



Bernalillo County Open Space News

Bernalillo County Open Space strives to be a dynamic network of properties with important natural or cultural resources managed to benefit people, plants, and wildlife by protecting and enhancing viewsheds, water resources, wildlife habitat, cultural/historic sites, and prime agricultural lands; and providing resource-based recreation and environmental education.

This year Bernalillo County Open Space, working with local partners, offered a wide array of free educational events including tracking animals in the East Mountains, workshops on how to plan and manage a backyard homestead, and a series of environmental films. Additionally, the County worked with students on science-based field

activities and spearheaded the first Master Naturalist Program in the state. This has been quite a productive year as we continue to mature into an identifiable and valued program. We owe our success to the many local partners and volunteers that make these events possible, as well as to County management and elected officials who support our mission.

A Message from the Parks and Recreation Director, Ed Chismar

The Heart of Bernalillo County - It's Open Space

Open Spaces in Bernalillo County are the Heart of the County. The landscape of Bernalillo County has changed drastically in the past five years.

Urbanization has developed on agricultural lands in the Valley, and in the vistas in the East Mountains. Urbanization, and Open Space preservation is a necessary co-

existence. The County Commission has placed a high value on its Open Spaces, and continues to add to the inventory. Open Space provides an informal element to recreate, enabling residents and visitors to



undertake activities on their own, or in organized activities. In addition, Open Space provides an enriched habitat for wildlife to co-exist with the urban lifestyle.

2010 Open Space programming created new venues to enhance our Quality of Life. I welcome you to participate in one of the many programs offered by Bernalillo

County Open Space. This newsletter summarizes programs offered this past year. If something catches your interest, contact us, or visit us on the web. Our Open Spaces exist for your enjoyment.

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Leopold Legacy Film Series



Aldo Leopold made the link between environmental protection, human ambitions and economic viability. Today, we celebrate his memory and teachings by considering our own land ethic through the second annual Leopold Legacy Film Series.

This year's featured films covered environmental topics on water, energy, food and development. The series was part of the larger Albuquerque Film Festival and each screening delved deeper into these issues with additional activities including an arts fair, panel discussion, and sessions on related themes.

Screenings and activities included:

- *Running Dry* with hands-on stations about water issues in New Mexico at the CABQ Open Space Visitor's Center
- *Split Estate* and a panel discussion at UNM on natural gas and energy consumption
- *Fresh the Movie* and an arts fair highlighting local art related to food at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House
- *Butterflies and Bulldozers* at UNM.

Special thanks to the many partners who helped make this series possible: SW Forum for Land Ethics, Anthony Anella, Albuquerque Film Festival, International Social Action Film Festival, Hubbell House Alliance, CABQ Open Space, Bioneers, and UNM's Sustainability Studies Program.

Citizen Science and Land Health Monitoring

A high school junior, with the help of her friends, kneels down to lift a net out of the water and exhales in excitement as she sees the strange

aquatic insects she just collected: delicate mayflies, caddisflies encased in leaf debris, and plump crane flies.

These critters are indicators of water quality. In this instance, the nets are full of pollution

sensitive insects that indicate clean water. The students follow up by checking nitrate, phosphate, pH, and dissolved oxygen levels. This is part of our Land Health Monitoring (LHM) program where we investigate the health of our forests and streams to be better land managers while engaging the youth and Master Naturalists in citizen science.

The LHM has been developed over the past two years with the assistance from River Source, Wetwaters Environmental Services, and the East Mountain High School. Starting in 2011, County staff will further develop LHM by taking water samples on a

monthly basis and examining the wildlife that visits these habitat rich environments through game cameras.



The properties we monitor are a small part of a much larger ecosystem, and we acknowledge the need for large-scale monitoring throughout the County. That is why the Open Space Program is a major sponsor of the Bosque

Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) that engages over 5,000 school children yearly in monitoring the Bosque on a monthly basis. BEMP has collected data and worked with students for the past 13 years. Through their efforts, a number of publications have been produced including the Middle Rio Grande Ecosystem Bosque Biological Management Plan. These citizen science efforts allow us to have an understanding of the connections in our local environment, including changes over time that aid in planning for a sustainable future.

RiverXchange

County Open Space and La Plazita Institute teamed up with the

RiverXchange program, a year-long water resources outreach project for fourth and fifth grade classes from Albuquerque, Rio Rancho and Santa Fe County.

This school year over 300 students will visit Sanchez

Farm and rotate through sessions focused on agriculture and water.



The first day was held in November with fifth graders from Navajo Elementary School where students planted garlic, discovered the tradition behind flood irrigation

through acequias, and learned about stormwater runoff and wetlands.

Master Naturalist Program

Rachel Carson wrote in The Edge of the Sea that the “place of the meeting of land and water...keeps alive the sense of continuing creation and the relentless drive of life. Each time I enter it, I gain some new awareness of its beauty and its deeper meanings, sensing that intricate fabric of life by which one creature is linked with another, and each with its surroundings.”



Do you have a love for the outdoors, curiosity of the natural environment and desire to work with others and help support conservation measures that improve land health as Carson did? Then you will be interested in the new Master Naturalist Program Bernalillo County Open Space and partners spearheaded. Over thirty states have such programs, and this year, we launched the first Master Naturalist Program to be offered in New Mexico.

Through this program, participants experience 55 hours of in-class training and field studies learning about the flora and fauna of New Mexico, local geology and hydrology, observing and investigating our connection to nature, and much more. Upon completion of the training, participants carry out a 40 hour service project on Open Space properties.

Currently, Master Naturalist Interns are implementing restoration projects including soil erosion control; working with youth doing field research; and developing outreach materials such as nature guides and information about bears and medicinal plants. These volunteers learn about the local



environment while contributing towards natural resource management and the growth of the Open Space Program. This is a three year pilot project that will eventually go state-wide with partner support.

Applications for the next training will be accepted in April 2011.



Advisory Committee:

Joe Garcia, La Plazita Institute • Karen Herzenberg, New Mexico State Parks • Verne Huser, Leopold Centennial Celebration • Laurel Ladwig a Texas Master Naturalist • Bruce McClure, Sandia Laboratories • Kristina Ortega, Sierra Club

The Alliance of Natural Resources Outreach and Service Programs (ANROSP) is the national organization assisting states' Master Naturalist and Outdoor Programs. Bernalillo County Open Space is represented on the ANROSP Board starting in 2011.

Master Naturalist Program Mission Statement

The Bernalillo County Open Space Master Naturalist Program aims to instill the pursuit of life-long learning and promote environmental stewardship. Participants are actively engaged through education and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources on Open Space properties.

BERNALILLO COUNTY



OPEN SPACE

Backyard Farming and Local Agriculture

It was quite a surprise when we held the first Backyard Farming workshop on an unpredictable snowy March day and over one-hundred people



arrived, despite the cold, to learn how to set up a backyard garden. The Backyard Farming Series was comprised of six seasonally-based workshops throughout the year. The overarching emphasis was to teach participants how to transform their backyards into a thriving urban oasis of food, medicine, and wildlife habitat. The series highlighted experts in their field who led presentations on the practical and theoretical application of their

specific topics, including designing and preparing a backyard farm; backyard livestock; productive and healthy gardens; harvesting food and medicine; and seed saving for winter preparation. During each workshop we also offered locally prepared food and gave out session-related raffle gifts.

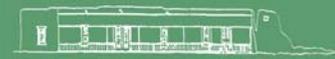
Participant Carissa Nichols exclaimed, "Sending you gratitude for facilitating this fantastic series. Design & Prepare your Backyard Farm, was packed with practical, in-demand information; your efforts are far-reaching and greatly needed in Bernalillo County. Thank you for bringing this to our



community - we'll do our part to manifest your words into green, growing forms."

Special thanks goes to the Hubbell House Alliance and Sunstone Herbs for helping to organize this series.

Hubbell House Alliance



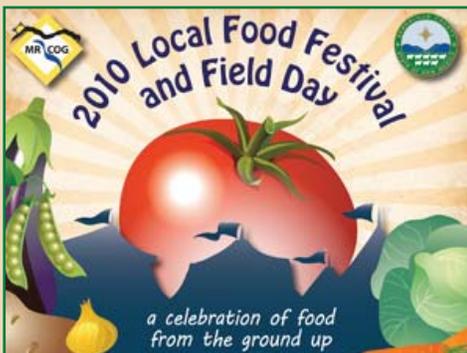
SUNSTONE HERBS



fostering sustainable relationships with the earth...

Food Festival and Field Day

In addition to the Backyard Farming Series, we also held the 3rd Annual 2010 Local Food Festival and Field Day at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House



led by the Mid-Region Council of Governments. An estimated 3,000 people attended the festivities that included locally grown food, live music, kid's activities, and workshops on gardening. Chefs handed out mouth-watering food samples while 70 vendors sold produce and handmade foods such as goat cheese, jams, and salsas. This event is the largest of its kind in Bernalillo County focusing on local foods. While located in the South Valley, the event serves the greater Albuquerque area and is growing each year.



East Mountain Interpretive Walks

Our East Mountain properties are predominantly piñon-juniper woodlands set in mountainous terrain that provides vital wildlife habitat and stimulating recreational opportunities. Each of these properties has a story to tell in regards to its rich history and cultural relevance. This year, we held three interpretive walks in the East Mountains where participants discovered some of these stories while exploring the beautiful vistas.



The first interpretive walk at Sabino Canyon was led by the East Mountain Historical Society. Participants learned about the Riedmont Fur Farm that flourished prior to the Great Depression. At its peak in the late 1920s to early 1930s, at least 300-500 silver foxes were raised at Sabino Canyon.

During the second event at Ojito de San Antonio, the Acequia Madre de San Antonio Community Ditch Association spoke about the ancient acequias that still flow today to provide water for the local community. An acequia is an

"Among acequias, we view water as the lifeblood of our communities because water brings us together as a community and water is essential to the continued survival of our way of life."

-The New Mexico Acequia Association

irrigation ditch that is a centuries-old system of communal management of water.

The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center facilitated the last event, also held at Ojito de San Antonio, where they led participants on a

hunt for animal tracks and scat. Participants spotted evidence of bears and learned that the only species in New Mexico is black bears, even if they are brown or cinnamon colored! They also caught flying and crawling insects using butterfly nets and pitfall traps.



Trail Construction

County Open Space spent a lot of time on trail building this year in an effort to make the East Mountain Properties more accessible to the public for recreation-based activities. Visitors can now enjoy a 1.5 mile trail at Ojito de San Antonio that ascends to a rocky outcrop with a 360° view of the Sandia Mountains and surrounding community. Sabino Canyon also has a newly constructed two-mile trail with interpretive signs featuring information about the property.



Open Space Property Highlights

Bachechi Open Space, Located in the North Valley

The Bachechi Family were early Italian-American immigrants to New Mexico whose contributions to the community included the construction of the Kimo Theater. They purchased the Bachechi Property in 1938. While in their possession, the family managed a chicken farm, alfalfa fields, apple orchard, pecan grove and much more. They sold the property to the County to be protected as Open Space in 1999.



During this past year, a comprehensive Master Plan was completed for Bachechi Open Space

with assistance from the neighboring community and designers, Sites Southwest, Sam Sterling Architects, and Bohannon-Huston, Inc. The County began construction to implement the Master Plan in September 2010 and will be opening the property to the public in late 2011.

Located at the southwest corner of Alameda and Rio Grande, Bachechi Open Space is next to the City of Albuquerque's Alameda Open Space trailhead. Once the construction is complete, the Bachechi and Alameda sites will seamlessly function as one integrated Open Space property. Improvements at Bachechi will enable this site to be a destination

by itself, while also retaining a trailhead/staging presence. The Master Plan enhancements include walking trails, a rehabilitated arboretum, memorial rose garden, native landscaping, wildlife blinds, equestrian-dedicated parking, solar-powered multipurpose educational building, and interpretive signage. As County Manager Thaddeus Lucero stated in the ground breaking event, "This is one of our gems in Open Space."



Sabino Canyon, Located in the East Mountains

Much of our efforts in the East Mountains this year were spent on site improvements at Sabino Canyon Open Space including a tree thinning to reduce fire threat, reestablishing a trail, and developing and installing interpretive signs.

The County implemented tree thinning at Sabino Canyon in partnership with the Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District and New Mexico State Forestry

Sabino means dwarf cedar juniper, but also is used to describe junipers in general, which grow abundantly throughout the East Mountains and historically provided firewood, juniper berries, and construction material.

Division. Through the thinning, diseased and overabundant trees were strategically cut down and either treated on site or removed. The end result is a reduced risk of catastrophic wildfires, the restoration of meadows and wildlife habitat, and healthier forests.

After the fuel wood thinning, volunteers came out for a day of trail building to reestablish a two-mile loop trail at Sabino Canyon. Anasazi Trails Inc. led the event presenting

on how to build sustainable trails that require minimal long-term maintenance. Once the presentation concluded, the participants got their hands dirty clearing rocks, leveling the dirt trail, and raking the area smooth.

We also installed five interpretive signs where visitors can learn about the history of the area while hiking along the trail. The signs highlight the early Pueblo presence, Carnuel Land Grant and Spanish settlements, Riedmont Fur Farm, and forest health.



Additional Property Updates

Visit the website for additional information about these properties, including: maps, Resource Management Plans, and the most up-to-date reports.

Valley Properties:



Valle del Bosque

has further established its Open Space boundary along the clear ditch and now includes a bridge leading to a boardwalk that overlooks the Rio Grande. The U.S. Corps of Engineers, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, Albuquerque City Open Space, and Bernalillo County Open Space coordinated on these additions.

Gutierrez-Hubbell House

continues to be managed by the Hubbell House Alliance and is open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10:00am-2:00pm. The perimeter trail is open all week from dawn to dusk. The County is also partnering with the Bernalillo County Extension Office to farm the fields and create demonstration gardens for next year's workshops.



Hubbell North

is a new 6 acre property purchased in November 2011. This property is just north of the existing Gutierrez-Hubbell House and was purchased for a tree nursery, as equipment storage, and agricultural expansion associated with the Gutierrez Hubbell House and other South Valley properties. Public input will be solicited in 2011 for ideas on complementary uses.

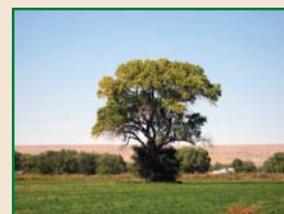


Durand

Open Space is currently undergoing construction of a storm water drainage channel, which will encompass the northern 200' of the Durand Open Space. This work will be complete in the Spring of 2011. The second phase of the project will begin this winter and involves construction of the outlet of the channel to the river. The completed project will restore habitat in the Bosque through storm water quality features. Additional improvements to the property include a second entrance to the parking area for equestrians, signage and art work, and a bridge crossing to the Bosque. These property modifications are led by Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority in coordination with Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation.

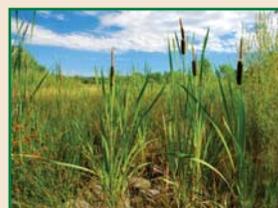
Pajarito

Open Space will receive a 0.5-mile expansion to the trail system and irrigation and fencing improvements in 2011.



Sanchez Farm

Open Space is undergoing a site master plan that will include overall improvements pertaining to future signage, lighting, shade structures, benches and other amenities that improve visitors' experiences at the farm.



East Mountain Properties:



Ojito de San Antonio

has a newly constructed, 1.5-mile single-track trail. East Mountain High School and Master Naturalist Interns are assisting with monitoring vegetation and water quality. Look forward to an interpretive guide, additional signage and improvements to the existing orchard in 2011.



Carlito Springs

is undergoing a cultural and environmental assessment and historic structures report. This information will provide a foundation for how the property is developed and used to ensure that the County manages the natural resources sustainably.



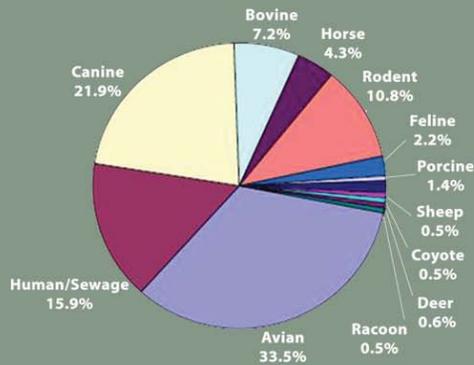
Sedillo Ridge

will require a cultural resources assessment in 2011 prior to pursuing forest thinning and trail building efforts in 2012.

Moving into 2011, County Open Space will continue to build on what has been established this year. We will continue to collaborate with our local partners to further develop the Master Naturalist Program and Land Health Monitoring with citizen scientists. The public can also look forward to more interpretive hikes in the East Mountains, as well as hands-on agriculture workshops and festivals in the valley. Stay tuned and get involved in your local Open Space.

A Word from Land Management

Dog waste results in the number two reason for water pollution coming from Fecal Coliform in the Rio Grande. Please prevent water pollution by picking up after your dogs.



Rio Grande Primary Pollutants resulting from Fecal Coliform

If there are any concerns that may be a maintenance issue at any Open Space property please contact 505-224-2119. Each call will be evaluated and put into our work order system. If you experience a public safety concern, call the County Sheriff's Office at 505-468-7100. For emergencies call 911.

Thaddeus Lucero, County Manager
Julie Morgas Baca, Deputy County Manager for Community Services

Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department

Ed Chismar, Director
Clay Campbell, Planning Manager
Mark Chavez, Land Management Section Manager
Colleen McRoberts, Open Space Coordinator
Adrienne Candelaria, Senior Park Planner
Grant Brodehl, Park, Open Space, and Trail Planner
Manuel Griego, Construction Project Manager
Ed Martinez, Open Space Crew Supervisor



Volunteer Appreciation

The Open Space Program relies heavily on volunteer support and there are always people who step up to lend a hand. However, once in a while there are people who go the extra mile. This year the County would like to recognize two such volunteers, Tom and Diane Tanner. This couple attended and volunteered at the Backyard Farming Series. They arrived early for every workshop to assist with set-up and parking and often stayed late. They also attend this year's Master Naturalist Training and are working on a service project on constructing wood burrowing bee houses. Look for their session on bees next year. Thank you Tom and Diane for being such stellar volunteers.

Partner Recognition

The County greatly appreciates the number of partners who assist with education outreach and land management. Special thanks goes to the following organizations:

Hubbell House Alliance (HHA), a not-for-profit organization, manages the Gutierrez-Hubbell House and partners with the County on a number of events including the Backyard Farming Series, Food Festival and Field Day, and Leopold Legacy Film Series. We also want to extend a warm welcome to Beverly Sanchez-Padilla, the new HHA Resident Manager. To learn more about this organization and how to support them, visit www.hubbellhousealliance.org



La Plazita Institute manages Sanchez Farm Open Space and partners with the County on educational events geared for youth including the RiverXchange project for fifth graders and Caesar Chavez Day serving over 300 students. They also assist with the Master Naturalist Program by serving on the Advisory Committee. To learn more about this organization, visit www.laplazitainstitute.org



Acequia Madre de San Antonio Ditch Association manages the acequia at Ojito de San Antonio and partners with the County for overall land management and property improvements.



There are a number of additional partners we work with that are listed on the Open Space website at www.bernc.gov/openspace