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## Settlement Reached in the “River of Tires” Lawsuit

**(WAGON MOUND, New Mexico)** – New Mexico State Land Commissioner Ray Powell and New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Dave Martin announced today that a global settlement agreement was reached with Kansas Equity Investments and Daniels Ranches, who created a massive tire dump located in Mora County.

Under the terms of the settlement, the lessee will remove the tires from the state trust land, and reclaim the area damaged by the tire dump. Kansas Equity Investments and Daniels Ranches will also pay the Environment Department a civil penalty and the State Land Office an amount based upon a final tire count. The State Land Office estimated that removing and appropriately disposing of the tires could have cost it as much as \$1 million, thus reducing the money available for trust beneficiaries, such as public schools and hospitals

The state trust land is located about 10 miles southeast of Wagon Mound. The estimated 300,000 scrap tires were dumped in a drainage arroyo, which was dubbed by the news media, “River of Tires.”

“This was an illegal and unauthorized dumping of tires which was clearly a terrible misuse of state trust land,” said State Land Commissioner Ray Powell. “Because of this lawsuit and the action taken by the Environment Department, the lessee has agreed to clean up the site by the end of November 2013 and to take additional action to restore the land to an appropriate condition after the tires have been removed – all at no cost to New Mexicans.”

The State Land Office had issued a grazing lease to Equity Investments Corporation, which is owned and operated by Harold Daniels and his son Troy Daniels. Harold Daniels also has an interest in the Northeastern New Mexico Regional Landfill, located in Wagon Mound, where many of the tires originally had been delivered.

“My administration worked in a cooperative and collaborative manner with local citizens in the area and with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to ensure that the individuals who created this problem were held responsible for cleaning up our public lands.” Powell said. “This money needs to continue to go to support our New Mexico schools, universities, and hospitals.”

“The Environment Department is pleased that all of the parties were able to come to an agreement that will restore the land impacted by this illegal tire dump and eliminate a public health hazard.” Martin said. “We appreciate the significant effort of the Environment Department’s Solid Waste Bureau and the State Land Office in achieving this important agreement.”

**(See photos of “River of Tires”) below**

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