



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*For Immediate Release*

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### **Governor Susana Martinez Presents Inaugural Environmental Excellence Awards** *Eight Honorees Exemplify Outstanding Accomplishments in Stewardship of New Mexico's Natural Resources*

**Albuquerque, NM** — Today, Governor Susana Martinez recognized winners of the inaugural Environmental Excellence Awards. The awards honor outstanding achievements in waste reduction and pollution prevention, energy conservation, environmental education and outreach, land management, water conservation, and youth leadership. The Governor also honored Laura McCarthy, director of conservation programs for the Nature Conservancy in Santa Fe, with the Environmental Leader of the Year award.

"These awards offer an important and unique opportunity to honor New Mexicans who lead the way in safeguarding our state's abundant natural resources," Governor Martinez said. "I'm so proud that so many New Mexicans share this commitment, and I'm honored to recognize these individuals for their outstanding accomplishments."

The 2015 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards winners are:

#### **Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention**

Puesta del Sol Elementary School in Rio Rancho is recognized as a leader in organics recycling. Students and staff separate organic materials from true trash. The program is a model for other schools.

#### **Environmental Education and Outreach**

Asombro Institute for Science Education is recognized for their Stepping Out for Science Inquiry Project. This initiative engages more than 900 seventh-graders in southern New Mexico in hands-on, research-based science education projects.

#### **Land and Ecosystem Stewardship**

The Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program of Albuquerque was recognized for their long-term stewardship of the Rio Grande Bosque ecosystem through data collection and public education.

#### **Water Resources**

The City of Raton was recognized for their continuing post-fire restoration efforts of the community and of Lake Maloya, their primary drinking water source.

**Wildlife Conservation**

The Vermejo Park Ranch of Raton was recognized for the restoration of New Mexico's state fish, the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout, to the Rio Costilla.

**Energy Conservation**

The Kit Carson Electric Cooperative of Taos was recognized for taking a proactive approach to creating energy diversity and sustainability. The Cooperative has ten solar projects in their portfolio, generating 10 percent of its total power capacity.

**Youth Leadership**

Talking Talons Youth Leadership of Tijeras was recognized for their Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP), which improves wildlife habitat while elevating youth and the community to become ethical stewards of wildlife, habitats, and the environment.

**Environmental Leader of the Year**

Laura McCarthy, director of conservation programs for the Nature Conservancy in Santa Fe, was recognized for leading the Conservancy, which is guided by the principle that economic growth and environmental stewardship are compatible.

Governor Martinez established the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards program to support, recognize, and celebrate the hard work of those New Mexicans dedicated to restoring and protecting the natural heritage and environmental health of our state. The program is open to a variety of applicants including businesses, non-profits, regional governmental organizations, tribes and pueblos, land grants, civic organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other groups and individuals. For more information and to learn about the 2016 awards, visit: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/OOTS/GEEA.html>

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