



**Aubrey Dunn, State Land Commissioner
State of New Mexico**

For Immediate Release

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**Photos: Commissioner Dunn and Cochiti Governor Garcia Make Final Signatures to Complete
Historic Land Exchange**

Santa Fe, NM (September 29, 2016) – The New Mexico State Land Office held a ceremony today to celebrate the closing of the land exchange between the Land Office and the Pueblo of Cochiti.

State Trust Land within the former Cañada de Cochiti Land Grant was traded to the Pueblo of Cochiti for Cochiti-owned property at 311 Old Santa Fe Trail in Santa Fe. The Pueblo purchased the Santa Fe Trail property, which includes Garrett’s Desert Inn, in order to directly make this trade with the State Land Office.

The trust land being exchanged has great cultural significance to the Cochiti people, as it is part of their ancestral lands. The land was acquired by different entities over time, and eventually was acquired by the State Land Office in a separate land exchange with the University of New Mexico for the Mesa Del Sol property located south of Albuquerque. The Pueblo of Cochiti has tried for years to reclaim these ancestral lands, and under the administration of New Mexico State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn the exchange finally took place. The trade marks the return of Cochiti’s ancestral land, while at the same time providing true value for the New Mexico State Land Trust and its beneficiaries, who will materially benefit from the income which will be produced from the newly acquired State Trust Land.

“This land exchange is of enormous importance to the people of the Cochiti Pueblo. I am pleased to play a part in the return of their ancestral land, while at the same time acquiring an income producing property for the beneficiaries of the Trust. We know the former trust land will be protected and well-managed in the care of the Pueblo,” said New Mexico State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn to a crowd of over one hundred people, including many Pueblo of Cochiti leaders and members.

The ceremony also included remarks from Pueblo of Cochiti Governor Nicholas Garcia and Former Governor of Cochiti Dr. Joseph Henry Suina.

After addressing the crowd in his native tongue, Governor Garcia expressed his thanks and appreciation to all who helped make the trade possible, "I want to thank everyone that has come here before us to celebrate this special occasion and coming and supporting us at this historic time," he said before he introduced Former Cochiti Governor Dr. Suina.

Dr. Suina described the history of the land and the great value it has to the people of Cochiti. He spoke of the fight for the return of these lands to the Cochiti people that has gone on without success for many, many years. That fight is now over.

In speaking of the exchange Dr. Suina said, "we are so happy that finally we see it happen. Many have gone on, passed on that weren't able to see it, but we have young people here, grandparents, parents, hunters and many others. This is for them. This is for all of us. This land is something that we will always have for our people. This is indeed a wonderful day."

Commissioner Dunn went on to present Governor Garcia with a handmade plaque and cane to commemorate the exchange. Artist Monica Gutierrez made the cane from apple wood grown on Cochiti land, inlaid with turquoise to represent the water running through the land and the top was engraved with canyons depicting Cochiti's beautiful landscape. A handcrafted Cochiti drum made by Dave Gordon was presented to Commissioner Dunn by Governor Garcia to display at the Land Office to remember this special day.

The State Land Office is responsible for administering 9 million acres of surface and 13 million acres of subsurface estate for the beneficiaries of the State Land Trust, which includes schools, universities, hospitals and other important public institutions.

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