

The Trust for Public Land, in partnership with Rio Grande Return, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, Earthworks, Audubon New Mexico and Santa Fe County request the McCune Charitable Foundation's direct support and assistance in fundraising for a landscape-level effort to conserve land and natural resources in the Santa Fe Gateway.

## **The Santa Fe Gateway**

The Santa Fe Gateway is defined as the land east of I-25 to the Glorieta Mesa and west to the Rio Grande from La Bajada Hill and north through La Cienega. (see appendix A for maps).



La Bajada

Modern day people are perhaps most familiar with this land as the viewshed when traveling on I-25 between Albuquerque, past Santa Fe, to Pecos.

But we are only the latest in a long history of travelers, stretching back into prehistory, who have moved through this corridor. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail and the Santa Fe National Historic Trail run through the Gateway.

Within the Gateway are rich water resources in the Santa Fe River, and the Alamo and La Cienega creeks, all tributaries to the Rio Grande, and the resources of the Galisteo watershed. This water has sustained residents and travelers for a thousand years, and continues to provide habitat for numerous wildlife species, including the endangered southwest willow flycatcher and many other songbirds.



The Santa Fe River near La Cienega

The Santa Fe Gateway offers a unique opportunity for conservation, education and interpretation. It is just a few miles from Santa Fe, yet relatively undeveloped and, as yet, largely intact. Conservation of these lands honors the history of the peoples who have lived here and provides an increasingly rare opportunity to establish public recreational open space and wildlife corridors within close proximity to one of New Mexico's major population centers.

## **Conserving the Gateway**

Bordered by the Santa Fe National Forest; surrounded by the Cochiti, Jemez, Santo Domingo, Tesuque, San Juan and Nambe pueblos, and with a growing population—projected as 10,000 new residents between 2005 and 2010—Santa Fe's development growth is largely confined to the lands south, southeast and southwest of the city.

The current economic climate presents, in addition to its many negative aspects, some interesting benefits for land conservation in particular. With credit frozen for many borrowers, development has slowed. Land prices are down, offering non-profits like TPL, which typically struggle to compete with developers in the real estate market, what may be once-in-a-generation opportunities to buy highly developable properties for conservation. We have already found landowners elsewhere who are far more ready to sell at lower prices than they imaged just six months ago. TPL intends to make as much of this opportunity as funding will allow.

Likewise, SFCT has seen a spike in landowner interest in conservation easement donations. Recent changes to the New Mexico state constitution allowing the transfer to other parties of the easement donation tax benefits is an important new tool for land trusts, and a great benefit for their missions and the communities they serve.

The water resources of the Santa River and Alamo and Cienega Creeks, and the Galisteo watershed, as well as the few limits on zoning in Santa Fe County, make the Santa Fe Gateway particularly attractive to developers and therefore particularly vulnerable. If developed in a piecemeal fashion, the results could be catastrophic for quality of life for people and wildlife in the area, New Mexico's cultural heritage, and the economy of the region.

The Gateway partnership, with its diverse perspectives on and skills in conservation, water resources, wildlife habitat, human needs for open space and access to nature, and recognition of the importance of New Mexico's culture and history, was convened to identify priority lands for conservation. Each seeks to inform its work in land acquisition, stewardship and restoration, as well as environmental and cultural education (see appendix B for organizational missions), with authentic tools grounded in community values and real science.



Historic La Bajada

We have divided the work of this partnership into four phases; support is requested for the first three at this time. The timelines of the phases may overlap.

### **Phase I: Immediately conserve important properties (2009 through 2010)**

Current efforts include the purchase or donation of land or development rights on eight key properties (see appendix C for a list). Expenses associated with this work, for which we request support in 2009, include staff time and direct expenses associated with hiring independent entities to perform due diligence activities (title searches, appraisals, environmental and archaeological surveys, etc.). See appendix D for a budget outlining these expenses.

**Phase II: Identify community-held priorities and opportunities to meet a wide range of land conservation goals through a formal Greenprint of lands south of Santa Fe city limits (2009 through 2010)**

Through our Conservation Vision department, TPL will work with community members, local leaders and stakeholders to develop a “greenprint” of the Gateway. TPL’s Greenprint is an interactive, community modeling process that uses a geographic information system to identify priorities for planning and conservation based on local input. What makes TPL’s land prioritization process different from other modeling tools is that it combines community values with sound science. TPL and its partners work with key stakeholders and the public to identify goals and values around land protection, such as habitat protection, trail connectivity and water resource protection. Then we work with a local Technical Advisory Team to develop scientifically sound GIS models that reflect those values. The result is a set of maps that prioritize exactly where the community should invest its limited resources in order to meet its many goals, an analysis of funding and implementation strategies, and a web-based Greenprint model that Santa Fe County, TPL, Earthworks, Rio Grande Return, Audubon New Mexico and other stakeholders can use to implement their conservation, recreational open space, wildlife habitat restoration or educational goals.



Mesa above the Santa Fe River

The greenprint, combined with outreach with landowners to learn about opportunities to purchase properties, can help define acquisition priorities with the greatest chances of success. Local governments and large land managers, such as BLM, would be involved in developing the Greenprint so that the results can be used to inform their land management and protection activities. See appendix E for a description of conservation visioning and Greenprinting.

The Greenprint process will identify the unique natural resources of the area, including wildlife habitat, forests, riparian corridors, scenic vistas, working lands and historic resources.

Phase I of TPL and partners’ Greenprint planning process and scope will incorporate the following steps:

- Stakeholder outreach to develop natural resource, park, open space and trail goals,
- Prioritizing lands for protection that meet identified goals, using GIS-based Greenprint Model,
- Conservation finance analysis to identify all existing and potential public sources of implementation funds from local, state and federal sources,
- An Action Plan with implementation strategies, and
- A web-based Greenprint that can be used long-term by local governments, BLM, USFS and other partners to update and share data and maps and guide future implementation.

TPL proposes creating a Greenprint Task Force with representatives from the county, incorporated jurisdictions and home-owner associations, federal agencies, local land trusts, watershed associations and other partners, which would guide the development of the Greenprint. We would work with this Task Force to identify goals and criteria for conservation and parks that span jurisdictional boundaries within the county.

Convening stakeholders to understand the issues from multiple perspectives is perhaps the most important part of this exercise if the Greenprint is to be broadly accepted as a meaningful tool based on local concerns and solid science. Stakeholders may include individual property owners, environmental organizations, home owners associations, sportsmen, local farmers and ranchers, grassroots support groups, and organizations engaged in formal and informal public education. Alan Hamilton and Rio Grande Return have been central to outreach, communication and education with stakeholders and a broader spectrum of relevant organizations to gain support and convey the importance of our success in protecting wildlife habitat, cultural resources and supporting economic growth. Alan will be TPL's full partner in convening these groups. The other partners also all have relationships with stakeholders that are central to our success.

TPL would work with Santa Fe County and members of the Technical Advisory Team, to collect all necessary data and build the model framework, holding regular web-based meetings to get input and guidance. Once the Greenprint Model is complete, TPL will work with the Task Force to prioritize and weigh the goals in order to create a land protection scenario with broad support.



Tetilla Peak

TPL will initiate the Greenprint by conducting a thorough Current Conditions Review to ensure that the Greenprint builds on any planning processes that have already taken place and that it supports future planning needs. The Current Conditions Review will include a review of related documents, including the Galisteo Watershed analysis conducted by Earthworks and Santa Fe Conservation Trust, and interviews with elected officials and key stakeholders.

There are two ways to convey the Greenprint Model. The first is desktop delivery. TPL can convey the Greenprint model to a local organization or agency and train a GIS staff person on how to manage and update it in the future. This option allows complete access to the model framework by the host organization, and allows them to perform maintenance on the model as data and priorities change, to produce maps and property-profile reports in house, and to extend

the model with additional criteria if desired. All other partners would access model results and maps through staff at the host organization or agency.

The second option for model conveyance is to create a Web-based Greenprint (Internet Mapping Site). A Web-based Greenprint would allow all stakeholders to have password-protected access to the model to download data, access and manipulate map outputs, and get information on priority parcels, among other functions. Based on early conversations, web-based delivery is likely the best option. The county and other jurisdictions may have different goals and uses for the model in the future; therefore, ownership of, and access to, the final model by a single jurisdiction would limit the ability of the other jurisdictions to manipulate the model and access model results and tools. Also, full web-based access to the model doesn't place the burden on one jurisdiction or stakeholder to manage maintenance of the model in the future or manage the access to model results by other jurisdictions. TPL can manage the website and model updates in the future for a modest fee.

TPL and the gateway partners are all experienced in seeking public funding for conservation work through the New Mexico State Legislature and the City and County of Santa Fe. Strategies include requests for legislative capital outlay funding, especially where it matches federal funding, including the US Land and Water Conservation Fund, the US Department of Agriculture's Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, and the Federal Land Transfer Facilitation Act. However, competition for these funds becomes stiffer each year, and the advocacy led by TPL, Rio Grande Return and the Santa Fe Conservation Trust and other partners is essential to our success.

TPL is a leader nation-wide in helping local municipalities create new public funding sources for conservation such as gross receipts tax increments and bond measures. For example, TPL has helped the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County pass measures resulting in almost \$78 million in new funds for parks, trails and open space.

### **Phase III: Use of the Greenprint to implement organizations' activities (2010 and beyond)**

Each of the partners foresees using the Greenprint to direct work toward our distinct missions.

TPL will pursue the acquisition of properties and/or their development rights by:

- Assessing the viability of each of the identified priority properties as a potential conservation transaction, and developing a specific acquisition strategy for each;
- Conducting confidential discussions with the landowners to determine their objectives and willingness to sell and/or donate their land for conservation;
- Working with federal, state and local agencies to match the geography and resources of each land protection priority with a specific agency to determine partners and long-term owners for each property;
- Securing public and private conservation funding that can be secured for each of the contemplated acquisitions; and
- Conveying the land or development rights to an appropriate steward.



Santa Fe Conservation Trust's work is similar to TPL's though they primarily pursue donation of conservation easements, rather than purchase or donation of land in fee. Recent changes to the New Mexico State Constitution allowing the transfer of the tax benefits of easement donations to other parties is an important new tool that has increased landowner interest dramatically.

Audubon New Mexico and Earthworks see the Greenprint as a tool for establishing plans for conserving wildlife habitat, conducting restoration, and educating the public. Audubon has established Important Bird Areas throughout the state and seeks information on which to base expansion of existing sites and designation of new sites, important parts of their educational mission.

Santa Fe County is interested in this tool as they consider a more comprehensive plan for land use and management in the southern part of the county.



View from La Bajada

## **Appendices**

- A. Maps: area map and ecoregion and resource detail maps from Galisteo Watershed Initiative with Gateway area marked.
- B. Organizational mission and history descriptions
- C. Current conservation project descriptions
- D. Budget
- E. Conservation Visioning brochure with Greenprint case studies

D. Budget (amounts deleted)

2009 2010

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Phase I: Current Conservation Projects

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**TPL-NM**

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Staff Time and Due Diligence aka Transaction Expenses: appraisals, environmental surveys, acquisition and conveyance/closing expenses, project related grants, interest, etc.

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Phase II: Greenprint

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**Santa Fe Conservation Trust**

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10% Director of Conservation Programs

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Travel and Meetings (20%)

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Subtotal SFCT

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**TPL-Conservation Vision Team**

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Current Conditions and Kick-off Meeting

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Plan and Develop materials for kickoff meeting

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Create Base Map (poster map of study area, roads, boundaries, protected areas)

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Review of Current Conditions Report

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Attend kickoff meeting and interviews - local project manager and GIS Project Manager

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Alan Hamilton/Rio Grande Return - interviews and current conditions

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Project management

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Conservation Goal-Setting

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Assist in identifying Technical Advisory Team (TAT)

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Develop program for goal-setting meeting with stakeholders

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Assist with and participate in goal-setting meetings - local project manager

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Review initial input from stakeholders; merge draft criteria from workshops and assess data requirements

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Assist with additional outreach meetings

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Alan Hamilton/Rio Grande Return - Stakeholder ID, TAT ID, Develop program and prep, Facilitate stakeholder goal setting meeting

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Project management

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Model Design

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Develop criteria matrix

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Review of criteria matrix with TAT, could be email and conference call

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Conduct final data inventory and compilation using criteria matrix and outline

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Revise and finalize criteria matrix

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Assist with TAT meeting

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Data Collection

Hold Meeting #1 of TAT (webex) to review criteria matrix and recommend data sources

Assist with TAT meeting

Alan Hamilton/Rio Grande Return - Assist with TAT meeting

Data Collection

Model Implementation

Model Implementation (construct models, validate, refine)

Hold Meeting #2 of TAT (webex) to review and refine criteria matrix

Additional meeting with TAT to assign criteria weights

Alan Hamilton/Rio Grande Return - Assist with TAT meeting #2 and additional TAT meeting to assign weights

Model Presentation and Final Refinement

Develop Program for second stakeholder meeting

Attend 4 jurisdictional meetings to prioritize goals - GIS Project Manager(2 trips - 2 meetings)

Co-facilitate second stakeholder meeting to prioritize goals

Refine matrix, model, and QC final model

Assist: Get sign-off from TAT and Steering Committee - local project manager

Alan Hamilton/Rio Grande Return - Facilitate outreach meetings and workshop to prioritize goals

Electronic Voting Equipment

Maps and Reports

Poster Maps - Conservation Priorities, Quality Control, Current Conditions, Population Projections, Protected Areas, Vacant/Undeveloped Land

Report Statistics -Study Area (acreage, protected, high priority, vacant/unprotected); Jurisdictions (acreage, % study area, protected, high priority, vacant/unprotected); Landuse/Landcover; Quality Control

Review Greenprint Report

Alan Hamilton - draft report and brochure, create necessary tables, edit text, incorporate revisions to final

Layout and design for report and brochure

Photography

Parcel Prioritization

Work with local project manager and partners to identify Parcel Prioritization committee

Work with Parcel Prioritization Committee to determine parcel prioritization criteria

Develop supplemental criteria matrix

Model Implementation (construct prioritization models, validate, refine)

Customize report tools for priority parcels

Report Statistics - Priority Parcels - jurisdictions and study area		
<b>Finance and Implementation Workshop</b>		
Prepare materials and assist with agenda for workshop		
Assist with workshop - local project manager		
Alan Hamilton - facilitate Workshop		
<b>Model Delivery Option A - Web-Based Conveyance</b>		
Website creation, setup, and data configuration; testing and quality control		
Initial Rollout to local team; Refinement of site after initial rollout		
Site Password protection		
Training via webex - up to four 2hr sessions plus prep		
General Maintenance and Management for 1st 6 months (1 hrs/mth); 2nd 6 months (1 hrs/mth)		
Other local team Staff time - management, training and WebEx		
Project Management for TPL GIS Manager		
<b>Subtotal TPL-Conservation Vision Team</b>		
Phase III: to be determined		
<b>Request by year</b>		
<b>Total requested</b>		

Note: No funding is requested for Audubon New Mexico or Earthworks in phases I and II.