



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 13, 2016

Contact:

Rebecca Neri Zagal, New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee, (505) 222-9572

Greg Miller, Carson National Forest, (575) 758-6251

George Dennis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (505) 761-4754

## **State and Federal Trustees to Hold Public Meeting Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> for Restoration of Natural Resources**

**Albuquerque** – Natural Resource Trustees for the Questa mine Natural Resource Damage settlement will hold a public information meeting on Wednesday, April 27 in Questa, New Mexico. The purpose of the meeting is to explain the process for identifying and selecting restoration projects to offset natural resource injuries incurred from mine operations. The Trustees are the State of New Mexico, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior.

As part of the project selection process, the Trustees will seek public input for restoration project ideas that would provide significant benefits to groundwater and aquatic resources. Project ideas submitted to the Trustees will be evaluated and incorporated into a Draft Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment that will be made available at a future date for public input and comment.

“Environmental restoration projects funded through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program strive to return New Mexico’s injured natural resources to the condition that would have existed without a release of contamination,” said New Mexico’s Natural Resources Trustee and Environment Secretary Ryan Flynn. “We strongly encourage public involvement to help in the identification and selection of restoration projects.”

Restoration projects ultimately selected by the Trustees for implementation will be funded from the Natural Resource Damage settlement. A consent decree for the settlement was approved by the U.S. District Court on September 30, 2015. The settlement required Chevron Mining Inc. pay \$4 million for restoration of injured groundwater and aquatic resources, and transfer 225 acres of land known as the Anderson Ranch in Taos County to the Bureau of Land Management to settle allegations that the company injured natural resources as a result of discharges of hazardous substances from the mine facility.

The public meeting will be held on April 27, 2016, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the VFW Post 7688, 2597 State Highway 522, Questa. Members of the public are encouraged to attend the meeting to learn how to submit restoration project proposals to the Trustees. For additional information, please contact the individuals listed above or visit the NM Office of Natural Resources Trustee website at <http://onrt.state.nm.us/>.