

**MINUTES
of the
SECOND MEETING
of the
RURAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

**July 28-29, 2022
Fort Sumner Historic Site, Bosque Redondo Memorial
3647 Billy the Kid Drive
Fort Sumner**

The second meeting of the Rural Economic Opportunities Task Force was called to order by Representative Candie G. Sweetser, co-chair, on July 28, 2022 at 11:24 a.m. at the Bosque Redondo Memorial in Fort Sumner.

Present

Rep. Candie G. Sweetser, Co-Chair
Rep. Anthony Allison
Rep. Rachel A. Black
Sen. Crystal R. Diamond (7/29)
Sen. Stuart Ingle* (7/28)
Rep. Roger E. Montoya (7/29)
Sen. Michael Padilla (7/28)
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez (7/29)

Absent

Sen. Siah Correa Hemphill, Co-Chair
Rep. Gail Armstrong
Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Rep. Kelly K. Fajardo
Sen. Carrie Hamblen
Rep. Susan K. Herrera
Sen. Leo Jaramillo
Rep. Willie D. Madrid
Rep. Nathan P. Small
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

Advisory Members

Rep. Harry Garcia

Rep. Ambrose Castellano
Rep. Rebecca Dow
Sen. David M. Gallegos
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
Rep. Antonio Maestas
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna
Sen. Mimi Stewart

Guest Legislator

Rep. Martin R. Zamora

(Attendance dates are noted for members not present for the entire meeting.)

*The President Pro Tempore of the Senate appointed this legislator as a voting member for this meeting.

Staff

Mark Edwards, Bill Drafter, Legislative Council Service (LCS)

Erin Bond, Researcher, LCS

Catherine Sayler, Staff, LCS

Grace Balderamos, Staff, LCS

Guests

The guest list in the meeting file.

Handouts

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

References to Webcast

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the meeting, which can be found at www.nmlegis.gov, under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Thursday, July 28

Tour of Fort Sumner Historic Site and Bosque Redondo Memorial

Task force members, committee staff and guests toured the historic site and memorial.

Welcome and Introductions (11:24 a.m.)

Representative Sweetser called the meeting to order as a special subcommittee and asked the members of the task force and staff to introduce themselves.

Welcome to Fort Sumner (11:33 a.m.)

Louie Gallegos, mayor, Village of Fort Sumner, welcomed task force members and thanked the members for visiting Fort Sumner.

Welcome and Bosque Redondo Memorial and Fort Sumner Historic Site Status (11:35 a.m.)

Michelle Gallagher Roberts, deputy secretary, Cultural Affairs Department (CAD), and Patrick Moore, executive director, New Mexico Historic Sites, CAD, welcomed the members of the task force and guests. Ms. Gallagher Roberts informed the members of the CAD's responsibilities, including education, preservation and research. She also provided an overview of the CAD's funding and the Cultural Affairs Facilities Infrastructure Fund. Mr. Moore explained the history of Fort Sumner and the Bosque Redondo Memorial. He emphasized the CAD's effort to rethink the direction of interpretation at the Bosque Redondo Memorial. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20072822%20Item%202%20Overview%20and%20Bosque%20Redondo%20Memorial%20Site%20Update.pdf>.

Proactive Planning for Agricultural Communities: Outlining the Market Investment Analysis Required for Successful Value-Added Business Recruitment (12:51 p.m.)

Jay Lillywhite, department head and professor, Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business Department, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, New Mexico State University, discussed the components of the business plans needed when developing value-added businesses. He noted that the Stronger Economies Together Program and the Create Bridges Program both provide assistance to New Mexico communities and organizations. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20072822%20Item%203%20Proactive%20Planning%20for%20Agricultural%20Communities.pdf>.

Development of Tourism Opportunities in Rural New Mexico (1:55 p.m.)

Antoinette Vigil, deputy secretary, Tourism Department, and Holly Kelley, business development coordinator, Tourism Department, reviewed the work and funding of the Tourism Department. Ms. Vigil highlighted the department's marketing and media initiatives, including New Mexico True, earned media and *New Mexico Magazine*. Ms. Kelley spoke about initiatives to further develop tourism in New Mexico, such as the hotel digital optimization program and enhancements to visitor information centers. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20072822%20Item%204%20New%20Mexico%20Tourism%20Department.pdf>.

Outdoor Recreation as a Selling Point for Rural Tourism (2:54 p.m.)

Carl Colonius, outdoor recreation planner, New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division, Economic Development Department, discussed the division's work to support and foster companies involved in outdoor recreation. Mr. Colonius also provided an overview of the Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant Program and the Outdoor Equity Grant Program Fund. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20072822%20Item%205%20Outdoor%20Recreation%20and%20Rural%20Economic%20Development.pdf>.

Status Update: Planning and Project Management Staff for Councils of Governments (3:21 p.m.)

Sandy Chancey, executive director, Eastern Plains Council of Governments (COG), and Dora Batista, executive director, Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District COG, discussed the programs and needs of their COGs. Ms. Chancey noted that all COGs in New Mexico needed additional staff to meet increasing community needs. Ms. Batista re-emphasized that COGs and their communities need staff and funding to apply for grants and meet community needs, including fire recovery and water supply maintenance. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=REOTF&Date=7/28/2022&ItemNumber=6>.

Federal Infrastructure Funding Rollout for Electrical Vehicle Charging Stations; Regional Transit and School Buses and Other Grant Opportunities (4:05 p.m.)

Mark Hayden, state purchasing agent, General Services Department, informed task force members of new funding opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations and possible ways this funding could be utilized by rural communities. Mr. Hayden requested that interested communities contact his office. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=REOTF&Date=7/28/2022&ItemNumber=7>.

Public Comment (4:44 p.m.)

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 5:09 p.m.

Friday, July 29

Reconvene and Welcome (9:03 a.m.)

Representative Sweetser reconvened the meeting, and Mary Ann Cortese, president, Friends of the Bosque Redondo Memorial, welcomed task force members. Members introduced themselves.

State Fire Response, Recovery Plans and Burn Scar Flood Prevention (9:10 a.m.)

Laura McCarthy, state forester and director, Forestry Division, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), and Collin Haffey, coordinator, Forest and Watershed Health Office, EMNRD, discussed the impacts of the forest fires across the state, particularly flooding and water contamination, and possible strategies for recovery. Ms. McCarthy noted that the scale of response is overwhelming and that many federal programs are limited by narrow jurisdictions. Mr. Haffey noted that individuals who appropriately protected their property from fire damage are now struggling with flood damage.

Kelly Hamilton, deputy secretary, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department, responded to questions and discussed the need for federal assistance. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20072822%20Item%208%20State%20Forester%20Presentation.pdf>.

Federal Fire Response, Recovery Plans and Burn Scar Flood Prevention in New Mexico (10:40 a.m.)

Wendy Jo Haskins, director, Ecosystem Planning and Biophysical Resources, Southwestern Region, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service; Rigoberto Lopez, acting state director, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA;

Jonas Moya, state executive director, Farm Services Agency, USDA; Ray Melton, business programs director, Rural Development, USDA; and Samantha Martinez, housing program director, Rural Development, USDA, spoke on the federal aspects of post-fire recovery and response through the USDA.

Ms. Haskins discussed the USDA Forest Service's use of the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Program. Ms. Haskins noted that the BAER Program is used to identify threats and take immediate action to manage unacceptable risks.

Mr. Lopez spoke on funding obtained through the NRCS's Emergency Watershed Protection Program and what conditions must be met for the NRCS to provide assistance. He emphasized that each agency under the USDA is controlled by different rules and regulations that restrict where each agency can offer assistance.

Mr. Moya provided an overview of disaster assistance programs provided through the Farm Services Agency, including the Livestock Indemnity Program, the Emergency Livestock Relief Program, the Emergency Forest Restoration Program and the Emergency Relief Program.

Mr. Melton reported that Rural Development is not a disaster relief organization but still works with other agencies to support rural communities in disaster recovery and offer disaster resources. These resources address needs such as transitional housing and home repair and rural business planning and recovery. Ms. Martinez discussed Rural Development's ability to provide subsidized home loans to those impacted by fires and what consequences might ensue if someone defaulted on the loan. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=REOTF&Date=7/28/2022&ItemNumber=9>.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.