

OPEN SPACE *newsletter*



A Quarterly Newsletter of the Open Space Division and the Open Space Alliance

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The Bosque Goat Project

By Elsa C. Bumstead

On one fall Trail Watch walk, the sound of a tractor was heard in the Bosque on the West Side north of Montano. Following it to its source, goat herder Ray Thornberg was seen riding his tractor as he pulled a trailer filled with fencing materials from one place to another. The goat herd of 450 was nearby, busily grooming the Bosque of invasive plants. The herd covered 0.5 to an acre a day, depending on available forage. Temporary fencing kept them contained, while a "guard" llama kept unwanted coyotes, dogs and people at bay. The goats were kept moving as new fence lines were installed, and old ones uprooted. Occasionally the work stopped, as passer-bys, curious about what they were seeing, inquired about the operation he was running there. Ray said, though he had lost a couple of goats to coyotes, all things considered, it was a small loss. Asked why the goats had not tackled the dense tumbleweeds in the La Orilla pole planting area, Ray replied that the dried plants were too tough, dry and thorny, and that sores would develop in their mouths if those plants were eaten.

The goat project started through the efforts of the late Representative Ray Ruiz in the 2003 Legislature. Funding of \$100,000 was provided, split evenly between a goat herd on 200 acres of Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District owned land in Socorro County,



Arnold the llama looking after the herd

and the other half for goats in the Rio Grande Valley State Park. The "La Orilla Project," as it became known, was in Albuquerque, on the West Side of the Rio Grande on 100 acres between Montano and Paseo del Norte.

Planning took longer than anticipated, according to MRGCD biologist, Sterling Grogan. Because contractors were busy clearing fuelwood from the Bosque during the nesting season, the introduction of goats was planned after its completion. The MRGCD made a point of working closely with City of Albuquerque Open Space key staff, including Jay Hart, Matt Schmader, Ray Chapler and Jay Evans. The MRGCD issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in July 2004. Five proposals were received. The contract was issued to a partnership between Phyllis Myers of Belen and Sarah Harris of Bend, Oregon. Myers supplied all

of the goats and the goat herder for the La Orilla project. Harris provided the goats for the Socorro County project. Since Harris had years of experience using goats throughout the West, she provided guidance for the La Orilla project. On September 16, 2004, the goats began their work as vegetation managers at La Orilla, and ended it in November over the Thanksgiving weekend.

The benefactor of the goat project was honored at La Orilla on October 30, 2004. Approximately 75 people attended the Ray Ruiz Memorial Goat Project Field Day. Experts from various Soil and Water Conservation Districts and from NMSU discussed weeds in the Bosque, strategies for control of non-native phreatophytes, including the use of goats, the re-establishment of native plants, and the potential for New Mexico livestock producers to enter the vegetation management business by using goats.

Goat herd impacts are being monitored at both project sites. Dr. Manny Encinias of NMSU Cooperative Extension Service is conducting biological monitoring at La Orilla site; Dr. Sandy Tartowski of the USDA/

...continued on page 3

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

New Year's is a time of beginnings and endings. In no place is this more evident than in the Open Space Division. As you may know, former Open Space Division Superintendent Jay Hart was recently promoted to Director of the entire Parks and Recreation Department. That leadership vacancy has now been capably filled by Dr. ("Doc") Matt Schmader.

Matt has been with Open Space for 13 years. He is the former Assistant Superintendent and is intimately familiar with all the publicly owned properties, their history, and their peculiar issues within the Open Space Division. Before he was a City of Albuquerque employee, Matt was a member of the Open Space Task Force which laid the groundwork for the creation of the Open Space Division.

Matt did his doctoral dissertation on Albuquerque's West Mesa Petroglyphs which helped pave the way for the creation of the Petroglyph National Monument. Matt's archeological research in the Sandia Foothills was vital in the creation of the Sandia Wilderness area in the Cibola National Forest. No one knows Major Public Open Space better than Matt. I look forward to a fruitful and cooperative relationship.

Each step forward you leave something behind, and I'm saddened to report that Chief Steven Thomas (the second person to be hired by the Division after Jay Hart), is retiring. The Open Space Division got its start in 1986 and in those 19 years, Chief Thomas has built the Open Space Law Enforcement section into a first-class police organization. Under Chief Thomas, the Open Space Police developed horse- and bicycle-units and have added the Rio Grande river to their 'beat' with hovercraft patrol. The Open Space police organization played a crucial role investigating and closing the two big bosque fires of 2003.

Under Chief Thomas, the Law Enforcement section has grown to 16 sworn officers and 3 civilians. Open Space Police not only face regular criminal activity, but also very specialized resource-protection challenges and in rugged terrain. No one does it better!

A warm welcome to Matt and very best wishes to Chief Thomas.



Martin J. Chavez, Mayor

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MJ Chavez'.

Martin J. Chavez, Mayor



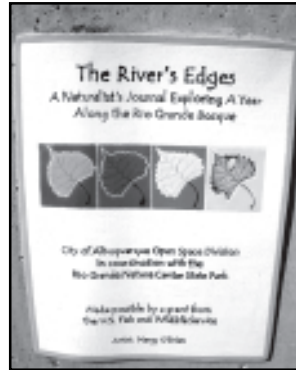
Go Surfing in Open Space, Dude!

It is finally here! The Open Space Division website. You can find general information on Open Space and download maps and brochures. And there is still more to come! Let me know what you think. **ALL** comments are appreciated and can be sent to Jodi Hedderig at jhedderig@cabq.gov

Visit: www.cabq.gov/openspace

The River's Edge: A New Installation at Rio Grande Nature Center

“The River’s Edges” is an exciting new interpretive art installation at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park wildlife blind, overlooking the City of Albuquerque Open Space Candelaria Farm Wetland. Twelve hand-made interpretive tiles describe a year’s exploration of the bosque and all of its many changes.



North Valley artist Margy O’Brien created this unique and educational exhibit for the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division and the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park.

Funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the art tiles represent pages from a naturalist’s notebook and are placed around windows of the existing wildlife blind that overlooks the Candelaria Farm Wetland, owned and managed by the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division.



The tiles at the Rio Grande Nature Center

State Park Wildlife Blind were hand-shaped, glazed and fired by artist Margy O’Brien, creating a one-of-a-kind interpretive exhibit for the citizens of Albuquerque. The goal of the exhibit is to teach visitors about the changing bosque here at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park and its interaction with the adjacent Open Space farmland and wetland.

For over twenty-five years, Margy O’Brien has worked as a professional artist and natural science illustrator, working in watercolor, pen & ink, pencil, and most recently ceramic tile. Ceramic tile, able to withstand cold weather as well as hot, is suitable in many places where other art media are not.

Margy’s nature-inspired tile artwork is part of public art projects at the City of Albuquerque’s Cottonwood Springs Trail at the Elena Gallegos Open Space Picnic Area, the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, and the Corrales Community Recreation Center.

...Goat Project cont’d from page 1

shows the goats are eating salt cedar and Russian olive, and that the native grasses that were already present in the native soil seed bank have been facilitated by the action of the goats’ hooves, urine and feces. That is the plan: with 2-3 more years of similar treatments, as many as 3 times per year, we expect the salt cedar and Russian olive to be stressed, native grasses to be expanding, native willows to be recovering, and the pole-planted cottonwoods to be thriving. The goats do eat everything, but our expectation is that the coyote willows will recover (as they do from mowing), and the goats did not strip the bark off the cottonwood poles to any significant extent (they didn’t touch the mature cottonwoods). We won’t have the first round of vegetation monitoring results from La Orilla until January.”

The initial funding of \$100,000 has been spent. The MRGCD plans to ask the 2005 Legislature for additional funding to continue goat herds at both the La Orilla and Socorro sites. If you would like to see the impact of the goats on the Albuquerque project area, take a walk in the Bosque at La Orilla. If you would like to support this project, please contact your New Mexico State legislators to encourage continued funding.

Elsa C. Bumstead is an interpretive naturalist, field biologist, open space advocate and Trail Watch volunteer, who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



On the search for more salt cedar and Russian olive

JANUARY**12 OPEN SPACE VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION****USFS Sandia Ranger District Visitor Center****6:00 pm - 8:30 pm**

Do you know someone who would like to become a volunteer or would you like are fresher yourself? Orientations cover Open Space history, lands, functions, and volunteer responsibilities. All participants must **pre-register** by calling Jodi Hedderig at 452-5210.

13 QUIVIRA COALITION SYMPOSIUM***LIKE WATER IN THE BANK: THE PROMISE OF ALLUVIAL STORAGE*****Hilton Hotel, Albuquerque****9:00 am - 4:00 pm**

What if we stored water where it most naturally can be “protected”—in the banks of creeks and rivers? What if landowners were compensated financially for land management practices that created a healthy hydrologic cycle for creeks and rivers, resulting in increased storage in alluvial systems? What if we redesigned urban growth so as to protect natural recharge zones, so that storm water becomes a resource to the community rather than a nuisance? Such questions will be pondered at the symposium. The cost for the symposium is \$10. You may also consider attending the conference that runs from January 14-16. Sign up online at www.quiviracoalition.org.

26 (& February 2) INTERPRETIVE TRAINING**National Park Service Visitor Center****9:00 am - 4:00 pm**

Open Space Volunteers are invited to attend a 2-day interpretive training with Open Space Environmental Education Coordinator, Bonnie Dils and National Park Service Interpretive Ranger, Cheryl Ford. This is a great opportunity to improve your knowledge of cultural and natural resources and learn how to share that information with the public. This training is **free**. Please call Bonnie Dils at 452-5205 for more information.



SPRING CLEAN UP IN THE FOOTHILLS

begins April 2 at Copper Open Space.

Stay tuned for details.

Open Space Volunteer Program: A Success Story

Five thousand three hundred seventy four or 5,374 -- that's how many reported hours Trail Watch, Adoptors and CIOTE volunteers contributed to the conservation of Open Space in 2004! And I haven't received December hours yet! Each year volunteers set a new record for hours spent in Open Space patrolling, educating, working on trails, and restoring lands. Last year volunteers contributed 5,378 hours and in 2002 the total was 4,768 - and I know once December reports are submitted hours will reach a new high.

There are some very dedicated volunteers in the program that we would like to recognize who contributed **over 100 hours** this past year.

Open Space was happy to welcome **57 new volunteers** to the Open Space program in 2004. Several of them hit the ground running

- **Chris von Huene** has been very busy in the foothills cleaning up garbage.



<i>John Baca</i>	<i>Daniel Geist</i>	<i>Susan Nofsker</i>
<i>Mary Louise Baca</i>	<i>Jim Grabam</i>	<i>Connie Schlimme</i>
<i>Robert Barr</i>	<i>Lisa Grabam</i>	<i>Richard Schlimme</i>
<i>Peter Baston</i>	<i>Don Heuszel</i>	<i>Tommy Thompson</i>
<i>Barbara Binder</i>	<i>Yvonne Heuszel</i>	<i>Dick Traeger</i>
<i>Elsa Bumstead</i>	<i>Chris Hoden</i>	<i>Stan Upchurch</i>
<i>Paul Daily</i>	<i>Chuck Lee</i>	



The Adopt-an-Open Space Program now has 32 groups looking after a portion of Open Space. Last year, adoption groups completed 37 projects including trail maintenance and trail building, bosque restoration and trash clean up. The collaborative school (**Albuquerque Academy, Bosque School and Sandia Prep**) adoption at Montano and the river completed 7 projects at their site last year!

Education is an important component to Open Space. **Paul Daily, Rozier Sanchez and Victoria Sanchez** supplement the Environmental Education program by leading interpretive hikes for students. Collectively, these Community Interpreters of the Environment (CIOTE) led 30 hikes last year.

Open Space also lead **72 conservation projects** with over 1,300 participants. Conservation project participants included Boy and Girl Scouts, school groups, and community groups. Projects included pole planting, trail maintenance and new trail construction, reseeding disturbed areas and trash clean up.

A very special thank you to **Paul Daily** and **Don Heuszel** for helping to open and operate the Elena Gallegos and foothill parking areas during lean staffing times over this past year. They had gates clanking open before the first chirp of the songbird on many mornings, working over 480 hours collectively. Thanks to **Patricia Carisella** for her help, also.

And, of course, we can't forget the **64 bosque volunteers** who walked, biked and rode their trusty horses through the bosque to educate the public about closure and report problems to law enforcement. These volunteers helped protect the bosque from another 2003 inferno.

Keep up the good work! Open Space depends on volunteers to fulfill our mission. If you know someone that would like to join the team, please have them call the volunteer coordinator at 452-5200.

Volunteer Appreciation Party Coming Soon!
Look for your invitation in the mail.

Rio Grande Community Farm: Cultivating Change

by Susan Turner

There is a place nestled in the North Valley, of Albuquerque, that raises the standards for community engagement. It is the Rio Grande Community Farm.

Recently, a young teenager, who was volunteering at the farm, upon hearing how the Open Space land was preserved for agriculture and wildlife habitat said, "Oh!

I get it! The people of Albuquerque were clairvoyant when they saw what was about to happen. They wanted to see clearly for future generations. They honored the past, the present, and

the future." I think this is a remarkable and accurate observation. I am also impressed with the understanding of the young man who made the remark, for he is living in an alternative home. He is presently a member of the Hogares program, which for over 30 years, has helped young people cope with the problems and pressures of growing up in an ever complicated world. This organization is one of many with which the farm interacts on a weekly basis. The farm provides an opportunity for the young men to release some of their overwhelming energy and gives them a sense of place. It connects them to their community in a holistic – holy – way.

Today, thanks to you and citizens, who supported saving this land, we have an amazing farm that is providing mindful and uplifting lessons to

many people locally and nationwide. It is an inspiring lesson in civics, reminding us that when people unite, for decency and right action, they can make a crucial difference. This information is shared with every visitor who comes to the Rio Grande Community Farm. One of the national organizations that has sent

volunteers to the farm for the past three years is "Mission Trips New Mexico." They are groups of young adults and teenagers, who come to New Mexico for a week, pay all of their expenses, and usually make

a small financial donation to the different agencies that they serve, during their visit. This year from February to July we have had 147 young people who came from as far away as Ann Arbor, MI, Syracuse, NY, Bellingham, WA, and two groups from Dallas, TX. One Dallas group included three teenagers from Sudan.

Last year the farm had 16 groups that did service learning projects. The total for these groups was 750 volunteers. They included pre-kindergarteners, who planted a successful garlic crop, and senior citizens who helped us create a waffle garden, as well as a sponge garden. Both of these gardens have helped us to use our water more efficiently. Other groups were public students, home school children, women from shelters, and mentally challenged

youths. Moreover, the local chapter of an international organization -'Day's of Taste'- came to the farm and introduced 4th and 5th graders to the beginning of the food chain. The "Mission Trip" groups have already been mentioned.

The Rio Grande Community Farm is always a hit, for it connects volunteers to the natural world while giving them an opportunity to serve. If we are to survive and maintain a balance for ourselves and Mother Earth, we must nurture that sense of awe that comes from putting our hands in the earth, learning about small wildlife, and gaining a sense of accomplishment from planting a seed that grows into a healthy plant that eventually becomes food for many. The farm is an empowering place where we emphasize education on community involvement, water conservation, soil maintenance, and innovative agriculture practices. The farm excludes no one, so long as the visitors are respectful of the land and Open Space rules.

We have accomplished much in a few years, but there is so much more that we can implement with the ongoing support of the mayor's office, Open Space, and the citizens of New Mexico and beyond. We need to seek solutions for advancing the farm and its possibilities so that we remain good stewards of the land and "clairvoyant".

If you would like to be involved with Rio Grande Community Farms, please contact Susan Turner, Service Learning Coordinator at 345-4580 or visit www.riograndefarm.org for more information.

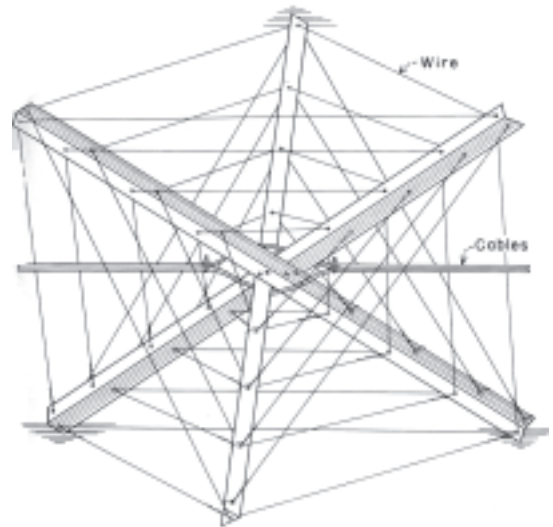
"Today, thanks to you and citizens who supported saving this land, we have an amazing farm that is providing mindful and uplifting lessons to many people locally and nationwide."

Goodbye Jetty Jacks!

by Jodi Hedderig

Take a walk through the bosque and one observes the soft organic lines of earth, the impressive girth of an elder cottonwood tree, the rustle of critters foraging, the sweet smell of plant decay and, oddly, a tangle of organized rusted steel beams, cable and wire – these are not discarded toy jacks from a transient Brothers Grimm giant, but jetty fields installed to control the flow of the river.

In the mid-1950's the Army Corp of Engineers, in cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation, began installing Kelner jetty jacks to enhance flood control in the Middle Rio Grande that, until that point, essentially consisted of a levee system. They were effective. Their design and placement functioned to slow the velocity of the river causing it to drop its sediment. The deposition of sediment slowly built the riverbanks and effectively locked the river into a defined channel. Although the jetty fields did not eliminate flooding (speed ahead 20 years to the construction of Cochiti Dam – this structure eliminated flooding) they did greatly reduce the river's ability to meander and, thus, visit its flood plain.



Today, Cochiti dam keeps the river tame, only allowing it to follow a predictable path without opportunity to revisit its ancestral lands. So are the jetty jacks still useful? Not really. In fact, they pose a hazard on different levels. Many people visit the bosque on a daily basis to enjoy the forest, to bicycle or ride their horse; the jacks, with their hard jutting edges, broken, tangled wire hidden in the debris of the forest floor and stern lines of impasse make recreation dangerous. On another level, they contribute to the fire hazard in the bosque. Jetty jacks collect dead wood, and jetty fields can trap people trying to escape from a fire and prevent firefighting personnel from accessing a fire.

The threat the jetty jacks pose has been taken very seriously by the City of Albuquerque, Army Corp of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and they are now, at this very moment, being plucked from the bosque. The Army Corp of Engineers has contracted the removal of 80% of the jetty jacks in the Albuquerque reach. The remaining 20% include jetty jacks in the river or run parallel along the river banks. They will also remain in areas where the buffer between the river and the levee is narrow, threatening levee integrity in the event of a high flow.

You can see for yourself the beauty of the bosque without the jacks at Central on the east side of the river, Alameda on the east and west side, and Montano on the east side.



BEFORE



AFTER

Southeast corner of Montano and the river

OPEN SPACE news

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Winter: 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
Summer: 7:00 am to 9:00 pm
all week
\$1.00 weekdays / \$2.00 weekends
857-8334

PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT
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Las Imagenes Visitor Center
8:00 am to 5:00 pm, all week
\$1.00 weekdays / \$2.00 weekends

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(505) 344-7240
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