



Santa Fe Conservation Trust

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Santa Fe Conservation Trust Applauds Renewal of Conservation Tax Incentive

Santa Fe, NM - Congress just renewed a tax incentive for private landowners—particularly working family farmers and ranchers—who protect their land with a voluntary conservation agreement. The incentive, which had expired at the end of 2009, facilitated the Santa Fe Conservation Trust's work with willing landowners in our community to conserve 2,377 acres of productive agricultural lands and natural areas between 2006 and 2009.

Conservation-minded landowners now have until December 31, 2011 to take advantage of a significant tax deduction for donating a voluntary conservation agreement to permanently protect important natural or historic resources on their land. When landowners donate a conservation easement to the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, they maintain ownership and management of their land and can sell or pass the land on to their heirs, while foregoing future development rights.

The enhanced incentive applies to a landowner's federal income tax. It:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;
- Allows farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and
- Increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

“Our entire community wins when thoughtful landowners conserve their land this way, protecting wildlife habitat, clean drinking water, scenic landscapes, recreational spaces, and productive agricultural lands,” said Santa Fe Conservation Trust's Executive Director Charlie O'Leary, “Conservation agreements have become an important tool nationally for protecting our watersheds, farms and forests, increasing the pace of private land conservation by a third – to over a million acres a year. Santa Fe Conservation Trust joins America's 1,700 land trusts and their two million supporters in thanking Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall along with Representatives Martin Heinrich, Ben Ray Lujan and Harry Teague for making this important conservation tool available,” he said.

In Santa Fe, the incentive is having a real impact as the Santa Fe Conservation Trust actively works with farmers, ranchers and other landowners, assisting them with the preservation of parcels large and small.

According to the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization that provides a voice for land trusts in Washington, DC, bills to make this incentive permanent have 274 House and 41 Senate co-sponsors from all 50 states, including majorities of Democrats and Republicans in the House.

More

This legislation is supported by more than 60 national agricultural, sportsmen's, and conservation organizations.

To learn more about the enhanced incentive visit: www.sfct.org or www.lta.org/easementincentive.

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The Santa Fe Conservation Trust was established in 1994 with the express intention of protecting and preserving the land in and around Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico. Our mission remains the same today. As the local land trust, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust is dedicated to protecting open spaces and critical wildlife habitat in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and San Miguel counties in perpetuity for the benefit of our children and grandchildren. Among the Trust's accomplishments are creating and maintaining Santa Fe's Dale Ball and Rail Trail systems, protecting Atalaya and Sun Mountains, and preserving more than 33,000 acres of land so that they'll remain as they are today—with clean air, water, starry skies and heart-stopping views.

For additional information, call the Santa Fe Conservation Trust at (505) 989-7019.

Interviews, images, further information are available on request.