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NEWS RELEASE

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Groundwater Restoration Projects Selected for Grant County

The New Mexico Natural Resources Trustee Dave Martin announces that six groundwater restoration projects have been selected for implementation in Grant County. The projects will be funded from a settlement for injury to groundwater natural resources occurring as a result of the release of hazardous substances from three copper mining facilities owned by Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. The Office of Natural Resources Trustee engaged in a cooperative natural resource damage assessment process with Freeport-McMoRan that culminated in a groundwater resources damage settlement of \$13 million.

After a concerted public outreach effort, the restoration projects selected were:

- Full offsite removal of hazardous substances at the San Vicente Creek Mill to avoid ongoing groundwater contamination
- Construct structures to prevent infiltration of contaminants into Santa Clara's drinking water wells and groundwater
- Improve main sewer lines in Santa Clara to prevent sewage spills into Cameron Creek
- Extend a sewer line to the Silver City North/Blackhawk area to enable additional household connections and eliminate use of faulty septic systems that contaminate groundwater
- Develop infrastructure at the Bayard wastewater plant to enable groundwater conservation by using treated wastewater for irrigation
- Replace failing clay sewer pipes in Hurley with modern impermeable materials to avoid groundwater contamination

“The Office of Natural Resources Trustee worked closely with local, state, and federal agencies; nonprofit organizations; and stakeholder groups to come up with these solutions. These projects will benefit our groundwater resources in New Mexico,” Trustee Dave Martin said. The Final Groundwater Restoration Plan for the Chino, Cobre, and Tyrone Mine Facilities describes the project selection process and identifies

additional projects to be considered for implementation should funds remain after the six projects are completed. An electronic version of the Final Restoration Plan is posted on the Office of Natural Resources Trustee website:

www.onrt.state.nm.us/ChinoCobreTyrone.html. Copies can be requested by calling (505) 243-8087 or may also be viewed 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.