



SANTA FE COUNTY
**OPEN SPACE
TRAILS AND PARKS**

conservation • connection • community
since 1998

“...there are piñons and cedars and golden miles of chamisa, and the gorgeous inferno of the desert, red palisades, blue-fogged buttes, and ranges on which the snow lingers, in lightning flashes of white even after the aspens have made the lower mountains green and young as walls of moss.”

Evelyn Scott, poet, 1930

From the green valleys of Chimayó to the equestrian trails of Edgewood, Santa Fe County **OPEN SPACE, TRAILS, & PARKS** protects the places we love, ensuring current and future generations can always enjoy and cherish the distinctive beauty and unique culture of Northern New Mexico.

Climb to the heights of Talaya Hill at daybreak or visit the rocky hills of Arroyo Hondo as the sun drops behind the Jemez peaks: Northern New Mexico reaches out before you like a vision from a dream. Many have sought to capture in words, artwork, dance, and song what this land means to them. **What does this land mean to you?**



Scarlet Hedgehog Cactus
(*Echinocereus coccineus*)
at Arroyo Hondo Open Space

On any given day, the trails of Santa Fe County are buzzing with activity—human or otherwise. Nuthatches flit between piñons, while chickadees chatter in the tall ponderosas. A coyote follows a well-worn path through thick grama grass, seeking wood rats or other delicacies. Deer leap up a steep mountainside, fleeing a sudden sound. Cyclists are commuting to town, equestrians riding with friends, runners exercising after work, families and hikers walking their dogs, and bird-watchers paused quietly, waiting for that tiny, elusive kinglet to show herself. In county parks, communities gather to celebrate milestones, families watch their children compete in sports, climb and slide on the playground, or just relax and enjoy a picnic on the lawn.

ENJOY



Romero Park, Agua Fria

Families and friends can enjoy pickleball, outdoor bouldering, and team sports. The park features a covered picnic area, grassy fields, and a variety of play options.

In 1998, the people of Santa Fe County voted to create Open Space, Trails and Parks to conserve and advance “sustainable and resilient ecosystems with landscape-wide benefits for human, plant, and wildlife communities.” Since its beginning, the program has hosted valuable studies which have better helped us understand just how special these places are. Studies of beaver-built ecosystems have revealed, among other important findings, that these lush habitats host rare species like the “Rio Grande Flasher,” a type of firefly. And open space bat surveys found 18 species—three-fifths the total species of bats in New Mexico! Even without formal study, the outdoors invites all of us to slow down, be curious, and learn about the world around us.

LEARN



Photo courtesy River Source.

Santa Fe River

Students from the Santa Fe Indian School studied the impacts of beaver complexes on river health. In some areas, they found that beaver-built habitats improved groundwater levels by 2.5 feet.

Did you know that New Mexico is in the top five most biodiverse states in the nation? On Santa Fe County's open spaces alone, plant surveys have counted more than 475 species, including rare and endangered plants. No matter your preferred way to experience our trails, open spaces, and parks, please tread lightly and care for these places so others may enjoy them, learn from them, and protect them. Recreating sustainably and being good stewards of these lands means practicing respect, gratitude, and care. We can all take simple actions to make a big difference:

- Pick up waste and carry it out.
- Stay on designated trails to avoid crushing plants and living soils.
- And always be considerate of others.

PROTECT



Arroyo Hondo Open Space

You can help protect the places we love by picking up your dog's poop, and taking it to the nearest trash can. Dog poop often contains artificial additives from dog food or veterinary medicines. It is not a natural part of the ecosystem, and pollutes our soils and waterways.

OPEN SPACES

are lands managed for conservation of natural and cultural resources. Thoughtful trails built through open space provide opportunities for recreation, reflection, and connection with nature and heritage.

TRAILS

sustainably connect our communities, providing safe and fun options for traveling through Santa Fe County on foot, horseback, and bicycle.

PARKS

are where we gather, play, and celebrate! At Santa Fe County's parks you can enjoy sports like soccer, baseball, and pickleball, come together with friends and family for a picnic, or bring your kids to the playground.

The 30-acre Edgewood Open Space and Equestrian Center features a fenced arena and a network of riding and walking trails through juniper woodland.

The endangered Santa Fe Cholla (*Cylindropuntia viridiflora*) is one of many species protected by open space.

Though one of the most successful animals to adapt to human development, the coyote (*Canis latrans*) needs open space to thrive.

The trails at Arroyo Hondo Open Space, six miles south of Santa Fe Plaza, offer over three miles of varied terrain for hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers.



Photo courtesy Lauren Aston Photography.



Who lives in open space?

Open space is for everyone. Mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, plants, and fungi—all need open lands to live and thrive. When visiting an open space, look for signs of the creatures who live there. Learn about the plants that many animals rely upon for survival. And don't forget that the ground, too, is alive: plants depend on living soils and mycorrhizal fungi on their roots to flourish.



Pinyon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*). Photo Richard Johnson.

What should you do if you see a wild animal?

Creatures who live on open space are wild animals. Keep your distance, and give the animal plenty of room. Use binoculars to look more closely, but do not approach. Never give a wild animal food. Wild animals who become used to humans are less likely to survive. Always remember:

Our favorite trails are wild animals' homes.



Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). Photo Marlin Harms.

The trail through **Little Tesuque Creek Open Space** follows a riparian canyon lush with willows and cottonwoods. The trail continues uphill into **Arroyo de la Piedra Open Space**.



Learn about New Mexico's history when you follow this 17-mile-long segment of **El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail** from the Santa Fe River to Diablo Canyon.



Did you know that the **Santa Fe River Trail** is more than just a trail? It's also a habitat and river restoration effort, returning native plants to the riparian corridor.



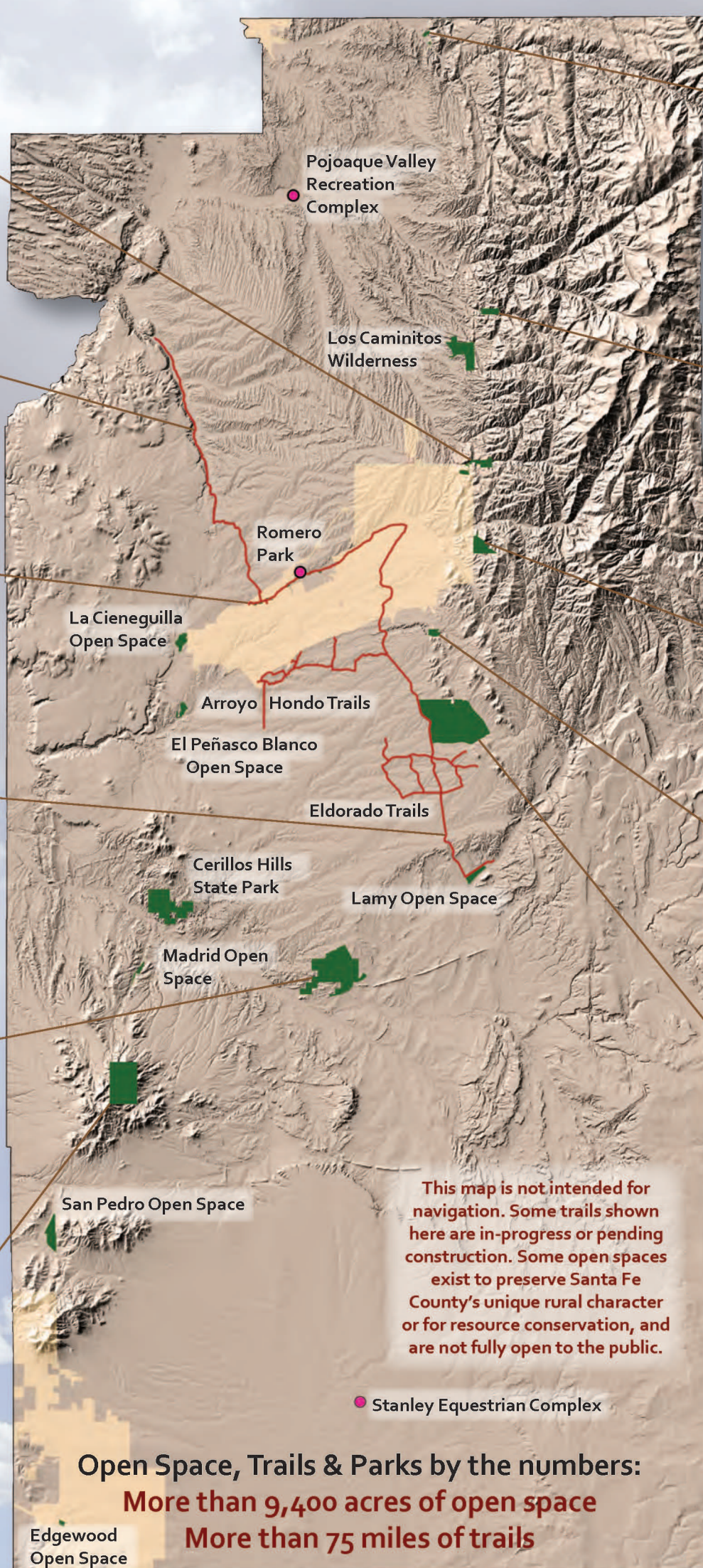
Follow the **Santa Fe Rail Trail** from Santa Fe to Lamy, or hop on the **Spur Trail**. Look for the historic Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe railroad branch, completed in 1880. But please, for everyone's safety, stay off the tracks!



The rolling piñon-juniper savannah of **Thornton Ranch Open Space** holds rich stories amidst panoramic views of the Galisteo Basin and beyond. Trails and planning are underway. This property is not yet open to the public as of 2026.



Black bears, mountain lions, and other animals live on the steep, forested slopes of the **Ortiz Mountains Open Space**, which rises to the highest point at Placer Peak's 8,898', and preserves archaeological remnants from the first gold rush west of the Mississippi. This property is closed to general access. Please contact us for more information.



At risk of development, community efforts led to the protection of **Los Potreritos Open Space**, a dynamic landscape and the historic viewshed behind the Santuario de Chimayo. There is no public access.

Beloved by hikers continuing into the Santa Fe National Forest, the trail through **Rio en Medio Open Space** offers the opportunity to witness a river ecosystem as it adapts to changes brought by a major flash flood in 2022.



Choose a new adventure each time you hike the many trails of **Talaya Hill Open Space**. Enjoy lower trails in shady canyons, or challenge yourself to climb 8,577' Picacho Peak.

Arroyo Hondo Open Space, with its far-reaching views across the Galisteo Basin, is beautiful any time of year. But it is especially worth a visit in the springtime when its many cactus species burst into colorful bloom.



The sprawling 2,650 acre **Bobcat Crossing Ranch Open Space** is a critical wildlife corridor from the southernmost foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the Galisteo Basin. Trails planning for this property is currently under development.

Other open space properties include 10 Little Hills Open Space, Madrid Open Space, Old Pecos Trail Open Space, Paseo Primero Open Space, El Rancho Open Space, and the Santa Fe River Preserve



We can't wait to see you out there!

Gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)

We are Guests on Native Land

Santa Fe County is located on the original homelands of the Ancestral Puebloan peoples. We acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are the first stewards of this land, and their history, lifeways, and identity are inherently woven into the ground where we leave our footprints, the air that fills our lungs, and the water we drink. Indigenous communities, for thousands of generations, have continued to migrate, visit, and occupy this region. They continue to retell and create new stories about these places today. Connection to land and ancestral places is a critical part of the health and 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.

CONTACT US

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For the most up-to-date information, please visit:
www.SantaFeCountyNM.gov/open_space_and_trails_program

In case of emergency call 911

Recreate Responsibly

Leave no trace.
 Pack out all trash.
 Respect plants and wildlife.
 Bring a leash and pick up pet waste.



No camping or ground fires.
 No motorized vehicles off roads.
 No firearms, weapons, or fireworks.
 No alcoholic beverages on premises.