

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

Maggie Hart Stebbins, Trustee

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Office of Natural Resources Trustee Celebrates Completion of First Restoration Project Funded with Gold King Mine Settlement Dollars***San Juan County Officials hold Ribbon Cutting for Cedar Hill Boat Ramp*

**CEDAR HILL, NM** — Today, the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT) and San Juan County officials celebrated the completion of the new Cedar Hill Boat Ramp, the first project to be completed using funding from the State’s Gold King Mine settlements, at a ribbon cutting event.

“We are excited to see this addition to the area’s already abundant recreation amenities in use,” said San Juan County Commission Chairman Steve Lanier. “This is the 10th public boat ramp in the county, and the northernmost ramp serving the Animas River. The timing is perfect to get a full season of boating in, and many more seasons of use.”

The Cedar Hill Boat Ramp project is one of four projects funded with a portion of the \$1 million recovered from Sunnyside Gold Corporation, Kinross Gold Corporation, and Kinross Gold U.S.A., Inc. for injuries to natural resources in New Mexico resulting from the August 2015 Gold King Mine blowout.

“The goal of the Gold King Mine settlements has always been to compensate those who were most affected by the 2015 release,” said Natural Resources Trustee Maggie Hart Stebbins. “We’re thrilled to see this first project completed and appreciate the leadership of San Juan County officials and staff in getting this done so quickly.”

The project has been managed by San Juan County with the costs of surveying, design, and construction shared between San Juan County and ONRT. The County has committed to maintaining the site in perpetuity.

“A new boat ramp opening in Cedar Hill on the Animas River expands the ability of our community and the boating public to enjoy a larger piece of the river with a safe takeout that provides easy access to both the river upstream and downstream going to Aztec” said Cody Dudgeon, owner of Desert River Guides in Farmington. “What that does for a small business like my own is it provides more options for recreational customers in the outdoor recreational industry and it also allows us to increase the number of people that can get on the river safely. Also, by opening a new boat ramp, especially one that provides recreational guidance such as the one we have there at Cedar Hill with maps and information for boaters, you will see

that people become better stewards of the river as well as more aware of the recreational opportunities in here in Farmington and San Juan County.”

The opening of the boat ramp compensates for the in-river recreational losses caused by the GKM Blowout by benefiting boaters, anglers, and other river-based activities and the local businesses that serve them. The ramp and adjacent facilities provide new access to the Animas River along a currently underserved 38.7-mile reach between Durango, CO and Aztec, NM.

For more information on New Mexico’s settlement with all three sets of defendants in the Gold King Mine litigation, please visit: <https://onrt.env.nm.gov/gold-king-mine/>.

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***About the Office of Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT):** ONRT is a state agency created by statute to ensure that New Mexico’s natural resources that have been injured by the release of hazardous substances are restored for the full benefit of New Mexicans. ONRT assesses injury to natural resources caused by contamination and then seeks compensation from the responsible parties for restoration of those injured resources. The funds obtained through settlements 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 ONRT, visit <https://onrt.env.nm.gov>.*

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