



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **For Immediate Release**

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## **For Additional Information**

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### **Picacho Peak Now Publicly Owned Land**

LAS CRUCES – The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has completed transactions to purchase Picacho Peak, according to Amy Lueders, BLM-Las Cruces field office manager.

Lueders and Picacho Peak's former owners, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), signed deeds to transfer ownership of the 957-acre Dona Ana County landmark for about 780 acres of equally valued land on the city's east mesa.

Picacho Peak's private owners had planned to develop the property, which lies along the Rio Grande west of Las Cruces. TNC bought the property about two years ago and began negotiations with the BLM to ensure the property's long-term protection and recreational use.

The BLM's Mimbres Resource Management Plan identified the approximately 4,960-foot Picacho Peak for acquisition and slated the east mesa land for disposal.

"Throughout the exchange process, the public told us over and over again that this land should be protected and preserved. The cooperation of area residents, TNC and the BLM is enabling that Picacho Peak's natural beauty will be maintained for future generations," Lueders said.

Terry Sullivan, acting state director of TNC-New Mexico, lauded the transaction. "Picacho Peak contains vital components of the natural and cultural history of southern New Mexico. The peak contains a high diversity of native cacti, and the historic Butterfield Trail winds through the canyons at the bottom of the peak. We are pleased that through our collaboration with the BLM, we have helped to protect this magnificent natural icon of the Mesilla Valley."

The BLM manages about 5.5 million acres in southwest New Mexico and about 13 million acres throughout the state.