

Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act

The Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act (S.210, H.R.506) passed both houses of Congress and was signed into law by the President on March 19, 2004. The purpose of the act is to provide for the preservation, protection, and interpretation of the nationally significant archaeological resources in the Galisteo Basin in New Mexico. These resources include many Pueblo Indian settlements that span the Prehistoric and Historic Periods, spectacular examples of Native American rock art, and ruins of some of the earliest Spanish colonial settlements in the United States. These resources are being threatened by natural causes, urban development, vandalism and uncontrolled excavations.

The act designates 24 archaeological sites with defined boundaries totaling approximately 4591 acres.

The act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to:

continue to search for **additional sites** in the area and submit recommendations to Congress for additions to, deletions from, and modifications of the boundaries of the archaeological protection sites.

enter into **cooperative agreements** with owners of sites on non-Federal lands. The purpose of these agreements is to enable the Secretary to assist with the protection, preservation, maintenance, and administration of the archaeological resources and associated lands. Where appropriate, a cooperative agreement may also provide for public interpretation of the site.

prepare a **management plan** for the identification, research, protection, and public interpretation of the archaeological protection sites on Federal land, and the sites on State and private lands for which the Secretary has entered into cooperative agreements. This plan will be developed in consultation with the Governor of New Mexico, the New Mexico State Land Commissioner, affected Native American pueblos, and other interested parties.

acquire lands and interests within the boundaries of the archaeological protection sites including access by donation, purchase or exchange. **CONSENT OF LANDOWNERS IS REQUIRED.**

The success of this bill will rest with the ability of the involved Federal, State and local agencies, Native Americans, private landowners, and other interested parties to develop and carry out cooperative management strategies that will provide for the preservation, protection, and interpretation of the extremely important and unique archaeological resources in the Galisteo Basin.

BLM is initiating a planning effort to meet the objectives of the law and will be contacting private and governmental landowners and Native American tribes shortly.