

La Bajada Ranch Summary of Development Ideas Received – November 2014

Compiled by the La Bajada Ranch Steering Committee

Public ideas for the development and use of Santa Fe County's La Bajada Ranch property have been expressed in formal surveys (posted on the LBRSC web page), and during the meetings of the La Bajada Ranch Steering Committee (LBRSC) since their inception. The October 23, 2014 meeting of the LBRSC provided another opportunity to solicit ideas (please see the posted minutes from all of the meetings for other ideas that have been expressed at different times).

This summary is meant to make some of the ideas expressed during LBRSC meetings more accessible, but it does not constitute an endorsement of any of the ideas nor is this listing a replacement for review of the other public surveys. There is no expectation that any one idea is paramount – the property has been mixed use for its entire history, and biological, topographic, cultural resource, and other conservation concerns guarantee that portions of the property will remain either undisturbed or enhanced as open space, regardless of eventual uses for the property as a whole. The property has already been approved for some residential use, but that use is subject to reassessment. Also, although individual citizens have expressed ideas and concerns, there is no proprietary linkage between a person and an idea. Even in the case where an individual has requested that their identity be posted in case there is any follow up interest, the LBRSC takes no position on whether that person's expression is better articulated than other expressions of the same idea. Finally, as one of several chairs of the LBRSC meetings over the past year-plus, I have taken the prerogative to break some ideas up into multiple ideas that can be viewed independently, I have rephrased some ideas in ways that may not be perfect translations of the citizen expressions (please review meeting minutes to get a sense of original intent), and I have melded some ideas that have been expressed informally. Please, if you have other suggestions, would like to express an idea more eloquently, or would like to clear up a misrepresentation, please use the comment facility of the LBRSC web page.

--Eric Blinman, LBRSC Chair, 11/12/2014

Ideas that were expressed at the October 23, 2014 meeting include:

- 1) The New Mexico Land Conservancy is one of several possible sources of expert advice for any land use proposal that might make use of conservation easements as part of a development plan.
- 2) Development opportunities should consider cooperative development with adjacent landowners. The new owner of the adjacent Santa Fe Canyon Ranch, represented by Kyle Harwood (kyle@egolflaw.com), is interested in the potential of cooperative development proposals, including possibilities for community and commercial farm alternatives.
- 3) Portions of the property are well suited to development of a sculpture garden or park. (Ryan Toups proposed this use, and he would like to hear from like-minded individuals: findingrien@yahoo.com. Instead of a static art exhibition, he sees a dynamic exhibition venue that brings together many elements of the northern New Mexico art community and public.)
- 4) Development of the property as a historic ranch was suggested, with educational and tourist visitation potential. Although no clearly defined historic linkage exists on the property, the landscape and regional

history provides the potential for something that would be complementary to the nearby El Rancho de las Golondrinas living history museum.

5) Complementary public use could also be articulated with the Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve.

6) Diane Strauss, representing the Coalition for La Bajada Mesa, articulated a vision for the property as part of a larger concept of open space, conservation, walking trails, and parks. This vision would include a recreation and education center, it would be compatible with other uses such as the sculpture park use (number 3, above), and commercial support services (such as a market or café) could be located on adjacent private property.

7) William Clift endorsed the Coalition's proposal, but he specifically raised the issue of viewing the La Bajada Ranch property not just as a central place but as a place to be viewed and appreciated from points outside of the property. He requested that any development consider impacts to the viewsheds from the surrounding landscape, and he expressed a willingness to take interested parties to those external landscape points so that they could understand the importance of the view of the La Bajada Ranch rather than simply the view from La Bajada Ranch.

8) Paul White (a member of the LBRSC) reaffirmed his goal that innovative water recycling, up to the point of zero new water use, be part of any development plan.