



New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT)

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program

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Executive Director, ONRT

ONRT's Mission & Authorities

▣ Mission

- Restore or replace natural resources and resource services injured by the release of hazardous substances or oil

▣ Primary Authorities

- NM Natural Resources Trustee Act
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation & Liability Act
- Oil Pollution Act

▣ Who Are the Trustees?

- ▣ States, Tribes and Federal Agencies

▣ Who is ONRT?

- ▣ ONRT is the trustee agency for the State
- ▣ Our staff
 - ▣ Trustee - Ryan Flynn
 - ▣ Executive Director – Rebecca de Neri Zagal
 - ▣ Environmental Scientist – William Fetner
 - ▣ Administrative Assistant – Elysia Martinez

Difference Between NRDAR & Remediation

- ▣ Natural resource damage assessment & restoration (NRDAR)
 - Restoration of resources to the condition they would have been in prior to release of contaminants

- ▣ Remediation
 - Removal or containment of contaminants released into the environment to protect human health & environment

Natural Resources & Co-Trustees

- Natural resources includes
 - Biological resources (fish, wildlife, plants), air, groundwater, surface water
- Coordination with other trustees
 - Federal, Tribal & other states
 - Assessment & restoration



ONRT Funding

- ▣ Operating budget
 - General Fund
- ▣ Restoration projects
 - Damage settlements
- ▣ Starting up new cases
 - Reimbursement of assessment costs

The NRDAR Process

- ▣ Assess injury to natural resources
 - Injury = measurable adverse change caused by hazardous substance or oil

- ▣ Cooperative assessment

- ▣ Determine damages
 - Damages = compensation for the injury & cost of assessment

- ▣ Restoration

Cooperative Assessment Results

- ▣ ONRT & FMI assessed groundwater injury
 - Settlement - \$13M

- ▣ ONRT, U.S. FWS & FMI assessed terrestrial & wildlife injury
 - Settlement - 714 acres of unique habitat + \$5.5M

Groundwater Restoration Projects

- ▣ San Vicente Creek Mill
 - Removal of tailings & contaminated soils to avoid ongoing groundwater contamination



- ▣ Santa Clara Wellhead Protection
 - Construct structures to prevent infiltration of contaminants into drinking water wells & groundwater

Groundwater Restoration Projects cont'd

▣ Santa Clara Sewer Improvements

- Improve and protect main sewer lines to prevent re-occurrence of sewage spills into Cameron Creek & associated alluvial groundwater

▣ Silver City Sewer Line Extension

- Extend a sewer line to enable additional household connections & eliminate faulty septic systems that contaminate groundwater

Groundwater Restoration Projects cont'd

▣ Bayard Wastewater Reuse Facility

- Develop infrastructure to enable groundwater conservation by using treated wastewater for irrigation

▣ Hurley Sewer Lines Replacement

- Replace failing clay sewer pipes to avoid groundwater contamination

Wildlife & Wildlife Habitat Restoration

- ▣ Draft Restoration Plan completed
- ▣ Public comment process completed
- ▣ Final Restoration Plan in early summer
- ▣ Restoration project implementation later this year