

TURNING THE CORNER WITH JANE PETCHESKY

This Spring long time Santa Fe resident Jane Petchesky donated her house and land to the New Mexico Land Conservancy. Located in the heart of the Community College District on the south side of Santa Fe, the house, which we are calling the Petchesky Conservation Center will not only function as NMLC's offices, but will also serve as a space to hold land trust meetings and special events and to conduct outreach to the general public about land conservation techniques and benefits. The Petchesky property includes 240 acres that are permanently protected by a conservation easement, which Jane Petchesky granted to the Forest Trust in 2004. In addition, Jane donated several trail easements through her property that the public will be able to use for walking, running, biking and horseback riding once the trails are constructed. These easements will also connect to a larger network of trails planned for the district.

For many years, Jane Petchesky and her late husband, Gene, were probably best known as the co-owners and operators of the Guarantee store located on the Santa Fe Plaza. Jane and Gene purchased the Petchesky Ranch in the late sixties to escape the ever-expanding city limits. The Petcheskys built their dream "adobe hacienda" in the early 1970s with conservation in mind. Some of the design features they incorporated were quite progressive for the times, including using passive solar energy, water catchment from the roof and use of a grey-water system to irrigate their fruit trees.

Over the years, they bred and trained a number of champion quarter horses. In addition, as one of its co-founders, Gene remained active with the Santa Fe Rodeo for a number of years while Jane pursued her interests in water conservation and open space preservation. Jane was also involved in the creation of the Community College District, which is now the fastest growing district within Santa Fe County, and was an early advocate for smart growth and sustainable development throughout the county.

We are very grateful for what Jane Petchesky has done for us. Jane has been active in environmental issues for a long time and all of these interests are reflected in this legacy gift. Having our own place creates a tremendous opportunity for us to grow our organization and to help increase awareness about land conservation in the Santa Fe area and around the state.



Photo courtesy of Teri Thomson Randall

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

In the natural world, spring is a time of renewal. The winter snows have all but melted and receded in the high country, and the streams and rivers are flowing full with the resulting run-off. As the days continue to warm and lengthen, the land springs to life. In nature, dormant trees and grasses begin to put on new growth, and wild animals give birth to their young. On ranches, spring is calving season, and on farms a time when new crops are sown.

Here at the New Mexico Land Conservancy, the coming of spring has also brought many new and exciting developments. Most notably, thanks to an incredibly generous donation from Jane Petchesky, we have become the fortunate beneficiaries of her beloved ranch. Upon transfer of the title in February, we began making modest improvements to the house with the purpose of converting it into functional office space. We also have been working with Santa Fe County to obtain our business license as a non-profit community services facility in the Community College District where the property is located. In April, we finally relocated our offices and are now preparing for an event to celebrate the opening of our new offices (now known as the Petchesky Conservation Center) and to honor Jane for her tremendous gift.

This spring we also hired new staff to support our communications, fundraising and organizational development efforts. We completed two important conservation projects and fielded a number of new landowner inquiries, many of which look like they will soon evolve into new projects.



We are also pleased that, despite the economic downturn, many of our long-time donors have continued to support our work. We know there are many worthy causes to support in these challenging times and we continue to be deeply grateful for your confidence in our work. We are very pleased to welcome

some new donors since our last issue. We hope that everyone reading this newsletter will continue to spread the word about the importance of conservation and our work.

As the economy improves, the wheels of growth and development are slowly turning again and we know we have our work cut out for us. We see a busy year and a bright future ahead of us.

If you are interested in learning more or supporting our efforts, please visit our website, give us a call, or stop by and visit us at our new offices. We're the house on the right off of Richards Avenue in the middle of all the open space across from the Oshara Village. It's easy to get caught up in the view and miss us, so be on the look out for our new signs.

*Scott Wilber,
Executive Director*



SPRING 2009 PROJECT UPDATES

Alegres Mountain Ranch

If you have ever traveled along Highway 60 in Catron County near Pie Town, you have most likely been taken in by the beauty of the area. One of the prominent landmarks in this area is Alegres Mountain which, at 10,229 feet in elevation, towers over the surrounding country and affords majestic views in all directions. This spring, NMLC and the Forestry Division of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) partnered together to successfully place a conservation easement over 1,760 acres of forest land on the Alegres Mountain Ranch, which encompasses much of the western flanks of its namesake mountain. This easement builds upon an easement NMLC completed last year that conserved the southern portion of the property, bringing the total area protected by conservation easements on the ranch to 3,240 acres. In addition to its scenic beauty, the natural habitat of the ranch supports many wildlife species including elk, mule deer, black bear, and mountain lion. The property is bisected by the Continental Divide and the easement will help protect the headwater areas for the Nester Draw and Middle Mangas Creek watersheds. NMLC secured a small grant for the conservation easement through the Land, Water and Conservation Easement program administered by EMNRD. The landowner subsequently donated the conservation easement which will be co-held by NMLC and EMNRD. We would like to thank Blake Tollett, the owner of the property, and EMNRD for being excellent partners in conservation.



Ancones Ranch

Most of us are aware that high-quality farmland in New Mexico is disappearing at an increasing and alarming rate, often being replaced by exurban and rural residential subdivisions. Such could have been the fate for the Ancones Ranch, located near the traditional community of Los Ojos in Rio Arriba County. However, at the end of last year, through a partnership with the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), NMLC secured funding to purchase a conservation easement over 197 acres of the ranch's irrigated pastureland and important riparian habitat.

In addition to preserving the picturesque agricultural setting around Los Ojos, the Ancones Ranch protects a one-mile stretch the Rio Chama. The river and bosque provide natural habitat for a variety of native fish, bird and animal species.



We would like to extend our gratitude to our conservation partners: the landowners, Vernon and Dora Casados, EMNRD and NMDGF. Each partner played a crucial and instrumental role in helping permanently protect this magnificent northern New Mexico property. NMLC will co-hold the conservation easement with NMDGF and ensure that the agricultural, wildlife and scenic values of this property are conserved forever.



Left and Right: Jane at the Ranch



Center: Gene surveys.



An Evening to Remember

On Saturday June 13, 2009, we will open our doors in celebration of Jane Petchesky and her legacy gift to the New Mexico Land Conservancy. Local environmental author and conservationist Willilam deBuys will be our guest speaker. Local filmmaker Teri Thomson Randall will also be premiering her new short video featuring Mrs. Petchesky as well as some of NMLC's easement donors and partners.

Take a look at our next issue in the fall or on our web site for party photos!

New Staff

In February, NMLC was pleased to welcome Jennifer Kilbourn as its new Communications and Development Coordinator. Originally from upstate New York, Jennifer moved to Santa Fe in 1999 after a stint in Denver, CO. Prior to joining NMLC, she worked many years in the Performing Arts Department at the College of Santa Fe as well as in the College's Development office, most recently as the Director of Research and Prospect Management. Jennifer also currently serves as the President of the Board of Directors for St. Elizabeth Shelter.



Jennifer studied Anthropology at Hamilton College and received her B.A. in Humanities from the College of Santa Fe. Jennifer enjoys bicycle commuting, local food, camping and fishing on the Rio Chama and Heron Lake .

Earthday Santa Fe

In late April, the New Mexico Land Conservancy participated in Earthday Santa Fe, sponsored by Earth Care International and the City of Santa Fe. Here are just a few of the drawings done at our table.



A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO
MOLLY & EVE - AGE 5.

Conservation Easement Tax Incentive Update

In the Fall/Winter 2008 issue of *Vistas* we discussed the extension of the Federal Conservation Easement Tax Incentive that was passed as part of the 2008 Farm Bill. The current Conservation Easement Tax Incentive allows the following: 1) ordinary taxpayers can deduct the appraised value of a qualifying conservation easement at a rate of 50% of their adjusted gross income (AGI); or 2) qualifying agricultural landowners (earning at least 50% of their income from agricultural activities) can deduct the appraised value of a qualifying conservation easement at a rate of 100% of their AGI. Both of these deductions can be spread out over a period of up to 16 years or until the value of the conservation easement donation is used up.

This federal tax deduction has provided a tremendous incentive for farmers, ranchers and other landowners interested in preserving their lands, but it is set to expire on December 31, 2009 if Congress does not take action. Recently, legislation has been introduced in Congress to make the tax incentive permanent so that landowners can continue to benefit from the donation of conservation easements. House Bill 1831 and Senate Bill 812 have been introduced to Congress and they need and deserve our Congressional Delegation's support. Please call, write or email your Congressperson and ask him or her to co-sponsor H.R. 1831 or S. 812. For more information, please visit the Land Trust Alliance's website at www.landtrustalliance.org/policy.

At the state level, the donation of land or a easement for conservation purposes in New Mexico may qualify a U.S. taxpayer for a state income tax credit. This tax credit is 50% of the value of the donation, up to \$250,000. The tax credit may be used for up to 20 years to offset any state income tax liability owed - or part or all of the credit may be transferred or sold at any time during the 20 year period. What this means is that even non-residents who donate land or easements in New Mexico may be eligible to earn a tax credit which they could then transfer or sell.

For more information about the state tax credit, please visit the New Mexico Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department web page, www.emnrd.state.nm.us/main/documents/3_13_20_3-25-08.pdf. Together, these federal and state tax incentives are motivating many private landowners to conserve their lands. Conservation easements help keep working lands productive and on the tax rolls, while protecting them from unwanted subdivision and development.

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Land Conservation Benefits Everyone – We Need Your Support!

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

“Conservation is a state of harmony between (people) and land.” - Aldo Leopold

Conservation of natural habitat helps protect wildlife and other important ecosystem values. Conservation of productive agricultural land assures that land and water rights are available to local communities to help secure sources of locally grown food. Conservation of scenic open spaces and historic and cultural resources makes it possible for future generations to enjoy the beautiful landscapes and cultural significance 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, and wildlife viewing. Wherever your conservation interests lie, we ask that you consider a contribution towards preserving New Mexico's unique and special land heritage for generations to come.

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. This year, make a special gift for a friend or loved one with a donation to NMLC.

Pledges. Make a long-term, planned gift by pledging to make recurring contributions every quarter, six months or year.

Planned Giving. By including NMLC in your will, you will leave a legacy of land conservation for generations to come – as well as receive potential tax benefits.

“The land belongs to the future.” - Willa Cather

Employer Matching Gifts. Check with your employer to see if they will match your gift or pledge. This can greatly increase your contribution.

Gifts of Real Estate. Gifts of land and other kinds of real estate enable NMLC to turn the gifts into much-needed capital for protecting high conservation value lands around the state, while providing the donor significant tax deductions.

Wish List. Make a gift of or contribution toward an item on our wish list. Items currently on the list are:

-Powerpoint projector and screen for presentations-

**All terrain vehicle (ATV), Motorcycle (dirt bike), Four wheel drive vehicle
for conducting site visits and easement monitoring**

** Office Floor Rugs ** **Small Meeting Table for 4** **Volunteer Landscaping**

MANY THANKS TO OUR DONORS

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