

New Mexico Land Grant Council (NMLGC)
August 22, 2025 – 10:00am
UNM Continuing Education
South Building – Room 207
1634 University Blvd. NE - Albuquerque
Zoom Meeting I.D. - 973 9212 5522

**Final Meeting Minutes
Regular Council Meeting**

1. Call to Order - Roll Call

Chairman Juan Sánchez called the meeting to order at 10:04am MDT. Roll call of the Council members: Steve Polaco, Monica Rodríguez, Andrea Padilla, and Juan Sánchez were present.

2. Introduction of Guests

Juan Sánchez (NMLGC); Steve Polaco (NMLGC); Monica Rodríguez (NMLGC); Andrea Padilla (NMLGC); Arturo Archuleta (NMLGC/LGMI); Greta Archuleta (NMLGC); Anissa Baca (NMLGC/LGMI); Jacobo Baca (NMLGC/LGMI); Don Bustos (Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG); Brian Martínez (Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG); A.J. Pacheco (Office of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández); Miguel Torrez (Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG); Tokey Boswell (BLM); Joseph Montoya (Arroyo Hondo Arriba Community Land Grant); Richard Valdez; Bella Mollard (USFS); Camila Romero (SLO); Edward Sena (Las Vegas LG); Daniel Herrera (Manzano LG, Chihenne Nde); Manny Sánchez (Chihenne Nde); Lenora Chavez (Torreón resident); Nancy López (Chihenne Nde); Victor Saavedra; Amanda Luján (Torreón resident); LM Garcia y Griego; Samuel Cordova; Eric Chávez (Office of Senator Ben R. Luján); Joseluis Ortiz (Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG).

3. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Sanchez asked to move item 13 after item 10.

Councilor Steve Polaco made a motion to approve the agenda, as amended; Councilor Andrea Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 11, 2025 Regular Council Meeting

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the July 11, 2025 Regular Council meeting; Councilor Monica Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

5. Discussion and Possible Action on State Land Office Update

Camila Romero (NM State Land Office) is planning final phase out of Villanueva project, which will finish in November. She has not heard from Dee Tarr regarding the Bearcat project.

6. Discussion and Possible Action on Federal and State Legislative Update

Federal

A.J. Pacheco (Office of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández) reported that September 30 is the looming government funding deadline. There has been no movement on the traditional use and cemetery bills. Congresswoman Leger Fernández also visited the Laguna Fire burn scar. Eric Chávez (Office of Sen. Ben R. Luján) discussed the August recess and the passage of the recission bill, which included \$8 billion in cuts and the end of funding USAID and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The Senator toured small businesses, Holy Cross Hospital in Taos, Christus St. Vincent's Hospital in Santa Fe, where he discussed the impacts of the Big Beautiful Bill, including cuts to Medicaid, SNAP and other programs. Beginning in October, the Senate will meet to discuss appropriations bills. The Senator was able to get \$605,000 in transportation, housing and urban development funding to San Joaquín del Río Chama Land Grant for community center upgrades. The Senate is discussing a "skinny" farm bill, Republican priorities in the Big Beautiful Bill and the recissions package. The Senator is engaged with the USFS regarding the Laguna Fire. Councilor Padilla commented on work requirements for social programs and Councilor Rodríguez commented on the effects on public radio.

State

The Interim Committee met in Las Vegas on July 14-15, where the NMLGC gave a presentation on issues, budget, and staffing needs, which was well received by both Republicans and Democrats. Los Vigiles provided a tour of the burn area and their work on post fire rehabilitation to the committee. The Committee also met in August 14-15 in Tierra Amarilla, where several land grants provided updates and La Clinica del Pueblo discussed their health clinic, which was started in the 1960s and is staffed by doctors from the local community that returned and make a good wage. They also heard from Matthew Probst, who is in charge of Rural Outreach Programs for UNM Hospitals, including mobile clinics. Perhaps land grants that have space can have rotating clinics in the future. The Committee also toured the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant. They will meet in Manzano on September 8 and 9.

7. Discussion and Possible Action on Bureau of Land Management Update

Tokey Boswell (BLM) reported that the BLM is in a holding pattern as it figures out how to implement the Trump agenda of energy dominance. The Socorro and Carlsbad RMPs are complete and the BLM is tracking the traditional use bill. Mr. Archuleta asked about the reported role of BLM in border security. Mr. Boswell reported that the BLM is in discussions with the Army to ensure existing BLM uses (ranchers and recreation) can remain. Some federal lands in the border area were withdrawn from BLM control and the Department of Defense and Department of the Army for three years beginning in April. Councilor Polaco asked for an update on the Council's request for patents. Mr. Boswell responded that he spoke with public lands and realty staff and it is in their queue. With diminished staff the BLM is behind in fulfilling the requests.

8. Discussion and Possible Action on U.S. Forest Service Update

Bella Mollard (USFS) reported that the Laguna Fire is 90% contained at 17,000+ acres and there are still no flights allowed in the area. The wildfire closure in the area is lifted and the USFS is

asking the public to be careful in the area. The Gallina Ranch remains in ready status and questions should be directed to Claudia Brookshire with the Santa Fe National Forest. The Middle Mesa is 92% contained and the BAER team is assessing post fire threats. The Hermits Peak Calf Canyon Fire remediation continues and 1,600 acres (50% of goal) at Angostura has been cut and skid decked. The USFS is now finished with phase 1 of the project. At the area around the Luna Fire, 450 of 900 of the total area has been cut and skid decked. 5,000 cords decked to date. At Lina para las abuelitas, the USFS is distributing fuelwood, where 58 of 88 acres were cut and skid decked and 1,800 cords were processed ready for distribution. Here, 350 people have gathered fuelwood. At the HPCC burnscar, 222 loads and 1,500 cords have gone to Mora and additional loads have gone to Las Trampas. The Questa to Red River trail EA is in process and public scoping has begun.

The Secretary of Agriculture on August 21 signed a memorandum prioritizing energy production on national forest system lands, shifting to a declaration of national energy emergency by the president. Councilor Polaco asked what type of energy and asked about compensation to land grants with former common lands that are now federal lands. Ms. Mollard responded that it will likely not be wind or solar as its not an administrative priority. There is not a lot of definition in the memorandum, which is vague with no guidance. More than likely energy production is centered on oil and gas. Councilor Rodríguez commented that 28,000 acres burned in the combined Laguna Fire and Indios Fire. Both fires were either started or perpetuated by the USFS and combined are the size of the city of Santa Fe. The floods are coming and the 100% of the Vigil family heard is effected, with many still lost or dead. She asked about plans for allottees. Ms. Mollard responded that suppression efforts continue and the BAER team will be there to assess. Councilor Rodríguez stated that the permittees were given feed through October, when they typically move their herds to winter pasture.

During the fire, the USFS dropped fire bombs and cattle did not scatter as they assume that they would. In a July meeting, the San Joaquin Grant asked the USFS if they knew the location for the presa for Cañón de Chama acequias, the headwaters at the Mesa Alta. The Grant fears that the acequia will get blown out and asked about the USFS plan. Ms. Mollard stated that she would get back to the Grant as soon as she has an answer. Councilor Padilla commented on the culpability of the USFS in managing fires and post fire destruction and Councilor Rodriguez added that the USFS stated that there was no funding for reseeding. Ms. Mollard reported that the Region 3 offices are shutting down and are down to a skeleton crew. She added that the USFS has provided short term emergency items in response to losses from the Laguna Fire, including short terms emergency waters (5,000 gallon storage tanks), private corrals, solar pumps, a semi load of hay for allottees on the allotments where cattle remain, and \$2,500 in vet expenses. Shaun Sanchez and Anthony Madrid will respond directly with the land grant and specifically on the acequia in the Cañón de Chama.

9. Discussion and Possible Action on Presentation by Manny Sanchez, President Chihene Nde Nation of New Mexico

Manny Sánchez, president of the Chi Henne Nde (Warms Springs Apache) handed out a map and history of the Chi Henne Nde of New Mexico and discussed the in federal re-acknowledgment process. He presented regarding the history of the Chi Henne Nde from the Spanish and Mexican periods through the American periods to the present. He discussed treaties signed by Spain, Mexico and the United States, the effect of U.S. policies that forced disparate bands to confederate

into a tribe, and how the U.S. Government even at one time classified the Chi Hene Nde as white, as they were Christian, sedentary and farmed with acequias. They were displaced from their traditional lands by the creation of Gila National Forest and their families moved with work, building the Hoover Dam, San Gabriel Dam before settling in California. The tribe is going through the federal recognition process and has submitted their petition for recognition. The Chi Henne Nde are members of the Consejo de Mercedes, and Nancy Lopez has served on the Consejo executive board for more than five years. She commented that she appreciates any support that land grants can give to their process.

Manny Sanchez added that through different treaties, Spain, Mexico and the U.S. recognized a land mass from Socorro south to Lordsburg as their area. Their ancestors put in four claims in the Court of Private Land Claims for rancherias that totaled 800,000 acres. The Chi Henne Nde last presented before the Interim Committee twelve years ago in Chilili, and Mr. Archuleta suggested that the 2026 interim session, prepping for 2027 session, would be ripe for Chi Henne Nde presentation and legislation that might assist in federal recognition. Chairman Sanchez asked if the Chi Henne Nde were still exploring political subdivision status as a land grant while looking into federal recognition as a tribe. Mr. Manny Sanchez stated both though identifying a land grant that they can identify as land base for the tribe with historic ties has proven difficult. Daniel Herrera commented that the land in Manzano that he gave to the Chi Henne Nde was given to him by his grandmother, who Apache – and that's why he gave it back to the tribe.

10. Discussion and Possible Action on Presentation by Vidal Gonzales, Youth Fly Fishing Camps

Vidal Gonzales (The Uncivilized Outdoorsman) provided an update on the Hispanic and Indigenous Fly Fishing Camp, whose goal is to build a positive relationship with land grant and acequia communities and tribes. The program spent 2 days at Hopewell Lake and 1 day at Canjilón Lake. Camp A had all new students and Camp B returning students. 32 students were selected from more than 100 applicants. Youth from San Miguel del Bado, Santa Cruz, San Joaquín, Atrisco, Trampas, and Truchas land grants and Santa Clara, Isleta, San Ildefonso, Tesuque, Pojoaque, Santo Domingo, Jemez, Ohkay Owingeh, and Navajo students participated as well. Councilor Polaco added that the Jicarilla Apache Nation should be included next year and he has contacts to help, and Councilor Padilla thanked Mr. Gonzales and asked if individual land grants can sponsor, especially something close to their community. Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Archuleta discussed using other locations, including tribal lakes and lakes on land grant properties, such as Manzano and Laguna del Campo and Mr. Gonzales discussed expanding the youth development beyond the fishing camp. Councilor Rodríguez congratulated Mr. Gonzales on his good work and stated that she knows youth participants, who said it was the highlight of their summer.

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

Vidal Gonzales (NM Acequia Association) presented comments on the OSE-ISC's regional water plan. This included adding an "acequia and rural water security advisory working group," similar to the tribal working group. Mr. Archuleta added advocating for the creation of the "Regional Water Security Program Fund" to be able to implement the act, which was left out of the last phase of draft planning. Final comments are due Sept. 27th and the ISC will have public comment on the rule itself on Oct. 15. Showing up in person is the most effective, particularly if the ISC does not

include our revisions. Councilor Rodriguez commented that Vidal worked very hard on this and commended his effort.

Mr. Archuleta discussed property acquisitions, where, if capital outlay monies are used, land grants need an appraisal or CMA (certified market analysis) to purchase property. The Council has been working with the Cristóbal de las Serna Land Grant for 2 years to do this, but cannot get a CMA as there are no comparable properties on which to base the analysis. DFA suggested using assessor evaluations, but some 10 acre parcels are valued at \$1,700 and others at \$4,000. DFA then said they will only reimbursed up to the assessed valuation, claiming that they cannot otherwise certify that they are not breaking anti-donation clause. Councilor Padilla is being asked to plan how and when they will spend their capital outlay, but are given no guidance from DFA. Anissa Baca (NMLGC) has been assisting land grants to enroll in the system and is working to figure out how she continue her role providing technical assistance to land grants in the new PARS system.

11. Discussion and Possible Action on comments relating to Martinez/Yazzie v. State of New Mexico

The Martinez/Yazzie lawsuit regarding education outcomes for Hispanic and Native American youth has led to reforms and implementation efforts by the PED that have been disputed. The Council might participate in the latest comment period, which closes soon. Councilor Rodríguez stated that PED has contracted the LANL foundation and Wested to host regional community meetings, where they discuss funding, cultural education, accountability and other themes. Comments from participants are going into database that WestEd. She would like to distill comments from land-based communities with Transform Education New Mexico and submit through portal and asked permission of the Council to submit comments. She would like to prioritize and fund outreach of the ALGE curricula. All comments need to be drafted into a report and sent to the judge by October 1st.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to allow Councilor Rodríguez to draft and submit comments on behalf of Council; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

12. Discussion and Possible Action on NM Dept. of Justice & Treaty Division Updates and Requests

Lisa Brown reported that the NMDOJ is planning another land grant and acequia leadership conference, tentatively scheduled for October 22-23 in Santa Fe. The Treaty Division is working with the San Antonio de las Huertas Land Grant in its reply to the Sandoval County appeal regarding property taxes. The initial reply brief is due September 16. The Division is working with an acequia in Taos and another acequia in La Mesilla in their attempt to recover embezzled funds. Enrique Romero and Thomas Davis of the Division are working with the San Joaquin del Rio de Chama Land Grant on negotiations with the U.S. Forest Service for use of the cañón and both have continued work with the five of the Sandoval 7 land grants. Enrique Romero attended a

Torreón Land Grant meeting to discuss the Division's role in the upcoming election and Megan Veach and Enrique Romero and working with the Cristóbal de la Serna Land Grant, trying to get the grant dismissed from a quiet title suit. They have also supported the grant by reexamining the 2018 House Joint Memorial and have worked with the Manzano Land Grant regarding the tax sale property acquisition.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve the NMLGC submission of an amicus brief on San Antonio de las Huertas Land Grant's tax exemption case; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

14. Discussion and Possible Action on changes to the State Audit Act Tier System Reporting

NMLGC staff attended the Small Local Public Bodies Forum and the OSA has sent a final report. OSA discussed amending the tier system and raising the caps. They also stated that once a land grant crosses a threshold (\$500k), it needs to do full blown audits thereafter. The idea is that yearly revenue does not reflect total assets, so a land grant that has savings needs to include that money in their reporting. In the meeting packet is a report from the forum. Council staff will keep the Council updates.

15. Discussion and Possible Action on Tort Liability Coverage and Bonding for the Santa Cruz de la Cañada Land Grant

The LGMAF requires that land grants provide proof that they have tort liability coverage and bonding. Before the first LGMAF distribution in 2023, the Council received funding in FY 2023 that it used to assist land grants in getting bond coverage and tort liability insurance. The Santa Cruz de la Cañada Land Grant will likely be eligible for the FY 2026 LGMAF but does not have funding to purchase both tort liability coverage and bond coverage. The Council could approach this two ways: 1) the Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG applies for coverage, sit on their bill and pay once they receive LGMAF coverage, or 2) Council pays for or offsets the cost of both bonding and tort liability coverage. The Council funding is flat, but it does receive some F&A refund.

Councilor Padilla stated that it was only fair that the Council pay for the coverage for the Santa Cruz Grant since it paid for others initial coverage in the past. Councilor Padilla then made a motion that the Council pay for tort liability coverage and bonding for the Santa Cruz de la Cañada Land Grant; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

16. Discussion and Possible Action on FY 2026 Land Grant-Merced Assistance Fund Certifications and Approval Process

The Land Grant Merced Assistance Fund for FY 2026 is \$2,197,035.63, which will be divided amongst all qualifying land grants. HB 493 (in packet) requires that any state agency that makes a grant ensures that entity has met reporting requirements (AUP, audits) and that if it has certain findings ("material weakness" or "significant deficiencies," the agency has discretion to impose rules for land grants that receive funding.

17. Discussion and Possible Action on Council FY 2025, FY 2026, and FY 2027 Budget

A budget update is in the packet.

FY 2025

DFA spent \$335.70 of \$3,300 budgeted DFA administrative fee, reverting \$2,964.30. The Council can ask if DFA will allow for SCLC bond and tort coverage can be purchased from through this funding for FY 2026.

FY 2026

The FY 2026 IGSA is in place, and but no billing is generated as of yet. The only expenses are those from the July meeting (\$394.96 in travel). Both the IGSA and NMLA contracts are in place.

FY 2027

None

18. Discussion and Possible Action UNM FY 2025 & FY 2026 Intergovernmental Services Agreement

The FY 2026 IGSA is in place but no billing has been generated. Mr. Archuleta will meet with the UNM fiscal services monitor.

19. Discussion and Possible Action on Legal Services 2026 Contract Update & Legal Services Requests

The contract is in place. There have been no new billings and no new requests.

20. Discussion and Possible Action on Professional Surveyor Services Contract Update & Requests

Mr. Archuleta presented the scope of work for the professional services contract for \$40k total at a rate of no more than \$189 per hour.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve the surveyor contract scope of work; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Polaco – aye

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

21. Discussion and Possible Action on Land Grant Registry Update

Dr. Baca reported that several land grants have submitted updates to the New Mexico Land Grant Registry, including:

- Anton Chico Land Grant – results of April 7, 2025 election and organization of the Board
- Santo Domingo de Cundiyó Land Grant – updated membership of the Board of Trustees
- San Miguel del Bado Land Grant – updated bylaws, results of April 28, 2025 election and organization of board of trustees
- Manzano Land Grant – updated membership of Board of Trustees
- Lower Gallinas Land Grant – updated membership of the Board of Trustees
- Cristóbal de la Serna Land Grant - updated membership of the Board of Trustees
- Santa Cruz de la Cañada Land Grant – FY 2025 Annual Report, results of July 2025 election and organization of Board of Trustees
- Tajique Land Grant - updated membership of the Board of Trustees
- Town of Tomé Land Grant - updated membership of the Board of Trustees

22. Discussion and Possible Action on Correspondence

In packet is a letter from the NMDOJ regarding the upcoming the Land Grant and Acequia leadership conference.

23. Discussion and Possible Action on Staff Assignments

NMLGC staff met with the Torreón Land Grant Board to discuss and prepare for their upcoming election.

24. Public Comments – discussion only

Edward Sena (Las Vegas Land Grant) stated that he seeks to get on the Interim Committee's agenda to present issues facing the Las Vegas Land Grant. He was presented with the summons for quiet title suit on land and the 2nd judicial district judge rejected his plea for help. The Las Vegas Land Grant received \$300,000 from FEMA, which it cannot spend, or even receive. They have an MOU with Luna Community College for its use of Camp Luna. The Land Grant is looking to sue City of Las Vegas for dump sites with no lining, no underlayment, leading to leeching, bacteria and e-coli. According to Mr. Sena, the City bullied land grants to giving 47 acres for the dump. He stated that he has no interest in looking for superfund federal designation.

Mr. Archuleta commented that the NMLGC and Treaty Division cannot assist the Las Vegas Land Grant as it is not a political subdivision. By statute, the 4th Judicial District should take a stronger role than appointment of board. He mentioned the need for the Legislature to address the status of the Las Vegas Land Grant to ILGC Chairwoman Rep. Linda Serrato and hopes that the LCS Counsel and Treaty Division can meet to discuss the Grant. Mr. Sena added that the summons they received for quiet title is coming from a former Las Vegas Land Grant board member, Ernesto Lujan, who transferred Las Vegas Land Grant land to his sister and himself. Amanda Luján from Torreon thanked the Council and Enrique Romero for their support helping the Torreón Grant move forward. Councilor Padilla stated that regarding vehicle insurance, the tort liability applications asked that they get additional coverage. Lenora Chavez stated that she is a resident of Torreón and she is afraid of the actions by board with lack of communication from the board. As a landowner, she fears the of rule of board that is not accountable. She wants to get information from the NMDOJ to ensure that the Town of Torreón Board is more than a clique.

25. Miscellaneous Announcements

None.

26. Date and Location for August Council Meeting

The September 2025 New Mexico Land Grant Council meeting will be held on September 26, 2025 in Albuquerque at UNM Continuing Education at 10:00 am.

27. Adjournment

Councilor Padilla made a motion to adjourn; Councilor Rodríguez 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 2:05 pm MDT.

Approved:

Chair

Date