



**La Merced del Pueblo de Chililí**  
**14 Old Chilili Rd, Chilili, NM 87059**  
**(505) 249-6759-Office (505) 286-8202-Fax**

November 21, 2014

The Merced del Pueblo de Chililí is a community land grant that has been officially in existence since 1841. As a land grant board of trustees that manages approximately 10,000 acres of common land we recognize how important access for traditional uses of those common lands is to our heirs. The heirs of our Merced utilize our common lands for a variety of uses such as: hauling firewood for personal use and commercial resale; gathering herbs for cultural and spiritual uses; piñon harvesting; grazing and watering of livestock; hunting; and general recreational purposes.

Our community does not differ greatly in our reliance on the forest from other community land grants, however a major difference is we own the forested land that is critical to our community's survival. This allows us to manage the lands in the best interests of our community and therefore our heirs have unrestricted access to those uses.

In our opinion the designation of a Wilderness has a huge impact on the Forest Service's ability to properly manage the land and also places too many restrictions to allow for meaningful access to the land by community land grants that are dependent on them for traditional uses. Furthermore we firmly believe that the overgrowth of the forests and the poor health of the watersheds located in the Manzano's and Sandia's is a direct result of restrictive management practices required by the Wilderness Act. The extreme conditions of the forests, particularly in the Manzano Mountain Wilderness and the Sandia Mountain Wilderness, pose a continual threat to all un-burnt Forest Service land, Pueblo Lands, and the common lands of all land grants within the Mountainair and Sandia Ranger Districts. Because of these concerns the Board of Trustees of the Merced del Pueblo de Chililí requests that the Cibola National Forest does not propose any additional Wilderness designations within the Mountainair or Sandia Ranger Districts. This includes removing the following parcels identified on the Sandia RD and Mountainair RD potential wilderness evaluations maps: D4\_ADJ1, D4\_ADJ2, D4\_ADJ3, D4\_ADJ4, D4\_ADJ5, D4\_ADJ6, D4\_ADJ7, D4\_ADJ8, D5\_ADJ1, D5\_ADJ2, D5\_ADJ3, D5\_ADJ4, D5\_ADJ5, D5\_ADJ6, D5\_ADJ7, D5\_ADJ8, D5\_ADJ9, D5\_ADJ10.

- Merced del Pueblo de Chililí Board of Trustees