

LAND GRANT COMMITTEE

Peñasco Community Center, New Mexico

August 22-23, 2023

Board of Trustees

President, Bonifacio I. Vasquez

Vice President, Vincent Abeyta

Secretary, Lorrie Garcia

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La Merced de Santa Barbara History

The Merced de Santa Barbara was granted in 1796. The Mexican – American War started in 1846 and ended in 1848, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The United States agreed to recognize and protect Mexican ownership of the property within the ceded territory and to allow Mexican citizens living in this territory to become US citizens. Later in 1894 the grant was registered with the Court of Private Land Claims and patented by the United States to the heirs of Santa Barbara grant in 1905 containing over 31 thousand acres. Then in 1903, Napoleon Bonapart Laughlin, a member of the infamous Santa Fe Ring of lawyers, formed partnership with other lawyers and corrupt politicians to change laws in order to take possession of land belonging to land grant heirs. In the case of the Santa Barbara Land Grant, Laughlin was able to convince a land heir to sue other heirs(s) to partition the grant. Laughlin represent both sides in the law sue. He was paid \$6,000 in land grant property for his work. He later purchased the entire grant, which was sold at action for delinquent taxes, part of the new laws designed to take possession of the grant. In 1908, Laughlin sold the grant to Santa Barbara Pole and Tie Company, a subsidiary of the Santa Fe Railroad. Later, in 1926 the Santa Barbara Pole and Tie Company sold the grant to the USFS for one dollar. The USFS has managed the grant until the present day. For more information: www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LGC0705 or <https://nmahgp.genealogyvillage.com/taos>.

Mission of La Merced de Santa Barbara

As a political subdivision of the state its object and purpose shall be to identify, determine, acquire and secure the common land and common water of the Merced; to control, care and manage its properties and resources; to promote the local economic development and local infrastructure of its communities; to conduct the comprehensive planning of its properties; to determine the land use and zoning of the common lands in accordance with the requirements of the State of New Mexico; and advocate for the health, safety and general welfare of the residents of the Merced and surrounding communities.

Population in Taos County and Surrounding Villages

- Taos County

- Population

32,759 (2020)

34,489 (2020)

- Age

16.2% 55-64

16.3 % 65 -74

10.1 % 75 –over

Rodarte 319 890 (2023)

Penasco 648 (2020)

Rio Lucio 389 (2011) 577 (2023)

Chamisal 638 (2011) 387 (2023)

Vadito 556 (2011) 307 (2023)

2,331

Difficult to find data for:

Llano de San Juan

Llano Largo

Llano la Yegua

La Merced de Sanat Barbara

Short Term Goals

- Continue work at the San Acacio facility
- Acquire the Guadalupe Clinic building and property
- Work with Carson National Forest Camino Real Ranger District
 - Demand more involvement in the Expansion Plan of the Sipapu Ski and Summer Resort
 - Reduce Wildfire Threat to the Santa Barbara Water Shed
 - Treat our water shed to improve terrestrial ecosystems and habitat
 - Preserve the culture and traditional used of land grant property
 - Firewood
 - a. Ojitio 30 to 60 acreas
 - b. Bear Mountain 10 to 40 plus
 - c. Ositio 757 acres

La Merced de Sanat Barbara

Long Term Goals

- Continue to request capital out-lay funding to purchase real estate and equipment for firewood distribution operations
- Develop the land management plan for San Acacio and Guadalupe facilities.
- Financial Security
- Research and work the Albert F. Easley survey of October 1895 (Mr. Cris Chavez)

La Merced de Santa Barbara Challenges

- 30 X 30 Executive Order 14008
- Office of State Engineer Office
 - Water Rights Violations approved by Mr. John Romero during Calf Canyon/Hermit Peak fires
 - Priority of appropriation Irrigation and Water Rights para. #2 Those who first appropriate...
 - 72-5-24.1 A. The state engineer shall not approve an application for a change.....
 - Water Transfer SP-2847-N from Heron Dam to Rio de Pueblo violation of 72-5-22 (Transfer of water rights) and 72-5-23 (Water appurtenant to land; change of place of use)
- United State Forest Service double standards in its application of the National Wilderness Preservation System
 - Sipapu expansion/ Santa Barbara Land Grant
 - Public Law 96-550-Dec 19,1980, Unless expressly authorized by Congress, the Secretary shall not conduct any further states wide roadless area review.....
 - Decision Memo – Sipapu Ski and Summer Resort Improvement Project dated June 5, 2018, signed by: James D. Duran- Categorically Excluding the decision, No public Involvement from Land Grant, total ground disturbance approximately 2.8 acres.

La Merced de Santa Barbara

Success stories

- Purchase of San Acacio
- Secure funding for the processing and distribution of firewood
- 150 Loads of firewood from Bear Mountain
- 150 Loads of firewood from Rodarte County Yard
- 30 lots assigned to 30 Leñeros in Ojitio project
- 89 projected firewood cords in 2023
- Award four scholarships to Peñasco High School students
- Foundation work at the San Acacio facility

La Merced de Santa Barbara Tour 23 August 2023

- Compuerta de Llano and Chamisal
- Fire Break cut during the Calf Canyon/Hermit Peak fire
- San Acacio facility

La Merced de Santa Barbara

Questions