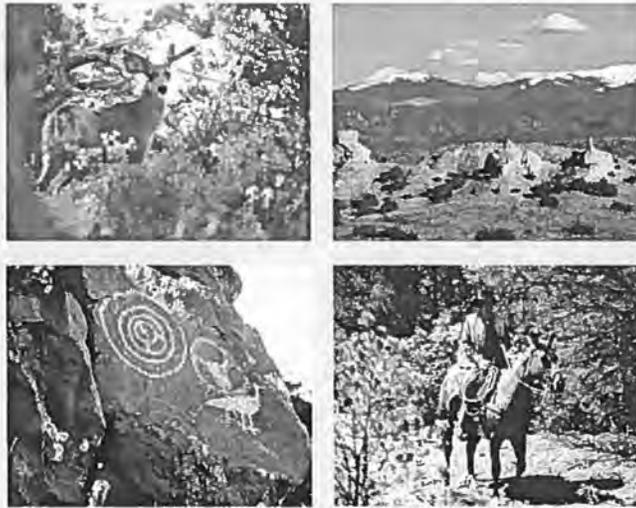


**SANTA FE COUNTY**

**OPEN LAND  
AND TRAILS PLAN**

**FOR THE WILDLIFE, MOUNTAINS, TRAILS  
AND HISTORIC PLACES PROGRAM**



*Photos: Judy McGowan, Bret Ellis*

**2000**

*Adopted May 22, 2000*

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---

For copies of this Plan please contact the Santa Fe  
County Land Use Department

**Santa Fe County**  
***Draft Open Land and Trails Plan***  
**Proposed Additions to 5/15/00 Maps**  
*(5/17/00)*

Update Edgewood incorporated area boundary on all maps.

**Map 2** – Add existing County recreation facilities. Add Rio en Medio, Pops and Madrid.

**Maps 3 and 4** – Add the Galisteo Basin archaeological sites designated in the Bingamin Bill.

**Map 5** – Add Areas of Critical Environmental Concern near La Puebla designated by BLM.

**Map 8** – Add Community College District to Planning Areas  
Add archaeological and ACEC sites from maps 4 and 5.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	v
Vision Statement .....	1
<b>Chapter 1 - Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Issues and Background.....	3
Landscape Characteristics of Santa Fe County.....	3
Population of Santa Fe County.....	4
Open Lands Planning in Santa Fe County .....	4
The Value of Open Land and Trails .....	4
Previous Open Lands and Trails Planning Efforts .....	4
Santa Fe County General Plan Policies.....	5
Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program .....	6
On-Going Studies and Conservation Efforts .....	6
Community-based Planning Process .....	7
County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) .....	7
Community Partners.....	8
Public Outreach.....	9
Purpose of the Plan.....	9
Element of the Growth Management Plan.....	9
Identify Resources and Establish Priorities.....	10
Entering a New Realm of Open Land and Trails .....	10
<b>Chapter 2 - Existing Conditions and Inventory of Parks, Trails and Open Lands.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Inventory of Open Land Resources .....	11
Existing County Parks, Trails and Open Lands .....	11
Trails Inventory.....	12
Other Public Lands.....	15
Resource Inventory.....	17
Summary.....	22
<b>Chapter 3 - Master Plan Recommendations.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Master Plan General Goals .....	23
Use of Open Lands: Passive and Active Recreation Uses .....	24
Proposed Parks and Trails .....	25
Parks and Recreation Needs.....	25
Proposed Primary Trails.....	27
Significant Resources for Conservation.....	29
Significant Cultural-Historical Areas .....	29
Significant Natural Areas .....	30
Master Plan Map .....	31
Summary.....	33
<b>Chapter 4 - Plan Implementation Strategies .....</b>	<b>35</b>
Conservation Methods.....	35

Voluntary Methods .....	35
Regulatory Methods.....	38
Project Selection Process .....	39
Process of Evaluating and Prioritizing Projects .....	39
Citizen Committee Evaluation Process .....	40
The Criteria .....	40
Board Authorization to Proceed with Negotiations and Purchase of Property .....	41
Use Restrictions .....	41
Sale of Property .....	41
<b>Chapter 5 - Administration and Financing of Program .....</b>	<b>43</b>
County Administration.....	43
Current Staff .....	43
Future Staff Needs.....	43
Establish a Division.....	45
Financing .....	45
Funding for Property Acquisition .....	45
Stewardship Funding.....	46
Leverage Funds Through Partnerships and Donations .....	47
<b>Chapter 6 – Land Management Strategies .....</b>	<b>49</b>
Resource / Ecosystem Management Planning Philosophy .....	49
Land Classification.....	49
Management Plan Process .....	52
Properties in Need of Plans.....	53
Property Improvements .....	53
Fencing Properties .....	54
Signs .....	54
Restoration Projects.....	54
Trail Building and Trailheads .....	55
Stewardship .....	55
Use Permits.....	55
Leave-No-Trace Principles.....	56
Rules and Enforcement .....	56
Partnerships .....	57
Water Rights .....	57
Property Leases .....	57
Volunteer Programs.....	57
Education and Public Outreach.....	58
<b>Chapter 7 - Plan Update Process .....</b>	<b>59</b>
Schedule for Plan Updates.....	59
Data Needs.....	59
General .....	59
Parks, Recreation and Trails.....	59
Cultural-Historical Areas .....	59
Natural Areas.....	60

Accountability .....	60
Future of COLTPAC.....	60
<b>Glossary .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>67</b>

**List of Tables**

Table 1: Parks and Recreation Types .....	12
Table 2: Inventory of County Parks, Trails, Recreation Facilities and Conservation Areas ....	13
Table 3: Park Needs .....	26
Table 4: Proposed Budget and Staffing for County Open Lands and Trails Program.....	44
Table 5: Management of Public Access on County Open Lands .....	51

**List of Maps**

*In Chapter 2:*

- Map 1: Santa Fe County Land Status
- Map 2: Existing Public Parks and Trails
- Map 3: Cultural-Historical Areas
- Map 4: Cultural-Historical Areas Composite
- Map 5: Natural Areas

*In Chapter 3:*

- Map 6: Parks: Existing and 20 Year Goals
- Map 7: Proposed Trail Corridors
- Map 8: Master Plan



*Photo 1: Jacona Land Grant (A. Nelson)*



# SANTA FE COUNTY



## OPEN LAND & TRAILS PLAN FOR THE WILDLIFE, MOUNTAINS, TRAILS AND HISTORIC PLACES PROGRAM

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### INTRODUCTION



Chapter 1 of the Plan describes the diverse landscape and population of Santa Fe County and factors of growth that have created the need for this *Open Land and Trails Plan*. Such planning has been discussed for a number of years, and has really advanced within the last several years with the assistance of the County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC). In 1998, County voters passed a \$12 million general obligation bond enabling the County for the first time to acquire large tracts of land for conservation and recreation.

The County is committed to a citizen-based planning process and will continue to work with COLTPAC and other partners and citizens to implement this Plan, develop effective stewardship programs and continue to identify resources in need of protection.

The purpose of this Plan is to establish long-term strategies for open land and trails conservation in the County, and to guide the County in a program to evaluate, acquire, develop and manage parks, open lands and trails. It does not recommend regulatory measures for open space, other than enforcing existing Land Development Code requirements.

#### EXISTING CONDITIONS AND INVENTORY



Chapter 2 contains an inventory of existing parks and trails in the County. Currently, the County operates few parks or trail facilities. Many are in need of upgrades. Table 2 lists the existing community and neighborhood parks, natural area parks and other County facilities and trails as well as their condition. These are illustrated on Map 2. Santa Fe County also encompasses other public lands available for recreation and other uses, some that are governed by an

agency mission of protecting resources. A Trails Committee also carried out an extensive inventory of trails throughout the County.

COLTPAC undertook an extensive mapping exercise and resource inventory of cultural-historical areas and natural areas. Of concern to County residents are the following cultural-historical areas:

- ❑ Archaeological and historical sites
- ❑ Sacred places
- ❑ Cultural-historical lifeways (working landscapes)
- ❑ Cultural places
- ❑ Traditional and traditional historical communities

Historic community buffer areas around communities are also important. Maps 3 and 4 illustrate cultural-historical resources.

A public opinion survey indicates that residents are particularly concerned about wildlife and natural areas protection, including the following resources:

- ❑ Wetlands
- ❑ Waterways
- ❑ Grasslands
- ❑ Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Map 5 illustrates natural area resources based on available resource data.

## MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 3 builds on the inventory in the previous chapter and identifies goals for protection and identifies significant resource areas for protection. It describes *what* the County would like to accomplish through this program as described by the following **general goals**:



1. Protect tracts of open land and trails using a combination of methods, including voluntary conservation easements, acquisition and existing regulations.
2. Protect regionally significant natural and cultural-historical resources in need of protection.
3. Emphasize conservation of large tracts of land that may be critical for wildlife habitat.
4. Provide buffers for communities.
5. Provide community and countywide benefits.
6. Balance open space goals with needs for housing in urban areas; therefore, emphasize open space protection in undeveloped areas.
7. Ensure countywide equity and a diverse mix of projects.
8. Build and enhance a countywide network of open land and trails.
9. Implement a land stewardship program that is on-going to ensure adequate maintenance of properties and protection of resources.
10. Collaborate with municipalities in the County to provide active recreation parks.
11. Develop partnerships with non-profits, government agencies, land trusts, community organizations for management and educational programs.
12. Leverage local funding sources with grants and donations to create good financial value for the County.
13. Develop educational /interpretive programs for open lands.

14. Minimize conflicts of open lands and trails users, but allow for multiple-purpose functionality.

Protecting resources is the most important function of the program, which means that public access may need to be limited on some lands. The program also emphasizes passive recreation uses (e.g., unimproved hiking trails) over active recreation uses (e.g., soccer and off-road vehicle use).

This chapter describes goals and criteria for parks and recreation, trails, cultural-historical areas and natural areas. It also identifies future park and recreation needs (see Table 3) and a primary countywide trail system. These are summarized in the Master Plan below.

#### *The Master Plan Features (Map 8)*



Staff used GIS to combine the mapped resource information to identify areas of high resource value and added the proposed trails and parks to illustrate a connected open space system in Map 8. The Master Plan illustrates long-term goals for protection and acquisition – beyond the \$12 million bond, but it is general and should be used in conjunction with the criteria.

*Areas of Critical Environmental Concern:* The Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are areas that have national significance and are extremely important for their cultural and natural resource values. As indicated on the map, three areas are important.

- La Cienega;
- Two Mile Reservoir; and
- La Puebla.

*Resource Protection Areas:* The Resource Protection Areas on Map 8 are areas where multiple resources exist. They include archeological sites, rivers, streams and wetlands, agricultural areas as well as grasslands. Clearly delineated on the map are:

- The northern valleys agricultural areas, wetlands and streams, including Santa Cruz and Pojoaque Rivers;
- Tesuque River;
- Western county grasslands and cultural-historic districts between La Cienega and Los Cerrillos;
- La Cienega Creek and the lower Santa Fe River;
- Galisteo basin and river area and San Cristobal and San Marcos Creeks; and
- The Los Cerrillos/Madrid area and historic mining district.

*Traditional Community Buffers:* Another goal stated earlier is to provide community buffers and protect the traditional hinterland of communities. Buffers are delineated for the following communities:

- La Puebla;
- Cundiyo;
- Tesuque;
- La Cienega;
- Lamy;
- Galisteo;
- Los Cerrillos;
- Madrid; and
- Golden.

*Proposed Neighborhood and Community Parks:* The Plan explains that protecting resources is more important than developing active recreation parks at this time, but the County does have needs for active parks and recreation. Table 3, based on a population-based analysis of needs, indicates that by 2020 the County would ideally provide 15 new neighborhood parks and 12 new community parks. Map 6 and the Master Plan also illustrate the general locations where future parks are needed. The County should collaborate with municipalities to provide some of the park areas indicated.

*Proposed Primary Trails:* Another goal is to build and enhance a countywide network of trails and protect historic trails. Segment One, north to south from Pojoaque to Edgewood is proposed to be the first major trail link which would connect to east-west river and arroyo corridor trails and to a secondary system, established through local community efforts. The Proposed Trail Corridors will be based on landowner willingness to negotiate. Maps 7 and 8 illustrate the trail corridor.

## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Chapter 4 describes *how* the County will accomplish the goals outlined in Chapter 3. The County will use a variety of voluntary methods, including the following: purchase of fee interest in land, purchase with leasebacks, conservation easements, donations and transfer of development rights. The chapter describes the methods in detail including the necessary steps. The Plan does not propose new regulatory methods for land protection, however the existing Land Development Code regulations should be reinforced with special attention to existing trails requirements.



An application process is in place to consider projects for the County Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program (see Appendix D). COLTPAC reviews projects in a public process using project selection criteria. Criteria are tiered (see Appendix E), including Threshold Criteria, General Criteria and Specific Criteria, so that a project must pass the threshold criteria to be further considered. The Committee then makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners, which has final authority. New rounds of projects are reviewed on an annual basis. The County has completed Phase I of project review and Phase II is in 2000.

## ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCING

This chapter anticipates a need of 2 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff for every 1,000 acres of land acquired and a budget of \$100,000 per 1,000 acres. By the year 2001 the County will likely acquire 2,000 acres of land. At that time it will require four FTE staff responsible for the duties of resource planning, maintenance, patrol and enforcement, garbage removal, volunteer coordination and real estate transactions. Currently one planner works full time with the

program and two other staff work part time (see Table 4). It may be efficient to consider establishing a division to manage the program.

Funds for acquisition are available from the \$12 million general obligation bond. The County must establish operating funds. Whenever possible the County will apply for grants and work with partners to leverage funds.

## MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES



### *Resource / Ecosystem Management Philosophy*

A philosophy of land conservation is essential to the County's stewardship of the land. This Plan recommends developing a development and management plan for each parcel of land to ensure protection of resources. A key to mitigating conflicts between recreation use and resource protection is to identify the primary purpose for which a parcel of land is acquired, or classify it with one of the following terms:

- Preserves
- Conservation Areas
- Regional Park Lands
- Agricultural Lands
- Trail Corridors, Trailheads and Visitor Areas
- Buffer Areas

Each parcel acquired will require developing a management plan involving the local community, the County and any other partners. Access to the property may need to be limited until resources are inventoried, short-term improvements are complete and the community develops a vision. Only appropriate areas should be open to the public for use.

The County has limited funds for development of properties and development will emphasize conservation and passive recreation use. The County may need to fence properties, do river or grassland restoration projects, and build trails and trailheads. At the very least, the County will provide signs identifying the property.

To promote good stewardship, the County is in the process of investigating the use of permits, developing a rules ordinance, working to develop greater partnerships and volunteer programs and promote education and outreach.

## PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

It is proposed that the Plan be updated **every two years**, or as necessary. This chapter lists the various data needs that should be addressed in a 2002 update of the plan. COLPTAC will be a permanent citizen's committee that will work with the County staff to oversee the program and work on plan updates.



## VISION STATEMENT

The Santa Fe County Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program will create a network of cultural, historical, recreational and natural open spaces and trails.

A diverse mix of projects, distributed equitably throughout the County, will:

- **serve as focal points** to enhance neighborhood, community and cultural identity;
- **preserve and honor** the natural, historical, and cultural diversity; and
- **provide opportunities** for leisure and human renewal.

An integrated plan of voluntary participation which emphasizes: integration with existing development regulations and requirements; joint-cooperative efforts between private, non-profits and governments; multiple-purpose functionality; cost effectiveness; stewardship and affordable maintenance, will create the greatest impact for achievable conservation of our resources to benefit current and future populations.

The County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) developed this Vision Statement for a long-term program to carry Santa Fe County well into the twenty-first century, beginning with \$12 million in funds set aside through the General Obligation Bond of November 3, 1998. The program will be guided and implemented through the collaborative efforts of the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners (Board), County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) and the Santa Fe County Planning Division.



*Photo 2: Galisteo River and Sangre de Cristo Mountains Beyond (L. Ellis)*



# CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

## ISSUES AND BACKGROUND

Throughout the General Plan update process during the past several years, communities expressed the need to protect open space in Santa Fe County. This *Plan* has been the result of a lot of public interest in open land planning in Santa Fe County and the efforts of the County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) throughout 1999.

### *Landscape Characteristics of Santa Fe County*

Santa Fe County is located in northern New Mexico along the convergence of the Rio Grande River valley and the southern Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The County encompasses 1911 square miles of diverse terrain. Elevation in the County ranges from lowland riparian areas and the Caja del Rio (5,500 feet) to the Alpine Tundra (over 12,600 feet) in Santa Fe National Forest. The elevation of Santa Fe Baldy Peak is 12,622 feet. The unique variety of terrain and elevation creates different ecosystems and life zones which support various animal and plant species. Dry, sunny days and cold dark nights characterize the climate. The arid climate makes water a scarce and important resource.

The cultural and historical heritage of the County is world renowned for the diversity and history. Cultural and historical artifacts are found in every part of the County. Many working farms and ranches remain as well as relics of past activities on the landscape. People have been interacting with the landscape for thousands of years.



*Photos 3, 4 & 5: Some Open Landscapes of Santa Fe County (L. Ellis)*

## *Population of Santa Fe County*

The population of Santa Fe County has become more urban in the past decade. In 1999, the population of Santa Fe County was approximately 125,000 people, 66,000 of which reside in the City of Santa Fe. Generally, 11 percent of the population resided in the north part of the County, 81 resided in the central area and 7 percent resided in the south. The overall population is projected to grow to 156,000 by the year 2020 (Prior & Associates). Information provided by the Year 2000 Census will be used to update the data and projections.

Santa Fe County's population is extremely diverse. Many Hispanic families have resided in the area for generations. Many newcomers, primarily Anglo, have also moved to the area in the past few decades. Seven pueblos are located in the northern and central part of the County, which enrich the diversity of the County. Millions of visitors pass through the region each year to enjoy the history, art and culture as well as scenic beauty of the place.

Most of the new development in the County is occurring near the urban areas around the City of Santa Fe, the City of Española and in the South by the Town of Edgewood. Residents claim that they enjoy the rural character and the feeling of living in the country that the typical large lot development provides. Many people also express concern over sprawling suburban development, the changing landscape and allocation of scarce resources.

## OPEN LANDS PLANNING IN SANTA FE COUNTY

### *The Value of Open Land and Trails*

One of New Mexico and Santa Fe County's great assets is the outdoor natural resources and recreation opportunities. Economic value is created by open lands, parks and scenic quality. Open land and trails also attract businesses and tourism and help strengthen communities by providing opportunities for residents to recreate and interact with the landscape and nature.

### *Previous Open Lands and Trails Planning Efforts*

Within the remarkable setting of the County, population growth and continuing urbanization create a need to protect some of the County's distinctive landscapes and a create need for additional recreation opportunities.

Traditionally the County has appeared to have an abundance of open space and hasn't had a need for an open land conservation program because of the low population. The landscape seemed vast and unpopulated. However, Santa Fe County residents and staff have been planning and discussing open lands conservation and trails in recent years because of new growth and development and recreational burdens placed on city and town resources. With the increase in population, problems and opportunities are surfacing for conserving land. Residents of growing urban areas would like to have more access to recreation and trails, while at the same time, people are losing access to public land and historic trails systems. Agriculture and ranch land is competing with residential land uses to support the growing population and operating in

volatile global economic markets. Natural areas and wildlife corridors are being squeezed by new development. Cultural and historical sites are also being converted to new uses and are difficult to preserve in a changing landscape.

The County has had few options to conserve land or provide parks, until recently. Regulatory methods are appropriate for some protection, but many property owners feel that they should not bear the financial burden for conserving land. Voluntary methods, likewise, cannot achieve all the goals of protection. However, with some financial means to protect land, the County can begin to acquire those lands that are most valuable to residents and keep them open to future generations.

In a 1993 "Public Opinion Poll on Growth and Development Issues," residents surveyed strongly or somewhat supported the following County initiatives:

- ☛ acquire and preserve scenic lands (89%);
- ☛ keep existing trails open (88%); and
- ☛ develop County parks (86%).

### ***Santa Fe County General Plan Policies***

The 1980 *General Plan* did not much address the matter of open space planning, except to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners appoint an Open Space Advisory Council to develop methods for the protection of the County's natural features.

The *General Plan Policies* document, adopted in 1997 and collapsed into the 1999 *Growth Management Plan*, addresses open space planning in several ways. First, it emphasizes a community planning process to be done by residents and property owners. It also recommends that the County create an Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee, or "a public committee of residents and property owners from the north, south and central parts of the County... for the purpose of creating a countywide open space plan..." It states the Committee should identify, prioritize, consider options, and establish trail and recreation needs.

The *Policies* document also states that this Committee will work with the Traditional Communities in their identification of sensitive and cultural areas, trails and open land. The Committee's recommendations will then be put forth to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) in the form of a Plan. This Plan, once adopted, will become an element of the current *Santa Fe County Growth Management Plan*.

The *Policies* state that the purposes for this Plan and strategies to protect open space are the following:

- a) identify the areas of countywide interest...;
- b) prioritize the open spaces and trails which should be protected...;
- c) consider options and recommend strategies [for protection]...;
- d) establish a trails plan to link open areas and public lands to the settled areas, and prioritize trails to be managed for hiking, equestrian and bicycle use and those to be reserved for neighborhood use; and
- e) assess park and recreation needs for different regions in the County.

### ***Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program***

In 1998, the County recognized that without a source of funding for land acquisitions, the options for conservation were limited to regulatory means. Strong opposition to regulatory methods of conserving open space arose previously during the General Plan hearings, encouraging the Board and staff to look for other alternatives.

Commissioner Javier Gonzales requested that The Trust for Public Land survey County voters to assess their willingness to pay for land conservation—to acquire open lands. The results of their July, 1998 survey indicated that voters were willing to pay. The telephone survey revealed that:

- 92 percent agree that “we need to protect Santa Fe’s river parkways, mountain vistas, and natural areas.”
- 73 percent are “more likely to support increased taxes for open space and natural land protection” (for mountains and foothills, river parkways, arroyos, and historical and cultural sacred sites) because they feel (these landscapes) “are part of our heritage, and we need to preserve them as our legacy to our children and our grandchildren.”
- 57 percent would be willing to pay up to ten dollars per year on a \$100,000 house. (Ridder/Bradden, 1998).

In August 1998 the Board passed a resolution placing a General Obligation Bond on the November, 1998 ballot. In November, 74 percent of Santa Fe County voters approved the General Obligation Bond for \$12 million to acquire necessary real estate for open space, trails, and related areas ... to establish the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program in order to preserve historic and natural areas. The ballot language also called for an independent citizen oversight committee and an annual audit of the program (see Appendix A). Approval of the bond initiated the program and much of the planning effort that followed.

### ***On-Going Studies and Conservation Efforts***

The County has completed several studies prior to this Plan, and the County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) and the staff referenced that earlier work to develop these recommendations. *The Santa Fe County Open Space Inventory Report* (1994), *The Visual Resources Inventory and Analysis* (1995), *A Treasured Resource: Open Places Plan Recommendations* (1997), and the *Santa Fe County Agriculture and Ranching Study* (1998) have been studied (see References section).

In addition, trail planning efforts have been on going in Santa Fe County for years. In 1996 a combined City of Santa Fe and Extraterritorial Zoning Authority (EZA) approved a County Trails Resolution calling for a countywide trails system. A citizen Trails Committee did a great deal of work to categorize and inventory trails. In addition, the existing Subdivision Regulations for the Extraterritorial Area, the County Land Development Code and the Santa Fe Urban and Extraterritorial Future Roads Plan adopted in 1999 (developed by the Arterial Roads Task Force) support trails.

The City of Santa Fe has some valuable plans and studies regarding open space, including the *City of Santa Fe General Plan* (1999), *An Ecological Assessment of Open Space in Santa Fe and its Extraterritorial Zone* (1998) and the *Santa Fe River Corridor Master Plan* (1995).

Numerous private conservation programs also exist throughout Santa Fe County. This Plan attempts to integrate and recognize the work of other organizations where possible, but not to duplicate it. A successful conservation program will depend on many partnerships with other agencies and private organizations and successful actions of all the organizations.

## COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING PROCESS

Santa Fe County promotes a community-based planning process for all planning, including open lands and trails. Consequently, a number of citizens, community organizations, conservation organizations and agencies worked together to develop the recommendations for this Plan. The Board began the process by establishing the County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC).



*Photo 6: San Pedro Land Grant (L. Ellis)*

### ***County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC)***

The Board created COLTPAC in September 1998, as a result of the bond language and the *General Plan Policies*. The County formed the 30-member citizen committee explicitly to represent the different regions as well as divergent points of view. Members represented conservation organizations, property owners, youth, families, retired persons, farmers and ranchers and community organizations. The Committee served to advise staff and the Board on this long-term *Open Land and Trails Plan* and to recommend implementation strategies. It also developed the project acquisition evaluation criteria (see Appendix E).

COLTPAC held facilitated monthly meetings from January through September 1999. These meetings were open for the public to observe and comment. In addition, two large public meetings took place in June and August of 1999, whereby the general public had more

opportunity to circulate and review materials and discuss the draft Plan and criteria with COLTPAC. Staff regularly updated the Board on the progress during 1999.

The Committee divided into working groups to focus on specific issues, including Cultural and Historic Areas, Natural Areas, Trails and Recreation, Alternatives to Acquisition, and Project Selection Criteria. Members of the public generally supported, and were sometimes quite enthusiastic about the recommendations of COLTPAC at the public meetings. Individuals and groups representing diverse areas of the County have sent support letters. Discussions with local community organizations show a willingness to handle maintenance and on-going stewardship of projects.

The volunteers of COLTPAC are largely responsible for the hard work and recommendations that went into creating this Plan.



*Photos 7, 8 & 9: COLTPAC Members at a 1999 meeting (J. McGowan)*

### *Community Partners*

Many non-profit organizations and other public agencies also participated in this planning effort, many of which are listed in the Acknowledgments section. The planning process would not have run smoothly without the participation of other organizations, particularly ECO Planning, Inc., the City of Santa Fe, Trust for Public Land and the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and

Conservation Assistance Program. These organizations worked with County staff to aid in facilitation of meetings and dissemination of information. Santa Fe County anticipates continuing to work with a number of partners to implement this Plan and manage an open lands program. Throughout this planning process, communities have expressed concern that the County should coordinate with local communities and hear their concerns about open lands and trails. County planning staff works with communities in their community planning efforts, and many concerns arise related to open lands and conservation. The County will also attempt to include rural points of view by encouraging more local community involvement.

### *Public Outreach*

As stated above, the County held a number of public meetings throughout the County in 1999. Notices of all meetings were posted in all County newspapers. Staff also contacted local radio stations, participated in radio talk shows, held workshops, did direct mailings and distributed fliers and information. In the future, the County would like to see draft plan information available on the web page so that members of the public may comment in that fashion. The County will also work towards establishing better contact and dialogue with Pueblos regarding conservation.



*Photo 10: Villages of La Cienega and Cieneguilla Residents with COLTPAC Members at La Cienega Natural Area (L. Ellis)*

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

### *Element of the Growth Management Plan*

This *Open Land and Trails Plan* will become an element of the *1999 Santa Fe County Growth Management Plan*. Recommendations of this Plan are intended to reinforce and supplement the *Growth Management Plan*. However, the conservation strategies herein are voluntary, not

regulatory, and are not intended to be implemented through the Land Development Code. This Plan addresses more programmatic and administrative aspects of the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program.

### *Identify Resources and Establish Priorities*

The *Open Land and Trails Plan* establishes long-term goals for open land and trails conservation in Santa Fe County. It describes existing conditions and resources and sets out future conservation objectives, implementation approaches and management strategies for County open lands. This Plan also provides a framework for the evaluation, acquisition, development and management of parks, open lands and trails. It serves as a guide and policy document for County staff, elected officials and the public regarding parks, open lands and trails in the County.

The community and district planning process will address regulatory measures and development patterns. Therefore, this open space planning effort does not recommend regulatory measures. However the guidelines and priorities advanced through this Plan may be a helpful reference for communities that desire to develop more strict standards for protection to decide which areas are significant for protection.

### *Entering a New Realm of Open Land and Trails*

Santa Fe County does not presently have a Parks and Open Lands Department or Division and has not previously had an open land and trails program. The County is entering a new realm with an acquisition program, and many new issues about administering parks and recreation needs and land conservation are surfacing.

It is clear that additional data is necessary to complete this Plan. This Plan and priorities may change as new data is assembled; therefore it will need to be updated periodically. Chapter 7 describes the data needs and update process.



*Photo 11: Madrid Wilderness Area Site Visit (L. Ellis)*

## CHAPTER 2 - EXISTING CONDITIONS AND INVENTORY OF PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN LANDS

### INVENTORY OF OPEN LAND RESOURCES

An inventory of existing resource information is an important component in preparing a plan for open land and trails. Such information is an essential first step for understanding the existing character of the County and helps to identify potential regional park locations and open lands resources that should be protected.

COLTPAC as well as County staff participated in the inventory of resources. They compiled an inventory of recreation resources, including the existing County parks and recreation facilities and public trails. This chapter also describes other public lands (i.e., state and federal) within the County that provide recreation opportunities or protect resources. COLTPAC also helped inventory the cultural-historical and natural areas important for conservation, which are described later in the chapter. The staff then considered and compiled the inventory information to create the Master Plan map described in the next chapter.



#### *Existing County Parks, Trails and Open Lands*

Table 1, on the next page, describes types of parks, their average size and service areas, and typical uses. Santa Fe County operates few neighborhood and community parks, but contains a higher than average number of natural areas which both urban and rural residents use. Many existing County facilities are in need of maintenance and renovations to address safety concerns. Table 2 lists the existing parks, open lands and other recreation facilities in unincorporated areas of the County (see also Map 2: Existing Public Parks and Trails). The table and maps do not list parks or open space within the City of Santa Fe limits, where most of the recreation services are provided for City and County residents. Edgewood and Española do not operate parks in Santa Fe County. In addition, the County should conduct an inventory to assess locations of parks and open lands in subdivisions that have been dedicated to the County for public use.

Currently the County operates approximately 120 acres of community parks and several neighborhood parks. A number of smaller facilities are dispersed throughout the County, which were mostly funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF). Many of these facilities, such as tennis courts and multi-purpose fields, need improvements for the County to receive additional L&WCF funds. By the year 2000 the County has also purchased approximately 1200 acres of new conservation areas and regional parks with the 1998 bond proceeds, including Cerrillos Hills and lands near La Cienega. Other lands are under negotiation.

**Table 1: Parks and Recreation Types**

Recreation Type	Size (acres)	Location / Service Area	Recreation Use Types
<b>Neighborhood Park -</b> <i>Serves one neighborhood. Mostly for passive uses.</i>	7-10	1/4 to 1/2 mile distance	Mostly passive. May support amenities such as picnic areas and basketball courts.
<b>Community Park -</b> <i>Serves two or more neighborhoods, oriented toward active recreational activities.</i>	20-50	1/2 to 3 mile distance - should be easily accessible	Site should have natural character. The site determines types of uses that can occur. Both active and passive uses. Parking is necessary. May support amenities such as tennis, ballfields, recreation centers.
<b>Sports Complex -</b> <i>Active recreation only.</i>	80-150; min. of 40 acres	Accessible from major thoroughfares	100% active recreation use. Parking and Lighting. Should be a flat site.
<b>Conservation/ Regional Parks -</b> <i>Lands set aside for conservation of significant natural resources or unsuitable for development.</i>	Varies	n/a	May have limited public access depending on resources on site.
Source: James D. Mertes and James R. Hall. <i>Park Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines</i> . National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), 1996.			



*Photo 12: Edgewood Park (A. Nelson)*

### ***Trails Inventory***

Map 2 shows public trails on Forest Service and BLM lands as well as the Santa Fe Rail Trail. The City of Santa Fe also operates trails along portions of the Santa Fe River, Arroyo Chamiso and Atalaya Mountain and has long-term plans for an extensive trail system throughout the City and Extraterritorial Zone. With other partners, the County is also negotiating new easements through Rancho Viejo and across the new NM599 (Relief Route).

County staff and consultants and the citizen’s Trail Committee have also inventoried hundreds of publicly used trails that are on private lands, and have produced a map which is available in the County Land Use Department. Many of the trails indicated are historic. Because the County has no means to notify every affected landowner regarding the trail inventory and to protect the privacy of landowners, the trails inventory is not published on plan maps.

Development Review staff will consider this trail inventory for lands which are being subdivided or developed, and requirements for maintaining trails will be based on existing Code requirements. COLTPAC also recommends that the trail inventory be used to negotiate additional easements with private landowners for a “secondary” or local trail system.

**Table 2: Inventory of County Parks, Trails, Recreation Facilities and Conservation Areas**

Name/Description	Location	Acres	Facilities															
			Parking lot / spaces:	Soccer / Football field	Basketball court	Baseball / Softball field	Bleachers and dugouts	Multi-Purpose Court	Tennis court	Playground / tot lot	Sign	Lights	Picnic tables	Picnic shelter	Concession Stand	Barbeque Grills	Walking path	Handicap accessible
<b>COMMUNITY PARKS (20 acres or larger)</b>																		
Agua Fria Park	Village of Agua Fria, off County Road 62	70	Y		1	1	4	1	1	1		3	10	4	1	4		Y
Lamy Park	Village of Lamy, Ctv. Rd. 33	50	Y										6	3		2		Y
<b>Total Acreage</b>		<b>120</b>																
<b>LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS (7 - 10 acres)</b>																		
Bennie J. Chavez Playground & Recreation Area	Village of Chimayo		Y					1		1			1	1		1		Y
Edgewood Community Center - Playground and Recreation Area	Edgewood at main Community Center		Y		1			1		1								Y
Leo Gurule Park	T16N R8E off Hwy 14	4	Y		1			1	1	1	1	1	4	3		3		Y
<b>Total Acreage</b>		<b>4</b>																
<b>NATURAL AREA PARKS / REGIONAL PARKS</b>																		
Cerrillos Hills Regional Park	Cerrillos Hills	1100																
Cieneguilla / Santa Fe River	La Cienega	151																
<b>Total Acreage</b>		<b>1251</b>																
<b>OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES AND MINIPARKS</b>																		
Chimayo Headstart Chimayo Multi-purpose court	Village of Chimayo - Community Center	n/a	Y		1			1	1	1	1	1						
Sombrillo Tennis Court	Sombrillo Community Center	n/a							1		1							
Pojoaque Tennis Court	Pojoaque off St. Hwy. 602	n/a	Y							1								Y
El Rancho Multi-purpose Court	Village of El Rancho Community Center	n/a	Y					1				1	1	1				Y
La Puebla Recreation Area	Village of La Puebla	0.5																
Rio en Medio Multi-purpose court	Rio en Medio	n/a	Y		1					1	1		2	2				
Cundiyo Park	Cundiyo	n/a	Y															
Valle Lindo Park	Valle Lindo subdivision off SR 14	n/a						1	1	1	1							
County Fairgrounds	City of Santa Fe - Rodeo Road	10	Y								1	1						Y
Galisteo multi-purpose court	Village of Galisteo Community Center	n/a								1								
Madrid Ballfield	Village of Madrid	n/a																
Edgewood Senior Center Park	Edgewood Senior Center	n/a	Y								1	1	1					
<b>Total Acres</b>																		
<b>TRAILS</b>																		
Rancho Viejo Spur Trail	Community College area	1.5																n/a
Santa Fe - Lamy Rail Trail	From I-25 (south of Santa Fe) to Lamy	11.5																
<b>Total Miles</b>		<b>11.5</b>																
<b>PUEBLO LANDS - PARKS AND RECREATION</b>																		
Nambe Pueblo Recreation Area																		
Tesuque Pueblo ballfield					1		1				1	1						
Pojoaque Pueblo Recreation Area and Tribal Park		5				1					1	1	1	1				
San Ildefonso ballfield																		
<b>Total Acreage</b>																		

Y = yes  
n/a = information not available

Table 2, continued: Inventory of County Parks, Trails, Recreation Facilities and Conservation Areas

Name/Description COMMUNITY PARKS (20 acres or larger)	Condition of Equipment and Facilities	Improvements Needed	Source of Funding for Original Development
Agua Fria Park	New constr. 99	Re-surface tennis court, basketball courts, walking paths and parking lot	SAP 97 & 98 L&WCF 72 & 74 & 77
Lamy Park	New constr. 99	multi-purpose court	County Manager & General Services Dept. 99
<b>LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS (7 - 10 acres)</b>			
Bennie J. Chavez Playground & Recreation Area	Poor - needs updates	Fencing and landscaping	County general fund
Edgewood Community Center - Playground and Recreation Area	Poor - needs updates	Tables, shelters, re-surface tennis court	County general fund
Leo Gurule Park	Poor - needs updates	Lighting, security, re-surface tennis court	County general fund
<b>NATURAL AREA PARKS / REGIONAL PARKS</b>			
Cerrillos Hills Regional Park	Management plan in process		
Cieneguilla / Santa Fe River	Management plan in process		
<b>OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES AND MINIPARKS</b>			
Chimayo Headstart Chimayo Multi-purpose court		Tables, shelters	L&WCF 75 L&WCF 79
Sombrillo Tennis Court			L&WCF 77
Pojoaque Tennis Court		Re-surface courts	L&WCF 76 L&WCF 83
El Rancho Multi-purpose Court		Re-surface courts	L&WCF 76 & GSD
La Puebla Recreation Area	Planning and Design (complete Summer 2000)		SAP 98 - \$50,000
Rio en Medio Multi-purpose court		n/a	L&WCF 75L&WCF 78 & GSD
Cundiyo Park			
Valle Lindo Park			
County Fairgrounds	Other facilities include arena, stalls, barn, exhibition building, bleachers, concession stand		County general fund
Galisteo multi-purpose court	Poor	Needs replacement	L&WCF 75
Madrid Ballfield	Poor	Stage and roof replacement	
Edgewood Senior Center Park			County general fund - GSD
<b>TRAILS</b>			
Rancho Viejo Spur Trail	under negotiation		TEA 21 99
Santa Fe - Lamy Rail Trail	n/a - no construction	Needs erosion control and trailhead improvements	TEA21 97
<b>PUEBLO LANDS - PARKS AND RECREATION</b>			
Nambe Pueblo Recreation Area			
Tesuque Pueblo ballfield			L&WCF 77 L&WCF 79
Pojoaque Pueblo Recreation Area and Tribal Park			L&WCF 78
San Ildefonso ballfield			L&WCF 75 & L&WCF 81

## *Other Public Lands*

### *Federal*

Federal land comprises approximately 303,446 acres (or approximately 25 percent) of Santa Fe County. Most of the federal land in the County is in the north. No Forest Service land exists south of the Galisteo Basin, and only a few small isolated Bureau of Land Management parcels are located there, many of which are on the disposal list (see Map 1: Santa Fe County Land Status). County residents are fortunate to enjoy recreation and other opportunities afforded by these lands. Many resources are also protected within these lands.

### *United States Forest Service (Forest Service)*

The United States Forest Service is the largest federal land owner in Santa Fe County with 239,576 acres of land, most of which is contained in the Santa Fe National Forest. The Forest Service mission is “to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people.” Thus, the Forest Service attempts to manage resources under the best combination of uses to benefit the public while ensuring the productivity of the land and protecting the quality of the environment. The Santa Fe National Forest offers many outdoor recreation opportunities, including camping and primitive backpacking, hiking, skiing (Santa Fe Ski Basin), fishing and hunting. The upper Santa Fe River watershed is off-limits to protect the drinking water source due to fire hazard. The Forest Service intends to develop a Management Plan for the area soon.



*Photo 13: Santa Fe Ski Area, Forest Service land (B. Ellis)*

### *Bureau of Land Management (BLM)*

In the north part of the County, the BLM operates 62,390 acres of land, including the Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area, Rio Grande River Caja del Rio area, the Area of Critical Environmental Concern near La Cienega and lands near La Puebla. BLM currently also lists 7,228 acres of exchange lands. The BLM mission is “to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.” This agency has particular expertise in the areas of recreation, wildlife habitat, cultural resource management, minerals and grazing. Many of the BLM parcels have active grazing leases.

### *National Park Service (NPS)*

The National Park Service maintains 1,480 acres of land, primarily in the northwest part of the County near Bandalier and the Glorieta Battlefield near Glorieta/Canoncito area. Bandalier National Monument is just outside Santa Fe County in Los Alamos County and Pecos is just to the east. The NPS mission is “to protect and preserve the scenery, the natural, cultural and historic objects in parks for people forever.”



### *State*

#### *New Mexico State Land Office (SLO)*

The New Mexico State Land Office owns land all around the County, primarily in the south. SLO operates 79,663 acres. The mission of the SLO is to manage the land for the purpose of generating revenue for the benefit of New Mexico’s public school system. The majority of these lands are leased and they are typically closed to members of the public who do not hold permits. The SLO mission is different from the federal lands agencies which promote either multiple use or resource protection.

#### *Hyde Memorial State Park*

Hyde Memorial is the only State Park in Santa Fe County. It is located within the Santa Fe National Forest, east of the City of Santa Fe. It offers opportunities for camping, picnicking, primitive camping, hiking and winter sports. Hyde Memorial is a fee area.

### *Municipalities*

The City of Santa Fe owns 1,039 acres of land that is designated for open space or park use. The City Parks and Recreation Department operates over 177 acres of neighborhood and community parks throughout the City, but still indicates a deficit of parkland and a need for new open lands and parks. According to the City’s 1999 General Plan, 6 new community parks (158 acres) will be needed to meet future needs as well as 22 new neighborhood parks (204 acres). This is based on a projected build-out population of 127,000 residents. The City of Santa Fe is currently updating these figures.

A new regional City Municipal Recreation Center of 1,845 acres opened in 1998. Located west of the City of Santa Fe, it is convenient for residents of the central part of the County. It offers opportunities for organized adult sports, golf and other outdoor recreation.

Presently the Town of Edgewood does not own or operate any park facilities, and the City of Española does not operate any urban parks within County boundaries.

### *Conservation Organizations - Semi-public Organizations*

Santa Fe County does not have an inventory of all the private conservation easements and conserved lands that exist. Thousands of acres of privately conserved land exist in the County, but there is no comprehensive record of it. Most of these privately conserved areas do not allow for public recreation access but have a mission of conserving resources. Santa Fe Conservation Trust has conserved thousands of acres. Taos Land Trust is beginning to address agricultural

land conservation in the County. Forest Trust has conserved easements, and the Nature Conservancy has conserved land in the Ortiz Mountain area. In addition, large homeowner's associations maintain private recreation land that is open for residents' use.

#### *Semi-Public School District Facilities*

The school districts in Santa Fe County, including Santa Fe, Pojoaque, and Moriarty are other possible partners for providing recreation. Currently the County and other organizations have some informal agreements with school districts to share facilities. Pojoaque Valley, for example, does cooperative projects with the State Natural Resources Department. It would be useful to do an inventory of such facilities and agreements that exist.

#### *Pueblo Lands*

Some facilities exist on Pueblo lands, as Table 2 indicates. Many of these facilities were funded through Land and Water Conservation Funds and offer additional recreational opportunities.

#### ***Resource Inventory***

COLTPAC also assisted the County with developing an inventory of cultural-historical sites and natural areas. The areas identified are not necessarily on public lands, which is why the maps are helpful in identifying "potential" conservation areas. Each of these areas is discussed below and presented in Maps 3 through 5.



*Photo 14: COLTPAC Presentation (H. Blackwell)*

#### *Cultural-Historical Resources*

Santa Fe County has a diverse human history linked to its natural features and landscape. Cultural landscapes result from the interaction of people (culture) and nature on the land over time. Throughout New Mexico's history, how people live their lives, earn a living, and make decisions about land, water and community help define the many landscape layers that transform physical spaces into meaningful places. How the many different and culturally diverse communities in Santa Fe County have acted out those decisions have defined their heritage, their traditions, and themselves, and have shaped the unique flavor of the County.

An integral part of Northern New Mexico community tradition, beginning long before the coming of the Spanish, is the concept of hinterland, or surrounding community space.

Community open space is part of the traditional use of space in the County and holds important value to its residents.

#### *Cultural-Historical Inventory Method and Data Sources*

COLTPAC used a cultural landscape approach to organize, review and recommend cultural-historical resources for conservation and acquisition. The information presented on the Cultural-Historical Areas map (Map 3) was derived from existing County data sources, the Agriculture and Ranching Study, and the State Historic Preservation Division (HPD) ARMS data.



*Photo 15: Petroglyphs Near La Cienega (R. Romero)*

#### *Cultural-Historical Inventory of Resources*

Cultural landscapes have both visible elements (cultural resources; for example, archaeological and historical sites), and less visible elements (for example, sacred places, cultural places, traditional land use practices and use areas). Each, however, is defined by the value that a community places on it. Culturally significant properties that help define landscapes include, but are not limited to, cultural resources, historical or traditional lifeways, use areas, and cultural places important to a community history, heritage or identity. Maps 3 and 4 illustrate cultural and historical properties in Santa Fe County, including homestead and ranch land, cultivated and irrigated valleys, irrigated agriculture land, traditional community buffers (or “hinterland”) archaeological and historical sites and the more extensive land grants.

Map 4 is a simplified version of Map 3 that consolidates areas with a high density of archaeological sites (i.e., at least three grouped together) to one theme—or “Known Cultural Resource Areas,” based on available survey data (HPD). All the other aspects of Map 4 are the same as Map 3. Map 4 will be updated with a current analysis from HPD showing high-density areas of “known cultural resource areas” when this analysis is complete. Most likely the updated map will show more extensive known cultural resource areas throughout the County.

The following five groups of cultural-historical properties are of concern to Santa Fe County residents:

#### □ *Archaeological and Historical Sites (HPD data)*

Archaeological and historical sites are at least 75 years old and represent the historical antecedents of the other four other property types. For example, old Pueblo agricultural fields identified by rock-lined cobble grid gardens that are no longer farmed are archaeological manifestations of an agricultural lifeway. Archaeological villages like Arroyo

Hondo and Waldo are simply older versions of our County's communities. HPD data indicates that thousands of these sites exist throughout the County; however the sites recorded are a fraction of the total that exist (545 communities sites, 239 sacred sites, 3718 lifeways sites, 350 agriculture sites, 278 mining and industry sites, and 365 homestead sites).

- *Sacred Places*  
Sacred Places include churches, moradas, shrines, cemeteries, graves, petroglyphs and places of spiritual meaning. No sacred places are indicated on the maps.
- *Cultural-Historical Lifeways*  
Cultural or Historic Lifeways represent land use practices, or working landscapes, that have historical *continuity* and meaning: agriculture, ranching, herding, homesteading, mining and industry, and commerce/transportation. Such landscapes are indicated on the maps.
- *Cultural Places*  
Cultural places can include traditional use areas such as woodcutting, quarrying or gathering areas, "named" places of importance to a particular group, or a place of historical meaning. The *ejidos* of land grant communities can have considerable place value.
- *Traditional and Traditional Historical Communities*  
Santa Fe County contains 21 Traditional and Traditional Historical communities, and at least that many pre-contact and ancestral Pueblo communities exist as well. A community at least 75 years old may qualify for State status as a Traditional Historic Community. Also significant are the traditional hinterlands or buffers around the communities, some of which are indicated on the maps.

#### Cultural-Historical Areas Landscapes

The following list includes a number of important historic and cultural landscapes as illustrated on Map 4. Some of them are also natural landforms or landmarks. The list is by no means inclusive of all significant features in the County. It is intended to highlight historically and cultural significant features in the County that merit consideration for protection including the following:

- Known cultural resource areas in the Galisteo basin and west of the City of Santa Fe.
- Large ranch lands and homestead areas in the central and southern part of the County.
- Small irrigated farms in the northern valleys.
- Mining district around Cerrillos and Madrid.
- Buffers around the communities of Galisteo, Lamy, La Cienega, Tesuque, Golden, Madrid, Los Cerrillos, Cundiyo and La Puebla.



Photo 16: Rowe Mesa Agriculture (L. Ellis)

### Natural Area Resources

The results of the Survey of Public Opinion showed that over 70 percent of County residents feel that protection from development for wildlife and plants is an extremely important role of open space. The rich mosaics of natural landscapes in Santa Fe County have supported the well being of wildlife and human occupants for millennia. Moreover, the physical and biological



*Photo 17: Wildlife West Nature Park, Edgewood (L. Ellis)*

resources found in natural areas are a wellspring for cultural development in Santa Fe County. The increasing development pressure over the past two decades has made an impact on the County's natural areas, but the loss is not nearly as great as in other southwestern communities. The Public Opinion Survey voices County residents' high priority for protecting the natural landscapes found in the County's forests, streams and grasslands.

Two of the most precious resources for Santa Fe County's wildlife and plants are water and watersheds—the river basins that carry water from the mountains to alluvial plains and canyons at lower elevations. Water quality and quantity depends on how land in the watershed is managed, particularly on steep slopes and in river floodplains next to waterways. The watersheds of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the Ortiz Mountains, and South Mountain provide critical water sources for the County's wildlife and human communities.

### Natural Areas Inventory Method and Data Sources

COLTPAC used available data sources to identify approximate locations of riverine wetlands and important grasslands in the central portion of Santa Fe County to produce Map 5. The Committee would have also used other data sources noted in Chapter 7, such as the New Mexico GAP analysis to locate critical ecological communities, but they were unable to access this data to produce the map. In particular, COLTPAC recommends conducting a GIS analysis of under-protected ecological communities (i.e., habitats that are not publicly protected on federal, state, county or city land). The information presented on Map 5 is just a beginning and should be revised once the additional data can be added, as noted in Chapter 7.

### Natural Areas Inventory of Resources

Map 5: Natural Areas in Santa Fe County, illustrates the significant natural areas which should be afforded protection in the County. These include:

#### □ *Wetlands*

Wetlands are mainly in the northern valleys of the County. These also include riparian areas that serve as a crucial habitat for wildlife.

- *Waterways*  
Waterways include permanent (major) and/or intermittent (minor) streams.
- *Grasslands*  
Another important conservation concern is the grasslands in the central county area. Map 5 shows areas of Cholla Grasslands and Grasslands that are important for conservation in the areas south of La Cienega and near Galisteo and Madrid and Eldorado.
- *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*  
Two Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are identified in La Cienega and Two Mile Reservoir. These areas which have multiple natural and cultural resources.

### Natural Areas Landscapes

The following natural areas are illustrated on Map 5:

#### ***Santa Fe River and La Cienega Creek***

The Santa Fe River, from the upper part which would include Two Mile Reservoir and other reservoirs and wetlands, through the City of Santa Fe and on through La Cienega (“the Marsh”), is a significant conservation area.

The middle Santa Fe River and La Cienega represents an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), as identified by BLM and other members of the Coordinated Resource Management team. The ACEC includes seven miles of the Santa Fe River Canyon, surrounding hills and mesas, and 3,556 acres of BLM-administered public lands.

The Santa Fe River and La Cienega Creek are two of the few remaining permanent rivers in the area and contain critical riparian habitat. The potential is great for restoration. If protected properly and action is taken to reestablish riparian vegetation and historic wetland habitats, this corridor can attract and support a great variety of wildlife.

Aquatic insect species such as caddis flies, mayflies and midges can be found here. The only known fish species is the Rio Grande sucker, but possibly trout could be returned if spawning areas were established. The sewage treatment plant provides a steady flow of water in the lower river. However, spawning areas are lacking (e.g., running water over gravel, sufficient vegetative cover to reduce stream temperatures, vegetation for shading over the stream). The river has potential as a major migratory corridor for avian species (e.g., for waterfowl, shorebirds, migratory songbirds).

#### ***La Cienega Watershed and Springs***

The water that emerges at La Cienega Springs comes primarily from the Arroyo Hondo watershed which is located in Santa Fe County on the southern edge of the City of Santa Fe. These springs and the perennial creek that flows in the upland portions of the watershed provide important wildlife habitats.

***Rio Tesuque, Rio Nambe and the Pojoaque River Corridor.***

A majority of these river corridors are on Pueblo Lands and are already afforded some protection from development. These corridors include wetlands, riparian area with good stands of Rio Grande cottonwood and willow, and are a corridor for migratory birds with a habitat for songbirds and other birds.



*Photo 18: Rio en Medio  
Creek (S. Robinson)*

***Santa Cruz River, Rio en Medio and Rio Frijoles Corridor.***

This corridor includes wetlands in the Chimayo area that are unprotected at this point.

***Galisteo Creek, San Marcos Arroyo and San Cristobal Arroyo.***

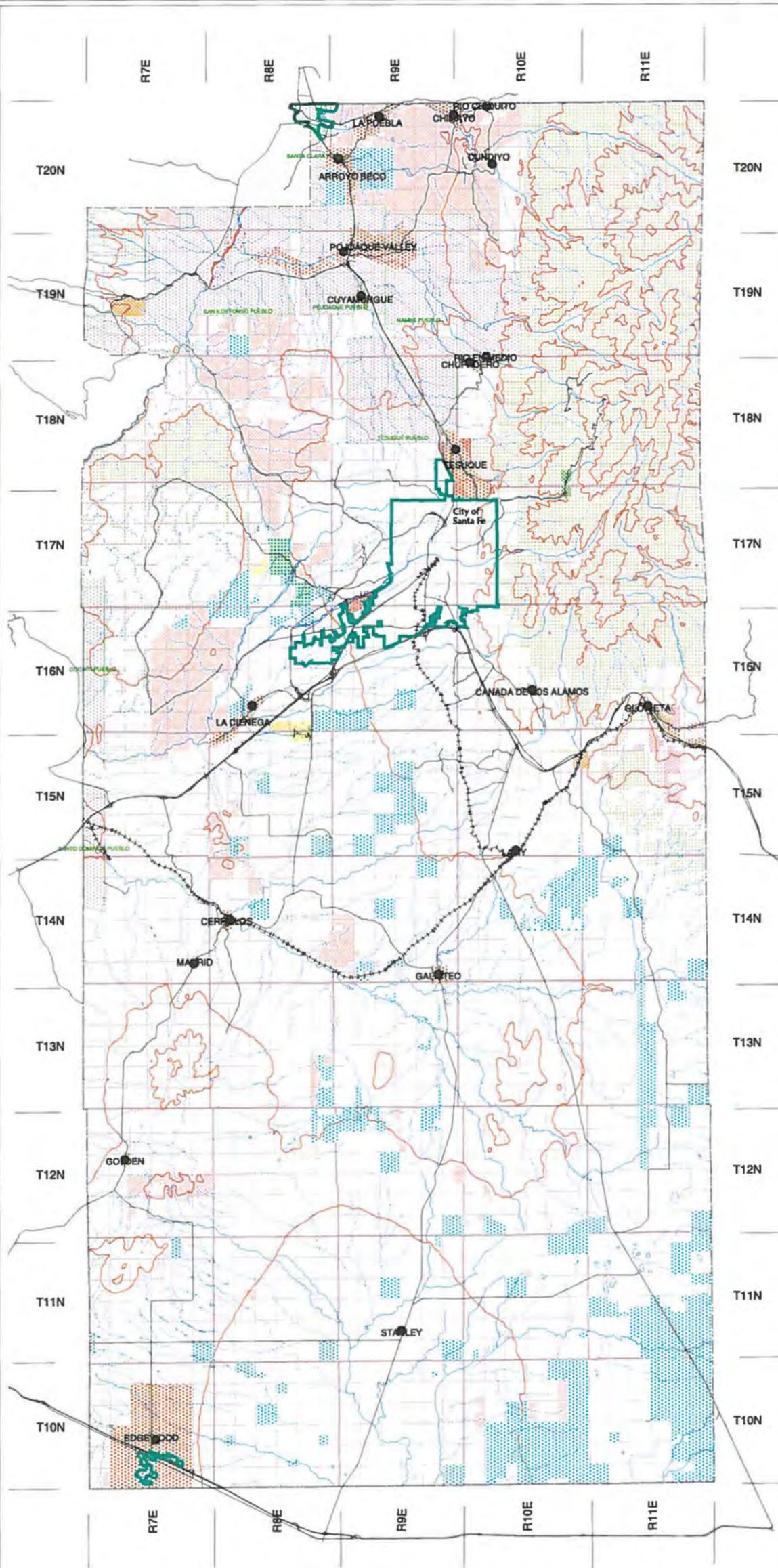
The Galisteo Creek originates as a perennial creek from the southern foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. An intermittent stream flows within the region of grasslands and cholla grasslands. The Cerrillos Hills region exists within parts of the Galisteo Creek. The intermittent streams flow within the region of grasslands and cholla grasslands. The Cerrillos Hills Park Coalition is working to determine the resources that exist within the region and will work to maintain its protection.

***Alamo Creek and Arroyo Calabasas***

Diablo Canyon with its unique geologic formations and the Jacona Land Grant are significant areas. Much more needs to be studied about this waterway system.

***Summary***

This chapter presented the inventory of existing resources in the County as developed by COLTPAC, building on previous research. Chapter 3 will begin to combine this data and identify significant resources for protection as well as criteria used to identify properties with such qualities.



### Legend

- T20N BLM Land
- Forest Service Land
- Forest Service Exchange Land
- T19N National Park Service Land
- State Land
- Hyde State Park
- T18N Pueblo Land
- City Recreation Area
- City/County Landfill
- State Penitentiary
- T17N NM National Guard
- Traditional Villages
- Traditional Historic Villages
- Incorporated City Boundaries
- Minor Streams
- Major Streams
- Major Roads and Highways
- Railroads
- Topography 500'



Scale 1:375,000

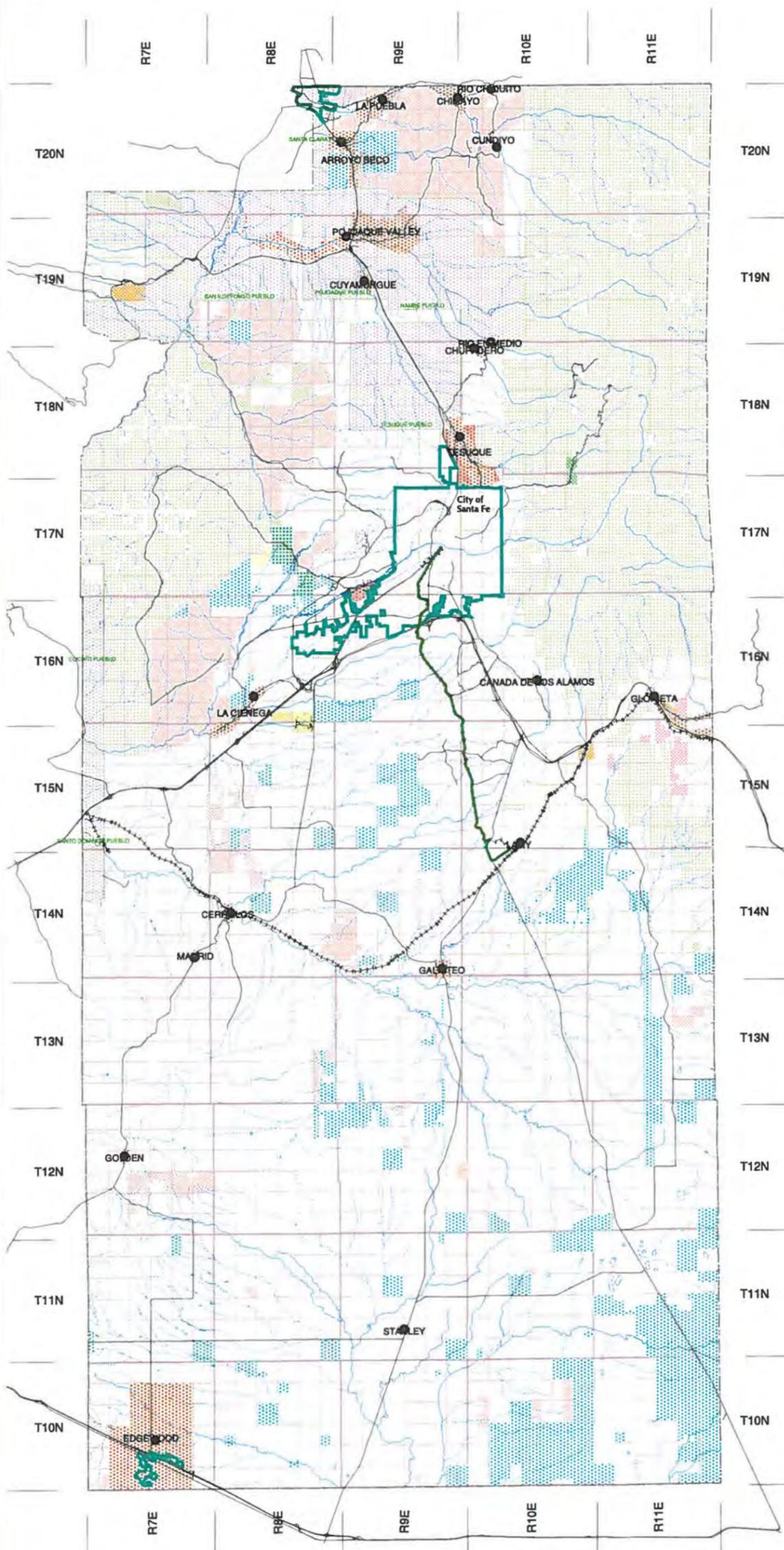
This information is for reference only. Santa Fe County assumes no liability for errors associated with the use of these data. Users are solely responsible for confirming data accuracy when necessary.



May 15, 2000

# Land Status Santa Fe County

Map 1



### Legend

- T20N BLM Land
- Forest Service Land
- T19N National Park Service Land
- State Land
- Hyde State Park
- T18N Pueblo Land
- City Recreation Area
- City/County Landfill
- T17N Traditional Villages
- Traditional Historic Villages
- Incorporated City Boundaries
- Minor Streams
- Major Streams
- Major Roads and Highways
- Railroads
- T15N **Existing Public Trails**
- Existing USFS Trails
- Existing BLM Trails
- Rail Trail
- T14N **Parks and Recreation Facilities**
- T13N Existing Neighborhood Park
- Existing Community Park
- Existing Regional Park
- Natural Area Park
- T12N Other Recreation Facilities and Miniparks (Note: need to add to map)
- T11N
- T10N



Scale 1:375,000

This information is for reference only. Santa Fe County assumes no liability for errors associated with the use of these data. Users are solely responsible for confirming data accuracy when necessary.



May 15, 2000

# Existing Public Parks and Trails Santa Fe County

Map 2

# Cultural-Historical Areas Santa Fe County

Map 3

May 15, 2000

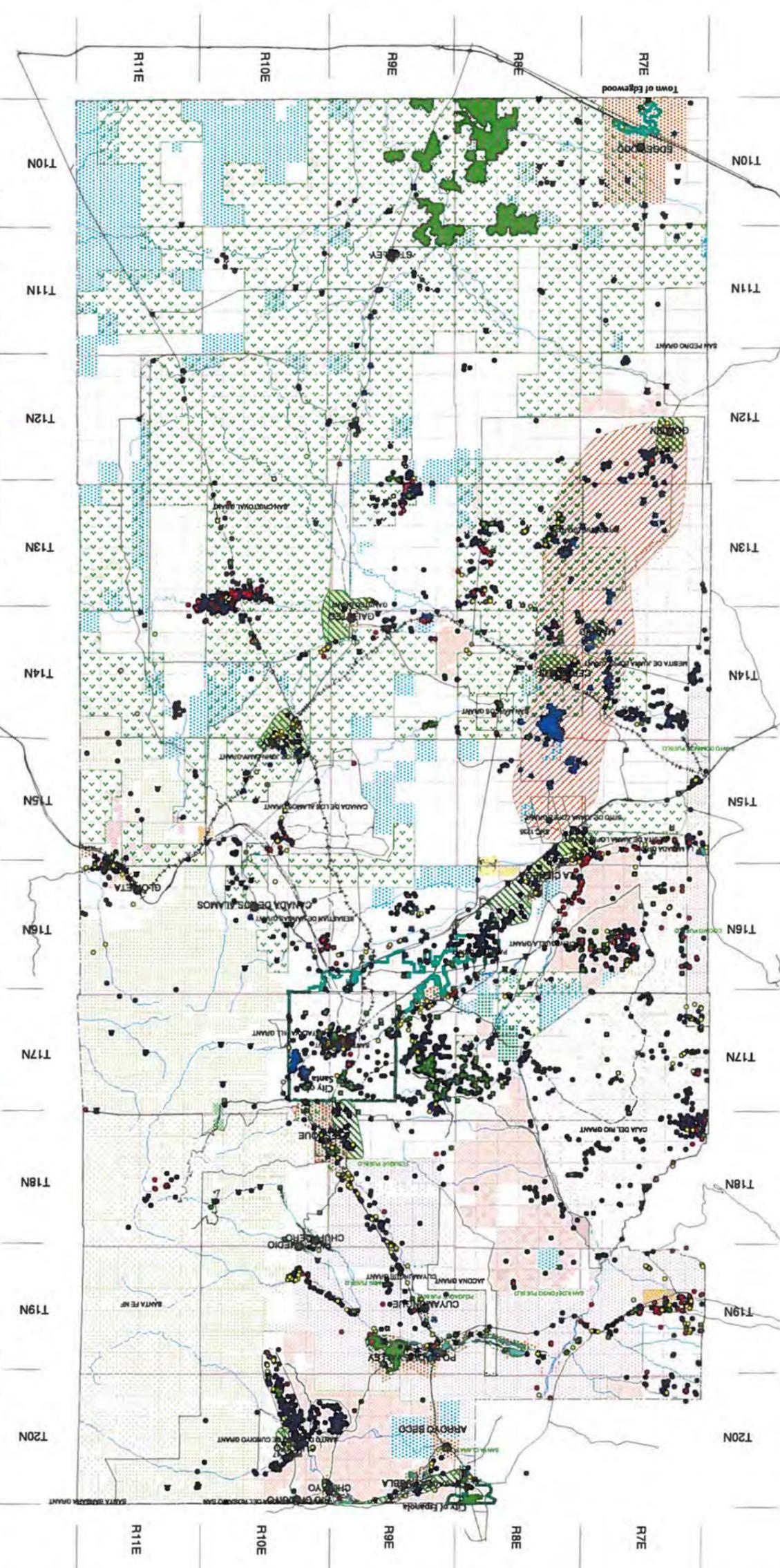


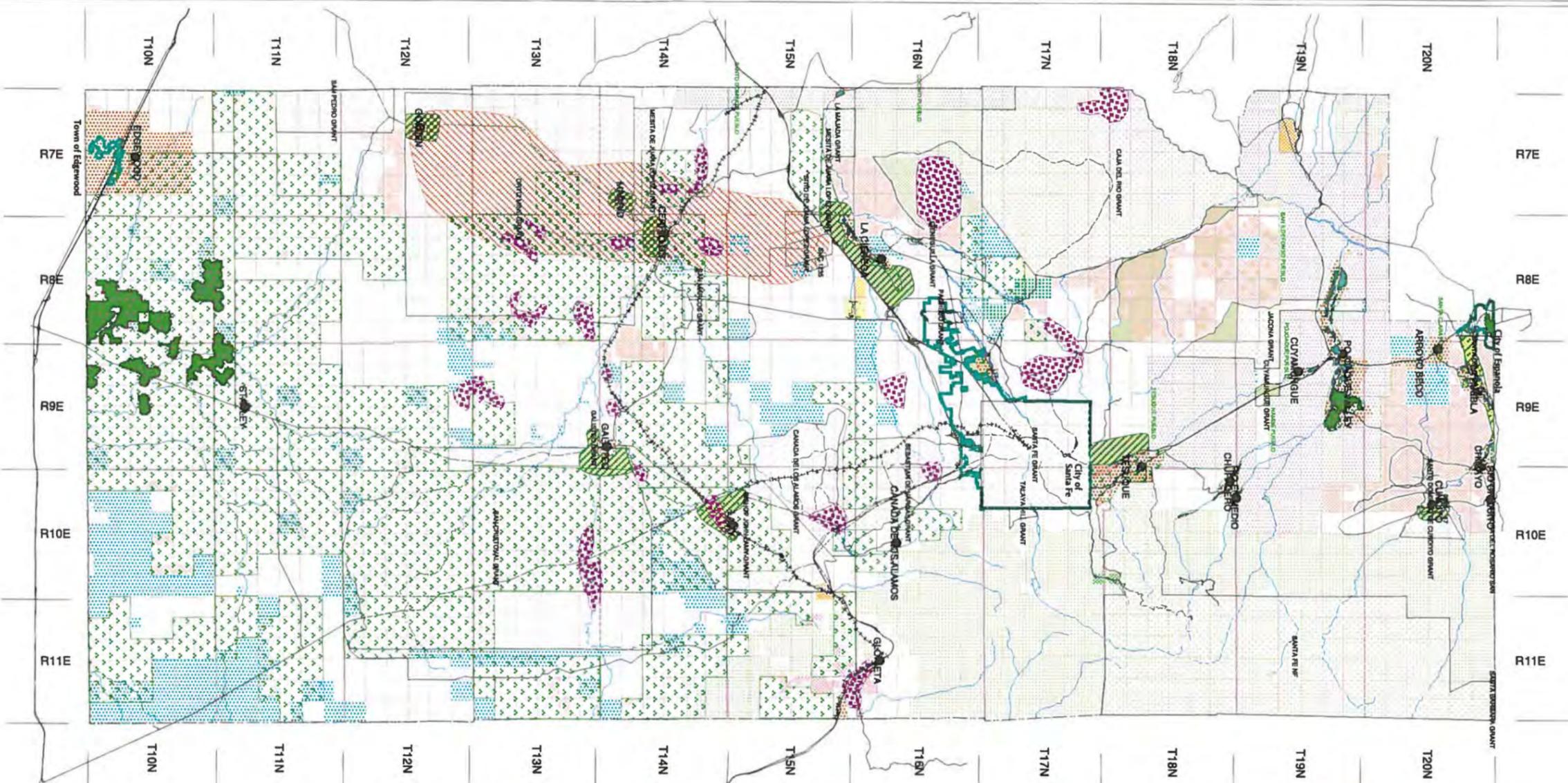
This information is for reference only. Santa Fe County assumes no liability for errors associated with the use of these data. Users are solely responsible for confirming data accuracy when necessary.



Note: Information is for inventory purposes only. This is not a zoning map. Work originally produced by County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC).

- Legend**
- BLM Land
  - Forest Service Land
  - Forest Service Exchange Land
  - National Park Service Land
  - State Land
  - Hyde State Park
  - Pueblo Land
  - City/County Landfill
  - State Penitentiary
  - NM National Guard
  - Incorporated City Boundaries
  - Major Streams
  - Major Roads and Highways
  - Railroads
  - Villages**
  - Traditional Villages
  - Traditional Historic Villages
  - Archaeological Recorded Sites**
  - Industrial Sites
  - Homestead Sites
  - Sacred Sites
  - Agriculture Sites
  - Communities' Sites
  - Lifeways Sites
  - Historical and Cultural Lifeways and Landscapes**
  - Mining Districts
  - Homestead and Ranch Land
  - Cultivated, Irrigated Valleys
  - Irrigated Agriculture Land
  - Traditional Community Buffers
  - Land Grants



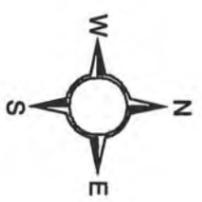


**Legend**

- BLM Land
- Forest Service Land
- Forest Service Exchange Land
- National Park Service Land
- State Land
- Hyde State Park
- Pueblo Land
- City Recreation Area
- City/County Landfill
- State Penitentiary
- NM National Guard
- Incorporated City Boundaries
- Major Streams
- Major Roads and Highways
- Railroads
- Villages**
  - Traditional Villages
  - Traditional Historic Villages
- Historical and Cultural Lifeways and Landscapes**
  - Mining Districts
  - Homestead and Ranch Land
  - Cultivated, Irrigated Valleys
  - Irrigated Agriculture Land
  - Traditional Community Buffers
  - Land Grants
  - Known Cultural Resource Areas (based on available survey data - HPD)

Note: Information is for inventory purposes only. This is not a zoning map.

Work originally produced by County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC).



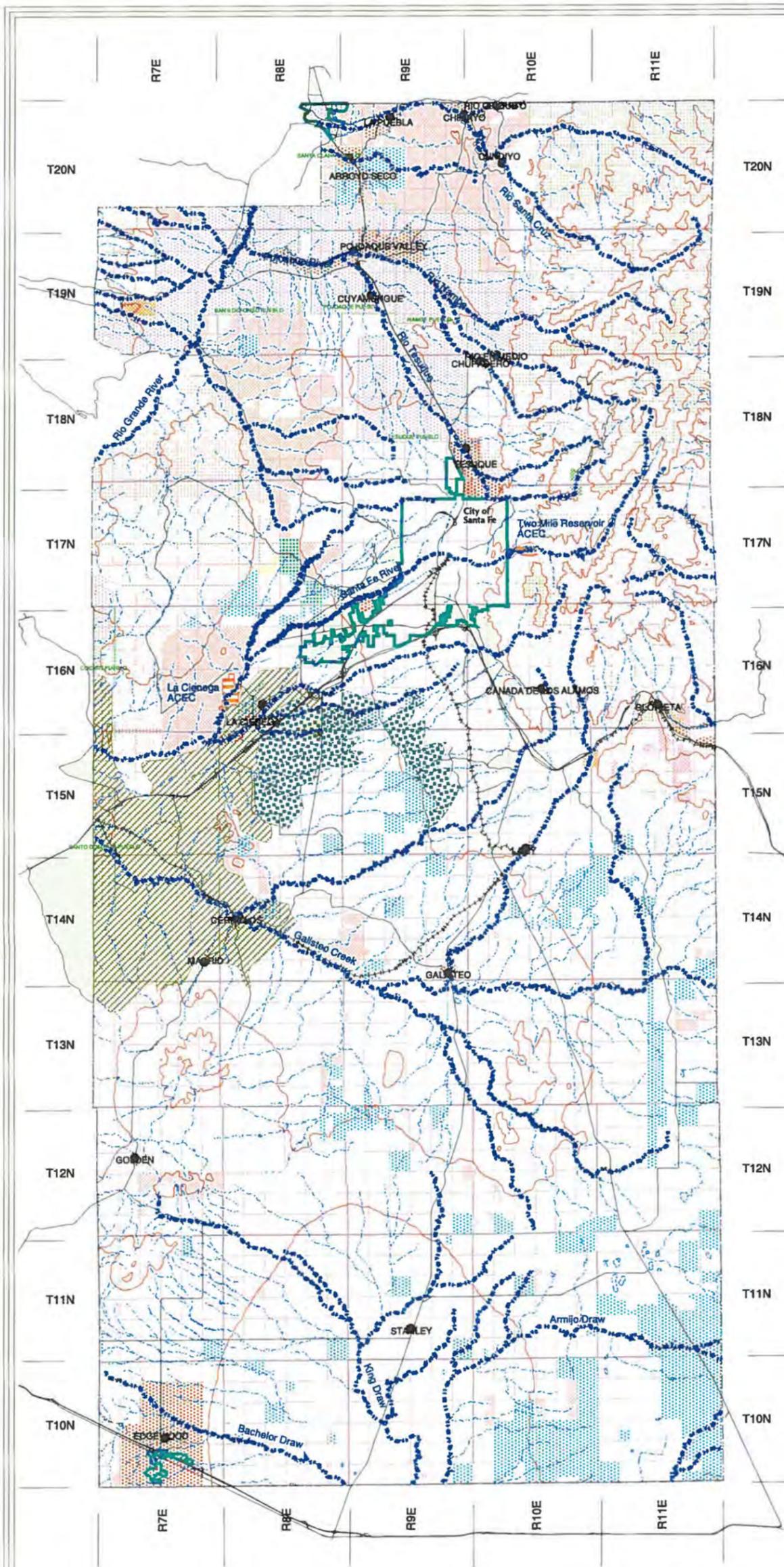
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May 15, 2000

**Cultural-Historical Areas  
Composite  
Santa Fe County**

Map 4

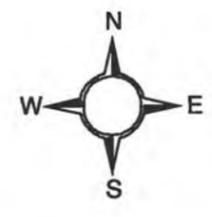


**Legend**

-  BLM Land
-  Forest Service Land
-  Forest Service Exchange Land
-  National Park Service Land
-  State Land
-  Hyde State Park
-  Pueblo Land
-  City Recreation Area
-  City/County Landfill
-  Traditional Villages
-  Traditional Historic Villages
-  Incorporated City Boundaries
-  Major Roads and Highways
-  Railroads
-  Major Streams
-  Minor Streams
-  Wetlands / Riparian Areas
-  Area of Critical Environmental Concern
-  Grasslands
-  Cholla Grasslands

Note: Information is for inventory purposes only. This is not a zoning map.

Work originally produced by County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC).



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May 15, 2000

Map 5

**Natural Areas  
Santa Fe County**

## CHAPTER 3 - MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter builds on the inventory in Chapter 2 and identifies goals for protection as well as significant resources in the County. It is intended to describe a long-term vision for the County, outlining future directions, and it addresses not only needs that can be immediately identified but those expected to emerge over the next ten to twenty years. This Plan is not intended to identify *only* those projects that can be implemented with existing resources, or with funding sources that can be readily anticipated. In this regard, it calls for new initiatives and presents a challenge to residents of the County to invest in the future. This may be done by seeking partnerships and new techniques to implement the projects identified in this plan that contribute to maintaining some of the qualities that make Santa Fe County unique.

This Plan assumes that the County will acquire land or easements through a variety of voluntary means. Chapter 4 addresses implementation methods and Chapter 5 addresses financial considerations and administration of the program,

### MASTER PLAN GENERAL GOALS

The primary goal of the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program is to protect parcels of open land that have multiple resource values to our community, including access to water, wildlife habitat and rare species, cultural and historical sites, agricultural uses, visual beauty, and recreational opportunities. It is also important to provide community benefits and provide good financial returns for taxpayers, and connect a system of trails and open land when acquiring or conserving lands. Stewardship and maintenance of properties, once acquired by the County, will be also important (see also General Criteria, Appendix E). The following general goals will guide the County with the open land and trails program:

1. Protect tracts of open land and trails using a combination of methods, including voluntary conservation easements, acquisition and existing regulations.
2. Protect regionally significant natural and cultural-historical resources in need of protection.
3. Emphasize conservation of large tracts of land that may be critical for wildlife habitat.
4. Provide buffers for communities.
5. Provide community and countywide benefits.
6. Balance open space goals with needs for housing in urban areas; therefore, emphasize open space protection in undeveloped areas.
7. Ensure countywide equity and a diverse mix of projects.
8. Build and enhance a countywide network of open land and trails.

9. Implement a land stewardship program that is on-going to ensure adequate maintenance of properties and protection of resources.
10. Collaborate with municipalities in the County to provide active recreation parks.
11. Develop partnerships with non-profits, government agencies, land trusts, community organizations for management and educational programs.
12. Leverage local funding sources with grants and donations to create good financial value for the County.
13. Develop educational /interpretive programs for open lands.
14. Minimize conflicts of open lands and trails users, but allow for multiple-purpose functionality.

## USE OF OPEN LANDS: PASSIVE AND ACTIVE RECREATION USES

Protecting resources is the most important function of the program, which means that human access may need to be limited or restricted on some lands. Therefore, open lands that the County acquires should be “developed” for primarily passive recreation uses, as well as some active recreation uses for “neighborhood parks and playfields” (see Appendix A: 1998 General Election Bond). Most open lands that the County acquires will be relatively undeveloped. Currently the County has limited funding available to develop and manage properties, but it will do some simple improvements such as fencing, signs, and unpaved trails. However, in communities that need recreation facilities or where no other active recreation exists, the County should consider developing agreements with community associations and municipalities to develop appropriate properties for neighborhood parks and active uses, such as ballfields. The associations or other entities must agree to be responsible for maintenance of such properties.

### Passive Recreation Uses

Improvement may include, but are not limited to:

- *Signs*
- *Unpaved trails for non-motorized use*
- *Picnic tables and shade structures*
- *Interpretive sites*

*Implies a lower level of human use.*

### Active Recreation Uses

Improvements may include, but are not limited to:

- *Paved bicycle trails*
- *Soccer fields*
- *Baseball and softball fields*
- *Football fields*
- *Running tracks*
- *Volleyball courts*
- *Basketball courts*
- *Tennis courts*
- *Off-road vehicle parks*

*Implies a high level of human use.*

## PROPOSED PARKS AND TRAILS



Photo 19: Pojoaque Playground (A. Nelson)

COLTPAC determined that it is important to not only protect resources, but also establish trail connections and some active recreation parks. The next sections identify goals for parks and recreation, trails, cultural-historical areas and natural areas. These are all important, but properties that contain multiple resources or opportunities are most important for the County program to achieve goals.

### *Parks and Recreation Needs*

This chapter builds on the inventory of existing parks in Chapter 2 to determine current and future “needs.” It has been determined that the County will have a need for neighborhood and community parks in the future, however, the program emphasis is on acquiring lands for passive recreation use and resource protection, rather than active sports development. Some disparity currently exists throughout the County in provisions of parks and recreation land. COLTPAC agreed that the County should serve recreation needs of village residents.

Recreation needs are expressed in terms of “level of service guidelines”, which are based on population and described as “number of acres of parkland per 1,000 people.” This type of analysis helps to establish long-term guidelines for particular areas of the County. It merely provides an “ideal” to measure areas of the County that may need parks to meet recreation services desired by citizens. This needs assessment approach is typically used in urban areas and may be distorted in this application because of the thousands of acres of public land which are not considered.

While the existing common standard is ten acres of parkland per 1,000 people, such a standard is probably unrealistically high. Santa Fe County proposes a guideline of six acres of net usable parkland per 1,000 residents (or two acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 residents and four acres of community parks per 1,000 residents. The average size for a neighborhood park is 8.5 acres and the average size for a community park is 35 acres). This acreage does not include arroyos, flood plains and other rights-of-way.

### *Parks and Recreation Goal*

- ❑ Meet the future needs of County residents as determined by a population-based needs assessment as illustrated on the master plan map.
- ❑ Work with school districts to establish more joint use agreements for school recreation facilities.

Table 3, based on the analysis of park needs, shows that by the year 2020 the County would ideally provide **15 new neighborhood parks** (a total of 128 acres) and **12 new community**

parcs (a total of 430 acres). The central area of the County will have the greatest need for parks because of rapid population growth (see also, Map 5: Parks: Existing and 20 Year Goals).

**Table 3: Park Needs**

Region	Population*	Neighborhood Parks			Community Parks		
		Existing (ac.)	Needed (ac.)	No. of Nieghb. Parks Needed	Existing (ac.)	Needed (ac.)	No. of Comm. Parks Needed
<b>Year 2000</b>							
<i>North</i>	14,178	5	23	<b>3</b>	0	57	<b>2</b>
<i>Central</i>	100,972	177	25	<b>3</b>	216	188	<b>5</b>
<i>South</i>	8,895	12	6	<b>1</b>	0	36	<b>1</b>
<b>Total - Year 2000</b>	<b>124,045</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Year 2020</b>							
<i>North</i>	17,277	n/a	30	<b>4</b>	n/a	69	<b>2</b>
<i>Central</i>	125,680	n/a	74	<b>9</b>	n/a	287	<b>8</b>
<i>South</i>	13,183	n/a	15	<b>2</b>	n/a	53	<b>2</b>
<b>Total - Year 2020</b>	<b>156,140</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>12</b>

\* Year 2000 & 2020 projections are based on *Santa Fe County Population and Housing Study, John Prior Associates, 1994.*

*Parks and Recreation Criteria*

COLTPAC developed the following recreation criteria for use in selecting properties for acquisition. These criteria are combined with trails and balanced with the cultural-historical and natural areas criteria so that they have equal weight (see Appendix E for more detailed criteria descriptions).

- The project contains significant recreation resources or open space opportunities other than trails.
- It minimizes impacts to neighbors, sensitive natural areas and sensitive cultural areas.
- It meets appropriate guidelines for intended use.
- It has topography that is appropriate for intended use.
- The community or another partner has developed a funding or maintenance program to support initial active use request.



*Photo 20: Cerrillos Hills Equestrians (B. Ellis)*

### ***Proposed Primary Trails***

This Plan and COLTPAC promote the concept of a one mile wide primary trail “corridor,” where the actual trail alignment will depend on willingness of landowners to sell or donate easements to the County. The trail corridor will be flexible depending on landowner willingness, public input and location of future land purchases. The entire primary trail will likely take many years to complete. Map 7 shows the Proposed Trail Corridors, the Segment One “Backbone,” and connections to communities, public lands and other destinations. The Proposed Primary Corridor, beginning with Segment One, is the ideal primary corridor for acquisition because it connects villages and existing large parcels of open land and would provide an alternative grid of trails where north-south alignments will ultimately connect to other east-west alignments and a localized secondary trails network.

In some cases it may be necessary to restrict the use of a trail segment or route a trail around a critical resource to protect it. In other places, acquiring easements for trails should be enlarged to achieve multiple objectives, such as conserving a natural arroyo and historic trail segments. The trail system should tie in with open lands conservation goals.

### ***Trails Goals***

- ❑ Identify and create a countywide Primary Trail “backbone.” Work with willing landowners to acquire and improve this backbone.
- ❑ Use the existing trails inventory to develop a secondary trails system that connects to the primary system, and rely on voluntary donations and subdivision regulations to build this secondary system. The County should offer technical support to local organizations.
- ❑ Preserve historical trails and protect access to existing trails, trailheads and recreation opportunities on federal lands. Acquire historic trail easements and develop trails parallel to the original path.
- ❑ Link County open land acquisitions, City of Santa Fe parks and State and federal recreation open spaces with trails.
- ❑ Combine trails with natural corridors and conserve such natural areas, such as permanent and ephemeral arroyos. It may be necessary to purchase wider easements so trail users can avoid critical habitats.

- Create “an entity” to accept and administer parcels in the County open land and trails program. Create a standard method to accept and administer voluntary contributions at the County.
- Create local recreational “mini-parks” and trailheads along the trails system.
- Work with BLM to retain disposal lands as part of a trails system.
- Provide interpretive stations along trails. Educational opportunities may include, for example, a description of migratory and animal movement patterns along wildlife corridors or a story of the historical significance of a trail.



*Photo 21: On the Old Santa Fe Trail (L. Ellis)*

### Trails Criteria

COLTPAC developed the following trails criteria for use in selecting projects or properties for acquisition. These criteria are balanced with the cultural-historical and natural areas criteria so that they have equal weight. Most important from a trails perspective are those areas located on a primary trail or linking to a primary trail (see Appendix E).

- The project is located on a primary trail.
- It links or is adjacent to a primary trail.
- It is part of or contains a loop trail system.
- It provides reasonable trailhead access.
- It serves as alternative transportation and links important destinations within the community.
- It is part of a historic trail that has been in use for 50 years or more.

### Primary Trail Segment One (Trails Pre-Purchase Package)

In 1999 the Board of County Commissioners approved a \$100,000 expenditure for a trail pre-purchase package to work towards identifying and acquiring easement for the Primary Trail Segment One. The County will hire a contractor to develop this package and negotiate with owners along the Segment One trail corridor to obtain option agreements from owners to purchase easements (see Map 7). The contractor will also work with adjacent property owners and local communities to assure agreement and support and present options to COLTPAC and the County. This assures that willing owners can be found and an entire connection may be made. The County may then purchase entire segments from property owners simultaneously.

### Secondary Trails System

The secondary trails system and historic trails protection will be achieved through volunteer easement donations and subdivision regulations that build on earlier Trails Committee inventory work. Secondary trails should provide links for local communities to the primary trail system and to other destinations. The County should update the inventory on a regular basis as local communities gather new information. Many local community groups such as Eldorado/Lamy and the West Side Planning group, are already negotiating with landowners. The County should offer technical support for local efforts and accept trail dedications. Map 7 also indicates community planning areas where trail connections should be determined by the local communities.

## SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES FOR CONSERVATION

### Significant Cultural-Historical Areas



*Photo 22: Santuario de Chimayo and fields behind (B. Ellis)*

Some lands will be important for conservation not because of recreation value, but because of physical resources on the site. COLTPAC agreed it is especially important to maintain the idea of historic open space hinterland. The Committee has some reservations about recommending County conservation of lands that are significant only for their archaeological value because the County does not have the expertise to maintain such sites. The following goal is specific to cultural-historical landscapes.

#### Cultural-Historical Landscape Goal:

- Maintain the unique, diverse rural character of the County through its archaeological, historical, cultural and sacred properties that contribute to community identity, history and connection with each other.

### Cultural-Historical Criteria

The criteria for cultural-historical areas are presented in order of importance as identified by COLTPAC. Of primary concern is: does the purchased parcel sustain the historical open space patterns of the County? These are equally weighted against recreation and trails and natural areas criteria (see Appendix E).

- The project represents the historical open space patterns in the county (i.e., community hinterland).
- It possesses multiple cultural-historical resources as identified on plan maps.
- It contributes to community identity, history or culture.

- It preserves a traditional lifeway (e.g., farming, ranching, herding, mining/industry, and commerce/transportation).
- It contributes to the historical development, heritage or cultural character of the county and has educational or interpretive value
- It represents a specific archaeological or historical site or cultural landscape.

### *Significant Natural Areas*



*Photo 23: Grasslands and river basin in Galisteo (L. Ellis)*

COLTPAC recognizes the importance of protecting natural areas for their intrinsic value, including waterways and grasslands for example. Most important to the Committee is the necessity to protect waterways and ecological communities that are not currently protected in the County. Because few areas in the County are undisturbed, in the future some landscape restoration will probably be necessary. The following goal is specific to natural areas:

#### Natural Areas Goal

- Protect watersheds, water quality and access to water for wildlife; provide habitat and diversity of community types.

#### Natural Areas Criteria

The following criteria, developed by COLTPAC, are equally important in assessing a property's natural areas significance. They are balanced with cultural-historical areas and recreation and trails criteria.

- The project protects watersheds, water quality and supply, and access to water for wildlife.
- It provides connectivity by linking critical resources/habitats for wildlife.
- It contains relatively undisturbed sites or sites that can be restored if degraded.
- It includes unique geological or ecological features.
- It provides habitat for a large number of plant and animal species.
- It increases the number of natural community types such as riparian, grassland, and forest types that are protected in Santa Fe County.

### *Master Plan Map*

By combining the mapped resource inventory information for cultural-historical and natural areas a pattern of significant conservation areas begins to be revealed. Staff used GIS to combine the resource information to illustrate the location and overlap of resources and identify those areas of high resource value. From this synthesis, it is possible to begin to identify areas that have abundant or significant physical resources—or at least two. Such a synthesis of data may then be used to help make objective decisions concerning open space conservation.



*Photo 24. Sangre de Cristo Foothills to the East of Santa Fe, Picacho Peak (L. Ellis)*

Staff next added proposed trails and parks to the synthesis of information to begin to reveal lands that contribute to providing a connected open space system. Map 8: Master Plan, illustrates areas in the County where multiple resources should be protected and where parks and trails should be planned through the voluntary measures described in Chapter 4. The Master Plan map helps illustrate long term goals for protection and acquisition for the County which would go beyond the initial \$12 million bond for open space. However, Map 8 is general and illustrative and should be used only as a reference when studying specific land parcels. It should be used in conjunction with the specific criteria, discussed previously, that are the basis for determining important parcels in the County in need of resource protection.

The Master Plan map is flexible and may change with additional community involvement and discussions with other partners (see Chapter 7: Plan Update Process). No proposals for Pueblo lands or municipalities are included at this stage. The map mainly focuses on the undeveloped, less urban areas in the County. It is assumed that the Cities' and Towns' Open Space Plans would prevail in the municipalities. It also focuses on the areas of the County not already protected or managed by another agency or organization.

### *Plan Features*

Map 8 begins to show an integrated network of open lands and trails and the regionally significant natural and cultural-historical resources in need of protection, as dictated by the goals earlier in this chapter and the vision statement. It is the County's intention to not purchase isolated properties, but to create a system of open land and trails. The map illustrates a system of open space that surrounds the City of Santa Fe, particularly in the Galisteo basin, and connects the northern and southern parts of the County. Also especially significant are the river, arroyos and valleys throughout the County. The mountains and hills are generally not identified on the map because most of these areas are already located on federal land. They are significant for habitat value and many have sacred place value as well.

### *Area of Critical Environmental Concern*

The Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are areas that have national significance, as designated by BLM, and are extremely important for their cultural and natural resource values. As indicated on the map, three areas are important.

- La Cienega;
- Two Mile Reservoir; and
- La Puebla.

### *Resource Protection Areas*

The Resource Protection Areas on Map 8 are locations where multiple resources exist. They include archeological sites, rivers, streams and wetlands, agricultural areas as well as grasslands. Clearly delineated on the map are:

- The northern valleys agricultural areas, wetlands and streams, including Santa Cruz and Pojoaque Rivers;
- Tesuque River;
- Western county grasslands and cultural-historic districts between La Cienega and Los Cerrillos;
- La Cienega Creek and the lower Santa Fe River;
- Galisteo basin and river area and San Cristobal and San Marcos Creeks; and
- The Los Cerrillos/Madrid area and historic mining district.

### *Traditional Community Buffers*

Another goal stated earlier is to provide community buffers and protect the traditional hinterland of communities. Buffers are delineated for the following communities:

- La Puebla;
- Cundiyo;
- Tesuque;
- La Cienega;
- Lamy;
- Galisteo;
- Los Cerrillos;
- Madrid; and
- Golden.

### *Proposed Neighborhood and Community Parks*

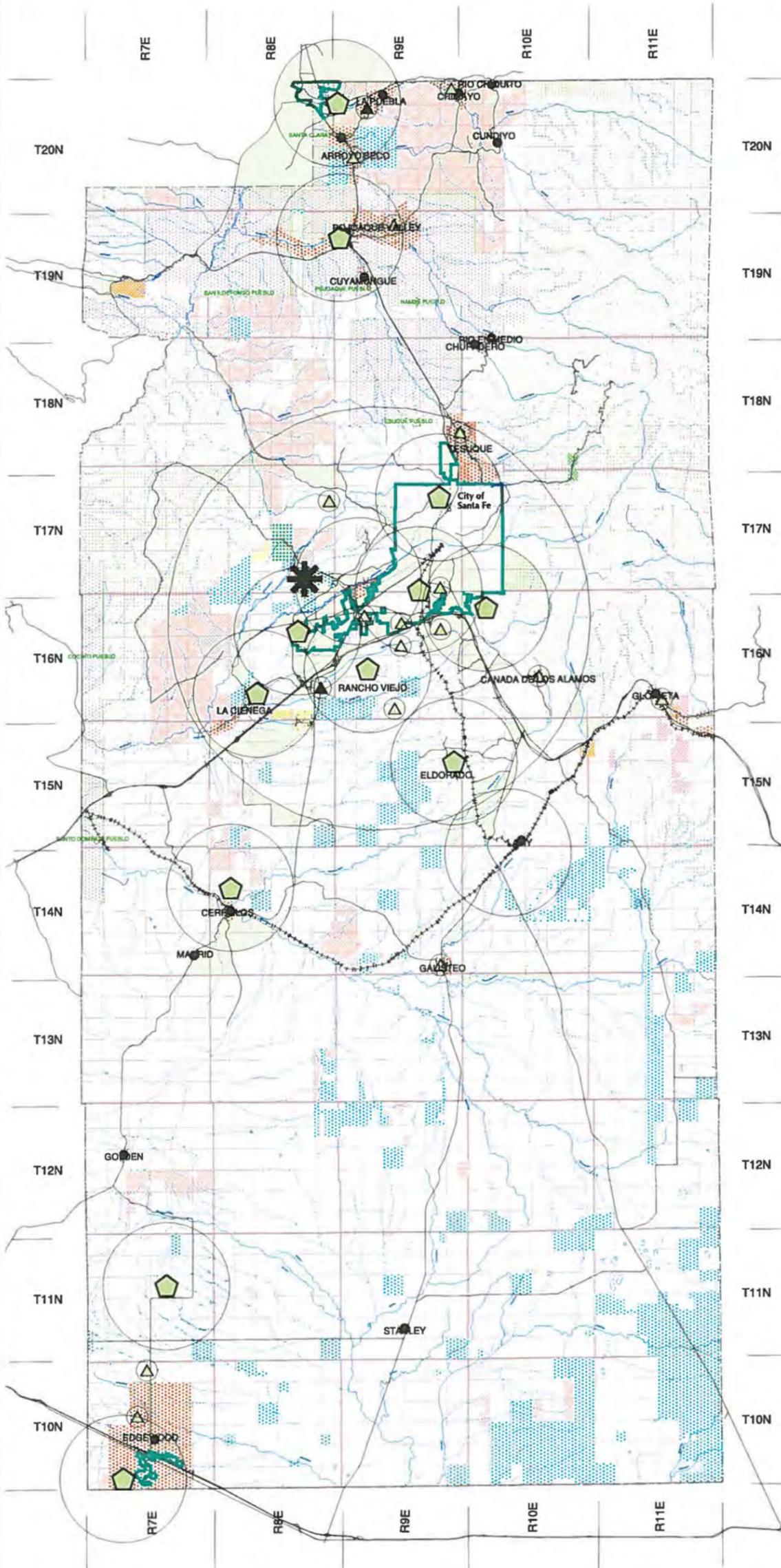
The Master Plan map also illustrates the general locations where future parks are needed (see Table 3: Park Needs). The County should collaborate with municipalities to provide some of the park areas indicated. The County should supply park facilities in those areas of the County in need as indicated on Table 3 and the Master Plan map.

### *Proposed Primary Trails*

Another goal is to build and enhance a countywide network of trails and protect historic trails. Segment One, north to south from Pojoaque to Edgewood is proposed to be the first major trail link which would connect to east-west river corridor trails and to a secondary system which should be established through local community efforts.

### *Summary*

This chapter has outlined goals for the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program. The goals emphasize conservation of large tracts of land critical for wildlife habitat, community-wide benefits, and developing a system of open space, rather than fragmented purchases. It also calls for long-term stewardship of properties. A Master Plan map, based on a synthesis of all mapped inventoried information in the previous chapters identifies the significant resources that the County should aim to protect. Chapters 4 and 5 will describe how the County will undertake the goal of protecting the areas listed above.



### Legend

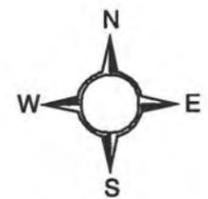
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- Pueblo Land
- T18N City Recreation Area
- Traditional Villages
- Traditional Historic Villages
- T17N Incorporated City Boundaries
- Minor Streams
- Major Streams
- Major Roads and Highways
- T16N Railroads
- Existing Neighborhood Park
- Existing Community Park
- Existing Regional Park
- T15N Proposed Neighborhood Park
- Proposed Community Park
- Park Service Area

Neighborhood Park = 1/2 Mile Service Area

Community Park = 3 Mile Service Area

Regional Park = 10 Mile Service Area

Note: Locations for parks are approximate based on population distribution only (see table 3: Park Needs). This map is illustrative only. It does not include all City of Santa Fe parks.



Scale 1:375,000

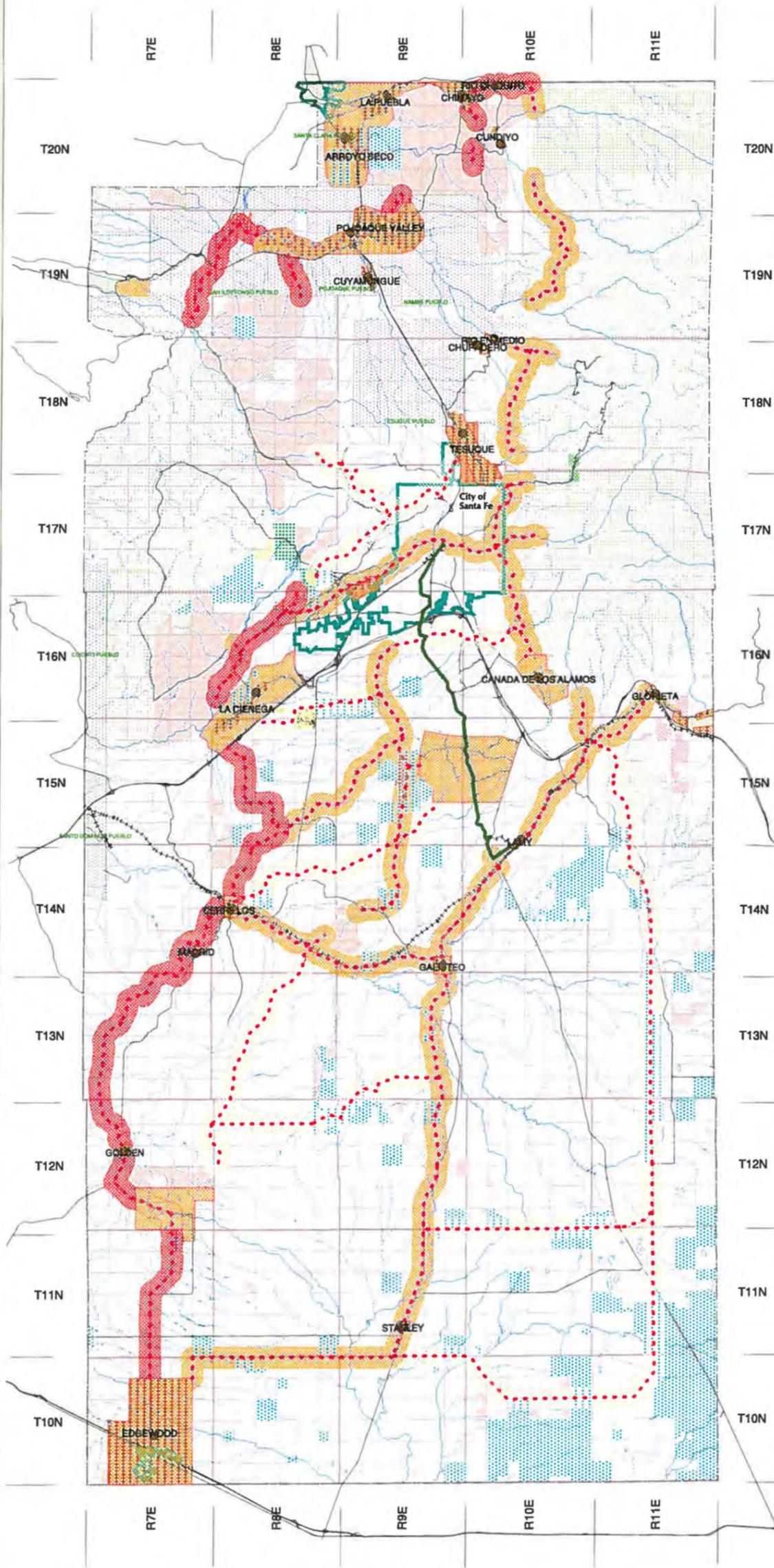
This information is for reference only. Santa Fe County assumes no liability for errors associated with the use of these data. Users are solely responsible for confirming data accuracy when necessary.



May 15, 2000

Map 6

# Parks: Existing and 20 Year Goals Santa Fe County



### Legend

- BLM Land
- Forest Service Land
- Forest Service Exchange Land
- National Park Service Land
- State Land
- Hyde State Park
- Pueblo Land
- City Recreation Area
- City/County Landfill
- Traditional Villages
- Traditional Historic Villages
- Incorporated City Boundaries
- Minor Streams
- Major Streams
- Major Roads and Highways
- Railroads
- Existing USFS and BLM Trails
- Santa Fe Rail Trail
- Proposed Primary Trail
- Trail Corridor (Segment 1)
- Trail Corridor (Segment 2)
- Trail Corridor (Segment 3)
- Community Trail Planning Area

Note: Trail corridors and alignments are flexible depending on landowners' willingness to participate. This is not a zoning map.



Scale 1:375,000

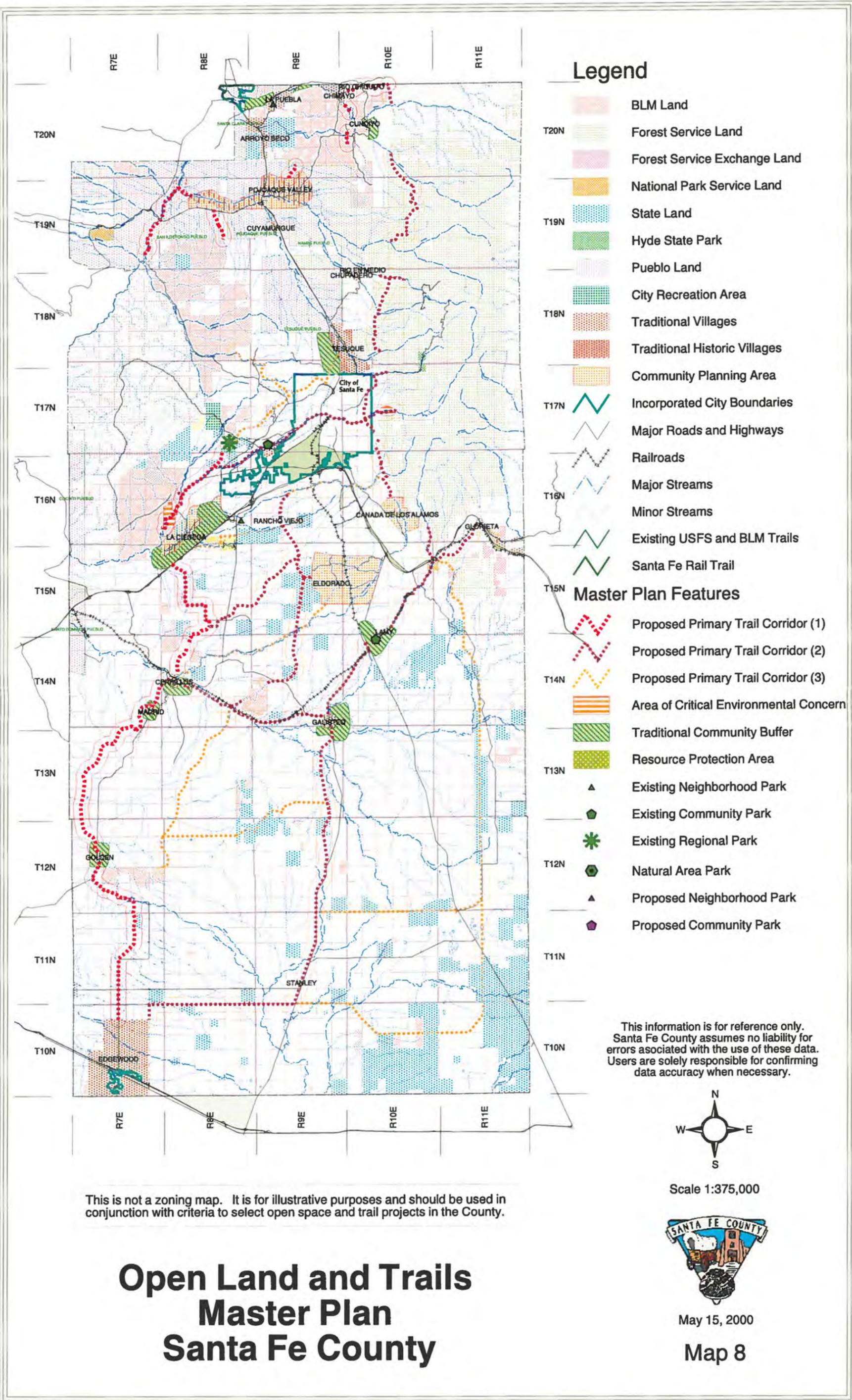
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May 15, 2000

Map 7

# Proposed Trail Corridors Santa Fe County





## CHAPTER 4 - PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The recommendations in this Plan will be implemented through a variety of programmatic techniques. Most of the emphasis on conserving lands is through voluntary acquisition and easements. This chapter discusses the various voluntary methods for conserving land, briefly discusses regulatory approaches and then presents the process for selecting projects for acquisition using the criteria. Administration and financing is discussed in the next chapter.



*Photo 25: Jacona Land Grant, Northern Santa Fe County (A. Nelson)*

### CONSERVATION METHODS

#### *Voluntary Methods*

This Plan proposes that the County will use a variety of voluntary methods to protect significant open lands, described in more detail below, including the following: purchase of fee interest in land, bargain sale, purchase of land with leaseback, purchase of conservation easements, transfer of development rights, intergovernmental transfers, intergovernmental agreements and donations. A voluntary approach assumes that the landowner contractually agrees to the approach. The descriptions of these approaches are presented below:

#### *Purchase of Fee Interest in Land*

Acquiring the fee interest means obtaining full ownership of the land. This approach is especially effective when the public desires access to the property and would like to ensure that the conservation is permanent. It can be an expensive approach for a governmental entity with limited funds and should be used where possible for larger tracts of land with a lower cost-per-acre. Commercial development areas such as highway corridors, typically have a cost of land that is prohibitive to outright purchase for the County to establish an effective overall open land and trails program.

*Necessary Steps:* COLTPAC recommendation and Board approval. Contractual agreement between County and a landowner. Deed restrictions to prohibit future sale or development of land. Final approval from Board.

#### *Bargain Sale*

A bargain sale is a purchase in which a landowner sells property to the County at a price below the fair market value. The purchase can be either fee interest or a conservation easement. Often the landowner is eligible for a tax deduction for the difference between the sale price and the fair market value because the sale is treated like a charitable contribution. The value is determined by a certified appraisal.

*Necessary Steps:* COLTPAC recommendation and Board approval. Contractual agreement between Santa Fe County and a landowner.

#### *Purchase of Land with Leaseback for Agriculture*

With this arrangement, as part of a land purchase contract the County agrees to lease the land back to the seller for a specified time for contribution of farming. The rent is negotiable and is sometimes below the market rate.

*Necessary Steps:* Santa Fe County must develop a leaseback program and determine appropriate fee structure before this method can be put into place. COLTPAC recommendation for purchase and Board approval. Contract between lessee and County.

#### *Purchase of a Conservation Easement (or Purchase of Development Rights)*

Where public ownership of the land itself is not essential to the public interest, the County may acquire an interest through a deed of conservation easement. Conservation easements usually serve two primary purposes: to reduce the amount of development that can occur on the property and/or to ensure that the property and its environmental, cultural and/or open space values are preserved and managed to meet a public policy objective. A conservation easement is a legal agreement tailored to a specific property, that runs with the land in perpetuity (unless otherwise provided in the deed of easement), leaves the land in private ownership (the assessed valuation *may* be reduced, although not always, but the property remains on the tax roll), and usually does not permit public access. Conservation easements are especially well suited to preserving prime agricultural land and scenic areas. One limitation is that the County may not be the holder of the easement. This responsibility must go to a qualified non-profit land trust.

*Necessary Steps:* Approval from COLTPAC to move forward with conservation easements. Board approval. Legal research to determine the best type of agreements. Contractual agreement between Santa Fe County, a landowner and a non-profit land trust. Continual monitoring to ensure that policy objectives are met.

### Donation of Fee Interest of Conservation Easement

With a donation of fee interest of conservation easement, the landowner deeds a conservation easement directly to a non-profit organization and uses the value of the donation as a tax deduction. The County does not need to be involved.

*Necessary Steps:* Contractual agreement between a non-profit organization and a landowner. The County does not need to be involved in this approach.

### Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)

The County and the City of Santa Fe both have policies promoting the development of a TDR program. Such a program would establish criteria or actual “sending sites” (those *from* where development rights are transferred) and “receiving sites” (those *to* where development rights are transferred). Conservation easements may be placed in perpetuity on the sending site. A major objective of a TDR program is to protect open space. Such a program can be used in conjunction with acquisition to protect open space but reduce the overall cost for the County. This approach works especially well in commercial development areas where the cost of land is prohibitive to outright purchase (i.e., Highway Corridors).

TDR’s (or development rights) may also be sold from County-owned open space parcels to produce revenue for management. Development rights should be transferred to designated “receiving sites” in the County. This may be a good interim program before the County and City coordinate a more regional TDR program.

*Necessary Steps:* A market analysis study will be necessary to determine if a TDR program is viable. Then, Santa Fe County must develop a TDR program before this method can be put into place. Board approval required.

### Intergovernmental Transfers (lease or patent)

The County may lease land from the BLM or the State Land Office. The cost for the application is minimal and the land is usually leased to the County as a first step toward patent.

*Necessary Steps:* Community support. Agreements between County and BLM, State or USFS.

### Intergovernmental Cooperation

The County will work cooperatively with cities and towns on open space conservation near or within municipal boundaries. The County and cities may develop intergovernmental agreements to develop master plans or maintenance programs for the properties.

*Necessary Steps:* Agreements between County and other entities.

### Donations

Some open lands conservation may be accomplished through promotion of individual and corporate donations of time and money. Corporations may earmark some of their funds for

charitable donations for land or water conservation or recreation projects. Others may give partial or outright donations of land. Likewise, individuals may be interested in land donations to reduce their tax burden. In most cases, the most successful programs to obtain and preserve recreation and environmentally sensitive lands are conducted by land trusts and other private organizations, which often work in close cooperation with government agencies.

*Necessary Steps:* Public education regarding success of County's open land and trails program and ability to conserve lands. Education regarding financial benefits of donations. Acknowledgement procedure for donators. Board must accept land dedication or donation.

### ***Regulatory Methods***

This Plan does not propose new regulatory methods for open lands protection, however the existing regulations should be reinforced with special attention to the existing trails requirements in the County Land Development Code.

### ***Subdivision Dedication***

Currently when land in the unincorporated area of the county is subdivided for development, the developer must dedicate land for open space, parks and trails. The amount of dedication is determined by a formula in the County Land Development Code. The Code requirements do little to preserve open space or public use, and in fact create isolated fragments of land around the County. This program will integrate with the development regulations and requirements to do more. Lands already required to be set aside for subdivision dedication should, where possible, tie into a system of open land and trails or conserve areas indicated on maps. The County may negotiate with the developer to acquire additional land for purchase, but the intent of this program is not to acquire land which is already required for dedication or take the place of any existing Code requirements, it should reinforce existing Code requirements and create more useful spaces.

### ***Trail Requirements for Subdivisions***

This Plan recommends continuing and enforcing existing subdivision regulations for trails, including the following.

According to the Santa Fe County Land Development Code (Ordinance 1996-10) Subdivision Regulations, where a subdivision is traversed by a trail, "recognized by Santa Fe County," a trail easement shall be platted which conforms substantially with the trail.

The Santa Fe Extraterritorial Subdivision Regulations (Ordinance No. 1991-11), states that "wherever an open space pedestrian or equestrian trail designated by an adopted plan crosses a proposed subdivision, dedication or reservation of an easement for such trail may substitute for required sidewalks if approved by the EZC."

The Santa Fe Urban and Extraterritorial Future Roads Plan, developed by the Arterial Roads Task Force (ARTF) and adopted in 1999 recommends that "roads shall be designed to safely

accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and (in rural areas) equestrian travel.” It also establishes trail network design criteria including the following:

- Trails or sidewalks shall accompany roads;
- Off-road trail systems are preferable;
- New development shall attempt to provide connections to existing trails;
- The quality of the trails shall be appropriate to expected usage;
- Grade-separated or traffic-controlled crossings are desirable.

## PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

### *Process of Evaluating and Prioritizing Projects*

An application review process is in place for projects and lands to be considered for the County Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program. The County first developed this process in 1999 to select projects to be funded with bond proceeds.

Any party, including a landowner or community association, may submit an application to the County to have a parcel of land considered for open space acquisition. Since the program is voluntary, it is necessary for the landowner to be aware that the application is being submitted on his or her behalf if another party submits it. This application seeks relevant information about the parcels, including location, size, estimated price, owner, environmental qualities, liabilities and community support (see Appendix D: Project Application). The County should hold workshops and do more extensive outreach to inform the public and communities about the application process.

The County has not actively solicited landowners to acquire particular parcels of land, but this may be desirable in the future to more comprehensively protect lands identified on the Master Plan to develop a trails system. This approach would still assume a voluntary program and the County would work only with *willing* landowners to acquire land or easements. It also assumes that COLTPAC would review information about parcels as with any other application. The County does not anticipate condemnation of parcels for open space acquisition.



Photo 26: COLTPAC at Wildlife West Nature Park site Visit, Edgewood (L. Ellis)

### *Citizen Committee Evaluation Process*

The County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) established the evaluation criteria to select projects in 1999. COLTPAC then designated seven members from the original 30 to be the Projects Subcommittee. The Board expanded this Committee to nine members in February 2000 and made it the long-term COLTPAC Committee (note: the term of the 30 member Committee expired in September, 1999). This committee of nine visits each parcel, confers with applicants and community representatives, holds public hearings, and evaluates projects based on the criteria below. COLTPAC may elect to work with an informal advisory committee, consisting of experts and advisors from other agencies and organizations (e.g., land trusts, tribal entities, municipalities and other governmental agencies) in the region to review projects. COLTPAC then presents recommendations to the Board.

Projects are reviewed in phases. Phase I was completed in October 1999 and the Board approved all the recommended projects. Phase II is underway in 2000. The County may opt to review projects on an annual or bi-annual basis, depending on availability of funding and necessity to complete projects in a timely manner.

#### *The Criteria*

COLTPAC established a tiered criteria evaluation process and evaluates each proposed project using the criteria (see Appendix E: Criteria for Evaluating Projects).

#### *Threshold Criteria*

The Threshold Criteria are the first filter in the process and they ask questions such as, is the landowner willing to enter into negotiations and does the property appear to have public benefit? The committee answers with a “yes” or “no”. In the case of disagreement between committee members, a majority vote decides whether a project passes the threshold criteria.

#### *General Criteria*

The second step in the process is the General Criteria. Each evaluator gives a score from zero to five for each criterion. COLTPAC first scores and then weights the project (with the weights indicated), and averages for all seven evaluators. With the General Criteria the Committee considers such aspects as financial considerations, community benefit, need for resource protection, potential for open lands and trails system enhancement and aesthetics.

#### *Specific Criteria*

The specific criteria are the detailed questions about the significant resources on the land, including Cultural-Historical, Natural and Recreation and Trails, presented in Chapter 3. COLTPAC gives a score for each specific criterion. The Committee then averages the scores, adds them to General Criteria scores with a ratio of 60:40 (General/Specific) and totals scores for each projects. The committee then ranks all the projects.

### Relating Criteria to the Vision Statement

As a last step, after evaluating and scoring and ranking all projects, COLTPAC considers whether the mix of projects achieves a distribution around the County. At this point the Committee develops a comprehensive list of projects to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners and presents the list in a public meeting.

### ***Board Authorization to Proceed with Negotiations and Purchase of Property***

Upon the recommendation of COLTPAC, the Board decides whether to approve projects so that County staff may proceed with negotiations to purchase property. Property purchased must be consistent with the bond language. At this time County legal staff is handling negotiations and has developed a standard contract. Negotiations are based on voluntary agreement between the landowners and the County. The County will not pay more than fair market value for land, so typically an appraisal is the first step in negotiations. Typically, the County and landowner agree to a joint appraisal which helps to establish a fair market value for purchase. Prior to the purchase of properties the County also undertakes environmental, cultural and mineral title research of properties. The Board must also approve final purchase agreements.

### ***Use Restrictions***

Properties that the County purchases through bond proceeds need to be “flagged” as such and in some cases may require a deed restriction. The County should describe the intended use for the property (as outlined in Chapter 6). The County is working on developing an ordinance to establish procedures for changing the use of the property or disposal of the property.

### ***Sale of Property***

The County purchases property for the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program with the intent that it remain open space in perpetuity. Each property acquired goes through an extensive public review process and has support prior to the acquisition. However, in the event that a sale or property is proposed, such proposal should be submitted to COLTPAC, the County Development Review Committee (CDRC) or other applicable local development review committee, and then proceed with recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for a final decision. Two public hearings should take place at least six months apart, so the public has an opportunity to voice opinions about the sale.



## CHAPTER 5 - ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCING OF PROGRAM



*Photo: 27: Commissioner Gonzales and staff at April 1999 COLTPAC meeting (H. Blackwell)*

### COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

#### *Current Staff*

The Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program is initially being administered through the Planning Division of the Land Use Department. This Division has compiled this Plan and is involved with community planning and coordination of the COLTPAC Committee. The Legal Department has also been greatly involved with real estate negotiations. In the future the Program will, however, need to operate with an interdepartmental approach with the County Manager, General Services, Finance, Attorney, Sheriff and possibly Public Works Departments more. The County has assembled a team of department leaders to address such issues.

Currently one planner works full-time on the program and two additional staff work part-time—a planner and an attorney. This level of staffing is adequate in the early stages of the program, although maintenance issues are already arising which require support from other Departments, especially General Services and Sheriffs.

#### *Future Staff Needs*

An analysis of other open space programs in the region indicates that staff needs are equivalent to two Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) staff persons per 1,000 acres of land which the County owns. By the year 2001, Santa Fe County will likely acquire up to 2,000 acres of land. At that time, the County will require four FTE staff, responsible for duties of resource planning, maintenance, patrol and enforcement, garbage removal, volunteer coordination, and real estate transactions. Table 4 (Proposed Budget and Staffing for County Open Lands and Trails Program) indicates the growing needs for additional FTE staff. These figures may be low to provide for all of the above tasks. Additional FTEs may be necessary.

**Table 4: Proposed Annual Budget and Staffing for County Open Lands and Trails Program**

Acres in County System			Budget			Staff Requirements			
Schedule	New Acres Acquired	Total Acres	Maintenance Budget* (\$100/acre)	For Equip.	For staff	County FTE existing	Proposed Total FTE positions (2 FTE/1000 acres)	FTE positions to add	Comments
<b>IMMEDIATE NEEDS</b>									
by July 2000	1250	1250	\$125,000	\$25,000	\$100,000	1.5	2.5	1.0	Existing staff are in Land Use and Legal departments. Needed: FTE in General Services.
by July 2001	750	2000	\$200,000	\$40,000	\$160,000	2.5	4.0	1.5	
<b>SHORT TERM NEEDS</b>									
schedule unknown ("for every additional 1000 acres acquired")	1000	3000	\$300,000	\$60,000	\$240,000	4.0	6.0	2.0	Establish Division to better coordinate staff or designate a "team leader" with budget.

**Assumptions:**

\*Budget does not include funding for acquisition or improvements.

2 Full Time Equivalent ("FTE") staff persons per 1000 acres (this includes planning, maintenance, legal, etc.)

\$100 per acre budget (includes operating costs and salaries).

\$40,000 average FTE staff cost.

### *Establish a Division*

By the year 2001 it may be most efficient to combine all the staff into one Division under Land Use or General Services [CHECK DEPT NAME] with strong ties to community planning and development review as well as recreation planning and maintenance. As the Program continues to grow, this level of coordination will be most effective for budgeting and managing parks and open land. Senior staff in the County have proposed a new Parks, Open Lands and Trails Division in Spring 2000.

## FINANCING

Table 4 also indicates the budgetary needs of this growing Program. It is projected that the cost to maintain the open land and trails properties will be approximately \$100 per acre. So for every 1,000 acres of land the cost will be \$100,000. This figure includes staff salaries (assumed to be \$40,000 per FTE) and equipment costs. This is a conservative estimate based on comparing other Programs in the southwest and Rocky Mountain Region. The average cost of those other Programs is \$149 per acre. The budget does not include the cost of land acquisitions.

### *Funding for Property Acquisition*

#### General Obligation Bond

Funding for open space acquisition in the County currently is available primarily from the 1998 \$12 million General Obligation Bond that created the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program. This funding can be used for acquiring real estate and any associated real estate costs and for some minor improvements, but not for long-term management or maintenance of projects. Funds from any approved sale of property in the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program should be returned to the program fund.

COLIPAC does not recommend a budget for property acquisition out of the \$12 million, with the following conditions and explanations:

- Let the quality of projects and the criteria selection process determine where funding should be spent; but,
- Encourage multiple use, multi-resource properties; and
- Distribute a mix of projects fairly throughout the County; and
- Avoid a local concentration of projects.

Another bond issue may succeed with voters as early as fall 2000 if the County has spent at least half of the original \$12 million and has met expectations of residents. A future bond should include language to specifically provide funding for improvements and maintenance, if possible.

#### Other Supplemental Funds to Acquire Property

Grants, such as TEA-21–Scenic Byways and Recreational Trails, Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF), and other private and government grants provide an occasional supplemental

source of funding to leverage the County's limited funds, often with a four to one match. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also provides grants for river restoration projects. Staff should actively pursue such funding, especially L&WCF funds which have recently been re-appropriated. First the County must bring old projects into compliance.

### ***Stewardship Funding***

Currently a minimal amount of operating costs of the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program are funded through the General Fund, primarily through the Planning Division and the County Manager's office. The County needs to establish a source of funding for maintenance costs of the program, however the General Services Department at the County is responsible for existing parks.

### ***Sale of Development Rights***

Selling development rights on County open land parcels may increase revenue for maintenance of properties. A market analysis is necessary to determine what developers would be willing to pay for development rights. In addition, "receiving zones" need to be established, so that development rights may be transferred to appropriate locations.

### ***Leases***

Through agricultural leases the County may raise a small amount of revenue to cover some maintenance costs. More research is necessary to determine lease rates.

### ***User Permits and Fees***

Permits for commercial recreation operators and individual backcountry use may increase County revenue as well and make it possible to manage resources so they are not exploited. The County may also consider assessing higher user fees to non-county residents, identified by license plates. This may be a high cost program. It will be necessary to study to determine whether revenues exceed costs.

### ***Increased Property Revenues From Adjacent Properties***

Over time, properties adjacent to open lands may appraise and sell for higher values, at which time the property tax assessment should be adjusted accordingly. Other open lands or agricultural lands should, however, be exempt from property tax increases.

### ***Requirement for Landowner Donation***

In all future negotiations for property acquisition, the County will require that participating landowners donate five percent of the purchase price of the property. This money shall be placed in an account to fund capital improvements and maintenance of properties acquired.

### *Leverage Funds Through Partnerships and Donations*

Developing partnerships with other government agencies, private and non-profit groups will be essential to the success of the Program. Pooling resources and expertise is an important step toward achieving project goals. Many grant programs require partnerships and/or matching funds prior to granting money for open space protection efforts. More partners means more leveraging capabilities. In addition, private groups involved with land conservation can help educate the public and raise awareness of the benefits of conservation strategies. These groups can assist in developing public consensus around the vision of the community. Some groups, such as land trusts, may be able to assist with pre-acquisition and negotiations, and may be the appropriate holder of conservation easements.

Properties where a landowner may be willing to donate a portion of land value may also help stretch County resources and such opportunities should be taken advantage of whenever possible.



*Photo 28: COLTPAC Meeting (J. McGowan)*



## CHAPTER 6 – LAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

### RESOURCE / ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PLANNING PHILOSOPHY

The importance of management of the natural systems and cultural-historical resources on open land parcels is second only to the acquisition of the lands themselves. A philosophy of land conservation is essential to the County's stewardship of the land. Otherwise, the cumulative impact from large numbers of park users will eventually degrade the natural systems.

Identifying the natural and cultural resources and developing strategies that are based on an "ecosystem management" approach may accomplish good stewardship. The key to protecting or enhancing any of the wildlife or plant species lies in protecting, conserving, restoring or enhancing the entire biological system in which they exist. Protecting cultural value is also dependent on an understanding of the landscape and history. This means doing inventories and understanding the system and limits of acceptable change for each parcel.

This Plan recommends developing a management plan for each parcel of land acquired to ensure the protection and enhancement of the resources first and foremost. Through these efforts, the County will manage the open land in a manner that protects our natural and cultural resources, provides a quality recreational experience where appropriate, and provides for the safety of the public. The County must also work with partners and find innovative and efficient



ways to stretch the limited management funds available. Conflicts will inevitably arise between the protection of natural resources and the demand for public use of the land. Recreation activities extract a toll from the natural systems, some more than others. Managing these conflicts necessitates compromise. The County and partners should consider alternative scenarios for development, with protection of resources taking priority.

*Photo 29: Signs Educating Visitors About Wildlife (L. Ellis)*

One key to mitigating these conflicts is to clearly state the primary purpose for which a parcel of land is acquired. Every parcel may not entail public access at all times. The County will place deed restrictions or other protective measures on properties to ensure conservation in perpetuity. Restrictions should depend on intended use of property and necessity for flexibility for trade or sale to another conservation organization. The purpose of the land (or Classification) will guide the level of development and use on that landscape. Thus, the following classification system is suggested:

#### ***Land Classification***

Land in the County open land and trails system should be categorized for management purposes. By classifying the types of open land, the County can better determine the type of management approach for an area. It should be noted that these categories are not mutually

exclusive, since part of individual parks may be classified and managed as combinations of these categories, depending on the characteristics of the site and the needs of the community. For example, the Cerrillos Hills Historical Park contains conservation areas and trail corridors.

### **Preserves**

*Purpose:* Preserves protect the underlying natural or cultural resources on the land.  
*Management:* Preserves are lands essentially removed from public use to protect the resources. They have limited, controlled public access points, with public use restricted to rare occasions when a need for access is scientifically or educationally-based. The County or partners manage the resources to meet the particular management needs of each preserve.

### **Conservation Areas**

*Purpose:* Conservation Areas sometimes have natural resource management needs that are seasonally related, such as nesting seasons or migratory periods or unique cultural or historical features. Usually the public can use these areas during all other times of the year.  
*Management:* Conservation areas may have limited public access or may be used seasonally. Public use may be limited in some cases for the protection of rare plants or wildlife or cultural sites, and are always limited to passive recreation uses such as equestrian use, walking, hiking, photography and bird watching. No motorized vehicles or mountain bikes are permitted. Educational interpretive sites may be appropriate.

### **Regional Park Lands**

*Purpose:* Regional Parks conserve and enhance natural, cultural, and/or scenic resources. However, the public will also use these lands for passive recreation and environmental education.  
*Management:* Regional Parks are managed for public use, with the purpose of providing a variety of opportunities to the public in designated areas. The parks are relatively undeveloped and uses center on passive recreation, but active uses such as mountain bikes may be allowed in designated areas. Typically, the park centers on the creation of a multi-use trail network and may include support facilities such as restrooms and parking. All development is done with sensitivity for the underlying landscape.

### **Agricultural Lands**

*Purpose:* Agriculture Lands are established to maintain viable working landscapes, including farms and ranches.  
*Management:* To maintain these landscapes, the County may allow limited, controlled or no public access. Multiple use trails may be provided, depending on the needs of the landowner. The County may use other conservation tools in addition to acquisition, such as conservation easements, leaseback programs and purchase of development rights to retain working landscapes. Maintaining water rights with the property is essential for a viable working landscape.

**Trail Corridors, Trailheads and Visitor Areas**

*Purpose:* Trail corridors and trailheads provide lands for a linked, non-motorized, multiple-use trail system (on-and off road) which provides an alternative transportation network and links major destinations, open land parcels, communities and public lands throughout the County.

*Management:* Design trail corridors for public use with sensitivity to wildlife, natural resources, human safety, agricultural needs and adjacent private landowners. Create partnerships for trail development and management and enforce rules. Develop specific trails for ADA access. Some limited motorized off-road vehicle trails may also be established for recreation in specific areas.

**Buffer Areas**

*Purpose:* Buffer areas are the historic open lands between urbanizing areas that help to define community boundaries and provide an important physical and psychological benefit to residents. These areas help break up a pattern of continuous urban development. The uses depend on the desires of the community residents.

*Management:* Buffer areas may involve any of the above management strategies, depending on the resources located in the area and designated uses and desires of the adjacent communities.

**Table 5: Management of Public Access on County Open Lands**

Resource or Land Classification ↓	Closed to Public	Seasonal Closures	Planned / Managed Access	Full Access
<i>Private conservation easements</i> (depends on the terms with the landowner)	◆		◆ depends on terms	
<b>Preserves</b> rare plants or animal species archaeological and historic sites	◆ depends on resource		◆ tours possible	
<b>Acquired Lands:</b> <b>Conservation Areas</b> Mountains, foothills, streams, arroyos and rivers and lakes Grasslands Cemeteries			◆	
<b>Regional Park Lands</b> Natural / scenic resources			◆	◆
<b>Agricultural Lands</b> Farms Ranches	◆ depends on resource		◆ depends on terms	
<b>Trail Corridors, Trailheads and Visitor Areas</b> Non-motorized trails				◆ on trails
<b>Buffer Areas</b> Depends on community -- may be passive or active uses			◆	

## MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS

The development of management plans for County open lands will be an on-going long-term effort involving local communities, County staff and other organizations to do data collection, inventory, education, recommendations, implementation and monitoring. Management plans combine the goals, needs, requirements, methods and techniques of the various natural resource disciplines. The management plans may include some or all of the following strategies, based on individual park requirements:

- Forest Management
- Weed Management
- Species Management
- Trails and Resource Management
- Habitat or River Restoration
- Agricultural Production and Grazing Management



*Photo 30: La Cienega Community Open Land Supporters (L. Ellis)*

When the County acquires lands for conservation, parks or trails, the following actions and considerations will mostly likely be necessary as part of a capital improvements and management plan, especially if the property will entail public access:

1. Limit access to the property until a plan is completed (County/Partners).
2. Develop vision and goals for the open land (public input).
3. Inventory resources and classify areas (or management zones) within the property (public input).
  - a. closure areas, if relevant
  - b. public access areas and trails, if relevant
4. Identify short-term management activities for Phase I (i.e., temporary site protection).

5. Identify necessary improvements and management activities for both short-term and long-term management, including but not limited to:
  - a. Conduct archaeological and ecological inventories and determine long-term resource monitoring strategy
  - b. Decide what improvements are necessary for visitor management protection and safety.
  - c. Determine which County departments and other partners will be responsible.
  - d. Decide an education and interpretation strategy.
  - e. Design areas to be constructed, including trails, trailheads and signs.
  - f. Determine whether permits should be necessary.
  - g. Decide long-term facilities management strategy.
6. Complete short-term improvements, signs or fencing on the property (County/Partners).
7. Work with COLTPAC to ensure that the intent of the Management Plan fits the overall program. Present the plan to other County staff and approve the management plan through the budget process (County).
8. Complete other improvements.
9. Open appropriate areas of the property for public use, in phases if appropriate (County/Partners).

### *Properties in Need of Plans*



The County has acquired several properties that need improvements and management plans including the following:

- Cerrillos Hills Historical Park,
- La Cienega/Cieneguilla Park, and the
- Madrid Wilderness Area
- Rio en Medio

Also in need of a management plan is the Santa Fe Rail Trail.

*Photo 31: Madrid Wilderness Area (L. Ellis)*

## PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS

The County has limited funds for development. Any improvements will emphasize passive recreation use and protection of resources and will be consistent with requirements for protection of resources. Not every property will have improvements, but all will be identified as a County open land or trail parcel through signs.

### *Fencing Properties*

Fencing will be important in some cases to demarcate property boundaries, focus access toward public trails and trailheads, control grazing animals and keep visitors from trespassing on neighboring properties. Fencing will be probably necessary at a minimum between County open lands and adjacent private lands, unless the terrain prevents crossing or adjacent landowners do not desire fencing. The County will only construct fences when absolutely necessary and will make every attempt to integrate the fence into the landscape to minimize visual impact.

### *Fencing for Safety*

Hazardous sites, such as mine shafts, should be fenced or filled as appropriate and consistent with management plan objectives.

### *Motorized Vehicle Closures*

Physical barricades to prevent vehicles from entering open lands or trails may require more heavy-duty fencing and gates or other approaches. For example, large rocks, bollards or berms may work to limit vehicular entry.

### *Sensitive Sites*

Some resource areas or sites may need fencing to protect from damage by livestock and people.

### *Signs*



*Photo 32: Trailhead sign example (P. Cusumano)*

The County will develop a standard logo and look for signs on open lands and trails. Each property at the very least will need an identification sign. However, communities may recommend different materials and types of signs that fit the character of the open land parcel. COLTPAC also recommends using recycled materials for signs and markers whenever possible.

### *Restoration Projects*

Some properties will be in need of grassland or river restoration work. The County will seek appropriate expertise and funding for such projects as identified through management plans. Restoring the Santa Fe River is a regional priority and federal funds are available for applicable projects.

### *Trail Building and Trailheads*

The County will ask open lands visitors stay on designated trails to minimize trampling of resources. Likewise, visitors will be only allowed to park cars at designated trailheads. Some trails may be more developed than others to allow access for those with disabilities. However, a majority of trails will be natural-surfaced trails for non-motorized use. Many will be constructed through volunteer efforts.

Trails and trailheads will be constructed in ways that appear natural and fit the character of the site and that do not impact archaeological and ecological sites on the properties. Trailhead facilities may include parking, trash receptacles, signs and restrooms, depending on budget limitations, desires of local stewardship groups and availability of other sources of funds.



*Photo 33: Volunteers working on the Santa Fe Rail Trail (J. McGowan)*

## STEWARDSHIP

### *Use Permits*

Regular open lands and trail visitors will not be required to pay fees or hold permits. However, the County may consider implementing a fee system for out-of-county visitors in the future (i.e., \$2 per visit or \$20 per year) as determined by vehicle license plates. The County may however develop a permit system for special activities. The County is also researching the fiscal impacts of developing permits such as:

- Special Use Permits;
- Research Permits; and
- Grazing Permits.

### *Leave-No-Trace Principles*

While regulations will dictate appropriate visitor behavior, the County will place a strong emphasis on educating visitors about maintenance and keeping the landscape clean and protecting resources and the values – natural, historical and cultural – that are to be protected.

All visitors should:

- Travel on trails and stay in designated areas;
- Dispose of waste properly–“pack-it-in; pack-it-out”;
- Leave what they find–rocks, plants and cultural objects;
- Respect wildlife by controlling pets and not chasing or feeding wildlife; and
- Respect other visitors–be courteous and yield to others. Avoid making loud noises.

### *Rules and Enforcement*

The County is presently developing an ordinance that would make it unlawful to do the following, unless posted otherwise as determined by a management plan:

- Dispose trash;
- Collect, remove or destroy objects, on or adjacent to land;
- Trap, feed, disturb or kill wildlife;
- Discharge firearms or fireworks or crossbows;
- Allow domestic pets to be out-of-control;
- Camp, except in designated areas where permitted;
- Use land after sunset and before sunrise, except in designated areas;
- Build ground fires;
- Operate motor vehicles, except on designated roadways;
- Park cars, except in designated areas;
- Park overnight;
- Advertise;
- Use land for commercial purposes, without permission;
- Amplify sound, without special permit;
- Consume alcohol, without special permit; or
- Enter “seasonally closed” or “closed” areas.

### *Yielding Right-of-Way*

All trail users should yield to equestrians. Bicycles should yield to pedestrians.

### *Enforcement and Penalties*

Mandatory fines will be levied for first offense, second offense, etc. The County will research appropriate fine structures and determine the appropriate role for the County Sheriff's department.

### *Protecting Adjacent Property Owners*

Some citizens have expressed concern regarding potential impacts to adjacent property owners. Negative impacts may include litter, vandalism, theft and trespassing. COLTPAC has recommended the following measures for all County land acquisitions:

- Fence properties when open land visitors may become a nuisance to adjacent landowners;
- Adopt strong rules regarding vandalism and trespassing and enforce them through mandatory fines;
- Develop a funding source to remove financial burdens from participating property owners for liability. State laws clearly protect owners in trails-related issues, however even if owners win a lawsuit, participation can be costly and stressful. A separate fund and non-profit entity outside the County should be developed to protect adjacent property owners from any liability concerns; and
- Organize a voluntary countywide entity to coordinate local trail maintenance efforts and ensure enforcement.

### *Partnerships*

Furthering relationships with conservation organizations and local communities will enhance the County's stewardship program. Whenever possible the County will seek partnerships to manage parks and trails with federal agencies, state agencies, cities, non-profit organizations and community groups. Partnerships will require Joint Powers of Agreement, Memorandums of Understanding and other formal contracts.

### *Water Rights*

Maintaining water rights with acquired properties is a goal of COLTPAC's, especially for agricultural properties.

### *Property Leases*

In the event that the County purchases property and leases it back to a farmer or rancher, the lessee will be responsible for maintenance of the property.

### *Volunteer Programs*

The County is currently working with the National Park Service RTCA program to develop a stewardship program that identifies possible volunteer programs. The County should hire a volunteer coordinator to help manage volunteers, local and regional efforts, and interagency coordination. In addition such a person would be responsible for an adopt-a-trail program and clean-up events and other trail building, fencing, sign installation, vegetation planting and

restoration activities. The County has successfully organized such activities in the past, on the Rail Trail for example.

### ***Education and Public Outreach***

Managing resources and providing for a safe and enjoyable visitor experience at County open lands and trails will also depend on public education and information about the program. The County should make such information available to the public in the form of brochures, on-site interpretive stations and other public events and newsletters. The County will produce an annual report and update on purchases and the status of projects. In addition, the County will work with local partners to publicize the opening of new open lands and trails.



*Photo 34: Rail Trail event (J. McGowan)*

## CHAPTER 7 - PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

### SCHEDULE FOR PLAN UPDATES

This Plan is intended to be a living document to guide the County in its management of the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program. This means that periodically the County will need to reexamine the goals and priorities and determine what gains it has made. In particular the maps and data that comprise them should be analyzed, the Master Plan Map and the budget and management policies. Sections of this Plan should be updated **every two years**, if necessary, in cooperation with the County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee. The next plan update should take place in 2002.

### DATA NEEDS

#### *General*

1. Identify land ownership in areas of significant resources as identified on the master plan.
2. Identify all potential federal and state land acquisition parcels.

#### *Parks, Recreation and Trails*

1. Identify land ownership data for proposed trail corridors.
3. Identify lands dedicated to the County or public in subdivisions.
4. Identify deeds, plats and site plans for existing County parks and County-owned lands and map in GIS.

#### *Cultural-Historical Areas*

1. Identify cultural places of value (community planning).
2. Survey and identify cultural-historical landscapes present in the County and give clear definitions of the properties associated with those landscapes.
3. Document community histories and historical traditions relative to open space of common lands.
4. Identify all conservation and archaeological easements in the County.
5. Identify historical trails, roads and railroad lines.
6. Identify agricultural lands and ownership in the northern part of the County. Include acequia systems.

## *Natural Areas*

Much of the information necessary to make a definitive evaluation on natural areas is currently not available. Therefore, what the Plan proposes *at this time* represents the areas that need protection based on available information, and public discussions. This Plan recommends updating the following data:

1. Use FEMA-designated flood plains to replace the current river corridor data, which only distinguishes major and minor watercourses.
2. Show major vegetation types (using GAP digitized information), topography, unique geological features (such as recharge zones or cinder cones). Many of these elements are available in GIS format—topography and vegetation types, but were not included in this map because they were either unavailable or too complicated to display.
3. Include GIS format geology maps.
4. *Note:* Watershed boundaries are not mapped since they do not reveal significant new information for the purposes of the Natural Areas Map. If this information were accompanied with additional hydrologic analysis, then watershed boundaries would be helpful. In addition, the scale for mapping the watershed boundaries will be dependent on the questions that need to be answered.

## *Recommendations to Provide Data Needs*

1. Hold community town hall meetings and gather through community planning efforts.
2. Sponsor community stewardship programs.
3. Sponsor community volunteer archaeological and historical survey crews.
4. Complete a synthesis of archaeological and historical resources for County representation.
5. Conduct GIS analysis of under-protected ecological communities in Santa Fe County.
6. Do further research and data development of County records.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The County should produce annual reports on the progress toward accomplishing plan goals for acquisition and management of properties to the Board of County Commissioners in a public meeting. These findings should also be published in a flier or regular newsletter for circulation.

## FUTURE OF COLTPAC

In 1999, COLTPAC members recommended that the County establish a more permanent citizen's committee that will continue to advise the County on this program. In February 2000, the Board passed a Resolution (No. 2000- 14) to expand the Committee and make it permanent. COLTPAC also recommends that staff keep all former COLTPAC members abreast of events (i.e., Board meetings) through mailings and to encourage additional public participation.

The purpose of the long-term COLTPAC will be to:

- Lay the groundwork for an ongoing program lasting far beyond the expenditure of the first \$12 million, as called for in the Vision Statement.
- Continue to advise the County on the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program, and approve and recommend priority acquisition and improvement projects to the Planning Division and the Board.
- Provide financial oversight and an annual audit as required in the ballot approved by voters November 3, 1998 bond.
- Work with staff to implement this Plan and management recommendations.
- Review and update this Plan every two years.
- Reexamine and, if necessary, revise the criteria for property selection as the program continues. (Note: Project application submissions will respond to, and will be evaluated on, the criteria in place at the time of the submission deadline).
- Update research on natural areas, cultural-historical areas and recreation and trails and provide findings in the form of reports and maps.
- Work with county staff to provide public outreach.
- Review management plans proposed for properties.

Committee members shall be volunteers, and shall serve a maximum term of two years each. The terms shall be staggered.

To provide continuity with the current program, the Board of County Commissioners will maintain the original appointments from COLTPAC in 2000 until their terms expire.

- Other interested members shall submit letters of interest to the County.
- The distribution of north, central and south shall be similar to the original COLTPAC (at a minimum, two members shall be from each of the regions: north, central and south).



*Photo 35: Black Mesa (A. Nelson)*



## GLOSSARY

**Active Recreation Uses:** developed open lands and facilities (i.e., including, but not limited to soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, running tracks, paved bicycle trails, volleyball and tennis, off-road vehicle parks). Active recreation implies a high level of human use of a site.

**Agriculture:** the cultivation and production of crops and raising of livestock (*Growth Management Plan* definition).

**Archaeological and Historical Sites:** Sites that are at least 75 years old and represent the historical antecedents of sacred places, lifeways, cultural places and traditional communities (for example, old Pueblo agricultural fields identified by rock-lined cobble grid gardens, and archaeological villages like Arroyo Hondo and the Agua Fria School House).

**Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC):** An area designated by the Bureau of Land Management which contains nationally significant cultural resources as well as riparian, wildlife and scenic values.

**Buffer:** an area designed to separate two communities (as defined on COLTPAC plan). Open space along the exterior boundaries of a development or community or along a road which serves as a transitional area between such development and adjacent land uses. The location of buffers to maintain community identity or separation between existing communities and new development may be designated by community plans as well as this Plan and implemented through a variety of creative design or development standards (*Growth Management Plan* definition).

**Community:** a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together in a specific locality within the larger area of the County. Communities have (or develop over time) common institutions, both formal and informal, which serve the practical and social needs of residents. These range from schools, churches, and local governing bodies to community associations and volunteer organizations such as fire departments and fraternal clubs which provide community-wide services or programs (*Growth Management Plan* definition).

**Community Planning:** detailed problem solving in local communities that involves local residents, property owners and local business people who identify and prioritize needs, formulate plans, and participate with staff if appropriate in drafting ordinances for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners (*Growth Management Plan* definition).

**Conservation Easement:** a property interest or right granted by the owner of land to another party to maintain or limit the use of that land in a natural undeveloped state.

**Gateway:** a natural or planned transition or entryway between areas (*Growth Management Plan* definition).

**Geologic Features:** recharge zones for aquifers, unique rock formations

**Lifeway:** A way or manner of living and landscapes that represent land use practices that have historical continuity and meaning, or working landscapes (for example, ranching, farming, mining, herding, commerce and transportation and homesteading).

**Open Space:** parcels of land or portions of parcels designated through the community planning or open space planning process and approved by the Board which will remain undeveloped and natural or with restricted development for environmental, cultural, resource, community or recreation purposes in perpetuity through various legal and voluntary means (*Growth Management Plan* definition).

**Passive Recreation Uses:** Relatively undeveloped lands (i.e., unpaved trails for non-motorized use, picnic tables and interpretive sites). Passive recreation implies a lower level of human use of a site. A management plan would address levels of human use on sites.

**Plant Community Types:** Groups of plants that grow together in recognizable units and are characteristic of different habitats such as riparian areas, (e.g., cottonwood-willow community), montane areas (e.g., spruce-fir community) and deserts, (e.g., blue gramma-cholla community).

**Primary Trail:** This Plan proposes the primary trail corridors as the main regional trail system for which the County will acquire easements.

**Rare or Endangered Species:** Animals and or plants whose existence is threatened, as defined by State or Federal agencies.

**Riparian Area:** Ecological communities, existing along river banks, streams, springs, lakes or wetlands, that contain unique vegetation and wildlife habitat due to its association with bodies of water; serve as perennial, ephemeral, or intermittent sources of surface or subsurface water; provide habitat for animal species; serve important cleansing and recharge functions for waterways; and, are referred to in the Southwest as bosques.

**Sacred Places:** Represent places of spiritual meaning (for example, churches, moradas, shrines, cemeteries and graves, and petroglyphs).

**Secondary Trail:** Local trails that will connect to a primary trails system.

**Significant:** Having meaning; having or likely to have influence or effect; important.

**Traditional:** Beliefs, customs and practices of a living community of people that have been passed through generations.

**Watersheds:** Entire regions in which the precipitation collects and flows into various tributaries or waterways with each tributary eventually draining into the mainstem of a river.

**Waterways:** Open water, such as lakes and ponds; riparian areas, or relating to the banks of a natural watercourse; and rivers and intermittent streams.

**Wetland:** (use US Army Corps of Engineers Definition)

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## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A: 1998 GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND

#### **Ballot Language Approved by Santa Fe County Voters, November 1998**

Shall the County of Santa Fe, New Mexico be authorized to issue its General Obligation Bonds, in one or more series, in an aggregate principal amount not exceeding \$12,000,000 to acquire necessary real estate for open space trails, and related areas and facilities within the County to establish the Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program in order to preserve historic and natural areas, including mountains and foothills, arroyos and river parkways, sacred sites, trails, and high desert habitats containing wildlife and native plants and to provide neighborhood parks and play fields for families and children, which Program shall be subject to annual audit and review by an independent citizen oversight committee, said bonds to be issued and sold as permitted by law?

APPENDIX B: SANTA FE COUNTY LAND OWNERSHIP TABLE

<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Sq. Miles</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Federal Lands</b>			
BLM	97.5	62,389.8	5.1%
BLM Exchange	11.3	7,227.5	0.6%
USFS	374.3	239,575.7	19.6%
USFS Exchange	3.0	1,916.8	0.2%
Corps of Engineers	4.4	2,829.4	0.2%
National Guard	0.5	312.3	0.0%
National Park Service	2.3	1,480.3	0.1%
<b>Total Federal Lands</b>	<b>493.3</b>	<b>315,731.8</b>	<b>25.8%</b>
<b>State Lands</b>			
State Land Office	124.5	79,662.7	6.5%
State Game and Fish	0.2	156.8	0.0%
Hyde State Park	0.5	348.2	0.0%
State Penitentiary	1.0	645.1	0.1%
<b>Total State Lands</b>	<b>126.3</b>	<b>80,812.8</b>	<b>6.6%</b>
<b>County Lands</b>			
County Landfill	0.7	443.5	0.0%
<b>County / City Recreation Center</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>1,845.8</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>City of Santa Fe Open Space</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1,038.9</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Pueblo Lands</b>	<b>142.0</b>	<b>90,878.7</b>	<b>7.4%</b>
<b>Private Lands</b>			
Traded from Feds	3.4	2,150.4	0.2%
Inholdings	8.2	5,237.1	0.4%
Private	19.5	12,502.4	1.0%
Unknown	1.9	1,188.5	0.1%
Other Private Lands	1,111.3	711,210.9	58.2%
<b>Total Private</b>	<b>1,144.2</b>	<b>732,289.3</b>	<b>59.9%</b>
<b>Total of County</b>	<b>1,911.0</b>	<b>1,223,040.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## APPENDIX C: VOLUNTARY VS. REGULATORY APPROACHES TO LAND CONSERVATION

### PROS

#### Acquisition

- More permanent protection of land occurs if it is purchased and managed effectively. Can be successful on a case-by-case basis.
- Lands acquired usually raise the value of nearby property, increasing tax rolls.
- Reduces conflicts over conservation approaches because public bears the cost of conservation.

#### Conservation Easements and other Landowner Approaches

- Can be more restrictive and more permanent than regulations.
- It is the choice of the landowner whether or not to conserve land. May benefit landowners who opt for easements through tax incentives.
- Reduces conflicts over conservation methods.
- Reduces cost of acquisition and management to public sector and keeps the land on the tax rolls.

#### Regulatory Approaches

- Can be effective in preventing development in sensitive areas, controlling patterns of development and pollution.
- May raise fees to pay for improvements and conservation measures with responsibility placed on developers.
- Performance zoning may give developers more options and incentives to tailor development to fit the site and community needs.
- When unplanned development is not permitted – costly disasters, such as floods, may be prevented.

### CONS

- Costly and impossible to protect *all* resources this way.
- Reduces the amount of land on the tax rolls.
- May be politically impractical.

- Doesn't work for lands where the public desires access, such as parks or trails. Land is still in private ownership.
- "Public" doesn't have as much influence or say in which lands or resources should be protected.

- Conservation zoning is highly controversial with property-rights advocates.
- Some people are concerned that regulations place a burden on private landowners.
- Conventional zoning has been inflexible and not tailored to individual site conditions, often leading to undesirable development results.
- Land conserved through zoning is subject to change through the political process or economic influences.

APPENDIX D: PROJECT APPLICATION  
Santa Fe County - Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program

**Application Form (Part I)**

**Instructions:** Please print or type all entries and return completed form to:  
Santa Fe County, Land Use Department  
102 Grant Ave, P.O. Box 276, Santa Fe, NM 87504-0276  
(505) 986-6225 fax (505) 986-6389

1. Common Name of Property (if applicable):
  
2. Name and Address of Property Owner(s) (applicant required to research this information in the County Assessor's office and contact owners):
  
3. Negotiation Status (is landowner willing to enter into negotiations with the County?)
  
4. Do you know of any problems with the title for this property?
  
5. General Description of Property and Unique Resources of the Site:
  
6. Location of Property, Including Township, Range and Section, Nearest Road(s) and Directions to reach the Property:
  
7. Approximate Size of Property (in acres):
  
8. Present Use(s):
  
9. Proposed Open Land or Trail Use(s):
  
10. Approximate Costs for Santa Fe County
  
11. Potential Sources of Other Public and/or Private Funding, or Conservation and Management Approaches (other than the County General Obligation Bond):

Application Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: (street or P.O. box) \_\_\_\_\_  
City /State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

## **Application Checklist (Part II)**

(Revised 9/8/99)

Please attach descriptions for the categories listed below. Limit your answers to one page, or less, for each one. Provide applicable documentation for all categories to support claims.

*Note: Santa Fe County will not participate in a purchase over fair market value, as determined by a qualified appraisal. A qualified appraisal will be done if the project is prioritized by COLTPAC and approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Applicants will need to provide a binding commitment from the landowner (an option or purchase and sale agreement) within 90 days after a grant is awarded.*

\_\_\_\_\_ **Basic Property Details:**

- List the purchase price
- List the approximate acreage
- Provide a legal description, if you have one (optional)
- Provide an appraisal, if one has been done within 60 days (optional)
- Describe any existing structures on the property, if applicable

\_\_\_\_\_ **Negotiation Status.** Provide name of property owner or representative and evidence that the owner or representative is willing to negotiate or enter into an agreement (a letter).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Site Map.** Provide a map (USGS 7.5 topo or better - one original) of the proposed project site. Show property boundary and any public land boundaries (if applicable). Show all current and proposed developments (roads, streets, easements, etc.), natural features (streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands) and mode of access to the property (public road, right of way, easement, etc.).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Area Map.** Provide a map of the surrounding area which displays current land uses (agriculture, rangeland, forest, pasture, development, etc.) and any proposed developments. Include any important land use features which may influence the project site. Please also identify other protected lands in the area and their ownership (i.e., local government, state or federal).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Water Rights.** Describe any water rights (surface, subsurface, well and drainage) that are necessary to protect and preserve the parcel's attributes. Who holds the rights? Will they transfer with the property?

\_\_\_\_\_ **Mineral Rights.** Describe any mineral, sand and gravel rights that are associated with the parcel. Will they transfer with the property? If not, who owns them and is development likely?

\_\_\_\_\_ **Land Uses.** Describe the existing land use practices on the site. What is the current zoning? What is the current land use? What will the land use be if the proposed open land or trails project is completed?

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Environmental Hazards.** Describe all know previous uses of the site, and any current uses not already described. What is the possibility of hazardous material or environmental problems on the site? Has a hazardous materials or environmental assessment been done? If so, what were the results?
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Encumbrances.** Describe any know encumbrances or liens on the property.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Access.** Describe whether the site has legal access, if the project is a fee acquisition. Will public access be permitted or prohibited?
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Community Benefit and Significance.** Describe the significance of the parcel and its importance or benefit to the local community or county residents.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Leveraging of Funds.** List all contributors to eligible costs of the project and their level of contribution. Funds must be cash contributions. Are they committed or anticipated? Is the property owner willing to sell the land for a reduced price or consider a conservation easement or other form of conservation to offset the cost? Document with letters, if applicable.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Stewardship.** Are other community organizations, agencies or non-profit organizations committed in part or in full to maintenance and improvements on the property. Document with letters, if applicable.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Proposed Open Space Uses or Conservation.** Describe proposed uses of the site if it is acquired for open space. Describe any proposed management approaches that would limit public access or protect resources.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Partnership.** In addition to the partners listed above, list other project partners. May include coordination with public agencies, or in-kind contributions. Document through letters of support, if applicable.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Community Support.** Provide evidence that the local community and county-at-large supports the project (*e.g.*, letters, petitions, resolutions, newspaper articles).
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Values.** Provide evidence through a map or photos indicating that the property contains significant natural, cultural, historical, traditional or recreational resources (see “List of Significant Resources”, page 4 of *draft Criteria*).
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Aesthetic Quality.** A description and photos of the aesthetic qualities of the property.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Cultural and Historical Areas.** Describe and map historical and cultural resources on the property, if applicable. Does the property possess multiple cultural-historical resources? Does it contribute to community identity, history or provide a buffer between communities? Is it agricultural or contain acequias? Does it have educational or interpretive value? Does it contain archaeological or historical sites?

- **Natural Areas.** Describe and map the natural areas on the property and species of concern on the property, if applicable. Does the property protect water quality or supply or access to water for wildlife? How undisturbed is the property? Is the property connected to other undisturbed or protected properties? Does it contain unique geologic features? Does it contain wildlife habitat for a diversity of species?
- **Recreation and Trails.** Describe whether the property is on an existing trail system. Describe and map how the property serves recreation needs in the community, if applicable (*e.g.*, County, City or other Plans, aerial photos or historical documentation). Does it provide access to other public lands? Does it contain historic trails? Is the proposed open space use integrated into the natural setting?
- **Proposed “Improvements”.** Describe and diagram any proposed parks and recreation and trails proposed or other intended uses for the property, if applicable.

APPENDIX E: CRITERIA

County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC)
Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program
(November, 1999)

Criteria for Evaluating Projects

Threshold Criteria

A Project must meet all of the threshold criteria to be further considered. (Answer YES or NO).

- The project is in the County of Santa Fe.
It appears to have one or more of the following values: aesthetic, recreational, historical, cultural, agricultural, geological, ecological, traditional.
It has a public benefit.
It is feasible, appropriate to its intended use and appears to be free of substantial adverse impacts.
The appropriate title and ownership appear to be free of obvious problems.
The landowner or representative is prepared and willing to enter into an agreement.

General Criteria

(Score the indicators for each separate Criterion separately on a scale of 0 to 5. Total scores for each set of criteria will be equalized and then weighted. Weighting is based on COLTPAC's indicated priorities.)

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS - The terms of the acquisition will allow the County to maximize its assets and leverage the open land and trails fund. (WEIGHT = .86)

- 1. The project is available for a reduced cost, (e.g., it may include a partial donation, conservation easement, or offer of a bargain sale by the landowner).
2. A partner or another party is willing to share or finance the cost of the acquisition.
3. A partner or another party is willing to assume financial or in-kind responsibility for on-going management and maintenance of the project.

Comments:

COMMUNITY BENEFIT - The project will be beneficial to local communities and/or the county at large. (WEIGHT = .84)

- 4. The project provides cultural, historical, recreational, natural open space or trail opportunities in a community that has expressed a need for them.
5. The local community has evidenced strong support for the project, (e.g., organized efforts such as letters, meetings, or background research).
6. It will benefit more than one neighborhood or the county at large.

Comments:

Note: The County will treat all communities equitably, and will favor those projects that have active community support.

PROTECTION / CONSERVATION - The project contains significant resources in need of protection or conservation (see attached list of definitions). (WEIGHT = .77)

- 7. It contains significant natural resources in need of protection or conservation.
8. It contains significant cultural / historical resources in need of protection or conservation.
9. It contains significant recreational resources / opportunities.

Comments:

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**APPENDIX E: CRITERIA**

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**AESTHETICS** - The project has exceptional, scenic, aesthetic or cultural values. *(WEIGHT = .66)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. It has unique color, texture, patterns of vegetation or physical features that provide visual interest or scenic value (e.g., It contains back-drop views or unique geologic features, or has high visual exposure from roads or trails).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. It possesses qualities that inspire, or gives a sense of solitude and/or psychological space.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. It creates a buffer between communities.

*Comments:*

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**SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT** - The project will enhance the existing or planned system of open land, parks and trails. *(WEIGHT = .58)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The project is identified on COLTPAC's County Open Land and Trails Plan as a high priority open land or trails area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. It is consistent with adopted or proposed Cities' and County General Plans, and private conservation program priorities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. It links or complements other open space or trails, (e.g., it is adjacent to, or part of, a trail system or public open land).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. It is consistent with its intended use, and it is safely and conveniently accessible.

*Comments:*

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## **Specific Criteria**

*(Score the indicators for each separate Criterion separately on a scale of 0-5)*

### **A. CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL AREAS** *(Maximum Points Equal to other Specific Criteria)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ A.1 **The Project Represents the Historical Open Space Patterns in the County.** The project contains land surrounding a traditional community (or buffer land) which has historically been undeveloped or lightly developed and used as "common land". *(WEIGHT = 10)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A.2 **It Possesses Multiple Cultural-Historical Resources** - The project possesses multiple cultural-historical resources (identified in the plan) and/or several cultural landscape layers important to the heritage or cultural character of a community or the county. *(WEIGHT = 5)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A.3 **It Contributes to Community Identity, History or Culture** - The project contributes to a traditional/historical community's identity, history and cultural connections as defined by the community (e.g., a church, petroglyphs, Spanish colonial sites), and maintains the geographical and rural integrity of a community. *(WEIGHT = 4)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A.4 **It Preserves a Lifeway** - The project preserves an open or regional cultural landscape representative of a traditional lifeway (e.g., farming, ranching, herding, mining/industry, and commerce/transportation), especially waterways and acequias. *(WEIGHT = 3)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A.5 **It Contributes to the Historical Development, Heritage or Cultural Character of the County and Has Educational or Interpretive Value.** The project is an example of an aspect of a community that has been transmitted through generations (e.g., Glorieta Pass, Pueblo heritage sites, Chimayo chapel hill). The cultural character includes resources that contribute to our mixed cultural heritage including Native American, Hispano and Anglo (e.g., homesteads in southern part of county and acequias in northern part). *(WEIGHT = 2)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A.6 **It Represents a Specific Archaeological or Historical Site or Cultural Landscape** (e.g., pre-Columbian Pueblo farms, Spanish Colonial Mission area, historic mining district). *(WEIGHT = 1)*
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## APPENDIX E: CRITERIA

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### B. NATURAL AREAS *(Maximum Points Equal to other Specific Criteria)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ B.1 **The Project Protects Watersheds, Water Quality and Supply, and Access to Water for Wildlife**, (e.g., by preserving or safeguarding a site with highly erodible soils on steep slopes near streams, damage to fish habitats can be prevented).
- \_\_\_\_\_ B.2 **It Provides Connectivity**. The project provides connectivity by linking critical resources/habitats for wildlife, such as upland and lowland areas (e.g., protecting riparian areas can allow wildlife access to water from upland areas).
- \_\_\_\_\_ B.3 **It Contains Relatively Undisturbed Sites or Sites that Can be Restored if Degraded**. (e.g., an overgrazed pasture may be easier to restore than a site that has been mined and buried in toxic mine tailings).
- \_\_\_\_\_ B.4 **It Includes Unique Geological or Ecological Features**. (e.g., unique geological features may include important recharge zones for aquifers such as unconsolidated alluvium; unique ecological features may include riparian areas or the presence of rare plant or animal species).
- \_\_\_\_\_ B.5 **It Provides Habitat for a Large Number of Plant and Animal Species**. (e.g., lands that support several species of wildlife or native plants rank higher than sites with low bio-diversity).
- \_\_\_\_\_ B.6 **It Increases the Number of Natural Community Types Such as Riparian, Grassland, and Forest Types that are Protected in Santa Fe County**. (e.g., this will be evaluated by COLTPAC mapping public lands as to the degree of protection afforded by the government agency as compared to the community types that are currently protected).

### C. RECREATION AND TRAILS *(Maximum Points Equal to other Specific Criteria)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ C.1 **The Project is Located on a Primary Trail**. The project is on an existing or proposed primary trail system. *(WEIGHT = 5)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ C.2 **It Links to Primary Trail**. The project links to or is adjacent to an existing or proposed primary trail. *(WEIGHT = 3)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ C.3 **It is Part of or Contains a Loop Trail System**. The project is part of or contains an existing or proposed looped trail system that will serve the public. A loop trail is one that begins and ends at the same location, preferably a trailhead.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ C.4 **It Provides Reasonable Trailhead Access**. The project has parking access or provides improved trailhead access to an existing (i.e., public lands) or proposed trail.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ C.5 **It Serves as Alternative Transportation**. The project links important destinations within the community and allows non-motorized travel between two or more public places (i.e., schools, parks, communities, special use areas) or places of public interest.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ C.6 **It is Part of a Historic Trail**. The project is part of a historic trail which has been in use for fifty years or more and generally reflects pre-motorized transportation system.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ C.7 **It Contains Significant Recreation Resources or Open Space Opportunities Other Than Trails**. *(WEIGHT = 5)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ C.8 **It Minimizes impacts to Neighbors, Sensitive Natural Areas and Sensitive Cultural Areas**. The project is integrated into the natural setting.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ C.9 **It Meets Appropriate Guidelines for Intended Use**. If a specific use is proposed for the project site, the site is of sufficient size and shape to accommodate such use.
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\_\_\_\_\_ C.10 It has Topography that is Appropriate for Intended Use.

\_\_\_\_\_ C.11 The Community or Another Partner has Developed a Funding or Maintenance Program to Support Initial Active Use Request *(applicable if the applicant is proposing development of facilities, trails or playing fields.)*

## Vision Statement

The last step in project evaluation process is to review all proposed projects in light of the Vision Statement and

Ensure that “a diverse mix of projects, distributed equitably throughout the county,” are recommended.

## List of Significant Resources and Definitions

*(Note: other definitions are provided in the Open Land and Trails Plan and the County General Plan )*

**Natural Resources:** Significant sites may include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Community Types**
  - groups of plants that grow together in recognizable units and are characteristic of different habitats such as riparian areas, (e.g., cottonwood-willow community), montane areas (e.g., spruce-fir community) and deserts, (e.g., blue gramma-cholla community).
- **Ecological Features**
  - unique, underrepresented, or interesting interdependent living systems that exist because of specific limiting factors such as the soils and nutrients, availability of water, climate, etc.
  - rare plants or animal species
- **Ecosystems Currently Underrepresented in the System.** Sites may include:
  - grasslands
  - cholla grasslands
- **Geologic Features**
  - recharge zones for aquifers
  - unique rock formations
- **Rare or Endangered Species**
  - Animals and or plants whose existence is threatened, as defined by State or Federal agencies.
- **Riparian Areas**

Ecological communities, existing along river banks, streams, springs, lakes or wetlands, that

- Contain unique vegetation and wildlife habitat due to its association with bodies of water,
  - serve as perennial, ephemeral, or intermittent sources of surface or subsurface water,
  - provide habitat for animal species,
  - serve important cleansing and recharge functions for waterways, and
  - are referred to in the Southwest as Bosques.
- **Watersheds**
    - Entire regions in which the precipitation collects and flows into various tributaries or waterways with each tributary eventually draining into the mainstem of a river.
  - **Waterways**
    - open water, such as lakes and ponds,
    - riparian areas, or relating to the banks of a natural watercourse, and
    - rivers and intermittent streams
  - **An Ecosystem Currently Under-represented in the System,** for example:
    - grasslands and cholla grasslands

**Cultural / Historical Resources:** Significant sites may include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Sacred Places:** Represent places of spiritual meaning, for example:
    - churches, moradas, shrines, cemeteries and graves, and petroglyphs
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## APPENDIX E: CRITERIA

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- **Cultural - Historical Lifeways:** Represent land use practices that have historical *continuity* and meaning, for example:
  - agriculture, ranching, herding, homesteading, mining and industry, and commerce and transportation.
- **Historic resources:**
- **Archaeological and Historical Sites:** At least 75 years old and represent the historical antecedents of sacred places, lifeways, cultural places and traditional communities (defined above), for example:
  - old Pueblo agricultural fields identified by rock-lined cobble grid gardens, and archaeological villages like Arroyo Hondo and the Agua Fria School House.

**Recreational and Trails Resources:** Sites may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Existing historical trails
- Rare piece of remaining land in a community that may be used for recreation or community definition
- Parcels of land that directly contribute to the county trail backbone or primary trail system.