



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES TRUSTEE



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NEWS RELEASE

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New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee

The New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee's mission is to return injured natural resources and the services they provide to the condition that would have existed absent the release of contamination.

Office of Natural Resources Trustee Finalizes Damage Assessment Plan for NASA White Sands Test Facility

ALBUQUERQUE – Today, the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT) finalized its Damage Assessment Plan (Plan) for the NASA White Sands Test Facility in southern New Mexico.

Groundwater beneath the facility was contaminated when hazardous substances were disposed of and released to the environment during earlier NASA operations. Implementation of the Plan will help determine the appropriate scale and scope of potential restoration compensation to New Mexico.

Based on this Plan, the ONRT will evaluate the impacts of releases of hazardous substances on natural resources and the services provided by those resources. Unlike the ongoing environmental remediation process, which focusses on containment or removal of contaminants to risk-based standards, the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process focuses on restoration of resources and their services to the condition they would have been in, absent the release of hazardous substances.

The NASA White Sands Test Facility is located in Doña Ana County approximately 18 miles northeast of Las Cruces and has supported the testing of space flight equipment for over 50 years. Ongoing operations and cleanup actions at NASA test facility are regulated by the New Mexico Environment Department's [Hazardous Waste Bureau](#).

The Plan is available at: <https://onrt.env.nm.gov/white-sands-test-facility/> or may be requested from the NM Office of Natural Resources Trustee, 121 Tijeras Ave. NE, Ste. 1000, Albuquerque, NM 87102, (505)222-9546.

About ONRT: The ONRT is a state agency administratively attached to the New Mexico Environment Department and ensures that New Mexico's natural resources that were injured because of contamination are restored for the full benefit of New Mexicans. The ONRT assesses injury to natural resources caused by the release of hazardous substances and then seeks compensation from the potentially responsible parties for restoration of those injured resources. The funds obtained are used to restore, replace, or acquire the equivalent of injured, destroyed or lost natural resources and the services they provide. For more information, visit <https://onrt.state.nm.us>.