

NEW MEXICO LAND CONSERVANCY

Conserving Land. Preserving Heritage

ANNUAL REPORT
2017

Celebrating 15 years
of Conservation Success!



OUR MISSION

To preserve New Mexico’s
land heritage by helping people
conserve the places they love

Founded in 2002, The New Mexico Land Conservancy (NMLC) is an accredited, statewide, non-profit land trust working to protect significant natural habitat, scenic open space, cultural and historical resources, and productive agricultural and recreational lands for conservation purposes and public benefit at community, watershed and landscape scales.

We work in collaboration with private landowners, community and non-profit organizations, government agencies, businesses and other public and private partners to pursue and achieve our mission. To date, NMLC has helped permanently protect more than 175,000 acres of high conservation value land across New Mexico and southeast Arizona.

Photo courtesy of Mildred Ortiz | Thunderhead over Cabezon Peak



Looking Forward—

Dear Friends,

At the close of 2017, we completed several conservation projects from Chama in northern New Mexico to the Chiricahuas in southeast Arizona. Since the beginning of the new year, we have taken on several new projects (collectively, totaling nearly 65,000 acres of land) covering almost every corner of the state as well as southeast Arizona. The diversity of our projects serves to remind me not only of the breadth of our work as a statewide and, increasingly more regional, southwestern land trust, but also just the sheer amount of time, energy and, frankly, patience that it takes to bring private land conservation to fruition.

As you will read in the following pages, due to the complexities of land ownership in the Southwest – where you can encounter everything from Pueblo and Spanish land ownerships overlapping with the public land survey system, traditional (acequia) water rights juxtaposed with more recent water rights adjudications, private lands intermingled with federal and state leases, split mineral estates, competing economic uses, threatened and endangered species legislation and environmental hazards – private land and water conservation can get pretty complicated. Add to that the dynamics of landowner tax and financial issues and the challenges facing large, extended families that have owned land for generations and are struggling with farm and ranch succession and estate planning, and the dichotomy between making a living and protecting the land and its resources. Clearly, land conservation is a complex and ever-changing business that requires vision, strategies and technical expertise combined with good communications, collaboration and social skills.

But then, nobody ever said this work was going to be easy – to succeed you certainly have to be in it with the long view over the long haul. During our brief 15 years, we have weathered numerous challenges and obstacles ranging from public perceptions about our work, to politics, to the legal, financial and tax underpinnings of our work, to the internal struggles of sustaining a fledgling non-profit in a state with limited resources. This new year will bring us a new tax code, new elections and administrations, a newly vitalized economy and, hopefully, new and progressive

Photo by Kerry Sherck



perspectives toward conservation, resource use, land use planning and social interaction.

New Mexico and the Southwest, like everywhere else in the world, are changing and we should not be fooled into thinking that the New Mexico we know now is necessarily how it will remain. We can certainly strive to preserve some important elements of our natural and cultural heritage, but we will also have to adapt our work to the evolving needs and wants of a changing society. Private working lands are an integral and vital part of a larger Southwestern landscape that includes rapidly urbanizing and industrial areas, and extensive public lands that find themselves under the ever-increasing and often competing pressures for economic and recreational use as well as preservation. These private, working lands provide us with valuable food and natural resources, as well as habitat and corridors for wildlife, water and other environmental services, as well as scenic open space and buffers for public lands.

We invite you to learn more about the importance and value of these private, working lands, and to help us ensure that they remain vital and productive by preventing them from being inappropriately developed and used. The future of New Mexico and the Southwest will depend on it.

For the land,

—Scott Wilber Executive Director

For Love of the Land . . .

From economically important working farms and ranches that produce our food, to environmentally sensitive watershed areas that we rely on for our drinking water, urban and rural people alike have a large stake in the preservation of our land heritage across the state.



Turkeys ‘grazing’ in the fields at Bosque del Apache.

Photo courtesy of Mark Watson

New Mexico – steeped in natural and cultural heritage, uniquely beautiful and diverse.

NMLC strategically focuses on three main goals:

CONSERVATION

New Mexico’s land heritage includes a wide array of important land values worth preserving:

- ◆ healthy watersheds, forests and agricultural land
- ◆ wildlife and other natural habitats
- ◆ cultural, historic and recreational lands
- ◆ scenic open space

More than half the land in New Mexico is privately owned, and these private lands play an essential role in the overall viability of the southwestern environment on which we depend for healthy lives and economies. Much of the wildlife habitat, migratory corridors and glorious open space in New Mexico, for example, owe their continued existence to private land owners.

Many of our public lands are “checkerboarded” with parcels of privately owned land. Conservation easements on private lands help buffer, consolidate and facilitate the management of these existing public lands which are also facing increasing pressures and demands.

Development is accelerating throughout the West. New Mexico’s future depends on the actions taken today.

That’s why, at NMLC, land conservation is a priority. As the only statewide land trust serving New Mexico, NMLC directs a significant portion of its resources to proactively conserving real property throughout the state.

EDUCATION

Our ability to conserve these lands relies on our ability to raise public awareness of, and appreciation for, the urgent need for conservation – at the statewide, community and individual levels.

NMLC continues to develop creative ways to reach more people – people with a variety of reasons for wanting to preserve these lands – through media and educational channels, including newsletters, e-bulletins, conferences, workshops, events and collaborations with other partners and organizations working toward a common goal.

CAPACITY BUILDING/ STAYING POWER

Our work doesn’t end when a conservation easement is completed. For every easement we hold, we are making commitment to steward these easements in perpetuity.

And perpetuity is a long time!

Every easement we hold must be monitored annually by NMLC. New Mexico is a large state, geographically speaking, and we also hold easements in southeast Arizona. That’s a lot of ground to cover every year!

A portion of our work is dedicated, also, to fundraising and the ongoing development of our Board of Directors. And we need to keep up with technological advances in our various fields – ranging from monitoring equipment and a comprehensive stewardship database to a mobile-friendly website and e-newsletter platform.

NMLC achieved accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance in 2015 – a rigorous process of demonstrating highest and best standards and practices in our work. We’re up for re-accreditation in 2020. We’re confident that we will succeed.

It is our intention in the years to come to expand our work into targeted regional conservation areas and develop our Center in Santa Fe to make it more available for education and community use in the future. #

Private Land Conservation Requires Generosity, Incentives and Partners

What often gets overlooked when we highlight our conservation successes is the fact that land conservation, whether on private or public lands, costs money.

Conservation easements involve a complex real estate transaction that requires a lot of associated due diligence and documentation. The amounts vary depending on whether an easement is donated or purchased, but typically, every transaction requires title work; mineral and water rights, and environmental hazards assessment; baseline documentation; conservation easement drafting and legal review; and appraisal. In addition, there are funding proposals to write, tax credit applications and, if publicly funded, countless government forms as part of the process of completing a project.

Generally, landowners bear most of these costs in addition to donating part or all of the appraised value of the easements they grant to our land trust. We are extremely grateful for the generosity of our landowners, but also recognize that sometimes it takes incentives to help encourage landowners to choose conservation over development. These incentives come in the form of both tax and financial benefits.

For some landowners, tax benefits combined with the relative simplicity of a donated conservation easement is enough. For others, financial considerations come into play and we have to be prepared to come to the table with funding, which, for larger, complex projects, may have to come from multiple sources. Because resources are scarce, projects often have to qualify or compete with other projects – sometimes nationally – for these resources, which often requires collaboration and partnerships.

Here are examples of funding resources NMLC has successfully applied to complete some of the conservation easement projects:



Federal Income Tax Deduction for Conservation Easements

The tax deduction for conservation easement donations is one of the primary incentives underlying the private land conservation movement in the U.S. In 2015, with the assistance of land trusts across the country, this incentive was made permanent, thereby eliminating a lot of the uncertainty that existed previously. Currently, landowners can be eligible for a deduction equivalent to the appraised value of the easement donation, which can be written off at a rate of 50% of AGI for up to 16 years or until the value of the donation is used up (landowners who earn at least 50% of their income from agriculture may be able to receive a 100% deduction). Over the past

15 years, NMLC has facilitated the donation of more than \$62 million in conservation easement value.

New Mexico State Tax Credit

New Mexico is one of just a handful of states that have a tax credit for land conservation. Landowners who donate easements or land for conservation can receive a credit for 50% of the appraised value of their donation up to \$250,000 per year. This credit can be used to offset their state tax liability for up to 20 years or the credits can be sold for approximately 80% of their value on the open market and converted to cash. This credit has become one of the primary drivers for land conservation in New Mexico because the ability to sell the credits has given landowners

(particularly land rich/cash poor landowners) a way to pay for the costs of conserving their land and often still have something left over to offset taxes, pay off debt and/or reinvest into their land. Since the program's inception in 2004, NMLC has facilitated over \$9 million of tax credits for landowners from the donation of conservation easements and land.

U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

NRCS has been one of NMLC's longest standing government agency partners. Through ACEP and its predecessor, the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (both Farm Bill programs), NMLC has secured more than \$10,000,000 in funding for easement acquisition, matched by another \$2.5 million in required private matching funds. All these dollars have been paid directly to landowners.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and NM Office of Natural Resources Trustee (NMONRT) Natural Resource Damages Assessment Funding

In 2012, Freeport McMoran signed a settlement with the Department of Interior (USFWS) and the State of New Mexico (NMONRT) that resulted in the creation of wildlife habitat mitigation funding to offset damages from its mining operations in southwest New Mexico. Over the past five years, NMLC has successfully secured over \$1.5 million in funding, matched with other public and private funds to complete five different riparian conservation easement and restoration projects.

NM State Forestry Division (NMSFD) and NM Game & Fish Department (NMGFD)

NMLC currently co-holds conservation easements over five properties with NMSFD and over two properties with NMGFD. The State of New Mexico has collectively provided more than \$2.3 million for these projects, not including the state tax credit program.

Corrales Farmland Preservation

In 2003, the Village of Corrales passed a \$2.5 million bond measure to preserve some of the remaining farmland within the Village from development. Working with NMLC and other partners, the Village protected over 37 acres of prime farmland. #

Photo Courtesy of Mildred Ortiz | Chaco Canyon

ACHIEVEMENTS

In celebration of our 15th anniversary, we thought we'd look at the numbers a little differently this year. Since 2002, we have worked with private landowners and partner organizations to accomplish the following:

80 Conservation Easements permanently protecting

176,635 acres

or **276 square miles**

138 Miles of perennial **rivers and streams**

& 1,010 miles

of seasonal **waterways** conserved

\$62,918,170 of conservation **easement** value donated by landowners.

\$10,322,685

in government agency **funding** secured by NMLC for the purchase of conservation easements.

\$9,100,850 in state **tax credits** facilitated by NMLC for easement donors.

Largest easement:
30,828 acres

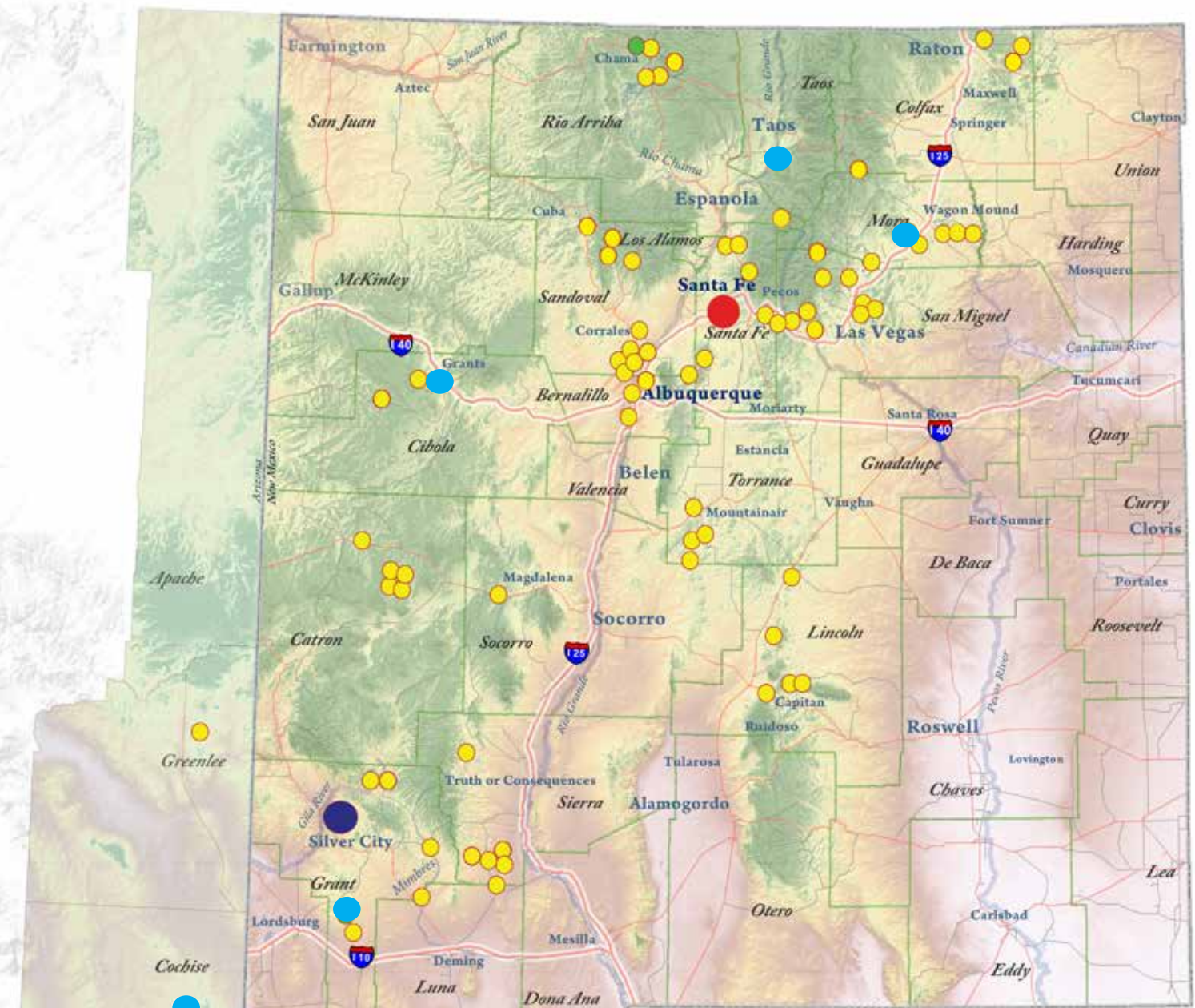
Smallest easement:
2 acres

A Big Thanks to Our Partners

- AZ Department of Game & Fish
- Chama Peak Land Alliance
- Conservation Resource Center
- Denver Zoo
- Ducks Unlimited
- Forest Trust
- Grant County Commission
- Hermit's Peak Watershed Alliance
- High Plains Grasslands Alliance
- Land Trust Alliance
- NM Department of Game & Fish
- NM Department of Transportation
- NM Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department
- NM Food & Agriculture Policy Council
- NM Office of Natural Resources Trustee
- NM Taxation & Revenue Department
- NM Tax Credit Alliance
- NM State Forestry Division
- Playa Lakes Joint Venture
- Quivira Coalition
- Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust
- Rio Grande Return
- Santa Fe Conservation Trust
- Silver City Trails & Open Space Committee
- Taos Land Trust
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Trust for Public Land
- Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
- U.S. Army – White Sands Missile Range
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Western Landowners Alliance #

NEW MEXICO LAND CONSERVANCY

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- Conservation Easements Completed in 2017
- Existing Conservation Easements
- NMLC Headquarters
- Southern New Mexico Office

176,500 ACRES CONSERVED

High Plains Grasslands Legacy on the Fort Union Ranch

RAIN! photo by Connor Jandreau



Incentives for private-land conservation are important, for without them, what would encourage the majority of private landowners to think beyond their own lifetimes, and their current and future prospects and opportunities for economic development, and cause them to think about simply conserving and stewarding land for future generations. And yet, incentives alone cannot ensure the widespread protection and maintenance of New Mexico's agriculture, wildlife, natural areas and cultural heritage in perpetuity. Instead it is the convergence of a vision for the land with the right incentives where a landowner shapes his or her legacy.

One clear example of this marriage between vision and incentive is on the historic Fort Union Ranch near Watrous in northeast New Mexico. Owned and operated by the Union Land and Grazing Company which dates back to the late 1800s, the company principals continue to model a way forward for conservation ranching and land use, with the promise of a productive, healthy and resilient land-base for both agriculture and wildlife.

In 2017, NMLC helped facilitate a fourth conservation easement phase over this vast, nearly 100,000-acre property, collectively protecting more than 10,000 acres of native shortgrass prairie, wildlife habitat and a historical legacy dating back to the period when it was still part of Mexico and the Mora Land Grant, followed by the later days of Anglo settlement along the Santa Fe Trail and the transformation of territorial New Mexico into a state of the union.

While proceeds from the sale of tax credits associated with their conservation easement donations have helped partially sustain the company's grazing restoration and land management efforts in recent years, perhaps one of the real rewards for the folks at Union Land and Grazing Company is preserving certain family traditions, including the peace of mind of knowing that at least some of their descendants may be able to continue galloping across the ranch looking for that heifer who was supposed to drop her calf last night and enjoying the added benefit of witnessing a Pronghorn fawn take its first steps across miles of unbroken shortgrass prairie. #

**. . . it is the convergence of a vision
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Freshwater habitat is a rare feature of the Desert Southwest, so New Mexico Land Conservancy placed “all hands on-deck” when US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) and the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee (NMONRT) announced a unique financial opportunity to restore and protect wetland and riparian habitat in the southwest region of New Mexico. We are proud to report that, to date, NMLC’s efforts have led to funding for seven valuable habitat projects with this competitive funding source. The NMONRT trustee, Butch Tongate explained, “this acquisition provides conservation and protection of precious New Mexico natural resources that multiple parties worked diligently and collaboratively to achieve.” Following are highlights of two projects.

Along the Burro Cienega

Otto Prevost Ranch

The Prevost Ranch is a working ranch nestled in the Burro Mountains and is bisected by approximately three miles of the Burro Cienega. The “cienega”—a slow-moving, commonly spring-fed type of desert marsh—consists of perennial stream-flows coupled with an extensive freshwater flood plain and riparian area. Many consider this five-mile historic cienega habitat, now incised but undergoing restoration, to represent some of the most productive freshwater habitat along the this 56-mile long watershed due to the shallow water table and perennial nature of water flow on the ranch.

Protection of the Prevost Ranch adds to the nine miles of Burro Cienega and 5,160 acres of habitat already protected by the neighboring Pitchfork Ranch



Above: The Prevost Ranch. Left: The Burro Cienega

Restoration & Protection

conservation easement. Protection of the Prevost and Pitchfork ranches is central to long-term protection, restoration and monitoring efforts in which NMLC and these landowners, along with federal and state agency partners, have been engaged during the past 15 years.

With little exception, NMLC’s protection of each freshwater system in New Mexico accompanies a complementary suite of conservation values, including cultural and agricultural resources as well as an abundance of species of flora and fauna. The Prevost Ranch’s reach of the Burro Cienega is no exception with a rich cultural history that includes the area’s historical significance to the Mimbres and Apache people. The fresh water and abundance of grass and other food sources also attracted many settlers traveling through the area as a stopover to water and rest their livestock.

Some unique species of native flora and fauna have

been reintroduced to the Burro Cienega, including: the Gila topminnow, Chirichahua leopard frog, aplomado falcon, and Wright’s marsh thistle. A plant previously unknown to science, *Eurphobia rayturneri*, was also recently discovered in the watershed.

The protection of this unique and special New Mexico gem would not have been possible without the support of Florence Prevost, Lynn Wilcox and the rest of the Prevost family. It is not often we are afforded the opportunity to protect such a myriad of conservation values on a working ranch.

NMLC would like to thank USFWS and NMONRT for facilitating the financial opportunity to ensure that these important freshwater riparian and floodplain habitats are permanently protected. The owners of Pitchfork Ranch – A.T. and Cinda Cole – were also extremely helpful in the implementation of this project. For more information about the Burro Cienega visit: www.pitchforkranchnm.com. #

photo by Connor Jandreau



The Spirit of Stream Conservation in Southwest New Mexico

Every conservation easement opportunity that comes across our desks at NMLC is vetted by the conservation staff to ensure that our limited time and financial resources are being allocated to worthy conservation projects. When weighing the benefits of this 1,451-acre property, it was obvious that the Southwest Sufi-Bear Creek conservation easement was truly a “grand slam” in terms of the conservation values NMLC would be protecting in perpetuity! Not only does the property provide outstanding fish and wildlife habitat, it also manifests valuable agricultural, cultural and scenic values.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Values:

Common black hawks, Chiricahua leopard frogs and Arizona sycamores paint the scene for this three-mile long matrix of riparian and floodplain habitat along Bear Creek. Surveys orchestrated by New Mexico Game & Fish indicate that 43 “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” (SGCN), of which 29 were documented along the Bear Creek corridor, are thought to benefit from the valuable habitat associated with the riparian-floodplain corridor and associated Madrean pinyon-juniper and Mogollon chaparral upland habitats.

Photos left and center by Scott Wilber



Right: Bear Creek visible by its lush green riparian outline.

Cultural Conservation Values:

Once home to the Avery family, these early ranchers of Grant County recognized the productive springs and perennial nature of Bear Creek stream flows through this property. Their homestead still stands and has been incorporated as a common meeting place for the Southwest Sufi Community. In addition to the Avery family, the year-round water availability of this tributary to the Gila River attracted many earlier cultures as is evidenced by the abundance of early Native American artifacts littered across the property.

Scenic Open Space and Natural Habitat Conservation Values:

The rich upland habitat and scenic open space associated with this unique property dovetails into the adjacent Gila National Forest, further protecting this large expanse of unfragmented habitat.

Agricultural Conservation Values:

Historically grazed, under the direction of Greg Schoen, the Southwest Sufi Community currently utilizes the irrigated lands on this property to produce heirloom vegetable seeds. These types of agricultural

endeavors are much more likely to persist under a conservation easement now that this unique property is protected from further subdivision and development.

Through Vision and Hard Work

The success of this conservation easement would not have been possible without the vision and hard work of Rashad Wilson, Yaqin Sandleben and Greg Schoen of the Southwest Sufi Community.

Permanently protecting this property and its natural and cultural values is a logical and complementary extension of the property's current function as a spiritual retreat. We would also like to thank George Dennis of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Will Fetner and Trais Kliphuis of the NM Office of Natural Resources (NMONRT) Trustee for facilitating the funding required to bring this project to fruition. Trais Kliphuis, Executive Director of the NMONRT, expressed her appreciation of NMLC saying “It's always great when federal and state agencies can foster positive and successful partnerships with organizations like NMLC to achieve permanent protection of precious natural resources.”



Silver City Trails & Open Space

The greater Silver City area is known for wonderful areas to hike and bike. The reason—a plethora of natural areas in the vicinity of the Continental Divide and local people willing to dedicate their free time outdoors building new and repairing existing trails. The people of Silver City have been willing to give back because of the many benefits that these trails and open spaces afford their community.

In recognition of the need to tie together these efforts into a more unified and connected network of trails, the community approached NMLC to help identify long-term funding to expand upon what had already been accomplished. A very generous grant by the LOR Foundation resulted in NMLC working with a myriad of partners to do exactly that. NMLC contracted with Traci Burnsed of Southwest Horizons Planning and Mapping to produce maps that incorporate all the trails in the area, as well as some visual alternatives as to how best to provide connectivity between these various trail systems.

Along with her trail mapping, Burnsed has also been coordinating monthly meetings with numerous stakeholders including city leaders, land managers, county commissioners, and many local volunteers who have contributed countless hours of their own time to build the network of trails that Silver City residents currently enjoy. It has been encouraging to see that the LOR funding for Burnsed's efforts seems to be catalyzing into a larger, more comprehensive planning effort at the county level. NMLC is grateful for the LOR Foundation's generosity—stay tuned for what we hope will be an expanded trails and open space planning and implementation effort for Grant County. #



Larry McDaniel on the trail with his dog. Photo by Bob Schiowitz



Photo by Chris Hinkle, courtesy of the Trust for Public Land.

Bluewater Heritage Ranch

With the support of our long-time partner in agricultural land conservation – the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – we were able to build upon our success and protect another 5,239 acres on this 7,600-acre ranch situated along the flanks of the Zuni Mountains just west of Grants. Intermingled with Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service and tribal lands, the property is one of the largest private landholdings in the Zuni Mountains and protecting this large ranch will help ensure this area will not be subdivided and developed.

Habitat types on Bluewater Heritage Ranch range from forested habitat at its upper elevations to riparian and freshwater fish habitat along Bluewater Creek at its lower elevations. This habitat along with the blue grama savanna along mid-elevations create beautiful panoramic views that are enjoyed by tens of thousands of travelers along the Interstate 40 (aka Historic Route 66) corridor between Grants and Gallup.

The history of the ranch includes five-generations of the Nielson Family that have enjoyed working cattle and taking care of the Bluewater Ranch. Artifacts on the ranch have been traced to Paleo Indians that existed on the Property somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 years ago. The area has and continues to be important to many Native American cultures, including the Navajo, the Zuni, the Ramah, the Laguna and the Acoma people.

We are very pleased to have been able to protect these valuable working lands and want to extend special thanks to Russ Nielson for his generosity, hard work and commitment to making this project possible. We are grateful for the funding provided through the NRCS's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and, in particular, want to thank Athena Cholas for her countless hours of work and support to help navigate this federal funding opportunity to a successful conclusion. #

Photo courtesy of Stephen Nielson | Reflections on the Bluewater Heritage Ranch

The Conservation 'Snowball Effect' on a Southeast Arizona Desert

Ranch owner, Josiah Austin, granted a conservation easement to NMLC across 6,043 acres of the Cienega Ranch located in southeast Arizona. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) facilitated the funding for this project, the bulk of which was provided by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, matched by private funding through the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust and a generous donation of land value from the landowner.

Instead of choosing to sit on his laurels and enjoy the revenue during his golden years, Austin leveraged this funding into additional conservation projects. He negotiated with his neighbors to purchase additional lands, including the acquisition of several development parcels that had been subdivided from the adjacent ranch. These acquisitions will help curtail development in this incredibly important and scenic grassland area. Austin proceeded to remove 70% of the fencing across the ranch and newly acquired tracts of land, and then installed new fencing in strategic locations. He also installed new water lines and troughs equipped with new solar powered water pumps. The new

pasture configuration and water distribution system now allow Josiah to better manage cattle across pastures sized for his cattle numbers and grazing strategies that revolve around the concepts of rest and rotation.

At the heart of Austin's grazing philosophy is an abundance of healthy vegetation and available water to not only to improve his cattle's health, but to also improve conditions for native wildlife populations. During the past 25 years, Austin has installed over 1,000 rock and earthen structures to reverse the incising of arroyos and perennial streams. These structures curb erosion and allow water to infiltrate soils, which in turn, encourages regeneration of vegetation. Conservation is at the heart of Austin's philosophy and with that he is constantly reinvesting his money into the promotion of healthy grasslands, and, consequently, healthy cattle and wildlife populations.

We're pleased to be working with such a progressive, conservation-minded landowner, along with TPL, NRCS, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Walmart's Acres for America Program, and the Knobloch Family Foundation, to place an additional 13,200 acres under a conservation easement in 2018! #



The Allure of River Conservation in the Rio Chama Valley

The Rio Chama Valley, from its frigid, trout-filled mountain headwaters to its cotton-wood-choked confluence with the Rio Grande, poses an important arena for stream restoration and land conservation in northern New Mexico. The valley is important for farming, recreation, wildlife, and of course, as the source of much of New Mexico's drinking water.

Much of the upper reach is privately owned and has endured centuries of seasonal cycles of snowmelt perfectly timed with community acequia cleanings and small, family-run livestock and hay operations.

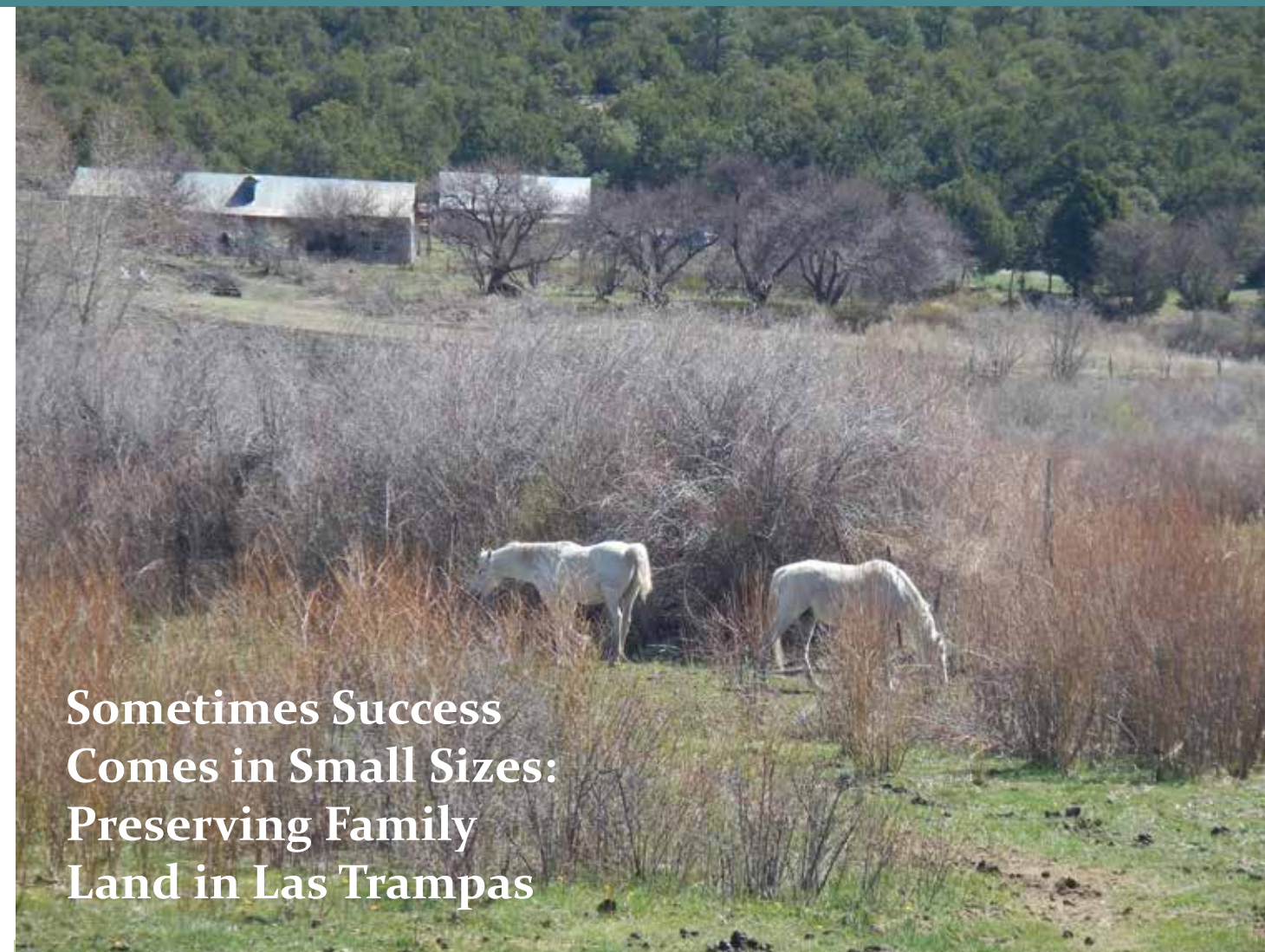
However, as more and more newcomers locate along her banks, significant pressures have begun to transform the Chama's riparian communities and floodplains, and once-irrigated pastures are now increasingly broken up into smaller and smaller recreational parcels.

But not all change is necessarily a bad thing, especially when a landowner comes along who recognizes this transformation and takes it upon themselves to try and do something positive about it. This is exactly what has happened in recent years on the Troutstalker Ranch south of Chama where landowner, Dan Perry, with a second conservation easement donation to NMLC, has now protected more than 745 acres along a mile and half of the Rio Chama, including preserving associated water rights for wildlife habitat and stream enhancements.

While agriculture has become less of a priority on this recreational ranch, the protected property still serves a vital role as wintering habitat for resident elk and mule deer herds, a pristine backdrop to the Village of Chama and an important part of the catchment basin for all those downstream New Mexicans who enjoy homegrown *agua* from the faucet. #



photos by Connor Jandreau



Sometimes Success Comes in Small Sizes: Preserving Family Land in Las Trampas

The conservation movement is often criticized for its seemingly myopic focus on land, water and wildlife – sometimes with little regard for local community and individual interests. Working lands conservation, however, is an arena in which the relationships between human and nature become the central tenant of the work; seeking the balance between human livelihood and the natural environment.

There is no better example of this than along the Rio de Las Trampas, a small tributary of the Rio Grande providing the lifeblood for centuries-old farming communities of northern New Mexico. The end of 2017 marked the conclusion of an intensive, two-year effort by NMLC to protect a 17-acre parcel of farmland that provides the scenic backdrop for the historic, traditional Village of Las Trampas along the High Road to Taos.

This was no small victory given the many challenges faced along the way. From navigating a complex web of land tenure involving historic

Spanish land grants overlapping Pueblo lands, combined with aiding a family to resolve a complex inheritance of family land by using the New Mexico Land Conservation Incentives tax credit to pay off probate court costs to keep the land in the original family that had homesteaded it in the late 1600s – these were but a few of the many “arroyos” traversed.

One might argue that such “treacherous terrain” wouldn't merit all the effort for such a small piece of agricultural land. But this *parcel* is a living example of the New Mexico land heritage – one that has seen Pueblo, Spanish, Mexican and American occupation and has evolved with the iron tools that carved out its acequia and tended its soil; one that exemplifies the nexus of place, tradition and natural heritage, and ultimately, one that has woven conservation values with human values to produce a success story worthy of replication across this unique and rich state. #

BOARD OF DIRECTORS | Leadership



Sayre Gerhart, Chair
Corrales, NM

Sayre became Board Chair this year after serving on the NMLC board for five years prior. She is an architect with a specialty in educational facility planning. She has been active in land-use planning and land conservation issues for many years. She served as Councilor for the Village of Corrales, where she initiated, funded and implemented projects for preservation of farmland and wildlife habitat. Sayre has extensive experience on non-profit boards, and with philanthropic leadership and civic projects benefiting local communities. Sayre holds a B.A. from Princeton University and an M.A. in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania.



Alan Overton, Treasurer
Santa Fe, NM

Alan is a Senior Vice President and Commercial Lender with Century Bank in Santa Fe. He has more than 30 years of commercial banking experience and has worked with property owners in southwest Colorado on banking transactions involving conservation easements. His banking background, business acumen and financial experience with conservation easement transactions have proved invaluable to the stability and strength of NMLC's fiscal position. Alan has a B.A. in Business Administration & Finance from the University of Houston.



Lawrence Rael, Vice Chair,
Los Ranchos, NM

A native New Mexican, Lawrence has had a notable career as a public servant, beginning as the Deputy Secretary of Transportation for New Mexico and later serving on Senator Jeff Bingaman's staff in Washington, D.C. He then joined the city of Albuquerque, where he eventually assumed the role of Chief Administrative Officer. In 2002 he became the Executive Director of the Mid Region Council of Governments –a regional transportation planning and economic development organization in central New Mexico. In 2012 Lawrence became the State Executive Director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Services Agency for New Mexico, appointed by former President Barack Obama. Lawrence holds a B.A. in Sociology and an M.A. in Public Administration from the University of New Mexico.



Claudette Horn, Secretary
Albuquerque, NM

Claudette is a Senior Environmental Manager at PNM Resources and has been a member of the NMLC board for four years. Claudette's background in environmental regulatory management and non-profit board experience is a major asset for the organization. She provides prudent guidance on policy analysis, direction and long-range planning. She has a very high regard for how conservation easements preserve and protect extraordinary landscapes. Claudette has served on the United Way of Central New Mexico and Women in Philanthropy Council. She holds a Bachelor of University Studies from the University of New Mexico.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dale Armstrong, Board Member, Albuquerque, NM

Dale was born and raised on a ranch in Quemado, NM. Over the past three decades, he has grown TLC Plumbing & Utility from a one-man shop into one of the premier service companies in the state with more than 300 employees. He and his wife Gail have four children, four grandchildren and operate a cattle ranch in Magdalena.



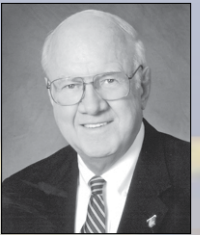
Tessa Davidson, Board Member, Corrales, NM

Tessa is the founding member of the Davidson Law Firm in Corrales, NM where her law practice focuses on water law issues and natural resource disputes. Since 2013 Tessa and her firm have been included in the Best Lawyers of American in Water Law, and in 2015 she was named "Attorney of the Year" in Water Law for the Albuquerque area. In 2015 she was noted in Women Leaders in the Law. Tessa is a fourth-generation New Mexican from a ranching family in southwestern New Mexico.



Cullen Hallmark, Board Member & Past Chair, Santa Fe, NM

Cullen is an attorney with the Santa Fe firm of Sommer, Udall, Sutin, Hardwick and Hyatt, P.A. He is an experienced cyclist, backpacker, river runner, cross-country skier and gardener. He has been a member of the Quivira Coalition for more than ten years, and manages its Red Canyon Reserve in Socorro County. He holds a B.A. from St. John's College and a J.D. from the University of Texas. He served as the Chair of the NMLC Board of directors from 2014-2016.



John (Jack) McCarthy, Board Member, Santa Fe, NM

Jack McCarthy, a native of Taos, is an attorney practicing with the firm of Cuddy & McCarthy, LLP, in Santa Fe. He is Past President of the New Mexico State Bar and the New Mexico Bar Foundation, and has extensive experience on the boards of non-profit organizations. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Benedict's College and a law degree from the University of New Mexico.



Judith Novotny Suiter, Board Member, Sandia Park, NM

Judith is owner and President of Zephyr Design, Inc., an environmental consulting and planning firm based in Albuquerque, NM since 1988. Judith's firm specializes in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) -related environmental analysis, visual resource analysis, site planning and project permitting. Judith holds a B.A. in Art & Design from the University of Tennessee and a M.A. in Community and Regional Planning from the University of New Mexico. She is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and the American Planning Association.



Moo Thorpe, Board Member, Santa Fe, NM

Moo, a native of Santa Fe, is a real estate broker with Sotheby's International Realty. During her career she has marketed and developed several successful communities in Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico. She and her husband Marc built an authentic adobe home where she lives with her family and many pets. She holds a B.A. in Geography from Middlebury College in Vermont.

photo by Joseph Sohm | Old Wooden Windmill
at Sunset, Pie Town, NM

NMLC ADVISORY BOARD



Anthony (Tony) Benson, Past Chair & Founding Board Member, Taos, NM

Tony is a retired geologist who serves as an Adjunct Professor at UNM-Taos and a member of the Board of Supervisors of the Taos Soil and Water Conservation District. He served as the first Chair of the NMLC Board of Directors from 2002-2004. He is also a Board member of the New Mexico Society for Range Management, New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts, BLM Resource Advisory Council, and the New Mexico Geological Society Foundation. Tony earned his B.S., M.S. and PhD degrees in geology from Ohio State University.



Sid Goodloe, Board Advisor, Capitan, NM

Sid has been owner-operator of the Carrizo Valley Ranch for more than five decades. He is a Board member of the Quivira Coalition and of the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association, a founding member of the New Mexico Riparian Council and an international livestock consultant. Sid and his wife Cheryl founded the Southern Rockies Agricultural Land Trust in 1998 and operated the organization until 2011 when they transferred their easements to NMLC and subsequently dissolved the organization. Sid has a B.S. in Animal Science and an M.S. in Range Science from Texas A & M University.



Elizabeth Richardson, Founding Board Member & Board Advisor, Los Angeles, CA

Elizabeth worked for Colorado Open Lands, a statewide land trust, for ten years and served on the Board of the Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts for twelve. She continues to be actively involved in the land trust movement by volunteering for the Southern California Council of Land Trusts. Elizabeth holds a B.A. from Radcliff College, a M.P.A. from University of Southern California, and an M.B.A. in Finance from University of Denver.



Jack Wright, Former Chair & Board Advisor, Las Cruces, NM

Jack has been a professor of geography at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces since 1990. He served as Chair of the NMLC Board of Directors from 2004 through 2011. He has consulted in the land trust field for 30 years and has designed more than 100 conservation easements in New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Jack has earned three degrees in geography: a B.A. from the University of Massachusetts, an M.A. from the University of Montana and a PhD from the University of California at Berkeley.

STAFF



J. Scott Wilber, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Scott has over 30 years of experience working in natural resource management, conservation and community development throughout the Rocky Mountain West and Latin America. He joined NMLC in 2004 as Conservation Director and was named Executive Director in 2006. Previously, Scott worked for The Trust for Public Land, Colorado Open Lands, The Nature Conservancy, the Tropical Forest Foundation, and the U.S. Forest Service. He holds a B.S. in Forest Management from Northern Arizona University, and a M.A. in Geography and Latin American Studies from the University of New Mexico.



Ron Troy, SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO PROJECT MANAGER

Ron joined NMLC after spending seven years focused on protection and restoration of Chinook salmon and steelhead habitat for The Nature Conservancy in Salmon, Idaho. Ron's previous experience also includes fishing and whitewater guiding, wildlife research, and operating a small farm and ranch operation in Hondo, New Mexico. Ron holds a B.S. in Finance from University of Idaho, a B.S. in Fish and Wildlife Science from New Mexico State University, and a M.S. in Biology with an emphasis on Ecological Restoration from Idaho State University. Ron is based in Silver City.



Connor Jandreau, CONSERVATION PROJECT MANAGER

Connor Jandreau has a background in conservation biology and conservation partnerships in the intermountain west, Canada and East Africa. Connor holds a B.A. in studio art, a B.S. in fish, wildlife and conservation biology, both from Colorado State University, and a M.S. in Natural Resource Management from the University of Manitoba, Canada. He is especially interested in the new face of collaborative conservation taking flight across the West. As an avid outdoorsman, he also revels in the chance to explore New Mexico's backcountry, whether with skis, boots, bikes or boats.



Sandra Halpin, COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING MANAGER

Sandra's career spans some 35 years in communications and marketing, ranging from USA Today, People and Ms. Magazine, to founding an alternative weekly newspaper in rural Wisconsin. Sandra also spent 5 years working with ranchers and landowners as Communications Manager for the Center for Holistic Management in Albuquerque before moving to Santa Fe to launch her own real estate brokerage and earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Santa Fe University of Art & Design. Sandra's deep love of the land is one reason she has made New Mexico her home for more than 20 years.



Barbara Godbey, OFFICE MANAGER

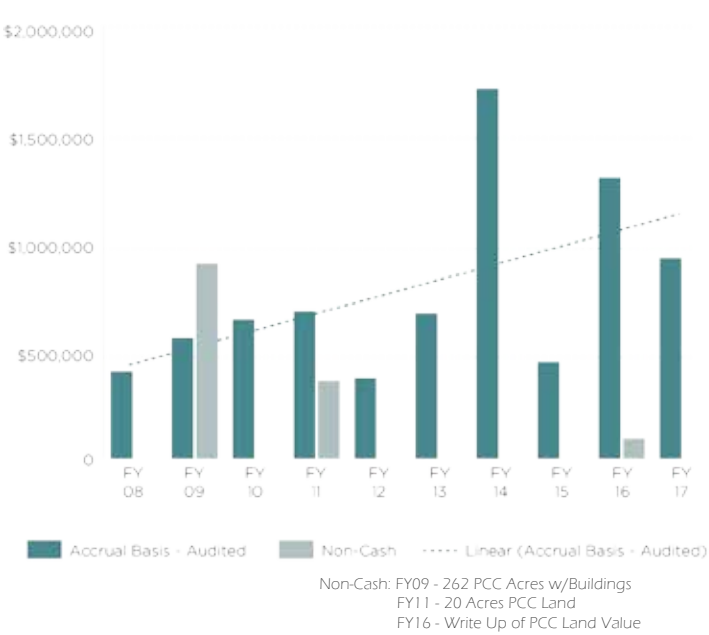
Barbara has more than 20 years of experience with office, data, and financial management. As Office Manager, Barbara wears many different hats: she manages the financials, maintains the smooth functioning of the office, creates efficiency systems and handles all administrative operations. She also supports our conservation, development and communications departments, coordinates the annual audit, and trouble shoots computer issues. She is a long-time New Mexican who cherishes the unique landscape of her native home.

FINANCIALS

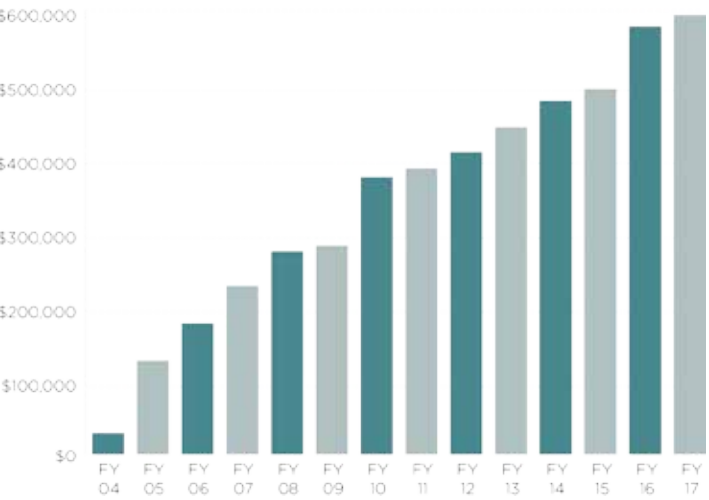
Statements of Financial Position - June 30, 2017 & 2016

Assets	2017	2016
Cash	\$ 265,937	\$ 270,217
Promises to give	680,846	658,000
Land, building and equipment	1,236,781	1,254,604
Stewardship fund	593,650	508,416
Other Assets	9,597	16,759
Total Assets	\$ 2,786,811	\$ 2,707,996
Liabilities	216,407	235,592
Net Assets	2,570,404	2,472,404
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 2,786,811	\$ 2,707,996

Income Growth



Stewardship Fund Growth

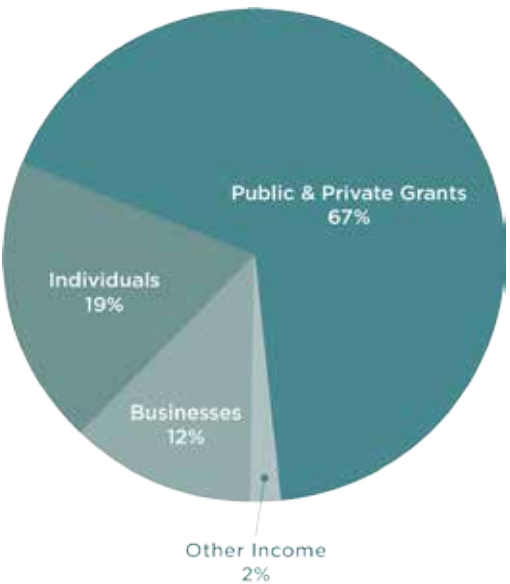


Source of financial data: FY2017 financial audit prepared by Swain & Grieco LLC. Copies of NMLC's annual financial audit reports and federal tax returns are available on our website: www.nmlandconservancy.org

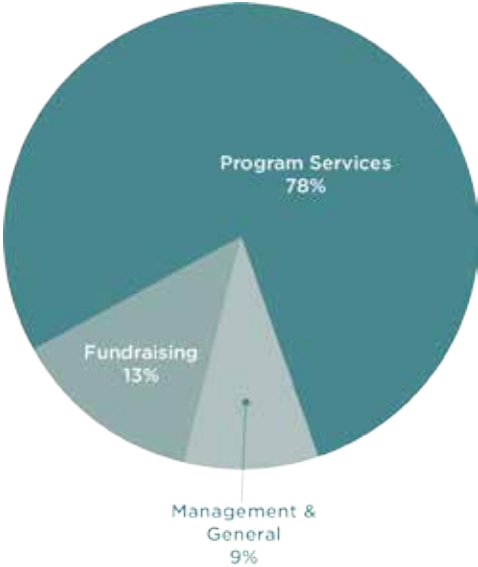
Statements of Activities 2017 & 2016

	2017			2016
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted"	Total	Total
Support and Revenue				
Landowner/Project Contributions	\$ 400,601	\$ (309,601)	\$ 91,000	\$ 893,924
Grants - Foundation	390,380	230,383	620,763	342,300
Individual Contributions	61,809	100,845	162,654	38,225
Business Contributions	34,824	-	34,824	18,338
Other Income*	19,377	-	19,377	7,796
Write-up of Land Value	-	-	-	94,000
Total Support and Revenue	906,991	21,627	928,618	1,394,583
Expenses				
Program Services	645,146	-	645,146	694,675
Management and General	73,742	-	73,742	123,753
Fundraising	111,730	-	111,730	83,735
Total Expenses	830,618	-	830,618	902,163
Change in Net Assets	76,373	21,627	98,000	492,420
Net Assets, Beginning of year	1,813,803	658,601	2,472,404	1,979,984
Net Assets, End of year	\$ 1,890,176	\$ 680,228	\$ 2,570,404	\$ 2,472,404

Revenue 2017



Expenses 2017



DONORS

Pioneer (\$25,000 +)

Wayne Kirkby
Lineberry Foundation
Werner & Helen Muller
New Cycle Foundation
New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee
Nielson Family Limited Partnership
Dan & Ashlyn Perry
The LOR Foundation, Inc.
The Trust for Public Land
The Union Land and Grazing Company
Turner Foundation, Inc.
US Fish & Wildlife Service
Lynn Wilcox

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Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails, Inc.
New Mexico Tax Credit Alliance
Kimberley & Scott Sheffield
Southwest Sufi Community
The Janey Fund Charitable Trust

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Nancy Dickenson
Edsal Chappelle
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PNM Resources Foundation
Rancho Viejo Limited Partnership
Elizabeth Richardson
Kelly Ward
Zephyr Design Inc., Judith Suiter

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Charmay Allred
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Pamela Roy
Christopher Rustay
Mary Anne & Al Sanborn
Peggy Sanchez Mills & James Mills
San Pedro Creek Estates HOA
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Ann Swift, *In Honor of Matthew Rosetta*
Adelante Consulting
LANB
Dale & Gail Armstrong
Anthony Benson
Elizabeth Richardson
Louise Stude Sarofim
COTTONWOOD (\$500)
Conservation Resource Center



Celebrating Land Conservation in New Mexico

In recognition of its 15th year anniversary, the New Mexico Land Conservancy celebrated its annual event, Corazon de la Tierra, at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort's Cottonwood Pavillion near Albuquerque. About 150 guests joined us for dinner and dancing.

NMLC presented this year's Jane Wing Petchesky Conservation Award to Courtney White – former Sierra Club member who dropped out of the “conflict industry” to co-found the Quivira Coalition, dedicated to finding and creating common ground among ranchers, conservationists, public land managers, scientists and others around practices that improve land health.

NMLC thanks the generous sponsors, live and silent auction-item donors, volunteers and guests who helped make this year's Corazon de la Tierra event possible!

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LANB
Dale & Gail Armstrong
Anthony Benson
Elizabeth Richardson
Louise Stude Sarofim

COTTONWOOD (\$500)

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Wild Birds Unlimited
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KSFR 101.1 FM Santa Fe Public Radio
Radio Free Santa Fe 98.1 KBAC

TABLE CAPTAINS (\$1,500)

Sayre & John Gerhart
Judith Suiter | Carole Ward
Troutstalker Ranch - Ashlyn & Dan Perry



Top: NMLC Board Chair, Sayre Gerhart, with Courtney and Gen White. Below: Rep. Matthew McQueen, NMLC Executive Director, Scott Wilber, Santa Fe City Councillor Joseph Maestes, and Kimi Green.

SPECIAL THANKS

- Agua Fria Nursery
Albuquerque Museum Foundation
Megan Baldrige
Sue Baum
Bear Mountain Lodge
Anthony L. Benson
Cave Creek Ranch
Kathleen Hurley
Dianne MacInnes
Milagro Vineyards
Kevin Minogue
Naturalist Journeys
Janey Potts
Reflective Jewelry
Ann Rymer
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Kimberly Sheffield
Rusty Spicer
Taos Ski Valley, Inc.
Elizabeth Temple
Ten Thousand Waves
The Feed Bin
The Mad Potter (Jamie Douglass)
Trader Joe's
Wagner Farms
Carole Ward
Mark Watson
Waterwise Gardening
Robin Zammes



This year, NMLC lost a longtime supporter and friend, Wayne Kirkby of Corrales, NM, who passed away in October 2017. Our very special thanks to Wayne for designating NMLC as the recipient of a generous planned gift of a retirement account. (Wayne was featured in our Fall 2017 newsletter).

New Mexico: Our Mission. Your Legacy.

When you include the New Mexico Land Conservancy (NMLC) in your estate plans, you are making a gift for future generations to enjoy the unique and special places we all cherish. A planned gift, like permanently protected land, is a lasting contribution to ensure that NMLC has the resources to conserve and steward these special places. Making a planned gift to our organization may provide you and your family with valuable tax benefits. Gifts to NMLC are not subject to gift or estate taxes. There are several ways to include NMLC in your estate plans; for example, bequests and gifts of retirement plans, life insurance policies and real estate. Please contact your financial planner to discuss options that meet your financial planning needs and philanthropic vision.



photo courtesy of Mark Watson

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www.nmlandconservancy.org

NEW MEXICO
LAND CONSERVANCY

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