

PROTECTING A FAMILY RANCH IN LINCOLN COUNTY

Like many of their peers, ranchers Gary and Beth Hightower knew they had some tough choices to make if their 19,000 acre ranch, which was handed down to them from two preceding generations, was to remain in the family for the next generation.

Located in the plains of central New Mexico between Corona and Carrizozo, the Ancho Cattle Company Ranch is one of the largest working ranches in Lincoln County. Due in no small part to excellent land stewardship and sustainable range management practices – including a rotational grazing technique known as holistic resource management – the property is a noteworthy example of successful, large-scale ranching in an economy that has not always been kind to the agricultural community.

The ranch, which consists primarily of southern shortgrass prairie mixed with piñon-juniper savannas, buffers the Lincoln National Forest along the northern edge of the Jicarilla Mountains and provides significant habitat for a variety of wildlife, including pronghorn antelope, mule deer and elk.

With a strong desire to keep their ranch in the family and prevent their land from being subdivided and developed like so many other large ranches in the region, Gary and Beth Hightower made a carefully considered decision – they partnered with the New Mexico Land Conservancy (NMLC) to place a conservation easement over approximately 9,800 acres of the ranch.

By entering into a conservation easement, the Hightowers retain ownership of their family land and the ability to manage it for agriculture and other purposes compatible



ANCHO CATTLE COMPANY RANCH

with the easement. Moreover, the land remains on the county tax roles and available for agricultural production.

Ranching is an integral part of New Mexico's culture, heritage and economy. Maintaining the viability of agriculture as well as the other important conservation values on the ranch was the fundamental goal of this conservation easement.

Through an innovative and collaborative partnership, the conservation easement will be co-held by NMLC and the New Mexico Division of Forestry. Partial funding for the creation of the easement was provided through the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department with the approval of Governor Bill Richardson's office.

We commend and thank the Hightowers for making such a generous contribution toward preserving this special land and the ranching tradition that it supports.

NMLC INSTRUMENTAL IN PRESERVING HISTORIC AGRICULTURAL LAND IN CORRALES

Working in partnership with the Village of Corrales, NMLC recently helped facilitate the acquisition of one of New Mexico's most historic pieces of agricultural land – a portion of the Gonzales family lands in the heart of Corrales. Located on the Rio Grande between Albuquerque and Rio Rancho, the Village of Corrales, like many traditional communities near large metropolitan areas, is facing rapid urbanization and loss of its agricultural identity. To offset this trend, preserving what little farmland remains has been a primary goal of the Village over the past few years.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3...

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As the blaze of autumn colors around the state slowly fade and the leaves begin to fall from the high country to the river valleys, we are reminded that another winter is just around the corner. As we reflect back, 2008 will undoubtedly be remembered as a year full of incredible challenges, changes, and hope. Whether we like it or not, we have all had to come to the realization that what happens in one part of the nation or world affects us all. We have witnessed the devastation of warfare and natural disasters around the world, and experienced rises in fuel and food prices throughout the region and country, culminating in the collapse of the housing sector and our financial markets, the very underpinnings of our national economy.

All of these events serve to remind us that conservation is an essential part of our human existence and survival. As we look at the world we live in today, we must necessarily recognize that things like local food security, energy dependence, water quality and supply, and conservation of our natural resources have taken on a new level of importance and urgency. Land and water conservation is inextricably linked to all of these things whether you are a farmer, rancher, energy producer, environmentalist, or simply an ordinary citizen trying to raise a family or earn a decent living.

New Mexico is incredibly fortunate to be rich in land and natural resources, combined with diverse cultures and scenery unlike anywhere else in this country, but it is also those very assets that continue to attract so many people to our fair state. New Mexico now ranks as one of the top ten fastest growing states in the nation. The level of growth and the changing conditions we are experiencing in a demographically diverse community necessitate that we identify,



prioritize and focus our attention on those lands around the state having the highest conservation values, which include agriculturally productive and resource-rich lands, critical watersheds and wildlife habitat, scenic open space, significant cultural and historic sites, and important

recreational lands. Land conservation is always a sound investment because land is one thing you can't make more of, and once it has been developed and built over, we won't get a second chance to preserve it.

The New Mexico Land Conservancy has set forth a goal of protecting 250,000 acres of high conservation value and productive working lands by 2016, directly or in partnership with others. So far this year, we have protected over 12,000 acres of land, increasing our total land conservation around the state to nearly 70,000 acres.

So we are well on our way to achieving our goal. With the combination of the enhanced federal tax deductions and the new transferable state tax credit, the incentives for private land conservation in New Mexico are as good as they have ever been. But we cannot sustain our efforts and achieve our ambitious goals without your help. Please consider making a contribution today and helping us ensure that the land heritage we have received is the legacy we leave for tomorrow.

*Scott Wilber,
Executive Director*



HISTORIC CORRALES FARMLAND

CONTINUED...

The Gonzales property was originally part of the Town of Alameda Land Grant. In 1710, the Alameda Land Grant, comprised then of over 100,000 acres, was given to Corporal Francisco Montes Vigil, a soldier in the Spanish army. Vigil was unable to settle on his grant as required by Spanish law so, in 1712, he sold it to Captain Juan Gonzales Bas. Through the years the land was subdivided and parcels were sold – however the tract purchased by the Village of Corrales was part of a larger parcel of land that had remained in the Gonzales family for centuries and had been continuously farmed since 1712.



GONZALES FARMLAND EASEMENT WITH THE SANDIA MOUNTAINS IN THE BACKGROUND

Funding for the acquisition of the land was provided through a local voter-approved general obligation bond passed in 2004 in support of farmland and open space preservation within the Village of Corrales. The property was acquired subject to a conservation easement which was purchased with Village bond measure funds combined with matching funds from the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service's Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program.

While the Village will own and manage the land, the New Mexico Land Conservancy will hold the conservation easement and be responsible for its long-term monitoring and legal defense. Through its Farmland Preservation Committee, the Village will consider proposals for farming a portion of the land or developing a community-supported agriculture project.

NEW MEXICO LAND TRUSTS PRESENT APPRECIATION AWARD TO SENATOR JEFF BINGAMAN



NMLC BOARD CHAIR JACK WRIGHT WITH PATRICIA DOMINGUEZ FROM THE SENATOR'S STAFF WHO ACCEPTED THE AWARD ON SENATOR BINGAMAN'S BEHALF.

NMLC joined the New Mexico land trust community in presenting an appreciation award to Senator Jeff Bingaman recognizing his role as a member of the Finance Committee in helping extend the federal tax incentives under the new Farm Bill.

On several occasions, the US House of Representatives had threatened to bring down the entire Farm Bill over the inclusion of tax provisions. Senator Bingaman was part of the team of Senators who stood firm and called their bluff, and thanks to his support, landowners donating conservation easements in New Mexico have two more years to take advantage of outstanding federal tax deductions. NMLC coordinated with the Land Trust Alliance and other New Mexico land trusts to organize the award ceremony, which took place during the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust's Annual Harvest Dinner.

DONATE TO THE NEW MEXICO LAND CONSERVANCY TODAY!
www.nmlandconservancy.org



CONSERVATION IN SELDEN CANYON

NMLC and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) are currently partnering to conduct outreach to landowners of high conservation value properties within a ten-mile stretch of the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico known as Selden Canyon. WWF is working to conserve critical habitat for the federally endangered Southwest willow flycatcher and other bird species within the canyon by restoring floodplains and protecting a mosaic of native riparian habitats including forests, dense shrub, meadows and wetlands.

The goal of the partnership is to provide information to landowners about land conservation priorities and opportunities, and interest them in working with NMLC and other partners to conserve their land. Our next step is to protect two riverfront properties that have been identified as extremely important habitats for the flycatcher.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY

Since early this year, NMLC has been working with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) to develop an education and outreach program on conservation easements for the New Mexico Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and other interested agricultural groups. After an initial meeting in Las Cruces in April, NMLC volunteered to serve on the Conservation Easement Education Committee (CEEC) organized by NMDA as an outcome of the April meeting. The committee held its first meeting in June at which time a request was made of the New Mexico land trusts to present information to the committee on conservation easements and the associated tax incentives.

In July, NMLC organized a meeting in conjunction with the Biophilia Foundation for local land trust representatives and land conservation professionals to discuss providing this information through a coordinated effort to NMDA. NMLC then took the lead on compiling and preparing comprehensive material on private land conservation, which was presented to the CEEC at its meeting in Socorro on November 5. NMLC and the other land trusts hope that this information will ultimately be distributed to NMDA, the SWCDs and other agricultural groups, and then made available through them to farmers, ranchers and other landowners interested in agricultural land preservation around the state.



NEW STAFF

In January, NMLC was pleased to welcome Michael Scisco to the team as our “on the ground” Conservation Specialist. Michael has over six years of experience working in the natural resource conservation field. He worked previously for the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, Ecotrust, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Michael has extensive conservation planning and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) experience related to open space preservation, water quality enhancement, riparian corridor conservation, and farmland preservation. Michael holds a B.S. in Environmental Science from Western Washington University and a Graduate Certificate in GIS from Portland State University.



As Conservation Specialist, Michael supports NMLC's conservation, stewardship and outreach efforts.

WANT TO SEE CONSERVATION HAPPEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY?
TALK TO A FRIEND ABOUT US!

OUR WISH LIST

Make a gift of an item on our wish list. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law. Contact your tax professional for more information. Items currently on the list are:

DIGITAL SLR CAMERA to produce high quality images for baseline documentation, monitoring and communications

POWERPOINT PROJECTOR and screen for presentations

ALL TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) for conducting site visits and easement monitoring

MOTORCYCLE (dirt bike) for conducting site visits and easement monitoring

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLE for conducting site visits and easement monitoring

FOLDING CHAIRS for events



ANCONES RANCH



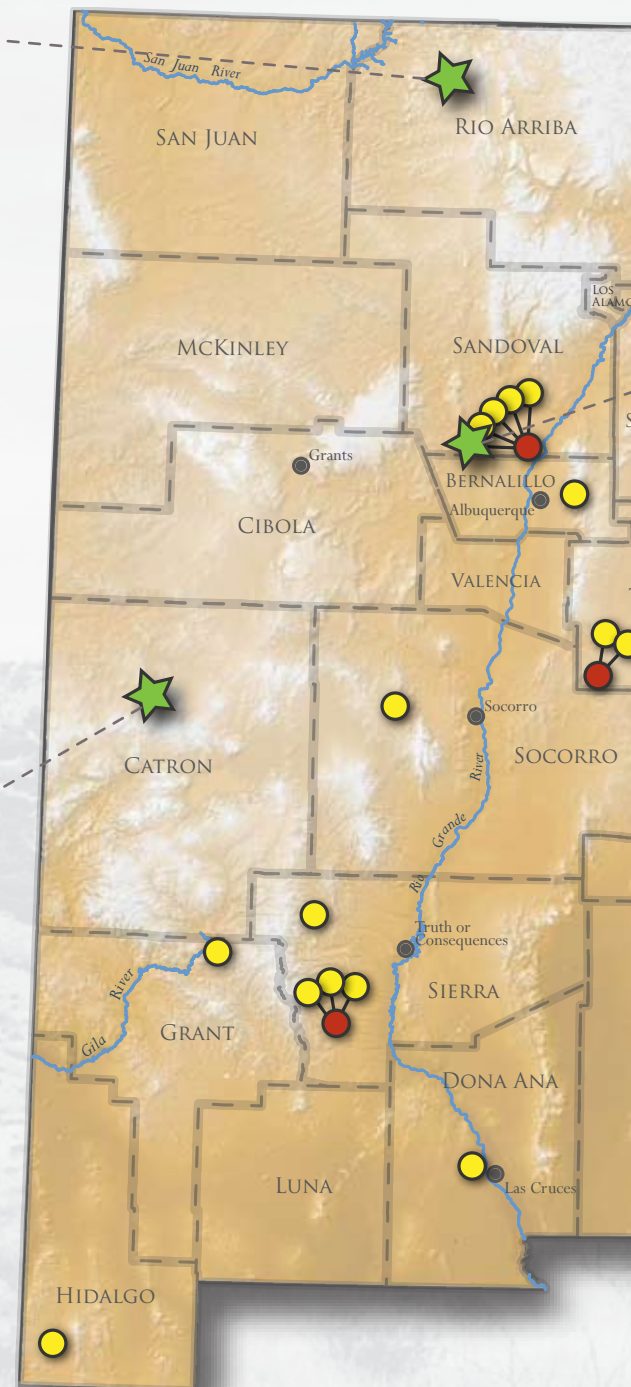
With magnificent views of the San Juan Mountains and the Brazos Box, Ancones Ranch is a stunning property located near the picturesque Village of Los Ojos in Rio Arriba County. The property consists primarily of irrigated hayfields with a mature riparian gallery forest along a one-mile stretch of the Rio Chama that runs through the middle of the ranch. Vernon and Dora Casados have agreed to place 196 acres of the property under easement. NMLC secured partial funding for this project through the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, and then approached the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) to serve as a conservation partner. NMLC and NMDGF will co-hold the easement and work together to maintain the conservation values of this spectacular property. NMLC anticipates completing this project before the end of the year.

ALEGRES MOUNTAIN RANCH

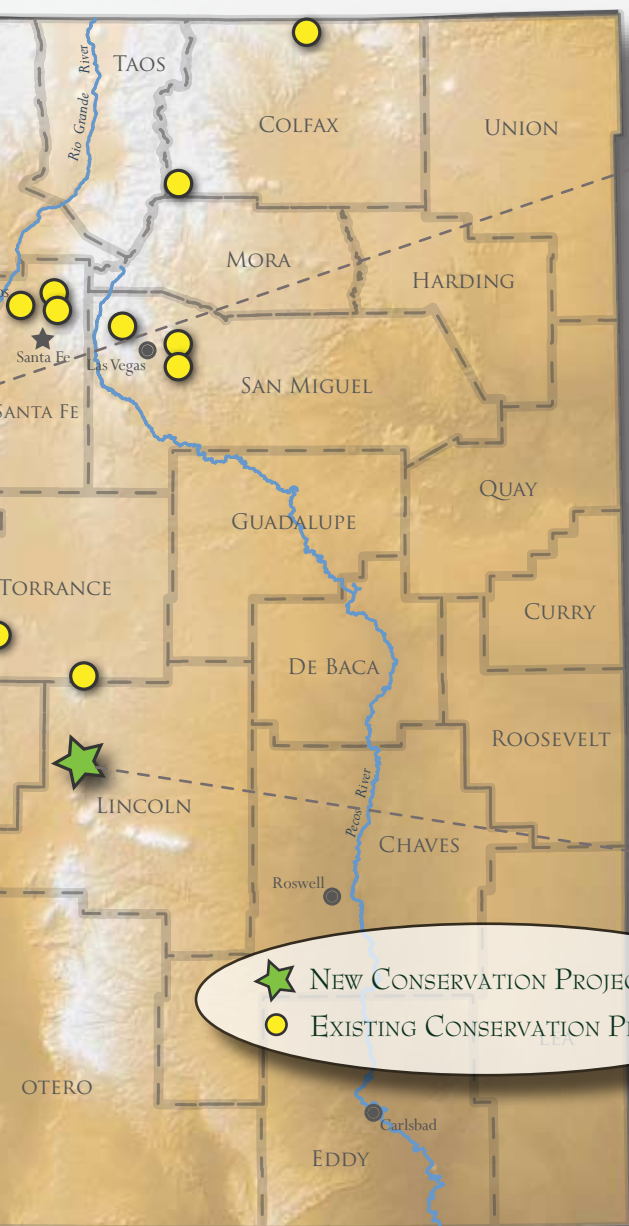


As our first project in Catron County, the 1,480-acre Alegres Mountain Ranch conservation easement, donated by Blake Tollett, stands out as an important accomplishment for NMLC and for land conservation as a whole. Located along the Continental Divide, five miles east of the Apache National Forest, the easement encompasses much of the southwestern flank of Alegres Mountain – a prominent feature in this part of the county. The 3,240 acre ranch is comprised of mixed Ponderosa pine, piñon-juniper and Gambel oak and provides excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife including elk, mule deer and black bear. NMLC is planning to work with the landowners and the New Mexico Division of Forestry to place the remaining 1,740 acres of the ranch under easement in 2009.

NEW MEXICO LAND CONSERVATION



69,683 ACRES



GONZALES FARMLAND



The five-acre Gonzales Easement is the one of five projects that NMLC has completed with the Village of Corrales since 2005, preserving a total of 33 acres – which represents nearly one-third of the remaining irrigated, agricultural land within the Village limits.

See Page 1 for more information.

ANCHO CATTLE COMPANY RANCH



Located in the plains of central New Mexico between Corona and Carrizozo, the Ancho Cattle Company Ranch is one of the largest working ranches in Lincoln County. NMLC, with help from our funding partners the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, secured a conservation easement over 9,871 acres of ranch land in central New Mexico.

The ranch, which consists primarily of southern shortgrass prairie mixed with piñon-juniper savannas, buffers the Lincoln National Forest along the northern edge of the Jicarilla Mountains and provides significant habitat for a variety of wildlife, including pronghorn antelope, mule deer and elk.

See Page 1 for more information.

UPDATE ON THE STATE TAX CREDIT FOR LAND CONSERVATION

During the 2007 legislative session, NMLC collaborated with The Nature Conservancy and members of the Modrall-Sperling law firm to help promote the expansion of the existing state tax credit for land conservation under HB990, legislation which was ably sponsored by then Rep. Peter Wirth and signed into law by Governor Richardson.

NMLC then worked closely with the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), providing input into their process of developing the administrative rules and regulations for the new state tax credit certification program. The program has been designed to ensure that the projects being considered for tax credits have significant conservation values and public benefits, are properly designed and documented to ensure the permanent protection of these conservation values and public benefits, and that the organizations responsible for holding the conservation easements and fee lands have sufficient capacity and resources to properly monitor and steward them well into the future.

NMLC wishes to acknowledge EMNRD and all of our conservation partners for helping to create an outstanding certification process for the new state tax credit program for land conservation. NMLC is also proud of the fact that two of its projects - the Ancho Cattle Company Ranch in Lincoln County and the Alegres Mountain Ranch in Catron County - were the first two conservation easements in New Mexico to be fully certified for tax credits under the new program.



WANT MORE INFORMATION
ON TAX CREDITS AND INCENTIVES
FOR LAND CONSERVATION?
CALL US AT: 505-986-3801

FEDERAL TAX INCENTIVES UPDATE

As part of the 2008 Farm Bill, earlier this year Congress extended the current federal tax incentives related to the donation of conservation easements through December 31, 2009. The success of this legislative initiative was due in large part to the excellent advocacy work of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) supported by its 1,700 members nationwide. The incentives, which apply to a landowner's federal income tax, can be broadly summarized as follows: (1) they raise the deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from 30 percent of their adjusted gross income in any year to 50 percent; (2) they allow qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100 percent of their adjusted gross income; and (3) they increase the number of years over which a landowner can take deductions from six to 16 years. LTA and land trusts across the nation are working to promote the permanent extension of these tax incentives. NMLC plans to do its part by working closely with the new congressional delegation for New Mexico to inform them of the land trust community's collective efforts and accomplishments around the state, and encourage them to support the pending legislation in 2009.

NMLC MOVING ON TO GREENER PASTURES

Last year, Jane Petchesky, a long-time Santa Fe resident, made an incredibly generous planned gift to NMLC of her house and land, located next to Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Church just outside the city in the



JANE PETCHESKY IN HER HOME; SOON TO BE THE BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR THE NEW MEXICO LAND CONSERVANCY

Community College District. Upon finding an apartment with a view of the Santa Fe River, this fall Jane made the decision to move into the El Castillo retirement community by the end of the year and will be turning her property over to NMLC at that time to use as our new base of operations. After making a few changes to convert the house into functional office space, NMLC plans to relocate to the Petchesky Ranch early next year.

We are grateful to the Paul Abrams Law Firm for providing us with comfortable office space for the past year and a half. We will miss being near the Plaza but look forward to having a permanent home. Stay tuned for announcements of our first open house next spring, followed by the Grand Opening of the Petchesky Conservation Center later in 2009.

HELP US BUILD AN ENDOWMENT FOR THE
PETCHESKY CONSERVATION CENTER
MAKE A DONATION TODAY!

NEW MEXICO LAND CONSERVANCY OFFICE GOES “GREEN”

STEWARDSHIP IN A GREEN WAY

The staff at NMLC believes in stretching every dollar by conserving, reusing and recycling in the office as much as we can. Our “greening” efforts got a big boost this year when, through a stroke of luck and the generosity for one of our Board members, we were able to purchase a Toyota Prius at the dealer’s cost after he won the car in a raffle.

The car, which averages 40 to 50 miles per gallon, will be a valuable asset as we travel across the state visiting new potential projects and monitoring completed easements (although we’re guessing we’ll still have to use a higher-clearance vehicle to cross some of those arroyos). So, look for the little green car with the NMLC bumper sticker out on the highways...and contact us if you’d like to get a bumper sticker of your own!

REDUCING PAPER

In yet another action to go green, NMLC will be issuing its newsletter in electronic format. If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically instead of via the US mail, please let us know. You can email our office at info@nmlandconservancy.org and simply put the word “subscribe” in the subject line. We will enter your email address into our mailing list and you will begin receiving your newsletter via email.



NEW MEXICO LAND CONSERVANCY'S PRIUS

LAND CONSERVATION BENEFITS EVERYONE – WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

With your support over the past few years, the New Mexico Land Conservancy has conserved nearly 70,000 acres of land with significant agricultural, natural habitat, historic and cultural resource, scenic open spaces and recreational values throughout the state.

Conservation of productive agricultural land assures that land and water rights are available for agriculture and that local communities have secure sources of locally grown food. Conservation of natural habitat helps protect wildlife and other important ecosystem values. Conservation of scenic open spaces, and historic and cultural resources makes it possible for future generations to enjoy the beautiful landscapes and cultural gems that define New Mexico as the “Land of Enchantment.” Conservation of recreational lands provides opportunities for trails and other forms of public access for hiking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and other recreational uses.

Whatever your particular conservation interest, we ask that you consider making a contribution towards preserving New Mexico’s unique and special land heritage for generations to come.

It is NMLC’s goal to conserve, directly or in partnership with others, 250,000 acres of high conservation value lands throughout New Mexico by 2016. We need your help to reach this goal. You can support the work done by NMLC in the following ways:

GIFTS OF CASH OR SECURITIES. Make your tax deductible donation using the enclosed envelope today. Also, consider making a contribution in the name of a friend or a loved one. We all celebrate birthdays and holidays. This year, make a special gift to a friend or loved one, or honor someone with a donation to NMLC. We accept personal and corporate checks, as well as gifts of stock. By giving appreciated stock, donors can avoid capital gains taxes and receive an income tax deduction.

PLEDGES AND PLANNED GIVING. Make a long-term, planned gift by pledging to make recurring contributions every quarter, six months or year. Or, include NMLC in your will, leaving a legacy of land conservation for generations to come – as well as potentially receiving tax benefits.

EMPLOYER MATCHING GIFTS. Check with your employer to see if they will match your gift or pledge.

GIFTS OF REAL ESTATE. Gifts of land and other kinds of real estate enable NMLC to convert them into much-needed capital for protecting high conservation value lands around the state, while providing the donor significant tax deductions.

You can also donate online and make a secure gift at: www.nmlandconservancy.org or make a contribution with your credit card over the phone. Simply call our office at (505) 986-3801 and ask to speak with Kris.

Don’t forget about Our Wish List on Page 5!

NMLC's BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OUR STAFF

Scott Wilber, Executive Director

Michael Scisco, Conservation Specialist

Kris Murphey, Office Manager

OUR BOARD AND STAFF WISH
YOU THE HAPPIEST OF HOLIDAYS
AND THE BEST OF NEW YEARS!

IN GRATITUDE TO OUR 2008 DONORS

BUSINESSES & CORPORATIONS

- Verde Realty

FOUNDATIONS & PRIVATE GRANTS

- Albert I. Pierce Foundation
- Land Trust Alliance
- McCune Foundation
- Messengers of Healing Winds
- Norcross Wildlife Foundation
- Turner Foundation
- World Wildlife Fund

GOVERNMENT GRANTS & PARTNERS

- NM Department of Finance & Administration, Local Government Affairs Division
- NM Department of Game & Fish
- NM Division of Forestry
- NM Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department
- US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Village of Corrales
- Village of Mesilla
- World Wildlife Fund

INDIVIDUALS & TRUSTS

- Paul Abrams and Abigail Adler
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- Herman and Frances Barkmann
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- Ray Powell
- Elizabeth Richardson
- Frank C. Sabatini Trust
- J. Paul Taylor
- Moo Thorpe
- Carol Walters
- John B. Wright
- Elizabeth Wright

LANDOWNERS

- Ancho Cattle Company
- Beck Land & Cattle Company
- Robin and Meade Martin
- Robert and Kathryn Scholes
- Jason Blake Tollett
- Jim and Katrina Winder

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

- Deer Canyon Preserve Homeowners Association

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUPPORT!

NEW MEXICO LAND CONSERVANCY

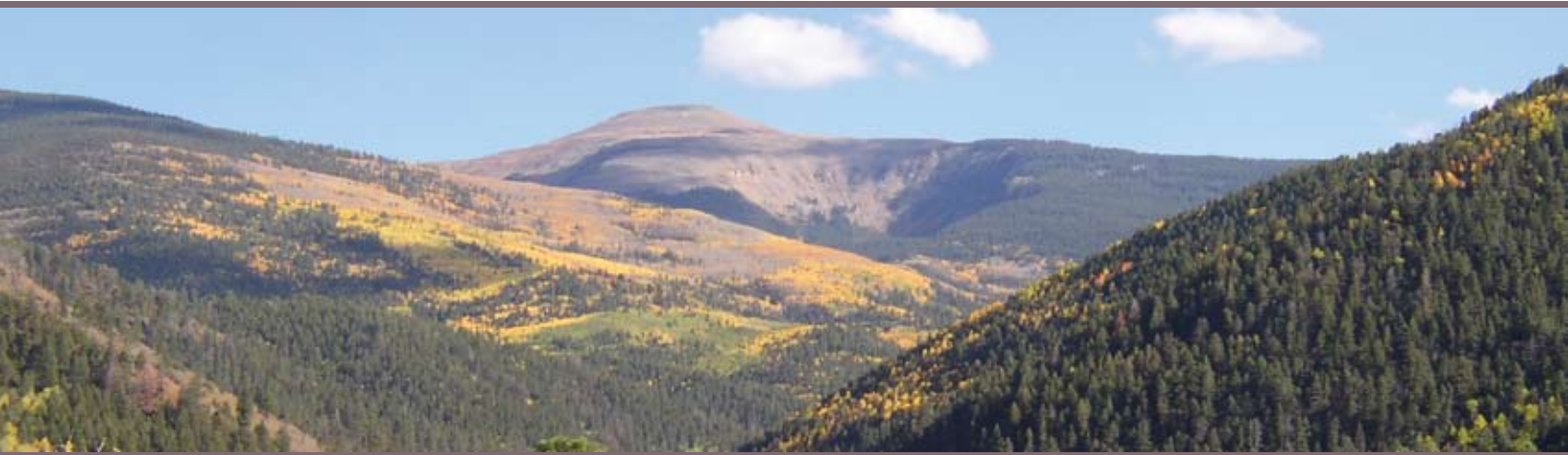
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