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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **State Releases Draft Restoration Plan for ASARCO Settlement**

(Santa Fe, NM) The State, through the Office of Natural Resources Trustee, issued a draft restoration plan for New Mexico's \$1.12 million ASARCO natural resource damage settlement.

The draft plan for New Mexico ASARCO Facilities addresses proposed restoration actions for natural resource damages resulting from releases of hazardous substances from five ASARCO facilities: the Blackhawk Mine in Grant County, the Deming Mill in Luna County, the Magdalena Mine in Socorro County, the Doña Ana Metals Survey site and the Stephenson-Bennett Mine in Doña Ana County.

"My goal as Trustee is to ensure that natural resources damages by hazardous substances are restored," said New Mexico Natural Resources Trustee Ron Curry. "The restoration projects, which will prevent future contamination of the environment, are linked to the groundwater, surface water and soil that were originally harmed by pollutants from the ASARCO facilities."

The draft restoration plan lists three candidate restoration projects that focus on environmental protection. Because the settlement sum may not be sufficient to address all three projects, the projects were prioritized with the Blackhawk restoration project selected as the proposed project. The prioritization was based on two factors: 1) the Blackhawk site has been susceptible to erosion and weathering, and is in immediate need of improvements to its existing tailing impoundment, drainages, and barren slopes to prevent release of tailings and degradation of the site, and 2) the Stephenson-Bennett and the Doña Ana Metals Survey locations require further characterization to determine if restoration actions are warranted.

Should funds remain after implementation of the Blackhawk site restoration, they will be used to implement restoration at the Stephenson-Bennett and the Doña Ana Metals Survey locations based on the findings of future characterization studies. Remedial actions for the remaining Deming and Magdalena sites will to be addressed with the \$2,310,000 bankruptcy custodial trust set up for their cleanup.

A notice of availability for the draft restoration plan has been placed in local newspapers and interested members of the public are invited to review and comment in writing on the draft restoration plan. Comments should be sent to: NM Office of Natural Resources Trustee, 4910-A Alameda Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113. The draft restoration plan will be available for public comment for thirty (30) days from May 21, 2010 until June 21, 2010. The document may be accessed via the internet at: [www.onrt.state.nm.us](http://www.onrt.state.nm.us). Requests for copies may be made to the ONRT. Copies may also be viewed at the following public libraries:

- The Public Library, 515 West College Ave., Silver City
- Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, 200 E. Picacho Ave., Las Cruces
- Marshall Memorial Library, 110 S. Diamond St., Deming
- Magdalena Public Library, PO Box 145, Magdalena
- Sunland Park Community Library, 984 McNutt Road, Bldg F-10, Sunland Park