



2023 Newsletter & 2022 Annual Report

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as of January 1, 2023

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## Bears Ears 2023 was a Blast!

Our third annual Bears Ears camping trip came off without a hitch this year. The weather was perfect, and the ten people who came with us were awesome campers, even when our water froze one night. We traveled to southeast Utah on April 30 for five nights and four days of exploration, made possible by our wonderful guide, Linda Siegle, who generously shared the knowledge she gained during 30 years of trips to the area. Bears Ears is huge, but Linda led us to special places where we explored ruins, kivas, towers, petroglyphs and pictographs that spanned thousands of years of history. Thank you to everyone who came! Want to join us next year? We'll share info on the 2024 trip later this fall. For now, go to [www.sfct.org/bears-ears/](http://www.sfct.org/bears-ears/) for more information.

## Tererro Mine Still a Threat

The Pecos area is being targeted for exploratory mining operations that could contaminate the Pecos River and its tributaries and damage the ecosystem and the endangered species that live there. It is critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl and home to native cutthroat trout, cougar, deer, elk, bear and many other riparian species. Plus the Pecos is important for outdoor recreation, a lifeblood of the area. According to Garrett Veneklasen at the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, the hard rock mine could stretch from Thompson Peak in the Santa Fe watershed to Jones Hill in the upper Pecos watershed—affecting 5,000 acres of ridgeline and 7 watersheds! Comexico is able to do this thanks to the General Mining Law of 1872 which says, "All valuable mineral deposits in lands belonging to the United States, both surveyed and unsurveyed, are hereby declared to be free and open to exploration and purchase." So a company can go on to federal land and exploit the minerals found there. Nineteenth century America wasn't concerned with environmental protection, so the General Mining Law of 1872 contains no environmental protection provisions and hard rock mining has been a notorious toxic polluter. A previous mine in the Pecos area near Elk Mountain, which closed in 1939, polluted Willow Creek and surrounding waterways with rusty colored acid runoff and toxic heavy metals. In 1991, the spring runoff pushed sulphuric acid, zinc and aluminum deposits into the Pecos River, killing 90,000 cutthroat trout at the hatchery and 10,000 more in the river. It is going to be a big battle to stop this from happening again. Stay informed at [www.stopterrerromine.org](http://www.stopterrerromine.org)

On the Cover: Arturo Chavez, "Western Cumulonimbus", Oil, 16" x 20" - Manitou Galleries

Newsletter design and layout by McAllister Yeomans.



Conservation Homestead in the Galisteo Basin, wetland area after invasive elm removal

## From the Executive Director

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It's the 30th anniversary of the Santa Fe Conservation Trust! Our first conservation easement protected a ridgetop behind St. John's College, and today, we protect more than 45,000 acres in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and San Miguel counties. On the following pages, you'll see an outline of our three decades of achievement, but notice how the scope of our work has changed over 30 years.

Climate change wasn't talked about much in 1993, but today, almost every American has a story to tell about how it has impacted their lives. In 2018, we realized that our patchwork of conservation easements throughout northern New Mexico may not be enough to help offset the growing impact of climate change. Today we are working to create larger, connected conservation corridors to help plants and wildlife move to habitat more suited to their survival. And we are teaching others how to care for the land at the Conservation Homestead, our property in the Galisteo Basin. More connectivity and showing others how to build the land's resilience to climate change are now important parts of our work going forward.

In this issue of EarthLines, we focus on some of the other imperatives that have emerged over the past 30 years. First, you'll read about a social justice issue: the construction of an accessible trail at the Conservation Homestead that will make it possible for many of the disabled in Santa Fe County to get outside and enjoy the wide open spaces of the Galisteo Basin. Part of our mission is to ignite a passion for nature in everyone, and with the accessible trail, we are reaching out to the 18,000+ people in Santa Fe County who are disabled and others who need an easier trail experience in the rural parts of the county.

You'll also read about how SFCT is expanding its Night Sky program. Protecting the biodiversity of life that supports us doesn't only happen on the land, it must also happen by protecting the darkness that we all depend on for good health and a good night's sleep. Did you know that plants and animals need darkness, too? Learn more about the importance of a dark sky in this issue and what we are doing to protect it.

The EPA recently reported that the average American spends 90% of their time indoors, so the future of conservation depends on helping people care about nature so that they will want to protect it for future generations. This issue also describes SFCT's Community Conservation Programs and how they connect people to each other and to the land to improve their health and happiness.

So read all about it in our 30th anniversary edition. SFCT's ability to respond to the challenges of our times is directly related to two things: a strong board and staff with the vision to make differences locally, and the support of donors like you who want to make that vision a reality. If you like what you read, I hope that you will give as generously as you can. Use the envelope inside, and make a donation today!

Sincerely,

**Sarah Noss**  
*Executive Director*





# 30 Years of Improving Your Quality of Life

**1993** – SFCT is founded. Founding board: Leslie Barclay, Henry Carey, Fabian Chavez, Bill deBuys, Margaret Gray, Dale Ball. First year budget is \$24,000.



Stewart Udall, 1920 - 2010

**1994** – Stewart Udall joins the board. A road is bladed on Atalaya Mountain in preparation for development. SFCT raises \$80,000 so the Forest Trust can repair the damage. SFCT works with nine parties to reach an agreement to preserve the mountain. Santa Fe County passes the Mountain Ordinance to prevent further hilltop development.

**1996** – Board member Walter Ganz oversees the Atalaya Trail work to improve access to the forest from town. Acquired 14 Conservation Easements (CEs); (5,717 acres).

**1997** – SFCT works with the state and Santa Fe County to purchase a 12-mile easement along the Santa Fe Southern Railway line between Santa Fe and Lamy to create the Rail Trail. 3 CEs acquired.

**1998** – Rail Trail completed. 6 CE's acquired (721 acres).

**1999** – Dale Ball resigns after overseeing the protection of 18,000 acres and the creation of the Rail Trail. Work begins on the Spur Trail to connect Santa Fe Community College to the Rail Trail. Stewart Udall becomes the board president. 4 CEs acquired (9,232 acres), including Tecolote Ranch.

**2000** – With SFCT support, Dale Ball starts work on what will be known as the Dale Ball Trails. 3 CEs acquired (114 acres).



Rail Trail ribbon cutting at St. Mike's with Mayor David Coss, 2004

**2001** – The Arroyo Hondo Open Space Committee is formed to preserve 86 acres as an open, public access area. Through private donations matched by Santa Fe County, the committee purchases the property. Dale Ball Trails open. 2 CEs acquired (1,362 acres) including Santa Fe Botanical Garden's Ortiz Mountain Preserve.

**2002** – The Spur Trail is finalized.

**2003** – Stewart Udall becomes director emeritus.

**2004** – SFCT funds an interpretive trail at the Arroyo Hondo Open Space. SFCT is awarded the Piñon Award for Excellence in the Environment; mapping of the La Tierra Trail system is completed. 11 CEs acquired (505

acres), including 32 acres of the Cerrito Amarillo River Canyon by 23 individuals who wanted to save the beauty of the canyon.

**2005** – 4 CEs acquired (296 acres).

**2006** – 2 CEs acquired (342 acres).

**2007** – SFCT joins a community-wide effort to protect 24 acres on the west side of Sun Mountain from development. SFCT hosts a Trail Summit promoting a "Green Infrastructure" vision for the city.



**2008** – Preservation of the Night Sky program launches. 5 CEs acquired (328 acres). Hired by SF County to provide trail maintenance. Successfully lobbies against oil and gas exploration in the Galisteo Basin leading to the moratorium.

**2009** – Community raises \$3.2 million to preserve Sun Mountain with public trails. Trust for Public Land transfers the CE to SFCT to protect it in perpetuity. 6 CEs acquired (1,526 acres).

**2010** – 2 CEs acquired (216 acres).



Sylvia & Dale Ball



View from Atalaya Mountain, 1998



Arroyo Hondo Open Space, photo by Billy Johnson

**2011** – La Piedra Open Space and Trail conveyed to Santa Fe County. 4 CEs acquired (1,330 acres).

**2012** – With the help of numerous volunteers, La Piedra Trail, connecting the Dale Ball Trail system with the Santa Fe National Forest, completed. 2 CEs acquired (320 acres).

**2013** – SFCT celebrates its 20th anniversary. 3 CEs acquired (978.72 acres).



**2014** – SFCT becomes a nationally accredited land trust. Passport to Trails program starts. SFCT begins trail maintenance for the City of Santa Fe. 2 CEs acquired (310.5 acres), including a second easement on Sun Mountain.

**2015** – SFCT accepts a 15.7 acre Railyard Park & Plaza CE from the Trust for Public Land. 2 CEs acquired (331.63 acres).

**2016** – SFCT receives a \$1.8 million, 2.9 acre piece of land along the Santa Fe River located at Upper Canyon and Cerro Gordo. SFCT is awarded the Mayor's Sustainability Award for transportation under the Trails Program.

**2017** – SFCT agrees to accept the transfer of five CEs from the Forest Trust. One CE is amended to add 292 acres to an existing 324 acre easement on Glorieta Mesa. SFCT is awarded the Mayor's Sustainability Award for environmental protection.

**2018** – 25th Anniversary celebrates the protection of 90 properties totaling 39,680 acres in three counties. Passport to Trails celebrates 2,000 participants. Vámonos: Santa Fe Walks begins. A ten-year Strategic Conservation Plan is launched to create connected, larger conservation corridors in response to climate change. 5 Forest Trust CEs acquired (3,357 acres).

**2019** – SFCT renews its national accreditation. The Insider Tours are initiated. GIS mapping tool for SFCT's three-county area is started to identify conservation-worthy properties to help implement the Strategic Conservation Plan. 1 CE acquired (530.5 acres).



The Conservation Homestead

**2020** – With Funding from the Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Charitable Trust, SFCT buys the 300-acre Conservation Homestead. Community programs and Banff Mountain Festival World Tour canceled due to pandemic. Community Conservation Celebration is virtual. Forest Trust transfers three conservation easements and SFCT acquires one CE (393 acres).

**2021** – Community programs resume. Land Protection Project Manager is hired to help implement the Strategic Conservation Plan. GIS mapping tool is completed. SFCT donates the Conservation Homestead CE to the Taos Land Trust and completes its management plan to use the property as a demonstration site for climate change mitigation. With donor support, SFCT purchases a 614 acre Apache Canyon property to protect it from development.

Thaw Charitable Trust donates a \$1 million endowment to SFCT. SFCT awarded the 2-year Safe Routes to School grant. Acquires 2 CEs (832.57 acres)



**2022** – Quick Start Fund started to help landowners pay for transaction costs. First Quick Start pilot project begins. At the Conservation Homestead, restoration workshops begin, four miles of trails are installed, and the property is opened to the public. MOU with Santa Fe County signed for Night Sky Monitoring Project. Vámonos has hosted 1,740 walkers since 2018. Passport to Trails has introduced 3,836 kids, staff and parents to trails since 2014. Safe Routes to School hosted 110 Walk & Roll to School events for 2,363 kids, fixed 59 bikes and offered 32 bike and pedestrian education classes to 1,127 kids. SFCT continues to maintain 55 miles of trails for the City through its volunteer program. 4 CE's acquired (1,720 acres)



**2023** – 30th anniversary of SFCT! SFCT enters the year with 100 CEs and four conservation properties. Total acres protected 45,441 in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and San Miguel counties. A Stewardship Associate is hired to help monitor the existing easements. SFCT is comprised of 8 staff, 15 board members, with an annual expense budget of \$1,048,137.



La Piedra trail workday 2012, photo by Billy Johnson



Santa Fe Railyard Park & Plaza, photo by Don Usner



# Everyone Needs Equitable Access to Nature

SFCT has been awarded a \$92,723 grant from the state's Outdoor Recreation Division for the planning and design of an accessible trail at the Conservation Homestead. This is an exciting new project that helps SFCT deepen its commitment to providing equitable access to nature for everyone in our community. Part of SFCT's mission is to ignite a passion for nature in everyone, and the accessible loop trail is an opportunity to do so for an underserved community in a rural landscape.

The City of Santa Fe has 30 miles of ADA accessible trails around almost every city park, and there is a new accessible trail segment on Upper Canyon Road built by the Nature Conservancy that allows those with disabilities to experience a portion of the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve. These are valuable urban opportunities for people with disabilities to get outside. However, people with disabilities cannot access the many miles of publicly accessible trails in the rural areas of the County, and that is where we hope to make a difference.

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust's Conservation Homestead Accessible Trail will be located on our 300-acre property in the Galisteo Basin, 14 miles from the City of Santa Fe. Our goal is to create a half-mile accessible trail loop and parking area, along with interpretive signage, that will be the entrance to our 4-mile loop, which connects to the larger Galisteo Basin Preserve trail system. Like those trails, the Conservation Homestead trails are open to hikers, bikers and equestrians, but the Homestead trails will improve the entire recreational landscape by adding an accessible loop trail with interpretive signage, not found on the larger trail system. Thus the beauty and tranquility of this wide open landscape will soon be available to the disabled, elders and others who need a more accessible trail experience.

According to the CDC, disability affects approximately 1 in 4 people in the US. If something is not accessible, it excludes not only the person with a disability, but also their families, friends and colleagues. Students who get to go on field trips generally leave behind their disabled classmates in the library or gym, denying them the chance to be in community enjoying nature together. The World Health Organization says that "much of what prevents people from participating fully in the life of their communities is not the disability itself but rather the environment, or ... external features of society created by people." SFCT hopes to bridge that gap. No one left behind! We want everyone to experience wide open spaces, dazzling night skies, silence and tranquility, and the archaeological story of place that help us all understand who we are and where we came from.

It is well documented that there are health benefits from being in the outdoors. Nature helps people heal faster from surgeries, it lowers stress levels, and being outside and moving improves everyone's overall health in many ways. SFCT has been introducing thousands of kids to nature through our Passport to Trails program since 2014. In 2018, we reached out to those who couldn't access the dirt trails as easily, with 30 walks per year on Santa Fe's ADA trails through the Vámonos: Santa Fe Walks program. Now we have the

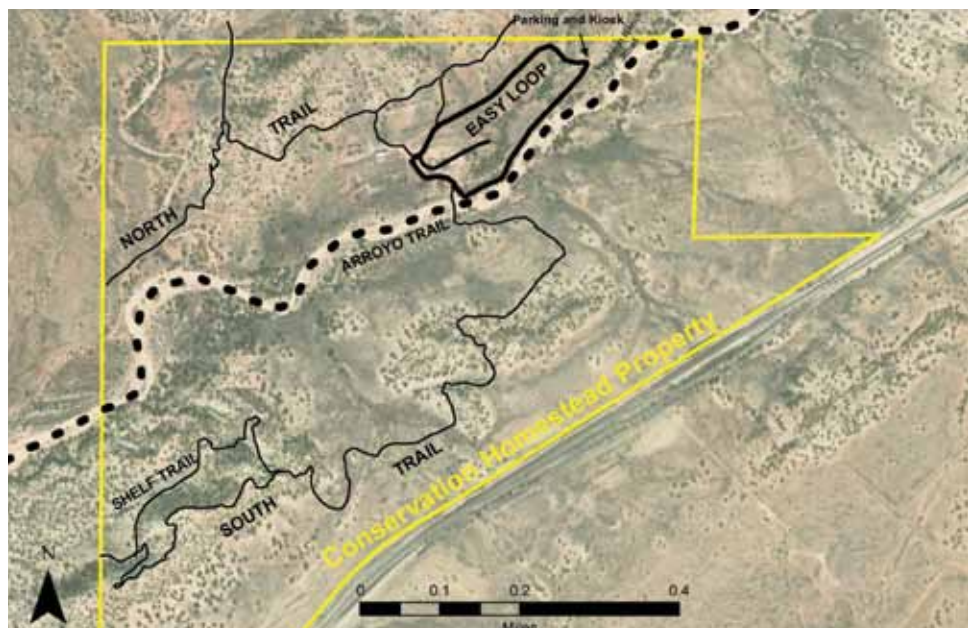
opportunity to impact the lives of the 18,933 individuals with a disability in Santa Fe County who have been denied access to the many recreational trails in the rural parts of the County.

Rather than being a set-aside trail, the half-mile multi-user loop is the entrance way to the rest of the trails on the property, ensuring inclusivity for the disabled population. The Conservation Homestead is also a conservation showpiece where SFCT is restoring the land. The accessible trail traverses a wetland that is being restored and a 14-acre restoration site that is being reseeded where the ranch buildings used to be. Users will see techniques like one rock dams, media lunas, and wicker weirs that are used to control erosion and disperse water so it can soak in to the aquifer, all methods that build resilience on landscapes stressed by climate change. The property is part of the Western Wildway Network, a wildlife corridor that stretches from Mexico to Canada along the Rocky Mountain chain. Locally, it is part of 6,000 acres of contiguous conservation easements that allow plants and animals room to roam between the Sandia and Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Thus, the accessible trail is the opportunity for all users to enjoy nature, learn about conservation and restoration techniques as well as the "story of place and people" that dates back thousands of years.

"Nothing for us without us," is the mantra of the community we seek to serve. So meetings are underway now with representatives from the New Mexico School for the Deaf, New Vistas, UNM Adaptive Sports Program, the Governor's Commission on Disability, G.O. Unlimited and the Cerebral Palsy Parent Association of New Mexico to assist us in better understanding how to create a truly meaningful outdoor trail experience for a diverse range of users with a variety of capabilities.

We hope to have the planning and design of the accessible trail finished sometime this fall. Next we will have to raise the money to construct the trail. If you are interested in helping everyone in our community get outside in this beautiful landscape, please contact Brian Jensen, SFCT's organizational advancement officer at [brian@sfct.org](mailto:brian@sfct.org), or make a donation online and restrict it to the accessible trail.

**Below: existing and proposed trails on the Conservation Homestead, including the half-mile accessible trail loop**



# The Conservation Homestead is Open for You to Enjoy

In 2022, we opened the Conservation Homestead to the public. To get to a place where we could show people how we want to use the property as a conservation showpiece, we protected the property with a conservation easement (which we donated to the Taos Land Trust), began our restoration workdays and built four miles of new trails that connect to the larger Galisteo Basin Preserve Trail System.

Phase one of the wetland restoration began, spearheaded by Land Program Manager Melissa Houser. We also started erosion control workshops, using rock structures like one rock dams, Zuni bowls and media lunas, all designed to slow and spread precious rainwater so it could soak in rather than run to the arroyo. Sawyers came in to cut down invasive trees in the wetland, and crews used the juniper branches to create pickets and weave branches in between them for the wicker weirs. Others hauled out literally tons of dead wood and downed trees so the light could penetrate to encourage the native plants to return. Crews came in to construct wicker weirs in the lower part of the wetland to slow the water that runs through it when it rains and spread the sediment to allow the incised bottom of the wetland to fill in. All this work took 71 volunteers a total of 494 hours of combined labor to achieve in 2022! How wonderful it was to have such community support for this work, which also helps us spread this knowledge out to the world!

When we say we cannot do our work without the support of volunteers, we mean it! Thank you to all of you who contributed energy, expertise, muscle power and camaraderie.



**Above: Installing trail signage on the Conservation Homestead**  
**Below: the grand opening of the Conservation Homestead**



*Want to donate your time or money to help speed this work forward? We welcome and need your support. You can donate using the envelope provided or online at [sfct.org/donate](https://sfct.org/donate) or become a volunteer by signing up at [sfct.org/support/volunteer/](https://sfct.org/support/volunteer/)*



**Above: constructing a Zuni bowl on the Conservation Homestead**

Meanwhile, Tim Rogers, SFCT trails program manager, and members of the Fat Tire Society, flagged 4 miles of new trails and created the new tread. Then, scores of other volunteers came in with mcleods, shovels and hoes to contour them. All told, the trail building took 11 volunteer days and 254 collective hours of labor.

The grand opening of the property was on a beautiful October day, and the cottonwoods were bright yellow above the Sanchez taco truck and Beer Creek beer table. It made all the work worth it because about 400 people came out to take a look, enjoy the trails and learn more about the restoration work that we plan to do as part of the management plan for the property.

## 2023 Goals for Restoration and Infrastructure Development at the Conservation Homestead:

- Finish the Healthy Soils Grant by reseedling a 14-acre area where the ranch buildings used to be.
- Install the dryland wildlife drinker that will capture rainwater in an 1,800 gallon tank and hopefully lure the pronghorn antelope back to the area while supporting other wildlife that live or pass through this habitat.
- Finalize the design for the Accessible Trail
- Install a small gravel parking lot with accessible parking spots
- Design and manufacture the interpretive signage
- Finish the wetland restoration
- Install solar pumps to get the well operational
- Start the creation of a Grassland Management plan
- Build relationships with stakeholder partners who might use the property for their programs while helping us with ours



# Slow Down to the Vastness of the Universe

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By Brian Jensen

After a spring storm canceled SFCT's first try at hosting a community star party, the clouds cleared out (for a minute!) and the stars aligned (pun intended!) to allow us to hold our very first star gazing gathering at the Conservation Homestead on May 12.

While SFCT has held various star parties over the past fifteen years, this was our first time hosting one on our own land for anyone in the community to enjoy the heavens under the dark skies of the Conservation Homestead. As part of SFCT's mission to grow and nurture people's love of nature, observing a dark night sky with new and old friends alike is a fun and mind-expanding way to bring wonder and amazement and build community around shared conservation values.

Just as the May party started on a clear and chilly evening, the international space station zipped by overhead. Then the constellations came into view as the sky grew darker. By that time, the astronomers from the Santa Fe Stargazers, a group formed by Sam Finn, one of SFCT's board members, had generously set up their finely-tuned and powerful telescopes – each one focused on different aspects of the night sky – and introduced people to other worlds right from our own backyard. With the 'scopes, gazers saw Venus in a crescent shape and the red planet, Mars. The highlight of the night for many were the globular clusters, or conglomerations of millions of stars in a spherical gravitational pull. It was humbling to consider that the light we saw through the 'scopes had traveled for millions of light years to reach our eyes. One special cluster, visible in the spring/summer, was the Sombrero Galaxy, which has more globular clusters than the Milky Way, and is a whopping 30 million light years away from earth – go figure. All in all, the event was a blast. Along with great Mexican food from Sanchez Tacos and beverages provided by Beer Creek Brewery, it was a trip out of this world and back!

As we were participating in this very human activity, which the ancestral Puebloans who lived in the Galisteo Basin also enjoyed, we could not ignore something unfortunate and “relatively” new to the night sky – light pollution. Even though we were miles south of the city and protected from any near-by development's lighting, we still saw light domes – Santa Fe's to the north and Albuquerque's to the south. It was a lesson in real time that showed why there is a need to work together to reduce light pollution, whether at home by using low impact nighttime lighting or by supporting SFCT's work to combat light pollution by keeping the public informed and building a case for strengthening our dark sky ordinances. Darkness helps everything thrive: critters, plants, and humans alike. For more info on star gazing, the night sky and what role you can play to lessen light pollution, check out [sfct.org/dark-skies](http://sfct.org/dark-skies). Let's not have to choose between a night sky that has been altered by light pollution and one that gives the ability to see the night sky in all of its glory.

Mark your calendars and join us this fall, September 15, for the next community Star Party at the Conservation Homestead. The fall sky will feature the Milky Way, the rings of Saturn, and so much more! Bring warm clothes and your imagination!




**Above: preparing telescopes for an evening of stargazing**

**Below: Venus following the setting sun.**







*While the night sky may not, at first glance,  
seem aligned with land conservation,  
it is critically important for conservation  
and protection of ecosystems.*

Above: night sky in the Galisteo Basin, photo by Tony Bonanno

## Monitoring Light Pollution So You Can See the Stars

By Brian Jensen

Most people familiar with the Santa Fe Conservation Trust recognize our work to protect northern New Mexico's culturally and environmentally significant landscapes through conservation easements, open spaces like the Conservation Homestead as well as respected community programs like Passport to Trails or Vamonos: Santa Fe Walks that nurture and develop people's love of nature. What folks may not be as aware of is SFCT's commitment, since 2008, to the preservation of our area's dark night sky. While the night sky may not, at first glance, seem aligned with land conservation, it is critically important for the conservation and protection of ecosystems. In fact, SFCT feels it is so important that we require our 100+ landowner conservation partners to comply with New Mexico's 1999 Night Sky Protection Act in our conservation easement agreements.

One of a few unifiers of the human experience across time and cultures is the dark night sky, the same sky revered by our ancestors over thousands of years. It was not until the last 150 years that this relationship started to change in fundamental ways because of light pollution. In fact, as the incandescent lightbulb and LEDs flood the dark sky with light, the Milky Way is obscured for nearly eighty percent of North Americans! Too much light also has negative impacts on the environment, disrupts ecosystems and compromises biodiversity. Plants and animals depend on the 24-hour light/dark cycle for reproduction, nourishment and protection from predators. And it can disrupt our own biological clock, which impacts hormones and is associated with other serious health issues.

To combat this alarming development, in September 2022, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust signed an agreement with Santa Fe County to use county buildings for the placement of three light-sensor monitoring stations. These EONS stations, which stands for "Eyes On the Night Sky," monitor and record changes in the light dome over northern Santa Fe County.

These EONS stations will be located at different geographic corners of the county to assess Santa Fe's light dome. The first station will be placed at Eldorado Fire Station #2 (perhaps by the time you are reading this!) with future locations slated for Galisteo and Tesuque. Each EONS station, standing about two feet tall, will collect data on a five minute cycle from sunset till sunrise in

all weather conditions. Data will be downloaded manually every few weeks and will be analyzed locally as well as in Flagstaff, where Dark Sky Partners, EONS' manufacturer and a project partner, is located. The expected output is approximately 100,000 sky brightness measures per station per year. Over ten years, the anticipated scope of the project will be one million sky brightness measures per station!

We will know within the first year if the light dome is getting brighter. What will a million data measures of light get us? The top goal is to continue to educate the general public about light pollution and trends in night sky brightness as more is known and understood about the adverse effects of light pollution. In addition, if there is actionable data, attempts can be made to make local night sky ordinances stronger and more enforceable.

The next time you look up at the sky, pay attention to what you can see and compare it to the night skyscape outside the city limits. The Santa Fe Conservation Trust is committed to protecting the dark night sky, and we ask for your support in these efforts as well. Remember, this natural resource has been around and has brought humans together forever. Let's not lose it!

Below: EONS monitoring device





# Improving Your Quality of Life, One Acre at a Time:

## 2022 Conservation Easement Projects

Last year SFCT partnered with five generous landowners to protect 2,210 acres of high-conservation-value land in our service area of Santa Fe, San Miguel, and Rio Arriba counties. From thriving floodplain habitat along the Pecos River to beloved local trails in the City of Santa Fe, these conservation easements ensure perpetual protection for some of our favorite places.

### Los Trigos Ranch Conservation Easement Amendment – 490 acres

Last April we closed on an exciting conservation easement amendment that added 490 acres to an existing 114-acre conservation easement at the Los Trigos Ranch in San Miguel County. The Los Trigos Ranch has significant habitat and creates more landscape connectivity so that both plants and animals have room to roam to help their survival. Both of the ranches adjacent to Los Trigos along the Pecos River are already under easement: to the southeast, the Pecos River Ranch (SFCT easement), and to the northwest, the Forked Lightning Ranch (New Mexico Land Conservancy easement). Forked Lightning is in turn bordered by Pecos National Historic Park to the north. Thanks to this history of land protection in the area, amending the existing Los Trigos easement to include the

river resulted in an impressive continuous stretch of protected land along the Pecos. Los Trigos Ranch is dominated by rolling piñon-juniper woodland with ponderosa pine in drainages and at higher elevations and a diverse mix of native grasses throughout. The Pecos River flows for approximately 1.8 miles across the property, flanked by healthy riparian habitat including willows, oaks, cottonwood, and boxelder, as well as sandstone cliffs that are home to bald eagles and other birds of prey. The property possesses natural habitat, scenic, historical, and cultural resource values. We send our thanks to the Cowles family for protecting this land for generations to come.



### Dorothy Stewart Trailhead Conservation Easement – 9.4 acres

If you've ever enjoyed the Dorothy Stewart Trail from Camino de la Cruz Blanca, you have walked or biked across a 9.4 acre property owned by the Forest Trust that connects to the city open space. It might be small, but its significance is mighty! The Forest Trust wanted to forever guarantee public access to the city open space by placing this property, which the trail goes through, under conservation easement with us. Dorothy Stewart was an early member of the Santa Fe Art Colony who moved to Santa Fe in 1925. A printmaker, muralist and painter, she had a studio near Atalaya Hill. Part of that property was donated to the Forest Trust by her friend, Irene Von Horvath. We send our thanks to the Forest Trust for this act of generosity that truly benefits Santa Fe's trail lovers.







### Commonweal Conservancy Astral Valley Conservation Easement – 1,383 acres

This conservation easement is part of the Galisteo Basin Preserve, owned and managed by the Commonweal Conservancy. Over the years, Commonweal has worked with SFCT to place more than 6,000 contiguous acres of its land under easement in order to protect scenic, open space, biological, cultural, and recreational conservation values. The Astral Valley conservation easement was the final piece of the puzzle. With Commonweal's donation of this conservation easement in June 2022, Commonweal and SFCT finished protecting and guaranteeing public access to the 55 miles of trails at the Galisteo Basin Preserve as well as majestic open space that is full of archaeological sites. Commonweal, in partnership with SFCT, has done more than any other landowner in the area to contribute to creating the landscape-scale connectivity that is so vital to building resilience to climate change and the loss of biodiversity in our region. We all owe them a huge debt of gratitude for their vision and determination to make this possible.

### Blum Conservation Easement – 38 acres

Creating and protecting connections between neighborhoods and our local trails is an important part of SFCT's mission. In November, a new conservation easement formalized the public's right to use an existing (but previously unofficial) connector trail to access the La Tierra trail system. This conservation easement enables neighbors north of La Tierra to hike or bike to the trails directly without driving, which benefits everyone by reducing congestion at trailhead parking lots and lowering vehicle emissions. Plus, the general public hiking on La Tierra can now experience this area via a spur trail north of Junction #3 (great views from the top!). In addition to serving as recreational land and scenic open space, the property's gently-sloping piñon-juniper woodland provides habitat for a range of native wildlife, and its protection expands upon the approximately 1,500-acre block of intact habitat at La Tierra. Without the protection of a conservation easement, this 38-acre private property was at risk of being developed and closed-off to public access. SFCT was delighted to accept the generous donation of this conservation easement from the Blum family, who purchased the land specifically in order to protect it. (Final note: There is no parking available north of the new conservation easement, so don't plan to access it by car. Equestrian access is also restricted. Please enjoy this land on foot or bike only.)







### Bill K. Brewster Honorary Conservation Easement – 290 acres

On December 28, 2022, SFCT celebrated a milestone by completing our 100th conservation easement. The newly-protected property spans 290 acres southwest of the Cerrillos Hills in the Galisteo Basin. The land's excellent natural habitat, cultural resources, and scenic qualities all made it a priority for protection by SFCT. Rolling piñon-juniper woodland, rocky outcroppings, and seasonal water resources on the property provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, and the land is located within a corridor that is important for animals moving between the Sangre de Cristo mountains and the Ortiz and Sandia ranges. There is evidence of a long history of human use of the landscape dating back thousands of years. To top it off, this picturesque property is visible to the public from multiple vantage points, including Cerrillos Hills State Park and the rail line north of Galisteo Creek. The conservation easement was donated by landowners who were inspired and mentored by the late Oklahoma congressman Bill K. Brewster. Brewster was a champion of conservation efforts and helped establish the federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations. The landowners chose to name this conservation easement after Brewster in honor of his legacy.

Want to learn more about conservation easements? Go to:

[sfct.org/protected-lands/conserving-land](https://sfct.org/protected-lands/conserving-land)

Below: Prickly Pear Cactus in bloom





# Legend

● SFCT Protected Properties

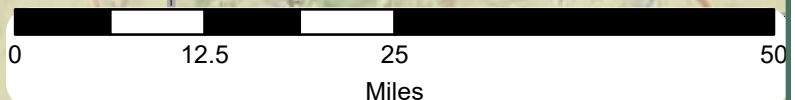
## SANTA FE CONSERVATION TRUST

### PROTECTED PROPERTIES & SERVICE AREA MAP

SFCT holds 100 conservation easements and owns 4 conservation properties. We work primarily in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and San Miguel Counties, with two conservation easements in Taos County.

#### SFCT Protected Lands County Breakdown as of 6/28/2023

County	Acres	Properties
Rio Arriba	6,389.1	7
Santa Fe	17,657.7	80
San Miguel	21,353.4	15
Taos	42.1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,441.3</b>	<b>104</b>





# SFCT's Dream Constituents Provide Public Access to the Rio Grande

By Sarah Noss

Ian Aeby and his wife, Irina, first got involved with SFCT through the Vámonos program. The first walk that Irina came on was "Walk with the Mayor" in 2019. She was so impressed by the program that she enticed Ian to join the next outing. Through Vámonos, they have both gotten to know the local trails better. A native of La Mesilla, NM, Ian's work took him to Albuquerque, Los Alamos, California, Arizona, Japan and worldwide. He and Irina had only recently settled in Santa Fe when we first met them.

During another walk at La Tierra Trails, he asked me about how conservation easements work. He said in 1955, his mother, Jeanne, and late father, Jack, bought a 58-acre property in La Mesilla, south of Espanola, along the Rio Grande where they built a couple of houses and raised their 5 children. During the walk, Ian gave me a little family history. He said his father had worked in Los Alamos during the Manhattan Project, and his mother had been recruited to teach school in the newly established Los Alamos public schools. "One of the earliest additions to the household," Ian said, "was a German Shepherd named Fritz who was inherited from a staff scientist who returned to Europe after the war ended. He wanted Fritz to have a new home with plenty of space to roam and children to play with." The scientist's parting words to the family, Ian said, were something like, "If you preserve this place as it is, you will never regret it."

"This sage advice from a venerable old physicist was not lost on us," Ian later said. "Both Jack and Jeanne grew up in farming communities in the Midwest and had witnessed urban sprawl paving over prime agricultural land. As a consequence, they both felt a powerful obligation to be good stewards of the environment."

Months later, we saw Ian and Irina on another Vámonos walk. This time, they brought their granddaughter, Daisy, with them, who is multilingual in English, Spanish, French, and Irina's native

**Below: Ian (left) with Melissa Houser, Land Program Manager (center) and Ariel Patashnik, Land Protection Project Manager (right)**



**Above: Ian and Irina Aeby**

tongue, Russian. Ian and Irina met in early 1991 when he was helping Northern NM College hook up to the Lab's fiber optic line that ran directly under the college. He started emailing a woman in accounting and finance at the Electrotechnical University of St. Petersburg, whose team was also installing fiber optic lines, and their email communication is probably one of the first online romances! On that walk with Daisy, Ian mentioned that he, his siblings and mother were now seriously discussing protecting their land. It is not a decision to be made lightly, as conservation easements are permanent and run with the land, so everyone had to be on board.

Later we found out that many family members were founding members of the NM Citizens for Clean Air and Water. Jeanne had spearheaded the grassroots campaign in the 60s opposing air pollution from the Four Corners Power Plant. Back then, Ian said, the toxic smoke plume from burning coal was the only man-made object on earth observable by the Apollo astronauts from orbit. What's more, the whole family, Ian said, "spent much of our spare time collecting litter along the highway, which was then trucked to the Roundhouse to urge passage of a bottle deposit law." Nothing came of that, unfortunately. "But when the price of scrap aluminum made it worthwhile to collect beer cans," Ian said, "we redirected our considerable littler picking skills toward aluminum cans and eventually earned enough money to purchase our first color TV." Because of the family history of protecting the environment, Ian felt certain that his family would want to protect their land.

One thing led to another, and soon Ian started helping on SFCT trail maintenance workdays. He even came to a Safe Routes to School bike ride at 7 am to help escort kids to school along the River Trail. Meanwhile SFCT had put together its Quick Start Fund, which covers transaction costs for landowners with significant properties, and allows them to repay it after they get their transferrable State tax credit. We asked the Aebys if they would like to be our pilot project for the Quick Start Fund. They agreed. Last summer, Ian called to say the family was in agreement to put the land in a conservation easement. He hoped we could move quickly, as Jeanne's health was declining.

When we went out to look at the land with Ian, we learned more about his father, Jack, who had died in 2015. He was at the University of Nebraska when he got his draft notice to serve in WWII, but was diagnosed with tuberculosis, so the Army didn't





**Above: the Aeby's 58-acre property in La Mesilla, NM**

want him. On his way to California to see if he could get work for the war effort, he stopped in Albuquerque and learned that one of his cousins had applied for an unknown job at a place in the hills above Santa Fe, so he applied, too. The recruiters at Los Alamos saw he had worked in the physics department at the university, so by the time he got to California, they wanted him to come back. In an interview of the Manhattan Project employees, Jack laughed and said they didn't realize his job was basically handing out supplies to physics students from the department storage area. Nonetheless, he ended up working for Physics Group 5 in Los Alamos, headed by Italian physicist Emilio Segrè, where they looked for fissionable material to make the atomic bomb.

**Below: Jack Aeby's photograph of the atomic bomb explosion in 1945 at the Trinity Test Site in southern New Mexico**



**Below from left: Ian Aeby, Irina Aeby, Sarah Noss**



Jack loved photography, and Segrè made him the official photographer of the group. Jack ended up being one of the only photographers at the Trinity Test Site and captured the only high-quality color photograph of the detonation of the world's first nuclear device, an historic image that was displayed around the world.

After the war, Jack finished his degree in psychology at UC Berkeley and then worked at LANL for another 30 years. He ended his career at Eberline Instruments, cleaning up radioactive sites around the country and in the Marshall Islands.

It always amazes us at the stories that we learn from protecting land. Ian and Irina remain our dream constituents. We were all very sad that Jeanne died in October 2022 before we were able to finalize the easement. The family's 58 acres are slated for permanent protection later this year, and Jeanne, at least, died knowing the project was underway, and that the San Juan Power Plant ceased burning coal the week before her death.

We send our thanks to the Aeby family for working to permanently protect this beautiful bosque property and provide public access to the Rio Grande for future generations to enjoy.

# Meet SFCT's newest staff & board members

## Brian Jensen

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### *Organizational Advancement Officer*

I came to the Santa Fe Conservation Trust after almost a decade of advancing the mission at the National Dance Institute of New Mexico, where I served in leadership roles including Chief of Staff, Board Liaison, and Development Strategist. I am very excited to be working with SFCT, aligning my personal interests in the outdoors and nature with SFCT's mission to keep northern New Mexico's living lands and people flourishing together and igniting people's passion for nature. I hold degrees in finance and photography from the University of Idaho and Santa Fe Community College. I have had a diverse career that has included serving as an English tutor for professionals in Prague, where I met my wife, Jessica, a native New Mexican and Investor Relations Analyst for Thornburg Mortgage in Santa Fe. I have come to all my professional endeavors with curiosity and a desire to build new relationships and networks. Originally from southern Idaho, I have resided in Santa Fe since 2008 and consider it my home. A large influence on my life has been the Rocky Mountains and their diverse landscapes, wildlife and cultural vibrancy. I am passionate about playing outside in all four seasons, geography and maps, and photography, am service-oriented and have enthusiasm for positive social change in my community. I love all the trails in Santa Fe and would have a hard time choosing a favorite.



## Melanie Solis Alvarez

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### *Stewardship Associate*

I was born and raised in Santa Fe and have loved being outdoors since a young age learning geography, collecting rocks, and having fun camping days with family playing in the Nambé River. I lived in Portland, Oregon for four years and graduated in 2022 with a Bachelors in Environmental Science from the University of Portland. Afterwards, I came back home to New Mexico, missing the chile and sunsets, and am excited to be working in my chosen field with SFCT.



## Sam Finn

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### *Board Member*

I am a retired astrophysicist. I earned my Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics and Astrophysics from the California Institute of Technology in 1987. From 1987-91, I was a research associate at Cornell University, and from 1991-1998 a professor at Northwestern University. In 1998, I moved to Penn State as a professor in a joint appointment in the Physics and Astronomy and Astrophysics departments. In 2001 I was named the Director of the first National Science Foundation (NSF) Physics Frontier Center for Gravitational Physics. I was the founding Chief Editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Frontiers in Astronomy and Space Sciences*, and also specialty section editor for the journal's *Cosmology* section. My wife, Nancy Ostiguy, Ph.D., who was an Associate Professor of Entomology at Penn State, and I decided to move to Santa Fe because I wanted to live in an area with a dark sky. We live in Eldorado, have an observatory at our house, and I now lead the Santa Fe Stargazers, who join me in supporting SFCT in its efforts to protect the night sky.





## Mark Fisher

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### *Board Member*

I relocated to Santa Fe with my wife, Christine, in 2018, and we love calling New Mexico home. We still go back and forth a bit between here and Chicago as we steward our two sons through college and high school in the Midwest. Born and raised in Southern Louisiana, I grew up fishing and hiking and became passionate about being outdoors and protecting the natural environment. I am excited to bring my passion for the outdoors and my skills in finance and organizational development to advance the work of SFCT. I worked in the building product industry for over two decades and recently founded the New Mexico Vintage Fund Partners, a VC Fund that focuses on New Mexico-based startups. I received a BSME in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Southern California and an MBA from USC Marshall.



## Carla Chung Mattix

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### *Board Member*

I am a semi-retired attorney currently working on a book project. From 1995 to 2021, I was an attorney at the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor, Division of Parks and Wildlife, and worked in the Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Santa Fe offices during my career. I provided legal counsel to the National Park Service in the areas of natural resources and environmental law, historic and archeological preservation, intellectual property, museum collections, historic tax credits and Native American issues. I worked on a number of land acquisition projects for the National Park Service including one of the largest interstate land exchanges entered into by the Department of the Interior, which eventually added 108,000 acres to Big Cypress National Preserve in Florida. I hold a J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center and a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering from Boston University. I am a member of the New Mexico, Virginia and D.C. Bars. My husband, Victor Johnson, and I like to hike, bike, ski and paddle-board in our free time. We appreciate and want to preserve the beautiful Santa Fe environment and the incredible opportunities to get outdoors in our community.



## Luke Pierpont

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### *Board Member*

I am a native of Santa Fe and am grateful to be living and working in such a vibrant area that means so much to me. I am currently a partner with the law firm Egolf + Ferlic + Martinez + Harwood, LLC in Santa Fe. In my law practice, I focus on water law, land use, real estate law, and renewable energy development. Prior to joining Egolf + Ferlic + Martinez + Harwood, LLC in 2016 I represented clients on real estate, water rights, natural resource and water policy matters in solo practice. I have served as a Board Member of the Natural Resources, Energy, and Environmental Law Section of the New Mexico State Bar, on the Board of the Permaculture Guild, and as a Santa Fe River Commissioner. I received my Bachelor's degree from Colorado College and J.D. from the University of New Mexico where I was a Manuscript Editor for the Natural Resources Journal and President of the Environmental Law Society. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time outside and can often be found running, cycling, skiing, rafting, and hiking with my wife Sarah and two daughters, Leila and Irene, and our family dog, Harley.



SFCT is blessed to have a board full of people willing to share their time, money and expertise to move our work forward.

You can meet all our board members at: [sfct.org/about/board-of-directors/](https://sfct.org/about/board-of-directors/)

# Meet Quinn Simons

## *SFCT Board President*

By Ryan Van Bibber

For Quinn Simons, the work of the Santa Fe Conservation Trust has always been personal.

Growing up in Santa Fe, he spent his formative years roaming the trails around Santa Fe. “My dad was a big outdoors guy, and I spent a lot of time in the mountains,” says Simons. While running, hiking the trails and climbing on the mountains, he formed a deep, abiding connection with the land here. And though he might not have known it at the time, it was on those trails that he had his first experience with the Santa Fe Conservation Trust.

Part of the area where Simons roamed was on private property, and for a time, access was an issue. However, those trails never shuttered to the public. Eventually, much of that property was transferred into conservation easements with SFCT, and today, Simons is able to share those same places that had such a powerful impact on him with his three children.

“Transferring those properties into conservation easements and providing access to the public [...] provided SFCT with the beginnings of this idea of creating a big swath of connectivity between open pieces of property,” Simons explains.

Since joining the organization in 2016, Simons has seen the idea of connectivity take off and the scope of SFCT’s work expand. “That, in addition to our community outreach and trail work, has combined to create a real mission-forward philosophy that has transformed SFCT into an engine,” says Simons. “Landowners see firsthand the work that the organization does, and it’s given them the confidence to put their property into conservation easements because they know that SFCT is going to be there forever, supporting them and doing its part to keep the properties undeveloped.”

For Simons, the Trust’s mission doesn’t stop there.

“We’re an unusual land trust in that we have a pretty even split between conservation easements and trails and community conservation work,” he said. Simons credits the board and the organization’s staff for pushing that “unusual” dual mission. “We’ve got a crew of people who are really dedicated to making Santa Fe a better place for everyone.”

Prior to becoming board president, Simons served on SFCT’s Trails and Community Conservation Committee. Its mission is to get people outside and ignite their passion for nature, giving underserved communities in and around Santa Fe the chance to form the same kind of connection to the land that Simons developed as a kid.

That happens through programs like Passport to Trails and Vámonos, which partner with local schools and health care providers to take kids and residents of all ages, respectively, hiking on local trails. During Bike Month in May, Simons was personally leading group rides with his own kids as part of SFCT’s Safe Routes to Schools initiative.

Simons is particularly excited about SFCT’s newest project, the accessible trail at the Conservation Homestead.



**Above: Quinn and Veree Simons**

“Santa Fe is notoriously bad for wheelchair accessibility, which is just the nature of having a town that grew up around mule trails and ox cart tracks. We’re building an ADA accessible trail on a piece of property out in the Galisteo Basin called the Conservation Homestead. It’s going to provide people with physical disabilities the ability to take a wheelchair out there, which is amazing.”

For him, it’s personal. When he was 23, Simons was in a mountaineering accident in Tibet. He suffered frostbite in his hands and feet, losing his fingers and both feet below the ankle. “I was in a wheelchair, and trying to get around town is hard. Getting up in the mountains, there’s not an option for that. For me, SFCT’s efforts to democratize access to nature is super relevant to my life and relevant to this town that we live in.”

As Simons enters his second year as president of the board, he sees his mission with the organization as extending that same deep connection he formed with mountains and the high desert to others, with a long-term goal aimed at keeping the community vibrant. “You live in Santa Fe because you love the quality of life here, and I think SFCT has a lot to do with that. It’s the reason why I moved back, and the reason that my wife and I decided to raise a family here. I feel that if we can expose some of the kids growing up in this town [to the trails and open spaces here], those kids can get out and appreciate that part of Santa Fe. Then, we can encourage young people who would normally go to college and move to Houston, LA, Dallas or Phoenix to come back and raise families here and contribute to the community themselves.

“Santa Fe is an amazing place, and the more we can get people to care about nature and protect it, it’s just going to make living here better now and in the future.”





Above: 2022 Vámonos Scavenger Hunt at the Arroyo Hondo Open Space

## Vámonos: Santa Fe Walks

*Join us on walks and hikes through the end of October*

Vámonos: Santa Fe Walks is in its fifth year of offering 30 free walks and hikes from May through October. The weekly walks are after work, last a little more than an hour, and are a great way to explore Santa Fe's trails, get some fresh air and meet people. Elder walks are slower meanders so that those in wheelchairs or with walkers can participate. Plus there are Saturday hikes to introduce Santa Fe's dirt trails to the community. When we first started Vámonos in 2018, we realized that not everyone could access the dirt trails: some needed an easier option. Many didn't feel comfortable walking alone, or maybe didn't know where to walk. So, we created Vámonos to fill those gaps and provide everyone more equitable access to the outdoors.

The health benefits of walking are well known: it is good for your heart. It eases depression and anxiety. And if you make it a habit, it lowers cholesterol and blood pressure. And over time, we realized the incredible social benefits that Vámonos offers. This May, the US Surgeon General reported that loneliness is just as big a health threat as smoking or obesity, and that Americans are spending more and more time alone. The pandemic made it worse.

We've found over the course of offering Vámonos walks that one of the most beautiful things about it is the social ties that develop from having an hour to chat with your neighbors while taking a walk. Being outside in nature, taking in the beauty of our surroundings with other people is just the tonic we need right now. As one of our volunteers, Judy Henry, said in an op-ed in the New Mexican, "I always feel better after a Vámonos walk. It feels good to get my body moving. I feel calmed down with the open spaces and huge skies around me. I feel more present and alive and open to talk to my fellow walkers and have made new friends."

Come take a walk with us and see for yourself. You'll find the full schedule at [sfct.org/vamonos/](https://sfct.org/vamonos/).

# iVámonos!

SANTA FE WALKS

# of Participants by Year

Year	Participants
2018	318
2019	542
2020	pandemic
2021	393
2022	487
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,740</b>



Right: Take a Walk on the Southside 2023 walkers trying to decide if it would rain. It did.





# 2022 Trails and Community Conservation Update

*What's the best way to get people involved in the work of SFCT and to care about nature?  
Through the trails, of course!*

Dale Ball was our first executive director back in 1993, and it was because of him that SFCT continues to have a strong trails legacy. SFCT has had a hand in the development of over 80 miles of trails in the region, including the Dale Ball and La Tierra Trails, La Piedra and Little Tesuque Trails, Sun Mountain Trail, Rail Trail and many more. The city's dirt trails remain accessible and safe for you thanks to city funding that helps us coordinate the many SFCT volunteers who maintain them. And we also work with the Santa Fe National Forest to maintain the Atalaya Trail.

Thank you to all the SFCT volunteers who came out in 2022 to offer the following services on our local trails

Location	# of hours	# of work days
City Trails and Open Space	410	27
Conservation Homestead	254	11
Santa Fe Canyon Preserve	49	3
Cerrillos Hills State Park	18	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>42</b>

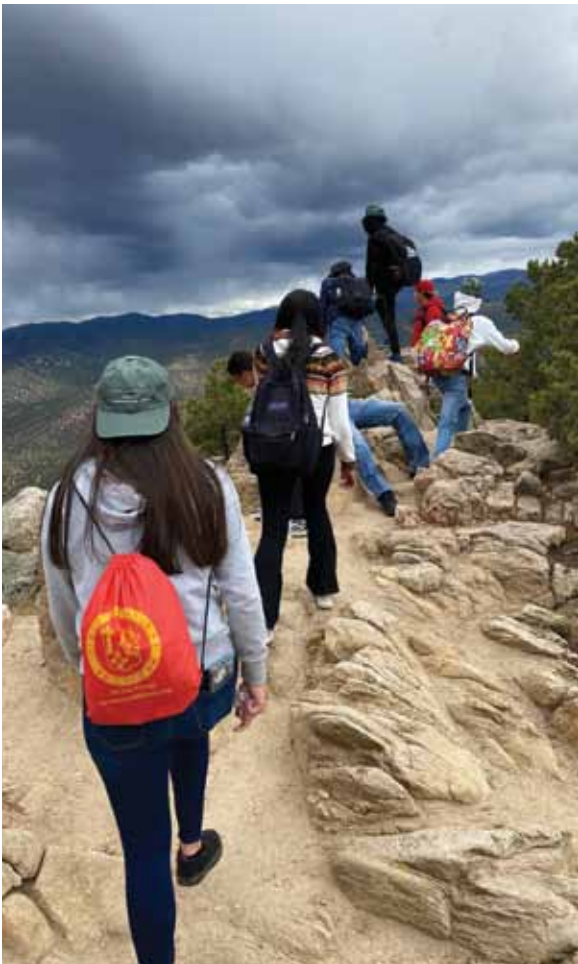
## Passport to Trails

Not everyone in our community knows about the wonderful dirt trails that roam the foothills or the open spaces on the north and east sides of town. Passport to Trails introduces this free resource to kids and their families through field trips primarily for fourth and fifth graders at south side schools. If they don't live close to the trailheads, many families don't know about the city's 55 miles of dirt trails. Passport to Trails aims to get kids on the trails to experience the joy of being outside. Since 2014, SFCT has taken almost 4,000 students, teachers and parents on Passport to Trails field trips to the schools! We target a primarily Spanish-speaking student population because a recent study from the Outdoor Foundation found that youth of color are significantly underrepresented in outdoor recreation, despite an emerging body of research showing that meaningful outdoor experiences during childhood are often critical for developing a lifelong environmental ethic. Our goals are to democratize access to nature so more people will care about nature and work to protect her.

### Passport to Trails in 2022

Season	# of field trips	participants
Spring 2022	8	159
Summer 2022	3	43
Fall 2022	17	378
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>580</b>

It costs over \$5,000 per year to pay for buses for the Passport to Trails program. If you'd like to help, make a donation today!





# Safe Routes to School

No age group needs nature more than children. Studies consistently find that children who spend time outdoors experience improved health and cognitive functions, stronger motor coordination, reduced stress and enhanced social skills. They also tend to perform better on standardized tests, demonstrate more enthusiasm toward school and have fewer attendance problems. So getting more kids to walk and bike to school is a no-brainer!

But life isn't the same as when you were a kid and your mom maybe pushed you out the door and told you to come back at dinnertime. The complexity and pace of life has accelerated, and kids need help to get to school on foot or on bike. That's why SFCT's Trails Program Manager, Tim Rogers, wrote the proposal in 2020 to access federal funding to create the Santa Fe Safe Routes to School Program, in collaboration with the city, Santa Fe Public Schools, the Metropolitan Planning Organization and other local partners. Santa Fe Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is targeting approximately 7,000+ students and their families in the Santa Fe Public Schools from kindergarten through 8th grade. Our mutual goal was to get more of these kids to walk and bike to school, to write an action plan for a sustainable program, and to assist the Santa Fe Public Schools in adopting the program to implement it throughout the K-8 public schools. The grant ends this summer, and look at what's been achieved in 2022!



Walk and Roll to School events are early morning meet-ups with kids and families to escort them to school, either on bikes or through walks. Participating schools include: El Camino Real Academy, Nina Otero Community School, Amy Biehl, Aspen and Chaparral, with more slated to participate in the coming school year. Thank you to the many teachers who coordinated with us to make these happen!



## Safe Routes to School 2022

Walk & Roll to School	# of events	# of schools	# of students	# of adults	total # of participants
Spring 2022	39	6	384	211	596
Fall 2022	71	6	1,250	517	1,767
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1,634</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>2,363</b>

Young kids need to be educated about bike and pedestrian safety in order to safely walk or bike to school, so funding was also used for educational events at schools. We send our thanks to our PE teachers and others who made time for the SRTS educators to come in to talk to the students!

Bicycle & Pedestrian Education	# of events	# of schools	# of students	# of adults	total # of participants
Spring 2022	29	8	977	95	1,072
Fall 2022	3	1	44	11	55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1,021</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>1,127</b>

What good is having a bike if it is broken and unusable? Part of the SRTS outreach to kids was to show them how to fix flats and do simple tune ups.

Fix-it Fiestas (Bicycle Repair)	# of events	# of bikes fixed
Spring 2022	3	59

The next round of federal funding will be awarded to the Santa Fe Public Schools in January 2024, which means SFCT will continue to implement SRTS through the upcoming fall semester, even though the grant has expired. We are seeking support from the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division's Outdoor Equity Fund, but the grant requires a 33% match. If you'd like to help provide gap funding to keep this program walking and rolling with SFCT's support, please make a donation online at [sfct.org/donation/](https://sfct.org/donation/) and make a note that it is for Safe Routes To School.





## Banff 2022

### Felt Like Home!

By Joanne Smogor

Being at the Lensic after a pandemic pause for two years felt just right. Familiar stage, friendly faces, crowded lobby, raffle tickets, bar open! The only thing we were missing was the Banff Road Warrior to introduce each film. Our partners up at the Banff Centre for Creativity and the Arts in Canada were still pretty Covid-cautious for the 2022 Banff Mountain Festival World Tour, and the virus's impact showed up in many of the films we viewed.

One of the highlights was *Breaking Trail* about Emily Ford, the first woman and person of color to thru-hike the 1900-km Ice Age Trail in winter. As Covid-19 surged amidst ongoing civil unrest, Emily set out with a borrowed sled dog named Diggins on a 69-day journey through subzero temperatures that tested her physical and mental endurance. As they embraced the unexpected kindness of strangers, the message that "the outdoors are for everyone" certainly aligned with SFCT's mission and programs that are focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

An eye-opener was a tour edit of *A Foreign Native* about a professional skier who leaves his familiar world behind and spends close to a year in Iran. When military activity ramps up in January and Covid-19 hits in February of 2020, his journey takes a very different route – a close-up view of Iranian life complete with a new language, music lessons and new and old friends.

Banff wouldn't be complete without mixing in some wildlife, climbing, and skiing and shredding the slopes. *Izembek* featured footage from Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge by Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Gerrit Vyn. The film was visually stunning as he set out to document both wildlife and wilderness in an effort to prevent the construction of a road through this critical environment. Each year, it seems, more of the award-winning films presented at the Banff World Tour reflect a growing concern for issues like loss of biodiversity, the necessity of nature for our well-being, and cultural and ethnic inclusion.

Thank you to all the 2022 ticket buyers and volunteers who braved the indoor crowd and to our committed sponsors and intermission prize donors. All of you make it possible to bring the film festival to Santa Fe, and we are grateful for your support of SFCT.





# The Old. The New. The Future Too!

By Joanne Smogor

Seeing old friends in person again for our 2022 Stand Up for Nature event last fall truly felt like a homecoming at El Rancho de las Golondrinas. We also filled the tent with many guests who had never joined us before – first-time ticket buyers, friends of guests and SFCT volunteers-- who decided to check out our party. We loved meeting all the new people who came.

It was so rewarding to see unmasked faces and share introductions, conversation, stories and actual hugs while sipping on specialty cocktails by Santa Fe Spirits, delightful bubbly by Gruet Winery, and of course, the hearty brews from our long-time friend, Second Street Brewery – tried and true event partners all. Speaking of tried and true, appetizers and the dinner buffet included a wonderful selection from Cowgirl BBQ, which has been serving this event for upwards of 16 years! And we were thrilled to have Lara Manzanares & J. Michael Combs entertain us with new “old timey” music so fitting to the historic setting.

Our annual event's new name, Stand Up for Nature, is our call for a future where everyone in northern New Mexico cherishes nature and works to preserve it for this and future generations.

We saw a troubled future through the innocent eyes of a child when The Exodus Ensemble, Santa Fe's new, innovative, immersive theater company offered us an SFCT world premiere that showed what could happen if we don't stand up for nature now. Their moving and entertaining performance brought tears, laughter, and above all, inspiration to create a better future by protecting the natural resources we currently have and motivating others to do the same. Standing with your arms in the air, you all literally stood up for nature and said YES to this challenge and then powered our work forward through your generous paddle raises and your heartfelt donations.

As we all continue to rely on our local natural environment for recreation, health, solace, social interaction, renewal and joy, we are grateful to you all for standing up for nature in the many ways you do!

Get ready for our 30th Anniversary Celebration on August 12, 2023 where we'll Stand Up for Nature with our special guests, Joe West & Friends. Joe is going to give us a rollicking and rhythmic ride through the music that represents our love of the land. We hope to see you there!



# Financial Statements

## January 1 through December 31, 2022

### Financial Position

#### Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$466,688
Accounts Receivable	\$216,605
Prepaid Expenses	\$3,029
Deposits	\$2,500
Fixed Assets	\$3,660,653
Operating Reserve	\$1,0581,207
Stewardship Reserve	\$857,387
Endowment held by SFCT	\$979,739
Endowment held by SFCF	\$145,139

**Total Assets** **\$7,389,946**

#### Liabilities & Net Assets

##### Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$45,127
Payroll Liabilities	\$15,095
Passthrough Payables	\$6,815

**Total Liabilities** **\$67,037**

##### Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$4,879,165
Board Designated	\$296,866
With Donor Restrictions	\$2,146,878

**Total Net Assets** **\$7,322,909**

**Total Liabilities & Net Assets** **\$7,389,946**

### Activities

#### Operating Income

Contributions & Grants	\$949,579
Fundraising Events	\$116,733
Program Services	\$123,101

**Total Operating Income** **\$1,189,414**

#### Operating Expenses

Mission Programs	\$689,627
Development	\$73,815
General & Administrative	\$73,815

**Total Operating Expenses** **\$837,257**

**Net Operating Income** **\$352,157**

#### Non-Operating Income & Expenses

Investment Income	(\$265,096)
In-Kind Contributions	\$1,408

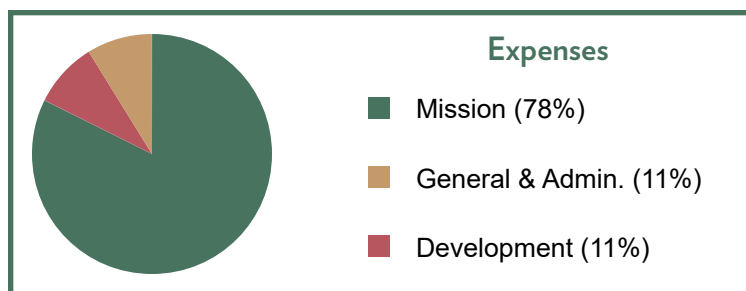
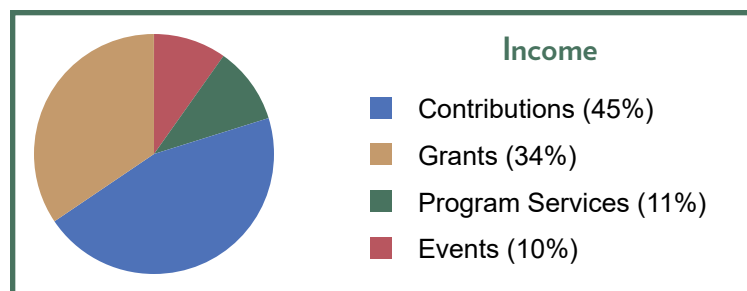
**Total Non-Operating** **(\$263,688)**

**Total Net Income** **\$88,469**



Above: Building a Juniper weir on the Conservation Homestead

Filed forms 990 can be found on our website at: [www.sfct.org/news/publications](http://www.sfct.org/news/publications)  
Complete audited financials available upon request.







Above: the Galisteo Basin with a view of the Ortiz Mountains, photo by Tony Bonanno

## A Donation Improves Your Quality of Life in Northern New Mexico

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust depends on your generous support to inspire and educate the next generation of conservationists and to ensure the land, trails and sky we all love and need are protected and preserved forever. Providing conservation services in perpetuity means we depend on your support today and in the future. Gifts of any size or type are welcomed and deeply appreciated! Gifts can be made using the enclosed envelope or online at [sfct.org/donate](https://sfct.org/donate). Thank you for your continued support!

### Types of Giving

#### Outright Gifts

Donations can be made in the form of cash, checks, stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares, real estate and personal property. Please contact SFCT at (505) 989-7019 for stock transfer instructions.

#### Recurring Monthly Gifts

Scheduling your donation, which can start as low as \$10 a month, provides SFCT a steady, reliable stream of support. We love this method of giving, and it's easier on your wallet!

Here's how easy it is to make recurring gifts at [sfct.org/donate](https://sfct.org/donate):

- Choose the amount that you want to contribute every month.
- Decide if you want to use a credit card, checking account or PayPal account

If your circumstances change, you can choose to increase, decrease, suspend, or stop your monthly gift. Check the box on the envelope, call us at (505) 989-7019, or go online to sign up at [sfct.org/donate/](https://sfct.org/donate/).

#### IRA Distributions

Age may just be a number, but if that number is 72 (or higher!) you can make your required minimum distribution a tax-free gift to SFCT directly from your IRA by designating SFCT as the recipient. This gift will not count as taxable income for you and will make an amazing impact preserving the land, trails, and sky you love and need. Please contact your financial advisor for details and thank you!

#### Matching Gifts

Does your company offer a Matching Gifts Program? If they do, submit their form and double your donation.

#### Vehicle Donations

Do you have an old vehicle you don't use anymore? Donate it to SFCT! We make it easy. Just go to [www.careasy.org/nonprofit/santafeconservationtrust](https://www.careasy.org/nonprofit/santafeconservationtrust) or give us a call at (505) 989-7019 for more information.

#### In Kind Gifts

We also accept in-kind donations. Please contact us for a list of needs.

#### Volunteering

Give the precious gift of time! SFCT has a wide variety of volunteer opportunities to support our mission: program, events, trail maintenance, mailings, data entry and other office duties. Please contact us at (505) 989-7019 or [info@sfct.org](mailto:info@sfct.org) for current opportunities.

#### Include SFCT in your Estate Plan

Does nature sustain you? Are you concerned about access to nature for your children and grandchildren? Want to make a gift that will impact this beautiful region in perpetuity? Consider including SFCT in your Estate Plan. Doing so is easy and will ensure that the land, trails and skies of northern New Mexico will be protected for future generations. If SFCT is already in your will or estate plan, please let us know! You'll become a member of the Atalaya Legacy Society (pg 28), be invited to an annual luncheon and, if you wish, be acknowledged in publications like this one. Explore your planned giving options at [sfct.org/planned-giving/](https://sfct.org/planned-giving/), contact us at (505) 989-7019 or email Sarah Noss at [sarah@sfct.org](mailto:sarah@sfct.org).

# Adios to Longtime Board Member Nancy Cook

By Brian Jensen

As a relatively new staff member at the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, I was excited to spend some time recently with Nancy Cook, a long-time board member who is closing out her final year at SFCT. I've wanted to get to know the person I've seen so often at SFCT workdays as well as organization events. I've learned that Nancy has been a gentle leader who frequently emails words of encouragement to the staff and fellow board members while supporting SFCT with her time, thoughtful ideas and financial support. When asked about what values she has brought to the board, Nancy said, "I'm a curious person, I'm independent and I care deeply about people." After three full terms as an influential board member since 2015, she must cycle off the board, having served as vice president and a longtime member of the planning committee for our annual fundraising gala. Nancy's participation has contributed to SFCT's community initiatives, strategic planning and conservation acquisitions. "She's been on the board just a little longer than I've been here, and she has added so much to the fabric of this organization," said Sarah Noss, SFCT's executive director. "I am going to miss her and the guidance she provided very much."

Initially introduced to SFCT through longtime friends and past SFCT Board members Kent Little and Sandra Massengill, Nancy was immediately taken by the organization's conservation mission. She resonated with the organization's ambition to raise SFCT's profile in the community by nurturing people's love of the outdoors via community programs. She recognized the value in helping people learn to appreciate and love nature so they will embrace protecting it.

A self-described "non-relaxer," Nancy hit the ground running and never looked back. She strove to develop meaningful and lasting relationships with everyone she came in contact with: board colleagues, SFCT staff, donors, volunteers and community members. Her focus has always been to help grow awareness for SFCT, which came to her naturally from her career in sales and marketing.

Nancy's arrival at SFCT was a long time coming. She wasn't from here and spent only a brief time in New Mexico early on in her career. Back then she proudly told family, friends and colleagues she was moving to the "Great Frontier" for an experience of a lifetime. It looks like she's fulfilled that intention. Post college in the 1970's, her proclivity for being on-the-go and ready for adventure saw a year spent overseas in Europe followed by a new career with the Associated Press where she was assigned to sell AP's broadcast services throughout the states of New Mexico and Arizona – every square mile of them. What she saw and experienced in her first ten months in the great Southwest would have a profound effect on her life and ultimately SFCT.

"I was gobsmacked by the geography, seasons and culture here," she said. In that first brief tenure, she became hooked on New Mexico's vast, fruity red and pink sunsets while driving to all points of both states. It was an immersive indoctrination into the region and its culture. "I suppose my youth and naiveté had something to do with its attraction; everything was NEW!" Nancy said. It proved to be an opportunity of a lifetime to experience the unique locales and the people of the Land of Enchantment



who so passionately defined them. It was with very mixed feelings she left after less than a year when AP transferred her to San Francisco. She subsequently spent three years in northern California and Nevada before the next move swung her back East to New York City and Washington, DC, for over a decade. After countless miles and too many 60-hour weeks in the harshly competitive world of television syndication, her need for a healthier balance in her life beckoned. She convinced her bosses to allow her to do the then unthinkable: open an office in her home in Santa Fe and travel from there. Traveling weekly to and from the ABQ airport for the next 27 years never bored her. Nancy's dream was realized. With the trusty steed she quickly acquired and her new-found rancher pals, weekends spent riding in the hills and mountains soon afforded her the antidote for her intense Monday through Friday travel schedules.

Like many of us, whether you were born here and left or chose to locate here during adulthood, New Mexico can grab you by the collar and suck you back – or simply not let you go. It did that for Nancy, and she's never looked back on what is approaching her 32nd year in Santa Fe.

When Nancy learned of the Santa Fe Conservation Trust and its mission, the organization seemed a perfect fit to sync with her passions. She felt she could contribute. As we spoke more about her tenure as a board member and what her contributions have meant to her personally, I began to appreciate who Nancy is. She feels most connected to SFCT's mission when more people, especially young people, are included and feel inspired to help preserve our ecologically and culturally significant lands in northern New Mexico. She expressed with cheerfulness and hope, "The more people we engage, the more support for conservation we create." SFCT's Vámonos and the Passport to Trails programs, our recent work in the Galisteo Basin at the Conservation Homestead, along with the night sky monitoring program are all particularly significant. She compliments Executive Director Sarah Noss, and staff and board efforts at broadening the organization's capacity in order to focus on new and challenging environmental issues.

While Nancy's nine years on the board are drawing to a close, she plans to stay connected through continued volunteering. When I squeezed in one last question about what she will miss, she answered without hesitation, "The people are who I will miss the most: the purposefulness of the trust's mission and being a part of that purpose."

Thank you for your service Nancy! Your valued partnership and passionate voice will be missed.



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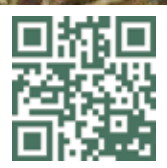


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