

RIVER RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT CAPS A LIFETIME OF GOOD WORK

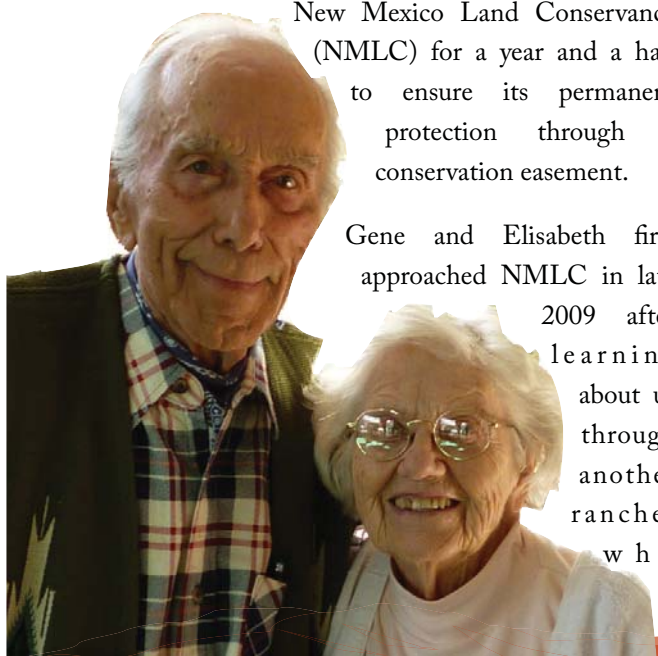
STRADDLING GRANT AND Luna counties in southwestern New Mexico, River Ranch encompasses a three mile stretch of the Mimbres River — the lowest reach of the river that flows perennially before disappearing into the desert.

Its waters support a mature mixed Cottonwood-Ash riparian gallery forest, including the current state champion Velvet Ash tree, and a seasonally flooded area of rare, native Sacaton grasslands, which stand out in sharp contrast to the surrounding Chihuahuan desert scrubland.

This combination of vegetative communities translates into notably high biological diversity. Black bear, mountain lion, mule deer, javelina, coyotes, bobcats, turkey and a variety of bird species are all known to occur on the ranch. And the ranch's owners, Gene and Elisabeth Simon, care so much about conserving this land that they worked with the

New Mexico Land Conservancy (NMLC) for a year and a half to ensure its permanent protection through a conservation easement.

Gene and Elisabeth first approached NMLC in late 2009 after learning about us through another rancher who



had recently protected his land. "We decided that a conservation easement would allow us to ensure permanent protection for the land while enabling a future owner to continue ranching, and, as a state-wide land trust, NMLC seemed like the best choice to help us accomplish that," Gene explains.

When NMLC identified a funding opportunity through State Forestry, the Simons liked the idea of the public-private partnership and that State Forestry would prepare a forest stewardship plan while NMLC would monitor and enforce the conservation easement. Partial funding was provided for the easement through the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, and the easement will be co-held by NMLC and State Forestry.

"The Simons have done a wonderful thing by protecting their ranch in perpetuity and ensuring that the river corridor is protected for wildlife," noted Scott Wilber, NMLC's Executive Director. "The easement land will also serve as a permanent buffer to prevent the encroachment of development on the nearby City of Rocks State Park."

(continued on page 7)

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New Board Member



CULLEN HALLMARK

NMLC welcomes Cullen Hallmark to our Board of Directors. Cullen is an attorney with the Santa Fe firm of Garber and Hallmark, P.C. He is an experienced cyclist, backpacker, river runner, cross-country skier, and gardener. He has been a member of the Quivira Coalition for approximately ten years, and manages its Red Canyon Reserve in Socorro County.

Cullen was born in Dallas, Texas, and grew up in El Paso. He earned a B.A. from St. John's College in 1980. When not in school, Cullen worked in residential house construction, as a ski instructor, as a native plant landscaper, and as a deck hand on a halibut boat in Homer, Alaska. He resumed his studies at the University of Texas School of Law, and earned a J.D. from that institution in 1984. He is a member of the state bars of New Mexico and Texas, and also practices in federal court.

New Staff

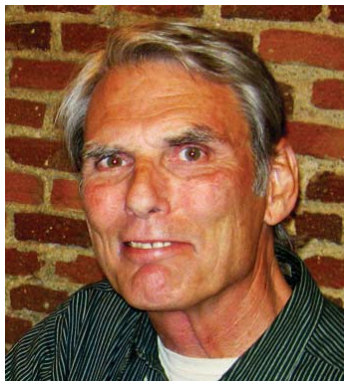
DONNA WELLS, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Donna will be putting her many years of conservation development experience to work at NMLC starting in August. She joins us after more than three years at the Nature Conservancy of New Mexico and more than seven at the Trust for Public Land. Donna has lived in Santa Fe for over 20 years and, outside of conservation, her interests include documentary film making and horseback riding. She has a B.A. in Creative Writing from Vermont College and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Goddard College.



JOSEPH GENDRON, CONSERVATION INTERN

Joseph recently retired from a consulting engineering firm, and is now exploring New Mexico as part of our conservation team. He is also a volunteer with the Continental Divide Trail Alliance, where he was Volunteer of the Year in 1998. He previously worked for the Town of Silver City as Brownfields Program Manager and Trails and Open Space Coordinator. He has a B.S. and a Master's Degree in Engineering from Tulane University. ❖



THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER:

ASSESSING OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PLANNING FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

DEAR FRIENDS,

HOW time flies...this June, as NMLC wrapped up another successful fiscal year, we also completed our first strategic planning cycle. Five years ago, as our Board and small staff gathered together at Tony Benson's ranch in Taos to develop a vision for NMLC, we set out some pretty ambitious goals for ourselves. Here is a brief summary of what we said we would do by the end of FY2011 and what we have actually accomplished over the past five years.

Conservation and Stewardship are the core of our work at NMLC. Here we set two primary goals:

1) To have conserved, directly or in partnership with others, a total of 100,000 acres of high conservation value land at community, watershed and landscape scales throughout the state.

2) To create a first-rate conservation and stewardship program including high-quality transactions, annual monitoring and legal defense for our easement portfolio.

The results:

1) We have conserved over 85,000 acres of land around the state and, with current projects, anticipate reaching the 100,000-acre mark by year's end.

2) We have demonstrated the capability to complete complex, high-quality conservation real estate transactions, monitor all of our easements (so far without any significant issues or violations), and we have set aside nearly \$400,000 in stewardship funding for the long-term legal defense of our easements.

Our work to successfully conserve land is supported by our efforts in the areas of **Information, Outreach and Policy**. Here we set three primary goals:

1) To become a statewide information resource about land conservation and associated techniques and benefits.

2) To increase landowner and general public awareness about land conservation, particularly within the agricultural community.

3) To support the creation and enhancement of tax and

financial incentives to further land conservation throughout the state.

The results:

1) We have created high-quality informational materials and distributed them throughout the state.

2) We have conducted statewide outreach to landowners, agency representatives, conservation and community-based organizations, elected officials and the general public through one-on-one meetings, workshops and conferences.

3) We have worked collaboratively with other land conservation organizations, public agencies, community-based

organizations and elected officials on two important statewide policy and legislative initiatives:

a) The enhancement of the New Mexico state tax

credit for land conservation, which was expanded during the 2007 legislative session from \$100,000 to \$250,000 and, more importantly, made transferable enabling the credits to be sold by landowners on the open market and converted to cash. So far, for the approximately \$3 million in tax credits claimed, over 44,000 acres of land, with a combined appraised value of \$40 million, have been protected statewide.

b) The creation of a combined total of over \$20 million in annual appropriations of state funding for land conservation and restoration, culminating in the formation of a dedicated conservation funding mechanism for the state through the passage of the Natural Heritage Conservation Act in 2010.

Lastly, in order to do our conservation work, we need a healthy organization. Therefore, in the areas of **Fundraising and Organizational Development**, we set two primary goals:

1) To raise necessary funds to meet the needs of our growing organization, fulfill our easement stewardship obligations and begin to build toward financial sustainability.

2) To become a viable and sustainable statewide land trust, including adequate Board and staff and administrative and financial capacity.

**Our strategic plan hasn't just been
another document collecting
dust on the shelf.**

(continued on page 4)

Director's Corner *(continued from page 3)*

The results:

1) We steadily increased our annual fundraising goals each year from \$250,000 in FY2007 to over \$800,000 at the end of this last fiscal year, set aside over \$400,000 in stewardship funding, and secured the gift of the 280-acre Petchesky Ranch which now serves as our Santa Fe headquarters as well as a venue to promote land conservation.

2) We increased our Board from six to 10 members, gradually added more professional staff in response to increased demand for our services, and implemented key policies and procedures (including annual financial audits).

So, for us, our strategic plan hasn't just been another document collecting dust on the shelf. We have put it to good use by setting ambitious but realistic goals, establishing quantifiable measures for success, and then tracking and adjusting our activities to achieve optimal results.

This spring we focused our planning and evaluation efforts to make the next five years even more successful than the last. With the assistance of consultants from Social Enterprise Associates and Lisa M. Dietlin and Associates, we engaged in a series of planning exercises to help us prepare a strategic plan for the next five years. We developed strategic fundraising, communications and marketing plans. We conducted a survey of all staff, Board and approximately 30 external stakeholders to identify trends, opportunities and priorities; take stock of what we had done well and perhaps not so well; and solicit recommendations for future action. Finally, we organized an internal strategic planning retreat to review and discuss this information, and develop some meaningful recommendations. All of this culminated in the preparation of a strategic plan for FY2012 to FY2016.

From our review of our activities and accomplishments over the past five years, all indications are that we are on the right track and need to do more of the same, but perhaps with even greater and more diverse forms of partnership and collaboration to increase our effectiveness in fulfilling our mission. During the last five years, we have accomplished much of the essential groundwork and established a solid base for future success.

During the next five years and forward, we intend to "step it up a notch": increasing our conservation goal to 150,000 acres by the end of FY2016, expanding our revenue in accordance with necessary staff and operational growth and the need to ensure adequate long-term stewardship and endowment funding, and

contributing to the collective effort to build a stronger and more effective land conservation community and movement for New Mexico.

We hope that you will join us in our continued efforts to ensure that the heritage we have received is the legacy we leave for New Mexico.

Thank you,

Scott Wilber

Executive Director ❖

Thank you Commissioner Powell!



NMLC would like to thank State Land Commissioner Ray Powell (shown at right with NMLC's Executive Director Scott Wilber) for his service on our Board and his continuing commitment to conservation in New Mexico.

Photo by Christina Cordova.

NMLC BOARD PROFILE:

ANTHONY ANELLA

TONY ANELLA – ARCHITECT, furniture designer, conservationist — has been trying to preserve, understand and interact with the New Mexico landscape since he was a child. Tony started his exploration of the land and agriculture at an early age.

Born and raised in Los Ranchos, NM, Tony's family's home was flanked by a large dairy farm, later to be known as Los Poblanos Ranch and Organic Farm. Mr. Simms, the owner, would encourage Tony and his brother to visit the farm through a gate that he created and named "Tony's Gate".



Tony Anella with his daughter Kate. Photo by Roderick Nash.

Tony became involved with the New Mexico Land Conservancy through the Montosa Ranch project, a limited conservation development incorporating a 30,000-acre conservation easement. With the help of NMLC, Tony and his partners came up with a master plan that was designed to protect the majority of the ranch through a conservation easement while allowing for a limited number of tracts that could be sold and developed into future home sites. In the project's design, he used "sieve mapping" to identify where to build and where not to build through a qualitative analysis of the land. Although the ranch ultimately was purchased by a single owner and kept intact, the project demonstrated that with some forethought and planning, development property can be designed to protect the integrity and intrinsic qualities of the land.

Later he joined 4H and raised sheep and horses. When he was 15 years old he spent the summer at Jaritas Ranch, a cattle ranch 12 miles east of Springer. This is where he learned to brand, milk and vaccinate cattle, fix fences and clean corrals. He is proud that by the end of that summer he could milk three Brown Swiss cows in one sitting.

Tony went on to earn a Bachelors of Art and History from Dartmouth College and a Master of Architecture from the University of Colorado. During his college years he was inspired by two books, Paul Hogan's [Great River: The Rio Grande in North American History](#), and Laura Gilpin's [The Rio Grande: River of Destiny](#). These works inspired him

to organize a 120-day kayak expedition down the Rio Grande, starting at the headwaters in Southern Colorado and traveling all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico.

Tony is co-author, with John B. Wright, of [SAVING THE RANCH: Conservation Easement Design in the American West](#), (Island Press, 2004). He is also co-author, with Mark C. Childs, of [NEVER SAY GOODBYE: The Albuquerque Rephotographic Survey Project](#), (The Albuquerque Museum, 2000). In addition to his work on NMLC's Board, he serves on the Board of Directors for the Aldo Leopold Foundation. In 2009, he co-chaired the foundation's centennial celebration, promoting Leopold's vision that an ethical relationship with the land is essential to a vibrant and healthy community.

We are proud to have Tony on our Board, helping us to preserve the landscapes of New Mexico that he so treasures. ❖

MANZANO MOUNTAINS RANCH CONSERVED

MESTEÑO DRAW RANCH is located approximately five miles north of Mountainair near the Village of Punta de Agua and Manzanos Mountains State Park in Torrance County. The ranch primarily consists of open grasslands with some scattered piñon pine, juniper and oak. Mesteño Draw is an intermittent stream that flows through the ranch primarily during spring runoff and monsoon season. The land was once farmed for pinto beans and there are multiple homestead sites on the ranch including an old house, barn and corral that the landowner, Joan Bybee, still uses for her small livestock operation.

The ranch is a prime example of a small-scale grass-fed cattle operation that employs sustainable grazing practices on the 867 acres comprising the property. The landowner has made a concerted effort to restore and enhance the Mesteño Draw riparian corridor. She has primarily worked with a host of volunteers (including NMLC's 2010 summer interns), the Quivira Coalition, the Clauch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District and the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service to install small and large rock dams all along the draw to build sediment and help slow the flow of water and prevent further channelization and erosion. She has also removed juniper and brush from a large portion of the ranch to keep the grasslands open and productive.

When asked why she decided to complete an easement over her ranch, Joan said that she is “concerned about the future of New Mexico’s wildlife and agricultural land with the current trend of dividing land up into residential areas. Grasslands that are kept healthy play an important role in drawing carbon from the atmosphere and in maintaining healthy mineral and water cycles.” She also said that she hopes that “future generations will be able to enjoy the natural environment both at the scenic



landscape level and at the finer-grained level of the individual plants and animals that are supported by the land.”

To date NMLC has conserved over 15,000 acres of land in Torrance County alone, and will continue to help conserve important agricultural and natural landscapes in this part of New Mexico. ❖

River Ranch (continued from page 1)

Always strong supporters of conservation, between 2005 and 2006 the Simons agreed to sell approximately 1,000 acres of the River Ranch to the New Mexico State Parks Division to expand City of Rocks State Park. They also entered into a cooperative agreement with State Parks, through its foundation, to provide substantial funding for the expansion of the park's programs and services. A few years later, the Simons conveyed 10 acres of their ranch to the Archaeological Conservancy, providing permanent protection to one of the last large Classic-period Mimbres sites in the area.

As he continues to work on his ranch, Gene Simon can look back on a colorful life that has included many notable achievements. He survived a Japanese kamikaze attack to the aircraft carrier on which he was serving in the South Pacific during World War II. Upon returning from the war, he worked his way up to be publisher and CEO of what became four western Pennsylvania newspapers, a printing plant and a New Mexico cattle ranch — all employee-owned.

His newspapers were as gutsy as he is, taking on the Mafia in the 1960s. In 1971, one of them was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for the iconic photo of a young woman kneeling over the body of a dead student during the Kent State shootings of Vietnam War protesters.

The complex operation was sold to Gannett in 1976. Because Gannett didn't want the ranch and Gene didn't want to continue as a Gannett publisher, at age 60 he acquired the ranch which included a 105-section, 808-head Forest Service livestock allotment — after foregoing payment of his minority interest in exchange. "Some of my friends and peers thought I was loony," remarked Gene, "taking all this on when normal people would be thinking of retirement, but it was the best decision I ever made!"

After operating the much larger ranch, in 1979 Gene decided that he needed to scale things down. He and Elisabeth purchased a small spread — the 81-acre Rancho del Rio (River Ranch) — along the Mimbres River near the town of Faywood, 35 miles southeast of Silver City and 30 miles northwest of Deming. But the ever-active couple soon expanded the River Ranch by purchasing an adjacent 7,600 acres from neighbors.

Among other pursuits, Gene wrote a weekly newspaper column for the Deming Headlight. It also ran in the Silver City Sun-News

and the Carlsbad Current-Argus. He had started the column, "Think About It," in Tarentum, Pennsylvania, and brought it with him to New Mexico. It resulted in a book titled "Cows and Columns" published by Wheatmark in Tucson, Arizona.

"Strange as it may sound, cows and columns make a great combination," Gene says. "The bulk of my ideas

came from the seat of a pickup or the back of a horse. Your mind is uncluttered. There's little distraction." He wrote the weekly column — never missing a deadline — for 27 years.

The decision to protect the remaining portions of their ranch with a conservation easement is the culmination of Gene's dedicated stewardship of the River Ranch over three and a half decades. "After living in this beautiful valley for so long and coming to know all the natural and cultural treasures on this ranch, I couldn't stand the thought of someone breaking up the integrity of this incredible place and putting up a bunch of trailers and mobile homes here after Libby and I are gone," he says.

On September 24th, NMLC will hold an event to honor Gene and Elisabeth Simon and celebrate the completion of their easement over the River Ranch. The permanent protection of this beautiful and important property is a tremendous gift to New Mexico from two remarkable people. ❖



Tax Incentives Aid Conservation

NEW MEXICO IS one of only a handful of states across the nation that has enhanced tax incentives for landowners who donate conservation easements or land for conservation purposes. As New Mexicans, we should take pride in the fact that our fellow citizens and legislative members have made conservation an important priority by providing these incentives to landowners who are interested in conserving their land.

The primary driving force for land conservation in our state is the New Mexico state tax credit for conservation easement or land donations, which was enacted in 2004 and then expanded and made transferable in 2008. The tax credit allows landowners to sell their credits at a discounted rate on the open market and receive real cash for their conservation easement or land donation.

Some may question why landowners need these tax incentives to donate easements or land. Why can't they just donate their development rights out of charity? Some would contend that, if private landowners are really interested in and committed to preserving New Mexico, they shouldn't need any special incentives.

However, the fact is that most of the landowners with whom NMLC works are "land rich and cash poor." In many cases, the land they own is far and away their most valuable asset. And since their incomes are often fairly modest, they often cannot take advantage of the ability to write off the full value of their charitable contributions because their incomes are too low relative to the appraised value of the easements or land they may be donating. The transferable state tax credit provides landowners an option to extract financial value out of their land without having to sell all or portions of it outright. This is very important to agricultural landowners as a decrease in their acreage or land base means an inevitable decrease in production. Through conservation easements, agricultural landowners are able to continue to farm and ranch, while realizing financial returns for the development rights they are foregoing through the granting of the easements.

The state tax credit provides a valuable incentive for more landowners to become involved in conservation, as it represents a viable option to help them address their land conservation goals as well as their estate planning needs. ❖

SANTA FE "GREEN FIRE" PREMIERE

THIS SPRING, THE New Mexico Land Conservancy and several co-sponsors were very pleased to present the Santa Fe premiere of the film "Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time." The premiere was held the evening before Earth Day at the New Mexico State Land Office Auditorium in Santa Fe. Over 100 people attended and engaged in lively conversations about land conservation before and after the film.

Probably best known as the author of the conservation classic "A Sand County Almanac," Leopold is also renowned for his work as an educator, philosopher, forester, ecologist, and wilderness advocate. The film shares highlights from Leopold's life and extraordinary career, explaining how he shaped conservation in the 20th century and still inspires people today.

NMLC would like to thank our co-sponsors, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, Audubon New Mexico, Earthworks Institute, the Aldo Leopold Foundation and the US Forest Service for their help in creating a wonderful event. We would also like to thank the New Mexico State Land Office for providing the venue.

Listen to an interview on Santa Fe Radio Café (KSFR 101.1) about Aldo Leopold and "Green Fire" at <http://www.santaferadiocafe.org/podcasts/?p=1115>. ❖

SAVE THE DATE!

Agricultural Land Conservation Forum

New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Thursday, October 6, 2011

8am - 5pm

No admission fee required
Lunch and refreshments provided

Farming and ranching represents an important part of New Mexico's land heritage, and agriculture is very much interwoven into the state's cultural, social and economic fabric. Conversion of agricultural lands is one of the greatest threats to our continuing agricultural heritage. Between 1982 and 2007, over one million acres of prime agricultural and rural lands were converted due to growth and development in New Mexico. This is an alarming trend that must be addressed if we are to ensure the future viability and sustainability of agriculture in New Mexico, as well as the important resources and benefits that agricultural lands provide.

The Agricultural Lands Conservation Forum will primarily focus on the use of conservation easements as a tool to help protect agricultural lands from conversion, and the role they play in supporting the continued use of these lands for agricultural and other related purposes. The forum will provide an overview of topics related to agricultural land conservation from experts in the field, including; an introduction to land trusts and agricultural conservation easements, federal and tax incentives for land conservation, estate planning, funding programs for land conservation, and case studies of agricultural land conservation presented by private landowners and community-based organizations who have experience working to preserve agricultural land through the use of conservation easements.

Participants of the forum will come away with a better understanding of conservation easements, the tax and financial incentives and resources associated with them, and the important role that easements can play in assuring the viability and sustainability of agriculture in New Mexico.

For more information please contact Michael Scisco
505-986-3801

michaelscisco@nmlandconservancy.org

To RSVP, please contact Kris Murphey
505-986-3801

admin@nmlandconservancy.org

NEW MEXICO
LAND CONSERVANCY

Preserving New Mexico's Land Heritage

GOODBYE, JANE

THERE ARE PEOPLE who seem to have a lifelong spark. They are unflagging, dedicated, interested, and absolutely devoted to the things in which they believe. They see something interesting in each person they meet and are gracious in every circumstance. NMLC is blessed to have known such a person — Jane Wing Petchesky, our friend and generous supporter.

Jane grew up in Connecticut, where her father was head of the National Victory Garden Institute and managing editor of Farm & Fireside magazine. He instilled in Jane, her sister, Nancy, and brother, Andy, a deep love of the outdoors.

As an adult, Jane worked in the fashion industry in New York. She first came to Santa Fe with a girlfriend in 1948 and met Gene Petchesky at a Fiesta party. When the party turned a little raucous, Gene convinced Jane to go with him to a nightclub called La Taverna on the Santa Fe River. As the days went on, their courtship proceeded quickly. After Gene made the effort to visit her and her family in New York and was still as charming as she found him in New Mexico, they decided to get married and return to Santa Fe.

In the late 1960s they acquired some property on the outskirts of town and built a home. They raised their son, Steve, and bred quarter horses. At the encouragement of Jane to follow up on a brainstorm during a road trip, Gene and saddlemaker Slim Green helped found the Rodeo de Santa Fe.

After Gene passed away in 2001, Jane stayed on the ranch and became active in issues of planned development, historic preservation, open space and water conservation. She actively served on boards and committees dealing with these issues, including the Old Santa Fe Association, the Old Santa Fe Trail

Association, the Santa Fe Watershed Association and the Richards Avenue Association.

NMLC's Executive Director, Scott Wilber, became acquainted with Jane shortly after moving to Santa Fe in 2004 and helped advise her on the conservation easement process she completed

with the Forest Trust at the end of that year. In 2007, as part of her estate planning, Jane decided that she would donate her property to a non-profit organization. With assistance from Billie Blair, then director of the Santa Fe Community Foundation, she considered several organizations and ultimately chose NMLC as the beneficiary of this gift. In

December of 2008 she moved into an apartment at El Castillo Retirement Residence, overlooking her beloved Santa Fe River, and subsequently transferred the Petchesky Ranch ownership to NMLC. It now serves as NMLC's headquarters.

We feel very lucky to have had the chance to celebrate Jane's donation with her, and that she was able to visit the ranch often to see the progress here and to replenish her supply of drinking water from the ranch well, which she preferred to the "city water." Jane took a genuine interest in our work and understood the importance of land and water conservation in New Mexico.

In recognition of a lifetime dedicated to good deeds and philanthropy, Jane was named a Santa Fe Living Treasure in June of 2010. Her life was an inspirational example of how one person can be a strong and positive influence in the place in which she or he lives. She will be greatly missed, but her legacy will continue on. ❖

The sun is setting, crickets are awake. Wind is up. The hawk flies beautifully on silent wings.

Blanca lies on the lawn.

It is cool now in my garden.

- Jane Petchesky

August 20, 1921 – February 2, 2011



Photo by Teri Thomson Randall

Many Thanks to our Supporters

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**“We abuse land
because we regard
it as a commodity
belonging to us.
When we see land
as a community to
which we belong,
we may begin to
use it with love
and respect.”**

*- Aldo Leopold,
A Sand County Almanac
1949*

Courtesy of Aldo Leopold Foundation: www.aldoleopold.org