

# 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 Carnúe, San Antonio de las Huertas, Tajique, 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 project

and to further build a foundation for lesson plans and curricula related to land grants and acequias. Associate Professor Dr. Diane Torres-Velasquez is currently writing a report on the Institute.

### *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 Chililí  
October 20-21 in Abiquiú  
November 22 in Santa Fe

