

SANTA FE COUNTY

Resolution No. 2006- 36

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING CRITERIA FOR TRAILS PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION FUNDS

WHEREAS, in 1998 and 2000 voters in Santa Fe County approved two General Obligation Bonds, totaling \$20 million dollars to fund the "Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program," ("Program"); and

WHEREAS, the Program's purpose is to acquire, develop and maintain open space and trails in Santa Fe County; and

WHEREAS, the County via Resolution No. 1998-105 and subsequent amendments, established the County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee ("Committee") to approve and recommend projects to the Board of County Commissioners ("BCC"), review the financial status of the Program, and provide advice to County staff and the BCC regarding Program planning and management; and

WHEREAS, creation of a county-wide trail network is a County priority; and

WHEREAS, the BCC dedicated \$2 million dollars from the bond funds to establish a trail network throughout the County ("Trails Projects funds"); and

WHEREAS, in order to achieve the goal of a county-wide trail network it is important for Trails Projects funds to be used in a cost-effective manner that results in maximum trail distance and public utility; and

WHEREAS, the Committee has developed criteria to assist in evaluating whether projects are eligible for Trails Projects funding in a document entitled "Definition of Trails Projects and Criteria for Trails Projects Evaluation".

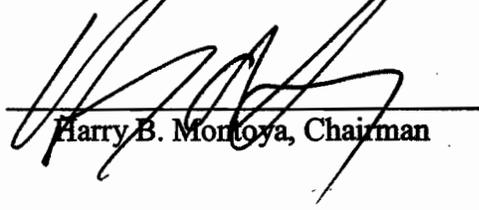
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the BCC that applications for Trails Projects funds should be evaluated under both existing criteria for review of open space acquisition applications and additional guidelines for the evaluation of Trail Projects as set forth in the "Definition of Trail Projects and Criteria for Trails Projects Evaluation" attached to this resolution as Exhibit A.

SFC CLERK RECORDED

03/02/2006

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 28 day of February, 2006.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

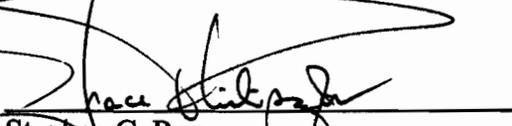

Harry B. Montoya, Chairman



ATTEST:


Valerie Espinoza
Santa Fe County Clerk

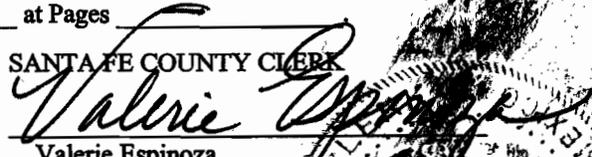
APPROVED AS TO FORM:

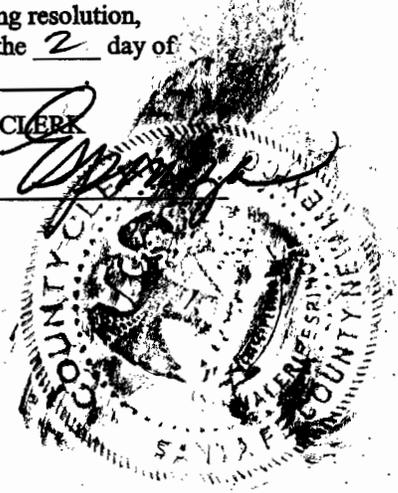

Stephen C. Ross
Santa Fe County Attorney

CERTIFICATE OF FILING

I, Valerie Espinoza, County Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, designated as Resolution No. 2006-36 was filed in my office on the 2 day of March, 2006, in book Number at Pages

Inst. 1422481

SANTA FE COUNTY CLERK

Valerie Espinoza



COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss BCC RESOLUTIONS
PAGES: 7

I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for Record On The 2ND Day Of March, A.D. 2006 at 08:55 And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1422481 Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office

Deputy Valerie Espinoza
County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM



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Exhibit A

Definition of Trails Projects And Criteria for Trails Projects Evaluation

Prepared by County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee
(COLTPAC) February 2006

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to define Santa Fe County Trails Projects and guide evaluation of applications for use of County Trails Projects funds. Section I provides background and describes the County trails planning goals. Section II outlines the criteria for County Trails Projects.

Section I: Background, Rationale, and Goals

1) Why Trails?

- a) Creating trails is a cost effective way to develop recreational infrastructure because less land is required. (5 miles of 30' wide trail easement with support areas requires 35 acres while a 5 mile trail loop on open space would require 200-600 acres)
- b) Given limited funding it is unlikely the County can purchase areas that are large enough to provide a multi-day outdoor recreational opportunities on a stand-alone basis
- c) Trails are recreational attractions and can link open spaces
- d) Creating trails and linking open space areas is a cost effective use of recreational money
- e) When secondary trails and open space areas are created as part of new land use developments, trails can be used to integrate them into the larger County Open Space and Trails system
- f) Trails are good for tourism and provide economic development opportunities throughout the County.
- g) Trails can provide an alternative, non-motorized transportation system

2) Why dedicated funding for Trails?

Although creating trails is cost effective, completing the entire proposed County-wide primary trail system will be expensive. The primary system identified in the Open Space and Trails Plan is approximately 280 miles in length. Assuming a 30 foot wide easement and 7 acres of land per mile of trail, and estimating that easements can be purchased at \$3,000 per acre (rough county-wide average), purchasing the entire trail network would cost approximately \$6,000,000.

Because achieving the goal of a county-wide trail system will require many transactions and a sustained effort over time, the County set aside Trails Projects funds to insure that the process continued and that the limited funding available would not be swept up by open space purchases.

3) What are the Challenges to Creating a County-wide Trail System?

- a) It is more difficult to create a trails system than to purchase open space because while open space can often be obtained from a single landowner, a County-wide trail system necessarily involves negotiating with multiple landowners.
- b) If one landowner along a proposed trail declines to participate, an alternative alignment must be identified, thus adding additional complexity to the process.
- c) Landowners are sometimes less inclined to participate in a trail project because there is generally less financial benefit from a trail easement than from selling a larger area for open space.
- d) Landowners may also have concerns about privacy, property devaluation, and liability issues from granting a trail across their property.

4) County Trails Goals:

The County Open Land and Trails Plan (2000) includes the following trail related goals:

- a) A county wide primary trail system that links together public lands (“a string of pearls”). See Map 7 “Proposed Trail Corridors Santa Fe County” in the Open Land and Trails Plan.¹
- b) An integrated system including trails and open space areas.
- c) Trailheads, campgrounds, and rest areas along the trail system.
- d) Local secondary trails that connect to and supplement the primary trails and create local recreational opportunities.
- e) Self-contained trail loop systems, along the primary trail system usually within County open space properties or other public lands.

1

The identified route of the primary trail system is designed to be flexible. The lines depicted on Map 7 of the *Open Land and Trails Plan* consist of 5-mile wide corridors to allow for major variations in route. The goal is to make connections in order to create a county wide trail system. When necessary, connections can be made outside the 5-mile corridor.

SFC CLERK RECORDED - 03/02/2006

Section II: Trails Projects Definition, Criteria and Specifications

1) Defining a Trails Projects

Trails Projects differ from typical open space purchases. Trails Projects are acquisitions of trail segments to make connections between two areas and serve to form the county-wide primary trail system. Trailheads, picnic/view areas and campgrounds that support use of the trail segments are also considered Trails Projects.

An open space project may include trails, campgrounds, etc, but that does not necessarily make the project a "Trails Project." In order to qualify as a "Trails Project" the project must further the goal of creating a county-wide trail network and should consist of a specific length of trail, with areas to support the trail, as appropriate. However, Trails Projects funds may be used on a prorated basis, to pay for trails acquired as part of an open space purchase.

"Trails Projects" should strive to create the most trail length possible for every dollar spent. Whenever possible trail segments should be acquired via a donation, but segments may be proposed as an easement/rights-of-way dedication or fee simple purchase.

The criteria described in this section is used to evaluate whether a project is appropriate for funding from the dedicated Trails Projects funds.

2) Criteria to be considered when evaluating a Trail Project:

- a) Does the project include a trail segment that contributes to the goal of creating a larger linked system?
- b) Does the project connect destinations, i.e. cities, towns, County Open Space properties, public lands, etc.?
- c) If the project creates a self-contained loop system with potential to become a "destination" does at least one segment in the loop contribute to a primary trail system corridor connection?
- d) Does the project attempt to incorporate existing trails that are commonly used and create official trail designations?
- e) Is the project located on terrain that is safe and accessible for general public use? In general and when practicable, trails should be designed with a maximum grade of eight percent. Urban trail segments should be designed to meet standards of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).
- f) Can the project be located in a manner that follows topography such as ridges, arroyos, rivers, or other geographic features?
- g) Does the project take into account natural vistas, neighborhood impacts, proximity to parks and access to road networks?

SFC CLERK RECORDED
03/02/2006

- h) Can the project avoid cultural sites and comply with State Historic Preservation Office review and requirements for trail layout?
- i) Can the project avoid disturbance to environmentally sensitive areas?
- j) If the project is located along roads is this justified because no other easement/alignment is possible?
- l) Can the project be designed in a sustainable manner with an emphasis on low construction and maintenance costs as well as long-term function of the trail facility?
- m) Does the Project support through connections for bicycle, equestrian and pedestrian uses?
- n) Are the Project dimensions appropriate for use as trails?

When feasible, trail easements should be at least thirty feet (30') wide. Trail easement may be as narrow as ten feet (10') to support small segments that make larger connections and may be as wide as three hundred feet (300') to accommodate topographic conditions for short distances. The 300 foot maximum width can be exceeded if:

- i) the land is part of a donation or dedication; or
- ii) the area is in an arroyo or other areas that form floodplains and/or riparian corridors. (If the area over the 300 foot maximum width is part of a fee acquisition, it should be valued as arroyo/floodplain versus the value of adjacent developable land or is otherwise substantially discounted).
- o) Does the project supply a trail segment that is long enough to justify use of Trails Projects funds?

A trail segment should be at least five (5) miles long, except when:

- i) It provides a connection from a public right-of-way to an existing public land holding;
- ii) It links or extends other segments;
- iii) It is in an urban area and provides a functional urban segment;
- iv) It links two destination points;
- v) It provides an acceptable alternative to the primary trail; or
- vi) It is part of an existing trail project.
- p) Does the project minimize acquisition costs by connecting through public lands where appropriate and with approval from relevant public agencies/entities?

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- q) Does the project satisfy the criteria for open space acquisitions as outlined in the *Open Land and Trails Plan*?

3) Criteria to be considered when evaluating a Trail Support Area:

The primary trail system needs trailheads, campgrounds, and picnic areas to facilitate and enhance public use. Trailhead access points should be no more than 5 miles apart in rural areas and 2 miles apart in urban areas. Typically trail support area acquisitions are relatively small and can also be used to enhance secondary systems.

Support area definitions:

- i) **Parking/trailheads:** This includes areas to park vehicles to access trails. These areas must have public access and should support parking of multiple horse trailers where appropriate and when feasible.
- ii) **Picnic/view areas:** This includes areas to stop and rest, picnic, etc but are not for overnight camping.
- iii) **Campgrounds:** This includes areas for backcountry primitive campgrounds or developed camping areas with parking.

Trails Projects funds may be used to acquire trail support areas. However use of the dedicated funds can only be justified when the ratio of supporting open spaces areas to trail are limited as follows:

- a) The acreage purchased for trails projects support areas typically should not exceed:
 - i) 7.25 acres per mile of trail along primary trail corridors
 - ii) 5.25 acres per mile of trail along secondary trail loop systems

Note: These calculations assume a 30' wide trail easement. A 30' wide trail includes approximately 3.6 acres of land per mile of trail. The above ratios for support areas are 2:1 for primary trail segments and 3:2 for loop trail systems.

- b) In certain cases a primary trail alignment may cross part of a proposed Open Space property purchase. In such cases it may be appropriate to use Trails Projects funds for the portion of the acquisition represented by the trail segment and associated support areas. However, the portion of Trail Project funding that is used should not exceed the above guidelines and shall be calculated based on projected trail length, width, and associated support areas.