

El Grito de Las Mercedes

Newsletter of the
New Mexico Land Grant-Merced
Movement

Land Grant Council members, staff visit Congressional offices and federal agencies in DC

New Mexico Land Grant Council Chairman Juan Sánchez, Councilor Steve Polaco, and Council staff members Arturo Archuleta and Jacobo Baca traveled to Washington DC in early June, visiting the offices of New Mexico's Congressional Delegation. They were joined by Monica Rodríguez of the San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant, who represented the New Mexico Land Grant Merced Consejo. The group met with Senator Ben R. Luján to discuss the traditional use act, a bill that would allow land grants to access to federal lands that were formerly land grant common land for traditional uses, including fuelwood harvesting, medicinal plant gathering, grazing and other uses. Council representatives also met with Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández, Congresswoman Melanie Stansbury, and Congressman Gabe Vásquez, and staff of Senator Martin Heinrich's office.

The NMLGC also discussed changes to the 2023 Farm Bill that would expand land grant eligibility for federal programs administered by the USDA. Chairman Sánchez proposed creating a set aside as land grants are not competitive against large producers and farmers, who have long standing relationships with USDA offices and SWCDs. A visit with Department of Interior leadership, who testified in support of the traditional use act in previous Congresses, was constructive and representatives committed to continue to support the legislation. Council staff also met with the U.S. Forest Service's legislation staff to clarify portions of the bill that drew concerns from their legislative analysts. Both Senator Luján and Congresswoman Leger Fernández identified the traditional use bill as one of their legislative priorities.



Land Grant Council members and staff meet with Sen. Ben Ray Lujan to discuss the Farm Bill



Featured: Jacobo Baca, Arturo Archuleta, Juan Sánchez, Monica Rodríguez, Steve Polaco, Rep. Melanie Stansbury

UNM Land Grant Studies Program hosts land grant and acequia teachers' institutes in Peñasco and Española in June

The UNM Land Grant Studies Program continued working with teachers in land grant and acequia communities to build a land grant and acequia curriculum for elementary, middle and high school students. The LGSP collaborated with the New Mexico Highlands University and the Peñasco Independent School District to host a ALGE curriculum workshop on June 10th at Peñasco High School. Teachers from elementary through high school, community members from local acequias and land grants, and students worked to build lesson plans centered around traditional land-based practices.



On June 17, Anissa Baca and Jacobo Baca of the LGSP hosted teachers from Pecos, Peñasco, Tierra Amarilla, Ojo Caliente, Pojoaque, Santa Clara Pueblo, Taos, and Española at Northern New Mexico College. Teachers collaborated on lesson plans, creating curricula that addressed a broad range of subject areas, from social studies to life and earth sciences, reading and writing to mathematics.

Land Grant Interim Committee begins 2023 session



Featured: Sen. Leo Jaramillo and Rep. Kristina Ortez

The Land Grant Interim Committee of the New Mexico State Legislature held its organizing meeting in Santa Fe on June 9th and its first meeting in the field in Las Vegas on July 12-13. Board members from the Los Vigiles Land Grant and Lower Gallinas Land Grant testified regarding their recovery efforts after the 2022 Hermits Peak & Calf Canyon Fire destroyed more than 60% of their common land. Both land grants became recognized through an amendment to state statute, which now names all land grants that are operating as political subdivisions of the State of New Mexico. The New Mexico Land Grant Council and the New Mexico Acequia Association also gave presentations and provided updates.

Important Reminders

- The next Land Grant Council meeting will be held on **August 11, 2023 at 10:00 am** in **Albuquerque**. Visit lgc.unm.edu for location information and how to participate virtually or in person.
- The Interim Land Grant Committee of the New Mexico State Legislature will hold its next meeting on **August 22 and 23** in **Peñasco**. Visit www.nmlegis.gov for more information.