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**To:** [Bowman, Randal](#)  
**Cc:** [Kathleen Benedetto](#); [John Ruhs](#); [Michael Nedd](#); [McAlear, Christopher](#); [Kristin Bail](#); [Peter Mali](#); [Aaron Moody](#); [Karen Kelleher](#); [Timothy Fisher](#); [Sally Butts](#); [Timothy Spisak](#); [Matthew Allen](#); [Amy Lueders](#); [Aden Seidlitz](#)  
**Subject:** Rio Grande Del Norte NM Initial Data Request Exec Summary, Data Summary, New Information Request Responses  
**Date:** Monday, June 12, 2017 7:40:10 AM  
**Attachments:** [Rio Grande Data Summary 6 12 2017.docx](#)  
[Rio Grande Executive Summary 6 8 2017.docx](#)  
[Rio Grande New Information Request 6 8 2017.docx](#)

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Hi Randy,

We have completed our review of the initial responses provided in response to the April 26, 2017 Executive Order 13792 and initial data request for the Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument. Please find attached an executive summary and data summary. These two summary documents along with the requested data and supporting sources of information have been uploaded to the respective Google Drive folder for the Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument.

Per your request, I have also attached the responses to the new, additional information requested in a word document. ("Rio Grande\_New Information Request\_6\_8\_2017")



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## 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 current 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

See attachment 1.d. Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument Presidential Proclamation.pdf.

#### 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 attachment 2. RGdN Activity Summary 2013-2016.docx).

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

Annual visitation has averaged 180,000 visitors since the March 2013 designation. However, there has been an increase of use at developed recreation sites. Recreation staff managing these developed sites in the lower part of the monument have reported that use began increasing at an average annual 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 had a noticeable increase in visitation to the monument:

2013 – 182,501 visitors

2014 – 128,026 visitors

2015 – 213,390 visitors

2016 – 195,948 visitors

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

There is no oil, gas, coal or renewable energy production within the monument.

The following energy transmission infrastructure is currently on site:

- Four transmission line rights-of way for electricity,
- 12 distribution lines to end-users

There are no gas pipelines and no applications pending for new or upgraded lines.

- c. Minerals - annual mineral production on site

None – there is no oil and gas potential within the monument. Mineral sales are now allowed within the monument under the current management plan. There were no mining claims or operations at the time of designation so there are no valid existing rights for mining claims or mining operations in the monument. There are no mineral developments or process facilities adjacent to or impacted by the monument designation.

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

i. The Río Grande del Norte National Monument is not available 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, 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 were closed to grazing before the designation. Within the monument there are currently 13,759 permitted AUMs. The AUMs actually used since designation:

2013 – 7574 AUMs  
2014 – 6875 AUMs  
2015 – 7746 AUMs  
2016 – 8357 AUMs  
2017 – 6829 AUMs (only for current use, final number will be similar to 2016)

Actual use fluctuates due to a combination of 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 conducts a creel survey every five years. The survey provides an estimate that the NM receives 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 covering the National Monument.

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 National Register of Historic Places (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 monument have been consistently led by two institutions (Barnard College, Metropolitan College of Denver).
- v. The main attraction to cultural resources located within the monument is a petroglyph sites located on the Big Arsenic Springs Trail and on the Vista Verde Trail.
- vi. Tribal responses to requests for consultation on cultural resources issues were considerably lower for proposed actions located within the pre-designated monument area than for the post-designation area.

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

a. Recreation - annual visits to site

Annual visits pre-designation was 147,295 visitors. Use typically varies from year to year based on weather conditions and the amount of water in the Rio Grande, where the quantity of water has a direct impact on boater use. Lower use is contributed to drought conditions.

2008 – 118,255 visitors

2009 – 142,359 visitors

2010 – 192,337 visitors

2011 – 159,045 visitors

2012 – 124,477 visitors

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

There is no oil, gas, coal, or renewable energy production on site. Energy transmission infrastructure on site:

- Four transmission line rights-of way for electricity,
- 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, BLM 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.

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, the NM receives 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 covering the National Monument.

- 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 Proclamation and the American Antiquities Act.

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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**

Refer to Proclamation for the terms of designation. No additional background.

See attachment 1.d. Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument Presidential Proclamation.pdf.

## **Executive Summary of Review of National Monuments under EO 13792 (April 26, 2017)**

### **Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument, Taos, New Mexico**

#### **Key Information about Rio Grande del Norte National Monument**

Rio Grande del Norte National Monument (242,455 acres) was established by Presidential Proclamation on March 25, 2013. Prior to designation, the area was managed by the BLM and continues to be following designation. The BLM manages for multiple use within the Monument (hunting, fishing, recreation, grazing, woodcutting and collection of herbs, pine nuts, and other traditional uses), while protecting the historic and scientific resources identified in the Proclamation and providing opportunities for scientific study of those resources. The resources identified in the Proclamation include cultural and historic resources, ecological diversity, wildlife, and geology. Overall, multiple use activities are allowed in the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument that are compatible with the protection of resources and objects identified in the Presidential Proclamation. Multiple use activities are subject to decisions made in current and future BLM resource management planning efforts which include public participation. National Monuments and other conservation areas managed by the BLM continue to allow for multiple uses according to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (dependent on proclamation language).

#### **Summary of Public Engagement Prior to Designation**

Congressional delegations and community groups held multiple public meetings from 2007 to 2013 regarding the proposed national monument prior to designation. BLM participated in these meetings as subject matter experts and did not keep records of dates, attendees or content of these meetings.

A coalition of sportsmen, ranchers, land grant members, water right holders, outfitters and guides, local business groups, local government bodies and others was formed in 2007. The coalition held public meetings, shared information, and created a website that describes this effort: [www.riograndedelnorte.org/monument-review/](http://www.riograndedelnorte.org/monument-review/) .

#### **Summary of Public Scoping in Development of Resource Management Plan**

In 2014, as required by the Proclamation, a resource management plan (amendment) was initiated to update the 2012 Taos Resource Management Plan and specifically address the management of resources, objects and values for the monument.

A formal scoping period began with the publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on January 3, 2014, and ended on March 6, 2014. During this period, the BLM received approximately 1,200 public comments on issues and opportunities to address in the Monument Plan. Of these, 126 were unique comments, and 1,110 were form letters addressing a broad spectrum of planning issues. A detailed scoping report was completed (see attached Executive

Summary Public Scoping RGdN\_Scoping\_Report) and made available to the public on May 23, 2014, which captures the management opportunities, potential conflicts, and other planning issues.

### **Summary of National Monument Activities since Designation**

Fishing, hunting, general recreation, livestock grazing, wood cutting, and collection of herbs and pine nuts has continued without change in management. The New Mexico Game and Fish Department has continued to keep 10,903 acres, within the monuments 242,455 acres, closed to hunting, in coordination with the BLM, in a developed recreation area with high density use. Recreation related activities in developed recreation areas have increased 20 percent each year since designation. In the five years before designation, the yearly average for overall visitation in the monument was 147,295 visitors. In the four years since designation, the average visitation has increased to 179,966 visitors; an overall increase of 18%.

Resource management activities, such as woodland treatments to reduce fire risk, and vegetation treatments to benefit wildlife and livestock have continued with little change, and have not been affected by the monument designation. There has been an increase in projects related to resource inventory and monitoring since the designation (see the '*Activity Summary 2013-2016*' in the google drive for a more detailed overview since designation).

### **Summary of Activities in Area for Five years Preceding Pre-Designation**

Prior to designation, BLM was managing the area per the 1988 Taos Resource Management Plan, which was amended in 2012 after a several year effort that involved substantial public engagement. Overall, activities in the five years preceding the designation are very similar to activities taking place since designation, except that increased public interest in the area has led to a noticeable increase in visitor use.

Very little changes occurred to livestock grazing AUMs, rights-of-way restrictions, and forestry and wildlife activities when under the RMP amendment and these activities were similar in the five years preceding the designation. The 2012 Taos RMP established the Taos Plateau Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) which limited commercial or surface disturbing activities that had been occurring.

### **Summary of Available Economic Information since Designation**

In 2016, visitor spending for Rio Grande was over 10 million dollars, supported 169 jobs, and created \$13,389,555 in total economic output.

The Small Business Majority commissioned a study, "Economic Impacts of Obama Administration Natural National Monuments", completed in 2016 by BBC Research and Consulting. The study describes the increases in economic activity related to the new

designation. For example, since the monument was designated in 2013, the town of Taos has seen a 21% increase in lodgers tax collections during the summer months. Local business owners reported a moderate boost in business directly resulting from the number of visits to the area because of the monument designation. Businesses such as bike shops and outdoor retailers have seen an increase in sales of 20 percent per year since the 2013 designation (see attachment Executive Summary The Taos News - good-news-the-taos-economy-is-growing,26223 and attachment Executive Summary - New Mexico National Monument, Like Most Others, Fuels Local Economy).

#### **Summary of Any Boundary Adjustments since Designation**

The monument boundary was adjusted within T29N. R11E; Section 29 in 2013 due to better survey information becoming available. This resulted in a reduction of 3 acres to the total monument acres.

**June 5, 2017**  
**New Information Requested on Executive Order on the Review  
of Designations Under the Antiquities Act**

**BLM Responses to Additional Questions for Rio Grande del Norte National Monument**

- a) Any legislative language, including legislation in appropriations bills

**Previous legislative proposals:**

Several legislative proposals have been introduced into the House and/or Senate to establish a National Conservation Area in areas covered by the current monument designation, and are listed in the attached document, (see attachment Additional Information Requested 1. Rio Grande del Norte legislative history.)

**Current legislative proposal:**

**Summary: S.432 — 115th Congress (2017-2018)**

Introduced in Senate (02/16/2017)

Cerros del Norte Conservation Act

This bill (see attachment Additional Information Requested. 1. US\_Congress-2017-HB432-Introduced) designates the Cerro del Yuta Wilderness (13,420 acres) and Rio San Antonio Wilderness (8,120 acres) within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument in New Mexico as wilderness and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The bill releases specified public land within the San Antonio Wilderness Study Area not designated as wilderness by this bill from further study for such a designation.

The bill requires the wilderness areas to be administered as components of the National Landscape Conservation System.

**Past legislation approved:**

**Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic River designations**

Section 3 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968

(see attachment New Information Requested 1. -WSR-act)

October 2, 1968 – 48 miles of the Rio Grande from Colorado State Line to Taos Junction Bridge, and four miles of the Red River designated (see attachment New Information Requested 1.Designation of Rio Grande WSR)

1994 – 12 additional miles were added to the 1968 designation on the Rio Grande, including five additional miles in the Monument (See attachment Additional Information Requested 1. WSR Additional Segment STATUTE-108-Pg611).

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Designated wilderness areas (name, acreage), Wilderness Study Areas (name if there is one, acreage, type), and/or areas managed to preserve wilderness or roadless characteristics that are not WSAs.

**i. Wilderness Study Areas:**

**San Antonio Wilderness Study Area** – 7,050 acres. Identified by wilderness review required by Section 603 of the Federal Land Management Act (FLPMA) and established by Congress.

**ii. Lands Managed to Protect Wilderness Characteristics:**

- Unit adjacent to San Antonio WSA - 9,859 acres
- Unit within Ute Mountain – 13,190 acres

- c) Outstanding R.S. 2477 claims within a monument – type of road claimed and history  
Taos and Rio Arriba County have RS 2477 claims, but none are contested or challenged.  
Both Counties have been asked for maps of routes being claimed, but none have been provided.

The two R.S. 2477 that have been identified within the Monument:

NMNM 057898 Non-Energy Facilities NM ST HWY DEPT Río Grande del Norte  
National Monument

NMNM 064203 Non-Energy Facilities TAOS COUNTY OF Río Grande del Norte  
National Monument

d) Maps

Please see [RíoGrandeDelNorteNationalMonument.pdf](#)

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g) Other – general questions or comments

There has been interest in protecting the Upper Rio Grande area. Efforts were underway since the Rio Grande del Norte designation in 2013 to look at the adjacent lands in Colorado to determine if similar ‘objects of value’ were present. Conejos Clean Water is a non-profit



organization in southern Colorado, currently working with local communities to examine the potential areas adjacent to the Rio Grande del Norte NM ([www.cccwater.org](http://www.cccwater.org)).

The San Luis Valley-Taos Plateau extends outside the current monument boundary and contains identified cultural values.