

El Grito de Las Mercedes

Newsletter of the
New Mexico Land Grant-Merced
Movement

Senator Lujan and Congresswoman Leger Fernández introduce Land Grant Traditional Use Legislation

Senator Ben R. Luján and Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández reintroduced the *New Mexico Land Grant-Mercedes Historical or Traditional Use Cooperation and Coordination Act* in early May. Members of the New Mexico Land Grant Council and their staff joined Congresswoman Leger Fernández and Congresswoman Melanie Stansbury at the Capitol, when Congresswoman Leger Fernández signed and introduced the legislation. H.R. 8262 and S. 4271 provide for greater cooperation between the federal government and land grant communities. “The introduction of H.R. 8262 by Representative Leger Fernández and S.4271 by Senator Lujan is a positive first step in addressing longstanding issues stemming from the implementation of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo,” said New Mexico Land Grant Council Chair Juan Sánchez. “For more than a century Spanish and Mexican land grant communities in New Mexico have struggled to ensure recognition, protection and access to natural resources located on their former common lands now managed by the federal government. These natural resources play a vital role in maintaining the traditional use practices that sustain the socio-economic and cultural integrity of many New Mexico communities. This bill will provide for greater cooperation and coordination between land grant-mercedes and the federal land management agencies.”



Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández signs traditional use legislation before introducing the resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Council member Steve Polaco with a map of the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant National Archives, Washington DC

San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant starts YCC crew

This summer, Jemez Mountain Schools partnered with the San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant to establish a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) crew to complete projects on common lands that otherwise exceeded the capacity of the land grant's board. The crew was funded through a grant from New Mexico YCC, a program of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department.

The crew is made up of seven youth, with one adult and one board member (President Leonard Martinez or Secretary Monica Rodriguez) present during work days. The crew is focusing on land-based projects, including fencing land grant properties, creating a space for a community garden and irrigating the garden from an acequia they cleaned after 20 years of inactivity. The crew will continue its work throughout the month of July with additional projects such as soil sampling the newly cultivated garden and cleaning the highway with the help of DOT's Beautiful Highways Grant.



The crew members are also offered educational components through the program and will listen to presentations from the NM Land Grant Council, the NM Acequia Association and NM State Extension, a training that focuses on careers in agriculture by board member Gerald Chacón. The board members of the San Joaquin del Rio de Chama Land Grant have said that there has been a lot of community interest built by seeing the crew members work throughout the summer and that they hope to expand and continue similar programs in coming years.



Land Grant Interim Committee begins 2024 session

The Land Grant Interim Committee of the New Mexico Legislature held its organizing meeting on May 10, where they adopted a work plan and meeting schedule. Senator Leo Jaramillo will serve as the Committee's Chair, and Representative Kristina Ortez will serve as Vice-Chair. The tentative agenda items for this year's interim session includes post-fire recovery efforts and fire prevention, financing options for land acquisition and updates from various land grants. If you are interested in attending an interim meeting this year, please find the schedule below:

July 25-26	Northern New Mexico College, Española
August 19-20	New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas
October 3-4	San Antonio de Las Huertas/Placitas
November 18	Santa Fe

Important Reminders

- The next Land Grant Council meeting will be held on **July 18 at 10:00 am** in **Albuquerque** at Continuing Education. Visit lgc.unm.edu for location information and how to participate virtually or in person.
- The annual Land Grant-Merced Consejo meeting will be held on **June 29 at 10:00 am** in **Taos** at the Talpa Community Center. Contact the Consejo at nmlgconsejo@gmail.com for location information and how to participate virtually or in person.
- The Department of Justice is hosting a day-long training for land grants and acequias **July 12 from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm** at UNM Taos, Klauer Campus, Padre Martinez Hall. Lunch and refreshments are provided. Topics include, Open Meetings Act, IPRA, elections, bylaws, financial reporting and more. If you are interested in attending, you may register online [here](#).