

NM State Land Office & Mescalero Apache Tribe

****PROPOSED**** Land Exchange Overview

**Wednesday, February 25th
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
New Mexico Farm & Ranch
Heritage Museum**





RULES FOR TODAY'S MEETING

AGENDA

- Welcome:
Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard &
Mescalero President Thora Walsh-Padilla
- Presentation of Proposed Tribal Land Exchange:
Michael Sage, NMSLO Commercial Resources Division
- Public Comment and Q&A

RULES FOR TODAY'S MEETING

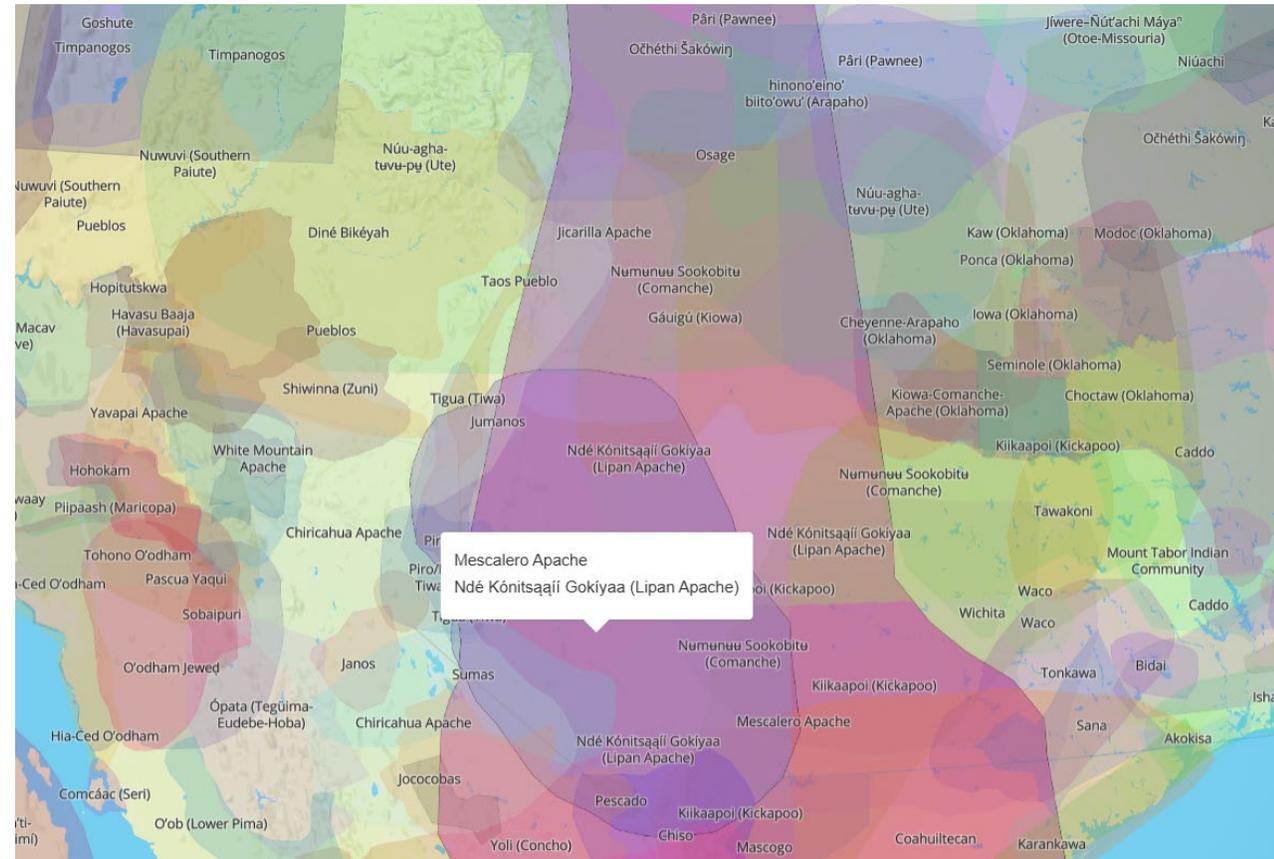
- You will be given an opportunity at the end of the presentation to ask questions and provide comment.
- Individuals will be limited to two minutes to accommodate all speakers.
- Keep questions and comments limited to the land exchange being proposed.
- All participants agree to be respectful of all presenters and speakers. Failure to adhere will result in removal from the public meeting.
- Public comments can also be submitted via written comment during the meeting or online at www.nmstatelands.org by clicking "Public Comment" at the top of the page.

PURPOSE OF TRIBAL LAND EXCHANGES

Overview

- Tribal land exchanges have been a longstanding practice at the New Mexico State Land Office (NMSLO), permitted by rule. Previous exchanges included Commissioner Aubrey Dunn's with the Navajo Nation and Commissioner Ray Powell's with the Pueblo of Cochiti.
- In 2019, Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard announced she would work with New Mexico's Tribal Nations to return ancestral lands in exchange for alternative land of equal or greater value to generate NMSLO revenue.
- The NMSLO manages 9 million surface acres and 13 million subsurface acres of state trust land to generate revenue for New Mexico's public schools, universities, and hospitals.
- Commissioner Garcia Richard has already completed Tribal land exchanges with Santa Ana Pueblo and Ft. Sill Apache.

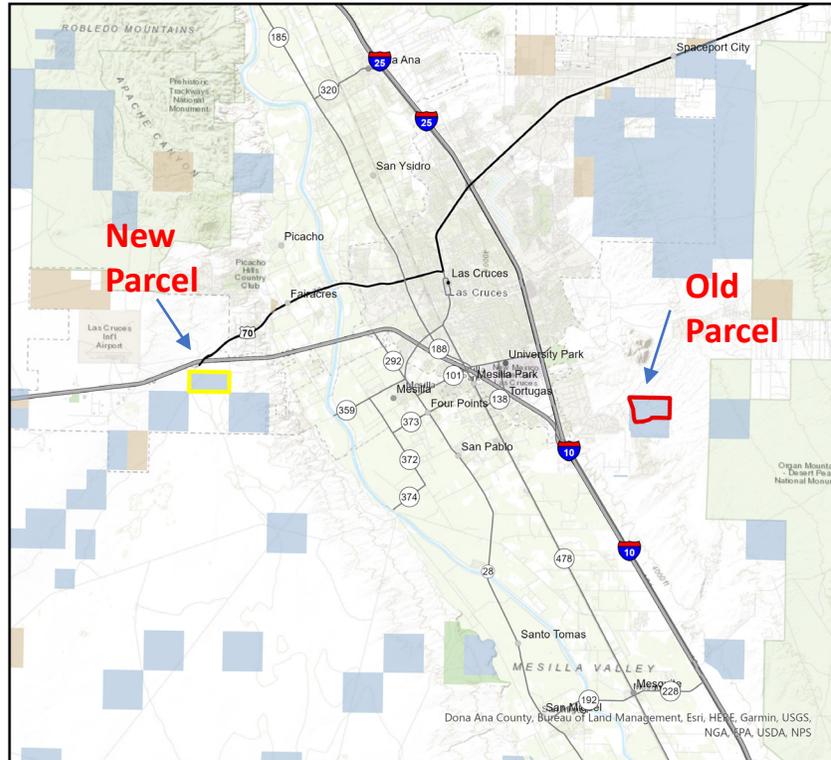
Ancestral Lands Of Tribal Nations



Map courtesy of Native Land Digital.



NEW LAND SELECTED FOR MESCALERO EXCHANGE



Stephanie Garcia Richard
Commissioner of Public Lands
505-827-5761
nmstatelands.org

Project Location Overview
Proposed Mescalero Apache Tribe Land Exchange

This map contains confidential and privileged information relating to the location of cultural resources and should not be shared without the approval of the New Mexico State Land Office. The NMSLO assumes no responsibility or liability for, or in connection with, the accuracy, reliability, or use of the information provided here, in NMSLO data layers or any other data layer.

Map Key

- Surface Estate
- Subsurface Estate
- Surface and Subsurface Estate
- Previously Proposed Parcel
- Current Proposed Parcel

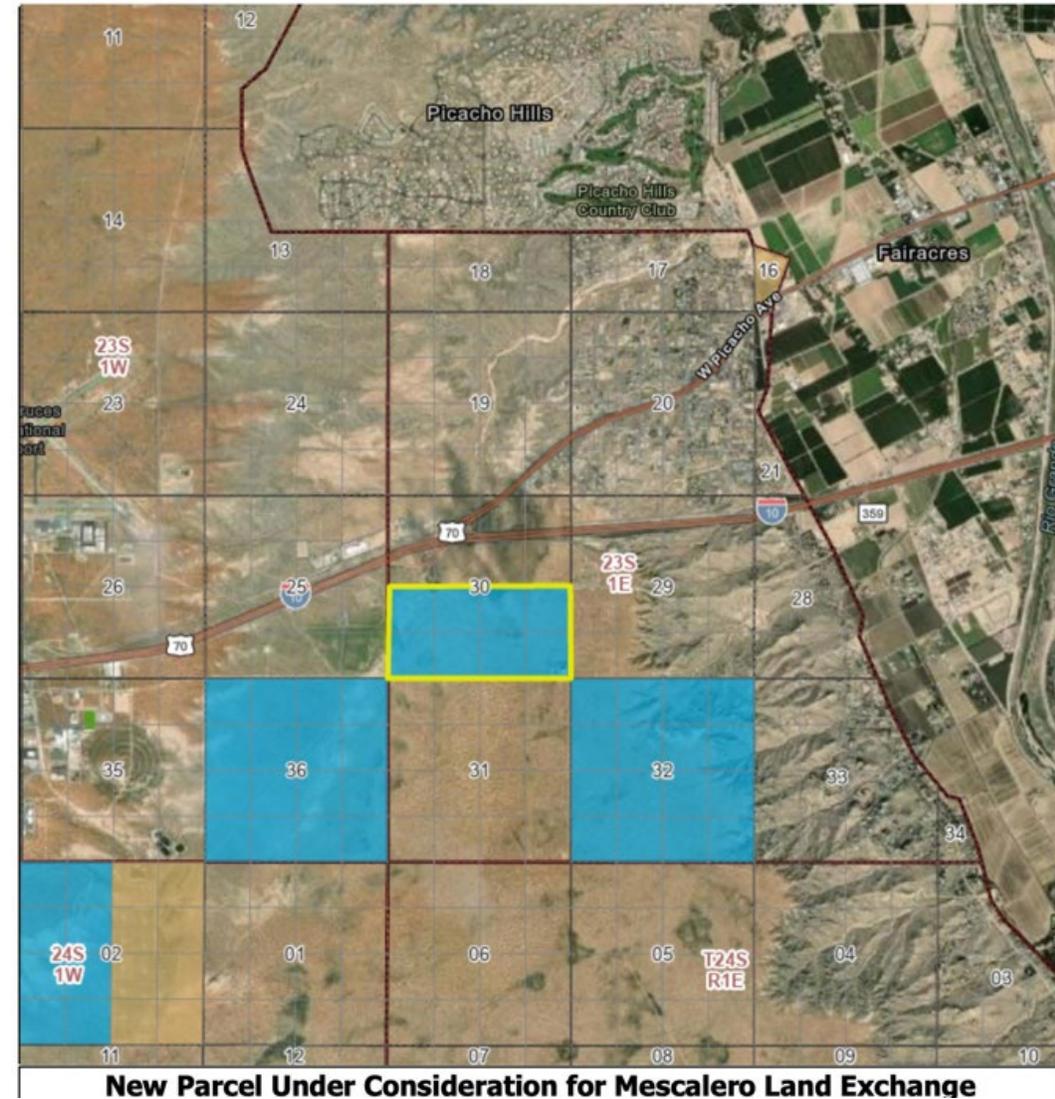
Scale: 0 1 2 4 mi / 0 1.75 3.5 7 km

Map Created by Ethan Orlando Ortega
Assistant Commissioner of Cultural Resources & Lead Agency Archaeologist
505-469-8606
eortega@slo.state.nm.us

The Mescalero Apache Tribe first applied for a land Tribal exchange in September 2024.

The State Land Office and Mescalero held the first community meeting in Las Cruces on November 7, 2025.

After careful consideration of public comments and meeting with locally elected leaders, Mescalero has identified a new parcel west of Las Cruces, near the airport and fairgrounds for the proposed exchange.

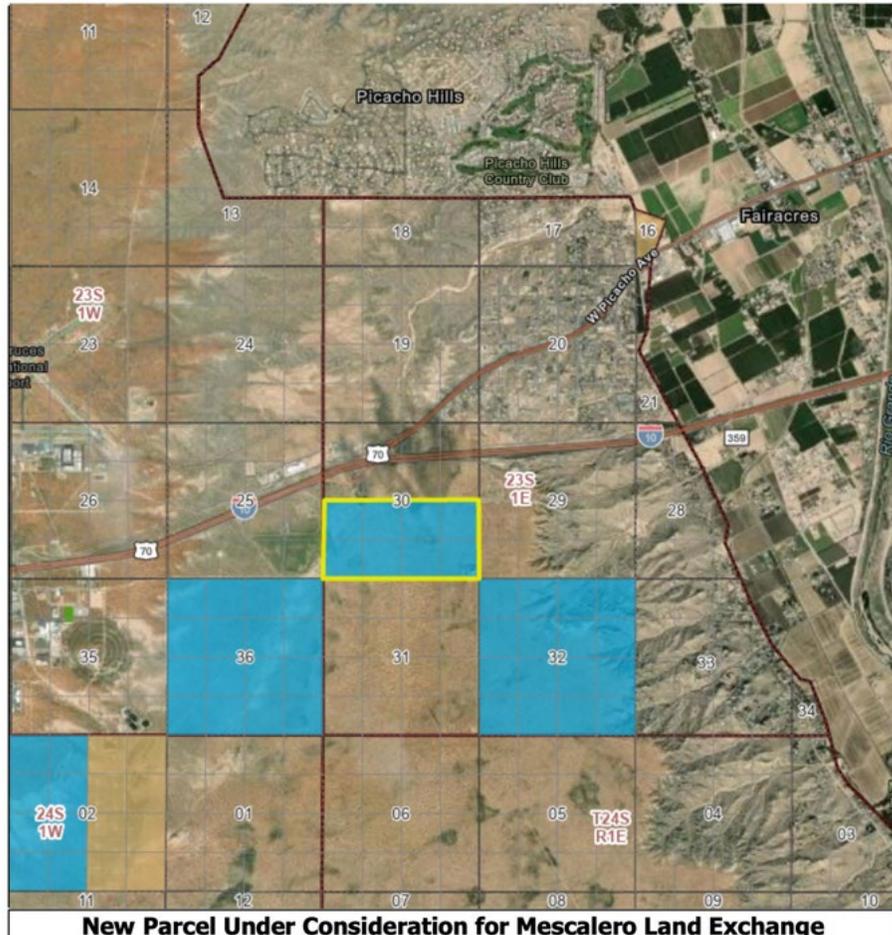


New Parcel Under Consideration for Mescalero Land Exchange

PROPOSED Mescalero Land Exchange

MESCALERO EXCHANGE LAND EXCHANGE

Proposed Land Highlighted In Yellow



- **Mescalero is no longer pursuing 330 acres of state land near A Mountain for a land exchange.** Instead, the Tribe has asked for a non-exclusive agreement with the State Land Office to access the parcel for traditional cultural uses, as the land is of significant cultural value to the Tribe. This agreement would still allow recreational access to the parcel with a valid permit.
- **Mescalero has now identified a parcel of about 320 acres of state land west of Las Cruces near the airport, south of I-10, for the exchange.**
- Like the previous lands selected, this new proposed parcel also falls within the ancestral homelands of the Mescalero Apache people and holds cultural significance for the Tribe.
- Consultation with other Tribal Nations is ongoing.
- Along with today's public meeting, **public comments on the proposed Tribal Land Exchange can be made online at www.nmstatelands.org** by clicking "Public Comment" at the top of the page.



IF THIS PARCEL IS APPROVED...

If Approved:

- The State Land Office would transfer the approved parcel to the Tribe.
- The transferred parcel would become “fee simple” land and the Tribe would have to comply with local land use rules in order to access critical infrastructure including roads and utilities.
- The transferred parcel would not officially become a part of the Tribe’s reservation until completing the multi-year federal process of placing the land into trust.
- The Tribe would be required to purchase a parcel of land of equal or greater value to transfer to the State Land Office.
- The Tribe would take ownership of the land subject to a grazing lease.



MESCALERO TRIBAL LAND EXCHANGE – NEXT STEPS



Next Steps:

- Following this public meeting, the State Land Office and the Mescalero Apache Tribe will review comments, questions, and feedback submitted by the local community.
- That feedback will help the Mescalero Apache Tribe and the State Land Office refine the proposal.
- After public engagement has concluded, the Commissioner of Public Lands will evaluate all input before determining next steps.
- Public comments can be submitted online by visiting www.nmstatelands.org and clicking “Public Comment” at the top of the page.
- More info at: <https://www.nmstatelands.org/proposed-mescalero-apache-tribe-land-exchange/>



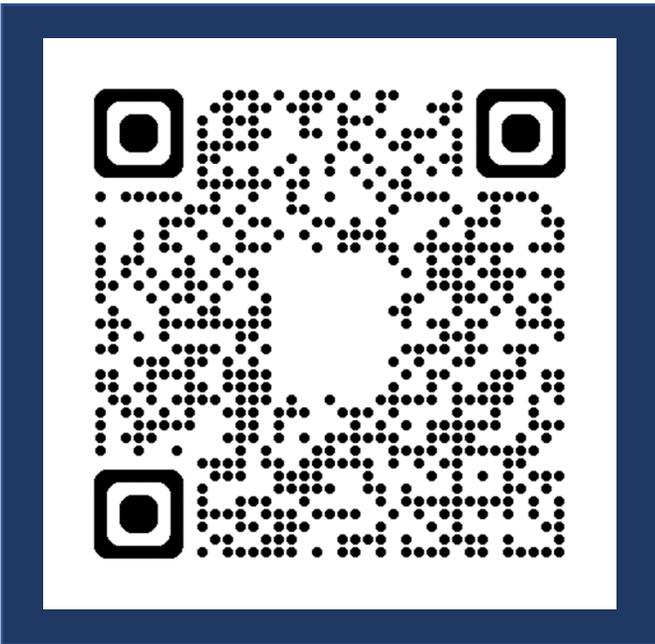
THANK YOU!

Questions?

505-827-5760

info@nmslo.gov

www.nmstatelands.org



Q&A RULES FOR ENGAGEMENT

- You will be given an opportunity at the end of the presentation to ask questions and provide comment.
- Individuals will be limited to two minutes to accommodate all speakers.
- Keep questions and comments limited to the land exchange being proposed.
- All participants agree to be respectful of all presenters and speakers. Failure to adhere will result in removal from the public meeting.
- Public comments can also be submitted via written comment during the meeting or online at www.nmstatelands.org by clicking “Public Comment” at the top of the page.