

State of New Mexico
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 11, 2013

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New Mexico Receives \$4.82 Million to Safeguard Abandoned Mines

SANTA FE, NM – New Mexico is slated to receive a grant for \$4.82 million from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining, to clean up abandoned mines. The grant will finance the safeguarding of abandoned mine sites north of Silver City, west of Grants, and in the San Pedro Mountains east of Albuquerque; reclamation of mine waste piles in Sugarite Canyon State Park near Raton; and studies and development of plans for future reclamation and safeguarding work in Madrid, Gallup, Silver City, and Cookes Peak.

“These projects will create jobs and improve public safety, water quality, and wildlife habitat in these areas,” stated Fernando Martinez, Director of Mining and Minerals Division.

At the time these mines were operating, there was no reclamation or safeguarding requirements. Mine wastes were dumped on the surface and mine shafts and portals were left wide-open. Streams and arroyos were adversely impacted and unprotected mine openings pose a danger to the public.

New Mexico’s Abandoned Mine Land Program works across the state to identify dangerous abandoned mine areas and to abate the hazards. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior through a fee on active coal production.

The Mining and Minerals Division estimates there are 15,000 mine hazards scattered throughout New Mexico that need safeguarding. The New Mexico Abandoned Mine Land Program has closed more than 2,000 hazardous mine openings over the past 29 years. Inactive or abandoned mine sites are extremely hazardous and potential visitors to these sites are advised to exercise extra caution when exploring these areas. The best safety practice to follow is to “Stay Out and Stay Alive.”

For information regarding mine safeguarding and reclamation, please visit the program’s website at www.NMMines.com or contact John A. Kretzmann P.E., Program Manager, New Mexico Abandoned Mine Land Program, (505) 476-3423 or John.Kretzmann@state.nm.us.

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