

Joseph Padilla, 50 year member of Los Vigiles sub grant

Background:

The Los Vigiles was established around 1951 by a deed of 3000 acres. This was given to the people of Los Vigiles. Similar sub grants were given to the Lower Gallinas and San Geronimo. Members has grazing, dead trees, hunting, and recreational uses. The sub grant has been governed by an elected board of trustees. Los Vigiles was one of three partition grants. The other two were Lower Gallinas and Sab Geronimo which were also established around 1951.

Los Vigiles has managed the sub grant by an elected board of trustees since the beginning. Regular meetings are held according to the open meetings act. There is a set of bylaws and regular elections are held. The original instigation for a partitioned/unit of government was because of the challenges Los Vigiles experienced in receiving water shed restoration/ fire prevention funding from the state. The state forestry division had approved to reduce the risk of fire to the watershed above Las Vegas; but the uncertain status of Los Vigiles delayed moving the funds into action. Also Los Vigiles successfully defended itself in court against an out of state land owner who blocked access on a road to the thinning area. Los Vigiles prevailed in district and appellate courts at great sacrifice to its members.

- 1 . Support sub grant becoming unit of government.
2. Enable us to apply for grants such as forest thinning. Thinning improves habitat for wildlife, reduces forest fires, and makes firewood available to the public. Forest thinning is needed.
- 3 . Becoming a unit of government means protection by the open meetings act.
4. There is fiscal oversight by the state.
5. Promotes transparency from public officials.
6. There is accountability for public officials.
7. House Bill 46 passed committees and both houses but pocket vetoed by two governors.
8. Los Vigiles sub grant has been behaving as a unit of government in many aspects.
9. Allows us to defend ourselves in court.