

El Grito de Las Mercedes

Newsletter of the
New Mexico Land Grant-Merced
Movement

Land Grant Council discusses Farm Bill with Congresswoman Leger Fernández

In 2018, land grants for the first time were made eligible for federal programs under the Farm Bill, a package of legislation passed every five years that impacts nearly all aspects of agriculture in the United States, from water and conservation to nutrition and marketing programs. Since that time, land grants have awaited guidance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on accessing the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and other similar programs, all of which are under the water and conservation titles of the Farm Bill. This year land grants are working with the New Mexico Congressional Delegation to make changes to the 2023 Farm Bill that will expand land grant eligibility for federal programs. Members of the New Mexico Land Grant Council and staff met with Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández in early May to discuss the 2023 Farm Bill. They explored other titles in the Farm Bill that would expand eligibility, proposed a definition of land grants-*mercedes* that would create a consistent way for federal agencies to identify them across all federal programs and discussed set asides for small farmers and ranchers. Hearings on the Farm Bill will take place throughout 2023, when a new bill will be passed that will expire in 2028.



Featured: Arturo Archuleta, Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández, Juan Sánchez, Anissa Baca, Jacobo Baca and Steve Polaco

BLM hosts Land Grant 101

Since their founding a decade and a half ago, the New Mexico Land Grant Council and the UNM Land Grant Studies Program have helped federal agencies understand New Mexico's land grant-*merced* communities. The Bureau of Land Management hosted Council and LGSP staffers Arturo Archuleta and Jacobo Baca in a "Land Grant 101" session, where they presented on the complex land tenure of New Mexico. The presentation demonstrated how federal lands grew at the expense of land grants, how this effected land grant communities and heirs, land grants status as political subdivisions of the State and the continued obligations of federal agencies to land grant communities. These informational sessions are important to educate incoming employees who move within the agency but are not from New Mexico and are unfamiliar with traditional uses on public lands.



ALGE Project continues at New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education Conference

The Acequia and Land Grant Education (ALGE) Project continued its efforts to create a land grant and acequia curriculum through presentations and a teacher workshop at the New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education Conference (NMABE) on April 14-15 in Albuquerque. Two panels reflected on the importance of embedding lessons about land grants and acequias broadly across curricula and grade levels. Panel members hailed from communities across the state and included active and retired educators, *acequeros*, land grant presidents and members. New Mexico Highlands University's Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations hosted a workshop that discussed progress, shared materials and grouped participants to work on lesson plans that align with New Mexico's science, social studies and math standards and benchmarks. UNM Land Grant Studies Program staff participated in the workshop with active and retired teachers from Tierra Amarilla, Belen, Santa Fe, Taos and Albuquerque.



Educators, community leaders, and Council staff participate in ALGE workshop hosted at NMABE conference

State Land Office and land grants partner on fuelwood projects



Bearcat project site



When a federal injunction closed down US Forest Service lands across New Mexico in 2019, New Mexico State Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard reached out to the New Mexico Land Grant Council to see where the New Mexico State Land Office could help. SLO conservationist Camila Romero and forester Mark Meyers worked with the Council to identify SLO managed lands near land grant communities and created prescriptions to treat these lands. The result has been several projects achieving the resource objectives of the SLO while providing firewood to land grant communities in need. The San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant administered the Cebolla project, providing fuelwood to their own land grant communities and to communities on the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant.

The Santa Bárbara Land Grant partnered with the SLO on the Copper Hill project, which distributed wood to communities on the Santa Bárbara and Las Trampas Land Grants. Currently, the Villanueva project employs a contractor to thin out SLO lands near Gonzales Ranch, delivering firewood to the San Miguel del Bado Grant and surrounding communities. The Bearcat Project on SLO lands in the East Mountains is a partnership of Edgewood and Claunch Pinto Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Forest Fitness, the SLO and several lands grants, led by Chililí. Firewood from the project will be divided amongst the Chililí, Tajique, Manzano, Torreón, and Cañón de Carnué Land Grants.

Tierra Amarilla Youth Program comes to a close

This year, the Council received a junior bill appropriation to support youth programming and development in the Tierra Amarilla area. The program, run by educator and TA native Dawn Salazar, taught student participants about land grants, acequias, agricultural practices, and other cultural aspects of New Mexico and their local area. Students were given the opportunity to visit a local acequia, visit a local's farm to learn about traditional planting techniques, interview an elder from their community, and more. The New Mexico Land Grant Council and UNM Land Grant Studies Program hope to run similar programs in other land grant communities in the future.



Steve Polaco gives students a tour and lesson about a local acequia



Student Jaidance Ulibarri interviews Rio Arriba County Commissioner Moises Morales



Student Michael Montañño interviews Chama Fire Chief BJ Samora



Student Aurora Hernandez interviews grandmother Agripina Salazar

Important Reminders

- The next Land Grant Council meeting will be held on **June 16, 2023 at 10:00 am** in Albuquerque. Visit lgc.unm.edu for location information and how to participate virtually or in person.
- The New Mexico Land Grant Merced Consejo's annual meeting will be hosted by the Juan Bautista Baldes Land Grant on **Saturday, June 24th, 2023 at 10:00am** in **Cañones, New Mexico**. E-mail nmlgconsejo@gmail.com for more information.
- The Interim Land Grant Committee of the New Mexico State Legislature will hold their planning meeting on **June 9, 2023** in **Santa Fe**. Visit www.nmlegis.gov for more information.
- **Important!** FY 2025-2029 ICIP's are due **Friday, July 14, 2023** at 5:00pm. Please login to the ICIP database at <https://www.state.nm.us/capitalprojects/> to view and update your projects. Remember that every grant needs to adopt a resolution approving your ICIP. More information and templates can be found at <https://www.nmdfa.state.nm.us/local-government/icip/>.