

# The Land Grant Forum

Monthly Newsletter of the  
New Mexico Land Grant-Merced  
Movement

## Record fire season for New Mexico effects dozens of land

Land grant communities across northern New Mexico were devastated by the fires that ravaged their former common lands. The Calf Canyon and Hermits Peak Fire has torn through the forests surrounding the Mora Valley and destroyed the watershed of the Gallinas River, including the lands of the Lower Gallinas and Los Vigiles land grant communities. The fire also burned portions of the commons of the Merced de Santa Bárbara and came perilously close to the Santo Tomás Apóstol del Río de Las Trampas and Nuestra Señora del Rosario, Santiago y San Fernando del Río de las Truchas Land Grants.

Councilor Andrea Padilla commented that her 72-year-old sister lives in Rociada with her 85 year old husband and his family is one of the families that has maintained Maestas canyon for hundreds of years. Their mountains have burned and people have lost corrals, hundreds of bales of hay and even their community cemetery. She added that the USFS should listen to traditional communities when to burn and not burn and that the USFS should understand herederos connection and love of this land, especially when rebuilding the landscape. Councilor Leonard Martínez commented that most of these rural homes average between \$17,000 and \$24,000 in income and rely on the mountains for traditional uses, which are all now threatened. He added that while he understands the utility of prescribed burns, who, at the USFS, decided to execute a burn in March and April? If the moisture content was high enough to issue a prescribed burn, why was it considered too dry to allow people to get firewood? Where is the logic? Council members commented that firewood will be a huge issue for land grant communities, and committed to working with federal, state and local entities to ensure that community needs are met.

### *Important Reminders*

The next Land Grant Council Meeting will be held on **July 13, 2022** in Albuquerque. Visit [lgc.unm.edu](http://lgc.unm.edu) for location information and how to participate virtually or in person.

### **NM AG Balderas announces opening of land grant, acequia gallery**

New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas has announced the opening of the New Mexico Land Grant-Merced y Acequia Historical Gallery and Repository on July 15, 2022. Contact Dr. Ricardo Dow y Anaya at [rdowyanaya@nmag.gov](mailto:rdowyanaya@nmag.gov) for more information.

## Summer Land Grant-Merced Youth Crew Begins



Crew members clear sand around a bench and path at Cerro Tomé Park



A Merced YCC crew member clears sand from the path at Cerro Tomé Park

The Land Grant-Merced Regional Outdoor Recreation Project, which is serving land grant communities in the East Mountains and Albuquerque (outskirts), began on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Youth from land grant communities and other areas are hired for a ten-week period to complete various projects. The crew began working in the Town of Tomé Land Grant at the beginning of June, where they built swales and improved a walking path around the Cerro Tomé Park. The Crew just completed work in Chililí building a roadside trail to their community park and will work on the path surrounding Manzano Lake in the coming weeks. Other land grants involved in this project include Cañon de Carnué, San Antonio de las Huertas, Tajiique, and Torreón.



Merced YCC Crew members load slash at Chililí

## Welcome, Anissa!



We are excited to welcome Anissa Baca to the UNM Land Grant Studies Program and New Mexico Land Grant Council as our newest staff member! A nuevomexicana and a proud norteña, Anissa grew up irrigating her families' farm with the acequia in her native Ojo Caliente. She came to the LGSP as a graduate student (MA, CCS Dept.) in September 2021 (BA, C&J, '15) with extensive multimedia / journalism experience and with a background in youth education, which she used to help complete the next phase of the merced youth oral history project. Anissa now provides general staff support to land grants, assisting boards of trustees with everything related to capital outlay. She is also assisting with the implementation of regional YCC project and is working on the Acequia and Land Grant Education Project, representing the LGSP in this collaboration with NMHU and the NM Acequia Association.

## Council and State Land Office Sign Fuelwood MOA

The New Mexico Land Grant Council and the New Mexico State Land Office signed an agreement that will help land grants access fuelwood on state owned lands near land grant communities. State Land Commissioner Stephanie García Richard commented that she understands both the economic and cultural importance of fuelwood and was proud to sign a memoranda of understanding with the NMLGC. The SLO provided critical relief to land grant communities during the Mexican Spotted Owl injunction in 2019, opening new fuelwood areas for heirs of the Santa Bárbara and Las Trampas Land Grants and continuing project with the San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant.



Council Chair Juan Sánchez and New Mexico State Land Commissioner Stephanie García Richard shake hands after signing an MOA between the Council and the NM SLO.

## ALGE Teacher’s Institute



The UNM Land Grant Studies Program, in collaboration with Highlands University’s CESDP Project and the NM Acequia Association, hosted a teacher’s institute for the Acequia and Land Grant Education (ALGE) Project. The institute took place virtually on April 23 which prepped participants for a larger, in-person institute at the Santa Fe Community College on May 7. Current and retired educators, along with land grant and acequia community leaders, were invited to build upon previous work completed by the ALGE

and to further build a foundation for lesson plans and curricula related to land grants and acequias.

### *Legislative Interim Land Grant Committee sets 2022 meeting schedule*

Sen. Leo Jaramillo (Chair) & Rep. Susan Herrera (Vice-Chair) announced the 2022 Interim Committee Schedule. It is:

- August 18-19 in Taos
- September 22-23 in Abiquiú
- October 20-21 in Chilili
- November 22 in Santa Fe



# The Land Grant Forum

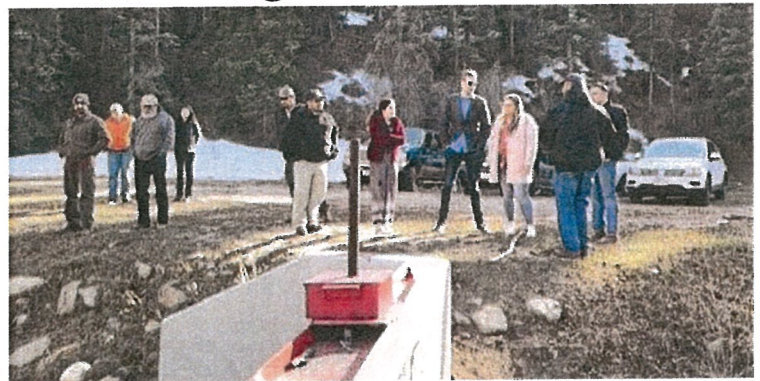
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## Taos County Land Grants tour Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández's staff



*Bonifacio Vásquez and Jose Arnaldo López explain acequias to congressional staff using a model created by Vásquez's grandson*

Washington DC office joined staffer A.J. Pacheco on tours of the Trampas and Santa Bárbara Land Grants, including a cemetery and acequia headgates on former common lands now managed by the U.S. Forest Service. New Mexico Land Grant Council assisted in the visit, which demonstrated the importance of H.R. 5493, the Land Grants-Mercedes Traditional Use Recognition and Consultation Act, which will provide require federal agencies to consult with land grants when undertaking projects on their former common land.



The Santo Tomás Apóstol del Río de las Trampas Land Grant, Merced de Santa Bárbara and the Arroyo Hondo Land Grant hosted members of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández's staff on April 13<sup>th</sup>. Land grant presidents Alex López (Trampas), Bonifacio Vásquez (Merced de Santa Bárbara) and Joaquín Argüello (Arroyo Hondo Arriba) discussed the history of their land grants and their relationship with the federal government, and past difficulties of working with federal agencies when accessing firewood, herbs and acequia infrastructure that are all on their former land grant common land. Nathan Schelble, Elizabeth Arevalo, and Nairka Trevino of Congresswoman Leger Fernández's



*Alex López of the Trampas Grant discusses a cemetery on USFS managed land with land grant heirs, Rep. Leger Fernández's congressional staff, NMLGC staff and U.S. Forest Service Camino Real RD staff.*

## Summer 2022 Outdoor Recreation Project



*Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps staff around the San Antonio de las Huertas Land Grant's Campo del Oso campsite.*

The NMLGC staff met with the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps earlier this month to discuss the upcoming Land Grant-Merced Regional Outdoor Recreation Project. The land grants involved in this project include: La Merced del Cañón de Carnué, Merced de Pueblo de Chililí, Tajique Land Grant, La Merced del Manzano, La Merced del Pueblo de Torreón, Merced de Comunidad de San Antonio de Las Huertas and Town of Tomé Land Grant. The scope of work for this project includes expanding a camping area, creating walking trails, upgrading a playground, creating water diversions, and more. If you know of someone who may be interested in working on the youth crew, please contact Anissa Baca at [nissal7@unm.edu](mailto:nissal7@unm.edu) for more information.

Thank you, Venessa!



Venessa Chavez left the UNM LGSP & NMLGC office in early March. She worked for the NMLGC and LGSP since 2017, building the Land Grant Studies Program's youth outreach program by organizing events for land grant youth, contributing to our intergenerational oral history archive through implementing regional grant awards, and so much more. Venessa also assisted land grants with capital outlay processes and was a key member of the Council's outreach to local, state and federal government. Her involvement with land grants will continue through her leadership in her own communities of Tajique, Chililí, and the greater Manzano and Sandía Mountain region. Thank you, Venessa, for your years of hard work and service to New Mexico's land grant-merced communities!



*Andrea Padilla, President of the Town of Tomé Land Grant discusses Tomé's summer project with Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps staff.*

### Save the date:

The NMLGC will host a financial training for all land grant Board of Trustees on **Wednesday, May 11th** beginning at 9:00 am. This will be a virtual training held *via Zoom* and will include presentations from the New Mexico State Auditor's Office, General Services Department, and Department of Finance & Administration. Please contact the Council for more details.

The next Land Grant Council meeting will be held on **May 17, 2022** in Albuquerque. Visit [lgc.unm.edu](http://lgc.unm.edu) for location information and how to participate virtually or in person.

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## Land Grants celebrate signing of HB 8 into Law



Land grants / *mercedes* from across the state gathered in Tierra Amarilla on March 2 to celebrate Governor Michelle Luján Grisham's signing of House Bill 8, the Land Grant-Merced Assistance Act. HB 8 created a fund which provides guaranteed revenue streams to qualified land grants. Distributions are based on each land grant's current revenue and will begin in 2024. Those with less revenue will receive a larger distribution from the Fund. The New Mexico Land Grant Council, the New Mexico Land

Grant-Merced Consejo, land grant boards of trustees and countless heirs and community leaders have worked on this legislation for nearly 20 years. State representatives and senators, members of the Rio Arriba County Commission and land grant leaders from across the state attended the official signing. Many land grant presidents spoke of about the struggles that have led up to this moment. "All the expenses we have so far have come out of the individual boards. We have to carry our own weight," Beverly Armijo, President of the Cristobal de La Serna Land Grant, said. They also shared the opportunities the Guaranteed Revenue Stream will allow their entities, such as acquiring property, building and maintaining community centers, and other various bills. "We'll be able to pay our utilities, instead of paying out of our pockets. We'll be able to put on more events for the youth and the children in our communities. We used to have a senior citizen center, and we'd like to be able to have events for those people. So we'd like to try and get the community back together," Jason Quintana, President of the Manzano Land Grant, said. The passing of this bill is a momentous moment, especially for those who have long been involved in the movement. "We started with nothing. Now we do have something and we're building on that. So, the future looks bright for land grants-mercedes. Right now, we're happy, and I'd like to thank everyone that's helped," Leonard Martinez, New Mexico Land Grant Council member and President of the San Joaquin del Rio de Chama, said.

### *Reintroducing the Land Grant Forum*

It has been over the year since the last issue of the *Land Grant Forum*, and we are happy to reintroduce this newsletter in a new format. The *Land Grant Forum* is transitioning from a quarterly to a monthly newsletter, delivered electronically to your inboxes at the beginning of each month. If you have an ideas for the newsletter, please reach out to Jacobo Baca at [jacobobaca@unm.edu](mailto:jacobobaca@unm.edu) or Anissa Baca at [nissa17@unm.edu](mailto:nissa17@unm.edu).



*Land grant leaders, heirs, legislators and local officials listen as Governor Luján Grisham (center, holding pen) prepares to sign HB 8. Seated to the left and right of the Governor are Rep. Matthew McQueen and Senator Liz Stefanics, the bill's primary sponsors.*

## Traditional Use Bill Reintroduced, heard in House subcommittee

House Resolution 5493, the Land Grants-Mercedes Traditional Use Recognition and Consultation Act, was heard in the House Natural Resource Committee's Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands on March 1, 2022. Introduced by Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández in July 2021, the Act is intended to provide for the recognition of traditional uses on federally managed lands by land grant-merced communities. It will also provide for greater consultation between federal land management agencies and land grant-merced boards of trustees. The Act would require federal land management agencies to issue guidance on how land grant-merced communities can access and use natural resources, for traditional use purposes, on federally managed lands located within their patented and/or historical-traditional use boundaries. "My ancestors lived in New Mexico on mercedes," said Rep. Leger Fernández at the hearing "Land grants are a part of our herencia." A companion bill, Senate Bill 2708, has been introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Ben R. Luján.



### *Important Reminders*

- The next Land Grant Council Meeting will be held on **March 18, 2022** in Albuquerque. Visit [lgc.unm.edu](http://lgc.unm.edu) for location information and how to participate virtually or in person.
- The New Mexico Land Grant Merced Consejo quarterly meeting will be held on **March 26, 2022** in Carnuel, New Mexico.  
*Questions?*  
Contact the Consejo at [nmlgconsejo@gmail.com](mailto:nmlgconsejo@gmail.com)

*Are you a retired or active teacher interested in land grant & acequia education? The UNM Land Grant Studies Program is partnering with NMHU and the New Mexico Acequia Association to put on a small teachers institute. Stipends will be provided. Please contact Jacobo Baca at [jacobobuca@unm.edu](mailto:jacobobuca@unm.edu) for more*

