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Dylan Fuge, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Laura McCarthy, Forestry Division Director

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Mora recognizes 2nd anniversary of Hermits Peak Calf Canyon Fire *Reforestation Center will shape New Mexico's future*

MORA, NM – Today, state and federal officials, along with northern New Mexico residents gathered at the John T. Harrington Center in Mora to commemorate the second anniversary of the devastating Hermit's Peak Calf Canyon fire. Officials highlighted reforestation efforts in the state that will be spearheaded at the expanded New Mexico Reforestation Center.

"The people from this community know best how to repair the damage from the fire, and this expanded reforestation center demonstrates the federal government's understanding of that," said **Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham**. "Growing the seedlings and getting them planted, and putting this community in the driver's seat is how we heal and regrow our forests."

Once constructed, the New Mexico Reforestation Center will have the capacity to produce 5 million seedlings per year, a massive increase over the current capacity of 300,000 seedlings per year. It will also create a New Mexico-based hub for reforestation efforts not just in this state, but across the southwest.

The Center will include greenhouses, a seed bank, and support facilities from seed processing to shipping, and office space. It will also continue the current Harrington Center's work to grow seedlings that are "drought-stressed" in the nursery to increase their survival in the harsh burned area environment.

The Center will also support workforce development, forest-based economic growth and valuable ecosystem services throughout New Mexico. A comprehensive economic analysis concluded the Center would support 474 jobs per year and generate \$1.25 billion in economic impacts over a 30-year period.

Speakers at today's event included Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) Deputy Secretary Dylan Fuge, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small, and State Forester Laura McCarthy.

"We're not waiting to get started," said **EMNRD Deputy Secretary Fuge**. "We're already collecting seeds, stocking them, subjecting them to drought stress, and preparing to plant them in the optimal locations to ensure the success of those seedlings."

Torres Small, a Las Cruces native and former New Mexico Congressperson, spoke of the collaborative effort involved in reforestation, including the \$11.6 million USDA has contributed to construction of New Mexico's new reforestation center.

"We all depend on the success of this effort. New Mexico is a state with unique landscapes and strong cultural connections to the land," said **USDA Deputy Secretary Torres Small**. "Now is the time to ensure that our forests continue to provide life sustaining benefits to everyone."

The event was also attended by the Mora County Commissioners, Department of Transportation Cabinet Secretary Ricky Serna, Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Deputy Secretary Ali Rye, and Representatives from New Mexico State University, Highlands University, and the University of New Mexico. These institutions, along with the New Mexico Forestry Division and the USDA, are partners in building the expanded New Mexico Reforestation Center.

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