

New Mexico Land Grant Council (NMLGC)
September 26, 2025 – 10:00am
UNM Continuing Education
South Building – Room 207
1634 University Blvd. NE - Albuquerque
Zoom Meeting I.D. - 956 2737 7448

**Final Meeting Minutes
Regular Council Meeting**

1. Call to Order - Roll Call

Chairman Juan Sánchez called the meeting to order at 10:01am 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); Lucas Montaña (USDA-NRCS); Bella Mollard (USFS – Carson and Santa Fe NF); Mike Howsden (Cristóbal de la Serna LG); Eric Chávez (Office of Sen. Ben R. Luján); A.J. Pacheco (Office of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández); Jason Quintana (Consejo de las Mercedes / Manzano Land Grant); Shaun Sanchez (Santa Fe National Forest supervisor); Anthony Madrid (Santa Fe National Forest); Lisa Brown (NMDOT); Lenora Chávez; Randolph Chavez; Leonard Martinez (San Joaquín del Río de Chama LG); Richard Valdez; Manuel Luna (Office of State Auditor); Avedona Lucero.

3. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Archuleta commented that Item 10, presentation by Manuel Luna, OSA, might need to be moved to accommodate Mr. Luna's schedule.

Councilor Steve Polaco made a motion to approve the agenda, with the above change; 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 August 22, 2025 Regular Council Meeting

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the August 22, 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 Federal and State Legislative Update

Federal

A.J. Pacheco (Office of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández) thanked Arturo Archuleta and the New Mexico Land Grant Council for testifying to the Natural Resources Committee on H.R. 4284, the cemetery conveyance bill. There is still no hearing scheduled for the traditional use bill. The Congresswoman honored the Las Trampas Church in the Congressional Record and a copy of the proclamation was delivered to the land grant. The New Mexico congressional delegation have asked that the New Mexico be excluded from the repeal of the roadless rule, which halted road construction in areas with wilderness attributes. The Congresswoman's office will be sending a shutdown resource guide soon. Shaun Sanchez (USFS - Santa Fe NF) clarified that there are three types of national forest system lands: general lands, inventoried roadless areas, and wilderness areas. Rescinding the roadless rule would essentially create two categories. Mr. Archuleta commented that when they made the roadless rule (RARE II, Travel Management) local communities were not engaged and they created the environment to create or expand wilderness areas by restricting public use. People used roads for fuelwood areas and to access other materials and exercise traditional use of the forest. Councilor Padilla cautioned that the goals of the current administration, curtailing restriction and expanding access, are different than ours. We need to be careful that expansion of non-renewable energy does not destroy our lands. Roads should be opened temporarily and for the benefit of local communities.

Jason Quintana (Manzano LG) shared Councilor Padilla's caution regarding the destruction of land. Leonard Martínez (San Joaquín del Rio de Chama LG) commented that road closures have been detriment to the San Joaquín Grant and in working with the Carson and Santa Fe NF resource management plans, he found that little community input was taken in their decision to close roads. Eric Chavez (Office of Sen. Ben R. Luján) commented that Sen. Luján did sign onto Roadless Rule letter demanding the Trump Administration omit the NM from roadless rule. In the spring, Senator Luján sent a letter to Natural Resources chairman Utah Senator Mike Lee demanding that the traditional use bill be heard. Regarding the shutdown, Democrats have attempted to save Obamacare, avert Medicaid cuts and retain the tax credits needed to maintain healthcare. The Senator pressed Health Secretary Bobby Kennedy on data used in technology and autism studies and criticized his lack of work with autism and disability community. Mr. Chávez also discussed the possibility of a hearing for the traditional use bill on Saturday, October 4.

State

The final Land Grant Interim meeting will be held on October 7, 2025. There will be presentations along with the typical bill endorsements. Chairwoman Rep. Linda Serrato will also have a noon hour press conference to discuss endorsed legislation, particularly the infrastructure bill.

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

Mr. Boswell was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following updates: The Department of Interior is moving toward a unification of Wildland Fire Services, which would consolidate the fire programs from BLM, BIA, USFWS, NPS, and others. This is expected to take place during FY26, and the goal is better unified services and decision making around wildland fire. BLM was pleased to present at the State's Interim Committee on Land Grant Mercedes, about our land use planning and land disposal process. That presentation can be shared; it includes contact info for our district offices. One of the important points is that BLM is not able to create a right of first refusal for LGM lands of interest, the way that the state has; our process is governed by federal statute. I have

attached a copy of the presentation for the Council and would be happy to field additional questions at our next meeting.

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

Shaun Sanchez (Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor) reported that the Encino Vista Landscape Restoration project was approved. The timber identified in the project will more likely be used as firewood than marketable timber. The priority is getting firewood to communities while reducing fuel load. Sandy Jacquez is the ranger for the Española District, which will oversee the project. The Santa Fe NF continued to work on the recovery effort from the Hermits Peak Calf Canyon fire and has been doing a lot of work under emergency authorities. This includes emergency road work like replacing culverts and removing hazard trees. This also includes reforestation, where they have replanted 1,000 acres, addressing invasive weeds, trail work and fixing boundary fencing. The recovery efforts are going through the NEPA process and the comment period is open now and ending October 20th. The emergency categorical exclusions are ending and the USFS is creating agreements with the Federal Highway Administration regarding bridges (which includes \$30-40 million of work). Continued work includes watershed stabilization and recovery and there are still some green islands of trees within burn areas. Public meetings will be held in Mora and Las Vegas on Monday and Tuesday to discuss proposed actions and engagement and they hope to wrap this planning up this year to start work.

Anthony Madrid (Santa Fe NF) reported that they are working with the San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant on the irrigation project in the Cañón de Chama. The USFS acquired the Scull Ranch and the Grant was to restore the property, including irrigation, ranching, orchards, and cemeteries. They plan to enter into a volunteer agreement and are exploring a potential special use permit for the longterm restoration of the Cañón. He added that he appreciates the passion and vision of Mr. Martínez and Councilor Rodríguez. Councilor Rodríguez addressed the Laguna and Indios fires, which were, in part, prescribed and burned a combined 30,000 acres. The surface looks like the moon and she questioned when evaluation and recovery efforts like reforestation and reseedling will begin. Mr. Madrid responded that the BAER map shows that only a small portion of the fire was high severity and 83% was not. They have felled some hazard trees and will take down more to address mitigating damage to springs. There is a lot of green grass and the stock tanks have water though they did get some flooding on the Indios Fire. Councilor Rodríguez commented that her main concern were the areas hit hardest and the plans for supporting allottees and Mr. Madrid responded that infrastructure and forage is better than before the fire with reductions of hazardous fuels like pine needles. He added that there is a 2-year window to file claims and also a FSA claims process. Mr. Martínez added that the fires destroyed arroyo crossings with more runoff and silt but they need help clearing the fields in the cañón and need field remediation, which Mr. Madrid stated could be added to the volunteer agreement.

Mr. Quintana asked if the USFS would pay land grants that have their own equipment to complete some of this work. Bella Mollard reported that firewood are permits available through online e-permit system and that the Carson and Santa Fe National Forest will present at the October interim meeting in Santa Fe. Mr. Archuleta stated that there is a draft MOU in the packet between the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests, the NMLGC, the NM Acequia Commission, and the NMDOJ Treaty Division. (The old MOU was between the Regional Office and the NMLGC). Shaun Sanchez commented that the MOU is general, and formalizes the cooperative relationship between

the entities, and hopefully something that can create SPAs and other opportunities for future collaboration and funding opportunities. Chairman Sanchez commented that the MOU is part of the traditional use legislation and is an important step. He hopes to have the Cibola NF onboard as well and will share the news of the MOU with the Mountainair Ranger District Supervisor.

10. Discussion and Possible Action on Presentation by Manuel Luna Office of the State Auditor

Small Local Public Bodies Forum was held and Council staff attended. He spoke about the tiered system and the proposed changes they are trying to make through legislation. The SLP assistance program: RFP's have gone out.

He is seeking support from the Council and land grant heirs to support these changes in a future bill.

10. Discussion and Possible Action on Presentation by Manuel Luna Office of the State Auditor

Manuel Luna (Office of the State Auditor) presented regarding the local public bodies forum held at the end of June. The OSA created working group to work on legislative actions, especially changes to the tiered reporting system. They have an aggressive legislative plan to move the tiered system out of audit act and move it as an administrative rule (NMAC) rather than statutory rule (NMSA). This requires a change to the audit act to allow for such flexibility to determine tiers annually (or less) without the need for legislation. The application for the small public bodies assistance program will open soon and the OSA wants to help as many small entities as possible.

8. Discussion and Possible Action on Interstate Stream Commission Water Security Planning Comments

Mr. Archuleta discussed comments developed by Vidal Gonzales of the New Mexico Acequia Association and credit him for taking the lead. The Council reviewed and discussed comments, including adding sections on an acequia and rural water security advisory working group, the creation of regional water security program fund, requiring that NM ISC assign staff to regions to support them, adding the integration and engagement to be used for input from working groups and councils as an operating principle, adding language that strengthens support to working groups and that they would have input on funding and discussed the proposed district boundaries.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to endorse the comments as written; Councilor Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

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

Councilor Rodríguez discussed a letter in the packet, commenting on the PED's implementation of the Yazzie Martinez lawsuit. The letter was sent to Gwen Perea Warniment of the LANL Foundation, which was assisting in collecting comments. Comments were developed

collaboratively by those that participated in regional meetings and reflected the need to teach traditional values through a culturally relevant curricula and perhaps tie these into the micro credentials earned for teacher advancement.

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

Lisa Brown (NMDJ - Treaty Division) reported that Tom Davis has been working with the San Joaquín del Río de Chama LG and the USFS on the Cañón de Chama irrigation project; Megan Veach is working with the Cristóbal de la Serna LG and will look at an MOU with the Carson National Forest to protect the land grant communities uses in the Miranda Canyon purchase area. She hosted a stakeholder meeting for House Memorial 18 regarding the origin of the lineas and is pressing the question, is the land grant immune from being named in the Collier Radio tower lawsuit? The Treaty Division will host an acequia and land grant leadership conference in October and will hold a water rights training on October 29th. The Division has continued meeting with the 5 land grants regarding the Sandoval case and on September 16 submitted response on behalf of the San Antonio de las Huertas Land Grant in their case against Sandoval County regarding property tax exemption. The Council will need to consider whether to submit an amicus brief if the case makes it to the court of appeals. The Division is also supporting David Benavides and NM Legal Aid in their representation of Tierra Amarilla Land Grant regarding the Laguna del Campo. Leonard Martínez commented that the Council needs to go into executive session to discuss the U.S. v. Sandoval Case and that the Council needs to better support the NMDJ, which has done a good job.

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

Lucas Montano (North area program specialist, NRCS-USDA) commented that he is an heir to the Anton Chico Land Grant and stated that there are many beneficial programs for land grants. The application deadline for all programs is October 17th. Individuals that are applying can apply as individuals but need to show that they control land. The EQIP program helps applicants address resource concerns, such as water for livestock, degraded plant conditions, brush management, etc. Councilor Polaco stated that he received funding to treat 70+ acres, but that there is a delay in NEPA and archaeological assessment.

13. Discussion and Possible Action on FY 2026 Land Grant-Merced Assistance Fund

Mr. Archuleta thanked Council staff (Anissa Baca, Jacobo Baca and Greta Archuleta) for their work on the Land Grant Merced Assistance Fund. Mr. Baca presented the process to determine eligible land grants, explaining EO 6 audit compliance, budgeting requirements of DFA, the certifications required by the Council and the Council staff's outreach efforts to bring land grants into compliance. The following land grants were presented as eligible to receive a FY 2026 Land Grant Merced Assistance Fund distribution (also in packet):

Abiquiú, Anton Chico, Arroyo Hondo Arriba, Chililí, Cristóbal de la Serna, Cubero, Don Fernando de Taos, Los Vigiles, Manzano, San Antonio de Las Huertas, San Joaquin del Rio de Chama, San Miguel del Bado, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz de la Cañada, Santo Domingo de Cundiyo, Santo Tomás Apóstol del Río de las Trampas, Tajique, Tierra Amarilla, and Town of Tomé.

A full distribution is estimated at \$115,633.45; a 75% distribution \$86,725.09; and a 25% distribution is \$28,908.36. Two land grants will receive a 75% distribution and one a 25% distribution, meaning that a balance of \$144,541.82 remains in the fund and will revert to the state's general fund.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve the staff recommendation on land grants eligible to receive distribution from the FY 2026 land grant merced assistance fund; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

Chairman Sanchez thanked the staff for their work on the FY 2026 LGMAF and Mr. Archuleta added that staff will follow up to be sure that land grants are on the Share system and have an updated W-9s on file with DFA.

14. Discussion and Possible Action on MOU for Access to Project Accountability Reporting System

The NMLGC has access to the new CAPS system through the ICIP permission to access form. For PARS side, which is where capital outlay awards are managed, DFA LGD asked for an MOU between every land grant and the Council. In the packet is an MOU, where Council staff (Anissa Baca) will request access to CAPS projects as an initiator.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve the MOU form for PARS access; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

15. Discussion and Possible Action on Donation to the Land Grant Council

Mr. Archuleta reported that the late former State Representative and Senator Bill O'Neill left a \$300,000 bequest in his will to the NMLGC. The monies have been processed by DFA and deposited and will be sequestered. There is also a 3% residual and an additional \$2.5 million to Santa Fe Community Foundation for projects for land grants and acequias in northern New Mexico. The earnings, not the corpus, will be distributed and this will amount to funding in the \$10,000s annually. We will share more information as it becomes available. The Council will have to develop a plan to use funds, perhaps seed funding for land purchases or something similar, or may consider depositing some of the funding with the state treasurer for investment.

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

A budget update was provided: July and August Council travel totals \$1,079.14 and the UNM IGSA has totaled \$77,982.78 thus far.

17. Discussion and Possible Action UNM FY 2026 Intergovernmental Services Agreement

Mr. Archuleta presented Pay Request #1 (for expenses from July 1-August 31) for \$77,982.78, including \$61,044.33 in project personnel, \$3,941.32 in facility rental, and \$12,997.13 in F&A.

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve Pay Request #1 for \$77,982.78; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

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

There are no new requests. New Mexico Legal Aid is working on 5 cases (with NMDOJ and UNM Law School NREL clinic).

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

There are no new requests and the contract is active. Chris Chavez will likely do a lot of work on the Cristóbal de la Serna Land Grant. The Council received a letter from the San Joaquín del Río de Chama Land Grant regarding a survey in 2020 of the patented area (the Cañón de Chama) that was 95% complete but only needed Mr. Chávez's signature. Mr. Martínez commented that he has worked on this survey project since 2014 across changes in the federal administrations. Mr. Chavez had concerns of legality of the survey of and on federal land and what the survey is going to be used for, as well as his liability and legality if the survey was filed with the County. Mr. Martinez also wanted to add the original community and cemetery to the survey. Mr. Archuleta stated that he would work on getting a meeting with Chris Chavez and that he is amenable to completing the survey. Chairman Sanchez asked Mr. Martinez if the land grant would record the survey and Mr. Martinez responded that they are interested in filing it as a historical document, not claiming title and starting taxation.

20. Discussion and Possible Action on Land Grant Registry Update

Mr. Baca reported that he has responded to multiple IPRA requests on behalf of the Council.

21. Discussion and Possible Action on Correspondence

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

22. Discussion and Possible Action on Staff Assignments

None.

23. Public Comments – discussion only

Lenora and Randolph Chavez thanked the Council for their work and information and resources regarding Torreon. Councilor Padilla reported that the Consejo will hold their quarterly meeting tomorrow (Sept. 27, 2025).

24. Miscellaneous Announcements

Mr. Baca reported that he responded to an extensive research request from Rep. Miguel García regarding the Las Vegas Land Grant and Luis Maria Cabeza de Baca Land Grant. He added that the Malcolm Ebright purchase has been verified (all purchased materials have been delivered) and organized.

25. Date and Location for August Council Meeting

The October 2025 New Mexico Land Grant Council meeting will be held on October 17, 2025 in Albuquerque at UNM Continuing Education at 10:00 am.

26. 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 1:11pm MDT.

Approved:

Chair

Date