



NEW MEXICO OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES TRUSTEE

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT)

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.

ONRT and Federal Agencies Release Final Restoration Plan for Environmental Damage at Chevron Mining Inc., Questa Site

Albuquerque – Today, the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT), the United States Department of Agriculture (represented by the Forest Service), and the United States Department of the Interior (represented by the Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management), (collectively, the “Trustees”) released the final Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment (“final RP/EA”) for the Chevron Mining Inc., Questa Mine (“Site”).

The Site is located in Northern New Mexico approximately five miles east of the town of Questa, adjacent to the Red River. The Site also includes mine tailing ponds located approximately nine miles west of the mine. The Site is the location of a large groundwater contamination plume that will require treatment in perpetuity to mitigate human health risks. That treatment will be conducted under the oversight of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Trustees released the draft RP/EA for public comment in November, 2017 for a period of 30 days. The Trustees considered all of the public comments received when developing the final RP/EA. The public comments received on the draft RP/EA and Trustee responses are provided in the final RP/EA. The final RP/EA also describes how Trustees for the Questa Mine Site Natural Resource Damage Assessment will use natural resource damage settlement funds for the restoration, rehabilitation, replacement, or acquisition of equivalent natural resources and services that were injured by the release of hazardous substances from the Site. The Trustees’ overall restoration objective is to compensate the public for these injuries through the implementation of restoration projects that provide comparable services at or near the Site. The Trustees carefully evaluated each of the groundwater and aquatic resources restoration proposals submitted and the restoration projects selected by the Trustees for implementation are described in the final RP/EA.

Funding for the restoration projects derives from a \$4,000,000 settlement for natural resource damages reached between the Trustees and the Responsible Party.

The final RP/EA along with more information regarding the Site can be viewed on the internet at <https://onrt.env.nm.gov/chevron-molycorp-mine/>.

The final RP/EA may also be requested from the N.M. Office of Natural Resources Trustee, 121 Tijeras Ave. NE, Ste. 1000, Albuquerque, NM 87102, (505) 222-9546 or viewed at the following public libraries: Questa Public Library, 6 ½ Municipal Park Road, Questa, New Mexico 87556 and Taos Public Library, 402 Camino De La Placitas, Taos, New Mexico 87571.

About ONRT. The ONRT is a small state agency administratively attached to the New Mexico Environment Department that works to ensure that New Mexico's natural resources that were injured because of contamination are restored for the full benefit of New Mexicans. New Mexico's Environment Department Secretary Butch Tongate serves also as the state's Natural Resources Trustee. 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 about the ONRT please contact: Trais Kliphuis, Executive Director, New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee, (505) 222-9572 or visit www.onrt.state.nm.us.

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