

Santa Fe Conservation Trust



Photo: Pecos River Open Spaces © Billy Johnson

Protecting the Land. Preserving Our Quality of Life

Annual Report 2010

Our Mission

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust is dedicated to preserving the spirit of place among the communities of northern New Mexico by protecting open spaces and critical wildlife habitat, by creating trails, and by protecting the traditional landscapes of our diverse cultures.

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You are holding in your hand a year in the life of your local land trust: 2010 was the Santa Fe Conservation Trust's (SFCT) seventeenth year in operation, a year of strategic organizational re-tooling and a year of important conservation successes. Lands where water runs fast and cool for native trout to wide open pastures to the quiet trails surrounding the hustle and bustle of the state capitol, SFCT remains actively dedicated to conserving the best of northern New Mexico.

SFCT works cooperatively with private landowners to preserve land in its natural state for all time. This unique role among not-for-profits requires a special set of skills that includes not only the ability to listen carefully to develop a true understanding of a landowner's rights and responsibilities to a property, but the expertise to demonstrate how the public benefits from these private actions. Together we set in motion a relationship – established in a voluntary conservation easement - lasting not hundreds of years but in perpetuity.

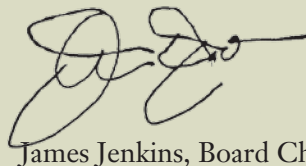
Over 5,000 acres of land are developed every single day in the U.S.! It is with the help of over 1,700 land trusts nationwide that we provide the necessary services to landowners interested in ways to preserve the natural character and integrity of the Earth; so far over 37,000,000 acres have been protected in the U.S. alone with the use of voluntary conservation easements. These protected lands promote a clean air, food and water supply, provide wildlife habitat and help vitalize communities.

As you will see in the pages that follow, in 2010, SFCT began working on a variety of new projects, completed several critical ones and made important new organizational commitments that will result in how we deliver our mission to the public.

We hope you'll enjoy reading about the year's conservation efforts, and perhaps learn something new about the dynamic nature of the land beneath our feet, the stars above and the nature of humans interested in keeping the two connected through conservation.



Charlie O'Leary, Executive Director



James Jenkins, Board Chair

P.S. We are successful because of the generous support of our donors. Please consider making a contribution to SFCT today!

Photo: Berg Property, San Miguel County

Photo: Arroyo Hondo Property, Taos County



“Having never owned a large piece of land, we were awe struck after the purchase was completed. We love and revere this piece of ‘tierra encantada’ and want to be good stewards to preserve it for future generations. Santa Fe Conservation Trust made this possible.”
“We will be known forever by the tracks we leave.” – Dakota
Adam & Sonya Berg, SFCT Newest Landowners

We Save Land

SFCT is a practical, on-the-ground partner for private landowners and communities wishing to protect the conservation values of their land permanently. SFCT owns no property long-term; we work with willing landowners to create voluntary, permanent land protection agreements, conservation easements, on private property.

Our landowner partners enter into such agreements for reasons as diverse as they are, including the desire to preserve the land they love forever, ensure its availability for future generations and protect unique ecological or archeological assets. In most cases, our work with landowners allows them to access significant tax benefits. The value of an easement donated to SFCT may be deducted from federal income taxes as a charitable gift. A NM state law allows sale of the tax credit to a third party for cash.



SFCT established new landowner partnerships in 2010, with those desiring to leave a lasting legacy that provides critical ecological and community services that benefit us all. North of Las Vegas, we assisted Adam and Sonya Berg with the conservation of their 204 acre piece of land that provides wildlife habitat for deer, bear and bats; filters rainwater as it percolates through the soil to recharge groundwater; and conserves oxygen producing trees and important vegetative cover that contribute to the natural integrity of the surrounding landscape and help regulate seasonal temperatures. These are all “ecological benefits” we take for granted that nature provides – and are critically important to healthy communities.

We also worked with The Trust for Public Land (TPL) to help conserve Sun Mountain in Santa Fe. (See page 7)

Photo: Galisteo Basin, © Billy Johnson



Photos: Courtesy Adam and Sonya Berg

“The Trails Alliance of Santa Fe maintains, repairs, and creates trails in and around Santa Fe with the help of many dedicated volunteers. The Santa Fe Conservation Trust is our most important and supportive alliance member assisting us with their leadership, coordination and encouragement.”

Steve & Cath Washburn, Trails Alliance Team Leaders



Photo: © Mitch Tillison

We Protect Stars

Very few places on Earth look the same as they did 1000 years ago, but when we look at the night sky, we see the same sky revered by our ancestors. With the invention of the light bulb came light pollution. Researchers have found that a single unshielded street lamp can affect the view of the night sky for an observer up to 120 miles away. Recent studies have shown that light pollution has significant negative impacts on human health, confuses and harms wildlife, wastes energy, creates glare, and actually reduces nighttime visibility. Outdoor lighting is certainly something we need. It provides safety from crime, visibility on roadways, and comfort when walking at night, but it does have a downside.

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust, with partners Capital City Astronomy Club, Santa Fe Southern Railway and Commonweal Conservancy, has had many successful Dark Skies Outreach Events educating the community about the importance of the connection between land and sky conservation and the simple steps they can take to reduce light pollution. In 2010, over three hundred tickets were sold to people in the community to celebrate land conservation in the Galisteo Basin and the importance of Dark Skies for future generations.

We Preserve Trails

In 2010, SFCT began work on several new agreements with private landowners to establish legal public access to several important trails in the foothills of Santa Fe. SFCT was asked to hold a conservation easement on Sun Mountain, providing the public with legal public access to a critical trail leading to the top of this mountain where the city owns 230 acres of open space.

SFCT also worked throughout the year to open significant land to the public for the first time to provide a critical link from the city to national forest lands. In addition, we began exploring opportunities to establish new trails on the south side of Santa Fe where there are fewer trail resources available to the public. We anticipate that these projects will come to fruition between 2011 and 2012 adding to the large network of public trails in and around the Capitol City.

We continue to plan ways to keep our communities connected with trails and open space, collaborating with the Trails Alliance of Santa Fe (TAOSF), an all-volunteer group of advocates and Pulaski swinging experts. In 2010, TAOSF received a \$5,000 grant from REI to help purchase tools, print materials and service a campaign to reduce trail conflicts between user groups. Together the TAOSF and SFCT are exploring new trail opportunities for underserved populations, assisting public agencies with trail maintenance and promoting the benefits of community trails.



Photo: La Tierra Torture Race, City of Santa Fe © Frank Herdman



Photo: Orchard on Santa Fe County Property



Monitoring and Stewardship

The protection of each of the nearly 33,000 acres landowners have entrusted to SFCT to protect, began with a conversation with the landowner - often around their kitchen table - about their desire to keep intact the natural lands they cherish. SFCT ensures that these lands are preserved by working with the landowner, who continues to own and manage their lands, to place a conservation easement on the property.

Our greatest duty as a land trust is to these conserved lands. Once the conservation easement is in place, this signals SFCT that our unique function - to monitor the property in perpetuity has begun.

SFCT currently holds in trust 75 parcels of private land in four different counties in northern New Mexico. With each new conservation easement agreement comes a deep and permanent responsibility: to oversee the conservation purposes, as penned in cooperation with the landowner and recorded at the county assessor's office. Our stewardship responsibility includes annual monitoring, responding to landowner inquiries, sharing technical information, and investigating potential violations.

As we mature as a land trust, SFCT will continue to develop cooperative programs with land specialists to help landowners care for and increase the health of their land in a changing world, further promoting conservation purposes through restoration and enhancement efforts.



Photo: Charles R Ranch, San Miguel County

Conservation Planning

In summer 2010, we drafted a conservation plan using a geographical information system (GIS) model. This mapping system allows us to use scientific data to analyze important conservation attributes of the lands in Mora, Rio Arriba, San Miguel, Santa Fe and Taos Counties. This conservation plan will help us to identify landscapes critical to the preservation of the culture and character of northern New Mexico.

Santa Fe Trail Viewshed

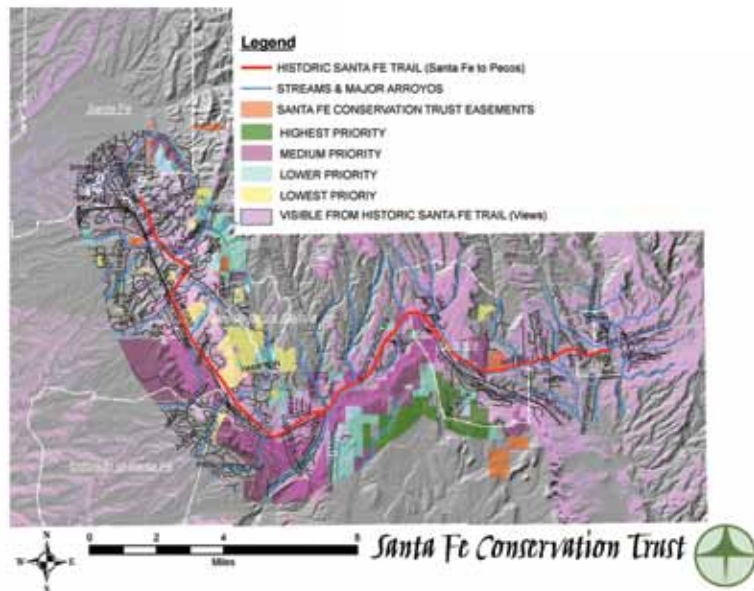


Photo: Aerial View of the Galisteo Basin, Santa Fe County

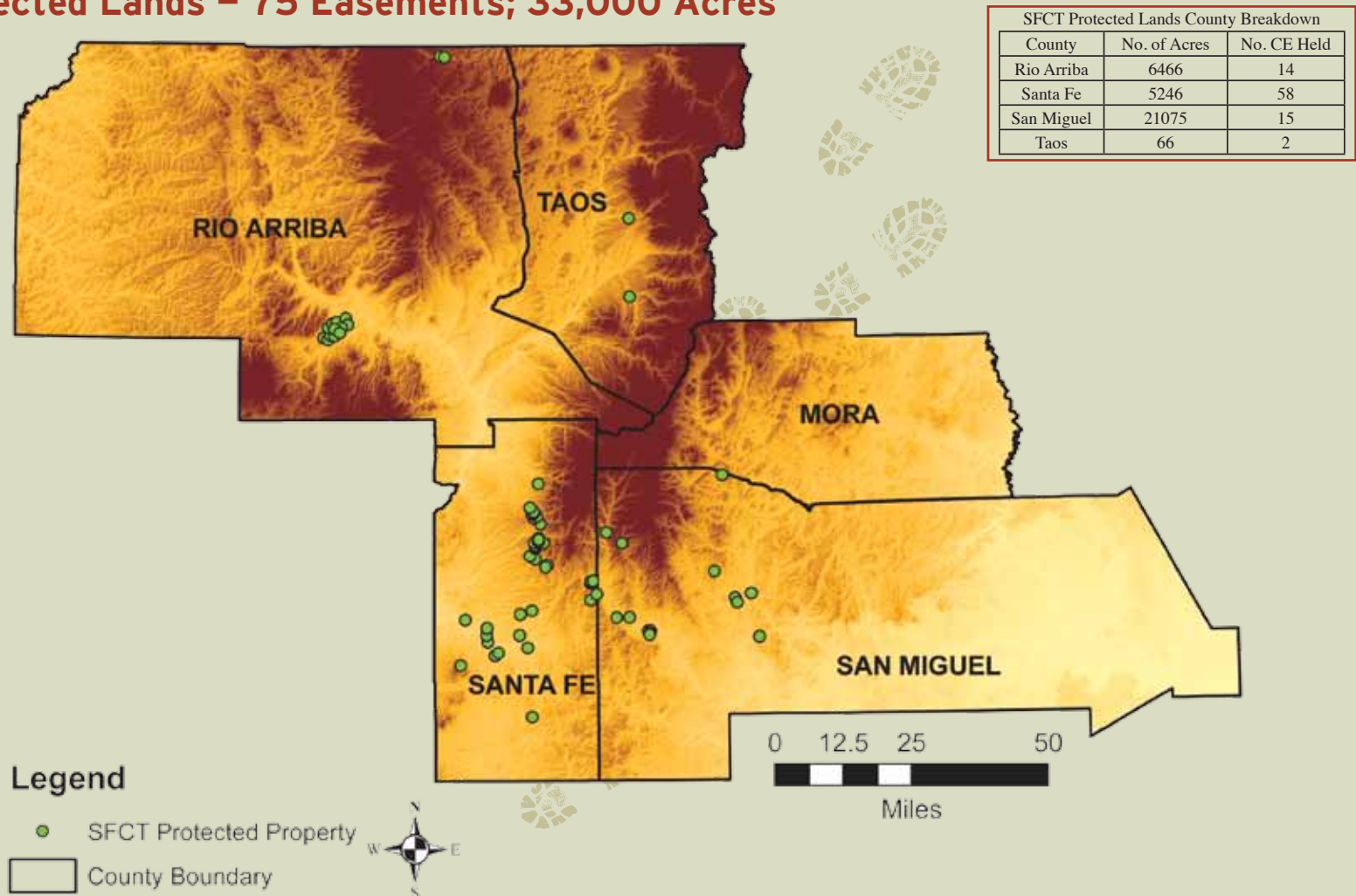
The Long View – Organization and Conservation Planning

In 2010, SFCT completed its first strategic plan working with Conservation Impact, a consulting group specializing in assisting non-profit conservation organizations.

The planning process resulted in the identification of four main goals:

- Draft a conservation plan and identify priority parcels for conservation
- Incorporate best practices available to aid 100% of monitoring responsibilities
- Achieve Land Trust Alliance accreditation by 2013
- Increase organization capacity to successfully carry out the strategic plan

SFCT Protected Lands – 75 Easements; 33,000 Acres



A Gift to Community

The strength of community support resounded throughout the Capitol City as The Trust for Public Land (TPL), with assistance from numerous individual donors united to acquire 22 strategic acres on Sun Mountain that was slated for development and would have forever scarred the hillside.

In 2010, SFCT recorded the first of 2 conservation easements on Sun Mountain. TPL donated the conservation easement to SFCT which retired all residential development rights on 11 acres and memorialized legal public access over the land. This action guarantees to the community that the land can never be built on and will forever remain open to pedestrian use. TPL donated the land to the City of Santa Fe as the long-term owner and steward of the 11 acres.

We applaud this community effort!

Photo: Sun Mountain, City of Santa Fe, © Maggie Muchmore



Combined Financial Statements

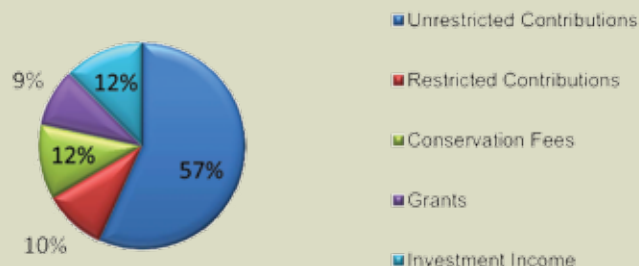
In 2008 and 2009, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust underwent independent financial audits with no exceptions. Our public support percentage on our 2009 990 was 85.79% an increase of 7.9% from 2008. SFCT has Audited Financial Statements and our 990 upon request at info@sfct.org

Combined Statement of Activities

	2010	2009
Support and revenue		
Unrestricted Contributions	141,262.53	119,216.08
Restricted Contributions	24,398.09	46,315.26
Conservation Fees	29,250.00	72,750.00
Grants	22,498.00	39,970.00
Investment Income	31,236.41	38,555.15
Total Support and revenue	248,645.03	316,806.49
Expenses		
Projects Expenses	10,733.53	18,855.43
Fundraising Expenses	13,071.18	17,713.30
Program Services and general*	255,877.01	280,219.90
Total Expense	279,681.72	316,788.63
Net Ordinary Income	-31,036.69	17.86
Net Income	-31,036.69	17.86

* Includes all staff salaries and overhead for Mission, Development & G &A

2010 SFCT Revenue



Combined Statements of Financial Position

	2010	2009
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	362,559.45	376,303.13
Receivables	6,000.00	48,260.15
Prepaid Expenses	5,268.76	6,285.16
Total Current Assets	373,828.21	430,848.44
Property and Equipment		
Fixed Assets	11,112.54	11,112.54
Accumulated Depreciation	-9,706.16	-8,362.27
Total Property and Equipment	1,406.38	2,750.27
Other Assets		
Board Restricted Stewardship	16,000.00	0.00
SFCF Stewardship Fund	227,704.85	210,477.17
SFCF Easement Monitoring Fund	71,787.97	26,425.89
Total Other Assets	315,492.82	236,903.06
TOTAL ASSETS	690,727.41	670,501.77
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	14,399.96	12,204.27
Total Liabilities	14,399.96	12,204.27
Net Assets		
Perm Restricted	315,492.82	236,903.06
Unrestricted	342,804.68	367,442.24
Net Income	18,029.95	53,952.20
Total Net Assets	676,327.45	658,297.50
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	690,727.41	670,501.77

“Farmland is disappearing in northern New Mexico at an alarming rate, due to development pressures, subdividing and the transfer of water rights off agricultural lands. We are so grateful for our collaboration with the SFCT and other land trusts to provide bridge loans to landowners who cannot afford the cost of setting up a land conservation easement on their property. Easements are one way of helping to preserve farmland, so our work together through SALCI can have a big impact on the food security of us all.” —Sara Noss, Executive Director, Santa Fe Farmer’s Market

Partnerships

Working with individual private landowners is at the core of our conservation efforts, but collaborating with other not-for-profit organizations, public agencies and private foundations is where strategic partnerships are essential to facilitate larger landscape conservation. These partnerships ensure that important natural resources such as agricultural soil, wildlife habitat, and multi-use recreation trails are protected. SFCT is currently working with several entities including:

Capital City Astronomy Club
City of Santa Fe
Commonweal Conservancy
Earth Works Institute
La Tierra Torture Mountain Bike Race
LightHawk
NM Department of Cultural Affairs



Santa Fe County
Santa Fe Farmer’s Market Institute
Santa Fe New Music
Taos Land Trust
Trails Alliance of Santa Fe
Trust for Public Land



Photo: (L) Loomis Farm
© Joan Baker

Photo: (R) Santa Fe Farmers
Market ©Billy Johnson



Important Federal Tax Benefits Extended Through 2011

Congress recently renewed, through 2011, an incentive that enhances the tax benefits of protecting your land by donating a voluntary conservation agreement. If you own land with important natural or historic resources, donating a voluntary conservation agreement can be one of the smartest ways to conserve the land you love, while maintaining your private property rights and possibly realizing significant federal tax benefits. These new incentives make it easier for average Americans, including working family farmers and ranchers, to donate the development rights on their land.

One incentive raises the maximum deduction you can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of your adjusted gross income (AGI) to 50%; allows you to deduct up to 100% of your AGI if you qualify as a farmer or rancher; and, increases the number of years over which you can take deductions from 6 years to 16 years.

The second initiative permits tax-free distributions to charity from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) of up to \$100,000 per tax payer, per taxable year for individuals that are older than age 70½. If you own an IRA and are over age 70½, you may transfer up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, a qualified charity.

Thank You SFCT 2010 Volunteers

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Photo: Galisteo Basin, © Billy Johnson



Thank You!

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals, foundations and businesses that made gifts to Santa Fe Conservation Trust during 2010. You have made a lasting difference for Northern New Mexico and the quality of our lives.

Benefactor \$5,000+

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James and Patricia McGrath
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Kent Jones and Mary Arnold
 In honor of Jim Jenkins for his contributions while serving on the Board of the Dos Griegos Homeowner's Association

Kim Straus and Jack Lain
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 In memory of Booker Kelly

We make every effort to ensure our list of recent donors is up to date and accurate. We apologize if we have missed you and ask that you contact us so that we may correct our error. As always, thank you for your support.

Stewart Udall played a pivotal role in the Santa Fe Conservation Trust. Serving as board member and chairman at the behest of his friend and our founding director Dale Ball, Stewart spearheaded the Santa Fe Rail Trail project, helped to protect Santa Fe's iconic backdrop, Atalaya Mountain, worked with political and opinion leaders to promote conservation, and never let our community lose sight of the importance of protecting what matters. When Stewart passed away in May of 2010, he left a void that can only be filled by those who wish to continue his work. Thus, the Stewart Udall Conservation Legacy Initiative was established.

This Initiative, informed and guided by the Trust's Conservation Plan, represents our strongest-ever effort to ensure the conservation of lands that sustain our culture, wildlife, and Santa Fe's extraordinary history and natural beauty. You can join this Initiative with a 3-year pledge to support our efforts to protect large-scale, critically important landscapes in and around Santa Fe.

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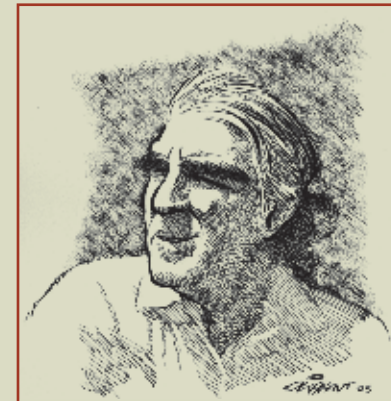
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"Stewart's wonderful mind evolved continuously and never crystallized, even to the very end. He rued our over-indulgence, our over-population, our widespread disdain for the natural environment, and our heritage to coming generations.

He remained a relentless conservationist, ever meeting the complexity of the day with vigorous intelligence. He faced the final mystery with curiosity and courage. I am honored to have been his friend."

— Jack Loeffler



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