



Strategic Conservation Plan of the
Santa Fe Conservation Trust
Saving Land. For Everyone. Forever.

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	4
2. Introduction	4
2.1 Mission	4
2.2 Vision.....	4
3. Purpose and Need	5
3.1 Organizational Evolution.....	6
3.2 Organization Focus.....	6
4. A Vision for Strategic Conservation Planning 2017-2027 [1 pp].....	6
5. SFCT Strategic Conservation Plan Guiding Principles	7
5.1 Introduction	7
5.2 Aligning Strategic Conservation with SFCT's Mission	7
5.3 SFCT Service Area Ecoregions	9
5.4 Targeting Land for Conservation.....	10
5.5 Threats and Opportunities.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5.6 Strategic Underpinnings to Identifying, Acquiring, and Preserving Conservation Lands	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6. Service Area and Focal Areas for Conservation	11
6.1 Service Area	11
6.2 Focal Areas	11
7 - Plan Implementation	17
7.1. Implementation Directives	17
7.2. Priorities	17
7.3. Strategies	18
7.4. Phases	24
7.5. Finances and fund raising	24
7.6. Needs for Ongoing Investigating and Planning / Need for Ongoing Investigations and Plans	25
References:.....	27
Conservation Values or Conservation Purpose.....	34
Public Recreation or Education.....	34
Natural Habitat Protection.....	34
Open Space Preservation.....	35
Scenic Enjoyment.....	35
Clearly Delineated Policy	36

Historic Preservation.....	37
Cultures of Northern New Mexico	38
Ecoregions of North Central New Mexico	38
Southern Rocky Mountain	38
Arizona / New Mexico Mountains	39
Arizona/New Mexico Plateau	39
Southwestern Tablelands	39
Threats	41
SFCT Service Territory	45
Focal Areas	45
Galisteo Basin Watershed	46
Pecos River Valley	48
Piedra Lumbre (Shining Rock)	50
Las Vegas Viewshed	52
Los Pinos River Valley	55
Santa Fe	56
Tesuque	58
Conclusions	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1. Executive Summary

In 2018, Santa Fe Conservation Trust celebrates its 25th anniversary. What began in 1993 as a community effort to save Atalaya Mountain from development has blossomed into a nationally accredited organization with a presence in four northern New Mexico counties. For 25 years, SFCT has successfully responded to and acted on small- and large-scale conservation opportunities offered by private landowners that protects threatened habitat, open space and viewshed, public trails and cultural resources (See Appendix A). The result of work thus far is nearly 40,000 acres of protected land. Additionally, SFCT is active in local community conservation efforts with the purpose of connecting people with the trails and open space that surround us.

With growth and time comes change. SFCT recognizes that moving forward it must become more strategic in its work. In the past, SFCT has relied primarily on landowners who have been motivated themselves to place their land under conservation easements. Now, however, SFCT must actively pursue conservation opportunities that are potentially better aligned with conservation and community values. From this recognition, this Strategic Conservation Plan (SCP) has been developed over the course of several years.

The SCP takes into consideration SFCT's organizational focus. SFCT is first and foremost a local organization that thrives on the input of its constituency and excels at the management of its local-based programs, such as the GUSTO trails program. SFCT's conservation work extends regionally within the northern tier of the state, including Rio Arriba and San Miguel counties. SFCT collaborates with and supports the work of New Mexico's other land organizations, such as the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust, The Trust for Public Land and New Mexico Nature Conservancy.

2. Introduction

2.1 Mission

Santa Fe Conservation Trust partners with our community to keep northern New Mexico's living lands and people flourishing together. We protect culturally and environmentally significant landscapes, ignite people's passion for nature and enable the continual regeneration of our healthy place.

2.2 Vision

We envision a future where everyone in northern New Mexico cherishes nature and works to preserve it for this and future generations.

2.3 Summary of process of developing the Strategic Conservation Plan

Conservation plan brainstorming sessions have been held over the past several years in committee meetings, particularly in the Land Review Committee. Additionally, when SFCT applied for accreditation, the importance of the strategic planning as evidence of the organization's commitment to excellence became paramount. Since accreditation was received, SFCT has worked closely with the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) to ensure that its processes and policies follow LTA standards. SFCT is currently beginning the process of re-accreditation for early 2019 and having a ten-year conservation plan is an important element of its re-accreditation efforts. With final Governing Board approval of the SCP, it will have been reviewed and discussed in all SFCT working committees, which include Finance and Planning, Development and Marketing, Nominating and Governance and the Executive Committee.

SFCT's SCP is intended as a document to be used on an ongoing basis by staff, SFCT committees and the Governing Board to plan for and extend the land under its protection. Additionally, the Plan can be used as a tool in developing relationships with potential donors and for landowners considering donating an easement.

A ten-year planning document is by its nature a continual work in progress. Future projections are at best a guide, while near-term goals can be actively pursued. Each year, the executive director and staff produce an annual operational plan that prioritizes the next year's goals and the SCP will serve to anchor the annual operational plans over its lifespan. SFCT should anticipate updating the SCP by early 2027 to have a renewed version in 2028.

Implementation and phasing of the plan is also driven by the funding requirements of projects that are taken on. Acquisition of high conservation value lands may only be accomplished through publicly supported fundraising campaigns. Additionally, there are landowners who may be unable to bear the full burden of the costs for placing their land in a conservation easement, for which SFCT will require additional operating funds.

3. Purpose and Need

The amount of land that would benefit from perpetual preservation in northern New Mexico is tremendous. Streams, rivers and drainage areas face ongoing development pressure and need to be preserved to ensure their future viability. The area of riparian lands is diminishing and should be set aside so that they may regenerate. Developments and private land impede access to national forests and other public lands making trail easements and open-space essential for public health and recreation. Wildlife corridors are being choked off and need to be kept open to ensure ecozone health and resilience. Historical and cultural assets are disappearing and should be set aside for future generations to study. Agricultural land is disappearing and must be maintained or increased for our local food security. Grasslands need to be preserved as a means of sequestering carbon. Through its Strategic Conservation Plan, SFCT can better analyze projects that come its way, as well as those projects it wishes to pursue for their strategic conservation and community benefits.

3.1 Organizational Evolution

SFCT traditionally has reacted to conservation proposals presented to it by landowners. While continuing to be responsive to landowners, it is critical for SFCT to now incorporate a pro-active land conservation strategy around which it can identify specific tracts and approach those landowners and garner public support and funding for acquisition of easements that contain the highest concentration of conservation values, provide buffers and link critical areas for maintaining a landscape's ecological and cultural continuity.

3.2 Organization Focus

To thrive as an organization with name recognition, SFCT must continue to champion relevant projects within the community. For example, the Grand Unified Santa Fe Trails Organization (GUSTO) is known throughout the region as a primary advocate for advancing the area's trails network and for managing and maintaining existing trails. Similarly, the proposed Walk with a Doc is a collaborative effort with area health care providers to bring awareness of healthy lifestyle choices by encouraging more people to walk the area's trails. The Santa Fe Farmers Market brings hundreds of people to the historic railyard every week, where SFCT holds an easement in the railyard park. Support of SFCT's Dark Skies Initiative is another valuable outcome of land conservation that affirms SFCT's branding as a valued community partner. SFCT is frequently approached to lead or assist in other community-based projects. The SCP will ensure that these community conservation programs continue to be integrated into SFCT's strategic land acquisition evaluations.

SFCT realizes that to be sustainable, it must make its work more equitable so that it can reach a wider diversity of stakeholders. Not everyone knows about the local soft surface trail system, and introducing more people to it broadens the trails constituency of SFCT. Similarly, SFCT needs to ensure that people from all walks of life and from all parts of the region can participate in preserving their land. Since conservation easements are expensive, SFCT will strengthen its land program to include funding for purchasing conservation easements and bargain sales for landowners who are land rich and cash poor but want to preserve their property for future generations to enjoy.

3.3 Organizational Capacity

SFCT holds 88 conservation easements in four counties totaling nearly 40,000 acres. Every easement is monitored annually in perpetuity. It is essential that as additional conservation easements are acquired, the organization is adequately funded to meet its obligations.

4. A Vision for Strategic Conservation Planning 2018-2028

SFCT's strategic conservation planning is a continual process and integral component of SFCT efforts. It must

- be a tool for SFCT to expand the possibilities for acquisition of more conservation easements, whether they be donated, as part of a bargain sale or purchased.
- embody the mission and vision of the organization

- involve SFCT’s staff and board members as part of ongoing quality improvement.
- reflect the importance of building relationships with people and organizations in the broader SFCT community.

5. SFCT Strategic Conservation Plan Guiding Principles

5.1 Introduction

Guiding principles serve to organize and underpin the strategic conservation effort and provide direction to future SFCT conservation staff as they respond to the threats and maximize opportunities in the socio-political realm and the natural world. To this end, SFCT’s approach to achieving future objectives will be grounded in principles of conservation biology, proven land trust practices, and practical knowledge and experience gained from working in its seven focal areas and the local community.

5.2 Aligning Strategic Conservation with SFCT’s Mission

SFCT strategic conservation efforts are guided by four mission components. These are aligned with federal statutory definition of conservation purposes in IRC §170(h) (See Appendix B). The four mission components and federal conservation purposes relate to critical benefits the public obtains from land with significant conservation values that is preserved in perpetuity.

The four mission components are:

1. *Protecting open space*—Such as working lands like ranches, farms, and grasslands and forests for the scenic enjoyment of the general public in accordance with clearly delineated governmental conservation policy, resulting in a significant public benefit
2. *Protecting critical wildlife habitat*—Such as rare, endangered or threatened species, protection of important winter range for elk and mule deer, or ponds and riparian areas that provide migratory stops for songbirds and waterfowl or natural areas that contribute to the ecological viability of a local, state or national park, nature preserve, wildlife refuge, wilderness area, or other similar conservation area
3. *Outdoor Education and Public Education*--Such as preservation of a water area for use by the public for fishing, or preservation of a hiking trail for use by the general public.
4. *Protecting traditional landscapes of our diverse culture*—Such as by the preservation of a historically significant land area (Ancestral Puebloan village, Civil War battlefield or Santa Fe or Old Spanish Trail ruts) or certified historic structure which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or is in a registered historic district (Cerrillos Historic Mining District).

Rephrasing these mission components in terms of benefits for the public may be of use to SFCT’s public outreach work with a view to strengthening public support for land conservation in general and for SFCT’s mission in the focal areas in particular. The public benefits of SFCT’s work in recent years, can be summarized as:

- A. *Scenic and recreational benefits*, as experienced on trails, roadways, and at viewing points, and during outdoor recreational activities, such as hiking, bike riding, fishing, and hunting
- B. *Social and economic benefits*, as experienced by people with affinity for local and traditional communities, agricultural practices, and hunting activities, which contribute to local jobs and income, and the conservation of a treasured identity and way of life
- C. *Critical natural resource benefits*, as experienced as wildlife habitat and biodiversity, clean water resources, and diverse biotic life
- D. *Critical cultural resource benefits*, as experienced at sites with treasured cultural resources that represent our shared heritage and cultural memory
- E. *Educational, exploratory, and research benefits*, – often in connection with any of the above-mentioned benefits – as experienced at interpretive sites or during interpretive events, in relation to the night sky, or to the ecology and cultural history of the land.

SFCT's pursuit of these goals and public benefits has evolved into a set of strategic geographic principles for focused selection of future conservation areas. These principles are based on an analysis of:

- Threats and opportunities for conservation in the next decade
- The ecoregion diversity in northern New Mexico
- The need to cluster around areas with already acquired easements
- Core concepts of conservation biology aimed at strengthening biodiversity and resilience

5.3 Threats and Opportunities

Threats to natural and cultural landscapes are present throughout the SFCT service area. The range, scope and impact of threats like residential and commercial development, corporatized agriculture and aquaculture, energy production and mining, transportation and utility corridors, biological resource extraction, human intrusions and disturbance, natural system modification, invasive and problematic species, pollution, and climate change is unique to each location (See Appendix D). Examples of local and regional threats include slow development that stays under the radar of County CIP and zoning regulations but still fragments the land; a potential, unforeseen boom in mineral extraction efforts; neglect of land by departing and absentee landowners; unresponsive easement holders; and poor coordination with other land conservation entities. Many of these threats are difficult to plan for and require a responsive and flexible organization to meaningfully participate in mitigation activities that can preserve wildlife habitat, night sky, scenic areas, clean water resources, working lands, cultural resources, and recreation lands before they are compromised.

Threats are often related to a particular area. Problems of low level urban growth under the radar of the County Sustainable Land Development Code are probably most prominent in the Santa Fe, Tesuque, and Glorieta areas. Land disturbance from potential future mineral extraction would mostly affect the Galisteo Basin. Land fragmentation due to development and neglect of the land due to departing and absentee landowners would be felt most in the Galisteo Basin, Pecos River Valley, and in the Las Vegas area.

Climate change is real and it exhibits predictable long-range consequences. It also presents land trusts, including SFCT, a major opportunity to use the remarkable value of conserved lands as a vital strategy to contribute to good carbon stewardship. SFCT can help educate the public about benefits of carbon stewardship through land conservation, and associated benefits, such as ecosystem resiliency, community well-being, climate adaptation options, and the security of preserved ecosystem services. In turn, members of the public may increase their support for the long-term protection of lands, especially those with intact ecosystems and the potential to preserve traditional land use practices and expand public education and recreation opportunities.

Opportunities for ongoing conservation of land that may stem from threats or changes in land use include the anticipated growing acreage of working lands available for conservation created by changing land use as landowner succession diminishes; potential for increased collaboration between land trusts, local and federal government agencies and concerned private landowners; and an increase in public response to potential threats and crises. Opportunities may also exist in pursuing greater connectivity between changing habitats and protected areas to facilitate the establishment of migration corridors, the creation of buffer zones surrounding corridors and protected areas, and the expansion of protected areas. Other current opportunities for conservation may exist in the regionally growing interest in connective trail networks to and through undeveloped land, a growing interest in astronomy requiring clear night skies, a healthy regional economy of agricultural food producers, a relatively low level of growth in the population in the region and a continued presence of an affluent segment of the regional population. Furthermore, SFCT can explore improving habitat quality through fire management, protection of night sky, invasive species control, watershed viability, enhancing resilience of species to climate change and other natural and human-caused threats and disturbances.

5.4 SFCT Service Area Ecoregions

SFCT's service area in northern New Mexico encompasses lands within four ecoregions: Rocky Mountains, Arizona/New Mexico Mountains, Arizona/New Mexico Plateau, and Southwestern Tablelands (See Appendix C). Each region contains climax and transition zones with low and high diversity plant communities and animal populations. While SFCT has conservation easements for a few parcels within the Rocky Mountains and Arizona/New Mexico Mountains Ecoregions, opportunities for large-scale conservation efforts are rare, because much of the land in these ecoregions is under federal management (e.g., US Forest Service, BLM, or BIA). SFCT's role in these ecoregions should focus on creating connective corridors and protecting private lands that enhance federal land protection.

Most of SFCT conservation efforts have focused on the Arizona/New Mexico Plateau and Southwestern Tablelands ecoregions. These two zones, which in a large part are transitional, comprise diverse wildlife habitats and plant communities across the expansive grasslands, woodlands, and forests within these physiographically varied regions. SFCT has targeted and successfully conserved large contiguous tracts of land within these two ecoregions, especially in the Galisteo, Pecos River, Las Vegas, and Piedra Lumbre focal areas (See Appendixes C and E). Conservation efforts within these focal areas are consistent with retiring development rights, reducing natural and human impacts, and providing for public education and recreation within working lands and farms, wildlife habitat, and other lands of conservation value. Targeting conservation opportunities in these areas, where SFCT holds significant conservation easements adjacent to public lands is strategic because of relatively high development pressure

and the transitional nature of these ecoregions. Therefore, working in these areas constitutes a cornerstone of SFCT's guiding principles.

5.5 Strategic Targeting of Land for Conservation

SFCT's mission, identified benefits, an analysis of conservation threats and opportunities, and an eco-regional analysis are the underpinnings of the selection of seven focal areas that encompass thematically or spatially-related ecological or cultural resources overlapping political or administrative jurisdictions (see Section 6). In relation to SFCT's mission-driven efforts, focal areas have properties that conserve and protect areas which contain one or more small and large undeveloped tracts with critical or threatened riparian and wildlife habitats, large tracts of open spaces as ranches, farms, or contiguous grass land or forested conservation easement tracts, and networks of public trails. These holdings translate into a healthier and diverse natural environment perpetuation of traditional land use, and outdoor education and recreation opportunities and the benefits they convey to the public.

In addition to the strategic targeting principles based on the four mission-defined components and the eco-regional analysis, it is strategically useful to apply scientific findings from conservation biology and landscape planning to help in identifying, acquiring and preserving conservation lands. The key strategic approaches aligned with conservation biology promote the protection and restoration of contiguous landscapes vital to the conservation of viable animal population numbers and species diversity. This "green infrastructure" approach provides a balance to a strategy focused primarily on preserving scattered high-value "postage stamps" of land, which may have high public visibility, but provide less conservation value for the financial outlay. Therefore, the targeting principles include the following two elements.

- An important strategic element of underlying SFCT efforts to conserve critical lands lies in the durable conservation of contiguous areas to optimize vital ecological functions (such as natural hydrology and connective corridors for wildlife), view lines, contiguous areas of night sky, trail alignments and associated scenic quality, continuous cultural landscapes, and sustainable working lands. A crucial element of this strategic approach entails pursuit of conservation easements with a relatively low set of conservation values that play a critical role in the preservation of connectivity between adjacent high conservation value lands.
- Another strategic element is the coordination of conservation choices with other protected lands, such as County Open Space properties, private land preserves, archaeological conservation areas, public watersheds and watercourses, grass lands, and forests, and wilderness and roadless areas. Seeking permanent protection of private land of significant conservation value adjacent to these other types of protected lands contributes to achieving landscape-wide conservation goals, while multiplying the value of conservation dollars contributed to these efforts.

Using the principles explained above, a finer strategic focus for categories of land to target for conservation would lead SFCT to concentrate conservation efforts on the following categories of lands based on land use characteristics: (A) scenic and recreational lands, (B) working lands, (C) wildlife habitat, and (D) lands of critical value from the perspective of conservation biology. Characteristics of these categories are explored below.

- A. *Lands that offer scenic and recreational continuity*: focus on (1) areas directly connected to a local or regional trail network, (2) areas with striking scenic features ("viewsheds"),

(3) areas with great night sky opportunities; (5) navigable stretches of rivers important for public education and recreation, and (4) areas that contribute to fishing and hunting opportunities throughout a focal area

- B. *Working lands/farms*: focus on (1) water source areas; (2) agricultural areas close to markets (economically viable agricultural areas); (3) prime agricultural land threatened by (ex)urban development, lack of successors on the farms, and other threats that might lead to loss of the working lands
- C. *Cultural resource areas*: focus on (1) areas important to traditional communities for biotic and geologic resource gathering and sacred or spiritual values, (2) areas that preserve cultural landscape structure including archaeological and historical sites important to understanding local and regional culture histories, and (3) areas of known importance for cultural resource protection
- D. *Wildlife habitat and lands of critical value from the perspective of conservation biology*: focus on (1) “keystone” areas, such as wetlands, riparian zones, water infiltration areas, and core habitat areas; (2) creating landscape connectivity for wildlife movement; (3) preserving size and the breadth of wildlife habitat; (4) watershed protection and preserving water sources across the land; (5) preserving contiguous areas of protected land in combination with other public or private lands; (6) preserving habitat of keystone species and species of the greatest conservation need as per the State wildlife conservation plan, and (7) areas that function as buffer zones for critical landscapes that are threatened by severe natural or human-induced degradation.

6. Service Area and Focal Areas for Conservation

6.1 Service Area

Over the past 25 years SFCT has developed its service area within northern New Mexico. As conservation easements were acquired the service area grew from primarily northern Santa Fe County to include San Miguel, Rio Arriba, Mora, and Taos counties. As explained above, this vast area encompasses the four major ecoregions and their diverse and important ecoregions. SFCT’s holdings in these counties reflects its primary mission to protect open space, wildlife habitats, traditional landscapes of our diverse culture, and promote public education and outdoor recreation (See Appendix E). SFCT has successfully acquired 88 conservation easements protecting nearly 40,000 acres within its service area.

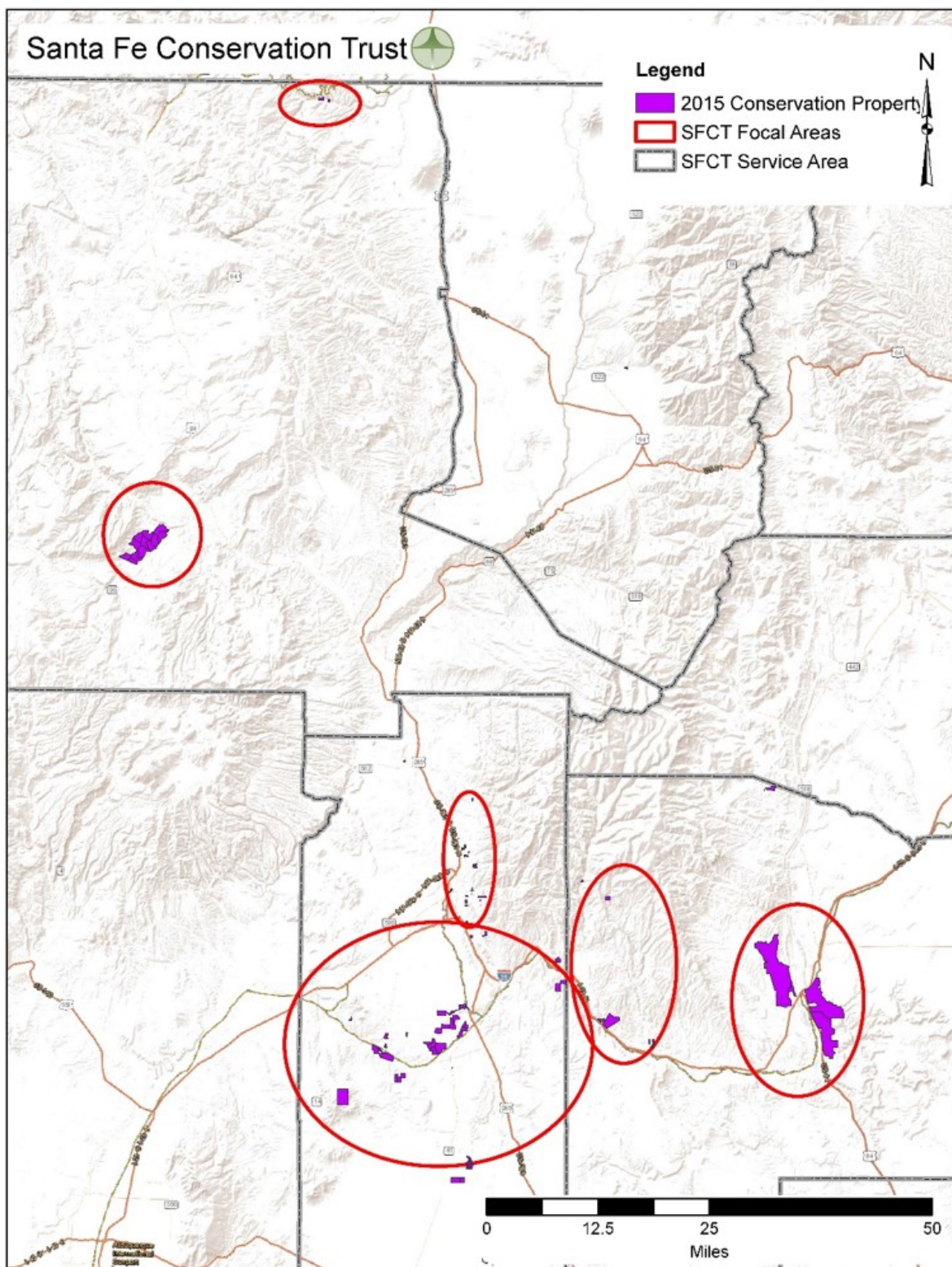
6.2 Focal Areas

SFCT’s strategic conservation activities are geographically concentrated in so-called Focal Areas. SFCT has gradually developed seven Focal Areas (See Appendix E). This Strategic Conservation Plan recommends a proactive conservation emphasis in four of the seven Focal Areas.

A focal area can encompass various ecological or cultural resources and overlap political jurisdictions, but generally has some cohesive element. Focal areas are defined as areas that have a high degree of conservation values (a major single Conservation Value in the case of a scenic viewshed, or multiple overlapping values in the case of water, wildlife and open space converging in one area) that align with SFCT’s Mission Statement, and are in proximity to other

SFCT protected lands. Examples include a small watershed, an undeveloped stretch of river, a cluster of farms or ranches, a grouping of prime agricultural soils, or a specific mountain peak.

SFCT's focal areas consist of conservation easements that are variable in size, conservation values, biological diversity, cultural landscape, and public education and outdoor recreation offerings. The smallest conservation easement is less than three acres, but it protects an important reach of the Santa Fe River canyon. Contiguous conservation easements in the Galisteo Basin preserve viewsheds, wildlife habitat and corridors, historically important landscapes and sites, and provide unmatched trail recreation opportunities that markedly improve the quality of life of Santa Fe County residents. Conservation easements along the Pecos River protect riparian habitats, wild canyons, and upland grass lands and wood lands. Large conservation easements in the Piedra Lumbre and Las Vegas Watershed preserve historic structures and trail ruts, viewsheds, and vast open space grass lands. Into the future, focal areas will be analyzed and evaluated with GIS tools, ecological models, and land use projections to determine, which areas should be targeted for conservation. Building on large contiguous easements will increase the effectiveness of wildlife habitat preservation, species diversity and longevity, unspoiled view lines, and protection of working lands. Connecting parcels in areas with high public use will promote trail expansion, connectivity, and ensure perpetual community health and quality of life benefits.



Santa Fe Conservation Trust Service and Focal Areas (This map to be labeled and the Tesuque area included)

For short- and mid-term initiatives SFCT identified a limited set of focal areas for more targeted conservation efforts. Merging the Santa Fe and Tesuque focal areas for practical purposes, leads to three focal areas with strategic priority for conservation action:

1. The Galisteo Basin Watershed
2. Pecos River Valley
3. Santa Fe/Tesuque Area.

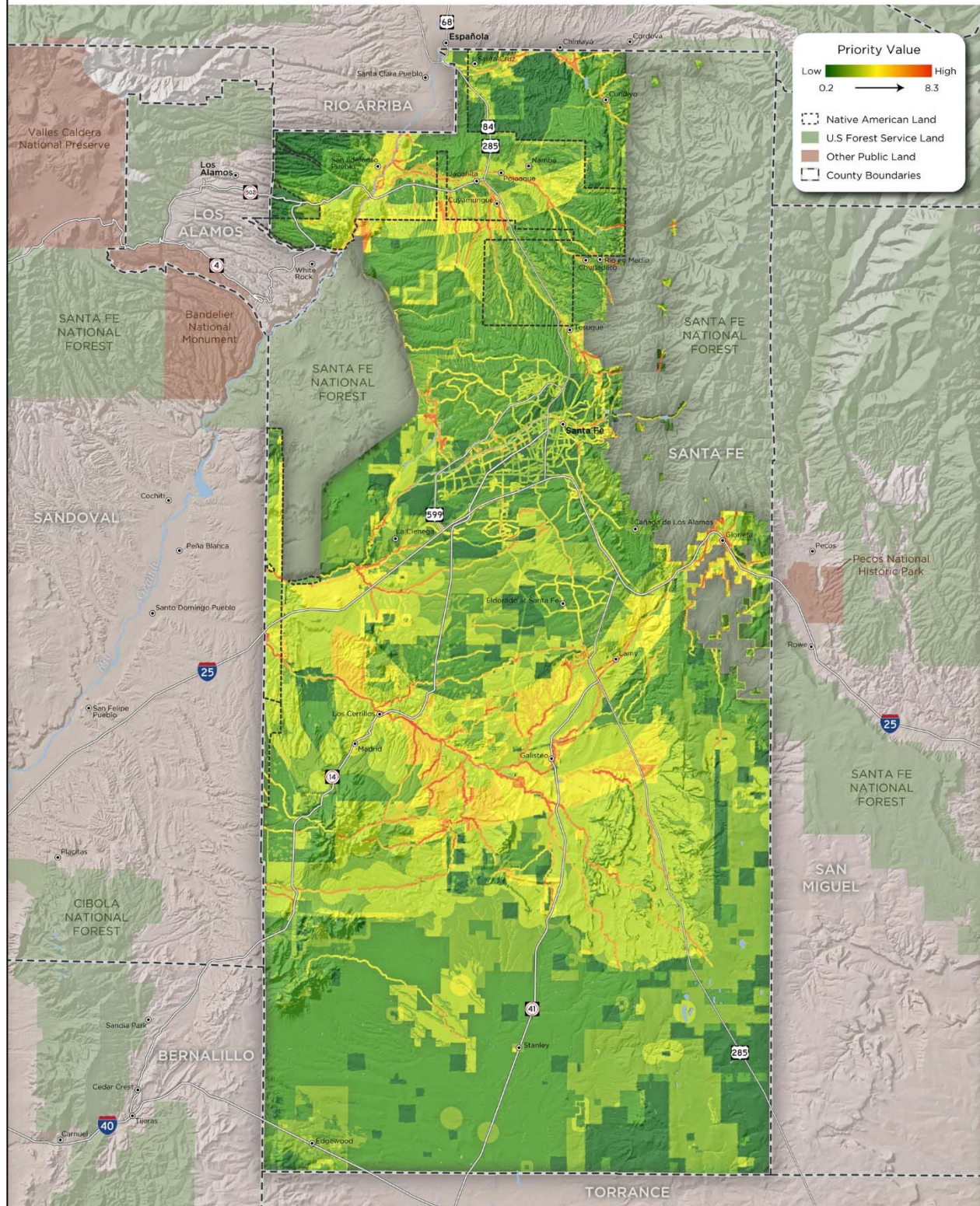
These three focal areas have the advantage of local visibility and impact, a well-established record of conservation easements, opportunities to leverage existing easements into larger contiguous conservation easements, a range of public education and recreation opportunities, and they reinforce the public perception and organizational identity of Santa Fe Conservation Trust as an important part of the local community.

Table. Santa Fe Conservation Trust Focal Areas at a Glance

Focal Area	County	# of easements	Acreage	Conservation Values	Threats	Opportunities
Galisteo Basin Watershed	Santa Fe	28	8,061	wildlife habitat; open space; public education; outdoor recreation; cultural resources	Residential development; loss of working lands; mining; invasive species; erosion and loss of habitat	
Pecos River Valley	San Miguel	9	1,504	Wildlife habitat; open space;	Energy development; loss of working lands;	
Santa Fe	Santa Fe	17	323	open space; outdoor recreation	Residential development; invasive species;	
Tesuque	Santa Fe	10	122	open space; outdoor recreation	Residential development; invasive species;	
Las Vegas Viewshed	San Miguel	6	19,505	wildlife habitat; open space; public education; cultural resources	Residential development; loss of working lands; mining; energy development	
Piedra Lumbre/Abiquiu	Rio Arriba	5	6,228	wildlife habitat; open space	loss of working land; human disturbance	
Los Pinos River Valley	Rio Arriba	2	135	wildlife habitat		

CONSERVATION PRIORITY ANALYSIS

SANTA FE COUNTY, NEW MEXICO



Weighted Conservation Parameters

Conservation Buffers	9%	Rare Plants	2%
Cultural Site Buffers	6%	Riparian Buffers	15%
Habitat	10%	Road Density	2%
Irrigated Soils	2%	Trail Connection	15%
Projected Population	8%	Wetlands Buffers	15%
Public Lands	6%	Wildlife Corridors	10%



Santa Fe Conservation Trust



Map & GIS Analysis by:
Unique Places
www.uniqueplacesllc.com
July 2015

The boundaries shown on this map are approximate and are intended for informational purposes only. This map does not represent a legal survey.

7 - Plan Implementation

7.1. Implementation Directives

The final part of the Conservation Strategic Plan offers directions and suggestions for plan implementation. This section operationalizes the Santa Fe Conservation Trust mission, SFCT board guidance, statutory conservation purposes and values with strategic tools and approaches. These operational directions aim to guide the SFCT in future proactive conservation easement acquisitions and ongoing unsolicited, but significant opportunities, to acquire conservation easements within the SFCT focal areas.

The SFCT mission directs the organization to protect open space and critical wildlife habitat, create trails, and protect traditional landscapes of our diverse culture. These organizational goals are structured by legally defined conservation values or conservation purposes for the preservation of land areas for outdoor recreation or the education of the general public, the protection of relatively natural habitats of fish, wildlife or plants, or similar ecosystems, protection and preservation of open space and preservation of historically important land areas or certified structures. In essence, the organizational mission and statutory requirements are aligned.

The SFCT Board directed its committees and staff to identify focal areas and create and implement GIS-based analysis of high priority lands within the focal areas based on future threats of development or land-altering use, greatest habitat and open space values, potential for trail expansion and connectivity, adjacency to public or protected lands, and lands with significant cultural properties. This process has been completed for Santa Fe County, which contains three focal areas (See Appendix F):

- The City of Santa Fe and Tesuque
- The Galisteo Basin
- Pecos River Valley

7.2. Priorities

Completion of GIS study and analysis of the other four focal areas (Pecos River Valley, Las Vegas, Abiquiu, and Los Pinos) should be a priority in the next two years. Based on the GIS analysis and a careful consideration of the potential conservation values and conservation purposes, the SFCT Land Review Committee identified the Pecos River Valley and Galisteo Basin as high priority focal areas, along with the Santa Fe and Tesuque areas. The committee's recommendation is to focus future analysis and acquisition efforts in these areas, while continuing to pursue conservation easements on special properties that also further SFCT mission, such as trail corridor easements that facilitate connectivity within the Dale Ball Trail

System and between other trail networks across the City of Santa Fe and within Santa Fe County.

Strategic tools and approaches for identifying and acquiring conservation easements within the priority focal areas and for pursuing landowner, mission-based opportunities within all focal areas are suggested below. These tools are guidelines for future acquisition and stewardship efforts. Implicit in this strategic approach is that SFCT expands its current staff to levels that can pursue the actions outlined in the Strategic Conservation Plan and that funding sources will be identified and tapped to allow for the pursuit, purchase, and stewardship of future conservation easements.

7.3. Strategies

This section presents strategies and approaches for proactive and opportunistic identification, pursuit, and acquisition of conservation easements. The strategies and approaches reflect common-sense actions employed by SFCT in the past and methods suggested in other land conservancy strategic plans.

1. Clustering Conservation Lands

The primary common-sense strategy takes advantage of the compounding benefits of focusing on special areas adjacent to SFCT-held conservation easements on multiple properties, as outlined in the section on Principles for Conservation. In our priority focal areas of the Galisteo Basin and the Pecos River, and Santa Fe-Tesuque, there is the potential for protection of substantially more important areas, if SFCT targets conservation easements on new neighboring properties or amends current conservation easements to incorporate additional significant lands. Generally speaking, a cluster of conservation easements allows better management of the land by multiplying conservation values inherent in these lands providing greater conservation benefits to the public. Additionally, clustering conservation easements allows the organization potentially to perform its annual stewardship role more efficiently, by allowing multiple properties to be visited in a single day.

Obviously, conserving a single parcel, unless it is very large or extends along a significant stretch of landscape of significant conservation value, rarely protects the entire resource. Starting with lands that are currently protected with conservation easements, future amendments of those easements or the acquisition of adjacent conservation easements will create corridors of protected lands. This accumulative process also engages the community and elevates the activities of SFCT in the public eye as increasingly larger areas are protected. In the case of the Galisteo Basin Focal Area, expansion of adjacent or existing easements may add to existing trail corridors, which provide a large, measurable, and desired public benefit. In the Pecos River Focal area expanding SFCT conservation easements, which cover large land areas will provide immediate and long-lasting positive impacts to open space, wildlife habitats, night sky, and potential preservation of historic or cultural properties.

Using GIS, as described below, SFCT will be able to promote or collaborate with planned developments that incorporate conservation easements into their master plans. Clustering of developable tracts, while leaving larger tracts undeveloped, benefits agricultural uses, wildlife corridors, night sky, and long-term ecosystem health, and can incorporate public access through trails and continuing education opportunities. Commonwealth Conservancy's approach to land use and conservation in the Galisteo Basin Preserve in the Galisteo Basin Focal Area is a good example of how this approach might work.

Similarly, such GIS-based planning methods allow for creation of conservation easements within larger parcels that are financially possible. Instead of trying to establish conservation on large parcels in all cases, smaller areas within large parcels can be targeted or larger subparcels may be placed in staged conservation easements.

Lastly, using GIS methods it would be useful for SFCT to pursue targeted conservation of small, but critical tracts, such as riverine and wetland areas that connect larger protected areas. Working to retire water rights is also important to this strategy, since water must run with the land for it to remain viable into the future.

2. Developing Capacity for CE Acquisition

SFCT in the future will be able to proactively and significantly expand its mission and conservation easement holdings in a cost-effective manner by pursuing acquisition or amendment of conservation easements on adjacent lands in priority focal areas. Funding these efforts may be accomplished by targeted donation requests, federal grant programs, such as the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) or the NM Land Conservation Incentive Act or the National Heritage Conservation Act. Some programs, like ACEP, require a 25% match, which is sometimes hard for the landowner and land trust to provide. The government also becomes the co-holder of the easement, which to some landowners is anathema. NRCS funding is also taxable, and many landowners have no desire to increase their tax burden. For many landowners, the federal programs are a good choice, but for landowners who are cash-poor, SFCT may need to further develop its fundraising to develop a funding source for bargain sale transactions and purchasing easements.

3. Using GIS-Guided Identification of Significant Properties within Priority Focal Areas

As GIS data improve and become more useful for identification and prioritization of targeted conservation areas, SFCT will need to grow its GIS capabilities and benefit from improved GIS technology to identify threatened or desirable parcels within priority focal areas. A suggested set of recommendations for using GIS for this purpose includes:

1. Update its GIS-based prioritization map in 2018-2019 based on more recent data and on the principles and prioritization criteria of this Strategic Conservation Plan. The new GIS-based prioritization map(s) might include:

- a. The 2009 NMSU technical paper: Santa Fe County Wildlife Habitat GIS Modeling: Workshop and Conservation Priorities
 - b. The 2010 Galisteo Watershed Conservation Initiative data sets for the Galisteo Basin Focal Area
 - c. The 2012 Santa Fe County Wetlands Action Plan
 - d. The 2013 NMSU Focal Species Mapping for Northern New Mexico (Mapping Conservation Priority Indices at Broad Scales in The American Southwest)
 - e. The 2014 Santa Fe County GIS-based mapping data of suitable area for County Open Space (produced by Earth Analytic, Inc. for Santa Fe County)
 - f. The 2015 New Mexico Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT) for plant and wildlife habitat quality (<https://nhnm.unm.edu/node/1>)
 - g. Any studies that reveal critical conservation areas based on climate change models for northern New Mexico
 - h. The latest SF County Growth Management maps
 - i. The latest GUSTO Trail Corridor Maps
 - j. The latest map data on all conservation properties in the SFCT Focal Areas, in order to seek properties that help conserve larger landscapes in these Focal Areas
2. Use the GIS analysis to target high-scoring parcels as defined by the threat and value classification scheme.
 3. Employ industry proven approaches to parcel acquisition including Conservation Limited Development Protection Programs (CDLPs), Fixed Ratio Zoning, and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), for example. Santa Fe County has initiated a Transfer of Development Rights program. SFCT should actively engage with the county to determine what its role might be, such as providing services to the County like perpetual monitoring, for the TDR program down the road. This program will apply to all three Santa Fe County SFCT focal areas. Because the County has introduced a program that essentially buys development rights without regard to preserving a parcel's conservation values and does not require an expensive conservation appraisal, SFCT needs to redouble its efforts to develop capacity to purchase important properties and place easements on them, to offer cash-poor landowners conservation easement bargain sales and purchase easements options.

4. Measuring Success and Expanding Monitoring Capacity

In order to know whether the vision and goals outlined in this Strategic Conservation Plan are being realized, SFCT will need to develop annual operational plans with measurable goals, and monitor achievements on an annual basis. Monitoring will need to address quantitative and qualitative achievements (in other words, targets and outcomes).

Quantitative targets are primarily expressed in acres of protected land, number of easements, and amounts of funding secured. Qualitative outcomes relate to the level of community support, leverage for conservation through other entities, and goodwill expressed in donations, volunteer support, and name recognition in the service area.

Positive outcomes also include the balance between targets achieved and organizational resources, such as funding, staffing, volunteer support, and community support, to be able to sustainably implement future programming. When targets are reached without the resources to monitor and conduct outreach and follow-up, the organization's capacity does not keep pace with its achievements.

Success based on qualitative values also includes SFCT's work in the community. In order to achieve these kinds of qualitative successes, SFCT will need to engage more in public policy and partnership activities. Community-based successes could include:

- the regional significance of preserved conservation value
- landowner and volunteer engagement
- the creation of leverage options, partnerships or community support toward more land conservation and more conservation friendly public land policies (e.g., of federal agencies, on state lands, or on lands owned by counties or municipalities)
- conservation through work by government and other entities or through responsible private landowner actions and increased stewardship

SFCT will need to evaluate its monitoring findings in comparison with the core goals of its mission. Annual measuring of and reporting on the achievement of core goals or interim benchmarks toward the goals (i.e., cumulative achievements) is useful for fund raising and outreach.

However, SFCT has experienced an ongoing shortage of monitoring capacity. This shortage is exacerbated by ongoing challenges with scheduling and obtaining access to certain properties. It will be important that SFCT works internally and with partners to improve communication and relations with landowners. SFCT may also want to explore how to offer incentives to landowners for better stewardship and to ensure that with any new conservation easements the organization builds from the get go high quality relationships and incentives to avoid future challenges with landowner relationships.

The irony of this Strategic Conservation Plan is that the current staffing strains and financial capacity shortage will only increase when the conservation acreage increases, as anticipated in this plan. Yet, SFCT will need to grow its minimal monitoring capacity to fulfill monitoring requirements as per each conservation easement (CE) and LTA guidelines, and to ensure that CE conditions are being upheld.

Therefore, SFCT has a priority need to increase its land program staff. This could be achieved by having more staff capacity and by working smarter. A common problem is that acreage increases are either gradual and slow or in big leaps, and they may not coincide with financial capacity to hire new staff. As a result, there will be years of pressure on staff to get the job done.

In order to address these operational challenges, SFCT will need to consider:

- Hiring additional or temporary staff
- Mobilizing additional help from board and committee members
- Collaborating with other conservation partners that also do monitoring on the properties in relation to stewardship or ecological restoration work
- Making more use of aerial monitoring and by using Google Earth; this will reduce the need to do ground monitoring to every 3-5 years
- Monitoring strategic conditions, such as key values listed in the easement or anticipated deviations from the easement agreement; focused, selective monitoring targeted at the key conservation values of each property could perhaps help limit monitoring to every 2 or 3 years for certain selected properties.

5. Developing Land Stewardship Services Capacity

In the years to come, SFCT may need to take more initiative in promoting stewardship and restoration on properties. Intensified weather events coupled with neglect of properties lead to a need for more stewardship and restoration work. The ongoing trend of gradually increasing ex-urban development and mineral extraction in the region increases the need for more effective night sky and wild life corridors. All these trends lead to an increasing need for stewardship and restoration. Conversely, many land restoration projects – especially those funded by government agencies – require or recommend that targeted lands for restoration (i.e., the restoration investments) are protected with conservation easements.

All these trends and factors indicate a growing need for the SFCT to pay more attention to developing relationships and work strategies (in collaboration with conservation and restoration partners) that offer landowner more effective land stewardship and restoration opportunities. Annual monitoring findings and regional collaboration will help SFCT with prioritizing properties for stewardship and restoration, and helping landowners find funding and technical support to get the job done.

Building capacity can be achieved in a combination of ways:

- Tracking annual stewardship activities and funding in the region as exhibited by regional restoration programs, landowner initiatives, and government initiatives
- Partnering with regional restoration programs in future proposals, directing these proposals to include Conservation Easement properties in need of work
- Documenting and presenting success stories; recognizing good land stewards (landowners); e.g., through annual awards at the Udall event

- Partnering with a few restoration organizations and/or experts who serve as consulting restorationists (following the example of consulting foresters) on a group of properties; treating multiple properties in conjunction where possible and advisable
- Creating demonstration properties; leading guided tours and educational events for students and other landowners in order to cultivate a greater sense of land stewardship on protected (“open”) lands
- Linking conserved and restored areas to the GUSTO or other trails networks, so the public can see the benefits of healthy land
- Starting by focusing on a few stewardship aspects: e.g., wildfire risk, bare ground and erosion and flooding problems, invasive plant species (encroachment by native species, and proliferation of exotics), etc.

6. Expressing Public Relevance of Land Conservation through Strategic Outreach

Strategic outreach events will help SFCT leverage greater public support for its work. It may be useful for SFCT to engage the public as well as public entities, schools, and potential partner organizations in conjunction with the Focal Areas through outreach events, participatory events, and outdoor events (runs, bike rides, guided walks, educational tours, cleanup days, restoration workshops, etc.). Such activities would build stronger public support for conservation and for stewardship. This in turn, might help with future funding, expanding the landowner base of conservation properties, and with leveraging conservation work on adjacent public lands.

7. Supporting or Initiating Legislative Initiatives in Support of the Strategic Conservation Plan’s Goals

Building on the capacity building steps outlined in the previous sections, SFCT would gradually grow enough public engagement to speak out in support of or initiate legislative proposals and County ordinances for expanded and cohesive land and natural resource conservation in its work area and in the Focal Areas. This work can be accomplished by:

- Joining in partnership with other entities to promote certain legislative proposals (e.g., regarding Forest Plan revision, County ordinances, etc.)
- Systematically supporting or sponsoring regulations and policies in support of the core goals of protected working lands, protecting wildland habitat and corridors, and trail corridors.

- Tracking county development and zoning approvals to ensure that they are in concert with conservation goals and speaking out when they are not
- Attending meetings (either via staff or board) of the governing bodies of City and County regarding land use and natural resource conservation issues that are of relevance to the conservation goals
- Partnering with “adopt” programs of governmental agencies and non-governmental entities in the work region
- Lobbying (within the legally allowed opportunities) for funds, grants, and public policy changes or endorsement of (local) political candidates.

These public policy support activities are probably most suitable to be conducted by the ED and Board members.

7.4. Phases

At the executive level of the SFCT, the ED and Board will need to consider phasing the implementation of the Strategic Conservation Plan in concert with annual staff and funding capacity and longer-term projections of these resources. It is critical to focus on capacity building within the organization before engaging in commitments that carry longer term requirements for staff and financial resources.

Therefore, the SFCT is best served with beginning the implementation of this Strategic Conservation by taking measures that boost its internal capacity, such as expanding long-term funding strategies, including board and volunteers in temporary tasks to cover staff shortages, expanding staffing through interns and other temporary staff, and eventually creating a new staff position (knowing at what level of resources this is sustainable). In a second phase, funding could be directed to hiring capacity to update the GIS-driven selection of target properties, development of stewardship capacity and outreach, and the further development of public outreach and policy initiatives. In the meantime, acquisition and monitoring need to keep pace with the existing staff capacity, but acquisition of large properties may need to be carefully postponed until sufficient financial and staff capacity can be anticipated or is secured to take on these added responsibilities.

In sum, this may lead to the following phasing scenario:

1. Short term: Capacity building
 - a. Building long-term funding strategies
 - b. Diversifying its monitoring approach and building monitoring capacity
2. Mid-term: Outreach development
 - a. Completion of a GIS study
 - b. Developing stewardship capacity and outreach
 - c. Further developing public outreach and policy initiatives
3. Longer term: Ramping up the conservation acreage in a significant manner

7.5. Finances and fund raising

Funding the Conservation Strategic Plan initiatives—SFCT Board and Finance Committees need to work on this section.

Financing the strategic plan is a game of anticipating the desired capacity building and programmatic changes or developments. It is also dependent on understanding the current and potential funding sources and financing mechanisms. SFCT will need to use a combination of financial resources from private donations and public grants to aid in the implementation process.

For capacity building, SFCT will need to have access to sustainable sources of funding. Such sources include an endowment, ongoing fees and revenues associated with staff work output, and dependable annual donations. One strategy for dependable funding that can be established immediately is a planned-giving program. With the largest intergenerational transfer of wealth (TOW) (e.g., through bequests and land transfers) expected to occur in the United States of America between 2000 and 2050 when an estimated \$41 trillion dollars will change hands, there has never been a more important time to offer additional giving opportunities to donors. The SFCT, a not-for profit, with an IRS 501(c) 3 designation and expertise in land and land transfers is uniquely qualified to benefit from this TOW and can even help mitigate potential tax liability for donors during and simultaneously conserve important natural land.

7.6. Needs for Ongoing Investigating and Planning / Need for Ongoing Investigations and Plans

- Investigating how SFCT Trails Initiatives (e.g., GUSTO) can be integrated in the Strategic Plan
- Research in local and regional TDR markets and other land transaction schemes that help promote land conservation.
- Research about the anticipated growth of farm and ranch land without successors, which might become available for conservation in the period between the present and 2040; collaborating and exploring how society in general and land trust organizations in particular should respond to this trend
- Research about payment for ecosystem services schemes that are appropriate for financing land conservation and stewardship measures
- Research in strategic collaboration with other organizations (and participating in collaborative efforts, such as the Rio Grande Water Fund, the NAWCA program for the Rio Grande Basin and for playa areas, agricultural land preservation initiatives, national night sky initiatives, regional trail development programs – other than GUSTO; etc.)
- Investigating strategies and funding sources to allow SFCT to purchase CEs, do bargain sales and buy property.

- Deeper investigations in how properties can be monitored smarter
- More attention to developing relationships and work strategies (with conservation and restoration partners) to offer landowner more effective land stewardship and restoration opportunities. Intensified weather events coupled with neglect of properties lead to need to more stewardship and restoration work; increasing development increases the need for more effective night sky and wild life corridors. All these issues lead to an increasing need for stewardship and restoration. Through annual monitoring findings SFCT will need to prioritize properties for stewardship and restoration, and help landowners find funding and technical support to get the job done.

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APPENDIX A – A Brief History of the Santa Fe Conservation Trust

Mission Statement

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust is 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.

Vision Statement

This mission aims to protect and enhance key natural areas, ranch and agricultural lands, river and stream corridors, trails, and the natural open lands that define and sustain our rich and memorable landscape.

We accomplish our mission by working with people in culturally diverse communities in ways that enhance community values, create meaningful connections between people and the land, preserve heritage and encourage collaborative action.

Westerners are shaped by the land, held by its distances, fed by its grasses and grains, protected by its ridges and ranges. We obtain water in the arroyos, shelter beneath cottonwoods and pinons, and derive our cultures from the trails that have linked us to the Aztecs, Chaco, Mexico, and Missouri. This is our past and we hold it in trust for our future.

1993-1999 – The Early Years

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) was established in 1993 to help protect an iconic property - Atalaya Hill – that was under immediate threat of residential development. The bulldozers had already begun to clear land on the mountain when SFCT became involved. At that time there was little in the way of professional guidance or local incentives to consider as an alternative to development. Working cooperatively with other conservation partners, SFCT secured Atalaya, repaired the scar across its face, and preserved access to the Atalaya trailhead that hundreds of people use every year.

In the organization's early years, SFCT worked on a variety of properties in Santa Fe, San Miguel and Rio Arriba counties. Responding to inquiries from landowners wishing to conserve some of their land and realize federal tax benefits for making charitable donations of land, SFCT played an important role as the charitable organization ready to receive gifts of land. By the year 2000 SFCT held 41 easements encumbering 22,316 acres of land protecting open space, from local viewsheds to large working ranches that benefit both people and wildlife. SFCT was a strong advocate for formalizing existing trails in and around Santa Fe into what would become known as the Rail Trail, the Spur Trail and the Dale Ball Trail system. These successes were only possible because of the original efforts of those who called Santa Fe home decades before the SFCT was organized. It was the sheepherders, equestrians, motorcyclists, bikers and hikers, exploring on foot, who all played critical roles in establishing important routes throughout the area.

2000-2005

Between 2000 and 2005, with local and government partners, SFCT was busy working on many initiatives, including the Arroyo Hondo Open Space Initiative (to preserve an 86-acre parcel in Arroyo Hondo), the Galisteo Watershed Conservation Initiative (a comprehensive ecological, sustainability conservation plan for the Galisteo Watershed) and the La Tierra Trail System, and it won the Piñon Award in 2004 for excellence in the Environment. In 2005, SFCT teamed up with a group of 23 people consisting of Pecos Canyon residents and friends who formed an LLC, named Cerrito Amarillo River Canyon Trust, pooled their resources, and bought and placed under conservation easement a beautiful 32-acre parcel on a huge loop of the Pecos River, in a largely unspoiled portion of its canyon. The success of that effort led to members of that group working with SFCT to protect another 93 acres of the canyon from development.

2006-2010

Between 2006 and 2010, SFCT added 16 easements covering 2,953 acres, and we have several more to be recorded before the end of 2010. In 2007, we held the first Trails Summit in Santa Fe, bringing together trail advocates and policy makers such as Sen. Tom Udall and Santa Fe Mayor David Coss. We advocated for a “Green Infrastructure” vision, to turn Santa Fe into a place where children and adults could get around town on multi-use transportation trails away from traffic. We partnered with other environmental organizations to bring water back to the Santa Fe River: with the City's Santa Fe River Fund, water rights can be bought by city residents for the “River to flow” thereby placing water back in the river on a full-time basis. In 2007, the NM State Land Conservation Incentives Act Amendments passed which increased the tax credit maximum to \$250,000 and made the credits transferable, allowing landowners to realize equity from their land while protecting it for future generations. In 2008, we worked hard to fight off the oil and gas threat to the Galisteo Basin, expanded our service area to protect the Los Pinos River in northern Rio Arriba County, and partnered with the Taos Land Trust to protect and provide public access to the Rio Hondo in Taos County. In 2008, our Night Skies program was developed. Through education and advocacy for our disappearing stars due to light pollution, the program has helped locals see firsthand the night sky in the Galisteo Basin during star watching events that are hosted throughout the year.

In December 2009, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) produced its most recent strategic plan. That Strategic Organizational Plan declared it to be imperative for SFCT to:

- Plan the conservation job, and take a proactive approach to land conservation. SFCT needs a plan to guide staff regarding conservation priorities.
- Define SFCT's bigger picture, and set long-term goals for lands it wants to conserve.
- Map high priority places to conserve by using Geographical Information System (GIS) software to identify where the highest concentration of conservation values (scenic view, wildlife habitat, trails, etc.) overlap in SFCT's service area.

This Strategic Conservation Plan (Plan) is provided in response to the above direction.

2011-2017

In 2012, SFCT completed the La Piedra Trail. This new trail connection between the Dale Ball Trail system and the Santa Fe National Forest trail created increased public access from the City to the National Forest and connects “wilderness” trails with the National Forest and the 13,000-foot peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains above Santa Fe. This trail system is now a major outdoor recreation asset for the community.

After completing and submitting an application for accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance in 2013, SFCT received confirmation of accreditation in 2014. After a long and arduous process, SFCT joined the ranks of 280 land trusts throughout the United States to achieve this status. Accreditation provides the public with an assurance that, at the time of accreditation, SFCT meets high standards for quality and that the results of our conservation work are permanent.

Through its Trails Program Manager, in 2015 the Santa Fe Conservation Trust organized and supervised numerous maintenance work days in Dale Ball Trails, nine in La Tierra Trails, three on other City of Santa Fe trails, and three on Santa Fe National Forest’s Atalaya Trail. SFCT also fully launched its “Passport to Santa Fe’s Foothill Trails” program in the spring of 2015. By year’s end, 361 school children, teachers, or parents were taken out on the city trails on eighteen outings.

2018 – Beyond

What began with providing a landowner a charitable organization qualified to hold gifts of land and land values has morphed into a much more capable entity that is now in a position to orchestrate conservation on a much larger scale. But like land trusts nationwide, SFCT seeks to broaden its constituency to include as many people as possible in its work. As our original founders age, SFCT must continue to make itself relevant to the community. GUSTO, the collaboration of many community partners to connect our existing trails is one such effort to ensure that everyone in our community can get on our trails. SFCT’s Passport to Trails program annually takes around 600 kids from Santa Fe’s southside schools on the trails. The goal of this program, started in 2014, is to introduce children and their families to the trail system and to inspire the next generation of conservationists. Similarly, SFCT is introducing new, in-town walking opportunities on the flatter, ADA accessible trails in town around our City parks. This program targets those with chronic health conditions who need to exercise to improve their health. And finally, SFCT is working to expand its land program not only on the staff side, but also from a financing perspective, so that SFCT can work with a wider variety of landowners and offer not just donated conservation easements and the accompanying tax benefits, but also so that it can work with landowners who may have significant properties they want to preserve but no means to cover the upfront costs.

Today, with 88 conservation easements recorded in four counties totaling nearly 40,000 acres of protected open space, SFCT is shifting its business model to actively pursue conservation projects rather than simply waiting to be approached by landowners. A land trust's primary function is to conserve land by upholding legal agreements of retired development rights that protect conservation values and support the natural integrity of the land. The land trust movement is one by which private land is preserved for public benefit by landowners who voluntarily retire all or a portion of the development rights to their land.

As the population of northern New Mexico grows, pressure is increased to convert more land from its natural state to provide homes, roads and other amenities deemed necessary for modern society. SFCT's objective is to provide a platform from which land conservation can be completed in a professional manner that will: Benefit the land and the landowner, provide public recreation and education opportunities, preserve wildlife habitat, and protect open space, scenic views and cultural resources that help to define our communities.

APPENDIX B – CONSERVATION VALUES AS PER PARAGRAPH 170(h)

Conservation Values or Conservation Purpose

The most subjective part of determining whether a conveyance has satisfied the requirements for a qualified conservation contribution is the question of whether the donation satisfies one of the conservation purposes. It is not necessary for a donation to satisfy all four conservation purposes; one is sufficient. However, the more conservation purposes that an easement can fulfill, the more likely it will satisfy the conservation purposes test of §170(h).

Section 1.170A-14 of the Treasury Regulations discusses at length the definition of conservation purposes in IRC §170(h). The four categories of conservation purposes can be summarized as:

- The preservation of land areas for outdoor recreation by, or the education of, the general public;
- The protection of a relatively natural habitat of fish, wildlife or plants, or similar ecosystem;
- Open space (including farmland and forestland) that is either preserved:
 - For the scenic enjoyment of the general public; or
 - Pursuant to a clearly delineated federal, state or local governmental conservation policy; and that will yield a significant public benefit; or
- The preservation of a historically important land area or a certified historic structure.

Public Recreation or Education

This conservation purpose is met if the conservation easement preserves a land area for the outdoor recreation of the general public or for the education of the general public.

Examples include preservation of a water area for use by the public for fishing, or preservation of a hiking trail for use by the general public.

Access: To qualify, the recreational or educational use must be for the “substantial and regular use of the general public.” Generally, the conservation easement must ensure some form of public access to the protected property.

Natural Habitat Protection

This conservation purpose is met if the conservation easement protects “a significant relatively natural habitat in which a fish, wildlife, or plant community, or similar ecosystem normally lives.”

Some alterations of the habitat or environment by human activity do not disqualify the property so long as the fish, wildlife or plants exist in a relatively natural state. Significant habitats and ecosystems include, but are not limited to:

- Habitats for rare, endangered or threatened species

- Natural areas that represent high quality examples of a terrestrial or aquatic community
- Natural areas that are included in or contribute to the ecological viability of a local, state or national park, nature preserve, wildlife refuge, wilderness area, or other similar conservation area

Examples include a property that provides important winter range for elk and mule deer, or ponds and riparian areas that provide migratory stops for songbirds and waterfowl.

Access: Public access to the property is not required for a property to satisfy this conservation purpose.

Open Space Preservation

Determining if land satisfies the conservation purpose of the preservation of open space can be very challenging. The exact language in §170(h) describing the preservation of open space is important:

iii. the preservation of open space (including farmland and forest land) where such preservation is

I. for the scenic enjoyment of the general public, or

II. pursuant to a clearly delineated Federal, State, or local governmental conservation policy.

Determining if a property meets the conservation purposes for the preservation of open space hinges on several key phrases in this passage. The first key phrase is that open space includes farmland and forest land. This means that working lands such as farms, ranches and forests are appropriate for protection by a conservation easement, provided the requirements discussed below are met. The second key phrase is that the preservation of open space must be either:

1. For the scenic enjoyment of the general public; or
2. Pursuant to a clearly delineated governmental conservation policy;
3. And will yield a significant public benefit.

It is critical to note that the preservation of open space must be for either scenic enjoyment of the general public or pursuant to a clearly delineated governmental policy. But, in either case, such preservation must “yield a significant public benefit.”

Scenic Enjoyment

Preservation of land for the scenic enjoyment of the public means: Preventing development of the property that would impair the scenic character of the local rural or urban landscape and preventing development that would interfere with the scenic panoramic view that can be enjoyed from a park, nature preserve, road, highway, water body, trail, historic structure, or historic land area, and such area or transportation way is open to or utilized by the public. “Scenic enjoyment” is evaluated considering all the pertinent facts and circumstances of a contribution. Among the factors to be considered are:

- The compatibility of the land use with other land in the vicinity
- The openness of the land
- Relief from urban closeness
- The degree to which the land use maintains the scale and character of the urban landscape to preserve open space and visual enjoyment

Access: The requirement of scenic enjoyment by the general public can be satisfied by visual, rather than physical, access to or across the property by the general public. The entire property need not be visible for a donation to qualify, although the public benefit may be insufficient to qualify for a deduction if only a small portion of the property is visible to the public.

Clearly Delineated Policy

A clearly delineated governmental conservation policy: Is more than a declaration by a single official or legislative body but does not need to be a program that identifies individually owned property.

Examples include preservation of:

- Land within a state or local landmark district
- A designated wild or scenic river
- Farmland pursuant to a flood prevention and control program
- The scenic, ecological or historic character of the land that is contiguous to surrounding recreation or conservation sites

Access: Access need not be granted unless barring the public from the land would frustrate the purpose of the donation. For example, if the purpose of the donation is to protect the scenic view of a river, and the river cannot be seen by the general public, some public access might be required to provide that scenic view.

All contributions made for the preservation of open space must yield a significant public benefit. The Treasury Regulations set forth these factors, among others, to be considered:

- Uniqueness of the property to the area

- Intensity of land development in the vicinity
- Consistency of the proposed open space use with existing public or private programs
- Likelihood that development of the property would degrade the scenic, natural or historical character of the area
- Access to the property by the general public, either physically or visually
- The importance of the property in preserving a local or regional landscape or resource that attracts tourism to the area

Historic Preservation

This conservation purpose is met if the conservation easement preserves a historically important land area or a certified historic structure. A historically important land area is an independently significant land area, including any related historic resources (e.g., a Civil War battlefield). A certified historic structure is any building, structure or land area (prior to the passage of the Pension Act, see below):

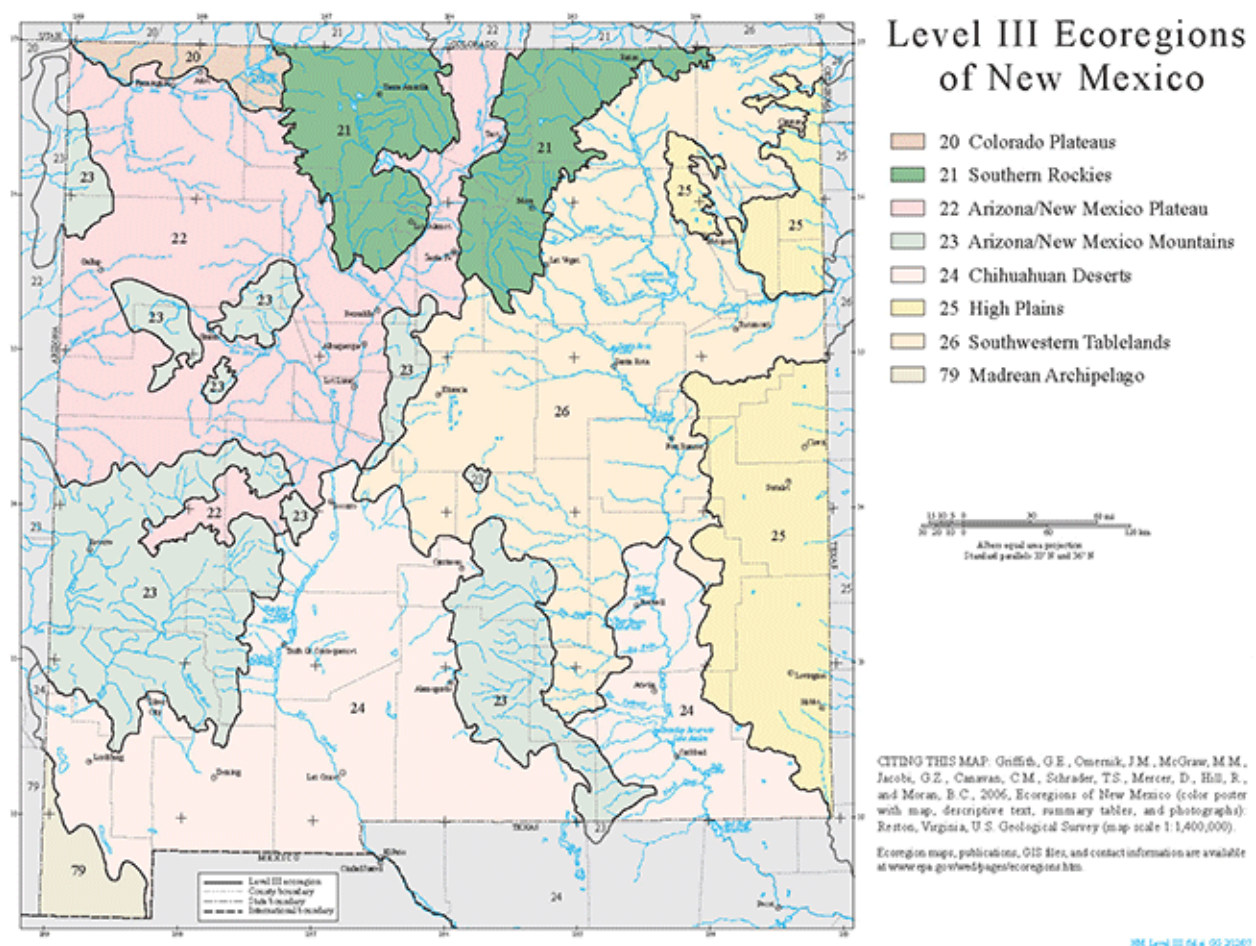
- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- Located in a registered historic district [as defined in section 48(g)(3)(B)] and certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historic significance to the district

APPENDIX C – NEW MEXICO CULTURES AND ECOREGIONS

Cultures of Northern New Mexico

Northern New Mexico has a rich and multi-ethnic cultural heritage influenced by the traditions and interactions between people of Native American, Hispanic, and European descent and have been influenced by the movement of people along trails and roads that have linked us through time with ancient settlements and trade centers to the west and south, and colonial and territorial commercial and cultural centers by way of the Camino Real and Santa Fe and Old Spanish trails, as well as the railroads and historic highways.

Ecoregions of North Central New Mexico



Southern Rocky Mountain

The Southern Rocky Mountains (SRM) ecoregion extends over nearly 40 million acres and includes portions of southern Wyoming, central and western Colorado, and northern New Mexico. Elevation ranges from approximately 3,700 ft. to over 14,400 ft. The ecoregion is characterized by two major mountain belts and intervening intermontane valleys and parks encompassing four broad ecological zones: alpine, subalpine, upper montane, and lower

montane/foothill. The primary ecological processes maintaining the natural systems and the biodiversity are fire, hydrological regime, herbivory, insect outbreaks, snow avalanches, and wind.

Arizona / New Mexico Mountains

The ecoregion is based upon the oldest mountains in the southwest, containing Precambrian igneous rocks as old as 1.5 billion years. These older volcanics are overlain with more recent sediments (including important fossil deposits from the Jurassic and Triassic) and volcanics (including volcanic flows and calderas from as recently as 600 years ago). The result is an extremely diverse physiographic region with elevations ranging from about 5,000 to more than 10,000 feet above sea level. The Arizona / New Mexico Mountains is an area of plateaus and mountains rising above the surrounding desert plains. It is best known as an area of big trees, especially ponderosa pine. Natural communities are typically ponderosa pine and white fir forest types above 5,500 feet and piñon pine savannas at lower elevations, although the ecoregion also includes grasslands, shrublands, and riparian forests

Arizona/New Mexico Plateau

The Arizona/New Mexico Plateau Ecoregion is covered predominantly in a mosaic of sparse semiarid grassland and desert-scrub species. Major washes and river courses often contain riparian canopies of cottonwood, desert willow, and salt cedar. Juniper and piñon trees are located in the upland areas, with ponderosa pine forests present at the highest elevations. The climate in the ecoregion is mostly semiarid, but regional topography causes annual precipitation to vary substantially

Southwestern Tablelands

Although quite diverse, the landscape can be characterized by its high plateaus and flat to rolling plains which are dissected by canyons, entrenched draws and caprock escarpments. These natural features were formed by the Canadian, Red, Brazos, Colorado and Pecos rivers, which feature wide and shallow sandy-bedded channels that contain unique aquatic fauna adapted to the semi-arid climate. The ecoregion also includes a diversity of other aquatic habitats, from high gradient snowmelt-fed streams in the Southern Rocky Mountain foothills, to intermittent streams in the arid Pecos River valley and Llano Estacado, to medium-sized groundwater-fed perennial streams in the rolling plains and prairies in the east. Playas and saline lakes are wetland types that represent a significant resource for many terrestrial and aquatic species, including migratory waterfowl and shorebirds (Smith 2003). Playas also function as critical recharge features for the Ogallala Aquifer. The importance of these wetlands in sustaining the biodiversity of the Ecoregion cannot be overemphasized. Dominant terrestrial ecological systems are shortgrass prairie, mixed grass prairie, pinyon juniper woodland, and deep sand shrub-steppe. Montane conifer woodlands and forests are found in higher elevations to the west, while Chihuahuan Desert shrublands occupy lowlands in the southwest. Mesquite

and juniper woodlands and shrublands currently occupy large areas of the ecoregion. The primary ecological processes that maintain these systems are climate, fire and grazing

APPENDIX D – OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS TO CONSERVATION IN 2018

Threats

The State Wildlife Action Plan for New Mexico states that threats are defined as factors that can adversely affect the long-term persistence of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). The following is a list of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) threats potentially effecting Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN).

1. Residential and Commercial Development

Habitat loss/fragmentation/degradation, including of riparian areas, and behavior modification from noise and activity associated with: urban areas, suburbs, vacation homes, manufacturing plants, military bases, power plants, and airports.

2. Agriculture and Aquaculture

Loss of nutrition and cover and habitat fragmentation associated with cattle feed lots, dairy farms, and cattle

3. Energy Production and Mining

Habitat loss/fragmentation, behavior modification from noise and activity, and direct mortality from collisions with wind turbines or burns associated with solar concentrator power tower facilities. Includes impacts of oil and gas wells, (including both surface impacts and effects to groundwater), coal mines, rock quarries, wind farms, and solar farms.

4. Transportation and Service Corridors

Habitat fragmentation, behavior modification from noise and activity, spread of invasive species, direct mortality from collisions with vehicles and utility lines, and raptor electrocution. Corridors include highways, secondary roads, logging roads, railroads, power-lines, cell phone towers connected by access roads, and oil and gas pipelines.

5. Biological Resource Use

Habitat loss/fragmentation, and population perturbation from direct mortality and associated, indirect effects on other species. Includes poaching, trophy hunting, fur trapping, predator and pest control, commercial logging, and fuel wood collection.

6. Human Intrusions and Disturbance

Habitat modification/disturbance and behavior modification from noise and activity. Activities include the use of off highway vehicles, motorboats, jet-skis, snowmobiles, mountain bikes, ultralight planes, hanggliders, and tanks and other military vehicles. Also include hiking, birdwatching, caving, rock-climbing, military training exercises, field-based species research and law enforcement, and illegal activities including vandalism.

7. Natural System Modifications

Habitat loss/fragmentation/modification, loss of nutrients and cover, erosion, sediment loss, and hydroperiod alteration. Impacts associated with fire suppression to protect property, escaped fires, arson, the construction and operation of dams and associated water releases, surface water diversion, groundwater pumping, channelization, snag removal from streams, and reduction in controlled burns.

8. Invasive and Problematic Species

Habitat loss/fragmentation/degradation, pollution of gene pools of native species through hybridization with nonnative species, population reduction through competition, disease, and predation. Harmful organisms can include feral horses, unrestrained pets, non-native mussels, nonnative grasses and riparian plants, native woody plants that spread into grassland areas. Diseases include chytrid fungus in amphibians, the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome in bats, plague, rabies, hantavirus, tularemia, chronic wasting disease, and West Nile virus.

9. Pollution

Habitat degradation, behavior modification from noise, direct mortality/reduced fecundity, loss of food and water. Sources of pollution include leaking septic and fuel tanks, untreated sewage, oil or sediment on roads, lawn and agricultural fertilizers and herbicides, illegal chemical dump sites, mine tailings, and manure on feed lots. Road-side litter and construction-site debris may entangle wildlife. Air pollution can result from smoke from forest fires, wind erosion from disturbed areas/bare ground, vehicle and industrial emissions. Excess heat, light, or sound can be released by highways, airplanes, power plants, and lights in urban areas.

10. Climate Change

Habitat loss/fragmentation, loss of food and cover, and direct mortality from drought and extreme temperatures. Ecosystem encroachment can include desertification while changes in geochemical regimes can include increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations. Frequency, magnitude, and intensity of heat waves, cold spells, droughts, tornados, hailstorms, dust storms, floods, and thunderstorms may all be affected by climate change.

The impacts of Climate Change, as predicted by various models, includes increasing air temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, increasing severity of drought in arid climates, more frequent extreme weather events, earlier snow melt in the mountains, and rising ocean levels. These impacts adversely affect the biodiversity and function of ecosystems, availability

and quality of natural resources, productivity of agriculture and forestry, human health, and societal infrastructure. Here in the southwestern United States, as a result of these impacts, we have already experienced catastrophic wildfires, flooding and reduced agricultural yields. Trends we expect to continue.

In *Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change through the Conservation of Nature* by the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia it argues that "Land trusts now have a major opportunity to use the remarkable value of conserved lands as a vital strategy to address climate change. Protected and conserved lands will contribute to good carbon stewardship through providing ecosystem resiliency, community well-being, the potential for carbon sequestration, adaptation options, and the security of ecosystem services. As the public begins to recognize these values it will increase its support for the protection of lands, especially those with intact ecosystems and the potential to maintain a range of values and services."

Specific strategies are available to safeguard water resources and reduce hazards from storms, fires and floods. These strategies include increasing rainwater infiltration, developing water reuse systems, expanding forest thinning treatments, improving the functionality of our rivers and arroyos.

Climate change effects may intensify other stressors, including insects and disease. A prominent example of current climate change effects within western North America is the widespread die-off of conifer species driven by the interaction of drought, insects, and fire. Climate change is expected to exacerbate the effects of land use change and habitat fragmentation on wildlife populations. For example, in southwest riparian ecosystems, future increases in periods of drought and intense heat are expected to increase rates of habitat loss and fragmentation, processes that limit the capacity of wildlife populations to adapt to changing conditions. These processes are further compounded by water extraction and invasive species. The Rio Grande is already suffering from the effects of water extraction and is considered at risk of more extreme flood events due to the urbanization of its watersheds.

Grasslands are likely to be highly vulnerable to invasive species under a changing climate. Projections indicate that climate change will have profound impacts on forest ecosystems across western North America. Most woody species are expected to shift northward to track suitable climate conditions. Many higher elevation species are projected to experience range contractions as suitable climates disappear. Drought-stressed forests are particularly sensitive to insect outbreaks, disease, and wildfire, all of which are expected to increase in frequency, intensity, and geographic extent with a warming climate. In recent decades, intense droughts, insect outbreaks, and wildfires have resulted in widespread tree mortality across the southwest. Given that forest mortality events are expected to continue to happen rapidly and over large areas, there is an urgent need to develop adaptive strategies that will address climate-related threats to these ecosystems in New Mexico.

By 2035-2065, mountain ranges within the Southern Rocky Mountains, Arizona/New Mexico Mountains, and the Colorado Plateaus ecoregions will have a much shorter period of snowfall and a greater amount of winter precipitation falling as rain. Only the northernmost mountains within the Colorado Plateaus ecoregion will continue to receive snow-dominated precipitation, although most months are projected to have a rain-snow mix even in this region.

Greater connectivity between suitable habitats and protected areas can facilitate movement of species as habitats shift. Establishment of migration corridors, management of areas surrounding corridors and protected areas, and expansion of protected areas can all improve habitat connectivity. Habitat quality can be improved through fire management, invasive species control, and watershed improvement, thus enhancing resilience of species to climate change and other disturbances.

APPENDIX E – SFCT SERVICE TERRITORY AND FOCAL AREAS

SFCT Service Territory

Santa Fe County

San Miguel County

Mora County

Rio Arriba County

Taos County – with Partners the Taos Land Trust

Focal Areas

A focal area can encompass various ecological or cultural resources and overlap political jurisdictions, but generally has some cohesive element. Examples include a small watershed, an undeveloped stretch of river, a cluster of farms or ranches, a grouping of prime agricultural soils, or a specific mountain peak.

Focal areas are defined as areas that have a high degree of conservation values (a major single Conservation Value in the case of a scenic viewshed, or multiple overlapping values in the case of water, wildlife and open space converging in one area) that align with SFCT's Mission Statement, and are located in proximity to other SFCT protected lands.

Galisteo Basin Watershed

Protected Land: 28 SFCT Conservation Easements covering 8,061 acres

The Galisteo Basin Watershed is celebrated for its spectacular scenic, wildlife, and cultural resources. Covering 730 square miles just south of Santa Fe, the Galisteo Basin's varied geography includes grasslands, forests, mesas, rolling hills, rocky escarpments, streams, small lakes, and wetlands. The watershed lies across three counties: San Miguel to the east, Santa Fe in the center, and Sandoval to the west. The Galisteo Basin lies at the intersection of four western ecoregions: the Southern Rocky Mountains, Arizona/New Mexico Mountains, Southwestern Tablelands, and Arizona/ New Mexico Plateau, each contributing to a rich biodiversity. Regionally, the Galisteo watershed serves as a wildlife linkage area—for cougar, black bear, mule deer, and potentially elk—between the Southern Rockies Wildlands Network and the area encompassed by the New Mexico Highlands Wildlands Vision. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network and the New Mexico Highlands Wildlands Vision are two prominent regional green infrastructure planning initiatives that have been developed in the past by consortia of national experts and organizations concerned with conservation biology. Galisteo Creek and its tributaries form a functional wildlife corridor network that establishes the linkage between the ecoregions. Additionally, the surface water drainage system also forms a regional and local hub of water resources and water related ecosystems of riparian zones and wetlands in an otherwise arid landscape. The riparian and wetlands system of the watershed serves in particular as a small stepping stone (i.e., an “island”) for waterfowl and other migratory birds that follow the alternative eastern fly routes parallel to the Rio Grande.

The Galisteo Basin is complex and nuanced landscape containing the material record and place-based cultural heritage for generations of ancient and modern peoples, extending back more than 10,000 years. The federal government recognized and protected the prehistoric Native American archaeological value of the watershed in the 2004 Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act (S.210, H.R.506). The Act specifically seeks protection for 24 sites of immense prehistoric significance, including several large pueblo ruins and petroglyph sites. It is this richness of culture and wildlife, coupled with its raw natural beauty that makes the Galisteo Basin and critical region to protect.

The Galisteo Basin Watershed was adopted several years ago as a landscape in need of protection, and we established a conservation goal of conserving 50,000 acres. SFCT, along with Earth Works International and Earth Analytics, undertook the Galisteo Watershed Conservation Initiative (GWCI), an initiative that created a plan for the protection and restoration of the basin's watershed resources. At this time, SFCT began working closely with Commonweal Conservancy at their Galisteo Basin Preserve, a conservation development, on a common goal to conserve over 12,000 acres of land for wildlife, prehistoric, and public recreation purposes.

Within the Basin is the Galisteo Basin Preserve (GBP), a large-scale, community stewardship initiative spearheaded by Commonweal Conservancy. Designed to permanently protect more

than 12,000 acres of open space, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources in the Galisteo Basin, the Galisteo Basin Preserve is considered a “keystone property” in the region; inappropriate subdivision into widely distributed, large-lot “ranchettes” would irreparably compromise the region’s scenic, wildlife habitat, water, historic, cultural, and traditional economic values. SFCT now holds conservation easements on 3,455 acres of the GBP and plans on receiving an additional 10,000 acres in the future. The Santa Fe Conservation Trust and eighteen landowner partners protect 8,061 acres in the Galisteo Watershed.

Pecos River Valley

Conserved Lands: 9 conservation easements, 1,504 acres

Running down from the western slopes of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the Pecos River travels 926 miles before meeting up with the Rio Grande on the southern border of Texas. Situated between Santa Fe and Las Vegas, the town of Pecos and the headwaters of the Pecos River lead to the Glorieta Pass, which has been utilized for centuries—by Pueblo and Plains Indians, Spanish settlers and traders, and U. S. military and travelers. The Santa Fe Trail, Route 66, and now I-25 have all passed through Glorieta and Pecos on their way west. For hundreds of years, the wild and scenic Pecos headwaters has greeted travelers on their way into the “Wild West.”

The Pecos Valley has presumably been occupied, at least occasionally, by humans for at least 12,000 years. It was first used seasonally by hunters and gatherers, with more permanent settlements increasing over time. The first permanent settlements in the area seem to have begun around 750 AD. Pecos Pueblo became the largest settlement for the previously dispersed farmers of the Pecos Valley around 1450 AD, although there was a pueblo near modern Rowe, as well. Pecos Pueblo thrived as a village and principal trading center on a major travel and trade route from Glorieta Pass to the Great Plains, well before the arrival of European settlers.

Pecos Pueblo was a thriving village reportedly housing 2,000 “souls” when visited by the expedition of Francisco de Coronado in 1540. The site of a major Spanish mission and church, the pueblo was left by its Towa-speaking residents in 1838, following a century of Comanche raiding, dramatic population decline, and loss of land to Spanish and Mexican settlement expansion. Ruins of the pueblo village and Spanish mission are preserved today at Pecos National Historic Park.

A contested and dangerous corridor of movement between the settled lands of the Rio Grande and Pecos River and the Great Plains, Hispanic settlers did not permanently reside in the area until the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Following the conveyance of several land grants downstream from Pecos Pueblo, small villages along the Pecos River and its tributaries, including Rito del la Vaca (Cow Creek) proliferated. San Miguel del Vado and its namesake grant was the largest community through which commerce with Plains Indians and the burgeoning Santa Fe Trail trade was filtered and administered until 1846. San Miguel del Vado and Los Trigos grants encompassed over 300,000 acres of pasture, forest, and watershed that sustained Hispanic villages and ranches into the twentieth-century. By 1831, an extensive system of irrigation ditches had been constructed along the Pecos River and its tributaries to serve the communities of Upper and Lower Colonias, North and South Ysidro, and El Macho, among others.

The opening of the Santa Fe Trail, followed by the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 introduced Anglo-American political, economic, and cultural influences to the Pecos River Valley. As in other parts of Northern New Mexico speculation in land and natural resources threatened traditional communities and lifeways. In 1862, the Battle of Glorieta Pass was fought between the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. The battle, which determined the fate of the western territories in favor of the Union, is interpreted by many historians as a major turning point in the war.

The building of the Santa Fe, Atchison, and Topeka Railroad through the Upper Pecos River valley in 1879 combined with the loss of lands through purchase and legal actions signaled a decline in the Hispanic agro-pastoral lifeways. In the twentieth century, grazing and farm lands lost to the Public Domain and reclaimed through the Homestead Act, were sold and reconstituted as Anglo-American-owned cattle ranches. These ranches included the famed Forked Lightning holdings owned by Colonel E. E. “Buddy” Fogelson and his actress wife, Greer Garson. Into the 1970s, the storied Forked Lightning Ranch and its neighbors were divided into smaller ranches more attractive to modern ranchers and landowners. The private holdings, traditional villages, and public lands of the Pecos River Valley constitute a remarkable multicultural heritage and diverse riverine, mesa, and mountain landscapes.

Gold and silver ore were discovered by other prospectors later in the 19th and early 20th centuries, but large-scale mining did not begin until 1926 or 1927 when the American Metals Company opened the Tererro Mine. Ore was transported down-canyon on an aerial tramway to the “El Molino” site on Alamitos Creek near the Town of Pecos for milling and concentration. At the peak of operations in the 1930s, Tererro had a population of over 3,000 people, and the mine was New Mexico’s largest single employer. Mining operations continued until 1939. Many of the roads, bridges, and campgrounds that still exist along the mainstem of Pecos Canyon were built or improved during the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps to support the mining operations and nascent recreation industry.

Piedra Lumbre (Shining Rock)

Conserved Area: 5 conservation easements, 6228 acres

Bounded by the San Juan and Jemez mountain ranges, Rio Chama flows through the Piedra Lumbre Valley to Abiquiu Reservoir, one of the great water resources of New Mexico. The 5,200-acre lake forms behind the earth-filled Abiquiu Dam, before the Rio Chama continues on its way through the town of Abiquiu and finally joining with the Rio Grande at Ohkay Owingeh 28 miles to the south. The reservoir is a keystone of New Mexico's recreational pastimes, with outdoor enthusiasts engaging in camping, hiking, swimming, boating, and fishing along the 12-mile lake. Pedernal and the sublime red sandstone landscape of the Abiquiu area, inspired the work of internationally acclaimed artist, Georgia O'Keefe.

The colorful and multi-textured sandstone cliffs and outcrops that bound the Piedra Lumbre Valley are renowned for their paleontological beds dating back 220 million years to the Triassic era. The New Mexico state fossil, *Coelophysis*, a small raptor-like dinosaur, was first found at Ghost Ranch and is on display at its museum.

The Piedra Lumbre Valley with its verdant grass lands, mesa and mountain fed streams, and rich and rugged physiographic and ecological settings have sustained 10,000 years of human presence. Early Paleoindian hunters followed waning herds of Pleistocene megafauna, bison and mammoth. For 7,000 years, a dryer and more temperate climate expanded wood lands and grass lands where Archaic hunter-gatherer family bands lived in seasonal camps on low, shelter rises above the Rio Chama and its tributaries. Ancestral Puebloan farmers moved into their former hunting territories and travel routes in the early 1100s establishing small puddled adobe hamlets. By the 1300s, small villages grew into large villages, exemplified by Tsiping, an 800-1200 masonry room village sited high above the historic village of Cañones. It overlooked the Piedra Lumbre valley to the north, while marking the northern entrance to the emerging Tewa world. Settlement retraction in the middle 1400s concentrated populations in the ancestral Tewa villages to the south, leaving the Piedra Lumbre Valley open to the movement of ancestral bands of Ute, Navajo, and Apache tribes into the area. Mobile bands camped in sheltered settings along the Rio Chama and its territories into the middle-nineteenth century.

The Piedra Lumbre Valley attracted early Spanish hunters and traders with the first village of 20 hardy families established near Abiquiu in the 1740s. Severe hardships due to remote location and periodic raiding by Comanches and Utes decimated the settlement, which was re-established by mixed Genizaro (detrified and Christianized Native Americans) and Spanish settlers at modern-day Abiquiu in 1754. During this same period and continuing into the early nineteenth century, numerous land grants were conveyed to families and communities in the Piedra Lumbre Valley. Remote ranches intermittently occupied at first, as the population in the Abiquiu area grew, these large agro-pastoral grants were joined by community grants with Cañones established in 1808. Beset by raiding, these communities maintained a tenuous hold on the land and their agro-pastoral lifeways.

With the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and the establishment of the New Mexico Territory, the Hispanic communities and landholders of the Piedra Lumbre struggled to retain their land and heritage. Subject to a new kind of raiding, their large land grants, including the Piedra Lumbre Land Grant (conveyed in 1767) were acquired legally and nefariously by consortiums of American lawyers, bankers, and investors and well-connected New Mexicans. These speculative ventures promised wealth to the new owners and dispossession and alienation for the traditional Hispanic communities, who lost access to their life-sustaining grazing and subsistence lands, of which the Piedra Lumbre Valley was a major part.

Confirmed by the Court of Private Land Claims and patented in 1902, the Piedra Lumbre Grant encompasses 49,748 acres in the heart of the SFCT focal area. With exception of Abiquiu Dam and Reservoir, the Piedra Lumbre Valley looks much as it did 300 years ago. A predominant ownership and land use pattern of large ranches with minimal development preserve a rich cultural heritage, natural setting of ecological and geological diversity, and landscape of awe-inspiring beauty.

Las Vegas Viewshed

Conserved Area: 6 conservation easements, 19,505 acres

The physical setting of Las Vegas has always made it a desirable and practical location for inhabitants. As far back as 10,000 years, people took advantage of the natural resources of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the meadows of the Las Vegas Plateau for sustenance and livelihood. During the years 1100 to 1400 AD, Pueblo and Plains Native Americans used the mountain passes northwest and southwest of the city as trade routes. Las Vegas was an ideal camping and trading location and its proximity to a perennial water source in the Gallinas River foreshadowed permanent settlements. The presence of water meant that agriculture was marginally possible, and a review of the archaeological record bears this out with area excavations uncovering remnants of corn, beans, manos, and metates.

At the outset of the U.S.-Mexican war in 1846 the US Army established its military headquarters in Las Vegas. Settlers traveling on the Santa Fe Trail were already familiar with the region and its strategic location and natural resources. The Santa Fe Trail established trade between the eastern United States and New Mexico in the early to mid-1800s.

The town had a second birth when the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad came through in 1879, and a second town center, this time east of the Gallinas, was set up around the railroad station. Las Vegas became an exceptionally opulent trading post in its heyday, and became a melting pot of the different cultures traveling across the U.S., as well as a stunning collection of revivalist architecture of different places and periods. It suffered a major setback in 1905 when a new rail line was built in New Mexico between the towns of Clovis and Belen, cutting off Las Vegas in the north.

In 1926, Route 66 was aligned along the Ozark Trail south of Romeroville (right next to Las Vegas) and west, along the Santa Fe Trail. Route 85 also followed the Santa Fe Trail and headed north through Las Vegas. It was an important town for those travelling the Mother Road between Santa Fe and Santa Rosa, offering a wide variety of services to the motorists. But in 1937 US 66 was realigned further south, when the "Santa Fe cut-off" shortened the road.

Hermits Peak

Named for the Italian religious recluse Giovanni Maria de Agostini, Hermit's Peak is surrounded in lore. He had traveled from Council Grove with a Santa Fe Trail caravan. Legend has it that Giovanni carved out a small cave on a narrow ledge and lived there from 1863 to 1866. The cave was so low Giovanni could never stand up, and to protect himself from the elements (and the sheer drop below) he built a rock wall around the mouth of the cave.

Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge

In 1965, the Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge was established by the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Action for the benefit of migratory birds. The 8,672-acre refuge

represents one of the few sizeable wetland areas remaining in New Mexico. It is open to the public for wildlife-dependent recreation, including wildlife watching, hiking, hunting, educational and interpretive programs and special events. Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge has 8,672 acres of grassland, cropland, marshes, canyons, ponds and streams where migratory birds take refuge as a central “flyway” area, including sandhill cranes, long-billed curlews, rough-legged grouse, geese, ducks, hawks, eagles and numerous shorebirds.

Romeroville

Established by Trinidad Romero a representative in the Territorial House of Representatives and a congressman from 1877 to 1879 coincided with the arrival of the railroad just southwest of Las Vegas. The station was named after him (without the "ville" part), and it was a humble place described in a 1915 description by the USGS of the area as "Romero (ro-may'ro) 6,287 ft. 791 mi. from Kansas City. A siding." Romero built a two-story adobe mansion which later became a hospital and finally a "dude ranch" which burned to the ground in 1932. The adjacent barn is still present today.



Romeroville ranch, circa 1900, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), neg. # 184841
This ranch has been preserved by a conservation easement with the Santa Fe Conservation Trust.



Romeroville Barn from 2016 Monitoring Visit

Los Pinos River Valley

Conserved Area: 2 easements, 135 acres

The Rio de los Pinos River meanders along the Colorado/New Mexico border from high in the San Juan mountains in the west, through the Toltec Gorge to meet the San Antonio River in the east. Literally translated “The Pines” river, it runs through some of the most pristine, undisturbed pine forests in the country. Rio de los Pinos also supports extensive cottonwood forests and wetlands: native grass meadows and terraced flood plains are largely grasslands with mixed coniferous forest. Of the particular wildlife importance are the riparian meadows which support a large diversity of invertebrate, bird and mammal species, including a resident elk population. Deer and elk seek out riparian shrub-lands and wet meadows for their rich and nutritious grasses. Lower mountain streams are also important for a variety of cold-water fish. Open water areas such as beaver ponds provide nesting, feeding, and resting habitat for migrating water birds. Small mammals such as meadow voles, pocket gophers, field mice, shrews, mink, and ground squirrels may use riparian woodlands that are seasonally wet. Bobcat, black bear, mountain lion, raccoons and coyote inhabit the area. Species of birds include wild turkey, great horned owl, golden eagles, woodpeckers, mallards and others.

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust is not alone in wishing to preserve this area: the Rio Los Pinos Wildlife Area, Cruces Basin Wilderness Area, and the Carson National Forest all protect portions of the river valley; but many gaps remain to be filled. SFCT is working with several of the landowners in the area to place their properties under easement, encouraging sustainable agricultural and land stewardship practices so that the Los Pinos will remain available for the enjoyment of future generations. The Rio de los Pinos provides water for several communities down river including Los Pinos and San Miguel. Protecting the subject property from further development will support the health of the watershed by maintaining rich riparian areas that reduce soil erosion and runoff and assist with groundwater recharge and infiltration. Protecting headwater areas such as this means more clean water for everyone downstream.

Sharing the river valley is the Cumbres/Toltec Scenic Railroad, a historic rail line built in 1880 for the silver mining towns in the San Juan; it still serves to carry people through this beautiful area on a strictly recreational level. The rail line runs along a ridge from Antonito, Colorado to Chama, New Mexico. It is the longest narrow-gauge railway in the United States, the entirety of which is designated a national Historic Site.

Nestled along the Rio de los Pinos is a five mile stretch that was homesteaded by Hispanic farmers and ranchers at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is now one of the last traditional Hispanic agricultural communities that were once so typical along the northern New Mexico tributaries of the Rio Grande.

Santa Fe

Conserved Land: 17 easements, 323 acres

Santa Fe, the capital of New Mexico, is located in the north-central portion of the state at the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Its elevation is approximately 7,000 feet above sea level. Founded by Don Pedro de Peralta over 400 years ago, Santa Fe is the oldest capital in the United States. It has attracted a huge cross-section of different cultures and ethnicities; is the third largest art market in the United States with approximately 250 galleries, attracting art collectors worldwide.

Our conservation efforts in the Santa Fe area have focused on its distinctive landmarks in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Visible from miles away and from Santa Fe at its feet, this land is part of the distinctive series of mountains that define Santa Fe's eastern skyline and lend immeasurably to the natural beauty of the community. Used by generations of Santa Feans for stock grazing, timbering and access to the National Forest and for hiking to Atalaya Peak, the land is now facing another kind of human encroachment: road and home-building. Though placing easements cannot stop all development outside of its boundaries, it can help create a buffer zone that sets a precedent for community conscience that values natural beauty and land preservation, for generations of Santa Feans to come. Among the landmark hills that the Santa Fe Conservation Trust has helped protect are Atalaya, Sun Mountain, Sallie's Hill and Cerro Gordo.

The earliest evidence of human occupation within the corporate limits of modern Santa Fe, date back to the sixth millennium B.C. For 5,000 years hunter-gatherers roamed the landscape leaving ephemeral remains of their temporary seasonal camp sites. Ancestral Puebloan farmers established small settlements along the Santa Fe River and the terraces northeast of the city by the 1000s. Initial settlement of the Santa Fe River and tributaries expanded through local population growth and migration into large adobe villages in downtown Santa Fe at Ogapoge, downstream and Pindi, Agua Fria Schoolhouse, and Cieneguilla pueblos, and to the south at Arroyo Hondo Pueblo early in the 1300s. Subjected to drought, floods, and a depleted environment, all the villages by Cieneguilla Pueblo were depopulated by 1420. Cieneguilla Pueblo, located 16 miles downstream from Santa Fe remained active until the Pueblo rebellion against the Spanish in 1680.

Initial probes into New Mexico area by Spanish explorers, including Francisco Coronado, beginning in the first half of the 16th century led to the colonizing expedition of Don Juan de Oñate in 1598. After eleven difficult years Don Pedro de Peralta settled Santa Fe-officially naming it the capital of the new colony in 1610. While settling the far northern colony, the Spanish government and church subjected the Pueblo population to a harsh and repressive regime of economic and religious oppression. In 1680, members of many pueblos and their allies in a revolt reputedly organized and led by Popé and Naranjo ousted the Spanish colonists from Santa Fe and New Mexico. Spanish rule was reestablished by Don Diego DeVargas in 1693,

by a systematic campaign of subjugation and submission that established a peace treaty between Spain and the Pueblos. This event is commemorated annually during the Fiestas de Santa Fe.

New Mexico continued to be a Spanish colony until the Mexican Revolution of 1821. Trade between Mexico and New Mexico flourished, along El Camino Real, which connected Santa Fe and Chihuahua, Mexico. During the Mexican American War, 1846-1848, Santa Fe surrendered to the U.S. Army, and New Mexico became a U.S. territory. During this time, the Santa Fe Trail was established, connecting Santa Fe to St. Louis, Missouri. This was to be the first highway into the West, bringing thousands of pioneers, settlers and tradesmen from the eastern U.S. to Santa Fe and the surrounding area. New Mexico remained a territory until achieving statehood in 1912.

Santa Fe itself received several blows to its commerce, industry and economy over the coming years. Between 1878 and 1880, the railroad built to connect the East and the West bypassed Santa Fe, removing it from its status as a trade hub. Again in 1926, Route 66 came through New Mexico, but went to Albuquerque instead of Santa Fe, condemning it to a back-road locale. Legislature passed in 1889 placed the future University of New Mexico in Albuquerque as well. These events caused a rift and a 50-year rivalry between Santa Fe and Albuquerque. In response to economic pressures, Santa Fe began billing itself as tourist and health destination, as well as pioneering what would be called the “Pueblo Revival” style of architecture that has made Santa Fe so distinctive. Distinctive architecture and an emphasis on arts and cultural have to Santa Fe becoming a haven for artists and galleries, trends that still continue today.

Today, Santa Fe is the centerpiece of a tourism industry that brings more than \$1 billion into the state every year. Municipal ordinances and efforts of the art and historic preservation community to preserve Santa Fe’s cultural heritage in the 1920s and 1930s and 1980s have made it a desirable location for second residences and professional people who supply services to the national markets. Rapid growth in the 1970s and a dependence on government employment and the need for hospitality services support blue-collar and lower-economic classes that contrast with wealthy permanent and part-time residents.

Tesuque

SFCT Conserved Land: 10 Easements, 122 Acres

The name "Tesuque" is a Spanish adaptation of the Tewa place name 'Tat' unge' onwi" which means, "cottonwood place." The Tesuque Creek watershed and bottom lands in the vicinity of modern-day Tesuque village are within the ancestral and traditional landscape of Tewa-speaking people of the Pueblo of Tesuque. Archaic hunter-gatherers camped along the floodplain for 4,000 years before the first Ancestral Puebloan farming communities were established between AD 900 and 950. The Pueblo of Tesuque was inhabited when the Spanish settled in Northern New Mexico at the end of the sixteenth century. The people of the Pueblo of Tesuque were involved in planning and initiating the rebellion against the Spanish colonists in August 1680. The rebellion expelled Spanish colonists, administration, and mission priests for thirteen years.

The first of Hispanic settlement in the Rio Tesuque area occurred in 1732 after the De Vargas Reconquest of 1693 when Antonia Montoya sold Juan de Benavides a piece of land containing much of what is now Tesuque. El Rancho Benavides extended from the current southern boundary of Tesuque Pueblo to the junction of the Big and Little Tesuque rivers between the mountain ridges on the east and west of the river. El Rancho Benavides became known as San Ysidro, who is the patron saint of farmers. The name is still used for the local church today. In 1752, Juan de Gabaldón obtained much of the Rio Tesuque region in a land grant from the Spanish Territorial Governor. In 1776, Fray Francisco Dominguez visited Rio de Tesuque village and documented that it contained 17 families with 94 people.

The acequia system established with the settlement of El Rancho Benavides provided a means of fairly distributing crop irrigation water and it was a cultural link for the whole community. Acequias supplied the community's drinking water, formed a network of paths connecting individual residences, and through the "mayordomos" control of water rights provided an effective political system that structured the entire village society. Land transaction and acequia records through the Spanish and Mexican periods show continuous use of the valley and its water for agricultural purposes. A number of those same acequias irrigate the valley today, with over 150 registered water users belonging to the five acequia associations of the valley. The patterns and configurations of land division and land use in Tesuque today reflect this historic acequia network and the associated agricultural uses of the past.

The watershed of the Rio Tesuque sustained Pueblo of Tesuque villagers and Spanish settlers providing a route into the nearby Sangre de Cristo Mountains for seasonal livestock herding, hunting and the gathering of firewood, piñones and other food resources and raw materials. Portions of the historic trail system that remain today are used for recreation.

With numerous houses and buildings used for business and residential purposes since the mid-1800s, Tesuque retained a rural and subsistence lifestyle into the 1970s. Over the last 40 years

a wave of newcomers seeking a rural lifestyle close to the City of Santa Fe have developed hill tops and new home sites on the valley floor. Undeveloped parcels are important links to Tesuque's rural heritage and landscape.

APPENDIX F – CONSERVATION GIS ANALYSIS TABLE

SFCT Conservation GIS Analysis

Layer	File Name	Resolution	Result Values	Notes
Conservation Buffers	conservation	30 meters	0 or 10	300 ft. buffers around SF city parks, SF county parks, open spaces wish list, SFCT current properties, NMLC current properties.
Cultural Buffers	cultural	30 meters	0 or 10	300 ft. buffers around archeology protected sites, scenic byways, Kennedy railroad, traditional communities
Habitat	habitat	30 meters	1-10	10 equals highly suitable for key species, 1 equals least suitable. 0 is no data and excluded from analysis. Based on “Total Species PI Model” given to UP by SFCT.
ICLUS Population/Housing	population	100 meters	1-10	10 equals areas of highest projected housing/population growth by 2050; 1 equals areas of least growth. 0 is no data and excluded from analysis. Based on of ICLUS B2 scenario which assumes moderate population growth and local solutions to environmental and economic problems.
Rare Plants	rare plants	30 meters	0 or 10	10 equals presence of any rare plants within the HUC10 Watershed
Riparian Buffers	riparian	30 meters	0 or 10	300 ft. buffers around named streams
Road Density	road density	30 meters	1-10	10 equals areas with least road density, 1 equals areas with highest road density
Soils	soils	30 meters	0 or 10	10 equals areas of irrigated soils
Public Lands	public lands	30 meters	0 or 10	300 ft. buffers around BLM, Forest Service, National Park Service and State Park lands
Trail Connector	trails	30 meters	0 or 10	300 ft. buffers around US Forest Service trails, multi-use paths, “new trail 8262011”, La Piedra trail, and bikeways
Wetlands	wetlands	30 meters	0 or 10	10 equals all types of wetlands, no buffer
Wildlife Corridors	Corridors	30 meters	0 or 10	10 equals areas of defined wildlife corridors, no buffer

