

Santa Fe Conservation Trust

Protecting the Land. Preserving Our Quality of Life



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Santa Fe Conservation Trust Accepts Railyard Park Conservation Easement

SANTA FE, NM – The Santa Fe Conservation Trust announces the acceptance of a 15.7 acre Railyard conservation easement from the Trust for Public Land. In an agreement reached between the two entities, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust will assume the responsibility for the protection of the Santa Fe Railyard Park and Plaza conservation easement, preserving scenic and open space, natural, historical and recreational values.

The conservation easement is part of the larger 50 acre Railyard Redevelopment Project that includes retail and gallery spaces, the Rail Runner Express train depot, picnic areas, public walkways and community spaces. The conservation lands extend from St. Francis Drive and Cerrillos Road on the west side to Montezuma Avenue and includes the Plaza – home for the farmer’s market and other popular community events - alongside the landmark water tower. A portion of the Santa Fe Rail Trail, which parallels the active Railway line, runs through the easement. In partnership with City, County, State and Federal sources, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust has played a significant role in the establishment of this trail which was completed in 2010. “We are very excited to be a part of this nationally recognized conservation project. The Railyard Park and Plaza have so much to offer it is no wonder they are fast

becoming one of the most popular and most important public gathering spots in Santa Fe,” said Charlie O’Leary, Executive Director of the Santa Fe Conservation Trust.

Working in collaboration with the City of Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Railyard Community Corporation, and the Railyard Stewards, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust will help ensure that the Railyard Park and Plaza are maintained in perpetuity as a park and community gathering place, in a dynamic, multi-organizational structure that also includes an active rail line and multi-use rail trail. The City of Santa Fe owns the 50 acre Railyard property comprised of the 40 acre north railyard and the 10 acre Baca Street Railyard 1 mile to the south, and is responsible for the day to day City services on the property in accordance with the conservation easement. The Railyard Stewards support the City of Santa Fe’s regular park maintenance by providing specialized care of the park’s ornamental gardens, coordinating an extensive community outreach program, and maintaining ongoing oversight of the park’s horticultural programs and design. The non-profit Santa Fe Railyard Community Corporation provides lease and construction management for the entire site, is responsible for the land and commercial space not covered by the conservation easement, and promotes and manages public uses of the Park and Plaza areas. Together with the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, these three entities will ensure that the Railyard remains a safe, accessible and vibrant part of the Santa Fe community. Referring to the assignment of the easement to the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, Linda Shafer, Executive Director of the Railyard Stewards stated, “The Railyard Stewards are extremely pleased to have an active partner in overseeing the stewardship and grounds of the Railyard Park.”

Historically, the Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. In 1995, when it appeared that Catellus Development Corporation, the real estate landowner that was spun off from the real estate

holdings of the Santa Fe Pacific Corporation, was preparing to demolish existing buildings and redevelop the Railyard area – removing the historical warehouses and freight docks and constructing towering multistory buildings - the Trust for Public Land stepped in to offer a conservation strategy for the property. Along with the City of Santa Fe, TPL brokered a deal to secure the land for public use. As part of the new plan, the City granted a Deed of Conservation Easement to TPL to monitor the compliance of the development and uses for the Railyard Park and Plaza, ensuring that the Railyard public spaces would remain as park land for generations to come. TPL also contracted with the City to oversee the design, fundraising and construction of the Railyard Park, Plaza and Alameda. The planning process for the Railyard Park began in 1996, with the official groundbreaking taking place in 2006. By 2010, the project was complete and the Railyard Park and Plaza was opened to the Santa Fe community. "We are looking forward to the opportunity to begin collaborating on the stewardship of the Railyard Conservation Easement with an organization so highly respected for its role in the preservation of public spaces in Northern New Mexico," said Richard Czoski, Santa Fe Railyard Community Corporation Executive Director.

Since 1993, The Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) has been dedicated to preserving the spirit of place among the communities of northern New Mexico by protecting open spaces and critical wildlife habitat, by creating trails, and by protecting the traditional landscapes of our diverse cultures. SFCT collaborates with other non-profit organizations, public agencies and private landowners to retire the development rights in perpetuity on important land. SFCT has protected more than 35,000 acres throughout northern New Mexico. Other SFCT successes include the creation and maintenance of the Dale Ball Trail System, preservation of Sun Mountain and Atalaya Mountain, protection of Arroyo Hondo Open Space in partnership with Santa Fe County

and the preservation of crucial parcels of land significant for their open space, scenic views, wildlife habitat and cultural and historical values. In addition to new land conservation projects, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust is working in collaboration with other community partners to establish a grand unified trail system (GUTS), a circular trail around the City linking many of the open space and trail areas including Dale Ball to Atalaya to Arroyo Hondo to Caja del Rio to La Tierra and more.

"I just want to say a big thank you to the Trust for Public Land and recognize the importance of their partnership over the initial years of the Park. We're in a good place with the Park right now, and excited to see the ways the Park continues to evolve under the Santa Fe Conservation Trust."

- Mayor Javier M. Gonzales

The addition of the Railyard Park and Plaza conservation easement brings the number of conservation agreements held by SFCT to 80.

For more information, contact Charlie O'Leary at (505) 989-7019 or log onto the SFCT website at www.sfct.org.

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