



SANTA FE COUNTY
OPEN SPACE
TRAILS AND PARKS

conservation • connection • community
since 1998

ENJOY

THE UNIQUE BEAUTY
OF SANTA FE COUNTY

LEARN

THE IMPORTANCE OF
TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF
AND OTHERS OUTDOORS

PROTECT

OPEN SPACES AND ALL
WHO CALL THEM HOME

TREADING LIGHTLY

A Guide to
Mindful Recreation
in Nature

Thank you for
protecting
these beautiful places
for future generations!

We Are Guests on Native Land

Santa Fe County's Open Spaces and Trails are on the original homelands of the Ancestral Puebloan peoples. We acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are the first stewards of this land. Connection to land and ancestral places is a critical part of the health, spirit, and overall wellbeing of these communities. Please honor and support Tribal communities by treading lightly and continuing the tradition of care and respect for the land for future generations.

To learn more about what makes Santa Fe County's open spaces and trails special, please visit:



HOW CAN WE CARE FOR OUR OPEN SPACES?

Caring for ourselves

- > Plan your hike ahead of time.
- > Dress for the weather, and carry extra layers for rain, cold, or sun.
- > Bring enough water and food: about 1 liter of water per 2 hours of hiking.

Caring for the land

Walking off-trail erodes soil and harms living things.

- > Our open spaces house a remarkable natural resource called **cryptobiotic soil**. It looks like a dark, raised crust—and it's alive!



- > Cryptobiotic soil is made of **tiny organisms** like fungi, algae, and cyanobacteria. It plays a crucial role in ecosystems by storing water and preventing erosion. If someone's boot—or a dog's paw—crushes it, cryptobiotic soil can take decades or even centuries to fully regrow.

Enjoy your snacks, but don't leave their wrappers or peels behind!

- > Bring an extra waste bag to pack out any litter you find as well. It's extra work, but it encourages others not to litter.

Take out what you bring in, but leave what you find.

- > Many different people have used these open spaces for a long time. If you find physical evidence of this, **do not** remove it from the land. Artifacts are important links to the past that deserve our respect and should be left in place.



Our open spaces and trails are home to hundreds of animal species. Stay safe and be respectful by giving them lots of space.

Caring for each other



- > People visit open spaces for many reasons. Respect right-of-way and limit noise (talking loudly, yelling, playing music from a speaker, etc.).

What about hiking with dogs?

- > Dogs are great hiking buddies! We just ask that you **keep your dog leashed along creeks and rivers** to protect these delicate ecosystems. In all other environments, please be sure you can see your dog and have them under voice control, unless otherwise posted.
- > Even if your dog is friendly, not everyone is comfortable around unleashed dogs.

A sticky subject: what about poop?



- > Please **always pick up your dog's poop** and carry it out to the nearest trash can.
- > Dog poop takes 3-12 months to fully decompose—sometimes longer in arid climates. It can spread *E. coli*, salmonella, roundworms, and canine parvovirus.
- > Dog poop is not compost. It contains unnatural chemicals from medications and processed foods.