



**PROCLAMATION HONORING PINOS ALTOS AND ITS SURROUNDING LANDS AS TREASURED CULTURAL, HISTORICAL & ECOLOGICAL ASSETS OF GRANT COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, Pinos Altos is a local treasure that must be protected from destructive incursions on its land, water, historical character and recreational uses; and  
**WHEREAS**, Pinos Altos, NM is a nonincorporated community nestled among the northern and western slopes of the Pinos Altos range, eight miles above Silver City, which straddles the continental divide at an altitude of around 7000 ft., and has properties that abut the Gila National Forest and BLM lands; and  
**WHEREAS**, Pinos Altos was the first large settlement in Grant County, and was once home to the Mescalero Apache and the earlier Mogollon and Mimbreno cultures, where Mangas Coloradas, the famous leader of the Warm Springs Apache, is honored locally; and  
**WHEREAS**, in 1860 gold was discovered in Bear Creek by three prospectors which led to the town’s growth to over 700 Anglo and Mexican miners and their families; for four decades, gold, silver, and copper were extracted creating a boomtown and county seat with a lively main street including stores, guesthouses, saloons, and houses of ill-repute; and  
**WHEREAS**, to this day, many families, Hispanic, Apache and Anglo, trace their roots to Pinos Altos; and  
**WHEREAS**, by 1903 when the population shrunk with a decline in copper prices, most of the tall pines for which the community was named had been felled and used for the building of the railroad, mining, and houses; and  
**WHEREAS**, after a century, the forest has restored itself and the community retains its Old West character with several original houses, the Hearst church, the Buckhorn saloon, and the courthouse remaining in use; and  
**WHEREAS**, P.A. residents value the cultural and ecological treasure for which they are stewards and are committed to preserving the historic heritage of the town; and  
**WHEREAS**, in recent decades, the area of Pinos Altos has spread beyond the bounds of the old town into side areas off Highway 15, the only access in and out of the area; and  
**WHEREAS**, hunting is significant in the local culture as an important source of sustenance for many Grant County residents, with New Mexico Game Management Unit 24 being highly coveted by hunters due to its preponderance of game populations and proximity to town; and  
**WHEREAS**, this area is an important wildlife habitat for numerous mammals, birds, fish, amphibian, and reptile species designated as endangered, threatened, rare, or as species of conservation concern; and  
**WHEREAS**, the Gila National Forest has identified four botanical Species of Conservation Concern within the area, and New Mexico’s Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department has designated this area an Important Plant Area and ranked it as “Highest Conservation Priority” for botanical species with twelve identified rare and endemic plant species; and  
**WHEREAS**, Pinos Altos serves as a green area for recreation and tourism and is the gateway into the Gila National Forest and the Gila Wilderness where numerous trail systems are beloved by hikers, including those visiting the Continental Divide Trail, designated by Congress in 1978, which is a popular trailway from Mexico to Canada; and  
**WHEREAS**, Pinos Altos and Highway 15 figure prominently in the Tour of the Gila, the important international bike race held each spring with nearby campgrounds and lodges accommodating many weekend travelers; and  
**WHEREAS**, for all its beauty and outdoor offerings, the Pinos Altos environment is a fragile one with fire a yearly threat, where residents urge vigilance in the use of heavy equipment and open fires; and  
**WHEREAS**, Historic mining activity in the area left thousands of yards of mine waste rock with heavy metal concentrations of lead, arsenic, cadmium, copper and zinc, resulting in many residents trucking in dirt from elsewhere for their vegetable gardens; and  
**WHEREAS**, Water is always a concern for residents where rainfall averages under 18 inches and where many households depend on wells and cisterns; large operations- such as mining, timber, or a big property development- would further lower the water table and cause great hardship for local families;  
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED**, that in recognition of the many and varied values held by local residents and visitors to the region, Grant County commissioners resolve to preserve and protect the Pinos Altos community, all National Forest System lands to the Gila Wilderness boundary to the north, west and south, including two miles to the east of the Continental Divide Trail extending to Highway 35, lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management located near this part of the Gila National Forest and to the north and east of Highway 180, including the Bear Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), and lands managed by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and State Land Office located near this part of the Gila National Forest and to the north and east of Highway 180.

**Proclaimed this 11<sup>th</sup> day of June 2026.**

**BOARD OF GRANT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
GRANT COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

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**Chris M. Ponce, Chairman**

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**Eloy H. Medina, Vice Chairman**

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**Nancy Stephens, Member**

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**Eddie M. Flores, Member**  
Attest:

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**Thomas L. Shelley, Member**

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**Connie Holguin, Clerk**