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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE NEW MEXICO OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES TRUSTEE &
THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ANNOUNCE
THE SELECTION OF WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS**

(Albuquerque, NM) — The N.M. Office of Natural Resources Trustee and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) (collectively, the Trustees) announce the selection of seven restoration projects to be implemented in southwestern New Mexico to restore wildlife and wildlife habitat natural resources. The restoration projects represent a diverse regional portfolio of projects that focus on birds and provide a maximum benefit to regional wildlife resources.

The Trustees are restoring these natural resources as a result of a natural resource damage assessment and subsequent settlement with Freeport-McMoRan (FMI) for their Chino, Cobre and Tyrone mine facilities. The settlement required FMI pay \$5.5 million for restoration of injured wildlife and wildlife habitat and transfer 289 hectares (714 acres) of grassland to the City of Rocks State Park to settle allegations that the company injured terrestrial and wildlife resources as a result of discharges of hazardous substances from the mine facilities.

To identify possible wildlife and wildlife habitat restoration projects the Trustees conducted a concerted public outreach effort to solicit suggestions for restoration projects to replace the injured natural resources. Selected restoration projects will provide either habitat protection and improvement or watershed habitat restoration. Parcels of land that are to be purchased will be placed in the public domain. Restoration projects include the following:

- Placement of a conservation easement on the Ancheta Springs property to protect habitat.
- Repair of severe erosion damage to the Burro Cienega to improve water quality and storage, and restore critical habitat for plants and animals.
- Reconstruction of stock tanks and ponds to develop and increase wetland and riparian habitats for wildlife in the Burro Cienega Watershed.
- Protection of native riparian habitat along Bear Creek through the purchase and conservation of the Double E Ranch.
- Restoration and improvement of riparian and wetland habitats along the Mimbres River.
- Protection and restoration of native riparian habitat along the Gila River through the purchase and conservation of the Redrock property.

- Protection and restoration of native riparian habitat along the Mimbres River through the purchase and conservation of the River Ranch property.

State Trustee Ryan Flynn said, “We worked closely with stakeholders to identify these solutions. All of the projects evaluated were suggested by stakeholders involved in the restoration project identification process. These projects will benefit our wildlife resources in New Mexico far into the future.”

“These habitat restoration projects, paid for with the settlement funds from Freeport-McMoRan, will benefit a wide range of wildlife”, said Benjamin Tuggle, Southwest Regional Director for the Service. “Working with the state and numerous stakeholders, we have been able to address past practices that damaged wildlife habitat, and are now moving to mitigate that damage.”

More information about the restoration projects can be found in the final *Wildlife and wildlife Habitat Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Chino, Cobre, and Tyrone Mine Facilities* on the Office of Natural Resources Trustee website:

www.onrt.state.nm.us/ChinoCobreTyrone.html. Copies will be available at the following public libraries: The Public Library, 515 West College Ave., Silver City, NM, (575) 538-3672; Bayard Public Library, 1112 Central Ave., Bayard, NM 88023, (575) 537-6244; and Gila Valley Library, 400 Highway 211, Gila, NM 88038, (575) 535-4120.

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