



## **THE NEW MEXICO OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES TRUSTEE**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

December 9, 2016

Contact: Trais Kliphuis, NM Office of Natural Resources Trustees  
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### **NM-ONRT SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE DRAFT DAMAGE ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR THE WHITE SANDS TEST FACILITY**

**Albuquerque** – The New Mexico Natural Resources Trustee, Butch Tongate, announces the release of the Draft White Sands Test Facility Natural Resource Damage Assessment Plan (Draft Damage Assessment Plan), and seeks public comment on the Draft Damage Assessment Plan.

A Natural Resource Damage Assessment evaluates the impacts of releases of hazardous substances on natural resources and the services provided by those resources. Unlike the ongoing environmental remediation process, which focuses on removal or containment of contaminants that pose a threat to human health and the environment, the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process focuses on the restoration of resources and their services to the condition they would have been in, absent the release of the hazardous substances.

The Damage Assessment Plan represents the State's current understanding of the activities that may be necessary to identify and quantify natural resource injuries resulting from the release of hazardous substances from the White Sands Test Facility, and to determine the appropriate scale and scope of restoration compensation. Inclusion of an activity within the Draft Damage Assessment Plan does not guarantee that it will be undertaken, and efforts and analyses not included within the Draft Damage Assessment Plan may be deemed necessary at a later date. As such, the Draft Damage Assessment Plan is not intended to limit the studies that may be undertaken in the course of the assessment, but to provide a framework within which the Trustee will prioritize efforts and implement the Natural Resource Damage Assessment.

Public review and feedback on the Draft Damage Assessment Plan is an important component of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process. The Draft Damage Assessment Plan is available electronically on the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee website <https://onrt.env.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/WSTF-Draft-Assessment-Plan.pdf>, or may be requested from the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee, 121 Tijeras Ave. NE, Ste. 1000, Albuquerque, NM 87102, (505) 222-9546.

The public is invited to send written comments on the contents of the Draft Damage Assessment Plan. The public comment period is open for 30 days. Comments must be submitted in writing to



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Ms. Trais Kliphuis, Executive Director, New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee at the address above by January 12, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. Comments may also be submitted via e-mail to: [trais.kliphuis@state.nm.us](mailto:trais.kliphuis@state.nm.us).

In addition, the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee is hosting a public meeting on December 14, 2016 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. at New Mexico State University, Environmental Health & Safety Training Facility, Academic Research C, 1620 Standley Drive, Las Cruces, New Mexico. This meeting will provide the public an opportunity to offer written comments on the Draft Damage Assessment Plan, ask questions of New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee representatives, and to learn more about the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process.

For additional information, please contact: Trais Kliphuis, New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee, (505) 222-9572, or visit the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee website at [www.onrt.state.nm.us](http://www.onrt.state.nm.us).