

## Call for Data Related to Review of National Monuments under EO 13792 (April 26, 2017)

### Rio Grande del Norte National Monument

#### 1. Documents Requested

##### a. Resource Management Plans/Land Use Plans

The Taos Field Office is in the process of preparing a stand-alone monument management plan for the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. Until this plan is complete, the Taos Resource Management Plan (RMP-May 2012) remains the applicable land use plan for the Monument. The Taos RMP is available here:

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/68121/86167/103325/Approved\\_Taos\\_RMP\\_-\\_5.16.12\\_\(print\\_version\).pdf](https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/68121/86167/103325/Approved_Taos_RMP_-_5.16.12_(print_version).pdf)

##### b. Record of Decision

The Record of Decision for the Taos RMP is available here:

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/68121/86168/103326/Taos\\_RMP\\_Record\\_of\\_Decision\\_-\\_online\\_version.pdf](https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/68121/86168/103326/Taos_RMP_Record_of_Decision_-_online_version.pdf)

##### c. Public Scoping Documents

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/72807/97058/117224/RGdN\\_Scoping\\_Report\\_5.22.14\\_\(1\).pdf](https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/72807/97058/117224/RGdN_Scoping_Report_5.22.14_(1).pdf)

##### d. Presidential Proclamation

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/03/25/presidential-proclamation-r-o-grande-del-norte-national-monument>

[Google Docs: RGdN-Proclamation March 2013](#)

See also Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument Presidential Proclamation.

#### 2. Information on activities permitted at the Monument, including annual levels of activity from the **date of designation to the present**

Although most of the management of the Monument has remained the same since it was designated, BLM has initiated a number of programs to improve resource monitoring and management. These activities are summarized each year in an Annual Report for the Rio Grande del Norte see 'Activity Summary 2013-2016'.

##### a. Recreation - annual visits to site

Annual use has averaged 179,966 since the March 2013 designation. The recreation staff managing sites in the lower part of the Monument where facilities are close to the Rio Grande have reported that use began to increase at an average yearly rate of 20% since designation. Camp and day-use sites that were filled only a few times each year are now being used at capacity every weekend from May through mid-September. The Taos Plateau area west of the Rio Grande has also seen a noticeable increase in use

from people wanting to explore the new Monument.

2013 182,501

2014 128,026

2015 213,390

2016 195,948

**b. Energy - annual production of coal, oil, gas and renewables (if any) on site; amount of energy transmission infrastructure on site (if any)**

No oil, gas, coal or renewable energy production on site.

Energy transmission infrastructure on site: four transmission line rights-of way for electricity, and 12 distribution lines to end-users. There are no gas pipelines. There are no applications pending for new or upgraded lines.

**c. Minerals - annual mineral production on site**

None there is no oil and gas potential, and prior management plans eliminated mineral sales from the area now designated as a Monument. There were no grandfathered mining claims or mining operations in what is now the Monument.

**d. Timber - annual timber production on site (in board-feet, CCF, or similar measure)**

i. The Río Grande del Norte National Monument is not open for large scale timber harvesting or for commercial fuelwood harvest. All removal of fuelwood is for personal harvest.

ii. Since 2013 several hazardous fuels reduction and forest health treatments were completed by BLM personnel, in partnership with other agencies (federal, state, and non-profit). In 2016 BLM began to permit the removal of dead and down fuelwood. It is anticipated in the future new areas will be available for green fuelwood cutting and removal.

iii. Since the Monument designation in 2013, the following numbers of cords of fuelwood have been sold.

2013 - 622 cords = 797 CCF

2014 - 464.5 cords = 595.5 CCF

2015 - 343 cords = 440 CCF

2016 - 431.5 cords = 553 CCF

**e. Grazing - annual grazing on site (AUMs permitted and sold)**

There are 71 grazing allotments within the monument - 62 are active grazing allotments and 9 have been closed to grazing before the Monument was designated. Within the monument there are currently 13,759 permitted AUMs of grazing, mostly for cattle. For the five years prior to designation, the following shows the AUMs actually used:

2013 7574 AUMs

2014 6875 AUMs  
2015 7746 AUMs  
2016 8357 AUMs  
2017 6829 AUMs (only for use currently taking place,  
final number will be similar to 2016)

Actual use is due to a combination of fluctuations in grazing permittee's herd sizes, weather conditions, etc. The amount of permitted grazing use has not changed since the designation of the monument.

- f. **Subsistence - participation rates for subsistence activities occurring on site (fishing, hunting, gathering); quantities harvested; other quantifiable information where available**

Fishing is an everyday occurrence along the Rio Grande in the Monument, and accounts for about 13% of total visitor use each year. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish does a creel survey every five years the estimate that on the streams in the Monument, we get about 80,000 visits per year. Hunting licenses are issued by the New Mexico Game and Fish Department for elk, mule deer, antelope, and bighorn. In 2016-2017, a total of 3,569 permits were issued for the three game management units that the Monument covers. This total does not include depredation licenses issued by the State.

BLM allows the personal gathering of herbs, pine nuts and other renewable commodities, but does not require a permit for this activity, and does not keep records on the amount of use.

- g. **Cultural - list of cultural uses/values for site; number of sites; other quantifiable information where available**

- i. Cultural surveys were performed where Section 106 inventories were required to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act. Surveys were conducted in conformance with the standards prescribed in BLM Manual H-8100-1
- ii. Cultural resources were evaluated and managed on an individual, site-by-site basis as "stand alone" resource entities and generally not within the contexts of cultural landscapes as significant and recognizable components.
- iii. Cultural resources were evaluated and managed as "stand alone" entities relative to their potential to be included with the NRHP. Cultural resource types not recognized by the NRHP were either not evaluated or considered ineligible for inclusion with the National Register.
- iv. Academic research on cultural resources within the area now encompassed by the National Monument was limited to two institutions (Barnard College, Metropolitan

College of Denver).

v. Recreational activities associated with cultural resources were concentrated elsewhere on BLM lands administered by the Taos Field Office. These areas were located to the south of the National Monument in the Ojo Caliente ACEC and at locations identified in the Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act of 2004, near Santa Fe. Very little public interest was directed at cultural resources located within the area now encompassed by the National Monument. Petroglyph sites located on the Big Arsenic Springs Trail and on the Vista Verde Trail represented the major pre-designation destinations for visitors to the area now included in the RGNNM.

vi. Tribal responses to request for consultation on cultural resources issues were considerably lower for proposed actions located within the pre-designated National Monument area than for the post-designation environment.

### 3. Information on activities occurring during the **5 years prior to designation**

#### a. Recreation - annual visits to site

Annual use pre-designation was 147,295; use typically varies quite a bit from year to year based on weather conditions and the amount of water in the Rio Grande, which will impact boater use.

2008 118,255

2009 142,359

2010 192,337

2011 159,045

2012 124,477

#### b. Energy - annual production of coal, oil, gas and renewables (if any) on site; amount of energy transmission infrastructure on site (if any)

No oil, gas, coal or renewable energy production on site.

Energy transmission infrastructure on site: four transmission line rights-of way for electricity, and 12 distribution lines to end-users. There are no gas pipelines. There were no applications received in this time period for new or upgraded lines.

#### c. Minerals - annual mineral production on site

None there is no oil and gas potential, salable minerals have been excluded in the area by prior management plan decisions, and there is very limited potential for solid mineral development.

#### d. Timber - annual timber production on site (in board-feet, CCF, or similar measure)

From 2008 -2012, the five years prior to the Río Grande del Norte National Monument designation, we sold permits for green fuelwood, but not for dead and down fuelwood:

2008 - 314 cords = 402.5 CCF

2009 - 300 cords = 384 CCF

2010 - 210 cords = 270 CCF  
2011 - 150.5 cords = 193 CCF  
2012 - 271 cords = 347 CCF

e. **Grazing - annual grazing on site (AUMs permitted and sold)**

There are 71 grazing allotments within the monument - 62 are active grazing allotments and 9 have been closed to grazing before the Monument was designated. Within the monument there are currently 13,759 permitted AUMs of grazing, mostly for cattle. For the five years prior to designation, the following shows the AUMs actually used:

2008 - 5780 AUMs  
2009 8334 AUMs  
2010 8243 AUMs  
2011 6449 AUMs  
2012 7122 AUMs

Actual use is due to a combination of fluctuations in grazing permittees' herd sizes, weather conditions, etc. The amount of permitted grazing use has not changed since the designation of the monument.

f. **Subsistence - participation rates for subsistence activities occurring on site (fishing, hunting, gathering); quantities harvested; other quantifiable information where available**

Participation rates in activities such as fishing, hunting and gathering of wood products or herbs have remained relatively unchanged for several years.

g. **Cultural - list of cultural uses/values for site; number of sites; other quantifiable information where available**

- i. Cultural surveys were performed where Section 106 inventories were required to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act. Surveys were conducted in conformance with the standards prescribed in BLM Manual H-8100-1
- ii. Cultural resources were evaluated and managed on an individual, site-by-site basis as "stand alone" resource entities and generally not within the contexts of cultural landscapes as significant and recognizable components.
- iii. Cultural resources were be evaluated and managed as "stand alone" entities relative to their potential to be included with the NRHP. Cultural resource types not recognized by the NRHP were either not evaluated or considered ineligible for inclusion with the National Register.
- iv. Public, Academic, and Tribal interests in cultural resources within the Monument would likely not approximate current levels where these are identified and managed as an "object" and "value" in accordance with the Presidential Proclamation and the American Antiquities Act.

4. Information on activities that likely would have occurred annually from the date of designation to the present **if the Monument had not been designated**

a. Recreation - annual visits to site

The answer to this question is highly speculative. Factors affecting projections on visitation are subject to a wide range of variables and independent of monument designation, such as market prices, recreation site construction, instream flows for rafting, etc. However, research by external parties (e.g., Headwater Economics and Pew Trust reports) indicate that protected landscapes are a draw for visitors and do result in increased visitation to a region. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that visitation would be less if the lands had not been designated as a monument. There has been no change in recreation opportunities allowed within the area designated as a National Monument. The Town of Taos, the Village of Questa, and Taos County Chamber of Commerce have all developed new marketing campaigns that promote the recreational opportunities in the Monument.

b. Energy - annual production of coal, oil, gas and renewables (if any) on site; amount of energy transmission infrastructure on site (if any)

The monument straddles the geologic province known as the Rio Grande Rift which is a pull-apart of the earth's crust. The Rift experienced extensive volcanism which eliminated any potential for hydrocarbons. There is no renewable energy production within the Monument (the 2012 Taos Resource Management Plan exclude wind and solar energy development).

BLM Taos Field Office has not received any applications for new or upgraded transmissions lines within the Monument.

c. Minerals - annual mineral production on site

The 2012 Taos Resource Management Plan designated the Taos Plateau Area of Critical Environmental Concern that covers most of the area designated as the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. The ACEC and the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River were closed to salable mineral disposal; all leasable mineral entry; left open to locatable mineral entry was most of the area with the exception of the San Antonio WSA, the Ute Mountain area, and the Wild Rivers zone of the Rio Grande Gorge Recreation Area.

d. Timber - annual timber production on site (in board-feet, CCF, or similar measure)

The Monument designation did not reduce the sale of wood to local community members.

e. **Grazing - annual grazing on site (AUMs permitted and sold)**

Livestock grazing AUMs would be as shown above since the Monument was designated. BLM has not made any changes in amount of use.

f. **Subsistence - participation rates for subsistence activities occurring on site (fishing, hunting, gathering); quantities harvested; other quantifiable information where available**

Although speculative, it is likely that participation rates in hunting and fishing increased due to the publicity around the Rio Grande del Norte designation. BLM does not keep records nor do we require permits for the gathering of herbs, pine nuts or other products collected by individuals. Nothing has been done to restrict these activities since the Monument designation we have actually worked with local community members to stage special events to share knowledge and skills regarding their collection. The State of New Mexico regulates the taking of big game and fishing on public lands no changes have been made because of the Monument designation.

g. **Cultural - list of cultural uses/values for site; number of sites; other quantifiable information where available**

i. Cultural surveys would be performed where Section 106 inventories were required to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act. Surveys were conducted in conformance with the standards prescribed in BLM Manual H-8100-1

ii. Cultural resources would be evaluated and managed on an individual, site-by-site basis as “stand alone” resource entities and generally not within the contexts of cultural landscapes as significant and recognizable components.

iii. Cultural resources would be evaluated and managed as “stand alone” entities relative to their potential to be included with the NRHP. Cultural resource types not recognized by the NRHP were either not evaluated or considered ineligible for inclusion with the National Register.

iv. Public, Academic, and Tribal interests in cultural resources within the Monument would likely not approximate current levels where these are identified and managed as an “object” and “value” in accordance with the Presidential Proclamation and the American Antiquities Act.

5. **Changes to boundaries - dates and changes in size**

The boundary was adjusted within T29N. R11E; Section 29 in 2013 due to better survey information. The result was to reduce the Monument by three acres.

6. **Public Outreach prior to Designation - outreach activities conducted and opportunities for public comment**

Many meetings were held prior to designation, but these meetings were hosted by Congressional delegations, the Secretary's office, and community groups. BLM only participated in these meetings as subject matter experts and did not keep records of dates, attendees or content of these meetings.

A diverse non-partisan coalition comprised of sportsmen, ranchers, land grant members, water right holders, outfitters and guides, local business groups, local government bodies and local conservation advocates was formed in 2007. The coalition members worked collaboratively, holding public meetings, sharing information, and discussing options with the staffs of New Mexico's senators at the time, particularly US Senator Jeff Bingaman. The Coalition website has material that describes this effort <http://www.riograndedelnorte.org/monument-review/>.

## 7. Terms of Designation

In addition to the establishment of the Nation Monument, the Presidential Proclamation of March 25, 2013, available in this folder, specified that the following terms be applied to the designation:

- All Federal lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of this monument are hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, 4 leasing, or other disposition under the public land laws, including withdrawal from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of this proclamation.
- The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights. Lands and interests in lands within the Monument's boundaries not owned or controlled by the United States shall be reserved as part of the monument upon acquisition of ownership or control by the United States.
- The Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) shall manage the monument through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a unit of the National Landscape Conservation System, pursuant to applicable legal authorities, including the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (82 Stat. 906, 16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.), to implement the purposes of this proclamation.
- For purposes of protecting and restoring the objects identified above, the Secretary, through the BLM, shall prepare and maintain a management plan for the monument and shall provide for maximum public involvement in the development of that plan including, but not limited to, consultation with tribal, State, and local governments as well as community land grant and acequia associations.
- Except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes, motorized vehicle use in the monument shall be permitted only on designated roads and non-motorized mechanized vehicle use shall be permitted only on designated roads and trails.
- Nothing in this proclamation shall be construed to preclude the Secretary from renewing or authorizing the upgrading of existing utility line rights-of-way within the physical scope of



each such right-of-way that exists on the date of this proclamation. Additional utility line rights-of-way or upgrades outside the existing utility line rights-of-way may only be authorized if consistent with the care and management of the objects identified above.

- Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the BLM in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument, consistent with the purposes of this proclamation.
- Nothing in this proclamation shall be construed to alter or affect the Río Grande Compact between the States of Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, or to create any reservation of water in the monument.
- Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to enlarge or diminish the jurisdiction of the State of New Mexico with respect to fish and wildlife management.
- Nothing in this proclamation shall be construed to preclude the traditional collection of firewood and piñon nuts in the monument for personal non-commercial use consistent with the purposes of this proclamation.
- Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to revoke any existing withdrawal, reservation, or appropriation; however, the monument shall be the dominant reservation.
- Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of the monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

Table 1. List of National Monuments Included in Review (per DoI Press Release dated May 5, 2017)

National Monument	Location	Managing Agency
Basin and Range	Nevada	BLM
Bears Ears	Utah	BLM, USFS
Berryessa Snow Mountain	California	USFS, BLM
Canyons of the Ancients	Colorado	BLM
Carrizo Plain	California	BLM
Cascade Siskiyou	Oregon	#N/A
Craters of the Moon	Idaho	NPS, BLM
Giant Sequoia	California	USFS
Gold Butte	Nevada	BLM
Grand Canyon-Parashant	Arizona	BLM, NPS
Grand Staircase-Escalante	Utah	BLM
Hanford Reach	Washington	FWS, DOE
Ironwood Forest	Arizona	BLM
Mojave Trails	California	BLM
Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks	New Mexico	BLM
Río Grande del Norte	New Mexico	BLM
Sand to Snow	California	BLM, USFS
San Gabriel Mountains	California	USFS
Sonoran Desert	Arizona	BLM
Upper Missouri River Breaks	Montana	BLM
Vermilion Cliffs	Arizona	BLM
Katahdin Woods and Waters	Maine	NPS
Marianas Trench	CNMI/Pacific Ocean	FWS
Northeast Canyons and Seamounts	Atlantic Ocean	NOAA, FWS
Pacific Remote Islands	Pacific Ocean	FWS
Papahānaumokuākea	Hawai'i/Pacific Ocean	NOAA, FWS
Rose Atoll	American Sāmoa/Pacific Ocean	FWS