

# The Enduring Nature of Land Conservation

*In Memory of Rancher Robert Quintana*



Rancher and businessman, **Robert Quintana** of Las Vegas, NM, owner of several ranches in northeastern New Mexico, passed away on January 10, 2021.

Among his many holdings in the region, Robert purchased the historic Phoenix Ranch and subsequently the **Phoenix Ranch West** (formerly the Jones Ranch) near Watrous, NM in 2008. In December 2014, at his behest, NMLC completed a 5,453-acre conservation easement on the Phoenix Ranch West, one of several other ranches in the grassland region including Fort Union Ranch, CS Ranch, Wagon Mound Ranch and Taylor Springs Ranch over which NMLC currently holds easements.

Located near the crossing of the Old Santa Fe Trail and the Mora River, the Phoenix Ranch West falls within the Rio Mora Conservation area, a federally designated region encompassing nearly one million acres in the Rio Mora Watershed that includes the **Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge**, a 4,600-acre refuge along the Mora River that is directly adjacent to ranch to the north. Approximately a dozen playa lakes are present on the northern half of the Phoenix Ranch West.

These seasonal wetlands provide important habitat for migratory waterfowl and other wildlife and help to recharge the underlying aquifer.

Robert put an extensive amount of work into improving water efficiency on all his properties, and after 30 years of hard work and dedication to what he loved, he leaves a land legacy of more than 71,000 acres of ranch and irrigated agricultural land in northeastern New Mexico.

Apart from his love for ranching and farming, Robert made time to invest and give back to the community serving on cooperatives, boards, committees, and programs too numerous to mention.

NMLC is grateful for Robert's foresight in conserving the Phoenix Ranch West and contributing to the protection of and expanding connectivity within the greater shortgrass prairie of northeastern New Mexico in perpetuity. #



(Google online: Robert Quintana obituary in the Las Vegas Optic from Jan. 14 to Jan. 15, 2021 for more information.)