



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FIRST MAJOR TRAIL CONNECTION IN OVER A DECADE
SET FOR SANTA FE'S SANGRES
LA PIEDRA TRAIL OPENING PLANNED FOR DECEMBER, 2011**

(Santa Fe, NM) Charlie O'Leary, executive director of the Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT), announced today that the Trust is ready to build new public trail in Santa Fe. Known as La Piedra Trail, it will provide three miles of new recreational public trails connecting Dale Ball Trail North with the Little Tesuque Creek Trail. Ground breaking will take place this month, and the project will be completed in December.

For outdoor enthusiasts, O'Leary's announcement is exciting news. Joining the two older trails will afford almost unlimited opportunities for hikers and cyclists. When completed La Piedra Trail will be the first recreational trail established in Santa Fe for 13 years. Speaking for the Trust, O'Leary said, "We are delighted to add to Santa Fe's accessible trail system in such a meaningful way. This is the first major trail connection in Santa Fe in decades. Our public and private partnerships between the Trust, landowners and public agencies, such as the City and the County make this project unique. Presently, no other organization in our community is promoting public trail issues of this magnitude."

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SFCT is the current owner of over 50 acres of land that it will convey to Santa Fe County for long-term ownership; this is the site for the new trail and natural preservation area. SFCT has taken on the responsibility of designing and building the entire three miles of trail. Many steps remain before the trail connection becomes a reality -- surveying, construction and planning for future stewardship.

“Since the founding of Santa Fe over 400 years ago, trail access to the mountains and nature has been important to residents and visitors alike. However, with increased development on private land, the construction of paved roads and the continued practice of fencing land, all of the major routes over natural surfaces have either been closed to the public or abandoned altogether,” O’Leary said. “Our goal is to re-establish this lost connection by constructing a new trail link connecting the city to the sky and helping make Santa Fe the first city of trails.”

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Under the leadership of Dale Ball, Bill deBuys, Stewart Udall and other environmentalists, Santa Fe Conservation Trust was founded in 1993. A non-profit organization, the Trust is dedicated to providing permanent protection for open spaces and critical wildlife habitat in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and San Miguel counties for the benefit of future generations. 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 and water, starry skies and heart-stopping views. For further information, contact the Trust at 989-7019 or info@sfct.org or check out www.sfct.org.

