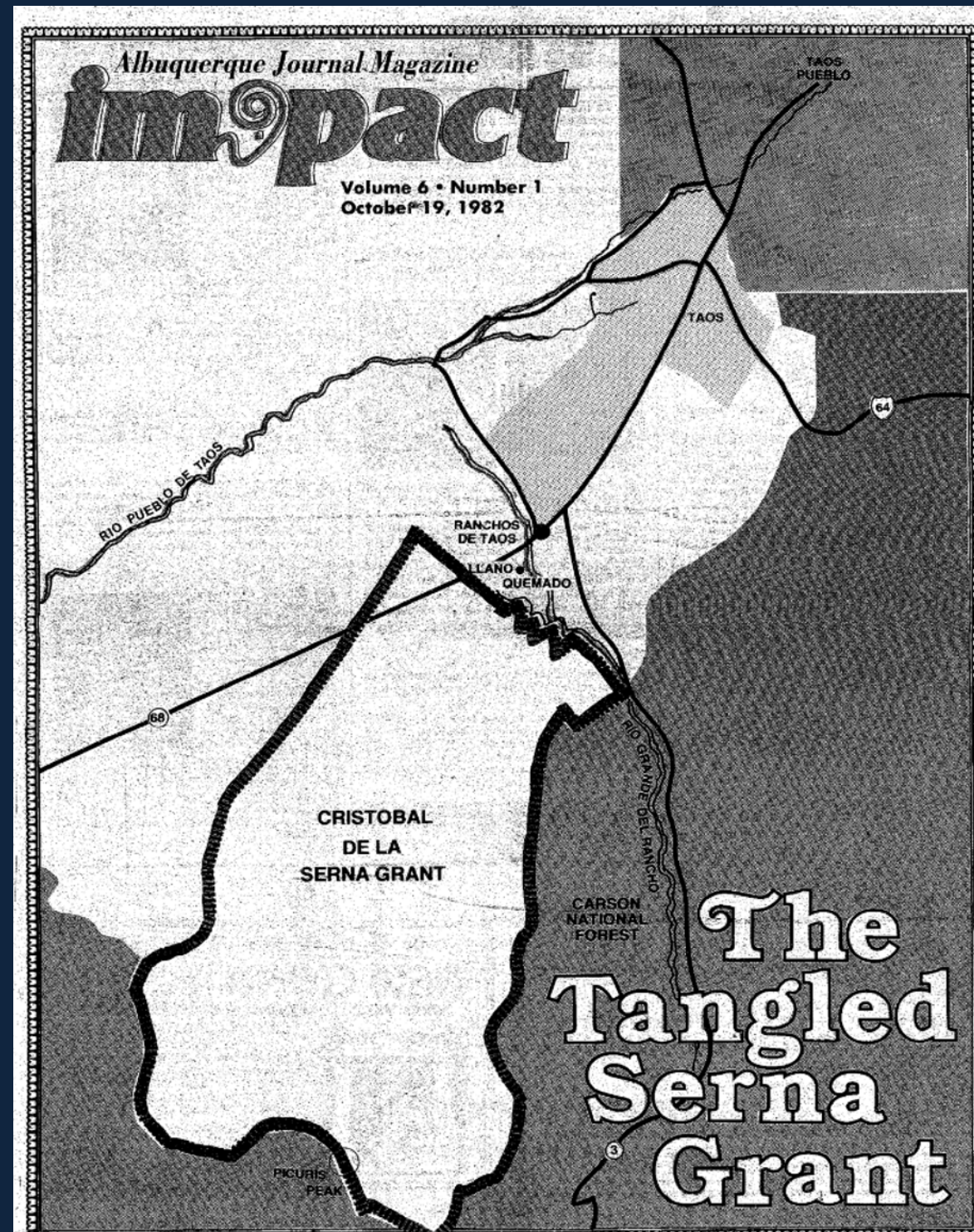
Statutory waiver of DFA's property acquisition requirements to allow CDLS to offer competitive pricing for *lineas* acquisition.

Amendment Regarding Survey Requirements

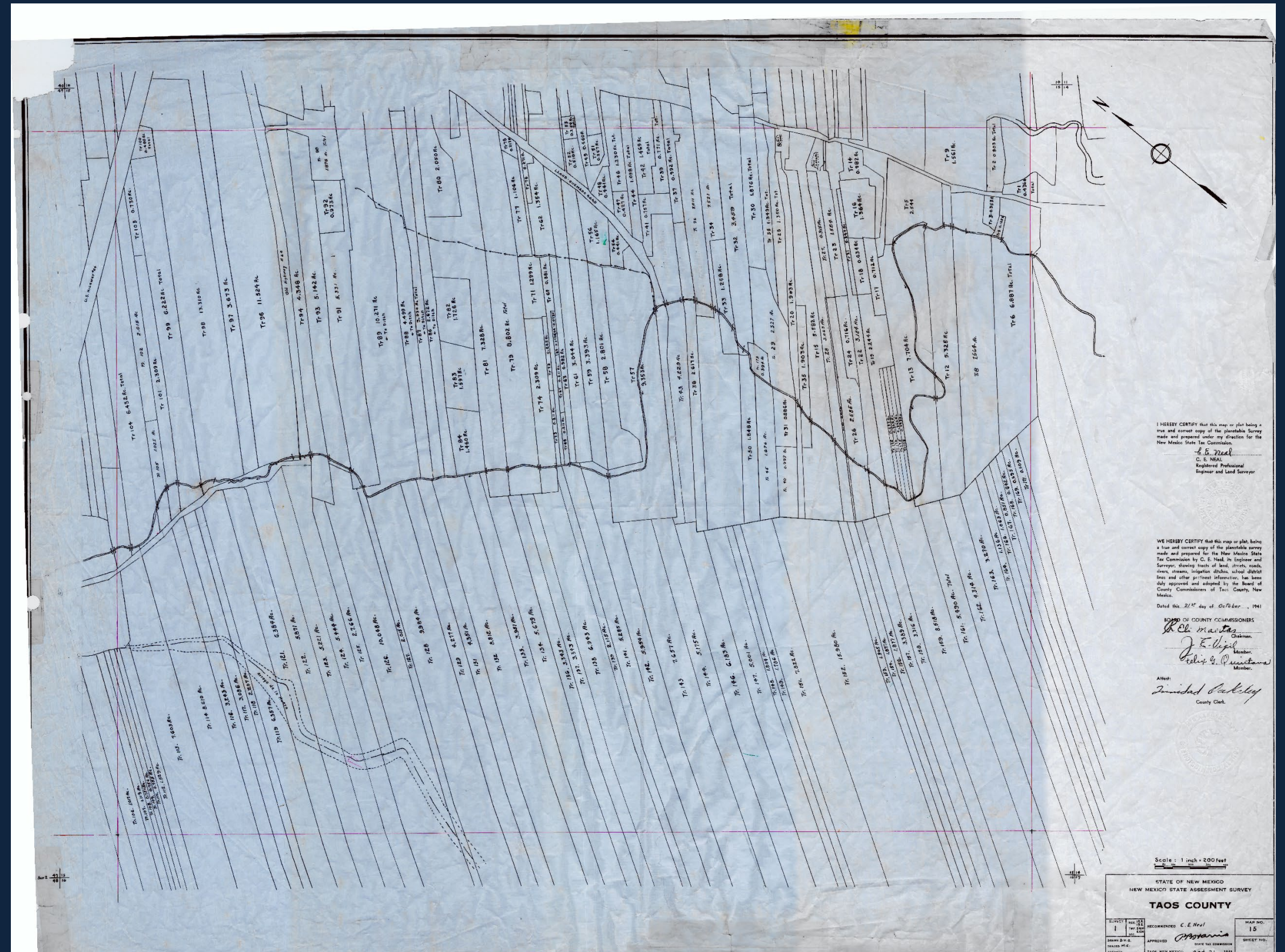
Statutory language that prevents surveyors from relying on tax deed descriptions within the *lineas* properties.

Moratorium on Development

Issue a state level moratorium preventing development within the *lineas* while additional research and surveying is completed.



Albuquerque Journal Magazine, October 19, 1982



Example of 1941 Tax Reassessment Survey Mapsheet depicting *lineas*

PROPERTY RECORD SHEET No. 1357

SEC. No. 24N RGE. 13E SCHOOL DIST. No. 2 OWNER Alfredo Romero CARD No. 124
SHR No. 1 MAP No. 15 TRACT No. 14 ACRES 0.982 ADDRESS Rancho de Taos, New Mexico
CITY _____ EX-SOLDIER _____ HEAD OF FAMILY _____ OTHER _____

LAND COMPUTATIONS

CLASSIFICATION	SYMBOL	ACRES	APPRAISED ACRE VALUE	TOTAL VALUE	TOTAL ASSESS'D VALUE	1942		1946		1950		1954	
						ACRES	VALUE	ACRES	VALUE	ACRES	VALUE	ACRES	VALUE
Irrigated	IIR A-2	0.091	\$125.00	\$11.38	\$5.69								
Irrigated, uncult.	IIIR A-3	0.147	100.00	14.70	7.35								
Orchard	VIIR Loc.	0.744	50.00	37.30	18.65								
Dry Farming, cult.													
Dry Farming, uncult.													
Pasture													
Waste Land													
Commercial Timber													
Total		0.982		\$63.38	\$31.69								

Lots: No. _____ Block _____

Addition: _____

BUILDINGS

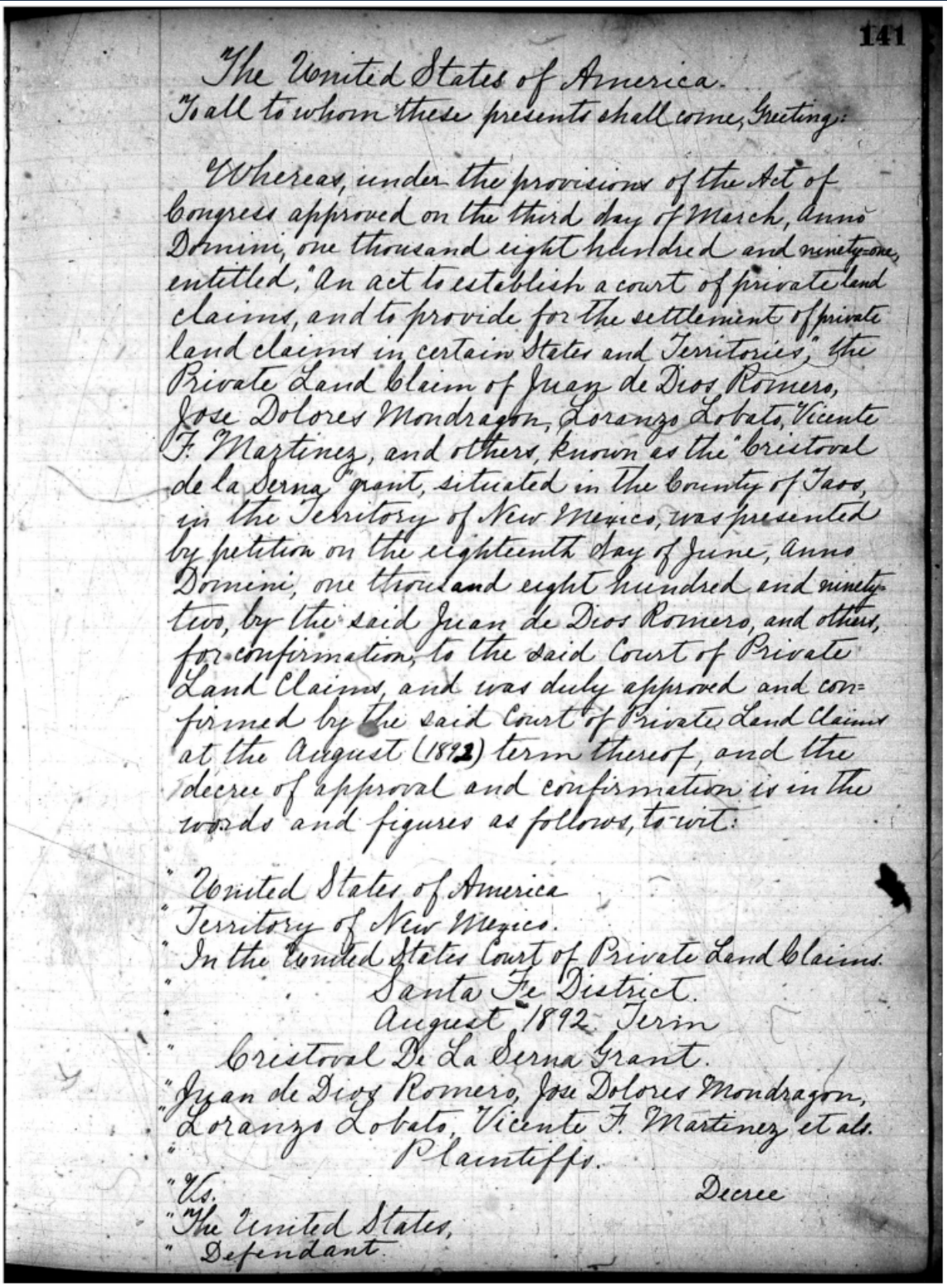
CLASSIFICATION	CONSTRUCTION	NUMBER OF ROOMS	YEAR BUILT	CONDITION	CLASS	APPRAISED VALUE	ASSESSED VALUE	ASSESSED YEAR VALUE			
								1942	1946	1950	1954
Residence	Adobe	3		good		\$280.00	\$140.00				
Garage											
Barn											
Shed											
Hotel											
Camp Ground											
Apartment											
Store											
Gas Station											
Garage (business)											
Fence 3/4 - 500' @ .01 per ft.						5.00	2.50				
TOTAL						\$285.00	\$142.50				

Remarks: Foundation: Mud and Rock
Finish: Mud plaster
Roof: Dirt
Floors: Wood

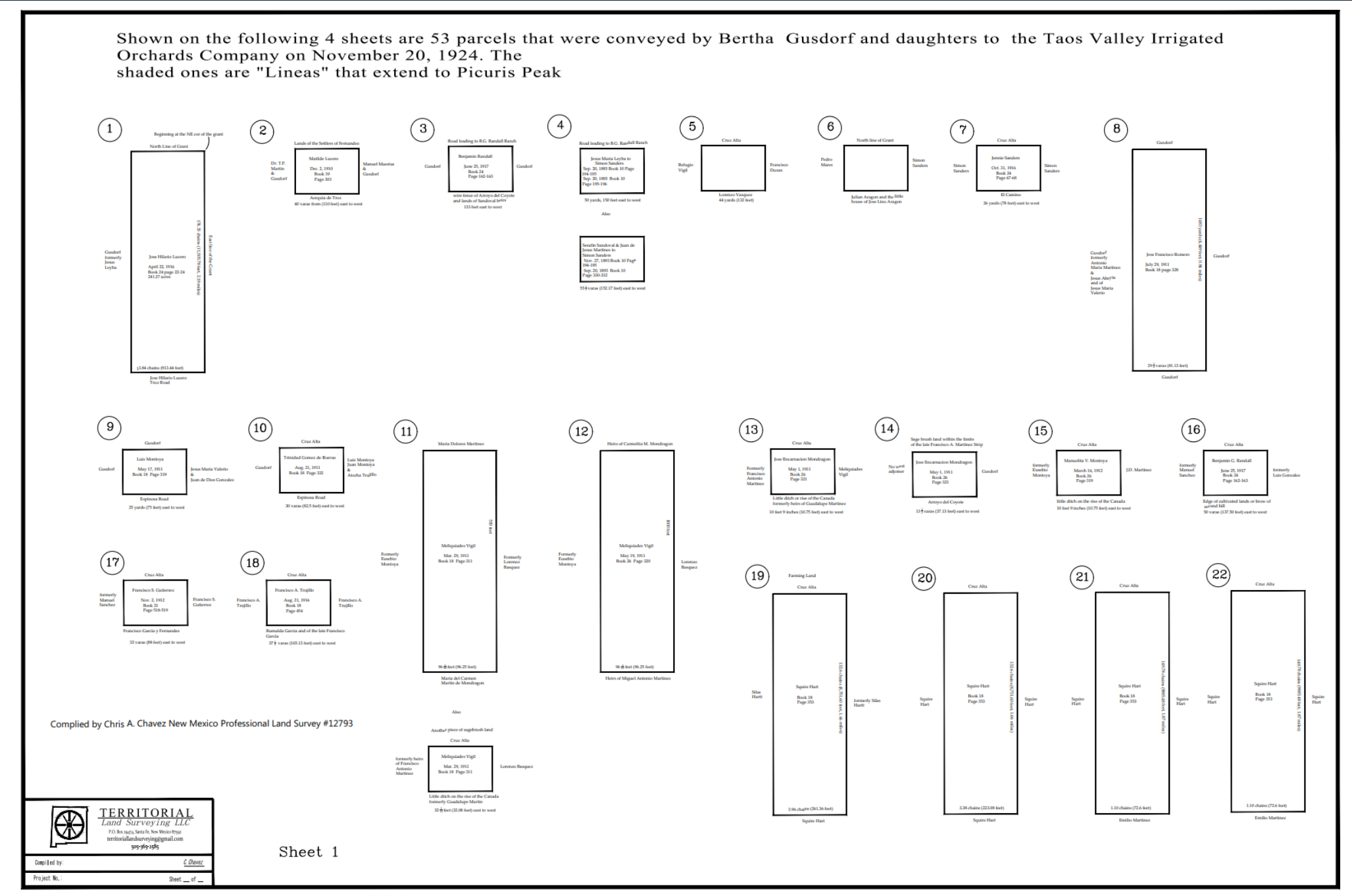
Example of Taos County Assessor Property Card



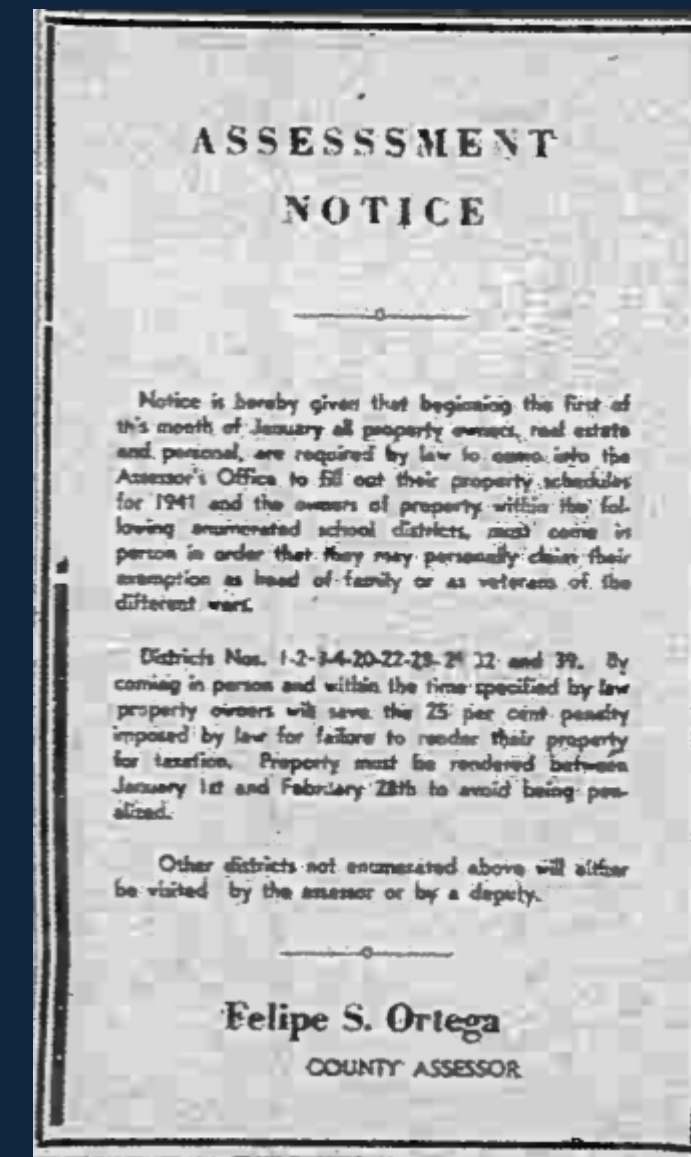
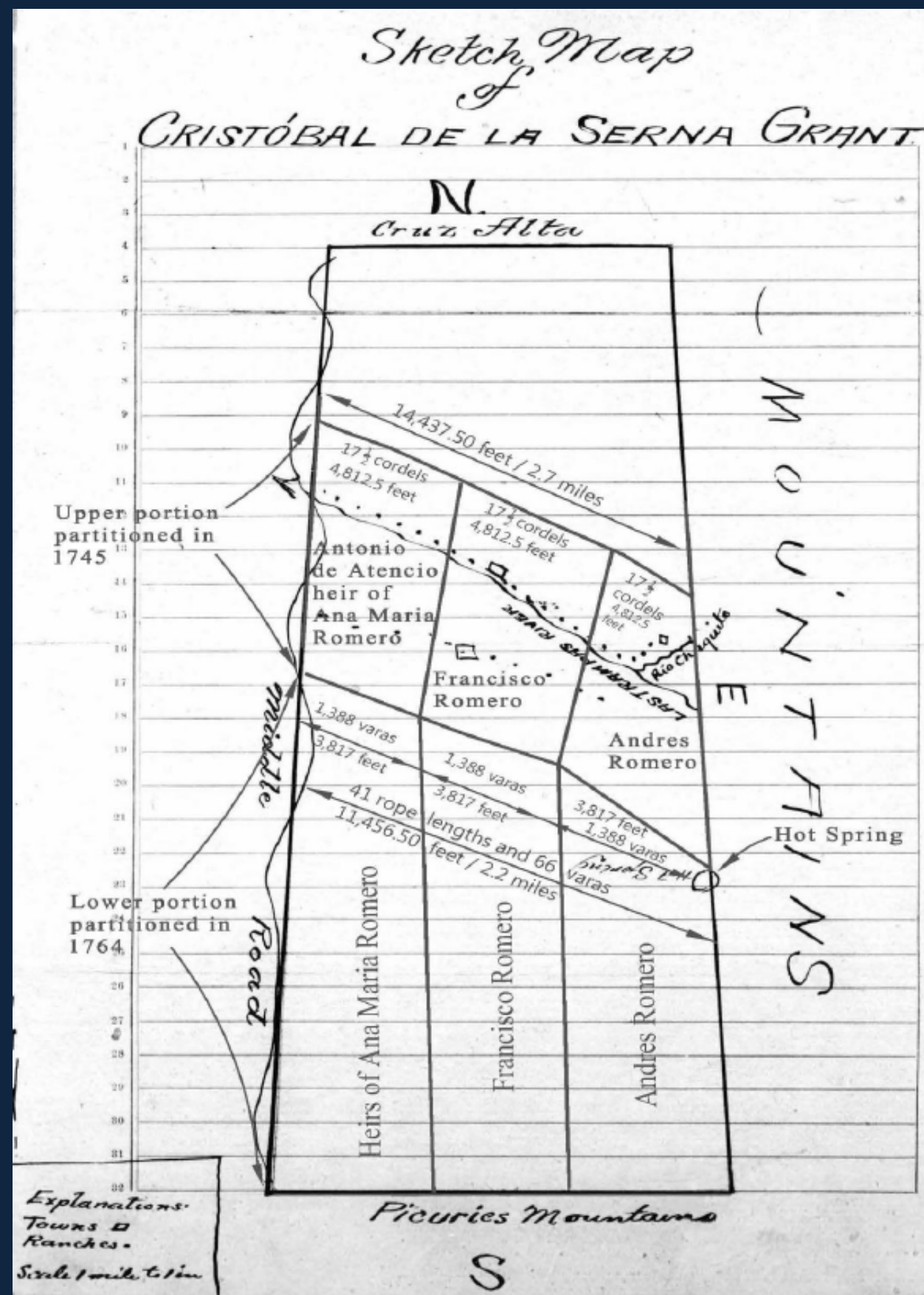
Draughtsmen, clerks, Office of New Mexico Re-Assessment Survey, Tax Commission, December 1941



First page of 1903 patent from the United States to CDLS



Example of Territorial Land Survey, LLC's analysis of *lineas* consolidation through property card and quiet title research



Spanish and English versions of notice in January 9, 1941
edition of *The Taoseno* newspaper announcing the 1941
Reassessment Survey

Questions

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