

CELEBRATING 80,000 ACRES CONSERVED

OCTOBER 16 WAS an exquisite fall day and NMLC's headquarters at the Petchesky Ranch were decked out in white tents and yellow chrysanthemums as some 80 guests arrived to enjoy "An Afternoon at the Ranch."

Through the generosity of sponsors such as Century Bank, Community Bank, the Levinson Foundation, the Permaculture Credit Union, Alphagraphics, Helenty Homans and Elizabeth Richardson, guests were treated to a presentation by NMLC and guest speaker Jack Loeffler, followed by music by the Santa Fe All-Stars. The staff of the Mine Shaft Tavern served drinks from the portal as Cowgirl BBQ dished up a delicious lunch.

Scott Wilber, Executive Director of NMLC, highlighted NMLC's accomplishments — most notably 80,000 acres conserved across the state. Before introducing the guest speaker, he presented a framed photograph to Santa Fe attorney

Matthew McQueen in appreciation of McQueen's work on behalf of the land conservation community.

Jack Loeffler, famed "oral and aural historian" of Santa Fe, spoke on how our shared environments are affected by population, competition, and overuse of resources. He evoked thinkers such as John Wesley Powell, Garret Hardin, Stewart Udall and Gary Snyder on the subjects of land and community.



Meanwhile, inside the main house, guests bid on items in NMLC's silent auction. The items for bid included prints of beautiful New Mexico and Arizona landscapes, gift certificates from Atrisco Café, Joe's Diner and Plants of the Southwest, a rafting trip from Santa Fe Rafting Company, grass-fed beef from Cerros de Taos Ranch, a weekend at the Cave Creek Ranch, a sturdy suitcase from REI, and 50-bale lots of hay courtesy of the Casados family of Radium Springs.

From her seat under the big tent, surrounded by friends, Jane Petchesky expressed her satisfaction with the activity at her former home. She said she hoped other events would bring more people out from the community to enjoy the center and learn about conservation.

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Afternoon (continued from page 1)

NMLC plans to honor Mrs. Petchesky's wishes by starting a monthly speaker series at the Petchesky Conservation Center in 2011, and making the center available to outside groups for events and meetings on a limited basis.

As the sun started going down and the last strains of "Waltz Across Texas" drifted across the ranch, guests began to make their way home, with a new understanding of just how important it is to protect the places we all love. ❖



Photos by Vanessa Baez and NMLC Staff

Allen Lewis Joins NMLC Board

NMLC IS PROUD to welcome Allen L. Lewis of Albuquerque to its Board of Directors. Mr. Lewis is Owner of United Enterprises, Inc., a real estate development and property management company. He is also Managing Partner for Harvard Mall Partners, a partnership that is currently redeveloping 4.5 acres across from the University of New Mexico. The award winning, fourteen million dollar project is a transformation of an old neighborhood into a revitalized New Urbanist community called "The Bricklight District."

Mr. Lewis is married to children's book author and former newscaster Carla Aragon. He brings to NMLC a keen understanding of land use issues and a love of conservation. He also serves on the boards of the New Mexico Cancer Center Foundation and the NM Association of Office and Industrial Properties. ❖



GIVING THANKS

DEAR FRIENDS,

As we draw near the end of another successful year, we have a lot to celebrate and be thankful for. This fall marks the eighth anniversary of the New Mexico Land Conservancy and my fifth year at the helm of this wonderful organization. We have come a long way in just a few short years, and so has the private land conservation movement in New Mexico.

On the land conservation front, we have now protected a total of over 80,000 acres of high-conservation value land around the state and even completed our first easement in Arizona. Since the beginning of this year, we have completed projects totaling 4,000 acres, and we anticipate adding another 2,000 acres by year-end, which will increase our total portfolio of conserved land to nearly 82,000 acres. With the projects cued up for next year, we will be closing in on the 100,000-acre mark by the end of 2011.

We have made tremendous strides with our communications and outreach efforts, particularly within the agricultural community, increasing awareness about the importance of land conservation as well as the techniques and benefits associated with conservation easements.

In the policy and legislative arenas, we have been active in the creation and enhancement of a variety of tax and financial incentives for private land conservation, including a transferable state tax credit through the Land Conservation Incentives Act; land conservation and restoration funding culminating in a permanent, dedicated state funding mechanism through the

Natural Heritage Conservation Act; and a small loan program in conjunction with the Permaculture Credit Union to assist private landowners with conservation easement costs.

Finally, with regard to our own organizational development, this year we



celebrated our first full year at the Petchesky Conservation Center and the completion of many new, essential improvements to our beautiful facilities on the south side of Santa Fe. In mid-October, we were blessed with a perfect Indian summer day for our first fundraising benefit here at the “ranch.”

You will read more about these accomplishments and our ongoing efforts in the pages of this issue, but one thing is for certain — none of our successes would be possible without the support of our landowners, partners and generous supporters. As we near the end of the Richardson administration, we would be remiss if we did not recognize what the Governor and the dedicated staff at the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resource Department, the State Forestry Division, the State Parks Division and the Game & Fish Department have done to further land conservation in New Mexico.

Many of our land conservation

successes over the past few years have been a clear demonstration of the power and added value of the public and private sectors working together. While we do not yet know what is around the corner, we hope to reach out to the next administration and extend the spirit of public-private partnership and collaboration. The ability to partner, share resources and collaborate increases the impact of the larger land conservation movement and, during tough economic times, it is also a prudent and cost-effective way to get things done.

We are also grateful to our private sector partners that include individuals, businesses and foundations. We realize that funding is tight right now and there are many important and worthy causes in New Mexico, so we are particularly grateful that so many of our supporters continue to recognize and value our mission and efforts.

Now more than ever, we need your support. With a staff of only four, we are a pretty lean operation for a statewide, non-profit organization — but it is an operation that, I can confidently and proudly represent to you, has a high rate of return on investment. With that said, on behalf of the staff and Board, I want to extend our best wishes for the upcoming holidays and we hope that you will keep us in mind as you consider your year-end charitable giving.

Thank you,

Scott Wilber

Executive Director ❖

FORKED LIGHTNING RANCH – A CONSERVATION LEGACY

EARLY THIS SUMMER, NMLC completed the second of two conservation easements over the famous Forked Lightning Ranch. The permanent protection of this historic ranch, formerly owned by the actress Greer Garson, is a testament to the conservation ethic of its current owner, Jane Fonda, and her family.

One can only imagine what could have happened if Ms. Fonda had not purchased and conserved the ranch. At one time, the Forked Lightning Ranch encompassed over 100,000 acres. Over the years, portions of the ranch were subdivided and sold off, following the unfortunate pattern of many large ranches across New Mexico.



Nestled in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains east of Santa Fe, the 2,400 acre ranch is not only beautiful but ecologically important, and includes nearly three miles of the upper Pecos River. It also contains several old homestead areas, including a church and cemetery ruins — remnants of a time when the Pecos River was a sustaining force for families that settled in the area.

While the ranch is smaller than it once was, it is still a remarkably beautiful piece of property. And it is located in an area increasingly vulnerable to development, so preventing continued subdivision in this region is of paramount importance.

In New Mexico and throughout the West, private lands adjacent to public areas are being subdivided and sold at a premium. Ms. Fonda's decision to protect the ranch with conservation easements will not only preserve the Pecos River corridor and the surrounding watershed, but will also help buffer the adjacent Pecos National Historic Park and the Santa Fe National Forest.

Ms. Fonda has said that Forked Lightning is where she most loves to spend her free time. We commend her for choosing to partner with NMLC to conserve and protect this magnificent ranch. Her actions today will benefit many New Mexicans for generations to come. ❖

*“What is once well done is
done forever.”*

– Henry David Thoreau

CATRON COUNTY CONSERVATION

WHO WOULD HAVE ever thought that Catron County would become one of the leading counties for private land conservation in New Mexico? Recognizing the potential in this area, NMLC has worked over the past three years to reach out to ranchers and other landowners in the northern part of the county, and we are pleased to report our progress.



Photo by Clay Ellis

To date, in partnership with state and federal agencies, NMLC has conserved over 6,000 acres of land around Alegres Mountain just south of Pie Town. With the second phase of the Shortes XX Ranch conservation easement near completion, NMLC will increase the total area of conserved lands in this part of the county by another 2,000 acres — to a total of over 8,000 acres.

Our success has primarily been due to landowners proactively working to protect their family ranches from impending development pressures. The Shortes XX Ranch has been in the family for four generations and, over the years, the Shortes family has actively ranched the property while investing significant resources into managing it for agricultural and wildlife enhancement activities. They have also worked with the New Mexico State Forestry Division (NMSFD) to develop a forest stewardship plan for the ranch, and have implemented many of the NMSFD's cooperative management strategies, including juniper thinning and water infrastructure projects.

A forward-thinking family, the Shortes family understands the value of partnerships. They have agreed to participate in a project in which NMLC is partnering with NMSFD and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to purchase conservation easements over their ranch in phases, with a combination of funding from the United States Department of Agriculture's Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) and the State of New Mexico. FRPP is a great resource for agricultural landowners who want to conserve their ranches and farms while retaining the ability to manage their properties for agricultural purposes. Through FRPP, landowners can be paid for their conservation easements and NMLC has been very successful in securing several of these grants over the past few years. So far, we have helped access over \$2.4 million in funding from this program, all of which has been paid directly to landowners.

We expect to complete the second phase of the Shortes XX Ranch conservation easement in early 2011. Other potential projects planned for Catron County will help NMLC and its partners preserve even more of the productive ranchland and wildlife habitat of this unique part of New Mexico. ❖



Photo by Clay Ellis

KATHERINE AND ELLEN'S EXCELLENT INTERN ADVENTURES

~ This summer, for the first time ever, NMLC was delighted to provide internship opportunities for two aspiring land conservationists. Ellen Gass came to us by way of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and Katherine McKinney joined us after completing her Master's Degree in Environmental Sciences at the University of Montana. Ellen and Katherine spent four months with NMLC, during which they supported a variety of land conservation and stewardship activities. At the conclusion of their internships in early October, we asked them to share some of their experiences working for NMLC.

Katherine McKinney

WHEN I FOUND out where I'd be spending the next five months of my life, my friend asked, "Will you have cell reception down there?"

"Maybe not everywhere, but I'm sure I'll have it most places." I paused, and then added, "It's not like I'm going to another country or something," as it seemed she was worried about me.

"You're not going to Mexico?"

"No. New Mexico."

"Oh."

And that was the way my internship with New Mexico Land Conservancy began.

While not a foreign country, New Mexico proved to be a foreign landscape to me, constantly surprising me by its diversity, by its culture — and by its sun. I had just spent two years in the often-gray Missoula, Montana before taking the position with NMLC, and had begun to crave sun like a starved flower.

Thanks to this agreeable weather, my fellow intern Ellen and I have had a wonderful summer traveling around the state to monitor NMLC's conservation

easements extending from the Colorado to the Mexican border, meeting welcoming landowners, and seeing some of the best kept secrets in New Mexico in terms of private lands. I was often surprised by the friendliness and openness of the landowners we met while visiting places like Pie Town, Carrizozo, Arrey, Chama, and Rodeo. Perhaps this good-naturedness and natural affability arises from living in small towns, but I have begun to attribute it to the New Mexico lifestyle. Busy landowners took time out of their schedules to share stories over meals with us. We heard about adventures on the ranch, jaguars in the Bootheel, family backgrounds, prize-winning trees, days served in the Peace Corps, and medical missions to Africa. These afternoons spent in the homes of the landowners who had placed conservation easements on their properties were memorable times for me.

Besides learning how to open, jump over, shimmy under, or climb through every possible ranch fence known to man, and learning the ins-and-outs of land trust stewardship, Ellen and I will also be walking away from our time at NMLC with an intense respect and admiration for those people who deem the protection of land valuable.

We have met strong, independent and capable men and women who have shown us that their chosen lifestyles are not easy, that they face many natural, financial, and familial obstacles to keeping their land the way it has been for generations. And, yet, despite these hardships, they manage to smile and joke with two young interns, love their land and support the conservation easements they have so thoughtfully decided to place on their land. New Mexico is so much richer thanks to those who are serving daily as good stewards of the land.

Thank you. ❖



Ellen Gass

I CAME TO the New Mexico Land Conservancy excited about gaining new experience in land conservation and thrilled about spending four months in New Mexico. Now that I am at the end of my internship, I realize that the experience I have gained in my short time in New Mexico is vastly greater than I could have imagined.

While the majority of my time has been spent monitoring conservation easements, I have also had the opportunity to meet and interact with some amazing landowners, work with NMLC staff and attend continuing education workshops. This internship has definitely prepared me for the next step in my career, which I know will involve land conservation.

Thank you to the NMLC staff, our landowners, and especially my co-intern, Katherine, for making this such an educational and fun experience! ❖

Mesteño Draw Ranch Workday

VOLUNTEERS **THOMAS WOLFF**, Deb Jones, Katherine McKinney, Ginnie Kerfoot and Ellen Gass, and landowner Joan Bybee participated in a Riparian Restoration Workday on August 15, 2010. The group built structures designed to slow down and spread out the waters flowing down Mesteño Draw.

The surrounding land was historically used to grow pinto beans. Mesteño Draw once provided constant water to homesteads in the Mountainair area. Over years of use, Mesteño Draw was straightened and the water rerouted through irrigation ditches. This led to severe erosion and several very large head cuts within the draw.



The creek has not sustained perennial flow since the 1980s. The landowners hope that by continued restoration, they can bring the draw back to its historic flow. ❖

CONSERVATION FUNDING OUTCOMES

DURING THE 2010 legislative session, the New Mexico Land Conservancy worked closely with the larger conservation community, the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) and the Governor's Office to help pass the Natural Heritage Conservation Act (NHCA), which created a dedicated funding mechanism for conservation easement and land restoration projects.



Photo by Clay Ellis

Unfortunately, no funding was attached when the legislation was passed. However, during the special legislative session that followed, Governor Bill Richardson stepped in and was successful in securing a \$5 million appropriation through House Bill 5 (HB5).

In June of this year, EMNRD issued a request for conservation easement and restoration proposals to be funded through the HB5 appropriation. This request for proposals produced 31 eligible applications totaling \$11.4 million in funding requests — nearly 2.5 times more than the funding available.

Of the applications, eleven conservation easement projects were approved for funding by EMNRD, including two projects in which NMLC will be directly involved: the second phase of the Shortes XX Ranch conservation easement in

Catron County, and the River Ranch conservation easement in Grant and Luna counties. On the Shortes XX Ranch project, NMLC will be partnering with the State Forestry Division to protect an additional 2,000 acres in the area east of Alegres Mountain, increasing the total area protected on the ranch to over 4,800 acres. On the River Ranch project, NMLC will also be partnering with the State Forestry Division to protect 1,009 acres along a three-mile stretch of the Mimbres River near the City of Rocks State Park southeast of Silver City.

NMLC is proud to have been able to help create and ultimately secure state funding for these important projects. The high demand and the number of applications received by EMNRD illustrates the need for permanent sources of statewide conservation and restoration funding in New Mexico. As the Richardson administration nears an end, NMLC looks forward to working with the new administration and state legislature to maintain and improve existing programs, and to encourage additional incentives and funding for land conservation in the future. ❖



UPDATES

Petchesky Conservation Center Improvements

THE PETCHESKY CONSERVATION Center was buzzing this summer — not only with conservation work, but with hammers and saws as well. As part of our long-term strategic plan to develop the center into a community service facility, we have completed the first phase of our planned renovations.

We started the summer with the conversion of the old “horse-pital” (formerly a small exterior room attached to the far end of the house which was used by the Petschesky family for veterinary purposes and as a foaling shed) into a new office for our Conservation Director. Our contractors were careful to incorporate the style of the original house into the renovation, and the new office is beautiful.

Anticipating the center’s use for larger gatherings, we also created separate restrooms para “*Las Damas*” y “*Los Caballeros*.” We also added an irrigation system outside to keep the trees and landscaping in good health and repaired the carport roof that was damaged during the spring winds.

The largest project was the conversion of the old barn into a combined garage and storage space. In the future we plan to create landscaped outdoor space between the main house and the barn, making it ideal for outdoor events.

If you would like information regarding the use of the Petchesky Conservation Center for meetings or events, please contact Lisa Adkins at 505-986-3801, ext. 100. ❖

NMLC First to Participate in New Loan Fund for Conservation Easements

FOR OVER A YEAR, NMLC has been actively involved in a collaborative effort with the Santa Fe Farmer’s Market Institute and several New Mexico land trusts called the Small Agriculture Land Conservation Initiative (SALCI). The group has been working to generate interest in the protection and enhancement of small agriculture among local governments, state agencies, and private foundations.

One of the most concrete outcomes of the SALCI’s efforts has been a partnership with the Permaculture Credit Union and the Permaculture Guild to create a revolving loan program through which private landowners who wish to place their land under easement can apply for low interest loans. The loan funds can be used to help cover the costs of completing a conservation easement, which can often be a limiting factor for some landowners who wish to conserve their lands.

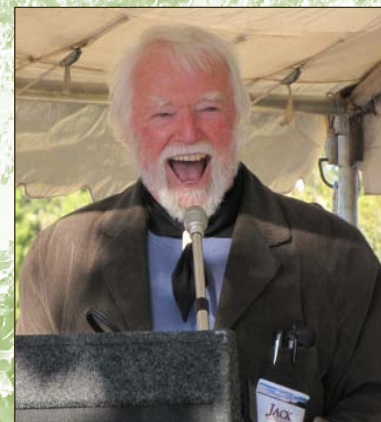
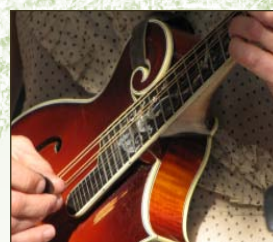
NMLC is proud to be the first land trust to contribute funds to this revolving loan program. Our funds will be matched by funds from the Permaculture Guild. The funds can be used by landowners to cover a variety of costs related to placing easements on their land, including title review, easement drafting, baseline documentation, environmental assessment, mineral reports and appraisals.

The revolving loan program is open to all landowners regardless of income level or property size. If you are interested in taking advantage of the program or learning more, please contact our Conservation Director, Michael Scisco, at michaelscisco@nmlandconservancy.org or 505-986-3801. ❖



An Afternoon at the Ranch

OCTOBER 16, 2010



Many Thanks to our Supporters

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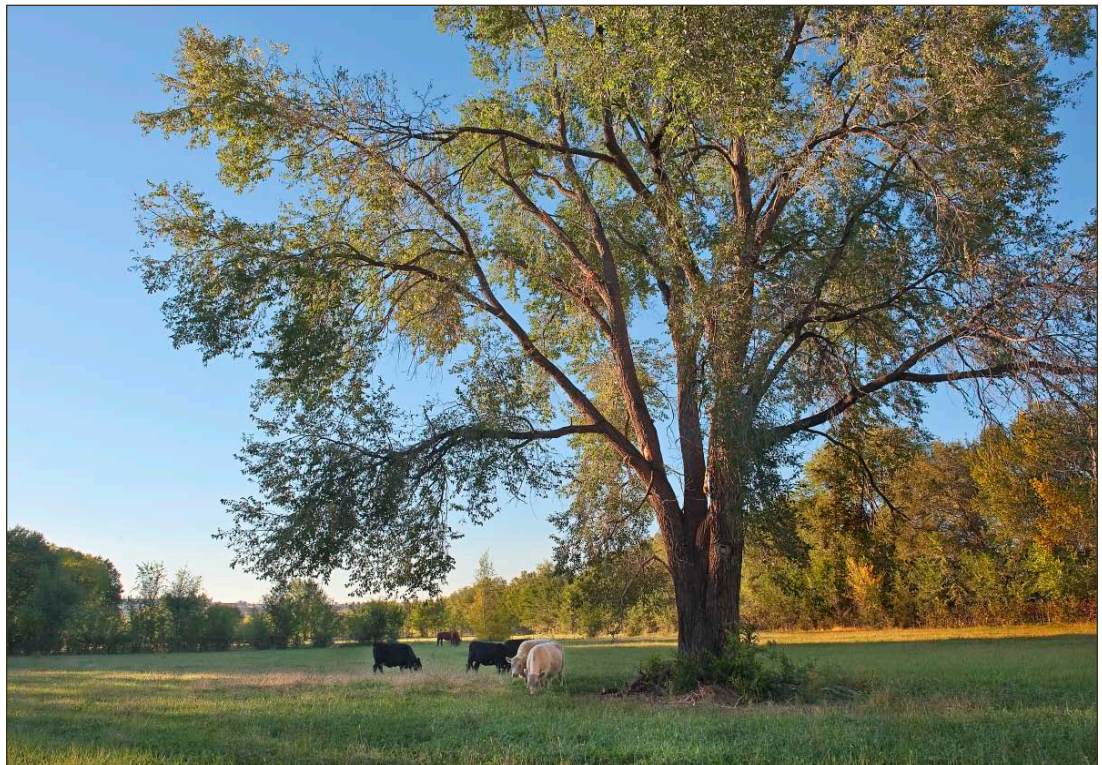



Photo by Sally Thomson

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