

SANTA FE CONSERVATION TRUST

2025 Newsletter
& 2024 Annual Report

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.

Vision

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

Values

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust actively fosters an organization and conservation movement that is intentionally diverse, equitable, and inclusive. We look to nature as our guide, working to support and connect a human ecosystem that is equally complex, resilient, thriving, and full of variety.

We acknowledge that land in northern New Mexico carries with it a complicated history that includes successive and ongoing waves of displacement and dispossession. We also acknowledge that land conservation and the environmental movement have historically underrepresented a diversity of people who cherish the natural world and want to protect it.

Looking forward, we aspire to create a better future by building a representative, engaged, and passionate conservation community dedicated to keeping northern New Mexico's living lands and people flourishing together. To that end, we focus our programs, policies, and plans on providing equitable access to nature for everyone in our community and creating opportunities for inclusion. We recruit, hire, retain, and promote a diverse staff. And we recruit board members who represent the lived experiences of the people we serve to ensure the diverse viewpoints of our community inform our decisions and actions.

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust recognizes that this long-term commitment is an ongoing process that requires continuous learning, growth, monitoring, and improvement.

SFCT Needs a Permanent Home

Since 2016, the staff at the Santa Fe Conservation Trust has grown from five to 10 employees and we have no room to expand in our current location. We have been searching for about 3,000 square feet—with space for our tools and archives—either to lease or own, and we are finding that the choices at that size are limited. Therefore, we have extended our lease through January 2026 as we continue to search for the perfect new space. We are happy to lease, but we would prefer to purchase a building, if we can.

SFCT has the duty of perpetual care of the conservation easements we hold, meaning we must be around forever to ensure the conservation values we protect are upheld. Ideally, we would like to settle into a building for the long-term rather than having shorter-term leases. If you have any tips on new office space for SFCT, we welcome your ideas and guidance. Please contact us:

email info@sfct.org or call 505-989-7019

On the Cover: Passport to Trails Hike — fourth graders from Nina Otero Community School enjoy a visit to the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve.

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SANTA FE CONSERVATION TRUST

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as of January 1, 2025

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Above: Grassland restoration area on the SFCT's Dovetail property.

From the Executive Director

We are calling this edition of earthLINES “the people edition.” In addition to the almost 200 wonderful volunteers who helped us deliver our mission last year, SFCT was also very active in 2024 deepening our work to bring more people into the world of conservation. Our community engagement programs reached almost 2,000 people of all ages, giving them opportunities to get outside in whatever way works best for them. And in 2025, we will be expanding that reach even more by impacting people living with disabilities, and their families and friends, when we open the accessible trail at our property in the Galisteo Basin. As you’ll see in the following pages, SFCT has kicked into high gear with its community engagement programs to bring health, happiness, and a passion for conservation to our community.

We are also happy to announce that we have a new name for our Galisteo Property! It is now called Dovetail. Read all about the beautiful journey we took to get to the name, and about the wonderful people who helped us get there. Taking the time to consider a new name for the property opened up so many doors for us. It gave us the time for introspection, to reach out to Indigenous people in the community for help, brought new voices to our board and staff, and also gave us the time to articulate the values that will guide our work going forward.

In everything we do, helping people express their passion for nature is what motivates us to protect this place we call home. We come at it from many different angles—from our land conservation and restoration work, to trails maintenance and development, from educating the community about protecting the night sky and through our community engagement programs. You’ll see in the following pages the hard work underway that brings people together to protect and enjoy the beauty of this region. It is work that not only improves your quality of life, but also gives back to nature, which gives so much to us.

I couldn’t be prouder of the work that is underway, and of the incredible generosity of all of you who make it possible. If you’ve supported our work in the past, thank you! If you are new to our work, please join us. Help us keep the momentum going. If you like what you read here, please go online at sfct.org or use the enclosed envelope to send in your gift. Now—more than ever—it is important for everyone to protect the iconic landscapes of northern New Mexico, not just for ourselves, but also for future generations.

Sincerely,

Sarah Noss
Executive Director





Above: Passport to Trails Hike — fifth graders from El Camino Real Academy at the Tesuque overlook on La Piedra Trail.

Are You Accessing the Power of Nature?

SFCT's Community Engagement Programs Give You Opportunities to Get Outdoors

One thing about living in northern New Mexico—nature is all around us. But according to a recent study by the Environmental Protection Agency, the average American spends 90% of their time indoors. And that's a shame, because being in nature improves public health and happiness, lowers healthcare costs for all of us, and creates happier communities. SFCT's community engagement programs focus on providing equitable access to the outdoors so more people realize the importance of protecting nature while enjoying the benefits of it.

We believe everyone deserves to live in a healthy place and enjoy a connection with nature. SFCT's community engagement programs are critical, because they offer opportunities for more people in our community to directly connect with the natural world around them. When we include more people, we improve more lives—and in turn, we gain broader support for conservation. Broadening our base is also important for other reasons:

1. The population of the US is getting more diverse, so we need to reach out to a greater diversity of people to stay relevant.
2. The US population is expected to grow by more than 100 million people in the next 50 years, so there will be greater development pressures on open spaces throughout the country, which means we need more people who care about conservation to help us defend the land.
3. As support for conservation wanes at the federal level, there are more opportunities for everyone to come together as a community to protect the iconic landscapes that we all love.

What's more, a recent study from the Outdoor Foundation found that youth of color are significantly underrepresented in outdoor recreation, despite an emerging body of research showing that meaningful outdoor experiences during childhood are often critical for developing a lifelong environmental ethic.

Why do we need to develop this ethic for everyone? Because many Americans are growing up without a strong connection to nature—and if they don't learn to love it, they won't act to save it. The more SFCT reaches out to those who have been overlooked by the conservation movement, the more relevant and inviting the movement will become.

Because SFCT has been involved in the creation of over 85 miles of trails in the Santa Fe area, our trail system is the most logical place to focus our community engagement efforts. SFCT's community engagement activities, including Passport to Trails and Vámonos, seek to improve public health, lower health care costs, and connect people not only to each other, but also to enjoy nature and its health-giving benefits.

Below: Vámonos walk along the River Trail, upstream from Frenchy's Field.



What's So Great About Nature?

Do you remember how important it was to get outside during the coronavirus pandemic? It was a stressful, isolating time and being outside gave us a safe space for contemplation or walking with a friend. These days, it seems like the world is changing quickly and it's hard to know where you can find some solace and stability. And that's what is so great about nature.

Research shows that the benefits of spending time in nature—and with others—helps strengthen our immune system, reduce stress, improve our mood and cardiovascular health. Being outside, even in an urban park, reduces anxiety and decreases the risk of depression. It can also enhance our creativity, cognitive function, and our ability to concentrate. Breathing fresh air and walking in nature helps to lower blood pressure, improve overall physical fitness, and aids in weight loss. And walking also helps regulate our circadian rhythms to improve the quality of sleep.

Being in nature also provides opportunities for social interaction

and connection. Studies indicate that loneliness is as damaging as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and walking with others is a great way to feel connection. Sadly, 43% of older adults feel lonely on a regular basis and there is a 45% increased risk of death in older adults who reported feeling lonely. Two of the three pillars to address loneliness and isolation are physical activity and social connection. SFCT's community engagement programs bring both to our community—in nature.

So, from the social to the emotional to the physical, SFCT is engaging in programs that not only provide more equitable access to nature but also improve our health and happiness.

On the following pages, you'll read more about the important community work in which SFCT is engaged. Being in nature is one way to care for ourselves, and when we care for ourselves, we are more able to care for the environment. This is a prescription that everyone needs right now. Please donate toward this essential work.

SFCT's Trails Legacy Improves Your Quality of Life

SFCT's community engagement focus was instilled in us from the very beginning, and what a journey it has been over the last three decades. Dale Ball was our first executive director, and built not only the Dale Ball Trails, but many other trails and connections besides. Because of this, SFCT has always been involved in the creation of many of Santa Fe's trails, to get people into nature. In fact, SFCT was created in 1993 when roads were being cut on Atalaya Mountain and development threatened its ridgetops. SFCT was successful in preserving open space around Atalaya, which is a treasured hike to enjoy an expansive vista overlooking Santa Fe. In 1996, Walter Ganz, an SFCT board member and outdoor enthusiast, realized how hard it was to access the national forest from town, so he spearheaded the creation of the Atalaya Trail, providing access for everyone, forever.

In 1997, Stewart Udall, former Secretary of the Interior under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and an SFCT board member for 10 years, worked with the State and Santa Fe County to purchase a 12-mile easement from Santa Fe to Lamy to create the Rail Trail. Afterward, SFCT helped fund the 12-mile Rail Trail from Santa Fe to Lamy, along with the Spur Trail to connect it to the Santa Fe Community College.

Dale Ball resigned in 1999, and SFCT assisted him in the creation of the Dale Ball Trails and connections that now provide more than 30 miles of beautiful foothill trails leading up into the Santa Fe National Forest.

In the early 2000s, our efforts turned to the Arroyo Hondo area, where SFCT, working with the County, preserved 86 acres of open space to create the Arroyo Hondo Open Space and Trails System. In 2004, SFCT funded the interpretive trail at the Arroyo Hondo Open Space. Around 2010, Margaret Alexander, an SFCT Board member, led the charge to map, fund, and create the La Tierra Trail system with the City of Santa Fe.

By 2009, Sun Mountain was under the protection of SFCT with public trails. By 2011, the Dale Ball Trails were connected to the Santa Fe National Forest by the La Piedra Trail, which was made possible by a conservation easement with public access that was then transferred to Santa Fe County.

So, while it may seem like our local trails are just there for the community to enjoy—they are the result of many years of determination and successful collaborations led by SFCT with scores of people, as well as the City, County, Forest Service, and more.

Ever wonder who maintains the 60+ miles of dirt trails in the City and County? The Santa Fe Conservation Trust! We maintain them with the help of dozens of volunteers who meet weekly in the spring, summer, and fall to be sure everyone can enjoy safe and sustainable trails. (cont'd)

Below: La Piedra Trail Connection alignment, between Dale Ball Trails North and the Little Tesuque Trail.



Outdoor Recreation – Community Engagement in Action

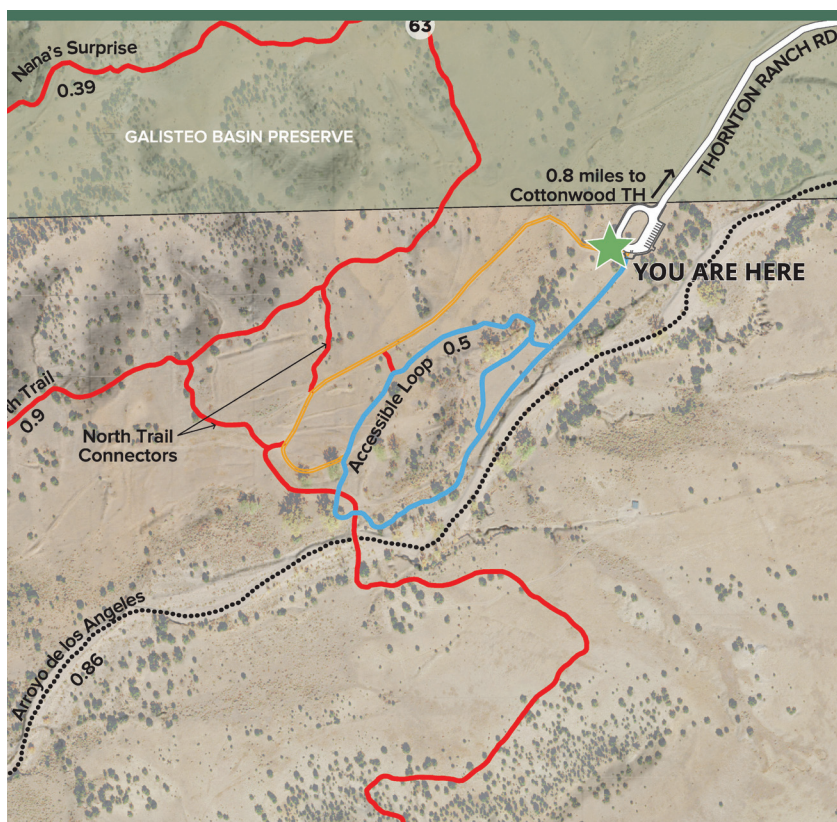
It's no surprise that the outside world is starting to recognize Santa Fe as an exceptional outdoor destination. Many events have been established to utilize our incredible outdoor resources which has allowed Santa Fe to tap into the \$3.2 billion economic impact of New Mexico's burgeoning outdoor recreation industry.

When Santa Feans use our impressive trail system, it supports better health, lowers overall healthcare costs, and contributes to a higher quality of life, which attracts employers and active workforces, helping our community thrive economically and socially.

Recognizing the value of outdoor recreation in New Mexico, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed New Mexico's Outdoor Recreation Division into law on April 2, 2019. By enacting this new initiative, New Mexico joined a dozen other states committed to growing and championing the outdoor recreation economy, which we recognize as an immensely powerful engine to grow wealth and job opportunities in our state, as well as improve the health and happiness of everyone who lives here. This is community engagement work at its finest, and we are proud of the part SFCT has had in making it happen locally.



Above: Safe Routes to School pilot program, developed by SFCT, funded in part by the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division.



Above: Trail system on Dovetail in the Galisteo Basin. Single track trails (red) are complete. The Accessible Trail (blue) construction will start this fall.

Accessible Trail at Dovetail – The Next Addition to SFCT's Trails Legacy

Building on SFCT's history of trails development, the accessible trail at Dovetail (see more on page 12) is scheduled to be constructed starting in September, 2025. Dovetail is SFCT's conservation and restoration demonstration site, and it also currently features four miles of singletrack, dirt trails that connect to a 50-mile trail system in the Galisteo Basin Preserve. Located in one of the most beautiful areas of Santa Fe County, just a 25-minute drive from Santa Fe, Dovetail features wide open vistas to the east and west and is embraced by hills on the north and south side of the 300-acre parcel.

Knowing that the rural parts of Santa Fe County do not have accessible trails, our plan is to construct a six-foot wide, half-mile, stabilized surface loop trail at Dovetail to serve the almost 19,000 people in Santa Fe County living with disabilities and those who need an easier trail experience.

SFCT received the funding for design and construction of the accessible trail from the New Mexico Department of Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant, which also helped us expand the road and build the parking lot. In addition to the half-mile loop trail, there will be shade structures, a trailhead kiosk, and interpretive signage telling the story of Dovetail and the history of the land. Rocket Ramps will build the trail and New Mexico Metalworks will construct the shade structures.

However, We Need Your Financial Help to Complete this Project

Our budget for the \$293,000 construction grant was put together last summer based on bids from the contractors. Since then, everything from inflation to tariffs to material shortages have alarmingly increased our costs. We know that the steel shade structures will cost an additional \$20,000 to construct, but we'd like to stick with this material because it requires very

little maintenance. And we anticipate that the materials for the construction of the trail itself will also increase. If you are a trail lover and want to provide more equitable trail access to those living with disabilities, please make as large of a donation as you can to SFCT today and earmark it for the accessible trail.

Planning and Building Dirt Trails with GUSTO

Creating Trails Where You Live and Play

The Grand Unified Santa Fe Trails Organization, known as GUSTO, is a community-based effort to connect the diverse dirt trails and trail systems all around Santa Fe. This initiative began in 2015 with key trail user groups like the Santa Fe Fat Tire Society (SFFTS) and the Santa Fe County Horse Coalition collaborating with SFCT.

GUSTO partners include the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County, which already manage our core dirt trail systems like Dale Ball Trails and La Tierra Trails, but also a diverse array of private landowners, homeowners' associations, nonprofits, and government units that otherwise might never have gotten involved in developing local trail connections in our area.

Under SFCT's leadership, the partnership grew to include over 25 local entities by 2000, which is when the initial vision of natural-surface trail connectivity had grown into a formal GUSTO Plan.

Bridging Trail Gaps through New Connections

Recognizing that there were opportunities to build useful and fun dirt trails through volunteer labor, GUSTO collaboration paid off right away through the creation and opening of critical connections such as:

- Spur Trail Connector to Santa Fe Community College (2016)
- Arbolitos Trail east of La Tierra Trails (2017)
- Dog Park Connector to La Tierra Trails (2018)
- Cerro Gordo Trailhead Connector to the central portion of Dale Ball Trails (2018)

Broadening the vision, SFCT continued to work with GUSTO partners to build trails to retrace historic rail alignments, such as the La Tierra Chili Line Trail (completed in 2020), and to pursue the development of soft-surface trails that can serve people with diverse mobility levels, such as the accessible trail we are planning to build on Dovetail in the Galisteo Basin in late 2025.

A lull in the GUSTO action between 2022 and 2024 occurred because of our efforts to develop a Santa Fe Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program to promote walking and biking to school. In January 2024, SFCT transferred the successful program, along with an SRTS Action Plan, directly to the Santa Fe Public Schools which now manages the program.



Above: Work in La Tierra Trails in 2024 included putting up historic interpretation and steps to finish off the La Tierra Chili Line Trail.

Moving Ahead with GUSTO

As with the SRTS initiative, through GUSTO we are deepening our trails work to focus on connections serving all Santa Feans wherever they live, work, and play. In 2025 and beyond, we are excited to reactivate this work with new collaborations on projects including:

- New Mexico Central Rail Trail connecting Oshara to Rancho Viejo
- Extending the Sarah Williams Trail beyond Dale Ball Trails
- Formalizing local access to Arroyo Hondo Open Space through an improved Acequia Trail
- Connecting the La Tierra Chili Line Trail to the Chili Line west of La Tierra Trails
- Working with diverse public and private partners to maintain and improve natural-surface trail access along the Rio en Medio, the Santa Fe River, Little Tesuque Creek, and even the Rio Grande.

GUSTO is proof that, working together and utilizing our dedicated volunteers, SFCT can lead the way in more quickly creating dirt trail connectivity to improve non-motorized transportation and recreation opportunities, and improve your quality of life.

Left : Work in La Tierra Trails in 2024 included putting up historic interpretation and steps to finish off the La Tierra Chili Line Trail.



Above: Vámonos hikers on the Norski Trail.
Below: Walkers at Reunity Farm.

¡Vámonos! Santa Fe Walks

Walking Together Improves Your Health and Happiness

Everyone deserves a meaningful connection to the land—and sometimes all it takes is a good pair of shoes and an open trail. Vámonos: Santa Fe Walks, one of Santa Fe Conservation Trust’s community engagement programs, is rooted in that belief. Through free, guided walks and hikes across the city and beyond, Vámonos invites people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to explore nature together, build community, and discover the healing power of being outside.

The 2024 season was our biggest since the program began in 2018. With 773 walkers joining us on 30 outings, participation surged by more than 50% over the 2023 season. Some came for exercise. Others came for a connection. One participant summed it up simply: “Wonderful, invigorated, gratified, grateful.”

From weekday strolls in the evenings on the Arroyo de los Chamisos and Acequia Trails to weekend hikes in the Galisteo Basin and the Santa Fe National Forest, the average group size rose to 26 walkers in 2024. Our most popular hike brought about 50 people to the South Pasture Loop at the Pecos National Historical Park in October, where clear skies and wide vistas reminded us why getting outside matters.

We’re proud that 74% of survey respondents were new to Vámonos, and that over 30% came from the south side’s 87507 zip code—reflecting our goal to make trails more welcoming and accessible to all. As one returning walker put it: “I discovered parts of Santa Fe I’ve never seen—and I’ve lived here for decades.”

The feedback was clear—people walk because it lifts their spirits, gets them moving, and builds community. Another participant noted, “With Vámonos, I feel like I am breaking out, emotionally and physically.”

A heartfelt thanks to all the Vámonos volunteers and dedicated staff who made every walk possible. Together, they created something special—a growing movement to walk and connect with the land.

We hope you will join us in 2025. Find the schedule at www.sfct.org/vamonos.



Trail Maintenance Update

Keeping the Trails Safe and Accessible for You

Volunteers working with SFCT's Trails Program Manager spent nearly 700 hours working on Dale Ball Trails, La Tierra Trails, the Sun Mountain Trail, and other locations in 2024. For the first time in over 10 years, we are now maintaining County portions of Dale Ball Trails in addition to the City trails that we have been taking care of for more than a decade. In 2024, 27 volunteers logged 619 hours over 41 workdays.

We helped The Nature Conservancy maintain the accessible trail in the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve. And we spent several workdays helping the City complete the Acequia Trail through Hermanos Rodriguez Park, working in tandem with Homewise, to create the final piece of connectivity from the Railyard to Rufina Street that had been envisioned for decades for the Acequia Trail.

Passport to Trails

What started in 2014 has grown into a vibrant community engagement program that introduces and connects fourth and fifth graders to the local trail system. Each grade level goes out in the spring and fall to explore different trails and learn about trail etiquette and the differing landscapes of Santa Fe's trail system. At the end of two years, students will have explored four trail systems and earn a hydration pack that they can use for future trail explorations with their families. In 2024, SFCT hosted over 32 field trips, and a record-breaking 665 students participated.

We are planting the seed of conservation in these kids so they will grow up to help SFCT take care of the land that takes care of all of us.

Below: Atalaya Elementary fourth graders on Atalaya Trail.

Trail Volunteers Create a GUSTO Connection

Another workday was spent with the Oshara Homeowners Association—our newest GUSTO partner. There we built a short, single-track trail in Oshara's open space across from the Pantry Dos restaurant to improve a social trail heading west from there to an abandoned railbed. The work laid the groundwork for a future section of New Mexico Central Rail Trail from Oshara Road (formerly Rabbit Road) to Burnt Water Road in the College Heights subdivision of Rancho Viejo. This GUSTO priority may soon provide trail users with access between the Oshara subdivision and Santa Fe Community College and beyond without using Richards Avenue.

The final trail workday of the year starred volunteers from the Santa Fe Fat Tire Society, which designed, built, and even paid for a footbridge across the Santa Fe River on our Riverhaven property in late December. Thank you, Fat Tire Society!



Starry, Starry Night . . .

The heavens aligned—literally—on October 4 for our free, annual Stargazing event, known as Star Party. We could not have asked for a more beautiful, crystal-clear night to see the rings of Jupiter, numerous constellations, and even the International Space Station orbiting 250 miles above Earth.

Now known as Dovetail, SFCT's 300-acre property in the Galisteo Basin provides wide-open spaces for viewing, as well as a protected dark night sky. Nine local astronomers from the Santa Fe Stargazers set up their spectacular telescopes and laser pointers to delight the crowd of 100 while providing context and education for those of us who enjoy the night sky but don't know much about what we are seeing. Each telescope was focused on a different planet, star, or constellation to give our viewers an array of cosmic visuals.

Prior to the viewing, participants enjoyed beer and cider from Beer Creek Brewing and tacos from Sanchez Taco Truck—two mainstay Star Party vendors. We are grateful to both for contributing to the effervescent nature of our stargazing events. Some of our creative guests even brought blankets and chairs to enjoy a picnic and savor the lovely landscape at Dovetail in comfort.

This is another one of our beloved events that fills up quickly. Be sure you are signed up for our emails so you can score a spot to gaze into the night sky with the experts. To sign up go to sfct.org/contact.



Above: Stargazing in the Galisteo Basin. (Photo by Marcia Skillman)

Meet Our Newest Staff Member

Randle Charles

Community Engagement Director

We are excited to welcome Randle Charles as SFCT's Community Engagement Director. Randle is a dedicated land steward and community educator with over 30 years' experience guiding transformative outdoor experiences and therapeutic adventures. His work is rooted in cultural vitality, experiential learning, and a deep reverence for the natural world.

Originally drawn to Santa Fe to study at the Institute of American Indian Arts, Randle's journey has been shaped by the wisdom of the land and meaningful relationships with elders and communities across North America. A proud Oneida father, he explores New Mexico's natural spaces with his young son, nurturing curiosity, respect, and joy for the land.

He has developed and facilitated leadership programs grounded in ecological literacy, cultural humility, and experiential learning. As a facilitator and artist, he elevates Indigenous voices and knowledge systems, guided by his Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) heritage.

Randle's work with the Santa Fe Conservation Trust reflects his life's mission—to connect people to place and help co-create a more just, resilient future for our shared landscapes.



Remembering Henry Carey

Henry Carey, one of the six visionary individuals who helped establish the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, passed away on April 24. He was also the founder of the Forest Trust and Forest Stewards Guild, and his untimely departure has left an indelible hole for many in our conservation community.

Sarah Noss, SFCT's Executive Director said, "He was one of the most enjoyable people to work with. He was kind, responsible, dedicated to conservation and everything you could ask for in a client. He truly walked the talk."

The Forest Trust and SFCT

Henry was instrumental in getting SFCT off the ground when a driveway for development was bladed across the face of the Atalaya Mountain foothills behind St. John's College (Henry's alma mater)—and could be seen from miles around. SFCT raised \$80,000 and contracted with Henry and the Forest Trust to mitigate the impact of the road that had been bladed. Dozens of trees were replanted to cover up the existing road scar. Today, you can't even see the driveway behind St. John's College, thanks to Henry's leadership at the Forest Trust.

Decades of History in Conservation

Henry served on SFCT's board of directors from 1993 until 1996, was one of the initial \$2,000 donors to the organization, and served as a charter member in 1994.

SFCT also worked with Henry from 2017 until 2024, during which time he generously transferred seven conservation easements from the Forest Trust and donated three conservation easements on Forest Trust land to SFCT.

The conservation easements that were either transferred or donated by the Forest Trust include:

- Off of Richards Avenue
 - Petchesky Ranch (240 acres)
- In the foothills near Bishop's Lodge
 - Fullerton #1 (37.16 acres)
 - Fullerton #2 (5.85 acres)
 - Tesuque View (1 acre)
- Off State Road 14, near Cerrillos
 - Lone Mountain Ranch (3,029 acres, home of Wagyu beef in New Mexico)
- On Hyde Park Road
 - Little Tesuque Creek Open Space (51.93 acres, publicly accessible and owned by Santa Fe County)
- On Glorieta Mesa, the second largest mesa in the world and the largest in the US
 - Big Fence Road (13 acres)
 - Big Fence (372 acres)
- On Camino Cruz Blanca, in the foothills
 - Dorothy Stewart (9.4 acres that created a public trailhead and connection to the Dorothy Stewart Trail)
- On the Winsor Trail near Tesuque
 - The Pond Tract (4 acres that contains the Winsor Trail)

"The Dorothy Stewart Trail only exists because of Henry," said Melissa Houser, SFCT's Stewardship Director. "The donations of Dorothy Stewart and the Pond Tract guarantee public access to those parts of the trails. The Forest Trust started in 1984 and forestry and how we think about forests have forever changed



because of him. He was patient and strategic. He took his time. If it meant that a project needed to wait two months to do it right, he waited and did it right the first time. So much of our local community was impacted by Henry because of the thoughtful work he did here," she said.

His work was more than local, though. The Forest Stewards Guild was conceived by Henry in Santa Fe but has since become a nationwide effort.

"Henry was an activist of the gentlest kind and very effective at what he did," Melissa said. "We will miss working with him, but celebrate the impactful contributions he made to conservation."



Above: One of Henry's transfers to SFCT was Lone Mountain, in the Cerrillos area, which came with a big story. There was the threat of it being developed as a gold mine, and when he had the easement, they figured out a way to stop the gold mine from going in by tying up the water rights. Sometimes, when you drive through that area, you will see this circular irrigation going to create beautiful ranch land, but also was used to stop the extraction of minerals in this area.

Dovetail is the New Name of SFCT's Galisteo Property

How a Naming Mistake Led to More Meaningful Growth for SFCT

What's in a name? Everything!

We made a mistake when we called the Galisteo Basin property we are stewarding the Conservation Homestead. It was during a conversation we had with Chris Chavez, an elder from Kewa Pueblo, when we realized that the use of the word “homestead” was not welcoming to the Native community. He explained that the history of homesteading was a painful period for Native Americans, and that, if we wanted the property to be welcoming to everyone, including Native Americans, we should recognize that the word “homestead” evokes painful memories of land loss and dispossession for Native people. While this particular property was never homesteaded as part of the Homestead Act of 1862, it was commonly referred to as “the Homestead,” and we carried that word forward without realizing the negative impact it had for many in our community.

It is because of this awareness that we embarked on an almost three-year journey to take a deep look at our organization and ultimately rename the property. Land has a complicated history, especially in northern New Mexico where signs of human occupation go back thousands of years. One of the ironies of our work is that we protect land that is the unceded territory of the Pueblo people. We took time to fully consider the impact of colonialism on the Native community of New Mexico, especially around land, to acknowledge it, and to write a Values Statement about how we wanted to ensure our organization was welcoming to all moving forward.

Our original mistake has turned into rich opportunities for SFCT. We formed a Community Advisory Group that included Chris Chavez, an elder and Cultural Preservation Officer from Kewa Pueblo, James Rivera from Pojoaque Pueblo, Denise Lynch who has Comanche roots and has lived in Galisteo for many years, along with board members Carmichael Dominguez and Carla Mattix, our accounting associate Antoinette Armijo Rougemont, our closest neighbor to the land, Kristina Flanagan, and Jerry Rogers, who, before he retired, served as the National Park Service's (NPS) senior officer for every NPS historic preservation and cultural resource management program—both inside the parks and nationwide. We also hired two capable facilitators to guide us in the search for a new name—Kristin Rothballer and Randle Charles.

In the fall of 2024, the Advisory Group participated in three walkabouts on the property with 70 community members. Then the group began their deliberations throughout four meetings from October 2024 to February 2025. What a deep and soulful time it was considering names for this 300-acre property. We fully agreed that the name needed to be amenable to all people.

Water emerged as a big theme. The Galisteo Basin has long been a place where people gathered because of its water resources. The Pueblo people and the Plains Indians all stayed there in the 1500s when the region was in a deep drought. The Spanish pastured and watered their horses there because of the water

resources. The land has a white rock geologic feature called the Galisteo Formation, which is a 3,000-foot-deep remnant of a river that flowed off the uplift of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains 45 million years ago. Even though the landscape feels drier today, it features a 30-foot deep well with water at the 17-foot level. Water is life, and during archeological surveys of the trails that SFCT installed on the property, we found a spear point dating back to 5,000 BC—even more evidence of both human and wildlife being supported on the land by water resources that existed there.

After deep conversations about the land and careful consideration of several names, one name in particular had resonance for the Advisory Group—Dovetail. Denise Lynch noticed that when people spoke about the land, they often had their fingers interlaced in front of them. It brought the image of the dovetail to her mind. As the group discussed the name, they realized how significant the dove is to many cultures. It is a symbol of hope, love, peace, and new beginnings.

Chris Chavez shared that the dove—called rain dove in his culture—is extremely important, as the rain dove led his people to water, and its song is an incantation for rain. The idea of the interlaced fingers that evokes the dovetail is also symbolic of a coming together. Even the carpentry method of dovetailing, which makes an object stronger and more enduring, also seemed resonant in the name.

The name Dovetail was presented to the SFCT board in April 2025, and there was unanimous support. We feel it is an ideal name that symbolizes the gentleness and welcoming nature of the place we now call Dovetail.

Another positive outcome is that we now have Native representatives on both the board and staff of SFCT. James Rivera, from Pojoaque Pueblo, a member of the Advisory Group, joined our board of directors. And Randle Charles, one of our consultants in the naming process, is now our Community Engagement Director.

Our Values Statement now guides our work to strive to fully represent the diversity of people who care about nature and who are disproportionately impacted by climate change and the loss of biodiversity. We know how important it is to be sure our land protection efforts and community programs equitably benefit the diverse communities of northern New Mexico. We will continue to build relationships by cultivating respect, trust, cultural humility, and cultural sensitivity while addressing economic and other barriers many face in joining our work.

As we move forward with Dovetail as the new name of this wonderful land we steward in the Galisteo Basin, we are grateful to the Community Advisory Group and those who came on the walkabouts for their time, talents, and insights. This entire process has led SFCT to build deeper and more authentic partnerships with more people in our community so that everyone has a place in our work and can see themselves reflected in loving and protecting the land.



Meet Chris Chavez

By Sarah Noss

We had a wonderful, almost two-hour conversation over breakfast with Chris Chavez in April, and what we learned was that he is hard to profile on one measly page. He is a Kewa Pueblo Elder, Cultural Preservation Officer, and Council Member. He's had a 23-year career in the military as a surgical tech in the Army, and for 20 years worked as a physician assistant in various hospitals before he returned to live at the Pueblo. He's also a scholar, with two Master's degrees, and he will soon have a doctorate in anthropology. He is also a jeweler, linguist, ethnologist, farmer, storyteller, food lover, and all-around funny guy. Given all the things he's involved in, we feel lucky that he participated in the renaming process of the Galisteo Property.

When we first met Chris, he said he only eats one meal a day. We looked at him with concern, and then he clarified, "But that one meal lasts from sunrise to sunset." Chris told us some funny stories about food. When he was training to go to Vietnam, for example (he became a conscientious objector after being drafted, but his father fought in Normandy and made him enlist), he met a Mormon who told him they got Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays off to practice their religion, so, after tasting their good food, he joined the church and enjoyed a four-day week. But he couldn't drink coffee, which is why he eventually dropped out.

After two years in Vietnam where he served as a surgical tech, dealing with front line shrapnel and other wounds, he came back to the US and continued his linguistics studies that he started at the University of Southern California. One of his master's theses is about preserving the Keresan language, a controversial topic because it is an oral tradition closely protected by the Pueblo, yet Chris saw it fading away. "The Keres language is a way of life for the community and the language is the single-most important element that holds it together and maintains its traditions and culture," Chris said in his thesis. "If the community does not intervene and resolve the language problem, the unity, traditions, and culture of the Pueblo will no longer exist and its assimilation will be complete."

In addition to his scholarly pursuits, Chris became a physician assistant working in Los Angeles before he returned to the Pueblo. He said, "They used to tell us, go to school, learn something, and when you learn...bring that education back to us. You can help our people. Presently, I am in that position. I have come home since I have been out there in the world." As a council member and Cultural Preservation Officer for Kewa Pueblo, he is often at meetings representing his people. In between, you can find him taking care of his cattle or farming his 250 acres and speaking Keres to Pueblo kids who he shows how to cultivate food.

We had our first lunch together in 2022, facilitated by our mutual friend Kristina Flanagan, who is the closest neighbor to SFCT's Galisteo land. During that meal, we asked Chris if the name "Conservation Homestead" should be changed and he said, "Yes."

It took us almost three years to get back to Chris about the renaming of the land. So, what was it like when we came back and told him that we were ready to rename the property and that we wanted him to participate? He said, "Well, I was wondering what I presented to you at the time. Was the situation just kind of off-hand at that point or was it a reality? Maybe you were thinking about that while I was doing the same thing. And then you called me. I said, wow, this is for real now. I was really happy."



Chris became an important part of the Community Advisory Group that helped SFCT rename the Galisteo Property. The group met four times in three-hour sessions (with lunch, of course!) between October 2024 and February 2025. As the name Dovetail emerged from several possible names that the group discussed, the cross-cultural connections to the dove started to emerge. Chris told the story of how the mourning dove, native to this area, is also called a rain dove. In Kewa culture, the rain dove led them to water. "We dance for rain, for moisture," he said. "Our whole culture is based on water and for Mother Nature to get her replenishment of water." The Keres believe that the dove's songs are incantations to bring water. "The dove is very important in our culture," he said.

"For me," he said, "I had my own ideas, gentle ideas about the property. And we discussed those. And I thought everybody contributed...when the decision came down, I was well aware of what the name was going to be... it's going to be gentle. My first look at the land was a soft landing. I sensed no conflict there. The dove itself, they're not carnivorous, they are not birds of prey, they eat berries and seeds. They are gentle. So I thought, this is it. The whole area is defined by the name."

We asked Chris how he felt about the whole renaming process and how he feels about SFCT. He said, "I realized that with your preservation of the property, it is significant to us that no private business will go in there and put up housing or some industry out there. And this is quite beneficial to our people, because we know this place. It defines us—through you—who we are, because the dovetail itself has stories. And then how we went through that is a process that took us quite a while. But now I accept it, and I will tell my Council what we've done."



Above: eBird workshop on Dovetail with staff and volunteers.

SFCT's Vision for Dovetail

A Landscape of Learning, Restoration, and Connection

SFCT's Dovetail property was acquired in 2020 with generous support from the Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Charitable Trust. This site serves as a model for land restoration practices that address the impacts of climate change on arid and semi-arid landscapes, and we are learning, restoring, and connecting to the land in big ways.

By 2030, SFCT envisions Dovetail, our 300-acre property in the Galisteo Basin, as a uniquely protected and welcoming place—defined by its wide-open views, peaceful atmosphere, and layered history. This special area invites all to relax, explore, and connect with nature. Through the protection of a conservation easement and a strong commitment to public access, SFCT actively stewards Dovetail to create a learning and demonstration site focused on ecological resilience and climate adaptation.

This vision includes building a passionate, curious, informed, and diverse conservation community—powered by collaboration and partnerships—and inspiring a lasting love for nature in everyone who visits.

Over the past five years, SFCT has implemented a wide range of restoration initiatives at Dovetail, including:

- Removal of 8,000 square feet of old building structures
- Keyline plowing and broadcast seeding to improve soil health where the structures used to be
- Installation of 107 erosion control structures on the north side of the property over 12 workdays involving 180 volunteers
- Prescribed grazing to support native grasses to control weeds using Horned Locust Remediation and their 180 goats
- Restoration of an ephemeral wetland over two years and taking out over 150 invasive elms
- Installation of two wildlife drinkers to benefit wildlife and someday lure the pronghorn antelope back to the property
- Completion of a 10-year Rangeland Restoration Plan
- Two Bullseye Monitoring Workshops to document current conditions of the rangeland

2024 Restoration Work at Dovetail – Supporting Birds and Citizen Science

In 2024, SFCT received a \$25,000 grant from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to further enhance habitat and engage the public in bird conservation. The grant funded the creation of a Rangeland Restoration Plan, including two Bullseye Monitoring Workshops, the planting of 45 native shrubs to improve bird habitat, and three public eBird workshops, all of which generated insight, impact, and inspiration.

SFCT organized the Bullseye monitoring workshops in June and September of 2024, with 47 volunteers participating. Bullseye monitoring generated information on the conditions of each of the 14 meadows in the five management units on the property. The Bullseye monitoring revealed that the rangelands on the property are in a stable but stagnant ecological condition. The soil is not as healthy as it could and should be to support healthy plant communities. The Rangeland Restoration Plan will guide us as

we work to improve the health of the soil and native plant species at Dovetail.

The eBird workshops introduced 8–17 volunteers at each session to the Cornell Lab's free birding tools:

- Merlin Bird ID, which helps users identify birds by sight or sound, and
- eBird Mobile, a tool that allows birders to record and share sightings with a global community, contributes to a vast open-source database used for scientific research and conservation.

In the winter, we saw lots of mountain bluebirds and found that, just like humans, the birds don't like to get up that early when it's cold!

Planting to Enrich Riparian Habitat

Cornell also helped us purchase and plant 30 Winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*) shrubs and 15 Three-leaf Sumac (*Rhus trilobata*) from Plants of the Southwest. These native plants are essential sources of food and shelter for wildlife:

- Winterfat provides protein-rich forage in winter, nesting material, and predator protection for birds and small mammals.
- Three-leaf Sumac is favored by big game, porcupines, rabbits, and a wide variety of birds, including songbirds, turkeys, quail, and pheasants. Bears and deer also benefit from this shrub.

Each shrub was planted alongside a Grow Oya, an underground clay pot designed for slow, efficient watering—ensuring healthy root development in this arid climate.

Right: Oya and shrub planting on Dovetail.



What's Happening in 2025

Going forward, the Rangeland Restoration Plan will be the focus for the next few years. Restoring the grassland at Dovetail—SFCT's conservation and restoration demonstration site—is one of the most important projects we have undertaken to date.

Healthy rangeland shades the soil and keeps the temperatures lower. It slows runoff and helps the water sink into the soil rather than running off into the arroyo. Its deep roots hold the water and trap and remove pollutants as it sinks into the aquifer. The grasses also trap carbon dioxide and transfer it from the air into the soil, lessening the impact of climate change. A healthy mix of cool and warm season grasses feed wildlife throughout the year. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century, the grasses in the Galisteo Basin were as high as the shoulders of a horse, but over time, due to overgrazing, erosion, the encroachment of invasive plants and trees, and a warming planet, the grasses need our help to come back to health.

Below: Juniper weir erosion control structure.



2025 Schedule of Dovetail Restoration Workshops

- June 7—Bullseye Monitoring Workshop to document the condition of the spring grasses
- July 19—Restoration Workshop: Juniper Removal where it has encroached on the grassland meadows
- August 2—Restoration Workshop: Erosion Control Structures to assist in grassland restoration
- August 30—Bullseye Monitoring Workshop to document the condition of the summer grasses
- September 13—Restoration Workshop: Erosion Control Structures to assist in grassland restoration
- October 18—Restoration Workshop: Erosion Control Structures to assist in grassland restoration

We hope you will join us for the upcoming workshops at Dovetail in 2025. With your help, we can all better understand the ecosystem at Dovetail—what lives there, and how to improve the conditions of the land to support all the creatures dependent on it.

2024 Conservation Easements Protect Priority Watersheds

Last year, the SFCT partnered with landowners to complete two new conservation easements of 20 acres in the Santa Fe area. From forested slopes in the upper Galisteo watershed to a popular trail along Tesuque Creek, these small but important conservation easements expanded the protection of private land in the Sangre de Cristo foothills.

Pond Tract Conservation Easement – 4 acres

The Pond Tract is a gem of a spot along the Winsor Trail in Tesuque, directly adjacent to the Santa Fe National Forest. This parcel's namesake is a pond that stores water to irrigate downstream fruit orchards. The property hosts a quarter-mile stretch of the popular Winsor Trail, which connects Tesuque to the Santa Fe National Forest and eventually the Pecos Wilderness.

This new conservation easement, which was donated to SFCT by the Forest Trust, formalizes the right of the public to use the trail on the property for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. The conservation easement also protects the property's habitat values and expands on the huge block of open space that is the Santa Fe National Forest. The forest on the Pond Tract property is a mix of by piñon pine, ponderosa pine, Rocky Mountain juniper and oneseed juniper, plus willow, wild rose, and other riparian (streamside) species along Tesuque Creek.

Next time you are hiking up the Winsor from Tesuque, we hope you pause to enjoy this peaceful spot that is now protected forever. Special thanks to the late Henry Carey of the Forest Trust for the donation (read more about Henry on page 11).



Tree House Conservation Easement – 16 acres

SFCT has now protected over 17,000 acres within our Galisteo Basin focal area. Most of us think of the Galisteo Basin as an open expanse south of the City of Santa Fe, but the upper part of the watershed is just as important, and it's a whole different world. Anyone who has hiked along Apache Creek in the Santa Fe National Forest has experienced the cooler, wetter, forested upper reaches of the Galisteo watershed. Last year, SFCT worked with a generous landowner along Tree House Road in Cañada de los Alamos to protect 16 acres of forested land above the creek. Preventing inappropriate development of this steep property contributes to the overall quality and quantity of water in Apache Creek and the Rio Galisteo. The piñon-juniper and ponderosa pine forest on the property includes a diverse understory of native grasses, forbs, shrubs, and cacti, including blue grama, ring muhly, chamisa, prickly pear, yucca, mountain mahogany, Indian paintbrush, purple aster, and verbena. The area is an excellent habitat for wildlife, including black bear, mountain lion, mule deer, and many other species.

Located just one parcel away from SFCT's 614-acre Apache Canyon property, the new Tree House conservation easement represents one more step towards a network of protected private property in the upper Galisteo watershed. SFCT's goal is to expand this work by partnering with more landowners in the neighborhood.



Above: SFCT staff site inspection on property along the Rio Chama.

Sneak Peek: Conservation Easements in Development

Each new conservation easement project brings fresh adventures for our land protection staff. In 2025, we are lucky to be partnering with four fantastic landowners to protect their farms, ranches, rivers, and wildlife habitat. We tailor each conservation easement to meet the needs of the landscape and the landowner, so we are always learning something new. These are a few of our current projects under development.

Farm in Nambe

Tucked between the High Road to Taos and the Nambe Badlands, this 100-acre conservation easement will protect a multigenerational family farm that is irrigated by the Acequia la Nueva and the Acequia de la Comunidad. The farm's fields and ponds provide habitat for wildlife moving between large blocks of open pueblo lands to the west and north. The farm produces beef and hay, which supports our local foodshed and agricultural economy. SFCT has secured funding for the purchase of this easement from the state's Natural Heritage Conservation Act program (more on this on page 18) as well as a USDA farmland protection program. SFCT is also contributing some of our own money through our new Total Transaction program, which will help cover transaction costs. As with all projects that involve multiple government agencies, this one will take a while to complete, but we are over the moon to be working to protect local agriculture, scenery, habitat, and a slice of history in northern New Mexico.



Rio Chama Property

SFCT staff was delighted by the plant diversity encountered while strolling around this 90-acre property along the Rio Chama just east of Abiquiu. The parcel stretches from the river to US-84. The planned conservation easement will protect the southern bank of the Chama, plus bosque, meadow, and farmland, and will have scenic benefits for travelers on US-84. The property's old agricultural fields, which are irrigated from the Acequia de los Gonzales, are currently being revived by farmers who plan to raise a native grass seed crop in addition to goats and chickens.

The landowner is dedicated to showing that restoration and regenerative agriculture can co-exist, and we are happy that a conservation easement will protect it all in perpetuity.



Ranch South of Las Vegas

Some of SFCT's earliest easements in the 1990s protected huge swaths of ranchland south of Las Vegas—about 20,000 acres in total! We are excited to be building on that legacy by working with a landowner whose 1,319-acre ranch lies just one parcel away from our Koldyke Conservation Easement in San Miguel County. This new easement will protect a ranch on the eastern edge of Apache Mesa that includes healthy rangeland, rugged forested canyon, and the headwaters of Aguilar Creek. The ranch has long provided a path for people and wildlife to move between the plains and the mountains, so it is rich in history as well as habitat for elk, bear, and other wildlife. The new conservation easement will also protect scenic resources, since the ranch can be seen from the Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge.



Pecos Canyon Easement Addition

Pecos River Open Spaces (PROS) is a nonprofit dedicated to preserving land along the Pecos River. SFCT is lucky to hold multiple conservation easements over land owned by PROS. We are now working with them to add 13 acres on the south rim of the Pecos Canyon—recently donated to PROS by a generous neighbor—to an existing conservation easement. When completed, this project will expand a block of perpetually-protected land that spans the river near Ilfeld. The new easement property consists of piñon-juniper woodland that provides excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife, including the piñon jay, a state Species of Greatest Conservation Need. The 13 acres is comprised of 12 separate lots that could be developed, so this small but mighty easement addition will truly enhance habitat protection along the Pecos River.

New Funding Broadens Conservation

In the face of upheaval at the federal level, SFCT feels lucky to have some secure, long-term funding from state and private sources to make conservation more affordable. Although the need for funding always exceeds the amount available, the new programs outlined below support a handful of excellent conservation easement projects each year. Step by step, we advance the goal of durable, strategic, landscape-scale conservation in northern New Mexico.

Natural Heritage Conservation Act (NHCA)

We are thrilled to report that in 2024 our Nambé farmland easement (read more on page 17) was the first project to be awarded funding through the newly revived Natural Heritage Conservation Act (NHCA) program. NHCA hadn't had money in it since 2011, and the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund reinvigorated NHCA under the auspices of the State's Energy, Mineral, and Natural Resources Department.

SFCT is excited and proud to be the first land trust in New Mexico to move forward with a conservation easement purchase using the Legacy Fund. Even more exciting, the NHCA money has helped us secure and leverage federal funding for the same project, which is exactly what the Legacy Fund was designed to do. We expect great things ahead for this program, landowners, and land trusts alike.

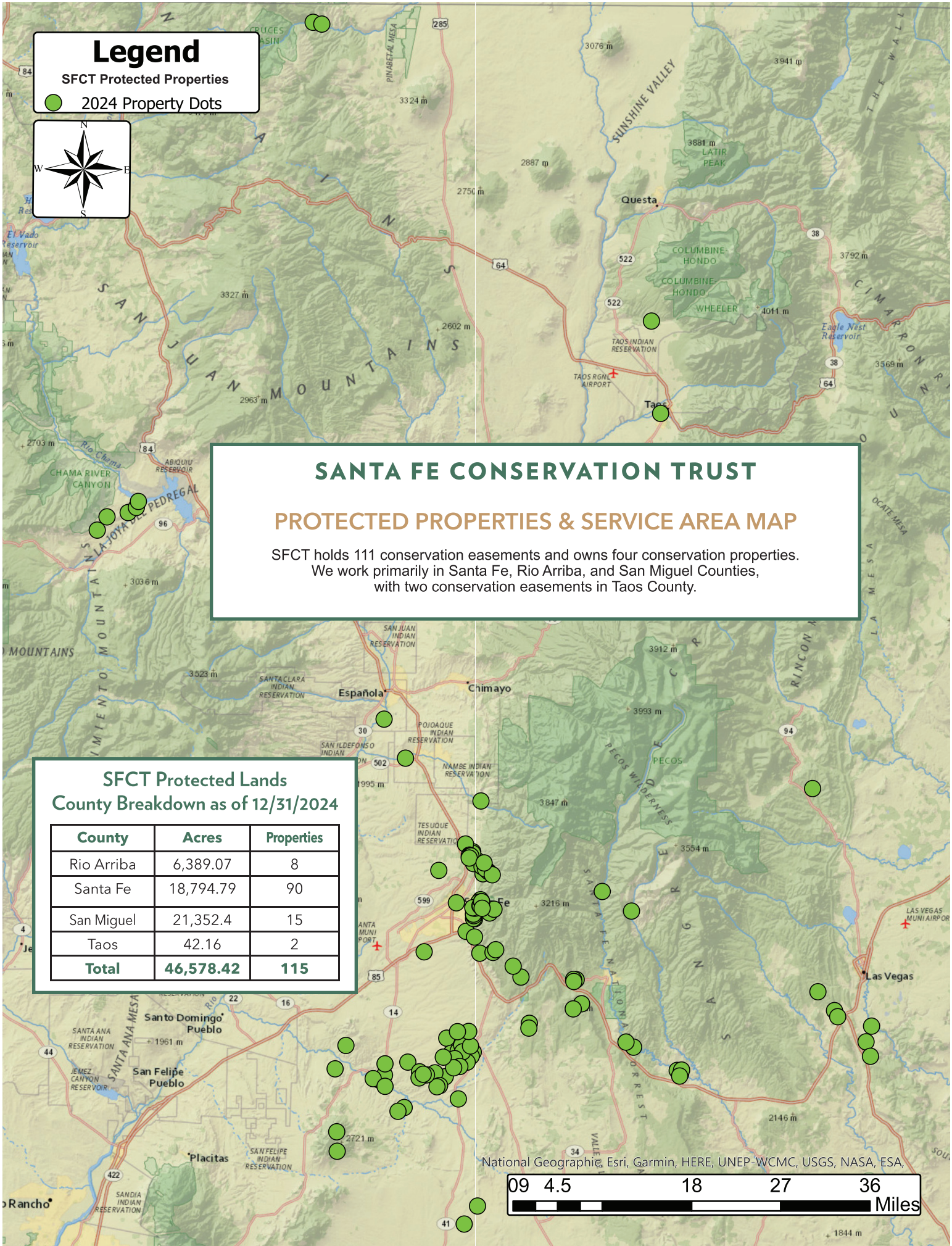
SFCT's Quick Start and Total Transaction Funds

In 2023, we completed the first project using SFCT's Quick Start Fund, which is designed to help landowners overcome the hurdle that transaction costs can pose to complete conservation easements. In this program, SFCT covers these costs, with an agreement from the landowner that they will pay us back once they receive tax benefits from their conservation easement donation. Then, SFCT can use the money to help another landowner, and so on, resulting in more land protected!

Our pilot project was successful, and the landowner was able to pay SFCT back in 2024. We have since used the money to start another project. In fact, two of the new projects (as described on pages 17-18) are supported by the Quick Start Fund, which exists because of generous donations from private individuals like you. This funding tool has opened the door of conservation to more people, and for that we are very grateful.

SFCT's Total Transaction Fund comes from our \$1 million endowment earnings. About once a year, we can apply those earnings toward covering transaction costs without repayment for a conservation project of high conservation value. In this program, we do not ask the landowner to repay the money. Our first Total Transaction project is the same Nambé farmland easement-in-process that was awarded NHCA funding. As it turns out, SFCT's financial support through Total Transaction helped this project secure an NHCA grant, because it counted as matching funds.

We hope these programs can continue to work synergistically to accelerate excellent conservation projects. These funding mechanisms are a huge innovation in our work, and will help us expand our network of protected land and landowner partners.



Board Profile: Carla Chung Mattix

Imagine having played a role in assisting the Department of the Interior's efforts to establish Bears Ears National Monument, but you never got to visit. That was why Carla Chung Mattix decided to join SFCT's annual camping expedition to Bears Ears in 2022, as this gave her the experience she had been waiting for.

"Seeing the spectacular area up close, with my husband, soon after my retirement, provided a tangible affirmation of the work I had done during my career," said Carla of her 25 years as a lawyer with the National Park Service (NPS) in the Department of the Interior's Office of the Solicitor.

This camping trip also solidified her relationship with SFCT, reminded her of the important mission of conservation, and she got to know the staff "who are dedicated to the Trust's mission as well as super nice people," she said.

But Carla's loose connection to the SFCT goes back even further—to 2015, when she had an office at the National Park Service's Old Santa Fe Trail building. SFCT held an annual event in the building's beautiful courtyard, so she became tangentially aware of the organization's work. She also learned that Stewart Udall, former Secretary of the Interior, was a founder and had served on the SFCT board.

It is this intersection of people, places, and passion that led her to join the board in January 2023.

During the camping trip to Bears Ears, Carla learned a great deal about SFCT's work and accomplishments and developed a deeper connection with the organization. She said, "The Trust's mission—in particular, to protect culturally and environmentally significant landscapes and ignite a passion for nature—really resonates with me. So, when Sarah later asked if I might be interested in serving on the board, I was honored to join."

Carla enjoys living in a community that not only appreciates a protected natural environment but also understands the fragility of it and the effort it takes to protect it. This philosophy directly aligns with the SFCT's mission making Carla a wonderful and strong advocate as a board member.

As an attorney with the NPS, she had the privilege to advise and learn from dedicated NPS employees, including scientists, archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, curators, and many other knowledgeable park staff members. "I became acquainted with park rangers and superintendents across the nation from American Samoa to the US Virgin Islands," she said. "The legal matters I worked on involved Native American issues, such as cultural property repatriation and collaborative management, historic preservation tax credits, intellectual property, and museum collections."

This experience positioned Carla for joining two specific SFCT committees—Land Review and the Land Trust Reaccreditation. In her work with the Land Review Committee, Carla said, "I have learned that the SFCT staff who develop, prepare, and monitor the conservation easements are incredibly knowledgeable and dedicated to this core component of the Trust. The board relies on their expertise and experience."

Carla also served on the ad hoc DEI Committee which developed the organization's Values Statement. "The Values Statement now reflects a commitment by SFCT to be mindful of and to engage a



Above: Carla Mattix and her husband, Victor Johnson at Nambe Falls on the Pueblo of Nambe, just north of Santa Fe.

broader community in northern New Mexico in the organization's activities," Carla said.

Most recently, Carla accepted the role of joining the Executive Committee as an At Large member. Of this new appointment, she said, "After serving on the board for two years, I hope to lend the expertise and perspectives I've gained thus far to this committee. I look forward to learning more about the inner workings of SFCT."

Literally and figuratively, Carla is working diligently on the next chapters of her retirement. She retired early to pursue other interests—one being a nonfiction book about the legal history of the National Park Service.

"The history and protection of America's national parks is a beloved subject," she said, "but the existing literature does not fully convey the importance of attorneys and courts in the development of the National Park System. My book, which will be published in early 2026—*National Parks and the Supreme Court, Legal Battles that Shaped the Parks*—tells the story of five cases involving national parks that ultimately went to the US Supreme Court." She hopes to bring this relatively unknown aspect of NPS history to light.

And once the book is published, Carla plans to dive into her next project which involves her Korean heritage. To that end, she is learning Korean so she can communicate better with distant family members when she visits Korea.

When Carla isn't writing a nonfiction book or learning to speak Korean, she is often outside, hiking on the Dale Ball Trails, walking on the Santa Fe River Trail, or skiing at Ski Santa Fe.

"One of the best things about Santa Fe," she said, "is the accessibility to the outdoors and accommodating weather. It means a lot to me to be a part of an organization that does so much to protect the outdoors for us all to enjoy."

Meet Our Newest Board Members

Sandra Ely

SFCT is lucky to welcome Sandra Ely as one of our newest board members because she knows all about the importance of conservation and taking care of our environment. Having worked for more than two decades at the New Mexico Environment Department in various roles including Environmental Protection Division Director, Air Quality Bureau Chief, and Environment and Energy Policy Coordinator, Sandra retired from her career and has turned her attention to community service and enjoying the outdoors.

After participating in the annual Bears Ears adventure in 2023, Sandra was invited to join the board because so much of her professional and personal passions aligned with the organization's mission.

"SFCT's work has improved my quality of life as I regularly use the Dale Ball Trails and other trails. Being on the board is a way to give back. So much of the world is about development and putting structures everywhere you can. This organization is about bucking that trend to create more open spaces and easements for everyone to enjoy. That's pretty inspirational," Sandra said.

As a member of the Land Review Committee, Sandra wants to be part of improving the quality of life for northern New Mexicans, protecting our environment and its creatures. Additionally, she said she deeply appreciates "SFCT's consciousness about making sure everyone has access to the trails and lands."

In addition to her work on the environment, Sandra is a registered nurse and serves on the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board.

With an MS in Environmental Studies from the University of Oregon, a BS in Conservation and Resource Sciences from the University of California at Berkeley, and a BS in Nursing from Creighton University, Sandra's interests are as varied as her education.

When she is not active as a volunteer for causes that touch her heart, and improve the environment, Sandra can be found hiking and running the trails around town with Lucy, her dog, and Steve, her husband.



James Rivera



"I believe that we all have a responsibility to care for Mother Earth. And we have cultural responsibilities to leave where we grew up in better shape than we received it."

This is James Rivera's personal philosophy, and as a Native American Pueblo man, this was his impetus for wanting to serve as a board member of the SFCT. James wants to go beyond the borders of the tribal land to work with the board on the common goal of educating and re-educating the community on the ways we can live in this world without destroying the earth.

James is inspired by SFCT's common goal, but also excited to learn the different insights, experiences, and backgrounds of his fellow board members so they can work together as a think tank—assembled by many to create one: one voice, one vision for conservation in northern New Mexico.

It was the Community Advisory Group that worked on the renaming of the Galisteo Basin property that drew him into the organization's important work and this is the door that opened for him to become a board member. He said of this experience, "The collective

ideas that were brought together made me realize that as one group of people, we can actually create this new name that becomes a symbol of where we are headed."

Having served as President and Founder of Cornerstone Government and Public Affairs for more than 30 years, James leads this Native American/veteran-owned company advocating for causes in New Mexico that impact Federal, State, County, and Tribal governments, private enterprises, and businesses. By providing services to promote government-to-government relations and consulting with tribal and non-tribal entities, his company advances economic development, energy, education, environmental issues, taxation, transportation, the arts, and other drivers that enhance the financial growth of New Mexico.

A member of Pojoaque Pueblo, James has three children. He is interested in deepening SFCT's relationships with the Native community and ensuring that future generations inherit a vibrant and healthy natural world.



Above: The crowd settles in at The Lensic for the 2024 Banff Film Festival.

BANFF Delivers Awe and Excitement

"Are you going both nights?"

When the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour, commonly known as Banff, comes to The Lensic for two nights, this is a common question. We would guess that most of our movie-going audience doesn't know that it all started in 1976 when a tight-knit group of climbers and outdoor enthusiasts conceived The Banff Festival of Mountaineering Films.

Over 30 years ago, invitations for film submissions began, and the festival started traveling to local Canadian communities. Today, award-winning and highly acclaimed mountain films chosen from 400 annual submissions go on tour in 40 countries, reaching an audience of over 550,000 worldwide in approximately 600 locations, including Santa Fe.

SFCT has been hosting the Banff World Tour since 2013, and, as this is our second largest annual fundraising event, we rely on local sponsors (38 in 2024) to keep our work going strong while satisfying Santa Fe's Banff mania. In 2024, we had six new sponsors join us along with incredible donors that helped create a rousing prize draw during intermission that included ski passes, a three-person tent, a day of guided fly fishing, brewery gift certificates and, of course, SFCT-branded and other local swag

thrown from the aisles into an audience of approximately 800 people each night during this sell-out event.

Last year, 16 amazing films were screened over two nights. And while many of the films submitted to and chosen for the Banff World Tour used to be short, adrenaline-filled action films, most of the films that the SFCT volunteer committee chooses from today involve storytelling and focus on the human character. In our survey sent to the 2024 filmgoers, we found that the overwhelming response was that variety is the key. The films that were most beloved engaged families and communities and highlighted teamwork, showed people overcoming adversity with the help of nature, and told inspirational stories with a good dose of humor.

We are grateful to our committee that chooses the films, our generous sponsors, and the avid audience members who make this event two stellar nights to remember.

Below: *Desert Wings*, 2024 Banff Mountain Film Festival at The Lensic.





Above: 2024 Stand Up for Nature fundraiser at the Farmers' Market Pavillion.

Stand Up for Nature: Your Party for Inspiration and Impact

"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one."

John Lennon's words came to mind in a relevant way last September listening to author, environmentalist, and climate activist Bill McKibben at our annual Stand Up for Nature (SUN) event.

Despite his sober look at the devastation caused by global warming and the immediacy required for real change, McKibben highlighted the "prospect of a beautiful and prosperous world ahead" if we all do what we can do now and come together to make change in a way that includes a good measure of joy. Any opportunity to come together, to act, and to volunteer—especially among those of a certain age who have more time and generational power—will bring about the structural change needed to safeguard our climate, he said. McKibben pointed to the Santa Fe Conservation Trust and its work as part of his message of hope and collectivism. "Be less of an individual," he advocated, "and move large enough to make changes. This is the test!"

The response of our 330 guests, many who were new to our organization and to SUN, indicated McKibben's message came through loud and clear. Along with current sponsors, donors, and volunteers who already embrace SFCT and its mission, a record number of attendees stepped up to generously support our work.

On the day before our event, his message of realism and hope about our climate future also resonated with 1,300 high school students at Santa Fe High, Capital High, and the Santa Fe Indian School. To protect land and our quality of life locally, McKibben wanted to speak with the next generation so they would know

that the solution to global warming is ready to be implemented on a large scale—and that is through solar energy. And he told the students that there are many forces at work to keep that solution under wraps.

The Santa Fe Farmers' Market Pavillion provided a beautiful, weather-proof setting. It was a fitting space given that most of the Railyard—including the park, rail trail, water tower area, and areas adjacent to the Pavillion—are protected by an SFCT easement. One of the building's tenants and a long-time supporter of SFCT, Second Street Brewery, poured the best of brews and cocktails, and, in SUN tradition, Cowgirl BBQ offered their popular buffet with options for everyone. Eileen & the In-Betweens, an indie folk band, warmed up the crowd with their multi-instrumental talent and social justice emphasis. And the decorations were colorful with fresh home-grown flower arrangements on every table, kindly provided by Tamara Prochorchik, a volunteer and SFCT's "first lady" since she is Sarah's partner.

Scott Jones, our sequined and talented auctioneer, got to know many of our guests during the cocktail hour and proceeded to dazzle onstage during our live auction and paddle raise. Our first live auction in 2023 turned out to be such a successful experiment, that we expanded it in 2024 to include a barrel of booze, a signed and framed Ansel Adams lithograph donated by his daughter-in-law, a private Sky Railway car for 40, a private Cowgirl BBQ Pool Hall party for 20, and a family glamping trip in the Grand Canyon. The final winners of these unique offerings walked away with smiles (including a determined SFCT board member). You can imagine our exhilaration when the paddle raise was the highest level of giving we have ever seen! Our hearts filled with gratitude and joy for the open-hearted generosity of our guests. Bill McKibben talked about the challenge of attaching brains to "large enough hearts" to be able to collectively create change, and we did that at the 2024 Stand Up for Nature event, which netted over \$180,000 for SFCT.

Below: Guest speaker, Bill McKibben and Santa Fe County Commissioner, Hank Hughes.



SAVE THE DATE!

Please join us October 4, 2025, for Stand Up for Nature at the Farmers' Market Pavillion.

Financial Statements

January 1 through December 31, 2024*

Financial Position

Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$408,390
Accounts Receivable	\$314,694
Prepaid Expenses	\$16,601
Deposits	\$2,500
Fixed Assets	\$3,650,188
Operating Reserve	\$1,397,270
Stewardship Reserve	\$1,297,302
Endowment held by SFCT	\$1,144,324
Endowment held by SFCF	\$153,171
Total Assets	\$8,384,439

Liabilities & Net Assets

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$24,397
Payroll Liabilities	\$26,405
Passthrough Payables	\$3,516
Total Liabilities	\$54,318

Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$4,964,630
Board Designated	\$331,504
With Donor Restrictions	\$3,033,987

Total Net Assets **\$8,330,122**

Total Liabilities & Net Assets **\$8,384,439**

Activities

Operating Income

Contributions & Grants	\$1,048,376
Fundraising Events	\$220,903
Program Services	\$77,821

Total Operating Income **\$1,347,100**

Operating Expenses

Mission Programs	\$963,116
Development	\$98,701
General & Administrative	\$177,661

Total Operating Expenses **\$1,239,479**

Net Operating Income **\$107,622**

Non-Operating Income & Expenses

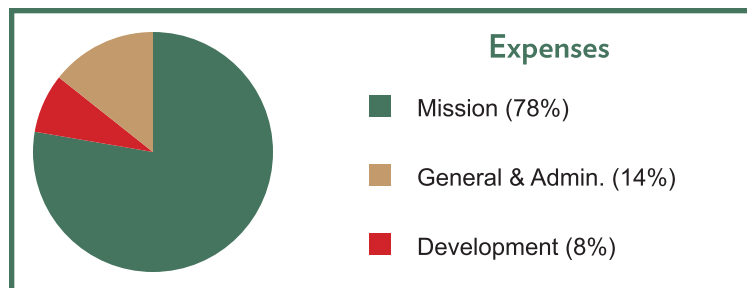
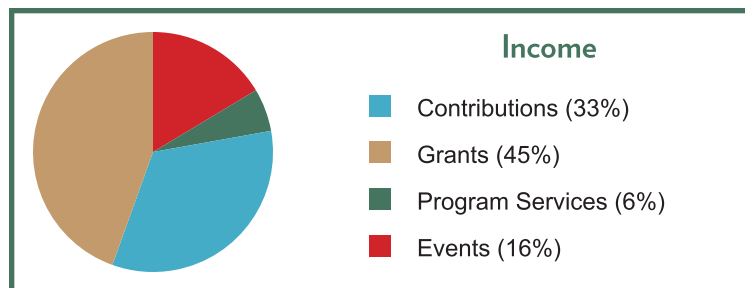
Investment Income	\$288,913
In-Kind Contributions	\$1,200

Total Non-Operating **\$290,113**

Total Net Income **\$397,735**



Above: Natural rock formation on a SFCT conservation easement in the Santa Fe foothills.



*2024 statements have not yet been audited. Filed forms 990 can be found on our website at: sfct.org/news/publications Complete audited financials available upon request.



Above: The Galisteo Basin with a view of the Ortiz Mountains. (Photo by Tony Bonanno)

Your Donation Makes a Difference to Your Quality of Life!

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust depends on your generous support to ensure our land, trails, and sky are protected for future generations. Providing conservation services in perpetuity means we depend on your support today and in the future. Every gift, no matter the size or type, is appreciated and needed. Please use the envelope provided and send in your donation today. You can also donate online at sfct.org/donate.

Types of Giving

Outright Gifts

Donations can be made in the form of cash, checks, stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares, real estate, and personal property. Please contact SFCT at 505-989-7019 for stock transfer instructions.

Make Recurring Monthly Gifts

A scheduled donation, which can start with as little as \$10 a month, might be easier on your budget. Plus, it gives SFCT a steady, reliable stream of support.

Here's how easy it is to make recurring gifts at sfct.org/donate:

- Choose the amount that you want to contribute every month.
- Decide if you want to use a credit card, checking account, or PayPal account.

If your circumstances change, you can choose to increase, decrease, suspend, or stop your monthly gift. Check the box on the envelope, call us at 505-989-7019, or go online to sign up at sfct.org/donate.

IRA Distributions

Age may just be a number, but if that number is 72 (or more) you can make your required minimum distribution from your IRA a tax-free gift directly to SFCT. This gift will not count as taxable income for you and will make an amazing impact preserving the land, trails, and sky you love and need. Please contact your financial advisor for details.

Matching Gifts

Does your company offer a Matching Gifts Program? If they do, submit their form and double your donation.

Vehicle Donations

Do you have an old vehicle you don't use anymore? Donate it to SFCT! We make it easy. Just go to careasy.org/nonprofit/santafeconservationtrust or give us a call at 505-989-7019 for more information.

In-Kind Gifts

We also accept in-kind donations. Please contact us for a list of our current needs.

Volunteer

Give the precious gift of time. SFCT has a wide variety of volunteer opportunities to support our mission that includes community engagement programs, events, trail maintenance, mailings, and other basic office duties. Please contact us at 505-989-7019 or inquire about current opportunities by emailing us at info@sfct.org.

Include SFCT in Your Estate Plan

Does your connection to the land sustain, enrich and inspire you? Are you concerned about access to nature for your children and grandchildren? Including SFCT in your will is easy to do and will ensure that the land, trails, and skies of northern New Mexico will be protected for future generations. If SFCT is already in your will or estate plan, please let us know and you'll become a member of the Atalaya Legacy Society (page 28), which includes an annual lunch for insider updates on our work and, if you wish, acknowledgement in our publications.

Explore your planned giving options at sfct.org/planned-giving, contact us at 505-989-7019, or email Sarah Noss at sarah@sfct.org. As we **protect land, for everyone, forever**, we depend on and are grateful for your support today, tomorrow, and beyond.

Monthly Donor Profile

By Sarah Noss

It is fun and scary to write a profile of someone I have known practically my whole life, but when Sally and I sat down to talk it over, I realized that there is much about her that I didn't know. The life stories she shared with me round out my overall impression of her—that she cares about her community, whether it be in Bainbridge Island, Washington, or here in her hometown of Santa Fe. And she is passionate about the concept of “home” and creating one for not just her family but also for the community.

Though Sally was not born in Santa Fe, her mom and three brothers moved here when she was 10. They lived in Chupadero, so Sally learned to love the beautiful landscapes and sweeping vistas of this area at an early age. She and I met over 50 years ago at Santa Fe Prep when the school was located on upper Canyon Road, and then we went to the upper school on Camino Cruz Blanca. I remember Sally from our field hockey and basketball days, both of us fierce competitors, of course. And I remember when Sally's mom died when she was a senior, but I wasn't aware of how disrupting that was to her until recently.

“When my mother died, we all had to move to Manhattan to be with my dad, and I remember us wandering the streets of the city feeling so disoriented,” she said. Before the move, Sally put her possessions into a big garbage bag, as they had run out of boxes, and unfortunately, all the things she held dear were mistakenly thrown away. “It was tough losing my mom and home base senior year,” she said. It is one of the reasons that feeling at home and manifesting a home are so important to her.

It took her many years to get back to her first home base. After graduating from Syracuse University, and spending a few years in Paris, she moved to Albuquerque and began a successful career as a travel agent. She started at Bolack Travel in Albuquerque for eight years, then moved to Seattle where she worked her way up to a high-end travel agency. “I loved that work, actually, and it ended up using every single one of my organizational skills.”

She met her ex-husband at work, and they raised two children on Bainbridge Island, a ferry ride away from Seattle. She used her organizational skills during that time on fundraisers for things like Little League and the rowing club. “That's how I contributed during that time, doing lots of events. Nothing makes me happier than having a yellow legal pad and a pencil.”

When the kids went to college, she and a business partner started a beloved store on Bainbridge Island called Stash. It was a recycle/reuse

store that offered inexpensive, beautiful clothing and homemade accessories made by women only, including some creations by Sally herself. (In fact, when she came back to Santa Fe, she asked me to save my chicken feed bags, and she turned them into wonderful tote bags.) “I did the accounting and money part for the store, and I found it very fulfilling to have my creative side validated there.” Still the lure of Santa Fe was potent, and in 2018, after she divorced, she bought a house in Santa Fe.

Sally remembers bringing her kids to Santa Fe on vacation when her son once said, “Mom, you breathe differently when you are here.” That's when Sally realized that this is her native home, and she said, “I relax in the beauty of New Mexico's natural landscape. As I drive from Albuquerque to Santa Fe, I actually feel my eyeballs release pressure and relax....I also think that having left here abruptly after high school, coming back and having everyone be so welcoming made me feel right at home again. I feel the sense of community here, and I love it,” she said.

Today, Sally is one of SFCT's most generous monthly donors. She said that it's her love of the land that inspires her to support SFCT. “Being in nature is part of my daily regimen and keeps me sane. It offers exercise for me and my dogs and I am blown away by the views every single day. Even if I walked the same trail yesterday, this mode of movement keeps me cheerful and allows me ample time to be appreciative of living in Santa Fe.”

Sally feels strongly that the trails and open space make Santa Fe a better place to live, and as a result, so does the Santa Fe Conservation Trust. “I am grateful for their work and honored to support their endeavors,” she said.



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Below: Vámonos walkers on the River Trail.



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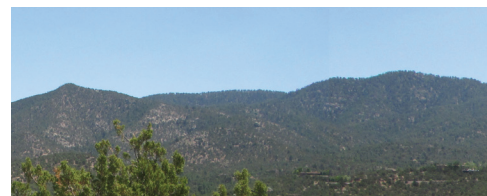
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Above: John Grabowska, with New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors, removing barbed wire on Dovetail to allow for the passage of wildlife.

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**Right: An actual dove on Dovetail! (Photo by
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Above: Taking a break from erosion control work in the County portion of Dale Ball Trails.

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