

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Forest Service is Committed to Working with Otero County and Grazing Permittees

Albuquerque, NM – May 17, 2014-Yesterday Southwestern Regional Forester Cal Joyner participated in a meeting with the U.S. Attorney's Office and Otero County officials for the purpose of assuring that county and federal officials are committed to promoting public safety, including the safety and security of federal officers and employees, in Otero County and the Lincoln National Forest.

During the meeting, Otero County officials raised concerns that long-standing Forest Service land management actions might deprive their constituents' access to water for their cattle if drought conditions worsen. Regional Forester Calvin Joyner assured the Otero County officials that the Forest Service will continue to work with ranchers with grazing permits to ensure that their cattle have access to water. Regional Forester Cal Joyner stated, "Water, and access to it, is currently available for cattle, and the Forest Service is aggressively exploring and pursuing all legally available options to make water available to cattle if the situation changes.

While there were differing opinions expressed at the meeting, the Forest Service is committed to working with county officials and grazing permittees in those areas where there are concerns.

The U.S. Forest Service recently completed the re-fencing of the Agua Chiquita riparian area. This fence has been in place for decades and was recently repaired and improved with input from the permittee and other partners and agencies to ensure cattle have access to water. The Forest Service will continue to work to ensure all parties involved understand that the fence is fully compliant with state and federal law.

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