

From: Stan Davis <____>

Sent: Tuesday, 14 July 2026 16:54:12

To: J. C. Giles <____> FOSM Webmaster <Webmaster@friendsofthesandias.org>

Subject: Pueblo of Sandia Land Transfer Act of 2026

Hi FOSM,

At last week's meeting Mike made brief mention of the T'Uf Bien Shur Trust land transfer. It just so happens the Governor of the Pueblo of Sandia, Stuart Paisano, met with some of us from Sandia Heights Homeowners Association this morning, where I learned some things. Below is text I'm sending to friends and some other groups/organizations who I think might be interested in this, including FOSM. Note that the Governor does recognize the importance of volunteers in helping with trails, graffiti, repairs/maintenance, and so forth. But he did not seem familiar with FOSM itself, so I was sure to speak up to be sure he understood that FOSM has been doing tons of work, including on the west side of the Sandias. At any rate, it is possible FOSM leadership may like to talk with Governor Paisano; his email is govspaisano@sandiapueblo.nsn.us, phone 505-867-3317. He has been meeting with many groups, and would be happy to meet with FOSM, I'm sure.

Regards,
Stan Davis

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This text below is a high-level summary of my understanding of the Pueblo of Sandia Land Transfer Act of 2026: it is brief, may include misunderstandings and inaccuracies, and lacks much more information that may be available elsewhere. This summary is presented by me as a private citizen.

My understanding is that this Act, if approved by Congress, will transfer approximately 10,000 acres of National Forest land (under the USDA) to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA, under the Department of the Interior). Attached is a map (jpeg) that zooms in on the Preservation Trust Area that is the subject of this transfer. A "Discussion Draft" document that I have seen says this Transfer is "To take certain Federal land in the State of New Mexico into trust for the benefit of the Pueblo of Sandia". As the date of the proposed Act indicates, they (the Pueblo) hope to have this transfer completed before the end of 2026.

Salient points

- One of the main reasonings given behind the Pueblo's desire to fully acquire/reacquire this land is because the National Forest has not been upholding their "end of the bargain" in their management of this area: crime, including vandalism and graffiti in the Juan Tabo and La Cueva picnic areas especially, as well as partying and public consumption of alcohol and drugs, and littering/trashing, is out of control. I have even seen a large pinyon tree lopped off by vandals in one of the pull-off parking areas along the Juan Tabo picnic one-way loop drive. [Opinion: the whole area seems almost lawless]. Another concern of the Pueblo is the lack of maintenance of the roads and perhaps also some of the historic CCC structures, but I'm not sure of the latter.

- The land in question is from the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area, and includes about 10,000 acres. The outline of this area is irregular, but extends roughly from south of North Sandia Heights to well north of the Rincon Ridge, and from the current eastern boundary of the Pueblo of Sandia (essentially the spine of Juan Tabo Ridge) all the way east up to the Crest of the Sandias. See the attached jpeg image, which is a screen dump of a scan, so it is not terribly good resolution, but sufficient for this discussion. The Preservation Trust Area is shown in the light gray shading.
- Certain areas are to be excluded from the transfer, including North Sandia Heights subdivision, Tierra Monte subdivision, and Evergreen Hills subdivision. Official trails that have been recognized historically will continue to still be accessible, and these are shown in greenish-blue, for example, La Luz, Tram (Tramway), Piedra Lisa and some other trails. Some trails and old roads that show up as orange within the Area were never officially approved trails, and it is possible access to these will probably be stopped. (Don't confuse the orange roads/trails inside the Trust Area with those up in the Sandias outside the Trust Area). There are many other trails within what I call the "Rincon Hills" area – the region north and west of FR333, east of Juan Tabo Ridge, and south of Rincon Ridge: these other trails are not shown on the map and access to these will almost certainly be stopped. Access to the Juan Tabo and La Cueva picnic areas, as well as La Luz and Piedra Lisa trailheads will continue. There may be exceptions, and not everything is "set in stone" at this time.
- The Pueblo of Sandia is expected to play a major role in the governance of this Area. The reason given for this is because the BIA, like the National Forest, is drastically losing funds and people. How the Pueblo will procure funds they envision they will need I do not know. Part of the Pueblo's role would include providing more visible and frequent law enforcement presence, and the regular opening and closing of the gates leading to the Juan Tabo and La Cueva picnic areas, which would help curtail overnight vandalism there. Law enforcement is a top priority, followed by fire (presumably wildfire) protection. Maybe increased law enforcement presence can also help curtail the motorcycle and sports car speeding that happens along FR333, but I'm not sure. They will also develop a forest management plan.
- The area I call "The Rincon" is highly culturally sensitive/significant to the Pueblo, hence their desire to minimize access to the "nest" of trails that can be accessed on the northern side of FR333, as mentioned above.
- Governor Paisano of the Pueblo recognizes the important role that "volunteers" take in helping to maintain trails and remove graffiti within the current boundaries of the National Forest that are part of this Trust area. I commented to him that it is the Friends of the Sandia Mountains (FOSM) members that work extremely hard to quickly remove graffiti, and that earlier this year worked quite a way up La Luz Trail repairing/rebuilding some of the CCC boulder walls that were falling apart. The Governor is highly aware of the value that hikers and others place in being able to visit this area. He believes that volunteers will still be valuable "partners" in helping to maintain trails, reconstruct amenities and remove graffiti.

- Governor Paisano commented that permission may possibly be granted for groups or individuals to visit places within the transferred area that would generally be off-limits otherwise.

