

New Mexico Land Grant Council (NMLGC)  
April 11, 2025 – 10:00am  
UNM Continuing Education  
South Building – Room 207  
1634 University Blvd. NE - Albuquerque  
Zoom Meeting I.D. – 977 2820 3291

**Final Meeting Minutes  
Regular Council Meeting**

**1. Call to Order - Roll Call – 10:03 am**

Chairman Juan Sánchez called the meeting to order at 10:03 am MDT. Roll call of the Council members: Steve Polaco, Andrea Padilla, Monica Rodríguez, and Juan Sánchez were present.

**2. Introduction of Guests**

Juan Sánchez (NMLGC); Steve Polaco (NMLGC); Monica Rodríguez (NMLGC); Arturo Archuleta (NMLGC/LGSP); Greta Archuleta (NMLGC); Anissa Baca (NMLGC/LGSP); Jacobo Baca (NMLGC/LGSP); Krystelle Anaya (LGSP); Lisa Brown (NM DOJ – Treaty Division); Bella Mollard (USFS – NNM Forests); A.J. Pacheco (Office of Cong. Teresa Leger Fernández); Johnathan Black (Office of Senator Ben R. Luján); Mark Zientek (Office of Cong. Teresa Leger Fernández); Jacky Alvarado (Office of Senator Ben R. Luján); Mike Howsden (Cristóbal de la Serna LG); Crystal Romero (Office of Senator Martin Heinrich); Lisa Morrison (BLM); Leonard Martínez (San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant); José Mondragón (Cristóbal de la Serna LG).

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Sánchez asked that the agenda be changed, moving items 7 and 10 after item 4. Councilor Monica Rodríguez made a motion to approve the adjusted agenda; Councilor Andrea Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla - aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

**4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 27, 2025 Meeting**

Councilor Steve Polaco made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the March 27, 2025 Regular Council meeting; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla - aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

**7. Discussion and Possible Action on Federal and State Legislative Update**  
*Federal*

Johnathan Black (Office of Senator Ben R. Luján) reported that Senator Ben R. Luján reintroduced the traditional use bill in the Senate (S. 1363), where it was referred to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He added that Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández reintroduced the House version (H.R. 2785), which was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources. A.J. Pacheco (Office of Cong. Teresa Leger Fernández) reported that Congresswoman introduced the traditional use bill and is seeking endorsement on the cemetery conveyance bill and is coordinating a discussion of the Small Tracts Act with the U.S. Forest Service. Mark Zientek (Office of Cong. Teresa Leger Fernández) added that the cemetery bill amends the Small Tracts Act to return cemeteries to land grants at no cost and that access and maintenance is key. Interested communities would still need to apply and transfers would not be automatic. The bill would also change the Small Tracts Act to allow the USFS to provide land back to small communities at a cost equivalent to the land's value.

Mr. Archuleta asked the purposes for including NAGPRA; Mr. Zientek responded that tribes are not yet eligible and this would add tribes for cemeteries and burial grounds, with Indian tribes ability to self determine a cemetery in line with their burial practices, death rites, cultural practices, etc. Mr. Pacheco added that the Congresswoman is collecting stories of effects of funding cuts (see <https://fernandez.house.gov/crisis>) and that CPF funding applications are now open. Councilor Rodríguez thanked Senator Luján for his support of the acequia infrastructure fund, which allowed acequia access to funds available to other farmers, especially in the event of flooding. Mr. Black responded that the Acequia Act does not have any other major updates, only that Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) is a cosponsor and that they are looking for traction on the legislation during Farm Bill discussions, which are expected later this year.

Councilor Rodríguez made a motion that the Council endorse the Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández's cemetery bill, as presented; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla - aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

Councilor Polaco made a motion that the Council endorse both traditional use bills, Senate Bill 1363 (introduced by Senator Ben R. Luján) and House Resolution 2785 (introduced by Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández); Councilor Padilla seconded the motion

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla - aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

Crystal Romero reported that Senator Heinrich is collecting stories on the effect of federal firings and funding freezes. During his work period he has highlighted the reintroduction of Pecos Watershed Protection Act. She added that they are still accepting CDS applications, which can be found on their website, [Heinrich.senate.gov](http://Heinrich.senate.gov).

## *State*

Mr. Archuleta reported that Governor Michelle Luján Grisham signed HB 24, the Solar Access Fund bill, and Senate Bill 47, making the Santa Cruz de la Cañada Land Grant a political subdivision of the State.

### **10. Discussion and Possible Action on Presentation by Vidal Gonzales, Uncivilized Outdoorsman Fly Fishing Camp**

Vidal Gonzales (The Uncivilized Outdoorsman, LLC) presented on the Youth Flyfishing Camps, which take native and Hispano youth to culturally significant waters, teaching the local significance, including ethnobotany. Lunch is provided for participating families, as well as gifts and prizes. There will be two camps, A and B, for returning students (Camp A - June 7, 21 and July 19, Camp B - June 8 and 22). There will be 13 students per camp and four spots will be reserved for land grant youth for each camp. Because of funding from the Outdoor Equity Fund, general participants must come from Santa Fe, Taos, Sandoval and Rio Arriba Counties. Applications are open and close May 20<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Polaco asked about locations; Mr. Gonzales responded that they are exploring private property opportunity on the Rio Brazos, or preferably on Rio Chama for June 7 or 8. Councilor Polaco and Mr. Archuleta offered assistance recruiting elders from Tierra Amarilla, who will paid a stipend for their participation. Mr. Gonzales inquired with the Carson NF regarding the use of Canjilón Lakes on June 21 and 22; Bella Mollard (USFS) offered to get in touch with the Canjilón RD District Ranger on Mr. Gonzales' behalf.

### **5. Discussion and Possible Action on U.S. Forest Service Update**

Bella Mollard (USFS) reported that the Santa Fe NF is continuing work on the Encino Vista Landscape Restoration Project, a 10-15 year project to reduce wildfire risk through timber sales and mechanical thinning. The objection process opened April 7. The Carson NF is working on the Questa to Red River trail project, a 15 mile unpaved trail with bridges and parking. The Taos Canyon Project draft EA will be released soon as they are assuring compliance with recent executive orders. The Taos Ski Valley project was signed by Carson Forest Supervisor James Durán and applies to the present special use permit area. Questa Ranger District supervisor Amy Simms is available for questions. The Sipapu Ski Area is replacing lift 3 with electrical work and modernizing snowmaking. They are initiating coordination with land grants, acequias and tribes. The Carson NF also had its first wildfire, the Sandoval Fire, which is 2-3 acres near Petaca.

Mr. Archuleta asked about the Taos Ski Valley approval, if the process was over or if there was any opportunities for input or for appeal. Ms. Mollard stated that Amy Simms is available for discussion and any other objections need to be a lawsuit. Leonard Martínez (San Joaquín del Río de Chama LG) commented that the Encino Vista Project is on the San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant agenda and wants to review it with Council staff. He spoke about the project with Santa Fe NF deputy supervisor Jeff Marcel, who is leaving in June. The Grant is also pursuing the Cañón de Chama Project, but it is hard to get resources or tech support without a concrete lease of water and land. The Grant seeks a 30-year lease via a Special Use Permit to complete the project and invest in infrastructure. The Grants wants support from the Council and also reached out to NMDOJ to negotiate lease for land and water. They received \$100,000 in capital outlay from Senator Leo Jaramillo, which they plan to invest in a comp plan for the Cañón de Chama project.

Jacobo Baca (NMLGC) asked if the Sipapu Ski Area work is related to their planned expansion; Ms. Mollard responded that it is not. She added that the Echo Canyon updates are almost complete.

#### **6. Discussion and Possible Action on State Land Office Update**

In the meeting packet is an e-mail from Camila Romero, reporting that the Villanueva project is ongoing and wants to meet with the San Miguel del Bado Grant to see if they are in need of assistance. Dee Tarr is still working on the PO and contractors for the Bearcat Project.

#### **8. Discussion and Possible Action on Bureau of Land Management Update**

Lisa Morrison (BLM) reported that there are more fuelwood areas opening up around the Taos BLM Field Office. She added that the BLM is working on collecting the patents requested by the Council and commented that Mr. Gonzales can consider BLM lands near the Rio Chama Wild and Scenic River for his youth fly fishing camps.

#### **9. Discussion and Possible Action on NM Dept. of Justice & Treaty Division Updates and Requests**

Lisa Brown (NMDNJ Treaty Division) reported that the Treaty Division has a new fellow. The division is developing a "Water law 101," which will become a part of its quarterly trainings. Regarding the Rio Chama adjudication, in speaking with John Utton, the Rio Brazos section is not completed. She added that they are hoping to have a workshop in Taos at the end of May regarding conservation easements for land grants and acequias. Councilor Rodríguez asked about the benefits and the loss of rights with conservation easements. The Division will host a meeting regarding FEMA settlements with the Los Vigiles and Lower Gallinas Land Grants on April 22 with participation from OSA and DFA. Mr. Polaco asked if the Division has heard anything regarding the spigot issue and Mr. Archuleta explained the situation, where the Game Commission agreed that the community would retain access to a spring that was piped into a spigot. When companies began abusing the spigot and selling water, the Game Commission closed it, abrogating communal rights to communal waters. Councilor Polaco added that other springs were not charted on the maps, leaving confusion to use and claims. Councilor Padilla had questions regarding land grants rights as political subdivisions.

Mr. Archuleta reported that New Mexico Legal Aid is working with the Council and the Treaty Division to support the Cristóbal de la Serna Land Grant in litigation. The Grant's claim of immunity under chapter 42-11-1 was asserted, but rejected by the courts. Judge at district court stated earlier this week that it does not apply to land grants since they can be sued in adverse possession prior to 2007, therefore they are not protected. Enrique Romero (NMDNJ Treaty Division) added that the Treaty Division will likely offer an amicus brief in their request for interrogatory appeal and will assist with the actual appeal. The amicus brief will also be filed by NMLGC, which may be stronger, as it will likely hold more weight given its long history of expertise regarding land grants nor the reputation with the courts that the NMLGC does.

Councilor Rodríguez made a motion that the Council with the NMDNJ file an amicus brief for interrogatory appeal and an amicus brief for appeal; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion. Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye  
Councilor Padilla - aye  
Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye  
The motion was passed.

Mr. Romero added that the Treaty Division will host a meeting with the Sandoval 7 land grants on Thursday May 1, 2025.

### **11. Discussion and Possible Action on Natural Resource Issues & Concerns - Local, State and Federal**

None.

### **12. Discussion and Possible Action on Council FY 2025 Budget**

Mr. Archuleta provided a budget update. The Council will travel to Washington in late May and has meetings scheduled with Congresswoman Stansbury on May 20<sup>th</sup> and Congresswoman Leger Fernández on May 20<sup>th</sup> and requests for meetings with Senators Luján and Heinrich. Costs will be around \$3,000 per person for the 4-day trip. He presented Budget Adjustment Request, adding \$700 to personnel in state travel, removing \$7,000 from law school externs, adding \$13,000 to the surveyor contract (to allow for research on 1940 assessment survey originals on the Cristóbal de la Serna LG), removing \$5,000 from community and education contracts, removing \$5,000 from natural resource project development contracts and adding \$3,300 to law clinic fee waivers.

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve the adjustments discussed above; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

- Councilor Rodríguez – aye
- Councilor Padilla - aye
- Councilor Polaco – aye
- Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

### **13. Discussion and Possible Action UNM FY 2025 Intergovernmental Services Agreement**

Mr. Archuleta presented an IGSA BAR, removing \$68,200 from consultants (63V0) and \$7,000 from participant stipends and adding \$700 to in state travel and \$74,500 to other professional services (69Z0).

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve the above; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

- Councilor Rodríguez – aye
- Councilor Padilla - aye
- Councilor Polaco – aye
- Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

Mr. Archuleta presented Pay Request #6 for \$61,278.98 including \$30,273.55 in project personnel, \$2,050.90 in personnel in-state travel; \$16,458.76 in surveyor contract, \$308.20 in copier and printer maintenance, \$1,970.66 in facility rental, and \$10,213.17 in F&A.

Councilor AP made a motion to approve Pay Request #6 for \$61,278.98; Councilor MR seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla - aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

#### **14. Discussion and Possible Action on Legal Services Contract Update & Requests**

See NMDOJ update above.

#### **15. Discussion and Possible Action on Professional Surveyor Services Contract Update & Requests**

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve Invoice 04112025 for \$3,291.75 for work in Manzano; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla - aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

#### **16. Discussion and Possible Action on Land Grant Registry Update**

None

#### **17. Discussion and Possible Action on Correspondence**

None

#### **18. Discussion and Possible Action on Staff Assignments**

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve an assistance request from the San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – abstain

Councilor Padilla - aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

Council staff assisted the Anton Chico Land Grant on April 7 and will help the grant canvas on April 13.

#### **19. Public Comments – discussion only**

Councilor Padilla reported that she attended the 2025 ABE NM Conference's ALGE preconference with Anissa Baca and commented that there are not enough land grant related lesson plans, with most existing ALGE lesson plans focusing on acequias. Tim Hagaman (NM EDD) stated that he would like to see a recreation project from the Council. He reported that Rob Black was confirmed

as secretary of the Economic Development Department and Isaac Romero will be his deputy. He has reached out to communities to create business parks, including identifying occupants like small call centers as there is a need for electrical and information technology infrastructure. Leonard Martínez (San Joaquín del Río de Chama LG) commented that they used the New Mexico Surplus Agency to obtain a grader, container, water pump, toolbox, and pioneer kits for their YCC. Councilor Polaco stated that he had not heard back from New Mexico Game & Fish on the Laguna del Campo.

## **20. Miscellaneous Announcements**

DFA is holding an ICIP training on April 16 and ICIPs for land grants and other special districts are due June 13, 2025.

## **21. Date and Location for May Council Meeting**

The May 2025 New Mexico Land Grant Council meeting will be held on May 30, 2025 in Albuquerque at UNM Continuing Education at 10:00 am.

## **23. Adjournment**

Councilor Polaco made a motion to adjourn; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Polaco – aye

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:34pm MDT.

**Approved:**

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Chair

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Date